A STUDY OF THE THEORY OF APPRAISAL FOR SELECTION

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ABSTRACT

Appraisal for selection is a vital archival function that demarcates knowledge of our past and influences our ability to form our future. Present archival theory, however, includes a profusion of conflicting and ambiguous criteria and terminology that correspond to the imprecise conceptualization of the appraisal issues involved. The central problem of appraisal is how to mitigate the distortion in the documentary heritage of society that is caused by the subjective process of apportioning value to records. This thesis evaluates international appraisal theory in western continental Europe, Britain, United States and Canada through a study of existing literature that explains appraisal ideas and discusses their practical application. It identifies areas of contradiction and generally accepted principles of appraisal. The study then builds on the strengths of international traditions of appraisal by focussing on three theoretically coherent principles that can guide appraisal for selection: the principle of impartiality, the principle of provenance, and the principle of contemporary value.
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INTRODUCTION

You and I by our involvement are either destroying or agreeing to the destruction of that very evidence which, in an almost Hippocratic oath sense, we are professionally bound to defend and preserve. That, without any question, is our first pitfall--a schizophrenic dilemma which we feel would not face us in an ideal world.

Felix Hull, 1980.1

Appraisal is a vital archival function in which records that have exhausted their usefulness are destroyed, and records of value are identified and preserved as the documentary heritage of society. Appraisal decisions demarcate our knowledge of our past and, therefore, influence our ability to form our future. In a very real way, archivists mediate society's knowledge of itself. In the light of this heavy burden, present appraisal practice sometimes appears to be inadequate. Some archivists, such as Felix Hull, go so far as to argue that appraisal poses an ethical problem to the archival community.

Since the mid-nineteenth century, archivists throughout the western world have struggled to come to terms with the modern explosion of recorded information in a proliferation of forms and media, which has exacerbated since World War I. Three factors complicate the issue of appraisal: the mass of records involved, the increased demand of the research community for access, and

the troublesome question of the relativity of value.

Examples of the exponential expansion of records can be seen in a 1976 statistical report which notes that the United States held 930,000 cubic metres of archives with an annual growth rate of 165,000 cubic metres, and France held 1,370,000 shelf metres with an annual growth rate of 51,000 metres.2 Many have traced the cause of the hypertrophy of records to the rapid expansion of government that now influences and documents many aspects of modern life, and to society's technological capability of copying documents with ease. Both trends have resulted in the proliferation of files that no longer are limited to recorded transactions, but also include copies of peripheral records and material that can be used for general information and reference. The pressure to destroy records in order to control the mass of information, while maintaining fiscal and legal responsibility, is on a collision course with an increasing pressure from researchers for broader public access to information. Appraisal literature regularly cites disturbed or outraged researchers who charge archivists with the irresponsible destruction of information. The problems posed by the quantity of records and public demands for access are, in essence, practical problems that need to be addressed through the development of public policy and careful management of resources.

Unlike the preceding practical issues, the notion of value

is central to the theoretical problem of appraisal. Value is a relative concept, rather than an absolute or permanent one. It is not inherent in records, but is relative to the perspective of the one ascribing value, whether it be the records creator, the researcher or the archivist. The intervention of the archivist into the formation of the documentary heritage of society, through the process of appraisal, creates a twofold danger in which the historical record could be distorted, and its archival and probative nature could be damaged or destroyed.

In response to the massive growth of modern records, the archival community has developed several methods for selecting records for permanent preservation. For the most part, archivists have attempted to identify values that they understand to be inherent in the records themselves. They have variously termed these values administrative value, financial value, legal value, historical value, research value, evidential value and informational value. To identify value, archivists have adapted principles governing archival arrangement to the appraisal function.

The principle of pertinence, now rejected as a method of arrangement, uses a content analysis of records to identify important subject areas dealt with. Appraisal decisions derived from content analysis are understood to be based on the interpretive methodology of historical study, because the importance of the subject can vary according to the interest and perspective of the creator, researcher or archivist. The
principle of pertinence is commonly understood to identify records containing informational value.

The principle of provenance, on the other hand, uses a structural analysis of records to identify the relationship that exists between the records and the records' creator. Structural analysis assumes that the content and organization of the records mirror the functions and activities of the creator. The principle of provenance is commonly understood to identify records containing evidential value. The principles of pertinence and provenance are generally used in conjunction with one another.

The modern explosion of recorded information has exposed traditional appraisal procedures as bereft of intellectual clarity. Archivists such as Helen Samuels question the ability of present archival practices to identify and preserve the documentary heritage of our society, and have sought to ameliorate the situation by advocating the development of coherent national plans.3 Such integrated planning, often referred to as documentation strategy, offers the benefit of consistency and rigour to the planning process. However, many of the procedures that are advocated in the application of documentation strategy reflect the conflicting and ambiguous criteria, practices and terminology that correspond to the

3 Helen Samuels, "Who Controls the Past," American Archivist 49 (Spring, 1986): 109-124. This article is Samuels' introductory analysis of the current theoretical and practical shortcomings of appraisal, and her proposed solution of documentation strategy.
imprecise conceptualization of the appraisal issues involved.

A study of the literature of appraisal reveals that there is little agreement even on elementary questions, such as: What is the purpose of appraisal? Who should appraise? When should records be appraised? What values are being appraised? How are those values identified? As one probes deeper, the intellectual problems become more complex. What is our documentary heritage and how can we identify it? What is the role of impartiality in the evaluation process? How can we impartially appraise records when the criteria of selection are inevitably derived from a subjective notion of value?

Given the importance of appraisal to archivists and to society, and the intellectual confusion that is apparent in much of the literature, the theory of appraisal requires reevaluation. Such a reevaluation will be attempted in this thesis by a study of existing literature that theoretically explains and practically applies appraisal ideas. The responsibility of democratic governments to be publicly accountable for their actions has resulted in well developed ideas and practice of appraisal among government archivists. For this reason, the analysis will focus on the theoretical framework that has been established for the appraisal of public records. However, there is no logical barrier to extending conclusions in an informal manner to the appraisal of private records as well.

In order to keep the following inquiry clearly focussed, three issues must be clarified. First, practical preservation
problems such as the availability of staff, equipment, storage and finances will not be dealt with. Although these factors are central to a repository's ability to preserve records, they are conceptually separate from the intellectual process by which records are selected for preservation. Given limited financial resources, an archivist may decide to override theoretical concerns by practical ones. But, mingling the two very different types of concerns further muddies the already murky waters.

Second, the thesis will focus only on appraisal for selection, and will not investigate appraisal for acquisition. Because of the breadth of the topic of appraisal, and the confusion and debate that exists within the archival community surrounding its basic concepts, this study will lay the groundwork for further study on the entire subject. Third, the meaning of the term value will be circumscribed. Because value is a relative term that is ascribed to records, the term will only be used when a perspective is involved, such as the perspective of an administrator, researcher or archivist. The term archival value is often used in appraisal literature to refer to the organic, authentic and impartial nature of records. In order to clarify the discussion, the use of the term in this sense will be avoided; for, the nature of archives is not relative to any perspective, but is inherent in the records themselves, and is logically derived from the creation process. It is the creation process within an administratively accountable context that results in the probative use of archival records for legal or
research purposes. Therefore, the terms archival nature and probative nature will be used when referring to this concept.

This study will attempt to identify generally accepted and theoretically coherent appraisal principles that can guide archivists in the appraisal process. It will be directed by the following research questions: What are the criteria that guide the appraisal process in the identification of permanent value? Can the archival principles of impartiality, contemporary value and provenance provide a conceptual framework in which appraisal decisions can be made?

Chapter one will analyze the perspectives of law and history on the probative nature of documentary evidence. Both disciplines use documents to reconstruct the past for their various purposes of judicial judgement and cultural interpretation. To reach their objectives, they require reliable, accurate records. The probative nature of records is directly related to the circumstantial guarantee of trustworthiness the creation process provides. The preservation of the probative nature of records must, therefore, be paramount in the archival implementation of the appraisal process.

Chapter two to four will analyze the writings of archival theorists in order to establish the general consensus on appraisal theory and procedures. This analysis will include a discussion of the notion of value and the role of the principle of provenance in the appraisal process. Its intent is to identify areas of coherence and contradiction within the general
theoretical framework. In this manner, the areas that need reevaluation will become apparent.

Chapter two focuses on traditions of appraisal in western, continental Europe. It will analyze the few available published quotations and translations of the writings of archival theorists, including Friedrich Meinecke, Hans Meissner, Marcel Baudot, Johannes Papritz, Elio Lodolini and Hans Booms. The discussion will concentrate on the theoretical division between content analysis and structural analysis in the identification of value. Several of these theorists also expose two important issues that require clarification if a coherent theory of appraisal is to be developed: the impartial perspective of the archivist, and the relativity of value.

Chapter three focuses on British traditions of appraisal as seen in the writings of Sir Hilary Jenkinson and Sir James Grigg. The discussion will analyze Jenkinson's theory of the nature of archives, and will relate it to Grigg's attempt to combine historical and administrative value in such a way as to preserve the archival and probative nature of archives.

Chapter four will focus on the North American traditions of appraisal as seen primarily in the writings of Philip Brooks and Theodore Schellenberg. Their influential concepts of evidential value and informational value reflect a practical strategy that equates use with value, and deflect the intellectual resolution of theoretical problems.

The conclusion will summarize accepted notions about the
theoretical foundation of the appraisal process. Then, it will attempt to build on the strengths of international traditions of appraisal by identifying three fundamental principles to guide appraisal for selection: the principle of impartiality, the principle of contemporary value, and the principle of provenance.
CHAPTER 1:
THE PROBATIVE NATURE OF DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Proof is a word often loosely used almost as a synonym for evidence. A more accurate use indicates the amount and quality of evidence which brings home conviction to the mind. When the result of evidence is assent to the proposition or event which is the subject-matter of inquiry, such proposition or event is said to be proved.

Sir Richard Eggleston, 1983.1

Archival documents created by individuals and organizations within the juridical system of a particular society provide evidence of the functions, activities and transactions of their creators. The study of such evidence is the primary method by which we gain an understanding of the immediate and historical past for both administrative and cultural purposes. The nature of documentary evidence is of prime importance and concern to law and history, which rule and explain the conduct of our society. Both disciplines recognize the central problem inherent in using documents to establish truth: the probative nature of documents is directly dependent on the reliability of the creation process. The preservation of the nature of archival documents must, therefore, remain a guiding principle of the appraisal process.

Given the importance of truth and self-knowledge to history and law, each discipline has developed a methodology that governs the use of documents. The methodology attempts to understand the nature of documentary evidence so as to circumvent its weaknesses and buttress its strengths. Because of their reliance on documents as evidence, it is not surprising that there are many similarities between the purpose and method of law and history. The similarities and variances between the two will be explored in order to understand better how each uses documentary evidence to establish truth. The resulting knowledge about the nature of documentary evidence should lay the groundwork necessary for an understanding of the archival function of appraisal.

The law constitutes the body of rules that is accepted by society, adjudicated by the courts, and enforced by the state. The body of rules governs the conduct of society in general, and resolves disputes in particular. Its prime purpose is to render judicial judgements in disputes or violations of the rights and duties of citizens, which are then implemented by and with the force of the state. In a concrete and powerful way, the broad purpose of the law defines and reflects the dominant ethos of the social, political and cultural features of a particular society.

Although the law has a distinctly contemporary perspective through its involvement in present events, it also integrates an historical perspective into judicial proceedings through the

2 The following discussion of the law reflects the common law tradition. It must be noted that many of its features are also codified in the civil law.
The hierarchical system of the common law tradition uses historical precedents to draw conclusions and pass judgements in the present. Such a practice assumes an important link between past and present that exists within the conservative tradition of the law, in which the courts attempt to provide stability to society through time. In this manner, a legal perspective has the dual function of tempering judicial judgement with the experience of the past, and of governing the conduct of society from the perspective of the present.

Judicial judgements are rarely based on certainty; rather, they are circumscribed by natural and logical limitations. The legal process attempts to identify the truth of a contentious issue in an imperfect setting. The court examines "the recollections of untrained observers, often emotionally affected by the events they are being asked to describe." To counteract these natural limitations, the courts rely on cross-examination.

3 Black's Law Dictionary, 6th ed., s.v. "Stare decisis." The concept of precedents is based on the doctrine of stare decisis, which is grounded on the theory that security and certainty require that accepted and established legal principles, under which rights may accrue, be recognized and followed. When a point of law has been settled by decision, it forms a precedent which cannot ordinarily be departed from. In unusual circumstances, a precedent can be set aside, when it is necessary to vindicate plain, obvious principles of law and remedy a continued injustice. Within Canadian federal and provincial jurisdictions, lower courts must abide by the judgements of higher courts and have a discretionary power of using precedents of collateral courts. All are bound by decisions of the Supreme Court.

4 Eggleston, Proof, 6.
testimony under oath and strict admissibility standards.

There are several other factors that place severe limitations on the legal establishment of proof. Rarely is the court in command of all relevant facts. Witnesses can be unavailable, refuse to become involved, or be unaware that they can assist. If they do participate, they, or their superiors, can intentionally censor their testimony. As well, lawyers can lack diligence and clients can lack alertness. The overriding limitation on the entire process is the essential imperfection of human recollection and the unintentional censorship imposed by the subconscious.5

Documentary evidence succumbs to most of these shortcomings, and is clearly susceptible to the intentional and unintentional censorship of records creators. Since documentary evidence cannot submit to the normal checks of oath-taking and cross-examination, the court must rely solely on rules delineating exceptions to hearsay and admissibility standards in its attempt to guarantee proof of facts.

The establishment of proof is rarely accomplished with certainty. Most often it is established by degrees of persuasion which bring conviction to the mind: "when the result of evidence is assent to the proposition or event which is the subject-matter of inquiry, such proposition or event is said to be proved."6

5 Ibid, 32-33.
6 Ibid, 6.
The courts thus enter the realm of probabilities and the apportioning of probative value. Because of the limitations surrounding the evidence of past events, the conclusion of the court "is much more likely to be a conclusion as to what probably happened than a conclusion as to what actually did happen."7

Courts, therefore, must rely on degrees of persuasion, on "somebody's evaluation of the likelihood of a future event happening, or of a past event having happened."8 The determination of degrees of probabilities, which range from certainty to improbability, is dependent on the concept of the "reasonable" person. Its central failing is that reason cannot be precisely or consistently identified or evaluated within the context of probabilities. In this manner, the identification of subjective probabilities becomes inexorably tied to the seemingly contradictory notion of subjective reason.

As several judgements demonstrate, "reasonableness" is rarely self-evident, particularly within the framework of the more stringent requirements of criminal law for proof beyond a reasonable doubt. The concept of a rational conclusion in the context of a court setting is a fluid one because the jury sets the logical parameters in which reason is established:

A rational conclusion and a rational explanation cannot be equated in the administration of the criminal law with a reasonable conclusion and a reasonable explanation. The jury set for themselves the

7 Eggleston, Proof, 33.
8 Ibid, 10.
perimeters of what is, in these contexts, reasonable.9

An earlier attempt to define reasonableness in the courts argued that

If the evidence is so strong against a man as to leave only a remote possibility in his favour, which can be dismissed with the sentence "of course it is possible, but not in the least probable," the case is proved beyond reasonable doubt, but nothing short of that will suffice.10

The standard of proof for civil law cases is based, not on satisfaction beyond a reasonable doubt, but on a balance of probabilities. One judgement attempted to explain it by arguing that if, "the evidence is such that the tribunal can say 'we think it more probable than not' the burden is discharged, but if the probabilities are equal, it is not."11 Another judgement stated that if "the evidence shows a balance in favour of it having happened then it is proved that it did in fact happen."12

In contrast to the purpose of the law, which participates directly in society, the writing of history is a cultural act of interpretation that stands apart from the political power structure of society. The historical perspective is inherently expansive and retrospective. History is written, not to govern


11 Ibid; quoted in Eggleston, Proof, 132.

the conduct of society, but to explain its meaning. It relates past events to the social, political and cultural context in which those events existed in order to provide meaning to the members of present day society. Its focus can be on the dominant ethos of society, or the powerless fringe. In either case, the responsibility of the historian's emphasis on context results in an explicit attempt to relate the event studied to issues in the broader society.

During the nineteenth century, the increasingly accepted standard for the writing of history was the German model of a rigorously objective scientific study, which intended to produce an accurate representation of the past events of the world. Reflecting the positivist attitudes of the confident age of progress, history was written during this time in an attempt to identify large scale laws of nature that could be applied to society. Historians in the first half of the twentieth century responded to resulting charges of historicism by retreating from grand purposes to understand and influence society. Instead, history was seen to have no relevance to modern society, and was studied in its own terms and for its own sake.

The modern understanding of the purpose of history writing has been transformed with the rise of our awareness of the subjective interaction between the observer and the observed, which renders the entire process value-charged.13 The logic of

13 Classic discussions of the value-laden process of history writing can be found in the following publications: E.H. Carr, What is History? (New York: Vintage Books, 1961); Robin G.
relativity has rendered the meaning of humanist inquiry to be an essentially subjective study of human society in which the inquirer is relative to the subject being studied:

The subjective elements of all the knowers, makers and players with cultural forms, as well as his own subjective aspects as knower, are forever entwined with his knowledge. . . . All his subjects are time bound and culture bound and so is his own consciousness as knower.14

The modern understanding of the role of subjectivity in historical inquiry "has marked the turning of the tide away from the positivist view of the historian as the detached observer treating historical events as the scientist observed the operations of nature."15

Most modern historians would agree that the purpose of history is not to render present judgement on the past, but to provide society with a coherent memory that has the potential to contribute to the development of future action. Such a purpose acknowledges the dynamic interaction between past events and present understanding. The attempt to interpret the meaning of past experience in the light of present knowledge "is subtly and unpredictably coloured by the milieu in which the historian


lives. Because the present inescapably provides the vantage point from which the past is viewed, some have argued that history "consists essentially in seeing the past through the eyes of the present and in the light of its problems." For this reason, history can be understood to be "a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past."

The historical perspective offers a unique vantage point of knowing the result of an event, which is not apparent to the participants. Our understanding of the past is formed by the known results of that event. The starting point for any analysis is the discrepancy between what people believed they were doing and what they actually did. The dual aim of the historian is to derive the meaning the event had for the participants, and then derive the meaning the event has for posterity in light of the outcome. The essence of historical thinking does not exclusively belong to the historian's craft, but is also part of the realm of everyday experience:

It is only by historical thinking that I can

16 Carl Berger, The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English-Canadian Historical Writing Since 1900, 2nd ed., (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), ix. Berger's entire book demonstrates how the writing of history is, itself, an historical act, for it inevitably reflects the cultural and intellectual context in which it is written.


18 Ibid, 35.

19 Leff, History, 50-51.
discover what I thought ten years ago, by reading what I then wrote, or what I thought five minutes ago, by reflecting on an action that I then did, which surprised me when I realized what I had done. In this sense, all knowledge of mind is historical. . . . All these inquiries are historical. They proceed by studying accomplished facts, ideas that I have thought out and expressed, acts that I have done. On what I have only begun and am still doing, no judgement can as yet be passed.20

In this manner, the historical perspective informs and enriches every aspect of knowledge and human society.

Both law and history rely on a mental reconstruction of the past for their various purposes of judgement and interpretation. Such a reconstruction is unlike a scientific experiment. Because past events cannot be repeatedly experienced and observed, the past is essentially unverifiable and can be discovered only inferentially. For the most part, both disciplines must rely on logical probabilities rather than certainty to fulfil their purposes. In both cases, certainty is circumscribed by natural and logical limitations inherent in the process of mentally reconstructing human activity.

In order to control the inherent limitations of documentary evidence, law and history have developed similar means to evaluate it and ensure its reliability. Both attempt to provide an objective evaluation of sources from which logical conclusions can be drawn. Because of the exacting social consequences that result from the implementation of the judicial process, the

judiciary has developed a complex system of common and positive law to guide the process. History, on the other hand, is developed in an informal way, with a less rigorously defined setting, more subtle social consequences, and, because of the destruction or loss of records inevitable with the passage of time, less available evidence. Because of these factors, its standard of proof is rarely higher than a balance of probabilities. In order to establish historical proof, however, history has the same need for accurate and authentic evidence as the law. For this reason, the standards set by the legal profession can be flexibly applied to historical inquiry as well. Primarily, legal rules provide exceptions to the use of hearsay evidence, and delineate an acceptable authentication process of evidence by establishing admissibility criteria. While the rules primarily apply to government and business records, the various Canadian evidence acts have defined the concept of business so broadly that it includes all forms of organized activity. By extension, then, the rules also apply to private records as well.

The common law has established that hearsay evidence is inadmissible because it fails to guarantee accuracy of facts. It does not proceed from personal knowledge of the witness, but from repetition of what the witness has heard from others. The value of hearsay evidence thus derives, not from the credibility of the witness, but from the veracity and competence of other people. Such testimony inhibits the establishment of truth because of the court's
inability to observe the demeanour, credibility, and personality of the declarant whose statement is in issue, the inability to qualify, clarify or cast doubt upon the statement by cross-examination, and the fact that ordinarily the declaration, unlike the rest of the evidence before the court, will not have been given under oath.21

Documents are categorized by the courts as hearsay because "they can only 'tell' the court that which someone else 'told' them."22 Documents, therefore, "inevitably make in-court assertions about statements made by someone else outside of the courtroom."23 Because such evidence is indirect, it is unable to comply with two essential features of the judicial system that ensure accuracy of evidence: cross-examination and witnessing under oath.

The primary exception of documents to the hearsay rule is provided by a circumstantial guarantee of trustworthiness in the creation process:

a court can feel relatively comfortable in breaking new ground if it has been satisfied that the circumstances of the document's creation provide an adequate substitute for the traditional safeguard of cross-examination. The proponent of a document should seek to persuade the court that the document, because of the circumstances of its


23 Ewart, Evidence, 12.
creation, is inherently reliable. 24
If counsel can show that the creation and custody of a document are trustworthy, then cross-examination becomes superfluous.25

The probative nature of documents is directly linked to and limited by notions of authenticity. An authentic document is one that is duly vested with all necessary formalities, and is legally attested. These formal attributes allow the evidence to be considered by the court as competent, credible and reliable.26

The definition implicitly acknowledges the reliability of form and legal attestation that is guaranteed by accountable procedures.

The process of authentication is one in which an attestation is made by a duly appointed official who certifies that a record is in due form of law. When the court is satisfied that the document is authentic, it draws a logical conclusion that the document in question is, in fact, what it purports to be.27 The court thus relies on the reliability of an organization's internal procedures of creation, receipt and control of documents.

Proper custody is intrinsic to the probative nature of authentic documents because it contributes to the procedural guarantee of authenticity. The keeping, guarding, preservation

24 Ibid, 14.
26 Black's, s.v. "Authentic."
27 Ibid, s.v. "Authentication."
and security of a document carries with it the idea of the
document being within the immediate personal care and control of
the person to whose custody it is subjected. Custody is thus
linked to authenticity. That is, proper custody guarantees the
security and preservation of the original integrity of the
document, and implies its genuineness.

The "Canada Evidence Act", which governs all judicial
proceedings that enforce rights created by federal statutes,
establishes a direct link between the probative value of records,
and the authentication process and proper custody of the
records. The main principles of the act can be seen in its
admissibility rules for public, government, and business records.
In each case, as the circumstantial guarantee of trustworthiness
decreases, the stringency of admissibility rules increases.

Public records are generally understood to be those records
which a government unit is required by law to keep to discharge
duties established by law. The aborted "Uniform Evidence Act"
defined public records in precise diplomatic terms: "'public
records' means any Act, ordinance, regulation, order in council,
proclamation, official gazette, journal, treaty or other record
issued by or under duly constituted legislative or executive

28 Ibid, s.v. "Custody."

29 Revised Statutes of Canada, "Canada Evidence Act," 1985,
c. C-5. The same principles can be found in the provincial
evidence acts as well.

30 Black's, s.v. "Public record."
authority."31 Public records can thus be understood to be probative and dispositive documents that are officially issued or received by the government to guarantee the rights and obligations of Canadian citizens.32

Because of the guarantees of authenticity inherent in the procedures of issuance, these documents constitute the highest level of admissible documentary evidence. In each case, the language delineating their acceptance is clear. The production of the published document is accepted as evidence of the truthfulness of its contents. The wording of the section regarding Acts of Parliaments is an example: "every copy purporting to be printed by the Queen's Printer shall be deemed to be so printed, unless the contrary is shown."33

In contrast to public records, the Canadian act establishes a higher degree of control over admissibility of government records that are not officially issued or received. They include records produced in the usual and ordinary course of business by any government, department, ministry, branch, board, commission

31 The "Uniform Evidence Act" was a bill that was submitted to Parliament in the early 1980s, but never passed into law. While it is not part of the statutory law of Canada, it does represent a codification of existing expert opinion on evidence issues in Canada. The definition does not contradict in any way the one that is assumed in the sections regulating public records in the Canada Evidence Act (s. 19-25). Reproduced in Ewart, Evidence, 321.

32 This precise definition of public records is in accordance with the "Canada Evidence Act". Elsewhere in this thesis the term is used in its broadest sense, as defined in the Glossary.

33 "Canada Evidence Act," s. 19.
or agency performing a function of government. Because their creation and custody is less stringently controlled than public records, there are three conditions attached to their admissibility. First, the 'book' in which the entry was made must have been one of the ordinary books kept in the creating office. Second, the entry in question must have been made in the usual and ordinary course of business. Third, the copy must be authentic. Proof of the existence of these three conditions must be established by oath or affidavit of an officer of the creating office. The acceptance of these conditions for the admissibility of documentary evidence assumes that the ordinary control of procedures and forms required in the normal transactions of the business of government is sufficient to guarantee the reliability of the resulting documents. Authenticity is guaranteed by proof of the proper custody of records.

Business records have the most extensive regulations governing their admissibility because they are outside the control of government procedures that help to ensure a high degree of accountability to the public. The term 'record' as defined by the evidence act indicates Parliament's intention to allow for broad admissibility of evidence. It includes "the

34 Derived from definitions of "business" and "business record" in the "Uniform Evidence Act" s. 152; reprinted in Ewart, Evidence, 322-323. This definition is also assumed in the regulations governing government records in s. 26 of the Canada Evidence Act.

35 "Canada Evidence Act", s. 26 (1).
whole or any part of any book, document, paper, card, tape or other thing on or in which information is written, recorded, stored or reproduced."36

The law establishes only one requirement for admissibility, that the evidence be a record "made in the usual and ordinary course of business."37 The term 'business,' as defined in the act, is so broad that it logically includes all organized activity: it "means any business, profession, trade, calling, manufacture or undertaking of any kind carried on in Canada or elsewhere whether for profit or otherwise..."38 The act liberalizes common law understanding of procedural guarantees of reliability in an attempt to recognize the complexity of modern record-keeping methods.

The act offers a balance to the liberalized admissibility criteria by providing the means of excluding or minimizing the evidentiary weight of a particular document under discussion in court. Under its provisions, the court may determine the probative nature of a particular document by considering "evidence as to the circumstances in which the information contained in the record was written, recorded, stored or reproduced..."39 In each case, the degree of trustworthiness of the record must be established. Arguing from subsection 6,

36 Ibid, s. 30 (12).
37 Ibid, s. 30 (1).
38 Ibid, s. 30 (12).
39 Ibid, s. 30 (6).
computer records could be admissible if reliability of creation and maintenance was established. As well, expert testimony can be included to explain the form of electronic records if accompanied by a sworn affidavit, or if submitted to cross-examination.40

The "Canada Evidence Act" establishes two principles that are used by the courts to identify a circumstantial guarantee of trustworthiness in the creation process of documents: records must be created systematically in the ordinary course of business, and must be kept in the custody of the officially appointed custodian to be considered reliable. Records with these requisites are an authentic and reliable source that can be considered by the courts, and from which historical accuracy can be assessed. It is evident that these same kinds of guarantees can offer informal guidance in their application to the pursuit of historical meaning.

The probative nature of documentary evidence is directly related to the circumstantial guarantee of trustworthiness the creation process provides. Thus, the nature of documentary evidence is derived from the creation process in which authentication and custody are granted or denied. These procedural guarantees of reliability permit archival documents to be used to establish degrees of logical probabilities. The logical requirements for proof parallel classical archival theory regarding the inherent characteristics of archives. Archives

40 Ibid, s. 30 (4) and (9).
consist of all documentary records made or received by a body in the course of its practical activities, and preserved as evidence of its mandate, functions and activities. Archival documents provide evidence of their creator because they are interrelated as to meaning, authentic as to procedure, and impartial as to creation. From this guarantee of reliability, intentions and actions can be compared, the accuracy of the evidence can be determined, and its historical meaning can be derived.

Because documents are inherently unreliable and prone to charges of hearsay, the most pressing need for all interpretive uses of archival documents is the preservation of the probative nature of documentary evidence from the genesis of records to their permanent preservation. Appraisal literature must be reviewed in order to establish whether or not the theoretical framework of appraisal adequately provides for the research requirement of the preservation of the probative value of documentary evidence.
CHAPTER 2:
EUROPEAN TRADITIONS OF APPRAISAL

It might seem plausible . . . that it is not only more meaningful, but actually essential, to view the activity of the archivist in relationship to the societal order, since it seems clear that there exists an indissoluble connection between values held by society and those held by the individual.

Hans Booms, 1972.1

Modern traditions of appraisal in western continental Europe had an explosive beginning during the period of the French Revolution, and have slowly evolved to the present day. Appraisal has been increasingly driven by the proliferation of records in the burgeoning information age. European archivists have grappled with the problems of appraisal in the context of the selection of public records by government repositories with clearly defined mandates of responsibility for records produced within carefully demarcated territorial jurisdictions. For the most part, the current practice of appraisal is limited to weeding duplicate documents or ephemera, and to sampling particular instance and case files.

In spite of the common practice of and evident need for appraisal, conflict permeates theoretical discussions of the

issue. German archivists have been the primary participants in the theoretical debate, but several French and Italian theorists have also contributed. The most fundamental conflict is about the validity of the practice, and the question of whether appraisal destroys the inherent organic integrity of a fonds. Some call for the development of theory to guide the process, while others argue that there are no theoretical grounds for any destruction of records.

Another area of conflict is the methodology used to appraise. Two basic approaches have been developed, derived from accepted principles of arrangement: the principle of pertinence, which assigns value on the basis of a content analysis of the records; and the principle of provenance, which assigns value on the basis of a structural analysis of the organization and functions of the records creator. Both approaches have been under the constant scrutiny of the archival profession, and the validity of each has garnered both challenge and support. Most archivists advocate a hybrid of the two approaches, with particular emphasis on one, but there has been no authoritative resolution of the debate. Throughout appraisal literature there often appears to be a general confluence of apparently conflicting ideas, none exclusive to any time period. Since the mid-twentieth century, the literature includes a growing awareness of the need for an objective framework to guide and control the subjective process of apportioning value to records. As well, there has been a shift from discarding 'useless'
In order to understand the origins of appraisal, the following discussion will begin with the French Revolution, with brief references to practices preceding and following it. It will then focus on twentieth century attempts to identify criteria for the selection of records judged to have permanent value through the formulation of the methodologies of content and structural analysis. The purpose of the discussion will be to establish whether or not the two approaches are mutually exclusive or complementary. As well, each methodology will be evaluated with regard to its ability to preserve the archival and probative nature of records for administrative, legal and historical research use.

From our knowledge of medieval times, it is clear that some sort of appraisal did exist prior to the French Revolution, and records were destroyed within an administrative context. For example, in the twelfth century, the creation of papal registries subsumed the appraisal function by limiting the accumulation of records held in registries to those that documented precedents typical of each organizational activity. Later, with the rise of democratic Italian city states in the thirteenth century, the destruction of records was circumscribed by the states' commitment to the principle of citizens' right to obtain
information.2 It is, however, the French Revolution that ushered in the modern concept of appraisal.

Ernst Posner has argued that the main currents underlying the archival development of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are derived from the democratic forces that were unleashed in France with the revolution. The developments are a reflection of the government’s acknowledgement of its democratic accountability to its citizens. The currents include the establishment of a national public archives administration, an acknowledgement of government responsibility to care for the documentary heritage of the past, and the government’s commitment to the principle of public accessibility.3 The forces of centralization of control and state responsibility for archives seem to have introduced the modern practice of appraisal, which in turn propelled a theoretical discussion about methodology and justification that is still with us today.

On June 25, 1794 (7 Messidor II), the Agence temporaire des titres was founded to appraise pre-revolutionary records. Appraisal was done by segregating the records into four broad subject categories that were defined by the state: useful, historical, feudal titles and useless. Useful papers, which established the right of the state to confiscate property, were


preserved in the newly created Archives nationales. Historical papers were transferred to the National Library for research use, and feudal titles and useless papers were destroyed. The criterion for appraisal was usefulness to the political interests of the state, not only for carrying out its practical activities, but also for controlling future political events and historical understanding. Early appraisal practices were, thus, explicitly directed by political ideology. Selection was accomplished in the midst of revolutionary fervour to guarantee the permanent demise of illegitimate privilege, without regard for the probative nature of the records. On October 26, 1796 (5 Brumaire V), reason prevailed with the founding of the Bureau du triage des titres to reassess the thinking that had allowed the mass destruction of feudal titles. The reassessment was the first hint of an awareness of the central problem that has plagued appraisal ever since: how to control and limit the subjectivity inherent in the concept of value. The destruction of feudal titles is an example of the worst abuse of such subjectivity.

In the early nineteenth century, the Napoleonic wars and the resulting rise of nationalism swept through Europe. Concomitant with these events was the rise of historical study as a source of encouragement to nations in the midst of the devastation of conquest and war. The result was a growing comprehension of the


5 Posner, Archives, 26.
importance of historical value as an appraisal criterion. With the entry of historical scholars into the archival profession, the methodology of appraisal was the identification of historical value through a primarily intuitive analysis of the content of records, coupled with a consideration of the needs of future historical researchers.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the concept of historical use as an arbiter of value was firmly entrenched in the appraisal process in France. In 1839, the government established an advisory commission to the minister for the determination of the usefulness of documents. In later years, the commission included archivists, administrators and historians. In 1844, the concept of usefulness as an appraisal criterion was tied directly to administrative and research interest. Permanent value was identified by the administrative interest of the state, departments, communes, churches or charitable institutions; or by the research interest of the disciplines of history, science, art, paleography, topography or statistics. All records relating to these interests were to be indefinitely preserved. 6

In 1921, in response to concerns of indiscriminate destruction of valuable records, the French government established rigid regulations that decreed that the greater part of public records would be preserved, and elimination would be

considered exceptional. In this manner, the government affirmed its commitment to historical value and promoted the concept that the basic import of appraisal was to be preservation.

During the same period in Germany, the approach of archivists to appraisal reflected their understanding of historical study. Such study focused on an empirical analysis of documentary sources, and was combined with practical experience and intuitive insights that resulted in knowledge and understanding of society and past events. Theoretical constructions were seen to intrude upon the authenticity and clarity of analysis and understanding provided by the historical perspective. For this reason, there was an inherent tension between theory and practice that naturally affected appraisal decisions. Many archivists intuitively related the concept of permanent value to records that were pertinent to historical research. Historical value was thus linked directly to present and potential research use, and was identified by content analysis of the sources. In effect, the implicit guiding standard of appraisal was the principle of pertinence.

This traditional approach to appraisal was publicly supported at the Second German Archives Congress held in Dresden in 1900. At the conference, Friedrich Meinecke argued that historian-archivists possessed a "feeling for historical life" through education and experience that equipped them with an

intuitive ability to appraise records for historical value.8 A year later, Waldemar Lippert supported Meinecke's position by arguing that the "historical expertise" acquired in the course of the practical experience of records disposal qualified archivists to appraise archives.9 In Lippert's intuitive approach to appraising value, "theory is worthless or inferior--only actual practice is decisive."10

The intuitive approach to appraisal was soon challenged by the widespread acceptance of the principle of provenance, notwithstanding the fact that many continued to support the primacy of content analysis throughout the twentieth century. By 1957, structural analysis dominated appraisal methodology in Germany. In this year, at the 35th German Archival Conference in Koblenz, Fritz Zimmerman rejected this prevalent trend, and supported the older tradition of content analysis. He understood the problem of subjectivity inherent in this approach, and attempted to address the problem by providing an objective standard to control the concept of value.

Without clearly explaining why, Zimmerman argues that an understanding of administrative functions and activities did not provide an impartial criterion for identifying value. Instead, he claims that objectivity could be established by comparing the

8 Booms, "Society," 84.

9 Booms, "Society," 84.


36
informational content of records to the needs and values of society: "The value of a document depends upon the principle of whether it possesses an enduring significance for us." The archivist determines value by asking which "significant areas of life within the pertinent records will continue to provide answers to future inquiries." Zimmerman concludes that the principle of provenance is not the key determinant of value, because it serves only the interests of traditional political and military history. Instead of using structural analysis to identify value, documents should be judged according to the importance of the information they carry. As Klumpenhouwer notes, Zimmerman shifted the source for determining archival value away from the relatively formal and stable environment of administrative structures towards the complex and ever-changing forum of societal activity in general, with the research community serving as a kind of interpreter.

Zimmerman’s attempt to provide an objective standard is a futile one. By using fluctuating research interest to identify permanent value, he creates a paradigm of relativity in which


13 Klumpenhouwer, "Value," 141.

14 Ibid, 142.
objectivity is irrelevant.

Content analysis as an appraisal tool continues to be advocated in the contemporary appraisal literature of other European countries, although German attempts to provide an objective framework are notably absent from the discussion. Its guiding principle is the preservation of records judged to be valuable according to the standard of the needs of future researchers. Within this tradition, a typical example of the kind of guidance that is offered by one archivist to another is to proceed in a responsible and imaginative manner.15 In France, Marcel Baudot rightly argues that "Archivists must not lose sight of their duty to preserve the largest possible documentary record of contemporary society, which in the future will become the source of historical research."16 The danger of such thinking, however, resides in making future research needs the primary focus of appraisal.

Baudot explains that historical value reveals itself in the light of knowledge about the administrative structure in which it was created, and in comparison to gaps in knowledge provided by the repository's holdings, and gaps of knowledge about the political, economic and social character of the regional jurisdiction of the repository.17 While such analysis includes

an understanding of social and administrative structure and context, its focus remains on the archivist's instinctive recognition of the historical value of the records.

Booms' critique of the use of the principle of pertinence notes the futility of archivists predicting future research use or interest:

But their efforts to form the archival documentary heritage of the present from evidence of the past using value standards of the future necessarily ended in speculation, especially since the basic conditions of human existence fog our perception of the future.18

Many would agree that the prediction of future research interest is difficult, if not impossible and futile. Historical value is not intrinsic to records, but is an attribute that is ascribed subjectively to them by someone from a distinct perspective within a particular historical context. Because content analysis is subject oriented, Booms links it to the principle of pertinence that dominated the practice of archival arrangement until the turn of the twentieth century. He notes that content analysis exposed the subjective relativity of the concept of value. When using this approach, "archivists were abruptly and threateningly confronted with a staggering variety of individual subjects, all of which lacked any prescribed value priority."19

The argument that the identification of historical value is an invalid criterion upon which appraisal decisions can be made


is supported by the many examples of records that have been destroyed by one generation of archivists and mourned by another because of changing research trends. One example can be found in the 1840 instance in which the Belgian Archivist-General ordered all sixteenth century commercial records of the Antwerp merchants destroyed as historically valueless.20 None could predict, at that time, the development of economic history in which such records could provide extensive knowledge about the relationship between commercial activity and the broader development of society.

With the widespread international acceptance of the principle of provenance as the theoretical basis of archival arrangement practices, the concept of structural analysis as a means to guide appraisal entered the discussion. If meaning is derived from context, then an understanding of the administrative structure of a records creator should be able to guide, not only arrangement, but also appraisal. To many German archivists, the destruction of copies of originals or transitory records in a registry was acceptable practice because they were regarded as extraneous to understanding context or structure: "the process gives a registry vitality, making apparent its essential characteristics--its arrangement and content--and making it more usable."21 During this same time period, British archivists were


21 Schellenberg, Modern, 135.
developing the theoretical framework that would identify and explain how the impartiality and authenticity of archives constitute the nature of archives.

In 1939, Hans O. Meissner, former head of the Prussian Privy State Archives re-issued and developed the systematic appraisal standards formulated in 1901 by Georg Hille.22 In the standards, Meissner insisted that "the old conception of appraisal as a matter of intuitive or fingertip feeling was completely discredited."23 But his own standards could not shake completely intuitive analysis. Archivists, he argues, should use three independent criteria for identifying valuable records: age, contents and function.

Meissner's primary contribution to the theory and practice of appraisal was the use of structural analysis. From a study of provenance, administrative and judicial records that documented the actual activities and functions of the creating unit within its administrative hierarchy were to be preserved. Without explaining why, he identified these records as having permanent value. Meissner, however, seemed to think that structural analysis was not sufficient to identify value. He combined it with the study of subject content by identifying as valuable documents that record substantial matters that affected property rights, notable persons, typical administrative processes and typical rights. He also advocated the preservation of records

22 Klumpenhouver, "Value," 52.

23 Schellenberg, Modern, 137.
that documented important historical episodes, or customs and mores of past ages. While Meissner's approach attempts to identify all possible subject areas of interest to future historical research, the identification of "important" historical episodes cannot help but reflect the particular interests that dominated historical study in Meissner's time. Even while attempting to provide for future research needs, it was inevitable that such an approach would fail.

In 1940, Hermann Meinert participated in a special commission to formulate appraisal standards for the Prussian Privy State Archives. Meinert endorsed Meissner's standards, especially the evaluation of the administrative source of the records. He argued that the significance of a records creator to an administrative hierarchy can be determined through an analysis of "the position of each administrative unit in the government structure, the nature of its activities, and the relations of its activities to those of superior and subordinate administrative units." In this manner, Meinert first articulated the now well accepted theory that records must be appraised in their administrative context. The theory was later supported and expanded until it became the foundation for the methodology of appraisal.

Meinert accepted the importance of evaluating the subject content of records. He also sought an objective

24 Schellenberg, Modern, 135-137.
25 Schellenberg, Modern, 137.
standard, for he thought that the value of the content could only be identified if it was measured according to fixed standards. He thought he could find those standards in the theoretical social structures of people, state and culture. Booms attributed to Meinert the role of engineering "a virtual Copernican revolution in archival appraisal" for he "shifted the emphasis away from the negative results of appraisal, from the destruction of the valueless, to the positive goal, to the selection of the permanently valuable." By 1956, however, Meinert concluded that it was not logically possible to develop a definitive and satisfying theory for the positive identification of value in records. Instead, he resigned himself to traditional forms of intuitive analysis in which "the archivist must be an historian" and "a good archivist must be something of an artist," equipped with "experience, practice, passion and an intuitive confidence."  

Not everyone accepted Meinert's intellectual resignation to the difficulties in providing an objective standard for the appraisal process. In 1957, at the previously mentioned 35th German Archives Conference in Koblenz, Georg Wilhelm Sante and Wilhelm Rohr promoted the selection of permanently valuable

26 Brenneke, Archivistica, 42; also in Booms, "Society," 93.


records through a structural analysis of the creating unit.

Sante suggested that archivists choose

only those agencies of greater significance which form the supporting framework of the administration, so to speak, and not just the mere stuffing, and which set themselves apart by their creative activity. Only such agencies are valuable for archival purposes and shall be called upon to submit their records.29

Sante adds that the process of appraisal must begin with a functional analysis of an organization, and then logically proceed to an assessment of the significance of the function of an agency, or an administrative division within an agency.30 Rohr attempts to construct a more exact measure by imposing a hierarchical standard of value on an administrative structure. He cites a central state archives as an example, in which the most valuable records would be

those of the constitutional bodies at the highest levels of government . . . , then the office of foreign affairs, for which of course all documents that do not relate to higher politics would have to be severely extracted from the whole. Next follow, through a number of stages of declining importance, the registries of the other ministries, and within these, the central of ministerial offices are the most important. . . . Subordinate agencies . . . will usually not survive the filter of selection.31


30 Ibid, 95.

Sante also argued that archival institutions must expand their acquisition strategies to preserve, not only government records, but also records of important private institutions. For, it could no longer be asserted that the records of state institutions are sufficient to document society as a whole.32

Booms categorically rejects the "Sante-Rohr Model" of appraisal for failing to produce a positive value selection of records. He concludes that confidence in a rigid, formal structural analysis derives from an implicit and "excessively" ideological assumption of the ultimate value of the public realm over the private:

The idea that organizational activity is inherently of archival value was anchored in prevailing societal opinion; even up to the 1950s, it continued to reflect the excessive ideological significance which was attached to the institutional or formal public realm at the expense of the informal, and the degree to which the state, as only a part of society, has traditionally been absolutized.33

Booms' rejection of structural analysis as merely ideological is not convincing. His argument seems to have less to do with appraisal than with his desire to promote the acquisition of private records by public institutions. Undoubtedly influenced by the _Annales_ school of historiography, his goal is to preserve a record that will provide an understanding of the totality of public and private past experience. However valuable his goal

33 Booms, "Society," 90.
is, the political issue of extent and mix of public and private records within a repository is better dealt with by developing a acceptable acquisition policies, rather than clouding the already murky picture of appraisal.

In 1964, Johannes Papritz echoed earlier attempts to develop objective standards. Scientific principles should guide appraisal and culling, he argued, and knowledge of the structural form of the record body would serve as a precondition to such scientific appraisal. He went on to insist that appraisal must "never be made dependent upon the availability of existing space in the repository." His words imply that, in his assessment, appraisal is a theoretical problem that requires an intellectual resolution. Practical problems are extraneous to the central issue of deciding how archivists choose for society which records should be saved and which can be destroyed.

Papritz, thus, attempts to revitalize the principle of provenance for the appraisal process. The principle is derived from the understanding that the records of an organization are arranged together because the record body, by creation and meaning, constitutes a logical unit in which each document exists in relationship to the entire body of records. Papritz argues that an understanding of the structural form of a fonds, which


mirrors the creating administrative unit, can provide an impartial standard for the appraisal of value of its constituent parts.

Booms dismisses the validity of Papritz’s approach by arguing that, logically, there is no "direct path leading from Papritz’s theories about the structural form of the record body to a 'theory of archival value' (Papritz)."36 Klumpenhouwer also rejects Papritz’s theory by arguing that he "could offer only a methodology for studying the form and structure of records with the implication that selection criteria would naturally flow from this process."37 But, neither critique offers valid reasoning to convince readers that value cannot logically flow from the structural form of the record body. On the contrary, our knowledge of the probative nature of archives, which resides in the process of creation within an accountable structure, clearly identifies a direct link between structure and value that is relied upon by the judicial system and the research community.

In Italy, Elio Lodolini’s approach to appraisal confronts the logic of Papritz’s attempts to develop a theoretical framework for appraisal. While Papritz calls for the development of scientific theory, Lodolini expunges any logical justification of the practice. Because the destruction of part of a fonds damages the archival bond that exists between all of the documents, he concludes that there is no theoretical grounds for

36 Booms, "Society," 94.
37 Klumpenhouwer, "Concepts," 143.
appraisal. But, instead of rejecting the practice, Lodolini accepts the inevitable and notes that, if appraisal must be done, the criteria used are necessarily empirical rather than theoretical. The empirical criteria include preservation of old documents, the elimination of whole series rather than individual documents, and preservation on basis of provenance, rather than pertinence. Lodolini's emphasis on maintaining the integrity of series, and the importance of structural analysis reflects his theoretical understanding of the organic nature of archives in which meaning is rooted in context. He then adds that if ninety-nine per cent of records are destroyed, as in the United States, damage cannot be avoided.

Lodolini offers hollow comfort to those attempting to construct an objective theoretical framework that will allow archivists to escape from the subjective limitations inherent in content analysis. If there are no theoretical grounds for appraisal, and yet records must be destroyed, archivists become caught in an intolerable quandary in which they are forced to participate in the destruction of meaning. Lodolini acknowledges that understanding the structural context and preserving the integrity of series provide standards of appraisal that can limit damage to a fonds. Such reasoning indicates that, in spite of protestations to the contrary, he is arguing from a theoretical


39 Ibid, 216.
standpoint, and is not simply presenting 'empirical' criteria for the sake of expedience.

Hans Booms stands apart from his contemporaries with his rigorous exploration of the intellectual weaknesses of the principles of pertinence and provenance when used as appraisal methodologies. In 1971, at the German Archives Conference, Booms advocated the principle of contemporary value as a definitive and objective standard of appraisal. His argument shifts the focus of Zimmerman's analysis from the significance records have to the appraising society, to their significance to the creating society. Noting that a state of absolute objectivity is an impossible goal, Booms' methodology is an attempt to "help archivists to distance themselves from their subjectivity to the greatest possible extent."40 He intended his model to provide "a concrete orienting principle for ascribing value through an appraisal process of positive value selection."41

The principle of contemporary value identifies value from the perspective of the creating society. Because the concept of value is not imposed on the records, Booms' principle has the ability to provide an objective point of reference that can resolve the tautological dilemma of appraising value in content analysis. Booms argues that "only the society from which the material originated and for whose sake it is to be preserved can


41 Ibid.
provide archivists with the necessary tools to assess the conceptions by which they bring the past into the present." 42 Public opinion from a particular historical era expresses the dominant political culture of society, and provides a fixed point of reference from which value decisions can be made: "Such a constant can only be derived from socio-political values that were dominant at the time the documentary material was created and actively used." 43

Booms also advocated the formation of documentation plans to be developed by subject category or historical phenomenon, within specific time periods, as they relate to a particular repository's sphere of responsibility. An advisory council could analyze contemporary opinion, and develop an historical grid of significant events that occurred in the broader contemporary society of the records' creator. From this analysis, archivists could "distill in concrete form the significant points from the total political and social events which occurred within the specific archival jurisdiction." 44 In this manner, the historical model could identify the essential events, actions, omissions, and developments that are characteristic of the time and subject under consideration.

After the significant events were identified, archivists could then proceed to construct a scale of significance of the

42 Ibid, 104.
43 Ibid, 105.
44 Ibid.
events. Booms argues that

The more precisely archivists distinguish degrees of historical relevance for these historical phenomena according to how characteristic, typical or momentous they were at the time, the more accurately will their documentation model reflect a scale of significance for societal phenomena parallel to which a scale of value for groups of records can be constructed.45

Such a scale presents the significance of historical events and phenomena that relate to each archival jurisdiction, and identifies how characteristic they were within the time period under consideration.

Proceeding from the scale of significance, the archivist was then to proceed to the actual appraisal of records. Records that document the "currents and cross-currents" of society were to be considered to have permanent value.46 The archivist could then determine "which documents, regardless of their provenance, possess the optimum concentration of desired information so that a maximum of documentation is achieved with a minimum of documents."47 The development of the scale of significance is the focal point of each documentation plan, and the most treacherous, for it is most open to the vagaries of subjectivity. It will be objective only in so far as it recreates the climate of the creating society, according to published sources.

Booms' analysis offers a remarkable contribution to the

45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
47 Ibid.
theory of appraisal, which, in his understanding, is supported by the complementary methodologies of social science and hermeneutics. He forcefully presents the relativity problems inherent in the process of ascribing value, and clearly establishes the need for an objective framework for appraisal. His most important contribution is his focus on the creating society, and the formulation of the principle of contemporary value.

Throughout his first proposal, Booms argues that reliance on the principle of provenance for the identification of value is derived from the romantic belief that accepts unquestionably the significance of public records. In his understanding, the "truth-value of the documentary material was, in principle, never questioned." His words indicate that he fails to see that "truth-value" is beside the archival point, for an analysis of provenance provides the key to the meaning and significance of records in the context of their creation. He rejects any attempt to use the principle of provenance as a means of providing an objective framework for appraisal. He argues that provenance is an ephemeral and unproductive value principle, for it obscured the need for the concrete, binding value principles archivists seemed unable to define, and offered surrogate appraisal methods. In this way, Provenienzprinzip, indispensable as it was for archival arrangement, also provided a formal, ideological basis for undertaking records

48 Ibid, 103.
49 Ibid, 87.
In 1991, however, at the annual meeting of the Association of Canadian Archivists in Banff, Alberta, Booms modified his concept of documentation plans as being too complicated and theoretical, and "not practical enough to be usable."51 His new proposal is noteworthy for the synthesis he achieves between the seemingly contradictory notions of pertinence and provenance: "The process of appraisal entails the immediate transition from the content of the historical events, of subject matter, to provenance."52 Beginning with the idea of pertinence, the initial concept of the historical grid is adapted to the formulation of a contemporary chronicle that notes, but does not interpret, dates of important and essential events that occurred during the time in which the records were created. From an understanding of the society contemporary to the records, the archivist moves directly to provenance in a structural analysis of the records creator, which provides an administrative chronicle of record-creating functions. Booms states unequivocally that in order to preserve the archival nature of records, provenance must remain the immutable foundation of the appraisal process.


For it is the task of archivists in advising researchers to transform their subject-based inquiries into administrative jurisdictions, in order to determine those provenances in which the desired source material exists.53

In this manner, preserving the archival nature of records ensures their future usefulness.

The third step in Booms' plan is the formal process of appraisal. The archivist identifies the primary responsibility of the agency under investigation, judges the extent to which the responsibility is documented in the records, and identifies the extent to which other agencies contributed to its implementation. Booms notes that the formal process of structural analysis rejects about 60% of records. As a secondary measure, the selection process can then be augmented with reference to the contemporary chronicle by selecting for preservation series of records that adequately document important events. Booms adds that this step could lead to the rejection of another 25% of records.54

Booms' clarification of the central role of provenance in the appraisal process alludes to the possibility that, instead of relegating provenance to an evaluation of subject content, the principle of provenance can be adapted by using a structural analysis of an archival fonds to evaluate the accuracy of its documentation of the activities of a records creator. In this manner, provenance becomes an empirically verifiable method

53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
whereby records can be judged according to their ability to reflect accurately the functions and activities of the creating body within the context of its contemporary society.

This brief overview of western European traditions of appraisal reveals that almost all twentieth century archivists acknowledge the problem of identifying value, and recognize the need for an objective framework for appraisal in order to limit the inevitable distortion of society's record that occurs with the intervention of the archivist. Appraisal literature suggests that, because value is relative to the perspective of the viewer, archivists must clearly identify to whom the perspective belongs, and for what purpose it is being ascribed. The value of records to the creating society may differ from their value to the archivist's society. In the same way, the value of the records to the creator may differ from their value to researchers. These differing values must be carefully separated in order to insure clarity in archival judgements. At the same time, the discussion on perspectives has caused several archivists to appeal vigorously for government repositories to acknowledge and accept responsibility for the important contribution of private records creators to the documentary heritage of society.

Archivists, however, disagree on the means to achieve their common objective. Sometimes they understand content and structural analysis to be contradictory, but most often they promote a poorly constructed hybrid of both approaches in a theoretical vacuum. However, if the discussion is re-directed to
the European understanding of the nature of archives as being an organic and impartial mirror of the creating body, the application of the principle of provenance offers the primary method by which the archival and probative nature of records can be identified and preserved. At the same time, the application of the principle of pertinence seems to offer a method by which carefully constructed acquisition policies may be developed in a way that will accurately reflect the functions and activities of society as a whole. Both approaches can play a role in identifying value within a clearly defined theoretical framework. The goal of such a framework should be to preserve the archival and probative nature of the documentary heritage of society.
CHAPTER 3:
BRITISH TRADITIONS OF APPRAISAL

The public records of England and Wales . . . . are vitally important for the knowledge and understanding of British society, its organisation and functioning.

The Wilson Report, 1981.1

Traditions of appraisal in England have developed from the mid-nineteenth century to the present, and are remarkably cohesive, unlike traditions in continental Europe. Central to appraisal theory is the concept of the preservation of the archival nature of records, the use of administrative value to identify historical value, and an abiding concern for the research interests of the user community. As in the traditions in continental Europe, questions are raised about the relativity of value, and calls are made for the need to maintain the impartial perspective of the archivist. While the principle of provenance is never referred to, the use of structural analysis is evident in the British insistence on defining "administrative value" as the key to select records for permanent preservation. The following discussion will focus on the two most important theorists who developed these ideas, Sir Hilary Jenkinson and Sir James Grigg. Because of the significance of their contribution

to appraisal theory, the following textual analysis of their writing will be developed in a careful and detailed manner.

The analysis will trace the development of ideas about the appraisal of government records in order to understand the historical context in which the theories of Jenkinson and Grigg originated. The discussion will then focus on Jenkinson's articulation of the nature of archives and his resulting theoretical framework for appraisal. Building upon Jenkinson's ideas, Sir James Grigg presents a carefully prescribed methodology that identifies the administrative and historical value of records through a structural analysis of the records creator. The purpose of the discussion will be to evaluate theories of appraisal in the British tradition with regard to their ability to preserve the archival and probative nature of records for administrative and historical research use.

Two historical events reflect the evolution of contemporary British ideas: the passage of the 1838 Public Record Office Act,2 which established the legal authority for the permanent preservation of government legal records, and the 1958 Public Records Act,3 which implemented the recommendations of Sir James Grigg presented in his 1954 report.4

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2 U.K. Laws, Statutes, etc., Public Record Office Act, 1838, 1 & 2 Victoria, c. 94.


The historical development of the archival practice of records destruction, and the emerging concept of appraisal were presented in the Grigg Report, and the identified inadequacy of the practice was used as evidence to argue for change. The Report's analysis of the development of appraisal practice is instructive, and provides an understanding of the historical context in which the ideas of Jenkinson and Grigg evolved. In 1838, the Public Records Office Act was passed to provide unified control and better public access to the legal records of the government, under "the charge and superintendence" of the Master of the Rolls.5 The act also allowed for periodic transfer to the newly created Public Record Office (PRO) of legal records, as well as other "Records belonging to Her Majesty."6 Departmental records began to be informally transferred, but some raised questions regarding the legality of the practice. In 1845, an informal agreement was reached between the Master of the Rolls and the various government departments that the PRO would act as an agency or extension of the departments, but that the departments accepted ultimate responsibility to ensure that their records were properly maintained and preserved.7 The status of departmental records was clarified in an 1852 Order in Council that explicitly brought them under the control of the Master of the Rolls. The Grigg Report notes that, "Since 1852 the Master

5 Grigg Report, 10, paragraph 5.
6 Ibid, 11, paragraph 8.
7 Ibid, 25, paragraph 46.
of the Rolls has been required 'from time to time' to order that Departmental records be delivered in his 'custody'; in fact he has never done so, and the practice remains as it was settled in 1845-6."8

The need to appraise the value of records was identified in an 1836 report to the Record Commission. The criterion used to identify value was "usefulness". The report stated that in almost every office "there are large masses of documents utterly useless to anybody for any purpose. . . . The keeping of these takes up valuable room, and imposes useless trouble. Under proper precautions, the Record Commission would do great service by destroying them."9 In spite of questions regarding the legality of the practice, an informal routine emerged in which the Treasury began to destroy records after seeking the advice of the Master of the Rolls regarding what records were not worth retaining.10 The practice continued for many years, as did the concern of the Master of the Rolls that the destruction of legal records was contrary to law.

In 1875, the Deputy Keeper published a parliamentary paper in which he reiterated the earlier call for destruction of useless records:

There are extant in the Public Record
Department large masses of legal and
Government documents which are wholly useless

8 Ibid, 15, paragraph 19.
9 Ibid, paragraph 20.
for legal, historical, military, statistical, economical or official purposes, and of no possible interest to any one. . . . It may be safely asserted that if such papers and documents had been preserved from the Norman Conquest to the present time . . . really valuable materials for history in all its branches would be swamped and crushed by their surroundings of useless rubbish.11

The paper implicitly accepted the criterion of usefulness for a broad range of research with its reference to legal, historical, military, statistical, economical or official purposes. As well, it unequivocally accepted the need for destruction and requested the proper authority to do so.

Parliament responded to the call for legal authority to destroy records in its 1877 Public Records Act. It empowered the Master of the Rolls, with the approval of the Treasury, and the head of the concerned government department to make rules "respecting the disposal by destruction or otherwise of documents which are deposited in or can be removed to the Public Records Office, and which are not of sufficient public value to justify their preservation in the Public Records Office."12 The criterion to be used in the selection process for preservation or destruction was broadened from research interests to "sufficient public value," although the later concept was never clarified. The 1877 Act also instituted the practice of controlling the entire process through preparation of the "Destruction

11 Ibid, 16, paragraph 22.
12 Ibid, 17, paragraph 23.
In 1889, rules regarding destruction of records held by the PRO and government departments were codified. The appraisal guidelines were presented to the department officer responsible for scheduling. The rules maintained the ascendancy of research interests. The officer was required to "take every precaution against the inclusion therein of any documents which can reasonably be considered as of legal, historical, genealogical or antiquarian use or interest, or which give any important information not to be obtained elsewhere." This is the clearest articulation of the evolving consensus that the identification of historical value was central to the appraisal process. The Grigg Report adds that since their establishment the 1889 rules had been subscribed to by virtually all government departments, and remained in force in Grigg's time.

By 1889, government archivists had identified the pressing need for legal authority to select and destroy useless records from their holdings. Their arguments clearly indicate that they considered the records in their holdings as a valuable national resource, which, because of the value of records to a democratic society, required legal authority before destruction could be accomplished. The criterion used for the selection process was referred to as "public value", or "usefulness" to research and

13 Ibid, 17, paragraph 24.
14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
history. Their arguments also reveal that, to them, the process of identifying value was a self-evident and straightforward exercise.

In 1937, Hilary Jenkinson responded to the British practice of the destruction of useless records in the second edition of his manual. In this work, he raises disturbing questions regarding the possible consequences of destruction to the preservation of documents with historical value. He identifies a theoretical crisis to which he applies his mind. His resulting theoretical construct has influenced the theory and practice of archives to this day. Jenkinson argues that the modern explosion of records has forced the archivist into the untenable position of "the modern Destroyer." If we are not careful, Jenkinson writes, the indiscriminate destruction of records will destroy their archival nature.

Jenkinson's argument about appraisal is rigorously developed from a traditional understanding of the nature of archives. The theoretical framework he constructs carefully preserves the probative nature of documentary evidence. In his words,

A document which may be said to belong to the class of Archives is one which was drawn up or used in the course of an administrative or executive transaction (whether public or private) of which itself formed a part; and subsequently preserved in their own custody for their own information by the person or persons responsible for that transaction and

their legitimate successors. 17

His definition includes reference to two primary aspects of the creation process of archives, in which impartial and authentic documents are created within an administrative structure.

Jenkinson begins his argument with the creation process. Archives are documents that are created or used in the course of an administrative transaction, of which they form a part. Such documents, he notes, are material survivals of the creator's transactions, and the activities that contribute to them. Archives do not merely refer to transactions, but are material parts of them, and directly connected to them. 18

Archives stand in contradistinction to occasional, isolated documents that are created, not in the course of a practical activity, but for the purpose of analyzing and reflecting on a past event. Because archives are an intrinsic part of the creation process of a transaction, they provide "first-hand evidence because they form an actual part of the corpus, of the facts of the case." 19 In other words, the probative nature of archives is strengthened because their inherent circumstantial and procedural guarantee of trustworthiness is a logical product of an administrative structure that must rely on accurate, reliable documentation of its transactions for its continued existence.

17 Ibid, 11. Jenkinson's emphasis.

18 Ibid, 3.

19 Ibid, 4.
Jenkinson concludes that "Impartiality is a gift which results from the first part of our definition of Archives." That is, the production of unbiased records is a logical consequence of the creation process, by which the creator is guaranteed credible and reliable documents, and from which transactions can be implemented, regulated and proved. If, therefore, the archival nature of records is preserved, the records will logically have the capacity to provide impartial information to all potential users on a wide variety of subjects regardless of the purpose for which the archives were created or the purpose of the research. Jenkinson adds the common sense proviso that meaning, of course, is bound to the significance of the administrative context in which the documents were created: "Provided, then, that the student understands [the documents'] administrative significance they cannot tell him anything but the truth."21

Jenkinson proceeds in his definition of archives from the creation process to preservation and custody. Archival documents must not only have been created or used in the course of an administrative transaction, but also have been preserved in the custody of those responsible for the transaction, for their own information. That is, documents become archival during the creation process at the point at which "they are definitely set aside for preservation, tacitly adjudged worthy of being kept" by

20 Ibid., 12.
21 Ibid.
the administrator.22 Their meaning is derived from the fact that archives constitute an "artificial memory" of the administrator,23 by providing "written memorials of its activities in the past. . . ."24 Archives thus provide to the administrator proof of past transactions, and information to plan future ones. Jenkinson's insistence on administrative preservation as essential to the formation of archives assumes an explicit, organized, ongoing process of administrative review that is not always practically achieved by a wide variety of organizations and persons.

Jenkinson argues that the administrator's need of accurate information guarantees the custody and safekeeping of authentic documents. He concludes that not only are archives "by their origin free from the suspicion of prejudice in regard to the interests in which we now use them: they are also by reason of their subsequent history equally free from the suspicion of having been tampered with in those interests."25 He notes that, while forgeries do exist, they are a rare occurrence in archives.26 His words implicitly acknowledge the strength of internal checks on accuracy exercised through forms control, as well as the external checks of accountability procedures that

22 Ibid, 8-9.
23 Ibid, 23.
24 Ibid, 39.
26 Ibid, 15.
govern the course of transactions. These checks can provide a context for the historical criticism of sources in the identification of forgeries or administrative attempts to deceive.

Jenkinson's definition of archives convincingly establishes their two "distinguishing qualities" of impartiality and authenticity. These qualities, which offer a procedural and circumstantial guarantee of trustworthiness, constitute the theoretical understanding of the nature of archives. As a logical consequence, archival documents can be used as evidence to furnish, establish or contribute to legal and historical proof.

Jenkinson's argument proceeds from the essential qualities of archives to the duty of archivists. The primary duty of archivists is to safeguard the essential qualities of archives by ensuring their "physical and moral conservation." That is, the primary duty of archivists is to preserve the archival and probative nature of the archives under their care. He notes two ways of destroying the essential qualities of archives, both of which entail the intervention of the archivist: archival arrangement and the archival disposal of records.

Archivists must guard against the destruction of the impartiality and authenticity of archives that can occur during the process of arrangement if documents are "violently torn from

27 Ibid, 12.

28 Ibid, 15, 146.
the connexion in which they were originally preserved, a connexion which in nine cases out of ten is important, if not vital, for the full understanding of their significance."29 According to Jenkinson, the archivist's "moral defence of archives" is primarily accomplished through careful arrangement and description practices, in which provenance and original order are identified and preserved.30 Proper arrangement must illuminate the archival significance of every document, and provide an "exposition of the Administrative objects which the Archives originally served. . . ."31 In this manner, the archival integrity of documents can be preserved.

Jenkinson's argument establishes that the essential qualities of archives are impartiality and authenticity, and the primary duty of the archivist is to safeguard those qualities. He then turns to his primary concern of discussing the legitimacy of the archival function of the destruction of useless records. Immediately, questions of value and subjectivity enter the discussion, questions that to his mind raise "insuperable"

29 Ibid, 42.

30 Jenkinson, Manual, 97. Jenkinson uses the term "provenance" to refer to the place of custody from which the archival repository receives the archives, and rejects this as a means of determining arrangement. His following discussion about administrative history and organization, and the correct identification of fonds clearly indicates his understanding and acceptance of the modern archival principle of provenance that guides the arrangement process. Jenkinson's principles of arrangement, which attempt to preserve archival integrity, can be found on pages 97-115.

31 Ibid.
difficulties. 32

Jenkinson goes straight to the heart of the problem inherent in appraisal with his question, "what is the standard? what is the criterion of Destruction?" 33 Acknowledging the consensus of the practice of his day, he notes that the only possible standard of choice for destruction that can be exercised in the present is that of "Historical Uselessness." 34 For the choice is based, "not on the ground of what is useful for the practical purposes of Administration but of what is worth preserving in the interests of History." 35 Jenkinson recognizes that there is great doubt "as to whether any one is competent to pronounce upon the probable needs of the future." 36 At the same time, he also questions the advisability of preserving the historical record for future society on the basis of a consideration of the archivist's own interests and those of the time in which the archivist lives. 37 Whether an archivist or historian participates in the appraisal process, the danger remains that the natural integrity of archives can be destroyed, thereby destroying their future use as impartial sources. Instead of safeguarding the essential qualities of archives, Jenkinson

32 Ibid, 149.
33 Ibid, 140.
34 Ibid, 144.
36 Ibid, 146.
37 Ibid, 144.
fears, archivists and historians who engage in appraisal "are given what amounts to a share in the creation of those Archives which it is their true business only to keep and to use respectively. . . ."38 It is a share that, to Jenkinson's mind, inevitably and inexorably distorts the impartiality of the historical record.

Jenkinson then turns his attention to the best method to safeguard the essential qualities of archives. To his mind, the creator of the records is the only legitimate appraiser:

for an Administrative body to destroy what it no longer needs is a matter entirely within its competence and an action which future ages (even though they may find reason to deplore it) cannot possibly criticize as illegitimate or as affecting the status of the remaining Archives. . . .39

In this manner, destruction is accomplished as impartially as creation, in the daily course of business, on the basis of administrative need, without self-conscious concerns for posterity. Jenkinson raises a caveat that predates Hans Booms' principle of contemporary value: "we can criticize the Past only if it failed to keep up to its own standard of values."40

Jenkinson concludes his argument with "The Golden Rule of Archive Making" for the "Archive Maker."41 In effect, Jenkinson is arguing for an efficient records management program. Records

38 Ibid, 149.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid, 140.
41 Ibid, 152.
necessary to maintain a corporate memory must include records that establish authority for action, as well as a record of past and present action. His golden rule requires the identification of vital records:

It appears then that the golden rule for the Administrator, so far as concerns his papers, must be to have them always in such a state of completeness and order that, supposing himself and his staff to be by some accident obliterated, a successor totally ignorant of the work of the office would be able to take it up and carry it on with the least possible inconvenience and delay simply on the strength of a study of the Office Files.42

Jenkinson's important contribution to the problem of appraisal is his "golden rule" of the identification of vital records by which the permanent value of documents can be determined. He entrusts the function of appraisal to the record creator in order to ensure that the essential qualities of archives will be preserved, not only for the judicial system, but also for posterity.

A later assessment of Jenkinson's concepts of impartiality and authenticity adds that "There is, indeed, something of the supreme confidence of the last century about both these concepts."43 With our increased awareness of the possibility of tampering with the genesis of records by records creators themselves, and the destruction of knowledge inherent in the appraisal process, our understanding of archival truth must be

42 Ibid, 153.
diminished from its previous absolute affirmation. In the end, we can affirm only that archives "do and should embody an essential element of truth," and that the record we hold "must be as complete, impartial and truthful as it is possible for us to ensure."44 In spite of our increased awareness of the relativity of truth, however, society's practical reliance on and need for the preservation of the probative nature of documentary evidence, as seen in the proceedings of the judicial system, remains paramount.

Jenkinson's careful articulation of the integrity of archives clearly established the theoretical framework for appraisal. He convincingly argued that in order to maintain the usefulness of archives to those who rule and explain the conduct of society, any theory of appraisal must identify ways to preserve the impartiality and authenticity of records. In essence, his "golden rule of archive making" applies the structural analysis inherent in the principle of provenance to the identification of records that document the creator's functions and activities. His emphasis on the judgement of the creator ensures that no outside perspective can distort the historical value and the future research use of the records.

In spite of Jenkinson's arguments for administrative value as the sole arbiter of preservation, the supremacy of historical value has remained intact, as enunciated in the 1889 appraisal rules, and reaffirmed in the Grigg Report of 1952. The Report

44 Ibid, 130.
contributes to the archival awareness of appraisal issues in important ways. In particular, it transforms the notion of historical value by subsuming it within Jenkinson's concept of administrative value.

In 1952, Sir James Grigg, former Permanent Under-Secretary of State, was asked by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Master of the Rolls to chair the Committee on Departmental Records. The purpose of the committee was to investigate and report on the problems surrounding the preservation of the enormous bulk of departmental non-current records, and to recommend any changes in law and practice that might appear to be necessary. The Report was published in 1954, and a year later the government accepted all its recommendations. The result was the passage of the Public Records Act of 1958. The Grigg Report, therefore, has had enormous influence on the theory and practice of appraisal in Britain.

The introduction to the Report notes that the result of inadequate appraisal practice produced an increasingly unmanageable situation in which "useless material has been unnecessarily retained, and papers which ought to have been in the Public Record Office long ago and available for the 'free use' of the public are still in the hands of Departments." Throughout the Report there is constant reference to the criteria


46 Ibid, 6.
that had been used since the mid-nineteenth century to identify records worthy of permanent preservation: the administrative criterion and the historical criterion. An understanding of the Report's terms of reference is key to understanding its proposals for change. The administrative criterion, echoing Jenkinson's notion, attempts to identify the value of the records to the creating department for its own purposes. The Report quotes a PRO memorandum that offers guidance to departments by stating that the work must be done "before the meaning of the transactions in question has faded from memory. . . by persons having a first-hand knowledge and experience of the executive work of the Department. . . ."47 The Report, thus, identifies knowledge, experience and timeliness as crucial to the identification of the administrative value of records.

Crucial to an understanding of the Report is its view that administrative value must be interpreted broadly. For example, it notes that the concept of administrative value should include

the likelihood of the paper being required as a precedent or as a guide to possible action should a similar set of circumstances arise in the future. This would entail the preservation, inter alia, of papers showing the authority under which a Department exercises, or has exercised, any particular function; together with papers showing the organisation it has developed, the policies it has adopted, and the procedures it has followed, in order to carry out that function.48

47 Grigg Report, 20, paragraph 29.

48 Ibid, 29-30, paragraph 60.
This definition of administrative value echoes Jenkinson's "Golden Rule of Archive Making" in the preservation of an organization's vital records, which document an organization's mandate, functions, procedures and activities.

The Grigg Report repeatedly equates historical value with a broad spectrum of research interests including, "historical, economic, sociological, and other non-administrative needs of the future (which for convenience we shall refer to as the 'historical' criterion)." The 1889 rules for preparing destruction schedules enunciate the rationale of the historical criterion by stating that "any documents which can reasonably be considered as of legal, historical, genealogical or antiquarian use or interest, or which give any important information not to be obtained elsewhere" should be permanently preserved. By 1950, the preamble to the schedule stated that the departmental officer responsible for the procedure should examine records scheduled for destruction, and "withdraw for preservation those containing matter likely to be of historical or legal importance or to be useful for social or economic research." The Grigg Report adds that the most practical method of identifying historical value would be "to select documents in the light of experience of the use made of earlier documents which have been

49 Ibid, 20, paragraph 31.
50 Ibid, 17, paragraph 24.
51 Ibid, 24-25, paragraph 44.
preserved."52 Thus, the Report maintains that the traditionally accepted criterion of usefulness, in the context of research, is the primary method of selection. In its focus on historical value and future research use, the Report seems entirely oblivious of the debate that raged in Europe over the futility of predicting future research use, or of the concerns raised by Jenkinson regarding the intrusion of archivists in the creation process that can endanger the integrity of archives.

The research and analysis of the Grigg Report is guided by its understanding of the greatest problem of the appraisal process: the lack of a method that can guide the selection of valuable records. A methodology of appraisal could be considered satisfactory only if it could overcome the problem of determining "in advance the potential value of documents to posterity for historical or other non-administrative purposes."53 The Report studied the three-step procedure used by departments for the selection of records for preservation and destruction in an attempt "to assess the efficacy" of the implementation of the historical criterion.54 The procedure included the preparation of the destruction schedule, an examination of the schedule by Inspecting Officers, and the execution of the schedule.55 In each phase of the procedure, the primary criterion for selection

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52 Ibid, 22-23, paragraph 37.
53 Ibid, 20, paragraph 29.
54 Ibid, paragraph 31.
was historical value. The destruction schedule was prepared by a departmental officer who identified the period of time during which each series of records needed to be retained. The officer was to exclude from the schedule all documents of historical interest, as noted in the schedule's preamble. As the report notes, this responsibility "is a very considerable requirement to make of an officer . . . whose main experience may therefore be expected to have been in duties connected with the executive business of the Department." The resulting practice was that the officer entrusted with the preparation of the schedule used as a criterion for selection the administrative needs of the department, and placed the onus for implementing the historical criterion on the inspecting officers.

The second phase of the procedure was the examination of the documents listed in the schedule by the Committee of Inspecting Officers. The committee consisted of the Deputy Keeper of the Records, an Assistant Keeper, and one barrister of seven years' standing. It examined all the series of documents listed in the schedules to make sure that the historical criterion specified in the schedule's preamble was being implemented. The Grigg Report notes that the identification of historical value was directly dependent on the clarity of the classification of

56 Ibid, 20, paragraph 32.
57 Ibid, 20-21, paragraph 32.
58 Ibid, 21, paragraph 33.
series.59 The Report also notes that while archivists gain a wide knowledge of research practices in the normal course of their work, "There is no established machinery in existence whereby the Inspecting Officers, in exercising the historical criterion, may take the advice of historians, economists, or other persons with experience in research."60 Because of the heavy load of work for the inspecting officers, and the broad categories used in the records' classification system, the Report's main criticism of the procedure was that the application of the historical criterion is "unavoidably transferred back, in its most difficult form, to the Departments themselves."61 In other words, lack of expertise and time combined to prevent the application of the historical criterion to the selection process.

The final phase of the procedure was the execution of the schedule. Once the schedule received parliamentary approval, the schedule was implemented by the department. Most often, the work of reviewing non-current records, many of which had no further interest to the department, was often entrusted to junior staff members.62 The execution of the schedule was accomplished in three informal steps, which are often referred to as "weeding": a review of departmental records to identify those to be retained or destroyed; destruction of files consisting wholly of documents

59 Ibid, 23, paragraph 38.
60 Ibid, 22, paragraph 36.
61 Ibid, 23, paragraph 39.
62 Ibid, 27, paragraph 51.

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authorized by the schedule; and, stripping of useless documents within files to be preserved. The Grigg Report notes that the execution of the schedule, which was implemented as a means of preserving valuable records, was ineffective because of one major factor: "The effect of these arrangements is to place the major onus for exercising the historical criterion on those least qualified to bear it, namely the comparatively junior officers by whom reviewing work is done." 64

The Grigg Report identifies the historical roots of the undesirable results of appraisal practices in the agreement of 1845-46 between the Master of the Rolls and the departments. In their informal agreement, the departments agreed to accept responsibility to ensure that their records were properly maintained and preserved, and the Public Records Department agreed to act as an agency of the departments in the fulfillment of those duties. In this manner, the "obligation that is thus placed on Departments to have regard to the possible needs of future research workers is an onerous one, and in meeting it Departments gain little advantage for themselves." 65 Because departments had no direct interest in preserving historically valuable records, reviewing was done by junior staff members in a piecemeal manner, and often simply postponed. 66

63 Ibid, 23-24, paragraph 41.
64 Ibid, 25, paragraph 45.
65 Ibid, paragraph 46.
The Grigg Report concludes its assessment of current practices with a critique of the complicated methodology for appraisal that had been imposed on archivists by legislative acts of parliament:

The present arrangements for the preservation of the records of Government Departments are governed by an Act of 1838 which we believe was not meant to apply to them, an Act of 1877 which makes the selection of records for preservation about as complicated as it can be, and an agreement of 1845-6 which removes from those responsible for the ultimate preservation of the records a proper oversight of them.67

The Report then proceeds with its proposals to remedy the problems encountered in using the historical criterion as a method of selecting valuable records. It first insists that nothing can be remedied in the appraisal process unless senior staff is allocated to make the necessary "decisions of great complexity."68 Then, it assures its readers that the preservation of archival value, as found in the 'unselfconscious' and 'impartial' nature of records, is of paramount concern:

the Departmental records to be preserved in the Public Record Office would consist entirely of papers that accrued in the course of normal administration and not any that were created, or whose form had been modified, for the historian's special benefit.69

The Grigg Committee clearly acknowledges the theoretical

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67 Ibid, 28, paragraph 55.
68 Ibid, 29, paragraph 58.
69 Ibid, 44, paragraph 111.
importance of preserving intact the archival and probative nature of the archives. It recognizes the imperative that the integrity of the records must not be altered for anyone's 'benefit', for such alteration would, in fact, destroy the potential value that derives from their inherent nature. The Committee's commitment to the preservation of an impartial record, however, does not result in the creation of a paradigm of conflict with the interest of researchers. Clearly, the focus of the appraisal exercise remains the selection of historically valuable records for the research community.

The major proposal of the Grigg Report is the institution of a two-tiered review process that combines a first review of the records at five years from the closure of the files, and a second review at twenty-five years for the purpose of implementing the historical criterion. The first review is to be done by each department's record officer. Its purpose is to destroy those records "which they do not need to retain further for their own Departmental purposes."70 While maintaining the primacy of the historical criterion, the Report concludes that because the identification of historical value is in no way related to the general work of the reviewing officers, "the solution to the problem must lie in the application of this criterion by indirect means."71

The indirect means of identifying historical value is found

70 Ibid, 80, paragraph 240.
in the equation of historical value and administrative value. The reviewing work is to be guided by the following question, which is immediately intelligible to the reviewer in terms of the experience gained in the normal course of work: "Is this Department likely to require this paper any longer for its own Departmental purposes?"72 Administrative value is to be understood in its broadest sense, which preserves evidence of a department's organization, authority, functions, policies and procedures as a precedent or guide to future action.73 Referring to the Grigg Report, Jenkinson later reiterates his "golden rule" by insisting that selecting records in the first review "should be of such an order that even if a piece of business or a section of organisation had been discontinued for some considerable time surviving files would enable it to be taken up again without difficulty or delay."74

The indirect application of the historical criterion is advocated in the Grigg Report because the Committee equates a broad interpretation of administrative value with historical value:

within the margin of error inevitable under any system, the papers which a historian of the future may wish to have preserved will in practice automatically be included among those which Departments find it necessary to keep for more than a short period for their

72 Ibid, paragraph 59.
73 Ibid, paragraph 60.
own Departmental purposes. The adoption of such a system would ensure that the historical criterion was in effect exercised . . . in a form which Departments would find it practicable to apply.75

The equation builds upon Jenkinson's "golden rule of archive making" that preserves the integrity of archives by preventing distortion of meaning from any outside perspective, whether it be that of an archivist or of an historian.

The Grigg Report accepts the basic concept of the need for the preservation of the archival nature of the records, but extends it from a limited view in which only the creator may select records for preservation to a broader view in which a structural analysis of the records using the functions and activities of the creating body is considered the impartial guiding method. In this manner, the appraiser maintains an objective stance and does not intervene in the creation process. Reflecting the approach of many archivists of the time, the Report does not extend the notion of objectivity to absurdity. Experience, judgement and historical sensitivity are central to a judicious and discerning application of structural analysis. With the development of experience, "we should expect that the Inspecting Officers would become a useful repository of knowledge" regarding registration procedures and reviewing work in general.76 The startling simplicity of the recommendation is striking in the manner in which it resolves the conflicting

75 Grigg Report, 30, paragraph 60.

76 Ibid, 51, paragraph 133.
paradigms created by European theorists. The theoretical framework preserves the archival nature of the records, maintains the objective perspective of the appraisal, and preserves records with historical value for the research community.

The second review proposed by the Grigg Report acts as a final check to ensure the preservation of historically valuable records. In effect, it is also a final check for the research community. It is to be done by each department's record officer in conjunction with the Inspecting Officer, who acts as a representative of the Public Records Department. Its purpose is to review all the records that survived the first review, and destroy "those considered to be of no further administrative or historical importance. . ." Because of the reduced bulk of the records and the expertise of the staff of the Public Records Department, "it should be possible for the historical criterion to be exercised directly in relation to these papers. Thus the criteria for preservation at the Second Review will be both administrative and historical. . . ." In 1961, Jenkinson commented, with a note of resignation, "I incline myself to think (for what my opinion is worth) that . . . this ultimate intrusion of selection based on the interests of research is inevitable." Ensuring government commitment to the needs of the research

77 Ibid, 38, paragraph 87.
78 Ibid, 80, paragraph 240.
79 Ibid, 38, paragraph 87.
community for preservation of and access to the documentary heritage of society, the Grigg Report also recommends the formation of a panel of advisors to enrich the quality of the application of the historical criterion. Such an Advisory Council would be composed of members from the judiciary, the legal profession, and the universities. Its purpose would be "to advise the Minister on those aspects of the Department's work which affect the interests of those who make use of its services." Presumably, the application of the historical criterion would be of paramount concern to the research community.

The Grigg system advocates the delegation of appraisal to record creators, even if this would provide them with the opportunity to hide the truth in awkward cases. In 1986, Michael Cook comments that this essentially English principle has theoretical roots in Jenkinson: "The point is that appraisal should be impartial: the historical record should reflect the biases and idiosyncracies of the administration of the day, and not those of the academic researchers of that time, or of a later time." The validity of the principle rests on the assumption that there is a broad correspondence between administrative values and research values. Cook notes this view has never been

81 Grigg Report, 52, paragraph 136.
82 Ibid, 54, paragraph 144.
seriously challenged since it was advocated.84

The major challenge to the Grigg proposal came in the late 1970s, with a public furor which broke out in the press when several academics charged the PRO with a large scale and indiscriminate destruction of public records.85 In 1981, the Wilson Report acknowledged that public records are "a most precious part of the national heritage. . . . These records are vitally important for the knowledge and understanding of British society, its organisation and function."86 It identified several changes in government record-keeping practices that exacerbated the current crisis in confidence. These changes included the old problem of the increasingly unmanageable bulk of modern records, and the newer problems of widespread use of electronic records, wider interests of researchers, and a greater public demand for access.87 The Wilson report noted that 'the keystone' to the Grigg proposals was the use of experienced, knowledgeable senior staff.88 It upheld the efficacy of the proposals, and concluded that the goal of preserving historically valuable records was undermined by the "administrative erosion" in the application of

84 Ibid, 52.


86 Ibid, 3, paragraph 1.

87 Ibid, 8-14, paragraphs 21-50.

88 Ibid, 6, paragraph 14.
the Report's methodology and principles. 89

During the 1980s, British archival literature began to include an occasional but growing sense of the need for the formulation of some overall national planning in appraisal. Principles that applied to appraisal for selection needed to be extended to systematic acquisition policies in order to guarantee an authentic documentation of society:

You are the custodians of the evidence of the past and present for the future; in that lies your responsibility and your challenge. Appraisal is only one element in the exercise of this function, intensely difficult and of enormous responsibility; it nevertheless rests with you essentially to determine what shall survive and whether that survival will present a worthy picture of society as you experienced it in your day and age. 90

Cook notes that local and specialized archives, libraries and museums were beginning to join with the PRO in their attempts "to build up banks of information which will cover their chosen field of operation, and ideally that field will have some sort of link with a national plan." 91 The national approach to coordinated appraisal for acquisition was essentially "information-directed." 92 Cook argues that such planning would be best implemented within a framework of coordination which maximizes

89 Ibid, 18-19, paragraphs 55-56.


91 Cook, Management, 66.

92 Ibid.
the usefulness of existing resources, and minimizes wasteful competition. He suggests the formation of a central agency, "such as a national register of archives, armed with executive powers but working with the trust and co-operation of archivists within the country."93 He insists that the aim of an archival repository, within the framework of its own particular mandate, "would be to build up holdings which contain a balanced documentation of the chosen subject area."94 The call for a national documentation plan is an interesting concept that is echoed throughout the European and American literature on appraisal.

British traditions of appraisal establish a general consensus that appraisal must be an impartial exercise. The appraisal function requires someone "who can represent the interests of research to the world of administration; and who can represent the needs of administration to the world of research. This is the definition of an archivist."95 The archivist's impartial perspective must be combined with expert knowledge of the archival repository, the records, the records creator, and the creating society. In the final analysis, the "judgements involved can only be made by those who have an overview of the nature of the records, the various uses they serve, the demands of research and reference, the resources available for servicing

93 Ibid, 67.
94 Ibid.
95 Ibid, 70.
British archivists make an important contribution to appraisal theory. They resolve the conflict between the principle of pertinence and provenance that is central to European thinking. The resolution is done by the formulation of a logical equation in which administrative value is synonymous with historical value. They denote structural analysis as the means by which archivists can impartially identify records of historical value. Their analysis suggests that the use of the principle of provenance not only preserves the archival and probative nature of records, but automatically subsumes the content analysis inherent in the principle of pertinence. Their use of the Advisory Council mirrors the European tradition of being attentive to the interests and needs of the research community in a way that can act as a check on archival practices. The British tradition also offers a precise methodology in the form of a two-tiered appraisal process, in which timing is an important factor in establishing the historical perspective required to evaluate the meaning of records. This methodology has the ability to streamline the appraisal process and to act as a final check for identifying historically valuable records.

CHAPTER 4:
NORTH AMERICAN TRADITIONS OF APPRAISAL

Research values are use values. Past, present, and future demand must justify retention. A long run of unique, understandable, and accessible records that will never be consulted by researchers is a bad investment of precious archival resources.

Maynard Brichford, 1977.1

Canadian and American archivists have developed an insular and symbiotic relationship in which they have ignored, until recently, the intense European debate surrounding appraisal. Instead of spending their time grappling directly with the intellectual problems of structural and content analysis, they have focused their energy on the construction of practical methodologies to solve the problem of bulk. In particular, they have responded by developing records management procedures, disposition schedules and various types of sampling.2 All methods of appraisal have relied on the basic assumption that use and value are synonymous. Structural analysis and content


2 This process has been well documented in, Richard Klumpenhouwer, "Chapter 3: Archival Appraisal as a Management Function, 1930-1980: The United States" in "Concepts of Value in the Archival Appraisal Literature: An Historical and Critical Analysis": 64-109.
analysis are used in tandem to identify records useful to administrators and researchers, and therefore, worthy of preservation. The North American focus on use reflects a lack of awareness of the importance of preserving the probative and archival nature of archives in the context of their provenance. The recent proliferation of electronic records has been a catalyst for re-thinking the centrality of structural analysis to the selection process.

There have been several notable attempts by North American archivists to provide a coherent theoretical approach to the entire appraisal process. The most extensive framework has been developed by Philip Brooks and Theodore Schellenberg. Their concepts of evidential and informational value combine structural and content analysis, and have been widely accepted by many archivists. The result has been well developed records management strategies to cope with the modern reality of information overload. However, the framework they have provided avoids issues of objectivity and value, as well as the underlying intellectual problem of how to preserve the probative and archival nature of records throughout the selection process. In light of the European discussion, their failure to adequately explore these issues renders their approach inadequate.

In 1940, Philip Brooks, a senior archivist at the National Archives, published an article that argued for a coherent approach to appraisal throughout the entire life history of
records, from creation to disposition. His major contribution to appraisal theory is his insistence on the development of records management strategies that control the flow and creation of information at the source:

The whole appraisal function is one undertaking, and it can best be performed with a complete understanding of the records of an agency in their relationships to each other as they are created rather than after they have lain forgotten and deteriorating for twenty years.

He insists that "the earlier in the life history of the documents the selection process begins, the better for all concerned." Brooks also advocates an extensive two-fold analysis of the administrative structure and functions of the records creator, and the relationship of the records to each other. Such a study would provide evidence of the substantive functions and activities of the creator. Unlike European archivists who advocate the use of the principle of provenance to identify the significance of the administrative structure, Brooks focuses on the relationships that exist between records as written evidences of functions and activities of the creating agency. Although he does not belabour the point, Brooks applies provenontial information in such a way as to create an objective framework in which value is related, not to perspective, but to the accuracy.


5 Ibid.
of the records representation of the records creator.

Brooks then proceeds to suggest three general categories of value that can assist in the selection process. He does not indicate how these values relate to the selection of records, but possibly he is using the categories merely to indicate a sensitivity to users. The values themselves are not precise or artificially imposed, but general and fluid groupings that overlap one another. Administrative value is the current value the records have for the creating agency to maintain an efficient administration. On the basis of such value, records are selected for preservation by the agency itself, according to its own needs. A second value is the administrative value of inactive records that contain information that could be useful to later administrators seeking precedents, political scientists studying administrative organizations, and archivists analyzing organizational functions.6

Brooks' final category is "the broad and indefinable field of 'historical value'" that portrays the basic facts of the agency's creation, policies and operations, or incidentally describes interesting conditions or events about certain individuals, periods or methods of doing business.7 Unlike Schellenberg, Brooks insists that the value of records for historical study is derived from their archival nature:

In fact, most records having historical value

6 Ibid, 230-231.
7 Ibid, 231-232.
possess it not as individual documents but as groups which, considered together, reflect the activities of some organization or person or portray everyday, rather than unique, events and conditions. 8

Brooks' brief aside regarding the application of these values indicates that he understands appraisal to be an objective analysis that can be augmented by intuitive assessment. He notes that archivists require four kinds of knowledge to identify the values of records:

First, we must know the agency of origin, its history, its objectives, and its methods. Second, we must know the relationships of records to each other, as shown in comparative studies within agencies and among all of them. Third, we must know and be alert to changes in the scope and methods of research--a staggering assignment in itself. And fourth, we must be acquainted with the use actually made of the records we have preserved.9

Brooks' contribution to the theory of appraisal rests in his insistence that appraisal is a process which is applied throughout the life history of records, beginning at creation. He focuses on understanding the relationships that exist between the records as evidence of the functions and activities of the records creator. His sensitivity to the needs of users reflects the longstanding concerns of British archivists for the research community. Although he has received little credit from the North American archival community, Brooks' concepts have been very influential, filtered through the mind of Schellenberg.

8 Ibid, 231.
9 Ibid, 233-34.
The most influential archival theorist in North America has been Theodore Schellenberg. In 1956, Schellenberg refined Brooks' concepts of primary, secondary, evidential and informational value. Since that time, Schellenberg's approach to the selection process has gained wide acceptance and has become the standard methodology by which appraisal is practiced in many parts of the western world. For this reason, it is necessary to understand his ideas and their implications for appraisal.

Schellenberg was clearly aware that appraisal is a difficult task, for he notes that his value standards were developed "to steer the unwary through the treacherous shoals of appraisal work." But because he fails to establish the intellectual content of the "treacherous shoals," it is difficult to judge his navigational success on his own terms. He derives his theory from an analysis of European theorists and attempts to integrate the conflicting approaches of structural and content analysis. But his integration is accomplished arbitrarily, by evading theoretical concerns and by failing to address the inherent intellectual problems of each approach.

For Schellenberg, value is not an esoteric concept mired in intellectual confusion. He attempts to extricate himself from the inherent problems of value in a practical manner, by equating value with use. But extrication cannot be so easily

accomplished. As Hans Booms has clearly noted, use as an arbiter of value is riddled with difficulties. The concept of use applied to appraisal implies the concept of value. It is speculative regarding the values of the future, includes the values of the present, and assumes the values of the past. The entire approach submerges appraisal in the subjective relativity of the concept of value and the inevitable dangers of the distortion of the documentary record. Schellenberg's theory thus fails to give preeminence to the need for an objective stance by the archivist, and fails to protect adequately the probative and archival nature of archives. What is lost in the process is the moral defence of the archival integrity of the documentary heritage of society.

Schellenberg identifies primary value as the usefulness of the records to the creating organization. The value of active records is temporary, and ends with the semi-active stage of the life cycle. Primary value is synonymous with the British concept of administrative value, which identifies records that are required to support the active administrative, legal and financial operations of an organization. But, contrary to British archival traditions, Schellenberg sharply differentiates primary value from secondary value.

Schellenberg defines secondary value as the use of archival records by agencies other than the creator, and individual researchers. These values are lasting historical, research values that remain long after the current administrative use of
records has exhausted itself. Schellenberg notes that records with secondary value are useful for two purposes:

(1) the evidence public records contain of the functioning and organization of the government body that produced them, and (2) the information they contain on persons, corporate bodies, problems, conditions, and the like, with which the government body dealt.11

On the basis of these two uses, he severs secondary value into two parts: evidential value and informational value. To justify the arbitrary nature of the division he adds that the distinction is made only for purposes of discussion, for the two types of values are not mutually exclusive.12 But Schellenberg's discussion and ultimate failure to integrate his artificial dissection of archival information ultimately undermine his rationalization.

Schellenberg's concept of evidential value does not refer to the probative and archival nature of records.13 Instead, his definition is carefully, and by his own admission, arbitrarily constructed to identify the important aspects of the functions

11 Ibid, 139.


13 Black's Law Dictionary, 6th ed., s.v. "Evidentiary." The term is defined as "having the quality of evidence; constituting evidence; evidencing. Pertaining to the rules of evidence or the evidence in a particular case." Perhaps Schellenberg chose not to use this legal terminology in order to distinguish his particular adaptation of the concept.
By evidential value I do not refer here to the value that inheres in public records because of the merit of the evidence they contain. I do not refer, in a Jenkinsonian sense, to the sanctity of the evidence in archives that is derived from "unbroken custody." I refer rather, and quite arbitrarily, to a value that depends on the importance of the matter evidenced, i.e. the organization and functioning of the agency that produced the records.14

Value is thus ascribed according to the archivist's subjective assessment of the relative importance of the organization and functions of the records' creator.

Arguing from the precision of the German archival principle of provenance, Schellenberg presents a structural analysis of the administrative context of creation as the central aspect of the identification of evidential value. Value is directly related to three factors: the hierarchical position of each office in the administration, the functions performed by each office, and the activities of each office in the execution of a given function.15 Greater value is attributed to those records that most directly and concisely reflect the above factors. The aim is to preserve records that most effectively document the origins, development and effectiveness of the substantive functions of the entire organization. In this manner, an accurate and representative "functional documentation" of the creating body is selected as

14 Schellenberg, Modern, 139.

15 Ibid, 142.
having permanent value. An added advantage of using such criteria is the fact that the selected records represent only 2.5% of all records created, which thus restricts the bulk of records necessary to preserve. In contrast, only a small part of the housekeeping records of an organization is necessary to preserve in order "to illustrate the variations in such processes" of the implementation of policy, and "to help in the interpretation of other records representing its substantive functions." 18

Schellenberg remains oblivious to the theoretical justifications for structural analysis. Instead, he understands it to be a practical approach to the identification of a particular kind of value:

The test . . . can be applied by all archivists, for no archivist is likely to question that evidence of every agency's organization and functioning should be preserved. Differences of judgement will arise only as to the completeness with which such evidence should be preserved. 19

He clearly acknowledges the importance of evidential value, and provides a clear methodology for deriving value from a thorough and objective analysis of the administrative structure of the creating organization. But, he fails to project his analysis to

16 Ibid, 143. Schellenberg's approach to the identification of evidential value is found on pp. 142-148.
17 Ibid, 143.
18 Ibid, 146-147.
19 Ibid, 141.
the next logical step: the identification of the relationship between an administrative structure and its documentation.

Within Schellenberg's model, records with evidential value are useful to a limited audience of public administrators, students of public administration and archivists. In spite of his division of information according to its administrative and research use, Schellenberg does acknowledge the validity of the orthodox archival theory that meaning is rooted in context:

The archivist must know how records came into being if he is to judge their value for any purpose. Public records, or, for that matter, records of any organic body, are the product of activity, and much of their meaning is dependent on their relation to the activity.20

He even goes so far as to concede that "In applying the test of evidential value the archivist is likely to preserve records that have other values as well. . .also for the economist, sociologist, historian, and scholars generally."21 Given Schellenberg's basic understanding of knowledge, it is difficult to understand his insistence on the separation of archival information into evidential and informational value, even for the purposes of discussion. For, information generated in the practical course of business cannot be segregated on the basis of current or potential use. All use depends on an understanding of context for meaning and significance, regardless of the user's status as administrator or researcher.


21 Schellenberg, Modern, 141.
Schellenberg then proceeds to define informational value as the value that is derived from "information that is in public records on persons, places, subjects and the like with which public agencies deal; not from the information that is in such records on the public agencies themselves."22 Such information is primarily found in the large series of modern government records such as vital records, citizenship records, land records and case files. Schellenberg identifies these records as being useful in the research of broad social questions, which can contribute to an understanding of historical causation and historical movements, such as the westward expansion of the United States.23

The problem with the concept is that Schellenberg limits informational value to information that is incidental to the substantive functions of the organization. He does not consider the nature of archives, in which the meaning of information in records is interrelated by the very act of creation and natural accumulation. At some level, however, Schellenberg understands the confluence of primary and secondary value. He notes that records that contain evidence of the mandate, functions, and activities of an organization have value for the creator "to the extent that they are needed for the current or future functioning of his agency; they have value for the archivist to the extent

22 Ibid, 148.
23 Ibid, 150-151.
that they are needed for an understanding of that functioning."24

In the same way in which the identification of evidential value is dependent on a precise analysis of administrative context, the identification of informational value relies on a content analysis that is derived from an understanding of research resources, needs and methods. Because the focus of analysis is on the use of incidental information, Schellenberg concludes that "Informational values can therefore be appraised piecemeal, for the records are judged solely on the basis of their content and not on their relation to other records produced by an agency."25 Schellenberg thus advocates a piecemeal appraisal of records that deracinates information from the context of creation. In so doing, he fails to recognize the legal and historical need for the preservation of the probative and archival nature of archives.

Schellenberg advocates three tests by which informational value may be judged. The first two tests are uniqueness and form, and are practical in nature: they identify records that are in the most complete, usable and concentrated form available. The third test is importance.26 With this final test, the archivist enters "the realm of the imponderable" as found in the present and future research world.27 In this manner, the test of

24 Ibid, 139-140.
informational value is submerged unabashedly in the subjectivity of prediction. But, according to Schellenberg, such subjectivity is a strength rather than a weakness, for the resulting diverse judgements "may well assure a more adequate social documentation."28

As part of the content analysis of records, used to identify informational value, Schellenberg alludes to a form of analysis that anticipated the present trend of documentation strategy:

The appraisal of records from the point of view of their historical interest becomes difficult when the records relate to broad historical movements, historical causation, and the like. Here a discriminating choice may have to be made among the records that are available. A movement like the westward expansion of the United States, for example, can be traced in a number of record groups in the National Archives. . . . In making this choice, the archivist may need the help of historical specialists.29

Such an analysis undermines Schellenberg's own insistence on the archivist as "independent arbiter" of the value of records, and intermediary between records creators and researchers in preserving records useful for research in a variety of subjects.30 By advocating assessments of historical movements and causation rather than assessments of records creators, Schellenberg endangers the power of the principle of provenance. This approach to appraisal weakens the contribution that

28 Schellenberg, Modern, 149.
29 Ibid, 150.
Archivists bring to research by the careful delineation and preservation of records in the context of their creation.

Schellenberg's conceptual separation of informational value from evidential value fails to consider the fact that information about specific events, things or phenomena achieves meaning and significance from its evidentiary context. Fact and context cannot be separated arbitrarily. Informational value that is understood to be distinct and separate from evidential value is information deprived of meaning. Records are always generated in the process of an activity, which is derived from a particular function of a creator. Schellenberg's concept of informational value as a separate criterion for appraisal should, therefore, be reconsidered.

Since the presentation of Schellenberg's ideas, the essence of his theoretical framework for appraisal has remained virtually unchallenged. Various reports throughout the 1960s and 1970s perpetuated accepted ideas that the appraisal of records should be determined by probable use. Some limited the concept of use even further by advocating the examination of frequency of use statistics.31 In 1977, Maynard Brichford produced a manual for appraisal that, again, related archival value to "continuing

usefulness."32 His manual does not provide a re-assessment of appraisal, but, instead, merely presents a synthesis of accepted ideas, augmented by practical suggestions, focusing on Schellenberg's uncritical amalgamation of structural and content analysis. Several have argued for the introduction of a new archival function, referred to as re-appraisal.33 But the notion merely accentuates the failure of archivists in the North American tradition to identify an appropriate timing for the selection of records for preservation.

A major attempt to alter appraisal methods was presented in 1985 by Frank Boles and Julia Young.34 But it, too, suffers from the fragmentation of knowledge into unconnected parts, and the entrapment of the selection process in a subjective assessment of value from the perspective of present use. Boles and Young construct a model that attempts to "incorporate in a logical form all the significant parts of appraisal, both those traditionally acknowledged by archivists and those factors which are often


33 The first to do so was Leonard Rapport, "No Grandfather Clause: Reappraising Accessioned Records," American Archivist 44 (Spring 1981): 143-150. Rapport suggests reappraisal every twenty to thirty years, which is similar to the timing for initial and archival appraisal advocated in 1954 by Sir James Grigg in England.

unarticulated."35 In the American tradition, the model’s theoretical framework is limited by practical concerns about cost, political pressure and access issues. The model’s three general categories include value of information, costs of retention, and political and procedural implications of the appraisal recommendations. Theoretical concerns of appraisal, however, are found only in the first category.

The suggested method by which the value of information is identified is a reconstruction of Schellenberg’s approach that attempts to reduce the tension between evidential and informational value. Its emphasis on "circumstances of creation" parallels traditional structural analysis that identifies the evidential value of the records under consideration. Appraisal is then balanced by a content analysis of information, which "takes place within a universe defined by the archivist’s experience and knowledge."36 In actual practice, however, the complex intellectual process of appraisal is unacceptably reduced to mathematical quantification.37

Boles and Young maintain Schellenberg’s primary focus on use, but extend the equation of value and use to the extreme:

Records may contain information that necessitates the restriction of their use. . . Whatever the scope of the restrictions,

36 Ibid, 129.

access limitations affect the use of the records and thus the worth of the information they contain. To cite the most extreme example, the decision to retain permanently closed records is suspect.38

Boles and Young seem to forget that today's political restrictions on access may well become tomorrow's freedom of information.

The North American tradition of insisting on the centrality of use as the ultimate arbiter of value has been recently challenged by several Canadian archivists, with the application of the principles of diplomacy to the appraisal process.39 Terry Cook, for example, develops these ideas in a manner reminiscent of Philip Brooks:

Archivists must not get distracted initially by the physical form or schematic organization of the record, but rather look at the processes and functions behind records creation. In this first and most important phase of appraisal, they must understand why records were created rather than what they contain, how they were created and used by their original users rather than how they might be used in future, and what formal functions and mandates of the creator they supported rather than what physical characteristics they may or may not have.40

38 Ibid, 130.


Cook's emphasis on relating the processes and functions of administrative structures to the circumstances of creation supports the centrality of provenantial information in the selection process. Barbara Craig adds that appraisal must be rooted in the factual reality of the records:

> The reality of the record base is an indispensable component of all acts of appraisal. Without an understanding of documents and records, of their forms and of their functions and of how they were created and used, plans can easily be divorced from reality.41

Luciana Duranti adds,

> The relationship between the records and the actions from which they derive, as embedded in the records intellectual forms and in their forms of aggregation, which tend to be very repetitive, will enable us to identify which functions and activities generated them, and their relative significance. Record forms will guide us to meaning, context and value, and so will the processes and procedures, the functions and activities of records creators.42

Such thinking deflects archivists' perspective from the values of their own society to an understanding of the relative significance of the records in terms of the activities of the records creator.

Another challenge to traditional approaches to appraisal


recently have come from the new medium of electronic records. The proliferation of electronic information systems as an increasingly normal method of recording information and transactions has the potential to become a catalyst in the re-assessment of appraisal theory and methodology. The application of archival concepts of provenance and original order to electronic records has demonstrated the importance of structural analysis. Automated systems create a startling ease of transmission and communication of information, an increased capacity for the manipulation of data and a new integration of the functional use of data. The dynamic relational formulation of data structures inexorably clarifies traditional understanding of the importance of provenance. For only in understanding administrative structure can one understand the functions of complex records. While provenance becomes highly intricate, the concept remains valid for electronic records if one extends it to the highest administrative level of responsibility for creation. The careful linkage of various uses of the information system made by subordinate offices according to their particular functions can identify and track the vital information about creation provided by the identification of provenance.

Electronic systems are organized in such a way as to process information rather than simply transmit it. Each record exists only within the system, and is dependent on it, not just for meaning, but also for processing and access. For this reason, electronic records must be identified, not by series, but by the
broader concept of information data systems. The organization of each data system into microdata related by software capabilities for precise indexing allows for a high precision of retrieval that is simply unattainable in paper records. At the same time, electronic records are highly unstable, and suffer from software dependency and rapid obsolescence. The traditional notion of original order as corresponding to physical order is meaningless in the context of the random storage of electronic data, and therefore must be reexamined. Original order in paper records is a static phenomenon that must be preserved to provide context and meaning. In electronic records, the concept of original order as an arbiter of meaning is found in the system’s dynamic relational context. This functionality is inherent in the design system of the software and must be preserved by the archivist to maintain meaning and access.

Electronic records began their history in the 1950s with non-record status, and were gradually accorded partial status for containing unique information. In 1981, John McDonald and Sue Gavrel from the Public Archives of Canada challenged Charles Dollar’s proposal to limit the evaluation of electronic records to technical and informational value. McDonald and Gavrel had no quibble with Dollar’s insistence on technical analysis as central to the appraisal of electronic records, but, for the first time, they insisted that electronic records also had evidential and
legal value.43

In 1984, Harold Naugler proposed his now widely accepted guidelines, which instituted a two-tiered approach that combined structural and content analysis with technical analysis.44 Schellenberg’s evidential and informational values were augmented by electronic values such as manipulability and linkage possibilities. The new addition of technical analysis assessed readability of the data file, the availability of documentation, and cost factors. Catherine Bailey concludes that the appraisal of electronic records is not conceptually different from the appraisal of paper records: "Their apparent intricacy is merely a reflection of the increased complexity of the electronic medium, not the nature of the information it holds."45

Since 1984, there have been two notable attempts to develop appraisal theory by Bailey, and the United Nations Advisory Committee for the Co-ordination of Information Systems (ACCIS).46 Both studies support the traditional North American emphasis on content analysis, but both also demonstrate the importance of


provenance. They also offer an integrated program of appraisal that is developed throughout the life history of a data information system, and includes initial appraisal, archival appraisal and re-appraisal.

Initial appraisal begins in the design phase of information systems. Because of the ease with which deletions and alterations can be made, the early identification of valuable records can support the automatic execution of appraisal decisions during a transaction. Design decisions can be carefully constructed to maximize record layout, the linkage of records to each other and to those in other systems, and the function that each type of record fulfills. The preservation of information about design decisions would contribute to the evidential value of electronic records and their contextualized meaning. As Bailey notes, such information parallels that which is derived from the preservation of original order in paper records. She argues that this is the most vital stage of appraisal, "because without an identification of the importance of information soon after its creation, electronic records may never even reach the second stage of a full archival appraisal."

Archival appraisal begins after administrative use is complete. Accepted practice insists on the submission of

47 ACCIS, Management, 41.
48 Bailey, "Archival," 188.
49 Ibid, 186.
electronic records in flat file format to dodge problems of electronic incompatibility and obsolescence. Bailey raises an interesting problem that is inherent in such a practice: "If archives insist on combatting problems of hardware and software incompatibility or obsolescence by accepting only flat files in ASCII or EBCDIC format, are they not losing some valuable evidential information about the records?"50 The Jenkinsonian insistence on the moral defence of the evidential nature of archives will propel archivists to eventually accept Bailey's suggestion to preserve, not only information, but also the dynamic structure of the entire information system. The United Nations report notes that technological obsolescence forces archivists to regularly move electronic information from one format to another. Because of the costs involved, the report makes the practical recommendation that this point of migration is the most logical time for the appraisal function to be performed.51

An understanding of the form of electronic records forces a re-evaluation of several aspects of traditional appraisal practice. As recent studies have indicated, appraisal must be an integrated process that spans the life history of records from creation to final disposition. For this to occur, the entire process requires extensive cooperation with the records creator. What remains to be re-evaluated is the North American focus on

50 Ibid, 188.

51 ACCIS, Management, 40-41.
content analysis as the primary method of identifying value. With the identification of the record status of electronic records, the primary focus of appraisal must remain the preservation of their archival nature. In order to be used as evidence for administrative, legal or historical purposes, the impartiality and authenticity of the records and the creation process must be preserved.

American traditions of appraisal centre on use as the primary arbiter of value that traps selection in the inescapable and conflicting subjectivities of past, present and future perspectives. Such an understanding is based on an incorrect premise that the context of creation is peripheral to the subject content of the records. But, the fact that records are used for other reasons than those for which they were created does not mean that the circumstances of creation are invalidated. For the meaning of records is inexorably connected to provenance throughout their life history, regardless of use. Most North American archivists maintain a broad acceptance of structural analysis, but they pay only lip service to the importance of maintaining the impartiality of records. Because lip service is not supported by logic, it is inevitably subverted by methodology. In the final analysis, the pervasive acceptance of the arbitrary bifurcation of knowledge into categories of evidential value and informational value does not help archivists preserve the probative and archival nature of archives.

The Canadian contribution to appraisal theory is found in
the growing insistence on the importance of understanding records in the context of their creation, which flows naturally from the functions and mandates of the records creator. Such an understanding acknowledges that, in order to preserve a documentary heritage that is usable by all researchers of all subjects, the duty of the archivist must remain the moral defence of archives.
CONCLUSION

After all is said and done, it is the record which is our special area of knowledge; it will be a sad day and a dangerous step when faith in planning replaces the study and knowledge of records.

Barbara Craig, 1991.1

While there is no monolithic consensus on appraisal issues in each of the traditions surveyed, dominant national trends seem to emerge that can contribute to a synthesis of international opinion. The archivists of continental Europe acknowledge the problem of identifying value, and recognize the need for an objective framework in order to limit the distortion caused by the intervention of the archivist. British archivists resolve the conflict between pertinence and provenance by formulating a logical equation between a broad conception of administrative value and historical value. They also contribute a practical approach to timing that involves an initial appraisal at five years from the closure of the files, and an archival appraisal at twenty-five years. Americans contribute a commitment to users, and a pragmatic insistence on efficiency. Canadians emphasize the importance of understanding records in the context of their


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creation.

All of the archivists surveyed share a sensitivity to the needs of users, although they argue about the significance of use in the appraisal process. The debate on use is profitable in that it identifies an essential aspect of the nature of archives. Whatever use is made of archives, and whatever its role in appraisal, the primary need of researchers remains the same: access to reliable evidence. The impartial and authentic creation and custody of records guarantees their probative nature. Archives provide a recorded memory of their creators that can be used as evidence to understand the present, plan for the future, and protect or challenge the past. The use of such a memory, whether it be for administrative, judicial or cultural purposes, reflects the primacy of the cultural value of records to society.

Archives are a national resource because they protect the rights of citizens, they provide for the democratic accountability of government, and they offer a source of knowledge and culture. From the preceding analysis of international literature on appraisal, three principles emerge that have the ability to guide the appraisal process in such a way as to protect the integrity of a nation's archival resource: the principle of the impartiality of archives, the principle of provenance, and the principle of contemporary value. The rational application of these principles will limit the distortion of the historical record that inevitably occurs with
the intervention of archivists in the selection process. To those who argue for natural selection, one can only counter with the logic that rational intervention cannot help but provide a better quality of evidence than chance.

The principle of impartiality recognizes that the impartial and authentic nature of archives, which is derived from the process of their creation and natural accumulation, must be preserved. Because of the value of archival records to society, because of the vital connection between preservation and usefulness, the primary focus of the appraisal process must be to select records for preservation in such a manner as to guard the archival and probative nature of the records. The question is, how can this be accomplished when the probative nature of archives is endangered by the various subjective perspectives brought by archivists to the process of selection.

As noted at the beginning of this study, the courts have circumscribed the use of documents as evidence, because they are inherently unreliable. The courts recognize the probative value of records only if two conditions are met. First, they must be authentically and impartially created in the usual and ordinary course of business. Second, they must be kept in the custody of a reliable custodian. The courts proceed on the assumption that the circumstances of creation offer a guarantee of trustworthiness because of the normal checks of accountability that exist within any organized setting. In other words, the courts limit the use of documentary evidence to archival records.
The stringent requirements of the courts for proof are an informal guide to society for the logical requirements for proof whenever records are used as evidence.

Given the importance to society of having access to reliable documents as administrative, legal and cultural evidence of its functions and activities, the first responsibility of archivists engaged in the appraisal process must be to ensure that the impartiality of the records is preserved. The Jenkinsonian notion of the moral defence of archives reflects the primacy of the probative nature of records, and directly links the notion of impartiality to use. The future usefulness of records as evidence is directly dependent on the preservation of their archival nature, through the application of principles such as respect des fonds and original order, which respect the external and internal integrity of each fonds. If archivists fail to perform this fundamental task, the records will be rendered valueless as evidence, except as discrete historical artifacts. The principle of impartiality must, therefore, be the primary principle that guides all archival functions, including the appraisal process.

The principle of provenance provides an objective framework for structural analysis, the purpose of which is to identify and preserve the records series that most accurately document the primary functions and activities of the records creator. Structural analysis is a comprehensive analysis of the contextual relationships that exist between a records creator and its
records. The analysis seeks to identify and understand the functions, procedures and actions of the records creator, as they are reflected in its administrative organization and in the documentary forms of its records. The analysis, therefore, needs to combine an administrative analysis with diplomatic analysis in order to relate the functions and actions of the records creator with the functions and role of the records. Because records are essentially transactional and provide evidence of activities, the analysis must focus on why and how records were created to document those activities.

By respecting the integrity of the original order of a fonds throughout the process, the probative nature of the records is secured for all users. The unique relationship that is created by the interaction between a researcher and the records of a fonds defines the relativity of value. If the value of the records, as defined by the particular perspective of one researcher, is arbitrarily extended and imposed on all, the result will be a gross distortion of meaning. The structural analysis of provenance attempts to counteract this danger; for the focus of the study is not the relationship between researchers and records, but rather the relationship between the parts of a fonds and the whole. That is, the focus of the study is the identification and explanation of the archival nature of the fonds.

In this manner, the application of provenance to appraisal does not limit the use of the records to a particular subject
from a particular perspective. The only limits to research questions would be the parameters of the functions and activities of the records creator in question. Users unfamiliar with how their research questions relate to these functions and activities need to be provided with meaningful intellectual access through the construction of logically designed indexes that link functions, forms, names, and subjects to the fonds of specific records creators.

In the various traditions studied, many archivalists acknowledge the problem of identifying value, and recommend the formulation of an objective framework for appraisal in order to limit the inevitable distortion that occurs in the appraisal process. Questions surrounding such an objective framework are captured in the troubling debate that pits pertinence against provenance as the primary tool of appraisal. The essence of the debate is captured in the objections of Fritz Zimmerman. He argues that the use of provenance to identify value results in a skewed selection of records that serves primarily the interests of traditional political and military history. To broaden the focus of selection, Zimmerman advocates the use of content analysis of the records to identify significant subject areas which are able to provide answers to more comprehensive research questions.

One problem with Zimmerman's argument is the fact that the application of provenance he objects to is, in effect, a camouflaged content analysis. Administrative units are evaluated
according to an ideological understanding of their "importance". If certain administrative structures are assumed by archivists to have primary importance in society, the inevitable result of such thinking would, in fact, support the interests of traditional political and military history, as Zimmerman charges. Thus the tautology of subjectivity is perpetuated.

A second problem with Zimmerman's argument is his focus on research use. Hans Booms has articulated clearly that selecting records for preservation on the basis of their projected value to future researchers is speculative for two reasons. First, subjects have no prescribed priority, for the value of records necessarily fluctuates with the perspective of the researchers. For example, what is valuable to a genealogist may not be valuable to a lawyer attempting to establish the validity of native land claims. Second, research trends change. When Zimmerman was attempting to broaden the focus of the selection process, he was responding to the research needs of the new social historians. They were questioning the validity of political history, which from their new perspective, was understood to exonerate the political structures of the elite at the expense of the rest of society. While archivists need to be sensitive to the needs of changing research trends, they cannot anticipate them.

Zimmerman's concern for meeting the needs of changing research trends indicates a widespread responsiveness among archivists from many traditions to the needs of researchers that
must not be negated in the rejection of content analysis. Researchers are dependent on archivists to preserve the probative nature of records, and to provide meaningful intellectual access. The first need must be addressed by the application of sound archival principles. The second can be addressed by the implementation of descriptive standards, rationalized intellectual access, and practical methods employed in the course of reference service.

The principle of contemporary value provides archivists with a mechanism by which they can distance themselves from the social conditioning of their own society by evaluating the functions of records creators in the context of their contemporary society. If meaning is rooted in context, then an understanding of context must be extended from the relationship between records and their creator, to include also the relationship between the records creator and its contemporary society.

An understanding of contemporary value primarily acts as an objective point of reference to help archivists distance themselves from their inevitable subjective allegiance to the ideology of their own society. The contemporary chronicle proposed by Hans Booms is not the result of an interpretive exercise, but is a straightforward record of dates and events that were important to the society of the records creator during the time the records being appraised were created. The chronicle provides an objective frame of reference in which the functions of the creator can be judged in a broad social context. As noted
previously, Hans Booms projects that use of this principle as a corollary of provenance, can eliminate a further 25% of records being appraised.

For example, native land claims in the 1990s would clearly form part of the contemporary chronicle of our society. Using this model, future archivists who are appraising records will evaluate them primarily by a structural analysis of functions and activities of the records creator. When this is done, a more extensive selection of records for preservation can be done by reference to the relationship between the records creator and contemporary events that relate the subject of land claims to the functions and jurisdiction of the records creator.

Modern research questions relating to native land issues in records created before the current widespread interest in land claims can still be answered by thoughtful provision of intellectual access to the new trends in research. If, however, archivists re-appraise historical records on the basis of their significance to current research trends, the dangers of the distortions inherent in content analysis are re-invented.

Several archivists have argued that the process of appraisal can be assisted by three measures. The first measure is the Jenkinsonian notion of vital records as the "The Golden Rule of Archive Making". Because vital records enable an organization to continue to function, they are the core of records that provide evidence of the organization, authority, functions, and policies and procedures of a records creator. These records can provide
evidence to establish administrative precedents for future action, as well as knowledge of the historical development of the agency and its functions. Such thinking assumes a logical connection between administrative and historical value which has been accepted as self-evident in the British tradition, but which clearly requires empirical verification.

The second measure suggested is that appraisal can be enriched by the insights provided by modern diplomatics. Diplomatists argue convincingly that diplomatic analysis can assist archivists in explaining the relationships that exist between the records of a fonds; and understanding why records were created, how they were used, and what functions they supported. The practical application of diplomatics to the appraisal of specific fonds needs to be demonstrated.

A third measure that can contribute to the rationalization of the appraisal process is found in the recommendation of the Grigg Report for two distinct stages of appraisal. The Report suggests that the initial appraisal be done by the creating department to identify a broad understanding of administrative value, five years after the closure of the files. The application of the British concept of initial appraisal using the principle of provenance as a guide could easily be adapted to the timing of the implementation of retention schedules, when files are moved from their semi-active stage to final disposition. The Report proposes that archival appraisal be done by the archivist in conjunction with the creating department to identify both
administrative and historical value, twenty-five years after the closure of the files. The time gap between creation, original use and archival appraisal provides an historical perspective to the process that can assist the archivist in a re-assessment of the initial selection of series. In this final appraisal, the principle of provenance can be combined with the use of the contemporary chronicle to further refine the selection of series for preservation.

Further study is required in order to provide empirical verification of how these three measures can contribute to appraisal for selection. If they are proved valid, through studies of their effect on the appraisal of specific fonds, they have the potential to contribute immeasurably to the quality of the selection process. To round out the entire subject, the principles of appraisal for selection need to be further examined to identify their application to the problems associated with appraisal for acquisition.

The current constitutional crisis in Canada has exposed the fragility of the confluence of cultural identities that combine to form the Canadian experience. The national search for self-knowledge evocatively demonstrates society's continuing need for and reliance on our documentary heritage to preserve or alter Canada's political, judicial and cultural life. For, knowledge of the past and present informs society in such a way as to create social stability and meaning in the midst of evolutionary change. For this reason, archivists must remember Sir Hilary
Jenkinson's admonition that our primary duty in appraisal is the moral defence of archives. In order for this to be accomplished, the principle of provenance must remain the foundation of the appraisal process.
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GLOSSARY OF ARCHIVAL TERMS

ACQUISITION:
An addition to the holdings of an archival institution, whether received by transfer under an established and legally based procedure, or by deposit, purchase, gift, or bequest.

ACQUISITION POLICY:
An official statement issued by an archival institution identifying the kinds of materials it will acquire and the conditions or terms that will regulate their acquisition.

ADMINISTRATIVE VALUE:
The value that accrues to records because of their usefulness to an organization or person to fulfill and document its administrative mandate, function and activities. It includes operational, legal and financial value.

ARCHIVAL NATURE:
The inherent characteristics of archives that are logically derived from the circumstances of their creation, in which records naturally accumulate in the course of a practical activity within an accountable structure. The characteristics of naturalness, interrelatedness, uniqueness, impartiality and authenticity guarantee the probative nature of archives.

ARCHIVES:
The documents created, received and used by an organization or person in the course of its practical activities, and preserved as evidence of its mandate, functions and activities.

APPRAISAL:
The process by which archives are evaluated for their final disposition, which includes either destruction or preservation in an archival institution.

AUTHENTICITY:
The quality of documents of being duly vested with all necessary and legal formalities acquired in the natural process of their creation within an accountable administrative structure. These formal attributes allow archival evidence to be considered by the court as credible and reliable.
CONTENT ANALYSIS:
The study of the subject content of an archival fonds. The resulting knowledge is used by the archivist in the appraisal process to determine the series of records that most accurately reflect historical and modern social phenomena of society.

HISTORICAL VALUE:
The value that accrues to records because of their usefulness to researchers. Synonymous with research value.

IMPARTIALITY:
The quality of being unbiased, unprejudiced and not partial to any party because of being in a position of neutrality and objectivity. Because archives are created in the course of a practical activity, they are understood to provide impartial, reliable evidence of that activity to all researchers, regardless of their purpose or perspective.

PROBATIVE NATURE:
An inherent characteristic of archives that logically derives from the circumstantial guarantee of trustworthiness of their creation process, thereby enabling them to be used as evidence to logically furnish, establish or contribute to proof.

PROVENANCE:
The organization or person that created, accumulated and maintained the records in the conduct of business or personal affairs. The archival nature of a fonds of a records creator is preserved by respecting its external and internal integrity. The external integrity of a fonds is respected by not intermingling the records of one records creator with those of another. The internal integrity of a fonds is preserved by respecting original order.

PRINCIPLE OF PERTINENCE:
The principle that the value of records is identified on the basis of the relationship between their subject content and important social phenomena.

PRINCIPLE OF PROVENANCE:
The principle that the records selected for permanent preservation are identified on the basis of a comprehensive analysis of the contextual relationships that exist between a records creator and its records.
PUBLIC RECORDS:
Documents issued by a body having jurisdiction on matters of a public nature, or related to matters regulated by public law, or accessible to the public.

RECORDS:
Recorded information created, received and maintained by an organization or person for use because of legal obligations or in the transaction of business.

STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS:
The study of the structure and functions of the creating organization and the processes by which the records were generated. The resulting knowledge is used by the archivist in the appraisal process to identify series of records that most accurately reflect the activities of the records creator.

VALUE:
The estimate in which a thing is held according to its real or supposed worth, usefulness or importance relative to a particular perspective.