

engagement with collections. For this purpose, the rich-prospect browser deserves serious consideration.

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Christopher A Lee (ed.), *I, Digital: Personal Collections in the Digital Era*, Society of American Archivists, Chicago, 2011. 379 pp. ISBN 1 931666 38 5 (paperback). US\$69.95.

Personal papers, personal archives, personal records, personal collections – whatever you call them, these materials have tended to fall between the different collecting and curatorial disciplines and professions. In the digital age, issues around personal collections have become even more complex and more interdisciplinary in nature, as well as steadily more pressing and urgent, as digital formats and services appear and disappear more rapidly. After more than 20 years of discussion in the professional literature – amply demonstrated in this volume’s 55-page bibliography – there is still uncertainty about the best way for the collecting professions to define and handle these materials.

This volume offers a valuable and wide-ranging collection of essays which examine conceptual issues, specific genres and types of documents, and the implications for memory institutions. Christopher Lee has assembled contributors from across the professions: archivists, librarians, academic researchers in the fields of recordkeeping and archival systems, and computer science researchers. They include two Australians – Adrian Cunningham and Sue McKemmish – as well as authors from Britain and North America. The absence of non-Anglophone viewpoints, while a little disappointing, is not a serious gap.

The absence of any creators of personal collections is more of a concern; where are the researchers, creative writers and other *collectors* speaking for themselves? This is particularly relevant when several of the contributors attempt to describe and define best practice for personal recordkeeping, notably in Cunningham’s ‘twelve principles’. Some of the essays include interesting reports on research into the behaviour of individual creators, but the overall perspective is very much that of the professional groups involved.

All the essays are well worth reading and considering, but two raise issues of particular urgency. Catherine Marshall – the Microsoft researcher well-known for her work on personal digital archiving – tackles the question of dealing with materials dispersed across numerous public or semi-public cloud-type systems. If a person’s digital collection is spread across Flickr, YouTube, WordPress, Facebook, Twitter and so on, what does this mean for the individual trying to *organise* these materials, let alone for the institutions trying to *collect* them? In a similar vein, Christopher Lee looks at the ‘appraisal of materials in the social web’ – in what sense can the notion of appraisal be applied to blogs and similar types of output?

It increasingly looks as though the digital age will require a complete re-thinking of what it means to collect, select and preserve personal materials. But this process will need to involve more than the updating of archival principles, in order

to encompass new technologies. It will need to take into account the fundamental changes which are happening in the nature of research – the so-called *Fourth Paradigm* – as well as the ways in which digital ubiquity is affecting the very concepts of social memory and historical evidence. The digital age is challenging the whole nature and purpose of libraries and museums; archives face the same challenges. The essays in this volume are a valuable overview of current approaches and issues relevant to personal digital collections, but they also contain some pointers alerting us to even more profound changes.

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Mark McKenna, *An Eye for Eternity: The Life of Manning Clark*, Melbourne University Press/Miegunyah Press, 2011. 816 pp. ISBN 978 052285 617 0. AU\$54.95.

Julian Barnes's recent novel, *The Sense of Ending*, quotes from a (fictional) French historian, Patrick Lagrange, that 'History is that certainty produced at the point where the imperfections of memory meet the inadequacies of documentation' (p. 17). This blurry, uncertain land mapped by the archive (the documentation of what happened), the history (the story of what happened) and the memory (the recollection of what happened) is the territory occupying Mark McKenna's wonderful biography of Manning Clark. The archive, the history and the memory are all seduced with the lure of nailing one of the great big eternal questions – what the hell happened? For the biography, the question to be looked in the eye is who was this person? And, from here, the almost inevitable corollary of who really was this person? (Where does this insistence come from? Is it left over from religion? Plato?) Who was Manning Clark really?

And where is he to be found? Though Clark left a well-tended personal archive of letters, press clippings, diaries, drafts, speeches and book annotations, McKenna is aware that the Clark of his archive is not the Clark of life. The task McKenna sets for himself, then, is how to balance the mass of the archive against the light of the living. For the lightness, he utilises the recollections of those who remembered – his voice, his movements and his teaching style. And this balances off the oppressive archive, the letters, the diaries, that is, for the most part, one of angst.

From this, emerges a Clark of many angles. The Clark of the establishment he so mocked – son of a minister, educated Melbourne Grammar, Melbourne and Oxford Universities, excellent cricketer and Carlton supporter. The unfaithful and needy husband and father; the drinker falling down in gutters in 1950s Canberra; the incredibly sensitive historian raging at critics; the public intellectual and Labor Party historian of choice; the inspiring teacher; and, not least, the author of the six-volume *History of Australia*. So what, then, is the real Clark? Of course, he is all of these people. Who is the *real* Clark? Real in the sense of what was the dominant theme, motivation or trait of his life? Well, from this biography, the real Clark is