Review Article

The Mysterious Outside Reader

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- Edward Duyker and Per Tingbrand (editors and translators), *Daniel Solander: collected correspondence, 1753–1782*, Miegunyah Press, Melbourne, 1995.
- Dymphna Clark (translator and editor), *Baron Charles von Hügel: New Holland Journal, November 1833–October 1935*, Melbourne University Press at the Miegunyah Press in association with the State Library of New South Wales, Melbourne, 1994.
- Helen Vellacott (ed.), *Diary of a Lady's Maid: Government House in colonial Australia*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1995.
- Edward Duyker (ed.), *A Woman on the Goldfields: recollections of Emily Skinner, 1854–1878*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1995.
- Andrew Hassam, *No Privacy for Writing: shipboard diaries, 1852–1879*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1995.
- David Fitzpatrick, *Oceans of Consolation: personal accounts of Irish migration to Australia*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1995.
- Frank Kermode and Anita Kermode (eds), *The Oxford Book of Letters*, OUP, Oxford, 1995.
- Ann Charters (ed.), *Jack Kerouac: selected letters, 1940–1956*, Viking, New York, 1995.

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* See biographical note on page 20.

I

I AM REGULARLY REMINDED by a colleague that half of all records created are personal records. While this assertion is of course more conceptual than quantifiable, it nevertheless serves to reminds us of the relative significance of the personal records dimension in the world of archives and records. The *Oxford Book of Letters* estimates that most of us write at least half a dozen letters every week, so that in fifty or sixty years of normal writing life many people must despatch about 18 000 letters. Letters are of course only one type of personal record. To letters we must add diaries, journals, notebooks, financial papers, drafts of writings and many other types of documents. Although much, if not all, of this material is archival in nature, only a tiny fraction of those personal records created ever find their way into the care (or Jenkinsonian defence) of archivists. Of course such is also the case with corporate/organisational records. Nevertheless, a quick census of the shelf metreage of archival holdings in Australia as evidenced by the *Directory of Archives in Australia*[1], reveals that less than five per cent of archival holdings in this country are personal records. There is no doubt that in recent decades the growth in personal records has not kept pace with the enormous bulk of records generated by contemporary bureaucracies. Nevertheless, in view of my colleague's assertion, it seems reasonable to conclude that Australian archivists have a poor record of capturing and preserving personal records.

Of course, size is not everything. Personal records archivists rejoice in the small high-quality personal collections that they acquire and happily contrast this situation with the kilometres of seemingly dry policy and case files that weigh down their government archives colleagues. Yet the fact remains that, as a society, we are not very good at capturing and preserving those personal records that can serve as evidence of our identity. A major reason for this is the relative absence of durable recordkeeping systems in the private sphere. The warrants for corporate recordkeeping (the need for ongoing corporate efficiency and the consequent need to retain and have access to corporate memory, together with legal/accountability requirements) mean that many corporate environments have durable and efficient recordkeeping systems which, sooner or later, can become the responsibility of archivists. Clearly the warrants for personal recordkeeping are not as compelling. Most people have very rudimentary and transitory personal recordkeeping systems.

But the problem is not just the relative absence of adequate recordkeeping systems. Another problem is the lack of any comprehensive method for linking recordkeeping systems in the personal domain to archival programs, or, in

the words of Sue McKemmish,[2] the process of transforming 'evidence of me' into 'evidence of us'. There is a notable absence of any systematic and coordinated process for the identification, appraisal and transfer of personal records into the care and retention of archivists. Graeme Powell's analysis of the collecting of personal papers in Australia[3] reveals a remarkably unbalanced and ad hoc national collection of personal archival records. In part this lack of balance is a reflection of differing recordkeeping practices between different categories of individuals (creative writers create more records and are better recordkeepers than boilermakers). More importantly, however, it is I believe a reflection of the biased collecting interests of manuscripts curators which, at least in part, is a reflection of their perceived research demands.

Both personal and corporate records can be of long-term socio-historical value. Because archivists and records managers are often involved in managing corporate records for short-term administrative/legal purposes they are well positioned to implement systematic strategies for the identification and retention of those corporate records that have enduring cultural value. It is because archivists are almost always absent from the administrative/legal phase of the records continuum for personal records that the mechanisms for the identification, capture and retention of those personal records of enduring cultural value have been so ad hoc and haphazard.

What are we to do about this situation? Should the separation of personal records archivists from the process of records capture continue to be, as Chris Hurley suggests,[4] definitive? The good thing about the advent of electronic records is that it has forced archivists to re-examine from the bottom up what it is we do. This process has been working through the corporate records domain for some years and has seen inter alia the emergence of the postcustodial school with its emphasis on the records continuum and functions/provenance-based systems of appraisal and intellectual control. Recently this re-evaluation has started to seep into the personal records domain. Elsewhere I have argued that personal records archivists need to become more actively involved in the records creation/short-term use phases of the records continuum in order to more efficiently identify, capture and preserve records of enduring cultural value.[5]

More recently Chris Hurley[6] has urged personal records archivists to study the literary warrant and functional requirements for personal recordkeeping and socio-historical evidence. If we wish to improve personal recordkeeping practices and software platforms as well as develop better systems for the identification, appraisal and transfer of personal records into archival care,

we need to have a much better understanding of what socio-historical evidence and testimony society would like to see preserved and for what purposes.[7]

To assist in this process I have studied a sample of recent publications based upon previously unpublished personal letters and diaries. It is my hope that, in studying the selection of documents chosen for publication and the uses and interpretations to which these are subjected, we may find some clues as to the literary warrant for personal recordkeeping.

Every year dozens of published volumes of letters and diaries stream out of publishing houses and specialist presses. The fact that publishers keep churning out these volumes suggests that there is a ready market for such titles and an active societal interest in reading transcriptions of the personal records contained therein. Notwithstanding prurience and the desire to peek into the personal lives of others, this continued interest is undoubtedly a manifestation of society's need to understand itself and its history. If only a minuscule percentage of personal records created ever find their way into archival care, then it is clear that only a further minuscule percentage of that ever gets published. In the process of course the records are often stripped of much of their context, that thing which archivists hold so dear and which is seen as a key defining element of the recordness of records. From an archival point of view, the extent of this context that is retained or conveyed in published form is, along with the maintenance of a reliable and authentic content and structure, the major yardstick by which the quality of these publications can be assessed. While I will touch on these points in this review, they are not my chief concern. What concerns me more is the nature of the material selected and the uses and interpretations to which those selections are subjected.[8] What I am also concerned about is the clues to the nature of personal recordkeeping practices which these publications reveal, for only if we better understand personal recordkeeping practices can we hope to do a better job at capturing and preserving those records for posterity.

In particular, I am interested in the motivations that drive certain individuals to maintain durable recordkeeping systems and will ponder the possibility that the dictates and expectations of posterity are an integral influence on the recordkeeping practices of many individual recordkeepers. In response to Jenkinson's admonition that records must be spontaneous, natural and impartial and must never be created with a view to posterity,[9] I will take my lead from Terry Cook[10] and argue that records are rarely so unselfconsciously pure, that all records are purposeful rather than 'objectively truthful' and that many records are consciously created for audiences which may not be immediately apparent. It is precisely because records are contingent and

purposeful that it is necessary for archivists to capture and preserve as much context as possible to enable future users to discern the hidden purposes and audiences for those records. I will argue the perhaps heretical notion that the possibility of posterity being one of these hidden purposes and audiences in no way devalues their recordness. It is merely one of many factors that has to be taken into consideration by future users of the records when interpretation and analysis of the records is undertaken. Because records are rarely as objectively natural as Jenkinson would have us believe, archivists should not overly fret about the possibility of active documentation strategies compromising the integrity of the records they mediate. Providing personal records archivists behave professionally and judiciously in their dealings with records creators (just as their corporate records colleagues are already doing), and providing they document their interventions thoroughly, their actions can only be beneficial.

II

There is no doubt that transcribing manuscripts, especially manuscripts from the eighteenth century or earlier, poses a number of practical dilemmas for editors. How true to the original orthography should the transcriptions remain without making the task of reading almost impossible for today's readers? How can the spatial arrangement of manuscript words on a page be adequately conveyed in transcript form without resorting to parallel facsimile reproductions? How do you deal with illegible words? How complete should the transcripts be if the body of original material is extensive, and, if exclusions/selections are made, what criteria should be used and how should the exclusions and selections be flagged and justified? The problems are compounded if, in addition to selection and transcription, it is also necessary to translate.

The editors of *Daniel Solander: collected correspondence 1753-1782* did not have the problem of selection, they simply included every item of Solander correspondence they could locate. To flesh out their collection they have added six items of third party 'ancillary' correspondence of biographical relevance to Solander. While I am not qualified to comment on the quality of the translations, they would appear to have broken the first law of translation, which is to use a translator whose first language is that of the language into which the items are being translated. Nevertheless, the Swedish letters here are transcribed in both Swedish and in English, so those with a command of both languages can check the quality of the translations themselves. The

volume contains extensive explanatory footnotes for each of the 188 letters in addition to maps, illustrations and adequate personal name, botanical and zoological indexes.

Unlike his contemporary, Joseph Banks, Solander does not appear to have maintained a personal recordkeeping system. He apparently kept no journal, choosing instead to expend his energies drafting detailed descriptions of the botanical specimens he collected so assiduously. Most of these descriptions, together with a small quantity of semi-official correspondence reproduced herein, are held by the British Museum of Natural History where he worked from 1763 until his death in 1782. The remaining correspondence is drawn from a wide variety of sources including the now widely dispersed Banks papers[11] and the papers of Solander's Swedish mentor Carl Linnaeus, which are held by the Linnean Society of London. The great value of this publication is the insight it gives into the creation of a scientific discipline. Linnaeus was the founder of modern botany. His student, Solander, and Solander's companion Banks were its greatest exponents. The excitement of these two young men experienced in identifying, describing and classifying 'new' plants shines through the correspondence.

Not that maintaining international scientific correspondence was all that easy in the eighteenth century. Many months would often pass before letters between Uppsala and London or vice versa reached their recipient. The delays must have been infuriating. Curiously, as an Australian publication, this volume contains very few references to Solander's epochal voyage on Cook's *Endeavour*. There are only two letters describing the voyage in detail and these were both written in Rio de Janeiro before the *Endeavour* even made it into the Pacific.

Botany was also the overriding passion of another early continental visitor to Australia, Baron Charles von Hügel. During the 1830s Hügel, an Austrian diplomat and army officer, spent six years touring the world in an effort to mend a broken heart. One of these years was spent in the Australian and New Zealand colonies. Throughout these travels he kept detailed journals, apparently with the intention of publishing a series of travel books after his return home. The voluminous manuscript which has been the subject of a prodigious feat of translation by Dymphna Clark is not the original journal kept by Hügel. The manuscript, which is in the handwriting of an amanuensis, was purchased by the Mitchell Library from a London dealer in 1932. It contains a mixture of transcripts from the original journal, which appears to have been lost, interspersed with subsequently penned ruminations on the nature of animal, human and vegetable life in New Holland. It would appear

to be a draft of a publication on his New Holland tour prepared some twenty or thirty years after the event. The Mitchell Library manuscript, as an estray of obscure provenance and no definite recordkeeping context, barely qualifies as an archival record. Dymphna Clark's diplomatic examination of the manuscript volumes is able to deduce some of the recordness embedded therein, but more questions are unanswered than answered. While the authenticity of the manuscript is undeniable, its socio-historical value is more informational than evidential. Such is usually the case with drafts of unpublished works of non-fiction.

In order to keep the publication within a manageable length Clark has edited out substantial chunks from the original, including the entire section on New Zealand, which may be the subject of a separate book. The footnoting is fairly sparse, but there is a detailed biographical glossary and an excellent index. Her translation is felicitous and, I imagine, true to the somewhat portentous and self-important tone of the original.

While Hügel's journal was written with a view to publication and thus posterity, the same cannot be said with such certainty for the other three volumes of journals and diaries under review. Each of these three in different ways represent attempts by the editors to give an historical voice to that often overlooked segment of society, working and lower middle-class women. Of these, *Diary of a Lady's Maid*, while not a complete failure by virtue of the qualities of the original manuscript, is certainly the least successful. The journals of Emma Southgate, a 'between stairs' maid to the wife of the Governor of Victoria in the 1880s, are full of what Marxist historians call 'false consciousness'. In the great class struggle Emma appeared to side with her aristocratic employers, but nothing like as much as her obsequious editor Helen Vellacott. While Emma records with stoicism the strained boredom, long hours and exhaustion of Vice-Regal balls and other engagements, these valuable insights into class psychology are almost buried amidst the furious forelock tugging of editor Vellacott. Vellacott's only interest in Emma Southgate appears to be in the glimpses she provides of the viceregal lifestyle. By the end of the book the annoying editorial interventions leave us with plenty of banal detail about the life of Lord and Lady Loch but very little biographical context on the author of the journals.

Much better is *A Woman on the Goldfields*, the shipboard journal and subsequent reminiscences of Emily Skinner. Compared with Vellacott, Duyker's editing is relatively unobtrusive. Those alterations he has made to the original text are enumerated and explained in the introduction. Skinner wrote her gold rush memoir in 1878, twenty-four years after emigrating to

Victoria from England. One can only speculate on the intended audience for the memoir. It may be that Skinner hoped for publication. It is, however, possible that the memoir was written to be copied and circulated amongst internationally dispersed family members. Duyker's copy of the manuscript came to him via contacts in Mauritius. In any case, as with all memoirs, posterity in one form or another is the intended audience. The manuscript is anonymous, except for the initials 'E. S.' and Skinner took some trouble to disguise the identity of herself, her husband and the other main characters in the narrative. This anonymity required Duyker to conduct extensive research to identify the author. This in turn led to the location of Skinner's shipboard diary in the hands of descendants in Australia.

Skinner's style is warm, generous, immediate, understated and wryly observant. As a source of evidence the memoir is an unusual mixture of frankness and dissembling. She describes in brutal, yet sympathetic detail the privations of life amidst a goldrush, including the death of her eldest child of frontier fever. At the same time Victorian scruples force her to gloss over some of the less salubrious aspects of colonial society. The nature of her intended audience, whoever they may have been, no doubt influenced her to fudge human peccadillos in a way that she did not feel compelled to do in her more private shipboard diary.

Despite their often stultifying uniformity, shipboard diaries are to descendants in settler societies powerfully symbolic representations of emotional passage and cultural transference. Andrew Hassam has previously conducted a detailed textual study of the genre in his *Sailing to Australia.*[12] He has followed up this dense theoretical work with a far more accessible collection of steerage diaries in *No Privacy for Writing: shipboard diaries 1852-1879.* Hassam's purpose in selecting eight steerage, as opposed to cabin, diaries is to rescue from obscurity the working-class experience of emigration. His extensive research has enabled him to select a broadly representative sample (e.g. four males, four females) of the sub-genre.

In addition to the highly ritualised form and content of these diaries, Hassam is particularly interested in the psychological motivations for writing them and the nature of their intended audiences. The diaries were not written for publication and were usually addressed to a specific person rather than the public at large:

> . . .emigrants expected their diaries to circulate among a small group of family and friends to whom the diary, ideally, could be read aloud. Shipboard diaries were a kind of journal-letter . . . but they were unlike letters both because of their more public nature and because they were conceived as books (p. xv).

As the overwhelming majority of such diaries are peculiarly unreflective, one can only speculate on the motivations for writing: to leave a lasting token of yourself in the homeland; to keep a promise to a close relative; to advise and instruct those coming after you; to exert some psychological control over the experience of dislocation and relocation; or simply to occupy some of the thousands of idle hours on board.

Hassam estimates that there are around 800 known shipboard diaries in existence, a tiny proportion of those that were written. Of these, only about thirty per cent are by steerage passengers, despite the overwhelming numerical dominance of steerage over cabin passengers. Of these, only about forty diaries represent the experiences of 400 000 working-class women emigrants. Class and literacy differences cannot by themselves explain these discrepancies. The major explanation lies in the title of the book. The cramped and noisy conditions between decks were simply not conducive to writing. The survival of those few diaries that are now in libraries and archives was 'through a combination of sentiment and blind chance'.

Hassam in his transcription and editing has been careful to preserve the variant orthographies as the voices of working-class regional Britain. While the editorial interventions are minimal, the biographical footnoting of obscure fellow steerage passengers adds to the humanity of the narratives. There are enough variations between narratives to help the modern reader persevere with the formularities of style and content.

Personal accounts of working-class migration to Australia are also the focus of David Fitzpatrick's *Oceans of Consolation*. In this case, however, the source documents are emigrant letters rather than shipboard diaries. This book is a formidable piece of scholarship, presenting a 650 page analysis of some 100 letters written by members of fourteen families of Irish emigrants between 1843 and 1906. While it may be possible to criticise some of the other books examined in this review for presenting records with insufficient context, the same certainly cannot be said of Fitzpatrick. Indeed, the opposite criticism could easily be made, that of investing a small base of evidence with an unjustifiably excessive amount of top-heavy analysis. The problem with representing context for records reproduced out of context is that the representation is one constructed by the modern day author/editor. Of course these are criticisms that would probably be made only by archivists. We should not forget that original records are there for interpretation, reinterpretation and reconstruction by scholars. This book is a fine example of that branch of modern scholarship which seeks to find enormous representative meaning in a small body of source documents. It is this scholarly trend that would

appear to give weight to the assertion that collecting archivists do not need to build broadly representative collections of records when historians are often happy to base an entire book or thesis on a single diary or a single folder of letters.

For collecting archivists to accept this advice would, however, do scholars, including David Fitzpatrick, a grave disservice. While Fitzpatrick's analysis is indeed focused on a narrow range of records, he draws upon a much broader range of records in support of his analysis. To me the great value of Fitzpatrick's book is the way it reveals the great richness of single documents, albeit recognising that single documents must never be analysed in isolation from their context. As a window into the daily lives and preoccupations of people from another place and another time this book has few peers.

In marked contrast is the *Oxford Book of Letters*, which presents an eclectic (everyone from Elizabeth I to Groucho Marx) selection of 328 letters dating from 1535 to 1985 in a form that is virtually context free. The great problem with these sorts of anthologies is that they suggest letters can be enjoyed in almost complete isolation from both the recordkeeping and socio-historical contexts from which they are lifted. I beg to differ. Certainly the selection contains any number of witty or devastatingly worded missives that one can dip into at random. Overall, however, I found many of them frustratingly opaque. The editors grant each letter no more than a few lines of background explanation and even fewer lines of user-unfriendly footnotes. To appreciate some letters I found myself not only having to read them three or four times, but also having to spend much more time running off to encyclopedias to fill in the admittedly lamentable gaps in my general knowledge. Even with all this effort, the rewards were often more obfuscating than illuminating. Moreover, most of the letters are not transcribed from the originals but are copied from already published sources, some of them doubtless of less than reliable representational quality. This is the sort of book that both encourages and feeds off the mentality of those antiquarian dealers who merrily dismember archival series into individual components for separate and more lucrative resale. The introduction is, however, worth reading for its potted history of letter writing, including an analysis of the impact of the introduction of the postal service on British writing habits.

Much more engaging and enthralling is Ann Charters' selection of letters of American beat generation writer Jack Kerouac. Each letter is introduced with a generous helping of biographical context and supported by extensive and informative footnoting. Kerouac was a prodigious and highly readable correspondent. Somewhat surprisingly, considering his chaotic lifestyle, he

was a meticulous recordkeeper. Despite his constant peripatations he maintained a base at his long-suffering mother's house. This quiet refuge gave him the space to both write and maintain his personal archive. When Charters first met him in 1966 Kerouac boasted 'I've kept the neatest records you ever saw'. For thirty years he systematically gathered and filed his literary drafts, journals and correspondence, including carbon typescripts of his own letters. Towards the end of his life he went through these records, annotating many with dates and comments.

What drove Kerouac to be such an assiduous recordkeeper? Friends testified to his unerring memory, awarding him the appellation 'Memory Babe'. All of Kerouac's literary output is heavily autobiographical in nature. His aim was to create an enduring Proustian fictional legend based upon his own life experiences. Kerouac relied on his personal records as an adjunct to his own formidable memory. When writing a novel based on a certain period of his life he would revisit that period by re-reading the relevant correspondence and journals. But Kerouac did not just maintain records for his own use. From an early age he was convinced of his destiny as a great writer. His dedication to that end was obsessive, unswerving and all-consuming. One gets the impression that almost every word he ever wrote was written at least partly for the benefit of an anticipated literary posterity. He placed himself mentally amongst the pantheon of leading literary figures: Whitman, Melville, Proust, Joyce, Céline and Thomas Wolfe, and drank himself to an early death when his much delayed recognition focused more on his social notoriety than on his literary achievements.

In a 1948 letter to his muse Neal Cassady he stated: 'I'm not saying this for your benefit (don't have to) so much as for "posterity" which may someday read this letter, all my letters'. Two years later he admitted to Cassady that his letter is written 'with the mysterious outside reader, who is certainly not God, bending over my shoulder'. In a 1951 letter to Cassady he parenthetically addresses this outside reader, telling us at one point to go to hell. He read and absorbed the published letters of Keats and Dickens. He kept unposted letters to his early girlfriends ('I shall preserve it as a monument to my emotional "teens"'). The self-consciousness of Kerouac's records creation and recordkeeping activities are an affront to the Jenkinsonian view of genuine records being spontaneous and impartial, unsullied by any thoughts of posterity. Yet who can gainsay the recordness of the Kerouac archive?

III

What can we draw from all this? On one level this literature survey is not terribly helpful—it merely confirms what we already know about societal interest in manuscripts. There has always been publisher interest in previously unpublished manuscripts and this interest is very often quite independent of any recognition of the recordness or otherwise of the original manuscripts. The *Oxford Book of Letters*, the von Hügel journal and the Emma Southgate journal are all cases in point. The original manuscripts for these publications were either not genuine archival records in the first place (e.g. Hügel) or they have been stripped of all of their recordness in the process of publication (the Oxford and Southgate books).

The other five examples, however, are more instructive for my purposes. Each of these publications have either preserved or recreated important contextual links in the process of editing and publishing, thus maintaining or enhancing the recordness of the manuscripts thus presented. As archivists we of course have to recognise that our distinction between records and non records is one that is, at best, only recognised implicitly by the great majority of researchers, editors and historians. Historians instead distinguish between primary and secondary sources. Just as not all manuscripts are records so not all manuscripts are primary sources, but not all primary sources are records.[13]

Does the selection of material chosen for publication help us to better understand society's literary warrant for socio-historical evidence and testimony? In one sense the answer is no, as the kinds of manuscripts reproduced here are exactly the sort of juicy items that manuscript curators are always happy to accept into custody. It is, however, worth noting that the Southgate and Skinner journals were not found in a library or archival collection, but in private hands. This highlights the long standing symbiotic dependence collecting archivists have upon researchers who locate valuable material and inform them of its existence and whereabouts.

Despite the lack of explicit awareness amongst researchers of the importance of recordness, these publications nevertheless highlight the importance of personal records being maintained in recordkeeping contexts wherever possible. Where manuscripts have been maintained in their recordkeeping context (e.g. Kerouac), the job of the researcher is made infinitely easier. Where manuscripts have been separated from their recordkeeping contexts the better researchers have had to recreate these contexts as much as possible in order to be able to develop meaningful interpretations of the sources. Of course the

researchers would probably not conceive of their efforts in those terms, but we know better!

What does this survey teach us about the nature of personal recordkeeping itself? I would argue that the Kerouac example is the exception that proves the rule. As personal recordkeepers go Kerouac was unusual in the amount of care and trouble he took to maintain and preserve a comprehensive personal recordkeeping system. I have argued that at least in part his motivation for doing this was posterity. Was Kerouac's conscious concern for posterity as unusual as his recordkeeping habits? Probably. I would argue though that Kerouac, by being an extreme example, helps to demonstrate in sharp relief aspects of personal recordkeeping behaviours that are more difficult to discern in the great majority of cases. Kerouac quite openly created records with a view to posterity. Is it not possible that the rest of us do the same to a greater or lesser extent, either consciously or subconsciously, depending on the situation we find ourselves in at any given time?[14] At the very least we know that records can be created for a variety of potential audiences, some of which may be extremely difficult to discern.[15] Andrew Hassam's analysis of the audiences and motivations for shipboard diaries highlights the importance of not judging records on face value. It is this multi-layered ambiguity of records that make it imperative for them to be maintained in their context-enriching recordkeeping systems. It is this requirement that makes our job as archivists so vital in the management of personal records.

If, to capture and preserve personal records in recordkeeping systems, it is necessary for archivists to establish links with personal records creators at an early stage in the records continuum, do we need to worry about the potential effect our actions may have on the nature of resulting records? Jenkinson warns us to avoid any actions that may introduce the dictates of posterity into the recordkeeping process. But, if these dictates are likely to be influential in any case, is it not better to recognise the fact and simply get on with the job of capturing those records that need to be captured, ideally through helping design and implement recordkeeping systems which are likely to either prevent or make transparent attempts to doctor the record? Providing we adequately document our involvement we can safely leave it to future researchers to discern the particular influences, audiences and motivations that underpin records creation. At least we can comfort ourselves with the thought that we have bequeathed a meaningful recordkeeping system to the researcher, thus providing a context which can make their job of interpretation so much easier. Surely it is better to do that than to continue our current practice of picking up the isolated remnants of recordkeeping systems in the

smug awareness that at least we did not offend Jenkinson's principle of non-interference.

Endnotes

1. Susan Burnstein et al., *Directory of Archives in Australia*, O'Connor, ACT, 1992.
2. Sue McKemmish, 'Evidence of me. . .', elsewhere in this issue.
3. Graeme Powell, 'The Collecting of Personal and Private Papers in Australia', elsewhere in this issue.
4. Chris Hurley, 'Beating the French', elsewhere in this issue.
5. Adrian Cunningham, 'The Archival Management of Personal Records in Electronic Form: some suggestions', *Archives and Manuscripts*, vol. 22, no. 1, May 1994, pp. 94–105.
6. Hurley, op. cit.
7. Luciana Duranti characterises this as the need for 'historical accountability . . . the need to provide and receive explanation and understanding from one generation to another'; see L. Duranti, 'The Concept of Appraisal and Archival Theory', *The American Archivist*, vol. 57, Spring 1994, p. 341.
8. I recognise that, by examining the uses to which society puts the archival records in its care in order to find clues as to the functional requirements for socio-historical evidence, I am placing use at the centre of the equation. This will no doubt horrify those who see themselves of defenders of the pure Jenkinsonian vision of archives, a vision which according to its proponents is disdainful of usage patterns dictating archival priorities. (c.f. Terry Eastwood, 'Nailing a Little Jelly to the Wall of Archival Studies', *Archivaria*, no. 35, Spring 1993, p. 251, note 16; Luciana Duranti, op. cit., p. 342.) I make no apologies for this. Records are not retained for their own sake, they are retained initially because they are administratively and legally essential to their creators. A smaller proportion of these records are retained beyond the period for which they are administratively and legally useful, because they are of socio-historical value. If records never get used they are clearly of no socio-historical value. A study of the way records are used for socio-historical purposes is therefore an essential element in understanding what makes records socio-historically valuable. It must still, however, be recognised that my sample is extremely narrow and can only reveal a part of the full picture. As Terry Cook has argued, archivists need to be cognisant of the broad spectrum of human experience (Terry Cook, 'Electronic Records, Paper Minds: the revolution in information management and archives in the post-custodial and post-modernist era', *Archives and Manuscripts*, vol. 22, no. 2, Nov. 1994, p. 308) when determining the socio-historical requirements for evidence. The published output of letters and diaries, while only a narrow slice of this experience, is nevertheless as good a place as any to start. What I am not saying here is that potential or anticipated use should dictate appraisal decisions. A functions/activities-based approach is the only workable means of appraisal. BUT, just because use cannot dictate appraisal strategies, that does not mean to say that usage patterns should be ignored. An understanding of usage motivations is a vital part of achieving a general functional understanding of what makes some records and not others enduringly valuable as socio-historical evidence. The distinction is subtle, yet crucial.

9. Hilary Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration*, Clarendon, Oxford, 1922, pp. 11–12.
10. T. Cook, op. cit., pp. 300–328.
11. Louise Anemaat, 'The "Banks on CD-ROM" Project at the State Library of New South Wales', *Archives and Manuscripts*, vol. 23, no. 2, Nov. 1995, pp. 263–264.
12. Andrew Hassam, *Sailing to Australia: Shipboard Diaries by Nineteenth Century British Emmigrants*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1994, reviewed elsewhere in this issue.
13. Peter Crush, 'Archives and Manuscripts' in *Debates and Discourses: selected Australian writings on archival theory 1951–1990*, eds P. Biskup, et al., ASA, Canberra, 1995, pp. 204–217.
14. For a description of similar activities and tendencies in a corporate recordkeeping context see Paul Hasluck, 'Problems of Research on Contemporary Official Records' in *Debates and Discourses: selected Australian writings on archival theory 1951–1990*, eds P. Biskup, et al., pp. 23–24.
15. At the other end of the recordkeeping spectrum from Kerouac is Patrick White, who kept no personal records (except photographs), who destroyed all but one of his literary drafts and who instructed his correspondents to burn all his letters. Yet even in this case the interests of posterity appear to intrude. Paul Brunton has argued that White's one surviving literary draft, that of *Memoirs of Many in One*, is in fact a sophisticated hoax played on the literary scholars who pour over such manuscripts and whom White despised. (See William Fraser, 'Patrick White's Last Laugh: did the author set a snare for unwary academics?', *Sydney Morning Herald Good Weekend*, 16 May 1992, pp. 18-24.) If Brunton is correct this record, for record it surely is, offends Jenkinson's 'no posterity' directive. Moreover, what are we to make of White's recordkeeping, or absence thereof? Is it not possible that by instructing his correspondents to destroy his letters he was subconsciously asserting their long-term significance? Who, when asked to destroy something, does not stop and ponder the wisdom of the directive? The fact that at the end of his life White assisted his biographer David Marr to locate his letters many of which, surprise surprise, had been carefully though secretly preserved, suggests to me that White had posterity in mind all along (see David Marr, *Patrick White: a Life*, Sydney, 1991 and David Marr (ed.), *Patrick White: Letters*, Sydney, 1994). Psychologically he could not bring himself to maintain his own recordkeeping system, so instead he got his correspondents to unwittingly do it on his behalf. In effect White created a distributed personal recordkeeping system, much of which has now been safely deposited in collecting archives around the country.