

# Meditate, Mediate, Celebrate: Public Programming in a Postmodern World\*

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This article uses previously articulated postmodern ideas about archives as a jumping off point to explore archival public programming through this theoretical lens. It discusses three main implications of the postmodern approach for this archival function: increased awareness about the mediating role of public programmers and their tools, recognition of the close connection between public programming and other archival activities, and an increased justification to design and deliver programs for the voices and interests present in all segments of society.

## Introduction

Postmodernism has changed the way that many archivists conceive of and, in turn, carry out their work. These insights, which have been most

clearly articulated for archival appraisal and description, also carry a number of important ramifications for archival public programming. This article will explore three main implications of the postmodern approach for this function in archives. In some instances, the elements that are identified here are extensions or sometimes reconstructions of the implications that have been identified for archival work in general.

In this article, postmodernism, taken in its broadest sense, encourages individuals to rethink how they formulate their ideas and carry out their activities, in light of previous 'natural' norms of understanding.<sup>1</sup> Postmodernism prompts individuals to question their methods and beliefs and open them for revision and reinterpretation. In many cases, ideas once considered to be over-arching or universal truths (or 'metanarratives') about the way that society operates are rejected as contingent constructions of specific times and places, reflecting various power relationships.<sup>2</sup> In their place, postmodernists suggest that there are numerous paths to acquiring a deeper understanding of the way the world works. Terry Cook explains:

The postmodernist tone is one of ironical doubt, of trusting nothing at face value, of always looking behind the surface, of upsetting conventional wisdom. Postmodernists try to de-naturalize what society unquestionably assumes is natural, what it has for generations, perhaps centuries, accepted as normal, natural, rational, proven – simply the way things are.<sup>3</sup>

Individuals in several disciplines have been exploring the implications of postmodernism for their field of study and archivists are no exception. Terry Cook,<sup>4</sup> Tom Nesmith,<sup>5</sup> Brien Brothman<sup>6</sup> and Verne Harris<sup>7</sup> have all made valuable contributions to the subject.<sup>8</sup> The ideas brought forward as a result of this work have served to breathe fresh life into the archival discourse and give new depth and relevance to many of the issues. Tom Nesmith notes:

The postmodern outlook suggests an important new intellectual place for archives in the formation of knowledge, culture, and societies. It helps us to see that contrary to the conventional idea that archivists simply receive and house vast quantities of records, which merely reflect society, they actually co-create and shape the knowledge in records, and

thus help form society's memory. This implies that studying the archiving process itself (and not just using archives in the familiar way to study other things) is a vital aspect of the pursuit of human understanding.<sup>9</sup>

When considering postmodernism with respect to archives, it is useful to conceptualise it as something which brings into clearer view certain assumptions about archival strategies and methods. The choice of words used by archivists who apply these ideas is instructive. When referring to the impact of postmodernism on archival practice, phrases like 'throw light on',<sup>10</sup> 'help us to see',<sup>11</sup> and 'draw our attention to'<sup>12</sup> are favoured in place of absolute cause-and-effect phraseology. In a sense then, postmodernism's contribution to the archival profession is that it prompts questions about aspects of archival theory, strategy, and practice, which in turn encourage archivists, donors, and sponsors, as well as researchers and society at large to view archives with fresh eyes. In some cases this simply amounts to a heightened awareness of professional issues, but in other situations, the insight gained may urge archivists to adjust their ideas and practices.

It is important to acknowledge that not all archivists endorse the application of postmodern insights to their work. There are some who find theoretical (and in particular, postmodern) ideas to be irrelevant or seemingly inaccessible.<sup>13</sup> Terry Cook and Joan Schwartz allude to this fact and, in turn, offer advice to archivists who are caught in the midst of this debate:

Thinkers about archives need of course to keep their feet on the floor-boards of the archival stage. They need to show that the 'postmodernisms' they advocate are not some ivory-tower debate by self-indulgent academics, but a vital, living concern for all archivists in the performance of their daily work.<sup>14</sup>

In turn, archivists are faced with a balancing act. Although many operate in environments where they already have more than enough work to do, their practices and approaches require improvement. The application of postmodern ideals to archival work offers some fresh perspectives and workable solutions to these problems on both theoretical and practical levels.

## Public Programming in a Postmodern World

### *Mediation*

While postmodern ideas about the roles of appraisal, arrangement, and description by archivists have been well documented in recent years, the spirit of these implications have only been directly extended to public programming archivists in a few instances.<sup>15</sup> In fact, when considered in light of this theoretical framework, there are three main implications for this aspect of archival work. The first implication, an extension of an idea that has been clearly articulated for archival work as a whole,<sup>16</sup> is that outreach archivists and their programming tools significantly mediate the archival process. Tom Nesmith's words about the overall activities of archivists ring true for public programmers:

mediation of reality occurs as archivists interact with the broader process of archivalization. Their personal backgrounds and social affiliations, and their professional norms, self-understanding, and public standing, shape and are shaped by their participation in this process. As they selectively interpret their experience of it, archivists help fashion formative contexts for their work, which influence their understanding of recorded communication and position particular archives to do particular things. This contextualizing of records and roles subtly directs their principal goals and functions ... as they contextualize their records and work, archivists shape what may be known from archival materials.<sup>17</sup>

In the case of public programmers, mediation begins when they select the segments of society that will receive targeted programs. In so doing they have the power to marginalise the research needs and interests of other, untargeted groups. Although the biases and backgrounds of individual archivists in an ideal world should not factor into their decision-making processes, it is probably inevitable that they do. By setting up a display in an elementary school (and not a university), in designing a virtual exhibit for computer savvy users (rather than a static one for the reading room), and by advertising tours to some groups (and not others), archivists are constantly affecting the composition and expectations of their body of researchers, real and potential, and their supporters, present and anticipated. All the while, some groups are

inevitably ignored or pushed to the margin. In turn, public programmers indirectly determine who will be most likely to tell their stories using archives and who will remain excluded from access to their pasts.

Public programming archivists also mediate the archival process by choosing the types of programming that they want to engage in and the records and themes that they wish to highlight.<sup>18</sup> For example, plans for open houses, or school tours, or other special events require public programmers to attempt to determine the needs of their audience, and then design and deliver what they feel is a suitable program. Publications that promote an archives' holdings also demonstrate the power that the public programming archivist has to highlight certain collections and subjects over others.<sup>19</sup> The process of preparing an archival exhibit also illustrates the high degree of mediation involved in the public programmer's position. Topics must be chosen, records need to be selected, and exhibits conceptualised and mounted. The results of this process have the potential to encourage (or discourage) the public's pursuit of potential research topics. Of course, the mediation of the public programmer is also apparent in an electronic environment since the public's use of an archival website (including any virtual exhibits that it contains) may be their only interaction with the institution, and so forms the basis of their very concept of an archives. Joan Schwartz and Terry Cook note: 'through descriptive practices and system architecture, through selection – at all levels – for online access, and through production of virtual exhibitions, archives wield the power over what will be known about what has been preserved'.<sup>20</sup> Thus, the information that public programming archivists choose to feature in their programming initiatives is of utmost importance to both the research process and the public's perception of the archives.

It is worth probing the mediation discussed above further by considering the degree to which public programmers are required to interpret records to carry out their work. Once archivists have chosen a theme to build an exhibit around or a potential publication to pursue, they are only part way through the mediation process. It then falls to them to make sense of what the records 'mean'. James O'Toole hints at the complexity of this task:

It is a bias of literate people, such as ourselves, to think that records, books, manuscripts, and other materials mean only what the words in them mean. A closer examination reminds

us that there is usually more to the story than that; that layers of meaning – practical, symbolic, cultural – are embedded in record making, and the records that are made.<sup>21</sup>

In a postmodern world, the derivation of meaning moves from relatively simple to increasingly complex. That which is crystal clear to one person at a given time may be entirely different to what makes sense to someone else (or to the same person in another time and place). Eric Ketelaar's statement that 'the archive reflects realities as perceived by the 'archivers''<sup>22</sup> can be extended to the conclusion that the archives' public face reflects realities as perceived by its public programming archivist.

The situation becomes more involved when one adds to this mix the 'limitations'<sup>23</sup> of postmodern communication. After all, public programmers are indeed the great communicators of the archival world. Once they arrive at their interpretation of a record, they must find some way to tell the world about it. The approach that they choose serves to determine the 'meaning' that people take away from an exhibit or outreach program, and shapes the audience's perception of the archive.<sup>24</sup> Out of all of this subjectivity, one equation can be stated with certainty with respect to public programming: 'interpretation' plus 'communication' equals 'mediation'.

As several individuals who have explored postmodernism and archives have already stated, the mediating role of the archival professional (public programming or otherwise) should not be viewed in a negative light. Brien Brothman asserts that: 'we are not simply "acquiring" and "preserving" records of value; we are *creating value*, that is, an order of value, by putting things in their proper place, by making place(s) for them'.<sup>25</sup> In fact, whether one is referring to Brien Brothman's archivist 'creating value', Tom Nesmith's archivist's role in 'authoring the record',<sup>26</sup> or the 'fingerprints'<sup>27</sup> and 'footprints'<sup>28</sup> that are left by Eric Ketelaar, Joan Schwartz, and Terry Cook's postmodern archivists, the outcome is the same. No matter what area of the archives an individual works in, their contributions to contextualizing the record's past and mediating its future possible interpretations are essential to its continuing life. Instead of denying this role by clinging to traditional notions of archival objectivity and neutrality, archivists should be proud of their mediatory role.<sup>29</sup>

While it is important for archivists to value their involvement in the archival process, they should take measures to ensure that they handle their mediation in a responsible manner.<sup>30</sup> Cook offers advice on the matter:

Archivists inevitably will inject their own values into all such research and activities, and thus will need to examine very consciously their choices in the archive-creating and memory-formation process. They will also need to leave very clear recorded evidence explaining their choices to posterity.<sup>31</sup>

Public programming archivists have an obligation to communicate their impact on the archival process to their audience. The public needs to understand that an archivist's representation of a collection or choice of a public program is subjective. While this work is informed by a sound knowledge of the history of the records and the context of their creation, and by a clear sense of their responsibility in creating society's memory, it is essential that the public understands that the outreach archivist's projection represents just one possible approach. Wherever possible, public programming archivists should emphasise that there are multiple ways to view records, and that a single public programming message or product is only one such reading among many other possible readings of the records. Recognition of the interpretive role that the archivist's choice of public programming tools (like displays and virtual exhibits) plays in the process is also essential. As Cook and Schwartz point out: 'when power is denied, overlooked, or unchallenged, it is misleading at best and dangerous at worst. Power recognised becomes power that can be questioned, made accountable, and opened to transparent dialogue and enriched understanding'.<sup>32</sup> Once this power is acknowledged, members of the public will be in a better position to find their own 'right' way through the records, as well as hold the archives accountable for its choices and its omissions.

Before leaving this discussion of the ways in which public programming archivists mediate the archival process, it should be noted that acknowledgment of this role alters the image of these archival professionals. By recognising the ways that public programmers affect the research process and shape public perception and support for archives, their role as active and integral players in the heritage community becomes evermore apparent. No longer viewed as mundane

clerks or passive keepers, archivists are beginning to acknowledge their roles as mediators among their colleagues and clients, and this recognition is sure to grow stronger in time. Along with archivists who control the acquisition and intellectual and physical access of records at the archives, public programming archivists in the postmodern world have the power to choose the audiences that archives reach and the public persona that they project.

### ***Connections between archival functions***

The second way that postmodernism helps archivists to see public programming in a new light is that it points out the close connection between this activity and all other archival functions. In the postmodern world, the public programming function becomes more an integral part of the work of all archivists than it is a singular or 'add on' function. Borders and boundaries in postmodern thinking are blurred. It becomes clear that among their other contributions to public programming, appraisal archivists are experts at building bridges to new donor groups (which are potential user groups) and researching contexts of records creation. Arrangement and description archivists also contribute to the archival public programming team – their knowledge of the collection is critical to those who are trying to raise archival awareness. The work of reference archivists is also significantly intertwined with public programming as these individuals are in a position to offer valuable advice on available reference tools and the interests and abilities of current researchers.

Since postmodernism reminds us that relationships between all things are rarely simple, it is not surprising that public programmers' connections to their colleagues operate in both directions. While the work of appraisal, processing, and reference archivists has a significant impact on public programmers, the reverse is also true. Public programmers should have a solid understanding of the unique aspects of the work of their counterparts in other units. This becomes increasingly important in institutions that adopt postmodern approaches to other archival functions<sup>33</sup> since it is public programming archivists who must communicate the resulting changes to their public. While it may be appraisal or description archivists who implement macro-appraisal or contextually rich descriptive practices in the spirit of postmodernism, it is the responsibility of reference and public programming archivists to



bring the results of these postmodern products or processes to the people who may or may not know (or care) about the theory behind the practice. The importance of this role should not be underestimated for, as Tom Nesmith points out, 'users of archives invariably want to look straight through archival institutions, their work, and their records, at something else in the past of greater importance and interest to them'.<sup>34</sup> Eric Ketelaar continues: 'We must also pass on this understanding to future users of archives and make them understand in turn *why* the archives were formed in a certain way and not only *what* happened'.<sup>35</sup> While this is a challenging objective, it presents an exciting opportunity to enhance public understanding about the nature of archives.

### ***Outreach to diverse communities***

A third way that postmodern thinking impacts public programming is that it encourages archivists to devote more attention to the voices and interests of all segments of society. While some institutions started to reach out to new groups long before postmodern ideas were applied to the discipline, much work still needs to be done in this regard. Postmodernism prods archivists to look beyond their traditional primary user groups to search for other individuals whose potential needs to interact with archives either have not been awakened or sufficiently considered by archivists in the past.

The needs of a great variety of groups are still not adequately addressed by current archival public programming initiatives. Terry Cook issued the following call to archivists in 2001:

the task [for archival science in the new century] also now includes taking archives to the people, or encouraging them to come to use archives. Archives are not a private playground where professional staff can indulge their interest in history or their personal interaction with historians and other scholars or, equally, their inclinations to be part of the public policy and information infrastructures of their jurisdictions; archives are a sacred public trust of preserving society's memories that must be widely shared.<sup>36</sup>

Have archivists given due consideration to the archival interests of immigrant groups? Do newcomers know about the services and collections of the country's archives? Has anyone considered the archival

needs of the poor? Do these individuals feel comfortable visiting an archives? What about inmates? Do prisoners have research interests that are not being met because of their address? Few have considered the archival needs of older individuals beyond the single (and partial) exception of genealogy. Given the rapid aging of the population, wouldn't archivists do well to consider the needs of this powerful demographic group?

When considering the design of archival public programming for those groups which are beyond the scope of most current initiatives, interesting parallels emerge with other postmodern ideas about archives. Postmodern archivists' observations about recordkeeping practices that marginalise specific segments of society are particularly pertinent to this discussion. Terry Cook's statement on appraisal serves as a helpful starting point:

If everything but a transactional 'record' is outside the purview of archives, then archival holdings will by definition only be drawn from that formal record-keeping universe. Such holdings will therefore exclude – more than they already do – the marginalized and weaker members of society, leaving the citizens silenced and governments emboldened.<sup>37</sup>

Elsewhere, Cook continues that, in light of postmodernism and other developments in the profession, 'appraisal will attend as carefully to the marginalised and even silenced voices as to the powerful and official texts, and search for evidence of governance rather than government'.<sup>38</sup> The analogy between 'marginal' records (or records' creators) and 'marginal' researchers (or potential researchers) is clear. Following closely on the discussion regarding the interrelated nature of the archival endeavour offered above, in the spirit of appraisal archivists who endorse macro-appraisal to capture marginalised records and description archivists who create contextually rich descriptions to highlight the existence of marginalised information in the collections, public programming archivists need to seek out their marginalised public and invite them to engage more fully with the archives. As archives acquire more representative records and offer rich descriptions for people to use, public programmers need to make sure that *all* potentially interested individuals know what is available at the archives.

Another important parallel to postmodern ideas about archives arises when one considers the idea of public programming for marginalised groups. Just as postmodernists have already pointed out that records and repositories are complex, constantly changing, and in need of 'ongoing critical interpretation',<sup>39</sup> so too are the users and potential users of archives. The following statement by Cook and Schwartz is in fact applicable to both of these circumstances:

By respecting the diversity, ambiguity, and multiple identities that underpin postmodernism, archivists should self-consciously construct archival memory based on observing differences as much as monoliths, multiple as much as mainstream narratives, the personal and local as much as the corporate and official perspectives.<sup>40</sup>

The parallels in this statement to public programming are apparent, as archivists look for ways to better meet the needs of their potential research groups. In the same way that appraisal and description archivists need to be sensitive to the diverse nature of records and records creators, so too should public programmers be open to re-evaluating the diverse and varying nature and needs of their current and potential clientele. In so doing, they will help archives and archivists to maintain their relevance and build on their integral position in society.

## Concluding Thoughts

The injection of postmodern ideas into the archival sphere has changed the professional landscape in recent years. Clearly postmodernism has important implications for archives. Terry Cook suggested that:

Postmodernism ... requires a new openness, a new visibility, a willingness to question and be questioned, to count for something and be held accountable. Postmodernism requires archivists to accept, even celebrate, their own historicity, their own role in the historical process of creating archives, and their own biases.<sup>41</sup>

The impact that these ideas have (and will have) on archival public programming is significant. Postmodernism alters the professional role and public image of outreach and programming archivists. To begin with, the application of postmodern insights sheds light on the significant

mediating role of the public programmer. This realisation lends support to the view that archival public programming is an intellectual, dynamic, and essential function of all archival institutions. As the ways in which public programming archivists intervene in the archival process become clearer with time, the public will benefit from a more informed perspective. Postmodernism also encourages archivists and their clients to see the connections between public programming and all other archival functions, highlighting the role of public programmers in interpreting and communicating the activities of the postmodern archive to those outside the archival community. Finally, postmodern ideas inspire archivists to respond to the voices of those whose needs have been overlooked or ignored by past public programming initiatives. All of this will result in a more carefully considered, relevant, and meaningful brand of archival public programming and public programming archivists who carry out their activities in a more self-conscious and inclusive way.

## Endnotes

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1 The following works provide the basis for the interpretation of postmodernism that informs this study: H Bertens, *The Idea of the Postmodern: A History*, Routledge, London, 1995; G Ward, *Postmodernism*, Teach Yourself Series, NTC/Contemporary Publishing, Lincolnwood, 1997; J Powell, *Postmodernism for Beginners*, Writers and Readers Publishing, Inc., New York, 1998.

2 For a more complete discussion of metanarratives, see T Cook, 'Fashionable Nonsense or Professional Rebirth: Postmodernism and the Practice of Archives', *Archivaria*, no. 51, Spring 2001, p. 17.

3 T Cook, 'Archival Science and Postmodernism: New Formulations for Old Concepts', *Archival Science*, no. 1, 2001, pp. 7-8.

4 T Cook, 'What is Past is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift', *Archivaria*, vol. 43, Spring 1997, pp. 17-63; 'Archival Science and Postmodernism', pp. 3-24; 'Fashionable Nonsense or Professional Rebirth', pp. 14-35; J Schwartz and T Cook, 'Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory', *Archival Science*, no. 2, 2002, pp.

1-19; T Cook and J Schwartz, 'Archives, Records, and Power: From (Postmodern) Theory to (Archival) Performance', *Archival Science*, no. 2, 2002, pp. 171-85.

5 T Nesmith, 'Still Fuzzy, But More Accurate: Some Thoughts on the 'Ghosts' of Archival Theory', *Archivaria*, no. 47, Spring 1999, pp. 136-150; 'Seeing Archives: Postmodernism and the Changing Intellectual Place of Archives', *American Archivist*, vol. 65, no. 1, Spring-Summer 2002, pp. 24-41; 'Introductory Comments on Postmodernism and Postmodernity', (lecture, 'What's It All About?: 'Postmodernism' and Archives', Association for Manitoba Archives, Winnipeg, Manitoba, February 19, 2001); 'Comments on 'The Postmodern' Archive: The Archivist in the 'Postmodern' Era', (lecture, 'What's It All About?: 'Postmodernism' and Archives', Association for Manitoba Archives, Winnipeg, Manitoba, February 19, 2001).

6 B Brothman, 'Orders of Value: Probing the Theoretical Terms of Archival Practice', *Archivaria*, no. 32, Summer 1991, pp. 78-100; 'The Limits of Limits: Derridean Deconstruction and the Archival Institution', *Archivaria* 36, Autumn 1993, pp. 205-20; 'Declining Derrida: Integrity, Tensegrity, and the Preservation of Archives from Deconstruction', *Archivaria* 48, Fall 1999, pp. 64-88.

7 V Harris, *Exploring Archives: An Introduction to Archival Ideas and Practice in South Africa*, 2nd ed., National Archives of South Africa, Pretoria, 2000; 'Redefining Archives in South Africa: Public Archives and Society in Transition, 1990-1996', *Archivaria*, no. 42, Fall 1996, pp. 6-27.

8 Several other archivists have also had a significant impact on this dialogue. For a more detailed listing of publications on postmodernism and archives see Cook, 'Fashionable Nonsense', 20-21 n14. Some of the key pieces on the topic include R Brown, 'Records Acquisition Strategy and its Theoretical Foundation: The Case for a Concept of Archival Hermeneutics', *Archivaria*, no. 33, Winter 1991-92, pp. 34-56; R Brown, 'The Value of 'Narrativity' in the Appraisal of Historical Documents: Foundation for a Theory of Archival Hermeneutics', *Archivaria*, no. 32, Summer 1991, pp. 152-56; B Dodge, 'Places Apart: Archives in Dissolving Space and Time', *Archivaria*, no. 44, Fall 1997, pp. 118-31; P Mortensen, 'The Place of Theory in Archival Practice', *Archivaria*, no. 47, Spring 1999, pp. 1-26; E Ketelaar, 'Tacit Narratives: The Meanings of Archives', *Archival Science*, no.1, 2001, pp. 131-41; E Ketelaar, 'Archivalisation and Archiving', *Archives and Manuscripts*, vol. 27, no. 1, May 1999, pp. 54-61; M Greene, 'The Power of Meaning: The Archival Mission in the Postmodern Age', *American Archivist*, no. 65, Spring-Summer 2002, pp. 42-55; J Schwartz, 'We make our tools and our tools make us': Lessons from Photographs for the Practice, Politics, and Poetics of Diplomats', *Archivaria*, no. 40, Fall 1995, pp. 40-74; J Schwartz, 'Records of Simple Truth and Precision': Photography, Archives, and the Illusion of Control', *Archivaria*, no. 50, Fall 2000, pp. 1-40; L

Koltun, 'The Promise and Threat of Digital Options in an Archival Age', *Archivaria* 47, Spring 1999, pp. 114-35.

9 Nesmith, 'Seeing Archives', pp. 26-27.

10 *ibid.*, p. 24.

11 Nesmith, 'Comments on "The Postmodern" Archive', p. 1.

12 *ibid.*

13 John Roberts clearly outlines his opposition to archivists who linger too long on theory in J Roberts, 'Archival Theory: Much Ado About Shelving', *American Archivist*, no. 50, Winter 1987, pp. 66-74.

14 Cook and Schwartz, 'Archives, Records, and Power: From (Postmodern) Theory to (Archival) Performance', p. 183.

15 This article assumes that discrete archival functions are performed by separate individuals. While this model is not representative of how all archives operate, it provides a vehicle by which to discuss the implications of postmodernism for all archival functions (whether they are carried out by one or many individuals within an institution).

16 Nesmith, 'Still Fuzzy, But More Accurate', pp. 144-5; Nesmith, 'Seeing Archives', pp. 30-2.

17 Nesmith, 'Seeing Archives', pp. 30-31.

18 William Rosenberg articulates this role of the public programming archivist, suggesting that theirs is one of the most significant types of mediation that occurs in the archival process in W Rosenberg, 'Historians, Archivists and the Question of Social Memory on the Eve of the New Century', in *Istoricheskie Zapiski* 2 (New Series), 2000 (in Russian) cited in F Blouin Jr, 'Archivists, Mediation, and Constructs of Social Memory', *Archival Issues* 24, no. 2, 1999, p. 108.

19 Tom Nesmith discusses the ramifications of archivists in general 'placing certain records on [a] pedestal' in 'Seeing Archives', pp. 33-4.

20 Schwartz and Cook, 'Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory', p. 15.

21 J O'Toole, 'Corte's Notary: The Cultural Meanings of Record Making', *RLG News*, Fall 1999, p. 11 quoted in Blouin, 'Archivists, Mediation, and Constructs of Social Memory', p. 106.

22 Ketelaar, 'Tacit Narratives', p. 133.

23 Nesmith, 'Seeing Archives', p. 29.

24 Tom Nesmith offers some interesting insights on the 'interpretive possibilities' that arise out of description and public programming work. *ibid.*, p. 34.

25 Brothman, 'Orders of Value', p. 82.

26 Nesmith, 'Seeing Archives', p. 32.

27 Ketelaar, 'Tacit Narratives', p. 137.

28 Schwartz and Cook, 'Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory', p. 6.

29 Cook and Schwartz, 'Archives, Records, and Power: From (Postmodern) Theory to (Archival) Performance', p. 183.

30 For suggestions on how archivists can be accountable, see Cook, 'Fashionable Nonsense', pp. 34-35.

31 Cook, 'Archival Science and Postmodernism', p. 24.

32 Cook and Schwartz, 'Archives, Records, and Power: From (Postmodern) Theory to (Archival) Performance', p. 181.

33 Cook, 'Archival Science and Postmodernism', pp. 21-23.

34 Nesmith, 'Seeing Archives', p. 27.

35 Ketelaar, 'Archivalisation and Archiving', p. 59. Carolyn Heald echoes these sentiments in C Heald, 'Is There Room for Archives in the Postmodern World?', *American Archivist*, vol. 59, no. 1, Winter 1996, p. 99.

36 Cook, 'Archival Science and Postmodernism', p. 19.

37 Cook, 'Who Will Do It if We Don't?: The Cultural Mission of Archives vis-à-vis Electronic Records' (presentation, Annual Meeting of the Society of American Archivists, Chicago, Illinois, August 1997) quoted in Greene, 'The Power of Meaning', *op.cit.*, p. 48.

38 Cook, 'Archival Science and Postmodernism', p. 23.

39 D Haraway, 'Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective', in her *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, New York, 1991, p. 196 quoted in Schwartz and Cook, 'Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory', p. 12.

40 Cook and Schwartz, 'Archives, Records, and Power: From (Postmodern) Theory to (Archival) Performance', p. 183.

41 Cook, 'Fashionable Nonsense', p. 28.

