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Reviews

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“Hugh A. Taylor is one of the most important thinkers in the English-speaking world of archives.” This is the way that Imagining Archives: Essays and Reflections opens. Taken at face value, it is an exceptionally bold statement, but one which the editors and Taylor himself sustain and support throughout this seminal work. Editors Terry Cook and Gordon Dodds further note that this is the first instance in which the writing and professional philosophies of Hugh Taylor have been gathered in one place. It is to their lasting credit and to the credit of Scarecrow Press that they have labored to bring this essential compendium to the attention of our community.

The structure of this work is simple. The editors have opened the volume with an introduction and two essays which touch upon the life and career of Taylor, thus serving to fix his thinking in the larger context of other archival modes of
thought. There follows a series of fifteen of Taylor's essays, arranged chronologically (the better to explore the evolution of his philosophies). Each is followed by Taylor's remarks on his own writing from the perspective of a man at the distal end of his career, these "reflections" having been crafted in the year 2000. The work closes with an afterword and reflection by Taylor on the corpus of his thinking regarding the nature of archives in the greater scheme of human endeavor.

The Dodds essay captures the broad nature of Taylor's professional thinking via the exploration of his professional roles. The expected roles of "teacher" and "editor" emerge, but in labeling Taylor as "ecologist" and "galactic traveller," one gains insight into the range of "outside-the-box" thinking that has characterized Taylor's career and his teachings.

Taylor's essays document his growth as first a traditional caretaker and interpreter of the public record in England, where his career began, and later in Canada, where both the scope of his responsibilities and the mandate for undertaking them broadened considerably. The first seismic shift in Taylor's archival philosophies coincides with his encountering and wholeheartedly embracing the media theories of Marshall McLuhan in the later 1970s. In using McLuhan to expedite a paradigm shift in archival theory, Taylor is leading the charge in encouraging archivists to consider their discipline wholly differently from the history-based models which had prevailed as earlier paradigms for the well-trained archivist. This declaration of independence was the liberating first salvo for a man who would in future years speak with authority about the ecology of archives. Indeed, the Society of Georgia Archivists publication *Georgia Archive* had a role to play in bringing this new mindset into the professional forum, publishing Taylor's "The Media of Record: Archives in the Wake of McLuhan" in the Spring 1978 issue.

The philosophical centerpieces of Hugh Taylor's thinking form the center of this volume as well. By the later 1980s, Taylor had moved his model into a realm that clearly extended beyond conventional ways of thinking about archives. In one instance, it was the use of the popular Transformer toy as metaphor for the myriad evolving arenas of archival endeavor. Another oft-cited essay, "My Very Act and Deed: Some Reflections on the Role of Textual Records in the Conduct of Affairs,"
has Taylor reminding colleagues that, no matter how sophisticated the technology governing access to information becomes, it is important to keep users in touch with the source materials, lest the means to access information overwhelms the information itself.

In the archival world of Hugh Taylor, it can be said that traditional modalities should not be dismissed, but rather that they serve as but a point of departure. He cautions against the dangers of professional stultification when he notes that "the expert is the person who stays put," and he clearly encourages archivists to remember their place in both the physical and spiritual communities as they transact their professional lives.

The closing afterword finds Taylor challenging the readers to employ their imagination in finding new and better ways to think about the place of our profession in a larger and ever-changing world. In issuing this challenge, Taylor thus hands off the torch to future generations of archival professionals and secures for himself a place as one of the seminal thinkers in our discipline.

We live in an age of increasing specialization, and we work in a discipline increasingly concerned with specific issues, such as methods of information access and conservation of a dizzying array of data formats. It is precisely in this technologically-specialized time that the work of Hugh Taylor is most necessary and the words of Hugh Taylor need to be heard most clearly. Though at $35 this volume is a bit expensive, there should, indeed there must, be a place for it on every archivist's bookshelf. Hugh Taylor and those of his students like Cook and Dodds have issued the challenge, and it is up to the next generation of outside-the-box thinkers to take it up and go forward.

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In his book *Appraising Moving Images: Assessing the Archival and Monetary Value of Film and Video Records*, Sam Kula examines both historical and current appraisal practices as they relate to moving images. This well-written book should be of interest to both general readers and professional archivists since by their very nature film and video recordings provide a unique challenge.

Drawing upon a wealth of experience with the subject, Kula notes that much of this book is the result of his forty years of interaction with moving image archivists and archives around the globe. Just some of the author’s many accomplishments include conducting seminars for UNESCO and serving as the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board’s special advisor. Currently Kula is president of the Association of Moving Image Archivists.

Kula begins his book with an informative introduction to the history of various collecting policies and appraisal theories as they have been applied to film and video recordings over the years. For example, as early as 1898 Czar Nicholas II’s cinematographer, Boleslaw Matuszewski, realized the importance of collecting this “new source for history.” Indeed, early interest in collecting moving images was to revolve around the unique manner in which film was able to capture historical events, whether actual occurrences or recreations.

One particularly enlightening section relates the story of the director of the Cinematheque Francaises in Paris, Henri Langlois, who concentrated mostly on collecting feature films and believed that “any policy of selection was an evil that archivists should avoid at all costs.” Although popular with the public, he unfortunately failed to spend much effort on either adequately cataloging or providing proper storage facilities for his films. As a result when two substantial fires destroyed a large portion of the collection, no one was able to ascertain exactly what had been lost.
Chapters three and four should be of interest to all professional archivists. In chapter three Kula defines Form and Function as the terms are applied to moving images and points out the unique manner in which they relate to this subject. In chapter four, the author looks at appraisal policies and practices of organizations and countries around the globe. Of particular interest are his profile of the UNESCO document entitled Recommendation for the Safeguarding and Preservation of Moving Images and his overview of appraisal activities as they relate to moving images from the United States to Malaysia.

In chapter six Kula examines the importance that appraisal plays in determining the monetary value of certain moving images and the role that archivists may play in this process. He devotes a number of pages to the famous six-foot-long strip of film, known as the Zapruder Film, on which images from the 1963 Kennedy assassination were inadvertently captured. Kula writes that different appraisers working for different interests and under varying assumptions assessed the value of the film's 494 frames at amounts ranging from $748,000 all the way to $40,000,000. The intrigue surrounding the Zapruder Film is just crying for more detail and would make a fascinating subject for further study.

In conclusion, Kula's book is well researched and packed with useful information. Although the book manages to address many aspects of the topic, no one source can be expected to exhaustively cover the myriad issues that surround the appraisal of moving images. This being the case, I found the book's bibliography, taken from both American and international sources, to be a good resource for those wishing to do further research on the subjects raised by the author.

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