

# Fringe or Grey Literature in the National Library:

## On "Papyrolatry" and the Growing Similarity Between the Materials in Libraries and Archives

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**Abstract:** The amassing of a national collection of books and related materials has been a continuing objective ever since the enactment of the first legal deposit law, the Ordonnance de Montpellier of 1537. There are various degrees of comprehensiveness, from deposit only in connection with copyright, to deposit of all printed information (and, by analogy, information in any other medium). The information revolution of the twentieth century is closely associated with the media revolution, and by 1984 permanent preservation of all information in national repositories has become a utopian goal. Modern reprography and new media have changed the materials of archives and libraries and complicated the distinction between them. Reprography has created problems of definition for Scandinavian national libraries, whose collections are based on deposit from printers. Much of the grey, or non-conventional, literature that is presently being discussed by information scientists can be identified as documents that were formerly reserved for the archives. It is suggested that archivists and librarians cooperate in defining their fields of collection and in revising their methodologies in the light of new technology, in order to cope with the massive amounts of material.

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THE CONSTANTLY GROWING MASS OF FRINGE OR SO-CALLED GREY LITERATURE is causing problems in national libraries, which have a legal obligation to preserve a nation's literature. Included in the category of fringe literature is casual, or semi-published, material, such as a photocopy of a manuscript, or a type-written copy given a booklike appearance through modern reprography. Grey literature is produced and presented through other than conventional commercial print publishing channels, and its arrival at a national library calls for special evaluation. This is seen especially in Scandinavian national libraries whose collections are based on legal deposit from printers. This impression that some archival material has acquired a booklike appearance is confirmed through contact with house printers of state and local government institutions. The amount of grey literature that reaches national libraries is probably only the tip of the iceberg, and this raises the question of the

legitimacy of preserving at high cost a rather casual selection of semi-published and rapidly deteriorating material in libraries that work sub specie aeternitatis. The problem also calls for cooperation among librarians and archivists to decide cases of borderline acceptability in order to avoid a duplication of effort as well as the loss of important material. National libraries, which usually must keep what other libraries shed, are generally libraries of last resort; but in the case of grey material, the situation may be reversed. Special libraries and documentation agencies may have to collect what the national libraries shed, in the interest of Universal Bibliographic Control (UBC).<sup>1</sup>

During periods of economic recession, there is a tendency to give the national museum function lower priority than the functions serving the immediate needs of the user community. Consequently, archivists and librarians have other mutual interests in addition to similarity of

<sup>1</sup>Grey literature is vaguely defined as non-conventional or informally published literature. Grey literature developed as a result of modern society's need for speedy information and the development within reprography. Its characteristics were summarized in "Working with Non-conventional Literature," *Journal of Information Science* 5 (December 1982): 124; N.W. Posnett and W.J. Baulkwill: "The non-conventional document is often physically large, produced for a small group of users and distributed free or under exchange agreements. It is frequently not traced by documentation services, including commercial ones. Accessibility is often difficult even in the country of origin. A non-conventional document may cover any subject. It may be serial or non-serial. Its content may be of the highest (or lowest) quality. ... Many characteristics of non-conventional literature have resulted from one of its major strengths, the comparatively high speed of production, often associated with in-house printing."

The best known type of non-conventional literature, irrespective of discipline, is technical or scientific report literature; but information scientists admit that in practice the term is open-ended. The meaning of the term is relative, depending on the coverage by subject bibliographies, special libraries, and documentation services within a certain subject field, and also on the comprehensiveness and effectiveness of the legal deposit system within a given country. So far, national libraries have not participated much in the lively debate on grey literature, though national libraries in France and Scandinavia, with highly developed deposit systems, are acutely aware of the problem involved in its collection and preservation. Brigitte Picheral, the French delegate at the seminar of legal deposit specialists in Vienna in 1981, stated: "Mais ces problèmes, qui concernent la technique de l'imprimé comme sa diffusion amènent à parler du document limite, justement, soumis au dépôt légal de l'imprimé, celui-là reconnu sous le nom de littérature grise. Créée à la fois par la multiplication des procédés de reproduction et des modes de diffusion, liée à la nécessité et au besoin contemporain d'information rapide (thèses non imprimées de façon classique, working-papers, rapports techniques, tracts ...) peuvent représenter, certes, un élément fondamental pour la recherche. Mais par ailleurs, les supports de cette catégorie de documents sont souvent fragiles, leur contenu souvent rapidement dépassé par définition, leur existence difficilement repérable. Peuvent-ils réellement entrer dans l'organisation systématique d'un dépôt légal centralisé? Et ne serait-ce pas plutôt le rôle de bibliothèques de recherche spécialisées que de rassembler et de faire connaître un certain nombre d'entre-eux?" ("Pflichtexemplargesetzgebung" *Bulletin/ Ligue des Bibliothèques Européennes de Recherche* 18 (1982): 20.

material. Both are concerned with the lack of funds; the need for inexpensive, automated techniques for low-level cataloging of single items; and the desirability of collective description of aggregations of items. Collective description may be appropriate and even preferable for certain types of library material issued by corporate bodies, and the data bases of the future should be designed to accept both types of description. The word printed is no longer synonymous with the word published. Therefore, librarians may have to adopt archival practices such as cooperation with depositors, sampling, and the preparation of disposal schedules.

### National Library Material

Most national libraries, with varying degrees of emphasis,<sup>2</sup> perform dual functions of preserving the records of national culture and providing an international collection of high quality. Whatever other function a national library may undertake, the collection of the nation's literature is its primary responsibility. The depository libraries, which have as their primary function a legal obligation to collect the literature of the nation, may well be expected to know what that obligation entails. Opinions vary on this matter, however. Some maintain that obviously printed literature must be fully covered, although there is some division of opinion about the value of the national library retaining such items as local newspapers, book jackets,

jobbing printing of all kinds, diaries, and similar ephemera.<sup>3</sup> Others disagree with the old formal objective of preserving all printed documents and contend that only the best products of the age and of the nation should be preserved.<sup>4</sup> In countries with a different tradition, the choice of reproduction method is thought to be irrelevant; and literature is defined as publications reproduced in multiple copies, in any form or medium, for sale, lease, or free distribution, whether general or limited. Thus, one chief characteristic of library material seems to be its lack of uniqueness, with a few subtle exceptions such as a single copy of a book produced for a special occasion.<sup>5</sup>

Apart from such exceptions, a book usually exists in a varying number of identical copies; but this has not always been so. In the past, books were in manuscript form; and traditionally the manuscript was included in the national library, even if it later ceased to be regarded as a book. Many libraries still have large holdings of such manuscripts, which they usually shelve and catalog separately. Even the introduction of typing initially caused no great confusion. The reproduction of a work in a limited number of copies probably did not induce the librarian to regard it as a publication; and even if on occasion he decided that an item did not belong in the manuscript division of the library—as might be the case when a doctoral thesis was reproduced in this manner—such cases could be easily dealt with and clear-

<sup>2</sup>Donald Davinson, *Academic and Legal Deposit Libraries* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books and Clive Bingley, 1969), p.7.

<sup>3</sup>K.W. Humphreys, "National Library Functions," *UNESCO Bulletin for Libraries* 20 (1966): 159.

<sup>4</sup>M. Joborn, "The Function of the National Library in the Hungarian Library System," *Libri* 23 (1973): 159.

<sup>5</sup>Some remarkable examples exist, all of which were presented to Danish royalty. In 1578 the illustrious printer Lorenz Benedict produced a book on military science, the only copy of which is possessed by the Royal Library in Denmark. The contents of the book easily explain its uniqueness. Another famous example is a Greenlandic post-incunabula work produced by Hinrich Rink in 1861, with a very circumstantial though modest title, containing samples of Greenlandic drawing. Even in the twentieth century we find an example that defies legal deposit stipulations: a uniquely illustrated edition of Ogier le Dannoy's *Roman en prose du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle* was presented to Queen Margrethe in 1967.

ly defined, and exceptions could be made to the general rule. On the whole, librarians are accustomed to regard manuscripts (including perhaps typescripts) as distinctly different from printed material, published or unpublished. Librarians commonly define literary material by its form and acquired attributes; thus an item with sheets fastened together and provided with a title page containing information for bibliographic description is considered to be a book.

Quite naturally, the wording of the laws of legal deposit, which usually emphasized the external characteristics of library material (publication and/or reproduction method, formerly synonymous with printing), supported the inclination of librarians to attach more importance to form than to matter. Later, when the art of printing became a less exclusive industry, especially in countries where printers and not publishers were mainly responsible for the deposit, it was thought necessary to make exceptions to the general rule of the laws of legal deposit. The exceptions were greatly influenced by the library tradition of categorizing a publication by its form. A few examples of exclusions will illustrate this point. Timetables, for instance, might be excluded, whether or not they contained a whole survey of the national railway traffic, with no considerations for the needs of future historians. Popular ditties written for family occasions might be excluded—even those written by outstanding authors. Reprints, regardless of their contents, might also be excluded.

Before the twentieth century, printing establishments were few, and the printing of a book was a costly affair. The definition of library material did not concern the librarian. Until relatively recently,

printers were a well defined group; but this is no longer true. During the latter decades of this century, modern reproduction methods have caused significant changes in library material. Since modern printing began with the appearance of the Gutenberg Bible, which competed in grace with any illuminated manuscript, the noble art of printing has degenerated into a varied number of industrialized printing methods. The products of this industry shocked Lauritz Nielsen, the venerable Danish librarian, who more than 50 years ago spoke with disgust of the industrial products of the printing presses.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, with the introduction of offset lithography, which is used inside as well as outside ordinary printing establishments, the borderline between printing and other reproduction processes has been blurred; and the interpretation of the acts of legal deposit in Scandinavia, and in other countries with legal deposit from printers, has become increasingly complicated.

Because the old criteria have become less reliable, it seems reasonable to ask whether or not they should be supplanted by those of an Anglo-Saxon tradition, according to which only published material must be deposited. There are several reasons not to choose that solution, however. For one thing, neither “published” nor “publisher” is a well defined term. In how many copies should an item be reproduced to qualify for definition as a publication? Does the term publication include such materials as research reports and conference papers and such semi-formal materials as internal memoranda and files of correspondence, notes of meetings, and similar items? According to a policy statement approved by directors of national libraries, the term “publisher” includes not only book publishers, booksellers, and state

<sup>6</sup>Lauritz Nielsen, *Pligtafleveringen til vore biblioteker* (Copenhagen: Hagerup, 1923).



publishing and distributing organizations but also universities, research associations, academic institutes, professional bodies, commercial and industrial companies, film and phonograph record producers and distributors, microform publishing agencies, and organizations publishing in magnetic tape and electronic form. (This list is by no means exhaustive.<sup>7</sup>) The broad adoption of this publication criterion would only add to the confusion that already exists. In addition, this criterion seems much too restrictive, especially in small countries, which can afford to have high ideals with respect to preserving the national literature. By this criterion, the national libraries would be deprived of much printed material that is now very much in demand. Consequently, the traditions of more than three centuries have been retained, and printer's deposit is still the basic principle in the new legal deposit laws in Iceland (1977), Sweden (1978), and Finland (1980). Printer's deposit is supplemented by publisher's deposit of material produced abroad.

It appears, then, that national libraries face two prodigious problems: How are they to cope with the mass of materials, and what is to be regarded as national literature that should be preserved for future generations? Viewing the burgeoning of paperwork during World War II, the *Washington Post* suggested in 1942 that the era might be known as the "age of papers" and that its preoccupation

with forms and reports might be called "papyrolatry." The new media are now slowly reaching the national libraries, which, unlike the archives, have not been forced into accepting them. More recently, however, we seem to be moving from papyrolatry to paperless. F.W. Lancaster, in his book on paperless information systems, states that the paperless system is intended to provide for electronic access to all types of documents read for their information value; but the system is not intended to replace print on paper for items read solely for recreational purposes. *Playboy* magazine, for example, is not likely to be enhanced by "soft-copy" display. A reviewer of Lancaster's book disagrees, however, not only with the serious intent of Lancaster's statement, but also with the lighthearted example; and the reviewer concludes that entertainment uses may even surpass more serious uses in electronic dissemination and market development as display-screen resolution is improved.<sup>8</sup>

Although the age of papers may be a transition, this does not eliminate the problem of coping with the immediate situation. It does not seem satisfactory to exclude types of material by introducing value judgments, since little of the new material belongs in the category of trivia. More to the point would be a survey of the entire Documentation, Library, and Archives (DLA) area<sup>9</sup> to consider possibilities of cooperation and to ensure

<sup>7</sup>"The Role of National Libraries in National and International Information Systems," *UNESCO Bulletin for Libraries* 31 (1977): 12.

<sup>8</sup>Charles T. Meadow, review of *Toward Paperless Information Systems* by F.W. Lancaster, *Library Quarterly* 49 (July 1979): 327.

<sup>9</sup>The Documentation, Library, and Archive (DLA) area is part of the concept of the National Information System (NATIS), which comprises all the agencies, resources, processes, and activities involved in the transfer of information in a nation. The task of NATIS is to ensure that all engaged in political, economic, scientific, educational, social, or cultural activities receive information that will enable them to render their fullest contribution to the whole community. This concept was promoted by UNESCO and accepted by the 1974 Intergovernmental Conference on the Planning of National Documentation, Library and Archives Infrastructures. The background of this initiative was the information explosion in the twentieth century. For example, it was calculated that the production and distribution of knowledge accounted for 29 percent of the U.S. gross national product in 1958, 33 percent in 1963, and nearly 40 percent in 1968 (*UNESCO Bulletin for Libraries* 31 [1977]: 8-12).

that no unnecessary duplication of effort takes place. Since national libraries and national archives share the obligation to preserve recorded information for the future, some attention will obviously focus on the archives.

### What Is Archival Material?

Archivists and librarians have very different approaches to their material. Archivists usually do not make clear distinctions between printed (even published) and unprinted records, and they do not always catalog or shelve them separately. This is illustrated by a report from an international conference of archivists in which the fundamental differences between library and archival material were discussed. The question was considered too abstract, and there was doubt about the legitimacy of asking it. According to the English representatives, the distinction was often nebulous, uncertain, and, in practice, ignored. The Portuguese representatives felt it was difficult to base the distinction between the materials of libraries and archives on rigid principles. There was virtual unanimity in the conclusion that the deciding factor was not whether or not a document was printed. Even the publication criterion was not accepted unanimously as a determining factor. The question had not been given much thought. Some representatives said the publication criterion was a determining factor but added that the rights of the archives always should be reserved. The representatives of The Netherlands rejected both the publication and the printing criteria and argued that the only acceptable element of distinction was that the archival documents be unique. Government publications were not excluded from the sphere of interest of the ar-

chives. A few of the archives represented receive none of these publications, while some receive a selection and others receive all. It is also noteworthy that some of the archives described government publications individually according to library principles, while others did so collectively according to archival principles.<sup>10</sup>

The definition of archival material—as far as its form is concerned—is obviously a rather flexible one. Hilary Jenkinson, the famous British archivist, discussed the problems involved in material annexed to documents, problems not unknown to librarians. He illustrated the problems by a *reductio ad absurdum*, by describing the dilemma of a viceroy from India sending home to the Secretary of England an elephant with a suitable cover letter or label. Is the elephant attached to the label or the label to the elephant? Jenkinson's own solution to the problem does not seem to amuse him in the slightest: the administration would be obliged to solve the question of housing and to send the elephant to the zoo long before the label or letter came into the archives.<sup>11</sup>

New developments have changed the general appearance of archival records, as was pointed out in the introduction to the 1965 edition of Jenkinson's manual. Ministries and agencies have expanded and proliferated, with a corresponding enormous increase in the quantity of records generated and held for reference. Moreover, the larger the office the more it must depend upon artificial, rather than personal, communication and memory. The mechanical and electronic means of writing, reproducing, recording, and retrieving information, which have developed to satisfy this need, have also swelled the archives with material

<sup>10</sup>*Le Concept d'Archives et les Frontières de l'Archivistique. Actes de la Septième Conférence de la Table Ronde Internationale des Archives* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale 1963), p.35.

<sup>11</sup>Hilary Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration* (London, 1922, reissued 1937 and 1965).

duplicated and circulated on a scale not contemplated by Jenkinson. The same office machinery has also produced records in new shapes—sound recordings, photographic film, punched cards, punched and magnetic tape, and microcopies of every kind upon card and film—which, while they may contribute less than duplicated papers to the bulk of the archives, nevertheless present the archivist with new and formidable problems of storage, handling, and interpretation. While the bulk of the records generated in every office thus tends to increase, so the sources of the national archives have multiplied. To records of the governmental departments which Jenkinson had in mind when writing his manual must now be added those of the enlarged local government authorities, those of para-governmental bodies such as the British Transport Commission, those of public corporations such as the British Broadcasting Corporation, and those of the great business houses whose activities and influence have become a powerful national force. The records of the nation have grown in bulk and complexity beyond even Jenkinson's vision in 1937, when his manual was reissued.

### Similarities and Differences

Today's busy modern civil servant has no time for producing holograph documents. Rather, he uses every modern contraption for communication; and modern democracy—and also bureaucracy—often requires that multiple copies of documents be produced for distribution among colleagues, superiors, other departments, and interested parties. Two opposite tendencies, therefore, work in the same direction, making records (archival materials) and publications (library materials) look more alike. Records are losing their

uniqueness and individuality and are acquiring many of the characteristics of a publication. The process of reproduction frequently carries with it certain aspects of a publication, such as title, imprint, and sometimes even a table of contents. Conversely, often a reproduced publication loses finish in the making and acquires the appearance of a hastily produced document. This type of reproduction contains limited and incomplete facts for library bibliographic description. The poor quality of many reproduced publications and the increasing lack of individuality in the presentation of the written word may be regretted for aesthetic reasons. More importantly, the difficulty of distinguishing between library and archival material, combined with the impossibility of coping with the amount of material, reveals the urgent need for librarians and archivists to more precisely define the concepts of their material. This is true not only of texts on paper, but of information in the new media as well. (It is hoped, however, that the authors of a Finnish report on legal deposit are correct in maintaining that it is fairly easy to distinguish between published and unpublished audiovisual material.<sup>12</sup>)

Archivists may not feel the need for precise definition of material, because they have never attached as much importance to form as to matter. Also, they have other matters to consider, such as evidential value of records (the relation of one record to another), which may prevent them from discarding items generally considered to be library material. One archivist, however, seems to have reflected on problems of distinction when discussing research in archives. Philip C. Brooks contends that a user of archival materials confronts all manner of typed documents, carbon

<sup>12</sup> *Vapaakappaletoimikunnan Mietintö. Komitéanmietintö 1973* (Helsinki, 1973), p. 128.

copies, mimeographed or offset copies, punched cards, and printouts of data processing machines which are not considered published materials. The distinction between written and printed materials is becoming less clear with the rapid development of facsimile processes.<sup>13</sup>

T.R. Schellenberg, in his classic book on the administration of archives, stated that, since librarians have often demonstrated an interest in the development of the archival profession, archivists should reciprocate and take an interest in library techniques. He remarked that a distinction is made between the techniques of the two professions on the basis of the assumption that archival techniques relate to records and library techniques to publications. Such a distinction is possible only if it is assumed that archivists and librarians are concerned with different kinds of material, and it is valid only if it is qualified by the statement that librarians are concerned *mainly* with publications and archivists *mainly* with records.<sup>14</sup> Schellenberg pointed out two basic differences between documentary (archival) and literary (library) materials. First, records are source or primary material. This difference largely accounts for the physical variations between the two classes of material. Since records are primary, they have attributes they received when they were created and they lack the attributes that publications, which are secondary, acquire in the course of their manufacture. These attributes include authorship and imprint. Second, records are organic material, which largely accounts for the substan-

tive variations between them and publications. Unlike publications, records have collective significance primarily in relation to activity and only secondarily to subject.<sup>15</sup>

In recent literature, the organism concept has been criticized as belonging in a romantic world, and it has been pointed out that archives—at least those of the present day—are the result of rational and systematic planning. This does not, however, dismiss the view of the archives as a totality, held together by many links, according to Swedish archivist Nils Nilsson, who also noted that modern reprographic methods have given certain records a booklike character and an increased mobility. Yet, the possibilities of a later rearrangement of the archives seem to be reduced, because, through modern office techniques, records have been linked in complicated patterns.<sup>16</sup>

There is considerable disagreement between Schellenberg and Robert L. Clark, editor of a book on archive-library relations. Clark's book contains the statement that the distinctions between library and archival materials are not distinctions of kind but are distinctions derived from the method and intent of creation. The chapter on similarities and differences concludes with the remark that, except for the quantity of books, there is little difference between the kinds of material found in a large library and in a large archives. The proportions by type differ, but the variety of types does not differ to any significant degree. There may be differences in the arrangement and description of the materials in that the library generally treats each item as a

<sup>13</sup>Philip C. Brooks, *Research in Archives* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1969), p. 95.

<sup>14</sup>T.R. Schellenberg, *The Management of Archives* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1965) p.4.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 119-20.

<sup>16</sup>Nils Nilsson, *Arkivkunskap* (Malmö: 1974), p.22.

discrete unit to be considered on its own merits, while the archives treats each unit in the context in which it was created.<sup>17</sup> The fact that a decade passed between the publication of Schellenberg's book and Clark's book probably accounts, to a certain extent, for the difference in viewpoint.

### Cooperation

One may be justified in wondering why the problem of coping with the amount of material and the possibility of resource sharing should not once be mentioned in a book dealing exclusively with archive-library relations. Since it is emphasized that the distinctions between library and archival materials are not distinctions of kind, there seems to be no serious impediment to resource sharing. This is especially true because the differences in arrangement of materials in archives and libraries are of recent date. They stem only from the introduction of the principle of provenance, which was formulated at the French National Archives in the third decade of the nineteenth century and ultimately became a guiding principle for the arrangement of public records in Europe. The principle was first given theoretical justification in a Dutch manual published in 1898. Before then, records were regarded as discrete units, and there was no "respect des fonds." Records were classified on principles inspired by library techniques. It is symptomatic that the theoretical reassessment of the nature of archives, which took place at the beginning of the twentieth century, was not only based on a better understanding, but was also dictated by insurmountable resource problems identical to those faced by librarians and information scientists today. Perhaps the

time has come for a new reassessment, not only of the division of responsibilities, but also of library methodology.

On the whole, literature on archive-library relations is scarce. In a recent bibliography of archival literature only two out of almost two hundred pages are devoted to "Archivists, manuscript curators, and librarians, comparisons and contrasts." According to one of the contributors to Clark's book, *Archive-Library Relations*, an analysis of the items listed in *Library Literature* for the period 1961-71 under "archival," "archives," and "archivists" reveals fewer than thirty articles, divided among *College and Research Libraries*, *Library Resources and Technical Services*, *Library Quarterly*, *Library Trends*, *Special Libraries*, and *Library Journal*. Nearly half of these articles are news notes.

Possibilities of cooperation are mentioned on occasion in the *American Archivist*. Philip C. Brooks noted that, aside from the obvious fact that many bodies of archives do happen to be in the custody of librarians, there are several other meeting grounds. One is the rising tide of "near print," "processed," and other types of materials that are produced in numerous copies but are not actually published. This tide flows between more traditional types of archives and true publications, and it threatens to engulf both librarians and archivists. It is an uncontrolled growth and its conquest will require all the skill of both professions. In recent years, the National Archives and the Library of Congress set a fine example of cooperation in their joint effort to define their fields in areas of possible competition.<sup>18</sup> Werner W. Clapp

<sup>17</sup>Robert L. Clark, ed., *Archive-Library Relations* (New York and London: R. R. Bowker, 1976), pp. 33, 35.

<sup>18</sup>Philip C. Brooks, "Archivists and Their Colleagues: Common Denominators," *American Archivist* 14 (1951): 40ff. Margaret S. Child, "Reflections on Cooperation Among Professions," *American Archivist* 46 (Summer 1983): 286-92, and Frank G. Burke, "Archival Cooperation," *American Archivist* 46 (Summer 1983): 293-305, both describe more recent cooperative efforts.



has given a pertinent example of changes caused by the introduction of new reproduction processes. The mimeographed research report, which has superseded journal publication to some extent, is requiring heroic efforts by librarians to control bibliographically. It would be a pity not to employ the same controls to manage the same publications in the archives. Clapp also has commented on the growing resemblance between the contents of archives and libraries. He concludes that the need for efficiency will force librarians and archivists to cooperate in developing bibliographic control of mutually held materials.<sup>19</sup> While one can only agree with the idea of resource sharing, the mere thought of preserving forever the enormous amount of research reports in two different national repositories rather boggles the mind.

### Fringe or Grey Literature

As a starting point for discussing resource sharing, it is necessary to take a closer look at the new types of material and to try to analyze the formidable term grey literature. From the point of view of the national library, the following questions arise: What are the types of material? What should be kept forever and what should the library keep provisionally in its capacity as documentation agency? What should the library consider to be the responsibility of documentation agencies and special libraries? How can the cataloging burden be reduced, and what possibilities does new technology offer for reducing it?

The products of the new reproduction processes roughly fall into three largely overlapping categories: (1) Literature that was formerly produced by conventional printing methods. This category is dif-

ficult to describe, since it represents all types of publications. A great amount of professional literature will be found in this category, but the choice of reproduction method largely depends on personal idiosyncracies. There is no telling when an author or publisher will sacrifice aesthetic preferences to financial considerations and a desire for speedy publication. Surely the mimeographed or photocopied research report, which has superseded journal publication to so large an extent, belongs in this group. (2) Material that was formerly reserved for archives and only existed in manuscript or a few typewritten copies. In this group belong a great many documents of national and local governments. Local government reform of the 1960s in Denmark involved a high degree of decentralization, which resulted in a flood of publications from fewer, but larger, local government institutions well equipped to do their own planning. Here also belong papers prepared for meetings and congresses as well as students' examination papers and theses. (3) Literature that never before saw light. This group includes new books, various forms of published non-book materials (such as sound books or publications in microform or on tape), paper printouts of automated systems, and educational kits in various media. This group also includes semi-publications such as fiction and political (grassroots) literature sold in book cafés, prepublication reports produced by academic institutions, and textbooks, produced by universities and other educational institutions, which contain both original material and some copied from other publications. Modern developments have inspired latent talents to express themselves in fiction and have promoted new educational theories through the production of a greater variety of

<sup>19</sup>Werner W. Clapp, "Archivists and Bibliographic Control: A Librarian's Viewpoint," *American Archivist* 14 (1951): 311.



texts for study. This phenomenon is sometimes called looseleaf pedagogics.

The System for Information on Grey Literature in Europe (SIGLE) project, which is concerned with material related to some of the categories listed above, was launched under the auspices of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1980. The British Library Lending Division (BLLD) plays a leading role. The term grey literature, or its equivalent non-conventional literature, is defined as literature that is not issued through conventional commercial publication channels. Examples include reports (both from the public and private sector) containing scientific, technical, economic, and social information; theses; conference papers not published in commercially available proceedings; technical rules and recommendations; translations (other than those published commercially); articles printed in certain journals (e.g., non-commercial society journals or local level journals); official documents (e.g., documents issued in limited numbers by government bodies); and industrial advertising literature.<sup>20</sup> These examples closely resemble the three categories of products of new reproduction processes outlined above.

In countries with highly developed legal deposit systems, much of the material in question cannot be called grey. The Royal Library in Copenhagen receives, through legal deposit or through recently instituted voluntary deposit from state and local government authorities, many research reports, doctoral theses, journals disregarded by abstracting and indexing services, official documents, and industrial advertising literature. The primary types lacking and much in demand are undergraduate theses and un-

published conference papers. Technical rules and recommendations and translations probably belong in an ad hoc group of documents which the national library could not, and should not, try to control. The prolific quantity of grey literature produced by the EEC itself is a great problem for a small member nation like Denmark.

No librarian would contest the need to acquire information inherent in the adoption of the Universal Availability of Publications (UAP) measures, but the national library can do this only in cooperation with special libraries and documentation agencies. It should not try to compete with them. The primary function of the national library is to preserve the cultural heritage of the nation, though in its dual function it may choose to go beyond that responsibility.

### Suggested Criteria for Selection

It is possible to draw four conclusions about what should be included in the national library. First, a publication issued by a commercial publisher and offered for public distribution must be preserved. Second, material issued by non-commercial bodies may or may not be appropriate for the national library. There are no completely safe criteria for selection of this type of material. Third, "printed" is no longer synonymous with "published." Fourth, value judgments do not apply. Thus, there is no alternative but to try to exclude archival material from the national library. As has already been shown, there are no formal criteria for distinction between library and archival material. The physical variations mentioned by Schellenberg are not always present, though in certain cases we may exclude material that is clearly

<sup>20</sup>J. M. Gibb and E. Phillips, "A Better Fate for the Grey, or Non-Conventional Literature," *Journal of Research Communication Studies* 1 (1978/79): 225-34. Also published in French in *Bulletin des Bibliothèques de France*, in German in *Bibliothek Forschung und Praxis*, and in Italian in *Bolettino d'Informazioni AIB* in 1979.

provisional, incomplete, lacks fundamental information for bibliographic description, carries journal or reference numbers for internal housekeeping, or is not intelligible to the uninitiated. The statement that the distinctions are not distinctions of kind, but rather are derived from the method and intent of creation, probably comes close to the truth. This view is supported by Adolf Brenneke, the German archivist, who contends that the essential difference between literary and archival material is a difference of purpose. Archival material is of a legal or an administrative nature, while library material has a literary purpose, with the intention of providing information, instruction, or edification.<sup>21</sup> According to Schellenberg, records are accumulated to accomplish certain functions, and the acquisition of subject content is only incidental to the accomplishment of an action.<sup>22</sup> He also says that records are products of activity, of purposive action.<sup>23</sup> Clearly, it is easy to find arguments against the practical use of such definitions and reject them as belonging in an abstract world of ideas. Nevertheless, librarians in a legal deposit department must make decisions every day, and it is better to make those decisions on the basis of difficult selection criteria than to proceed by instinct. The problem becomes more apparent in the light of the products of purposive action. These include: papers prepared for congresses (compared with the published congress report after the event); theses prepared for academic degrees (the best of them may be published at a later stage); and prepublication research reports that are only circulated to individual research workers (compared with reports that are

distributed to institutions and libraries. The distinction is difficult.) Lecture notes of a university faculty member may be evaluated according to the same principles. Since his work is not only part of the history of the university and the history of his own activity, but may also be original research of independent value, the question arises whether or not his work should be regarded as a product of purposive action. Some archivists may disagree with the idea of regarding a university faculty member's work as primarily part of the history of the university. This view was expressed, however, in a recent article on faculty papers and special-subject repositories. Just as they contribute to the record of the school's activities, faculty papers are themselves understood more fully in the context of that record. Individual collections of faculty papers are often seen as distinct, unrelated units, separable from the papers of other professors in the same department or from the official records of the institution itself with no loss in meaning or perspective. They are, however, best appraised, processed, and used in the context of the academic communities in which they were created. That a discouraging number of university archives do not consider the papers of faculty and research staff to be their collecting responsibility is probably not exclusively an American problem.<sup>24</sup>

An author may be the best judge of his own work, and his attitude will often be evident in his willingness or reluctance to acknowledge his work as fit for deposit in a library. We may have to rely on his judgment, if the act of legal deposit leaves us no other alternative. Certainly the selection of government publications

<sup>21</sup>Adolf Brenneke, *Archivkunde*. Bearbeitet . . . und ergänzt von Wolfgang Leesch (Leipzig: Koehler & Amelang, 1953), p. 34.

<sup>22</sup>Schellenberg, p. 68.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 66. Note also that the Danish word "akt" (act) is equivalent to "document."

<sup>24</sup>June Wolff, "Faculty Papers and Special-Subject Repositories," *American Archivist* 44 (Fall 1981): 349-50.

should also be made in close cooperation with the issuing institutions, because only they can know if a marginal item such as a committee report is intended for publication or should be considered as a working paper to be placed in the archives. Such cooperation is a long-standing tradition in the archives and may even be a legal obligation,<sup>25</sup> but it is rather foreign to the librarian.

The Royal Library in Copenhagen has had some experience of cooperation with depositors through the voluntary deposit from state institutions and local government authorities. This voluntary system was instituted in the 1970s because the Danish legal deposit act was considered inadequate. The voluntary deposit was started on a rather tentative basis without strict guidelines, the intention being to form a general idea of what was produced by more or less private printers. Initially, the library was overwhelmed by the flood of publications; but it soon became evident that it was quite easy to sort out provisional or incomplete material. The principal problem was the alarming number of materials that seemed to qualify for permanent retention.

Even if the national library takes great care in selecting the right material for permanent retention, there is always a possibility that a working paper may become well known and widely distributed. Since wide distribution is the first attribute of a publication, the item should be preserved by the national library. Mistakes are inevitable; and the national library should be authorized to claim an item for deposit at a later time, even if that item was initially rejected.

The library may also wish to keep an item provisionally and decide about

preservation later. This can be done by flagging the item in the catalog. Modern technology can assist the library in doing this as well as in checking the frequency of loans and in withdrawing the item from the collection. Such procedures should not be considered to be in conflict with the legal deposit acts, which generally imply a legal or moral obligation to keep everything that is deposited.<sup>26</sup>

Librarians of national collections and archivists have several mutual concerns. They both have difficulty in controlling the masses of material; and, by definition, their collections are not select. They contain much material that is not of topical interest; but it may become important in a remote future, often to a small group of researchers. That is why, in an economic recession, there is a tendency to give the national function lower priority than is given those functions which serve the immediate needs of a large community of users. Consequently, the national repositories badly need efficient and economical methods of obtaining bibliographic control. Schellenberg remarked that the library profession has become a precise and well-defined discipline while the archival profession, in contrast, is in a formative stage.<sup>27</sup> The technical perfection attained by librarians has both advantages and drawbacks, because the best is sometimes the enemy of the good. Serious backlogs are often the price of high ambition. Librarians should join archivists in their present efforts to modify the new technology and make it compatible with their methodologies. The archivists are correct in being wary of adopting the Anglo-American Cataloging Rules (AACR II), which are supposed to ease their way toward the use of automated systems, and of becoming

<sup>25</sup>Nilsson, p. 48.

<sup>26</sup>Cfr. recent discussions regarding the first draft of "Guidelines for Legal Deposit Legislation" prepared by Jean Lunn (Paris: UNESCO, 1981).

<sup>27</sup>Schellenberg, p. 61.

locked into library networks that cannot handle hierarchically arranged archival data. The fact that provenance provides a high level of access to documents is often completely ignored by librarians.<sup>28</sup> They usually can think of only one way to deal with library material: cataloging discrete items, even when such action is futile because an item lacks the rudimentary elements for cataloging or is of only modest interest if isolated from the context in which it was created. Librarians should not use a steamroller to crack nuts! The change in library material, the problem of coping with the masses of material, and the lack of resources are all factors that call for simplification and differentiation of library techniques of arrangement and control systems. The data bases of the future must be designed to accommodate the techniques of describing both single items and groups of items.

### **Library Methodology: Time for a Review**

Through sheer force of inertia, the priorities given to the various activities of a library tend to remain conservative, and library methodology remains sacrosanct. Lars-Erik Sanner, in a brief but highly suggestive article on library goals in practice, highlighted the problem of balancing the conflicting demands for staff between the service and processing units—the external versus the internal functions. He properly questioned the rationality of library practices. Sanner cited as examples of lack of rationality the belief that service should be maintained even to the detriment of other functions and the persistent belief that quality of books is directly proportional to quantity. When one compares departments in different libraries that have roughly identical work

and a similar workload, one may find that they are quite differently staffed. Often the privileges of a certain department may be traced back to a former chief who was both powerful and headstrong. According to Parkinson's laws, the department easily succeeds in occupying its many officers. Cataloging work, ironically enough, is not balanced against the use of catalogs. Rather, it tends to become an end in itself; and catalog perfection is not at all dictated by the demand from outside but rather is mandated by the librarians. This mandate has been codified at international conferences and in voluminous collections of rules. Sanner mentioned that new procedures might even improve information retrieval. Many Scandinavian research libraries supply multiple access by personal and corporate authors, but often provide no access by title.<sup>29</sup> Automation will solve this problem. Another alternative method is the input of information relating to book history, or provenance in the library sense of the term. Much important information, which scholars will have to dig out at a later stage, is completely lost in our perfect catalogs, while it lies hidden in our library archives.

It is not the number of data elements prescribed by AACR II—now used in all Scandinavian national libraries—that makes cataloging so time-consuming, at least as far as monographs are concerned. For serials, one has to consider the constantly changing nature of this type of publication and reduce the number of data elements as much as possible. This fact was realized by the founders of the International Serials Data System (ISDS), which, unfortunately, conflicts with AACR II. The editors of AACR II should not be praised for disregarding the

<sup>28</sup>Richard C. Berner, "Toward National Archival Priorities: A Suggested Basis for Discussion," *American Archivist* 45 (Spring 1982): 166, 168.

<sup>29</sup>Lars-Erik Sanner, "Bibliotekens målsättning i praktiken" in *Levende Biblioteker. Festskrift til Palle Birkelund 29 januar 1982* (Copenhagen: Biblioteks centralen, 1982), pp. 112–14.

existence of ISDS, which is the only worldwide system for the registration of serials. The worst problem in AACR II is the intricate set of rules for presentation of data elements. One may well ask whether the pigeonholing of data and endless possibilities of output and combination of search elements made possible by modern electronic data processing do not render superfluous much elaborate cataloging, such as the speculative choice of main entry: personal or corporate author or title.<sup>30</sup> Paradoxically, it is one of the editors of AACR II, Michael Gorman, who has had the courage to tell librarians that, in this world of practical use of machine-readable bibliographic records, the cataloging codes and standards that defined our work in the pre-machine age are becoming marginal or even irrelevant.<sup>31</sup>

The change in library material may require a more radical change in our highly refined library methodology than that envisaged by Gorman; and the possibility of using archival techniques of arrangement and collective description—the techniques of covering aggregations of documents in simple description entries—should be seriously explored for material of the record type. True enough, archival finding aids cannot help the searcher find specific items to the extent that library catalogs can, providing those individual items are homogenous in subject matter and can be described from information readily available on a title page. This is often not the case with

material issued by corporate bodies, especially government agencies. The problem of dealing with material fundamentally different from usual library material is clearly reflected in the history of the Scandinavian depository libraries with legal deposit from printers. The futile effort of including in subject catalogs, which were specifically designed for the analysis of subjects, items that had only an organic significance as collective units was almost pathetic; but, with the development of the art of printing, the effect was simply disastrous. The classification systems, especially under the social sciences subject headings, were inadequate; and scientific and technical literature was submerged by literature reflecting human activity, more or less artificially classified. Description became more and more complicated, and the number of devised titles increased in the catalogs. Eventually it became necessary to establish special collections of summarily cataloged material, mainly consisting of such materials as statutes, reports and accounts, house journals, catalogs, and programs issued by corporate bodies. These collections also contained such material as separately printed poems, which, because of their large quantities, were thought impracticable to catalog. Almost all such materials were included in the *Bibliotheca Danica 1482–1830*, but they were left out of the later Danish national bibliography. The material is arranged in classified order on the shelves according to a system that

<sup>30</sup>F. Wilfrid Lancaster and Linda C. Smith: "Compatibility Issues Affecting Information Systems and Services" (Paris: UNESCO, September 1983 [PGI-83/WS/23]), p. 43. "In traditional library practice, the main entry in a catalogue is usually the entry appearing under the name of the person (or organization) that appears to be chiefly responsible for the authorship of the document. In other cases the main entry may appear under the title. The term main entry is actually used in two ways in the literature of library science: 1) to refer to that one entry in the catalogue in which full information on the document may always be found (added entries may give shortened information only), and 2) to refer to the access point under which this entry is filed in the catalogue, usually the name of an author, less frequently a title. In a computer-based system the whole idea of a main entry is redundant: a complete bibliographic record is stored once and all access points provided—by subject, by author, by title, by language, or whatever—are merely pointers to this record."

<sup>31</sup>Michael Gorman, "New Rules for New Systems," *American Libraries* (April 1982): 241.



combines library and archival methods. There are about a hundred subject groups. Within the hierarchy, each institution, association, or firm is arranged according to the general purpose of its activity. If the activities are too diverse to be contained in one group, they are placed in two or more. All material is arranged in hierarchical order according to provenance; and with the help of a survey of the classes and a subject index, it is usually surprisingly easy to locate an individual item or to satisfy a subject inquiry that is not contrary to the system of arrangement. The user who wishes to be informed of all the activities within a certain region may, however, have to go through an enormous amount of material. Regrettable though it is, in this case we should perhaps try to combat the equal-for-all syndrome—the tendency to treat all material as if it were of equal value, which obviously it is not—described by Sanner.

The Scandinavian collections of small print may serve as models for library collections of the new material. They may even be extended to include such material. It is a curious fact that, in principle, the main forms of library methodology—description and classification—remain virtually unaffected by a highly developed technology, even though shrinking budgets and increasing amounts of material call for reevaluation. Rules for description have not changed radically for over a century, and in classification we are still tied to what Brenneke describes as “the Procrustean bed of ten numbers.” He criticizes the Dewey Decimal Classification System for its lack of elasticity. The system can only be enlarged through subdivisions, not in breadth. The archivist is not able to foresee all functional developments within administration in his planning of

the system.<sup>32</sup> The fact that archival methodology is considered by some to be less sophisticated than that of librarians, and to be still in a formative stage, may explain why archivists seem to be more receptive to the change in material and new developments in technology, especially in the United States, where “chronology inevitably is a factor in dealing with archives, and where the problem of volume of modern records has replaced the problem of deciphering medieval charters.”<sup>33</sup>

The author of an article on social history and archival practice noted that archivists are all aware of the scorn expressed for the nineteenth-century crypto-librarians who cataloged and classified records as if they were books. Archivists may wonder whether, a hundred years from now, their successors will think the same of twentieth-century crypto-records managers who retain records as if they were still in actively used files. Provenance should be understood more as a technique than as the intellectual basis of a profession. The point is not to abandon it, but to go beyond it.<sup>34</sup> The author concludes by saying that his article rests on the assumption that archival practices and principles are not immutable. The understanding of historical research has changed, as have society and technology. It is now time for archivists to reevaluate the conventional wisdom of their profession and to discard what has become outmoded, to reorder priorities, and to retain only what remains useful. There is reason to believe that library practices are not immutable either. Michael Gorman certainly realized this when he opened his article by citing Thomas Carlyle: “Today is not yesterday, we ourselves change; how can our works and thoughts, if they are always to be the fittest, continue always the same?”

<sup>32</sup>Brenneke, p. 82.

<sup>33</sup>Ruth W. Helmuth, “Education for American Archivists: A View from the Trenches,” *American Archivist* 44 (Fall 1981): 296.

<sup>34</sup>Fredric M. Miller, “Social History and Archival Practice,” *American Archivist* 44 (Spring 1981): 122.