Representation: Selected Readings

Archival Perspectives

Kaplan, Elisabeth, “Many Paths to Partial Truths: Archives, Anthropology, and the Power of Representation,” Archival Science 2 (2002): 209-20. p. 211: [Archivists] “… actually serve as intermediaries between a subject and its later interpreters, a function/role that is one of interpretation itself. That translates into power over the record and how it is interpreted; and it points to where power is negotiated and exercised. This power over the evidence of representation, and the power over access to it, endows us with some measure of power over history, memory, and the past.”

Yakel, Elizabeth, “Archival Representation,” Archival Science 3 (2003): 1-25. p. 25: “Archival representation processes are neither objective nor transparent. As such, archivists need to be more conscious of the activities that structure the creation of representations, their social construction, as well as their appropriate uses. Archival representations speak not only about the collections for which they act as surrogates, but also about archival practice and archivists.”

Yeo, Geoffrey, “Concepts of Record (1): Evidence, Information, and Persistent Representations,” American Archivist 70 (Fall/Winter 2007): 315-343. p. 337: “To differentiate records from other kinds of representation, records can be characterized as persistent representations of activities, created by participants or observers of those activities or by their authorized proxies.” 3 attributes: records have persistence; records are representations of activities; records are created by persons or devices (participants, observers, proxies).

Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary Perspectives


Dyer, Richard. The Matter of Images: Essays on Representation, 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2002. P. 3 “Because one can see reality only through representation, it does not follow that one does not see reality at all. Partial, selective vision of something is not no vision of it whatsoever.”


