Introduction to Part I: Unsettling Archival Studies

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Efforts have long been underway to decolonize archival work and archival holdings, to repatriate artifacts, to change derogatory terms in finding aids, to consult with community members about appropriate protection of sacred artifacts, and to heal and reconcile in the wake of wounded/wounding histories. To effectively contribute to these ongoing *unsettlements*, though, we must necessarily address the longstanding interdisciplinary divide between professional archivists trained in records management and archival researchers trained in the humanities. Michelle Caswell articulated this concern in 2016:

> Yet almost none of the humanistic inquiry at "the archival turn" (even that which addresses "actually existing archives") has acknowledged the intellectual contribution of archival studies as a field of theory and praxis in its own right, nor is this humanities scholarship in conversation with ideas, debates, and lineages in archival studies. (p. 2)

As co-editors trained specifically in the field of rhetorical studies, we share Caswell's concern, as do many of our colleagues in rhetoric. K.J. Rawson (2018) writes that "few in our field's archival (re)turn have grappled with the critiques leveled by professional archivists against academics who neglect to attempt to understand the archival profession" (p. 329). This special double issue is our attempt to converse *across the disciplines*, facilitated by a journal that is invested in providing a venue for the sharing of knowledge and "interaction among—scholars interested in writing, speaking, and otherwise communicating across the curriculum (CAC)." It is our hope that this issue can advance archivists' ongoing efforts to develop critical, decolonial, and community-driven approaches to their work, while also introducing humanities scholars to the ongoing conversations in archival science that will greatly enrich their own research.

How we as a scholarly collective invested in archives pursue these goals is a remarkably public endeavor. In early 2021, for example, the members of the Indianapolis community called for the resignation of the director of the Indianapolis Museum of Art (IMA) after the distribution of an employment listing said it was seeking a new staff member who could both attract a diverse audience and also maintain their "traditional, core, white art audience" (Bahr 2021). After the director's resignation, the listing was updated and reposted. However, as of Feb. 18, 2021, it still describes the primary objectives of the job similarly: "to welcome and embrace a more diverse audience while maintaining the Museum's traditional core art audience," and "to capture the interest and support of both the IMA's core art audience of traditional supporters and a broader, more diverse local and regional population of potential visitors." Bound up with tradition is a centering of whiteness (and of maleness, and of straightness, and of cisness, and of ableness). In rhetorical studies, we pay special attention to how audiences themselves are written. How we imagine our audience is reflected in how we speak to others, "enabling" some and "silencing" others (Lunsford & Ede, 1984, p. 170). Audiences are not passive containers who simply receive information from the speaker, but rather have the rhetorical legitimacy to "use their own identities and histories as sieves to categorize, interpret, and acknowledge those who stand and speak in their presence" (McKinnon, 2012, p. 204). We

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thus have a responsibility to the communities represented in archival records to revise how we imagine the audiences of our archival practices and scholarship.

In their apology, the IMA commits to the creation of an independent review committee, a community-wide advisory committee, antiracist staff training, and this promise: "We will expand curatorial representations of exhibitions and programming of/for/by Black, Latino/a/x, Indigenous, Women, People with Disabilities, LGBTQIA, and other marginalized identities." For them, it seems that expansion, or the simple addition of *more* multicultural diversity and inclusion, is the ultimate goal of unsettling efforts. For the essays collected in this section of the special issue, though, expansion is not enough. Instead, authors present both critiques of archiving as a set of institutional practices, ideologies, and conventions, and new tactics of critical, communal, and digital archiving within and against those systems of power.

This double-issue offers contributions that shed light on how tactical archival practices can decenter, reshape, unsettle and rewrite traditional archival methodologies, with a particular focus on the ethics of archival praxis. Critical, communal, and digital archives often respond to a political moment, to social and cultural conditions, and to the needs of a community by reclaiming and/or retooling certain archival practices, sometimes rewriting archival conventions altogether. For example, marginalized communities and groups do not collect for the sake of collection. They often collect with the survival of future generations in mind and to pass down their histories. We invited scholars across the humanities and social sciences to highlight critical, communal, and digital approaches to archival work, to consider how radical political approaches might support them, to reflect on how to counteract and resist racist, colonial histories, and to explore alternatives. We are honored to feature contributions by scholars who enact decolonial approaches (deGraffenreid; Krupa & Grimm; Rayan), antiracist efforts (Carbajal), collaborations with Indigenous communities (McCracken & Hogan; Engle), repatriation efforts (Krupa & Grimm), ethical archival stewardship (Culbertson & Lanthorne), community-based projects (Powell, Heinz, Thomas & Paz Cody), and multimodal, digital technologies (represented in Part II). Contributors to this special issue illuminate the exigency, timeliness, and urgency of unsettling archival studies as national and international leaders are confronting questions of public memory, public commemoration, and a legacy of systemic racism and social injustice wrought by a settler colonial past.

Part I highlights original contributions made by critical archival scholars. The first three articles pose necessary interventions and challenges to longstanding archival practices such as stewardship, provenance, and minimal processing. These authors assess how their traditional understandings have historically reinforced marginalization of certain communities and reflect on how to implement change within existing resources. The next three essays offer rich case studies and examples of authors' efforts to develop community-centered approaches to archiving. Investigating acquisition, custody, and repatriation, this section represents the transition from traditional archival approaches to building relationships with the users, subjects, and creators of archival records. The final two articles uncover how colonial legacies of violence are implemented and normalized through the management of archival collections and explores the potentials for unsettling the institutional models of creation and access that continue to perpetuate this violence. Collectively, these articles will likely present rhetoric and composition readers and other archival researchers in the humanities with new vocabulary for describing the material processes of records keeping and management, as well as offering archivists, librarians, and information scientists new ideas and examples for reconsidering traditional archival practices and enacting critical archival methods and approaches.

This special issue begins with Anna Culbertson and Amanda Lanthorne's "Praxis, Not Practice: The Ethics of Consent and Privacy in 21st Century Archival Stewardship." The authors reveal the complexity of representing the histories of vulnerable populations and discuss the challenging decisions they faced when prioritizing the values of privacy, consent, and community relations over the imperative to build archival collections. Continuing with an eye toward ethical concerns, Alexandra deGraffenreid explores the tension experienced by professional archivists who aim to balance "ethical, person-focused archival practice" and

"reparative arrangement and description" with the demands of "minimal processing practices," which aim to keep collections accessible to researchers without creating undue backlogs. Next, Krista McCracken and Skylee-Storm Hogan unsettle the concept of archival ownership and provenance in "Community First: Indigenous Community-Based Archival Provenance." Using the archives of the Shingwauk Residential School Centre in Ontario, Canada as a case study, the authors illustrate how they worked with community members to develop "alternative approaches to archival organization… through the lens of Indigenous legal traditions [and] community ownership."

The next three articles focus on the archival processes of repatriation, acquisition, and custody, all with a focus on community-based practices. In "Digital Repatriation as a Decolonizing Practice in the Archaeological Archive," Krystiana Krupa and Kelsey Grimm explore the affordances and limitations of digital repatriation as a decolonizing practice in archaeological archives, using the example of Angel Mounds, a precontact Native American archaeological site curated by the Indiana University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. Cynthia Engle's essay, "Furniture Fit for a Queen: How a Table Led the Way to Building an Inclusive Community Approach to Archival Acquisitions," takes a decidedly different turn: rather than focus on repatriation, Engle explores the process of acquisition, in this case, accepting a historical artifact, a table returned to its rightful place in history in the residence of Queen Lili'uokalani, Hawaii's last reigning monarch. Engle describes the stages of an ethical acquisition process that culminated in a blessing ceremony for the table, restoring the energy/spirit of the object, a ceremony that allowed Engle herself to "reconnect…to [her] heritage and find…[her] own way to [her] ancestral bones as a kānaka ʻōiwi [Native Hawaiian]." The next article, "A Continuum of Archival Custody: Community-Driven Projects as a Path toward Equity" highlights the impact of supporting community-based archival projects. The four authors, Chaitra Powell, Kimber Heinz, Kimber Thomas, and Alexandra Paz Cody, describe a grant-funded project designed to support communities in the American South who are creating, curating, and maintaining their own archives, reimagining archival stewardship to deploy "institutional resources in support of community-driven archival collection and initiatives," thereby beginning the much-needed work of "sustainable repair and healing."

The final two essays in this issue confront the legacies of a settler colonial past, racist violence, and imperialist nation-building in international contexts. Itza Carbajal, in "Historical Metadata Debt: Confronting Colonial and Racist Legacies Through a Post-Custodial Metadata Praxis," argues for a community-centered, participatory metadata archival praxis as a way to engage in anti-racist, anti-colonial practice and illustrates her collaborative work with two Latin American partners and her commitment to take "an overt stand against the colonial gaze inherent when working from a privileged Global North standpoint." In "Archival Imperialism: Examining Israel's Six Day War Files in the Era of "Decolonization," Tamara Rayan examines archives that have been restricted and censored for more than fifty years, a process that leaves current and future researchers with the challenge of identifying and filling the intentional gaps created by the state archival record keepers. Rayan illustrates how, via careful research and sleuthing, it is possible to piece together parts of the narrative that official record keepers have tried to obfuscate, "revealing how symbolic annihilation in the archive extends, and is an extension of, systemic annihilation via symbolic annihilation."

We envision this special issue as *unsettling* our collective work on two levels: first, as a critique of the institutional and disciplinary practices that have sedimented into the ways we approach archival collections and archival research, and second, as a turn away from the institutional and disciplinary divides that have presented a false binary between those who manage archival collections and those who conduct research in them. Part I of this special issue, in particular, both showcases and contributes to the ongoing labor of scholars in the archival field who are committed to building critical, decolonial, and community-centered futures for archival management and research. We invite our non-archivist readers to read, underline, reread, notate, and cite from the robust conceptual vocabulary presented here.

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