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"'The Archive' Is Not an Archives: On Acknowledging the Intellectual Contributions of Archival Studies"

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"The Archive" is Not An Archives: Acknowledging the Intellectual Contributions of Archival Studies[i] / Michelle Caswell

Introduction: Archives Are Rarely On Fire

<1> I want to begin by discussing archives that are *actually* on fire. On August 25, 1992, the National and University Library of Bosnia-Herzegovina in Sarajevo was targeted by Serb nationalist forces, shelled, and set ablaze. Over three days, more than two million volumes of books, archival records, manuscripts, newspapers, maps, and journals were burned to a crisp, despite brave attempts by the people of Sarajevo to rescue them. As librarian Kemal Bakarsic described,

> "The fire lasted into the next day. The sun was obscured by the smoke of books, and all over the city sheets of burned paper, fragile pages of grey ashes, floated down like a dirty black snow. Catching a page you could feel its heat, and for a moment read a fragment of a text in a strange kind of black and grey negative, until, as the heat dissipated, the page melted to dust in your hand."[ii]

<2> These ashes were just some of the nearly 1.5 million books and untold numbers of state archives, religious manuscripts, and community records destroyed during the Balkan Wars in what has accurately been labeled bibliocide.[iii]

<3> I bring this up not to demonstrate an inability to understand metaphor, but to expose differences in the ways in which humanities scholars and archival studies scholars view archives. For humanities scholars, "the archive" denotes a hypothetical wonderland, the "first law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events," according to Foucault, or a curious materialization of the death drive and pleasure principle according to Derrida.[iv] In such metaphoric "inflation" (as Marlene Manoff describes it), the archive *might* be on fire.[v] For archival studies scholars and practicing archivists, archives-emphasis on the "s"-are collections of records, material and immaterial, analog and

digital (which, from an archival studies perspective, is just another form of the material), the institutions that steward them, the places where they are physically located, and the processes that designated them "archival."[vi] These archives-"*actually existing archives*" [vii]-are hardly ever on fire, and when they are, as in the case of National and University Library of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1992, archivists, citizens, nation-states, and international governmental and nongovernmental actors try to *do something* about it.

<4> The two discussions-of "the archive" by humanities scholars, and of archives by archival studies scholars (located in library and information studies departments and schools of information)-are happening on parallel tracks in which scholars in both disciplines are largely not taking part in the same conversations, not speaking the same conceptual languages, and not benefiting from each other's insights. Since Derrida's *Archive Fever* hit the presses in 1995, tomes of humanities scholarship have been dedicated to critiquing "the archive." "The archive" has been deconstructed, decolonized, and queered by scholars in fields as wide-ranging as English, anthropology, cultural studies, and gender and ethnic studies. 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. In essence, humanities scholarship is suffering from a failure of interdisciplinarity when it comes to archives. [viii]

<5> This paper both explores why there has been such a failure of interdisciplinarity and proposes concrete solutions for bridging this intellectually unsustainable divide. First, I will provide a brief overview of the concepts that have defined and preoccupied archival studies in its recent history, rendering the field visible in the face of its erasure. Next, I will provide examples of humanities scholarship on "the archive" that fails to acknowledge archival studies scholarship. I argue that the refusal of humanities scholars to engage with scholarship in archival studies is a gendered and classed failure in which humanities scholars-even those whose work focuses on gender and class-have been blind to the intellectual contributions and labor of a field that has been construed as predominantly female, professional (that is, not academic), *and* service-oriented, and as such, unworthy of engagement. Finally, I will advocate for overcoming this divide through workshops, collaborative scholarship and co-taught courses that create dialogue between humanities scholars, archival studies scholars, and professional archivists.

Archival Studies: An Intellectual History

<6> Archival studies is a subfield of information studies dedicated to understanding the nature, management, and uses of records. Also known as "archival science" by its more social science-oriented proponents and "archivistics" by some of its European scholars, archival studies is

deliberately chosen here as a larger umbrella term that broadly encompasses the cultural, social, political, technical, and scientific aspects of the study of archives. It is a field defined by its object of study, rather than its methodology, so that it includes a wide range of methods from the scientific, the social scientific, and the humanistic.[ix] This section will briefly outline the intellectual lineage of archival studies in the dominant English-speaking Western paradigm, situating the field within the disciplines of history, library science, and more recently, information studies. Next, this section will describe some of the key conceptual preoccupations of the field, namely conceptions of record, provenance, value, and representation. Although it is impossible to summarize the intellectual contribution of an entire field in just a few pages, this section will underscore the theoretical basis for archival studies, hopefully putting to rest any lingering misconceptions that archival studies is narrowly confined to the realm of practice.

<7> Although some version of archival thinking and practice (broadly defined) have been present in every human society, the dominant Western English-speaking archival studies tradition traces its lineage to two major publications: the 1898 *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives* (known fondly as "The Dutch Manual") by Samuel Muller, J.A. Feith, and Robert Fruin (later translated into English), which introduced foundational organizational principles such as original order and *respect des fonds*; and the 1922 *A Manual for Archive Administration* by Sir Hilary Jenkinson, the Keeper at the U.K. Public Records Office, which posited the importance of provenance over content.[x] In the American context, T.R. Schellenberg's 1956 *Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques* first detailed how such European concepts were adapted to the U.S. National Archives, and provided guidance for the practice of appraisal based on what Schellenberg termed informational and evidential value. Much of the dominant archival studies tradition arose from a government records context, which assumed both that records were created by public agencies in accordance with fulfilling their core missions and that archivists have an ethical obligation to make records publicly accessible to hold government officials accountable. [xi] While such principles remain foundational, they have resulted in a rather myopic development in archival theory that is only now stretching beyond government records to incorporate personal manuscript collections, community memory formations, and more pluralist conceptions of what records are.

<8> As the field emerged, so to did the need for professional training programs. Until the 1980s, American archivists were trained primarily in history departments, and underwent a brief three-course sequence on archival studies that included a practicum. But over the next two decades, archival education became not only more rigorous and robust, but shifted largely from the purview of history departments to that of library science programs. [xii] By the early 2000s, archival studies emerged as a full-grown field within the discipline of information studies (formerly known as library and information science), with all the

signs thereof: several peer-reviewed archival studies academic journals; doctoral students and PhD-holding faculty with ambitious research agendas; and, by 2009, the creation of academic venues to discuss archival studies research such as the yearly Archival Education and Research Institute (as opposed to purely professional venues like the Society of American Archivists Annual Meeting). [xiii] Today, more than a dozen archival studies programs within (what is known as) iSchools (or schools of information)[xiv] train not only Master's of Library and Information Studies (MLIS) students who will pursue professional practice as archivists, but doctoral students whose research explores the social, cultural, political, personal, and scientific aspects of records and archives. This is to stress that, while there is certainly a body of literature focused on professional practice, archival *theory* remains an important aspect of archival studies. Although it is impossible to summarize an entire field in a few pages, what follows is an analysis of a few key archival concepts that preoccupy researchers in the field, offered in the hopes of enticing readers to more thoroughly explore the presented concepts (and others) in archival studies literature.

<9> The "record" is *the* foundational concept in archival studies. Records, according to the prevailing definition in archival studies, are "persistent representations of activities, created by participants or observers of those activities or by their authorized proxies." [xv] While records contain information, they are distinct from other forms of documents in that they may also serve as evidence of action. While not using the word "evidence," per se, Yeo's definition implicitly distinguishes records from information objects (such as published books) that are not necessarily related to nor are products of activities (other than the act of writing itself). Jonathan Furner further clarifies that records are not evidence in and of themselves, but are defined by their potentiality; they are *capable* of serving as evidence in support of claims about the past by a wide range of users.[xvi] Archivist Brien Brothman convincingly argues in the postmodern vein that notions of records and evidence are cleaved by a sense of temporality that cannot be fixed, regardless of archivists' best efforts. In this light, evidence is always contextual, always *of* something *for* someone, Brothman argues. [xvii]

<10> Pluralist and deconstructionist archival theorists have challenged these dominant evidence-based definitions of records. Indigenous Australian scholar Shannon Faulkhead, for example, offers a pluralist view of records as "any account, regardless of form, that preserves memory or knowledge of facts and events. A record can be a document, an individual's memory, an image, or a recording. It can also be an actual person, a community, or the land itself.'[xviii] For Faulkhead, the defining characteristic of a record is not its ability to serve as evidence, but as a springboard for memory. Shifting the focus from record-ness to archive-ness, deconstructionist archival theorist Verne Harris highlights the importance of archival labor in making something "archival." He writes, "'archives' is defined by three fundamental movements or attributes: one, a trace on, or in, a surface; two, a surface with the quality

of exteriority, and: three, an act of deeming such a trace to be worthy of protection, preservation, and the other interventions which we call archival."[xix] Unlike Faulkhead, Harris maintains the materiality of an exterior surface as a definitional quality, but the process of archival labor is also a prerequisite for making such material traces "archival."

<11> The records continuum model, first developed in Australia by Frank Upward and Sue McKemmish, provides a comprehensive understanding of records and archives rooted in archival studies thinking.[xx] The continuum proposes a multidimensional model of concentric circles through which records are *created* as the byproduct of activity, *captured* as evidence (disembedded from their creation and extracted into systems that allow them to be used), *organized* into personal or institutional archives as memory (migrated into systems which allow their use across an organization), and *pluralized* as collective memory (migrated into systems which allow their use across society). [xxi] As McKemmish summarizes, "archiving processes *fix* documents which are created in the context of social and organizational activity… and preserve them as evidence of that activity by *disembedding* them from their immediate context of creation, and providing them with ever broadening layers of contextual metadata."[xxii] The continuum model is characterized by the dynamic and transformative nature of records and recordkeeping within multiple and interacting dimensions such that, "while a record's content and structure can be seen as fixed, in terms of its contextualization, a record is 'always in a process of becoming.'" [xxiii] In this view, the archives is not a stable entity to be tapped for facts, but rather, a constantly shifting process of re-contextualization.

<12> While not a continuum theorist *per se*, Dutch archivist Eric Ketelaar sees records as dynamic objects in motion, continually shifting with each new use and contextualization. He traces the changing ways in which records are used to construct meaning and posits that records are "activated" with each use. For Ketelaar, such activations then become part of the records' "semantic genealogy," influencing all future activations of the record. He writes:

> "Every activation of the archive not only adds a branch to what I propose to call the semantic genealogy of the record and the archive. Every activation also changes the significance of earlier activations…. Current uses of these records affect retrospectively all earlier meanings, or to put it differently: we can no longer read the record as our predecessors have read that record."[xxiv]

In this light, the use of records fundamentally changes them, becoming part of their provenance.

<13> Provenance in another key theoretical concept in archival studies. Through provenance, archival studies insists on the importance of the context of the record, even over and above its content. Within the mainstream Western

archival tradition, provenance has been defined as, "the origin or source of something," or "information regarding the origins, custody, and ownership of an item or collection."[xxv] The principle of provenance traditionally prescribes both that records made by different creators be kept separately, and that their original order is maintained. However, this dominant traditional conception of provenance has been challenged on several fronts within archival studies over the past two decades. New re-conceptions of provenance view it not merely as an "organizing principle" or a "physical and intellectual construct," but a "sociohistorical context," in the words of Jennifer Douglas.[xxvi] Tom Nesmith, for example, defines provenance as "the social and technical processes of the records' inscription, transmission, contextualization, and interpretation, which account for its existence, characteristics, and continuing history."[xxvii] In this new re-conceptualization, provenance is an ever-changing, infinitely evolving process of recontextualization, encompassing not only the initial creators of the records, but the subjects of the records themselves; the archivists who acquired, described, and digitized them (among other interventions); and the users who constantly reinterpret them. Similarly, Laura Millar, influenced by the broader conceptualization of provenance in museum studies, posits that archival conceptions of provenance should include: creator history or "the story of who created, accumulated, and used the records over time;" records history or "the story of the physical management and movement of the records over time;" and custodial history, "the explanation of the transfer of ownership or custody of the records from the creator or custodian to the archival institution and the subsequent care of those records."[xxviii] In this estimation, archivists and users are active participants in the provenance of records, and are therefore important stakeholders in their custody, mediation and uses. Provenance is not only about the past, but the future of the records as well; this approach to provenance includes all possible potential activations in its scope.

<14> Furthermore, some of these recent reinterpretations open provenance up to broader community-based configurations. Joel Wurl, for example, has posited that, in the context of an ethnically diverse society, ethnicity, rather than origin in an organization or governmental agency, forms a meaningful basis on which to trace provenance.[xxix] Similarly, Jeannette Bastian has urged archivists to expand the scope of provenance to include subjects of records and not just their creators-an arrangement that, in Bastian's case study, balances custody of colonial records between postcolonial nations and their former colonial rulers.[xxx] Bastian also argues that all of these stakeholders become part of a "community of records."[xxxi] For Bastian, provenance and community are intertwined, such that "the content, context and structure of record creation [are] inextricably bound together in a vision of provenance and community that seeks, weighs, and accommodates all the voices of a society."[xxxii] In Bastian's expansive interpretation, provenance becomes a tool for community inclusion, rather than one of limitation,

for hearing the voices of those previously silenced, rather than amplifying the voices of the powerful.

<15> In some cases, these reinterpretations of provenance collapse previous distinctions between the creator and subject of records, so that both become co-creators of the record. Central to this discussion is the definition not just of provenance, but of creatorship. Recently, a host of Australian archival theorists, influenced by Indigenous Australian philosophies, have posited that, not only should records' subjects be included in provenance, but that the subjects of records themselves should be seen as co-creators. Writing about the records of Australian colonization, theorist Chris Hurley has described a "parallel provenance," that is, two differing claims to the origins of records-one provenance tracing records back to the colonizers who created the records, and one provenance tracing the records back to the colonized subjects of them, resulting from diverging conceptions of creatorship. [xxxiii] Building on Hurley's work, Livia Iacovino advocates for a participant model of provenance, whereby all participants in the creation of records are deemed co-creators, and as such enter into a relationship marked by a series of rights and responsibilities, with important implications for ownership, access, and privacy.[xxxiv] In this conception, not only should provenance be expanded to include the society from which the records emerge(d), but the notion of creatorship is expanded to include the subjects of records.

<16> Value is another core archival studies concept.[xxxv] Contrary to popular misconceptions, archivists do not keep everything. Instead, they make appraisal decisions based on a careful evaluation of records. Here, value refers not to the monetary value of records, but their value in attesting to the events from which they emerged, their value in representing some important aspect of the past, and, in some strands of archival thinking, their value for present and future users. Appraisal is the process by which archivists determine the enduring value of records offered to a repository. Selection is the process by which archivists pick which records to keep based on the value determined during appraisal. Value is not an objective quality that exists outside of context, but rather is inextricably linked to the mission and policies of the particular archival repository for which the archivist works, the training and philosophy of the archivist and the repository, the political, historical, and cultural milieu in which the archivist works, and the archivist's professional ethics and personal values. Like "evidence," "value" always exists *for* someone in a particular place at a particular time. Such value may be fiscal, administrative, legal, social, cultural, informational, and/or evidential, with various archival schools of thought emerging around each of these values, and with different archival thinkers advocating for the primacy of one of these types of value over others. Through the determination of value made during the appraisal process, archivists decide which materials to keep, which to get rid of, which materials become the raw materials of history and collective memory, and which will be gone forever. This assignation of value is perhaps the greatest

expression of archival power and expertise, through which archivists act as gatekeepers to the past.

<17> Representation is another foundational archival concept that is largely absent from humanities scholarship on "the archive." More traditionally known as archival description, representation is the process by which archivists produce descriptive metadata, or data about the data stored in collections. This descriptive metadata then "allow[s] users to locate, distinguish, and select materials on the basis of the material's subjects or 'aboutness.'"[xxxvi] Descriptive metadata can then be used to formulate a finding aid, which is a description of an archival collection used by researchers to gain access to collections, or to create a record in a database, which can also be used by researchers to access collections. Archivists might also create many other descriptive tools, such as inventories, abstracts, guides, and accession records, all of which detail the context and content of the records in a particular collection. Through representation, archivists name the subject of their collections, creating access points that can aid (or prevent) users from finding collections, bringing certain aspects of collections to the fore (or obscure them through omission), and gaining physical and intellectual control over collections.

<18> The term "representation" is used here rather than the more narrow term "description" in order to highlight that this process is a "fluid, evolving, and socially constructed practice."[xxxvii] As archival scholar Elizabeth Yakel explains, "the term 'archival representation' more precisely captures the actual work of the archivist in (re)ordering, interpreting, creating surrogates, and designing architectures for representational systems…."[xxxviii] It is up to the archivist to describe what she thinks is important about an object, and in so doing, to provide a particular narrative about it. Furthermore, as archival studies theorists Wendy Duff and Verne Harris argue, "description is always story-telling - intertwining facts with narratives, observation with interpretation." [xxxix] How archivists represent records determines how researchers may access them, and subsequently, which records they use to write histories, make legal decisions, and shape society's views of the past.

<19> Theorists in the traditional dominant strand of Western archival thinking, like Sir Hilary Jenkinson, denied archivists an active role in description, claiming that archivists were impartial mediators between the record and its description. However, over the past twenty years, archival studies scholars influenced by deconstructionist thinkers have questioned the notion of the archivist as neutral describer; for them, archival description is a contested act through which power is exercised.[xl] This exercise of power may operate overtly when the archivist has an obvious political agenda, but it always operates subconsciously, given that all archivists bring assumptions, identities, and experiences to the task of description. Wendy Duff and Verne Harris, for example, have called on archivists to deconstruct the process of archival description. They write:

> "Personal histories, institutional cultures, gender dynamics, class relations, and many other dimensions of meaning- construction are always already at play in processes of records description. Every representation, every model of description, is biased because it reflects a particular world-view and is constructed to meet specific purposes. No representation can be complete. The representer's value system, shaped by and expressing a configuration of the forces mentioned above, is the final arbitrator on the content of a representation. Each archivist must decide what information about which records to highlight; what transitory data to capture and make visible. When describing records archivists will remember certain aspects and hide or forget others. They will highlight some relationships and ignore others."[xli]

<20> Duff and Harris call on archivists not to abandon description in the face of the ethical challenges it poses, but rather, when creating descriptive tools, to "resist the systemic imperatives to privilege, to exclude, to control."[xlii] This resistance can take the form of acknowledging the inherent biases of the archivist, as well as cultivating a "hospitality" to "exploring new ways to open up archival description to other ways of representing records or naming the information in the records." [xliii] In other words, archivists should invite users, as well as outsiders to the archival process, to participate in archival description using language, categories, systems, and standards that are meaningful to them. These languages, categories, systems, and standards will shift over time, as the meaning of the record shifts according to the context of its uses. Furthermore, Duff and Harris describe "liberatory" descriptive practices that acknowledge the role of the archivist in the representation, allow for input from diverse constituents, and destabilize the view that its categories are natural. In this light, archival representation should be an ongoing collaborative process that welcomes diverse input, not an end-product (such as a finding aid) that presents an authoritative or definitive voice.

<21> This article has now provided a brief overview of ongoing theoretical discussions concerning four foundational concepts in archival studies: record, provenance, value, and representation. It will now address how and why such theoretical concerns have been ignored by humanities scholarship on the "the archive."

Gender, Class and Intellectual Disrespect: A Familiar Disappointment

<22> Like many of my colleagues in archival studies, I eagerly purchase books that have the word "archive" in the title: Diana Taylor's*The Archive and the Repertoire*; Carolyn Steedman's *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History*; Ann Cvetkovich's*An Archive of Feelings*; Ann Laura Stoler's *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common*

Sense; and the edited volume*Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History*, edited by Antoinette Burton to name just a few. [xliv] I shuffle immediately to the bibliography to see whom is cited. Time and time again, I experience the same disappointment. No Verne Harris cited. No Terry Cook. No Sue McKemmish. No Anne Gilliland. Even the best humanities work that acknowledges archival labor, such as Kate Eichhorn's *The Archival Turn in Feminism: Outrage in Order* (which, to its credit, even briefly addresses the de-skilling of librarians and archivists), largely ignores archival studies scholarship.[xlv] Why?

<23> This omission is not the result of chance, but, I contend, is a result of the construction of archival labor as a feminine service industry and archival studies (if it is ever even acknowledged as existing) as imparting merely practical how-to skills. [xlvi] There seems to be little understanding in the humanities that professional archivists have master's degrees, that archival standards and best practices are culturally constructed artifacts, and that behind every act of archival practice is at least a century-old theoretical conversation. Like so many other feminized professions-education and nursing are prime examples-archivists have been relegated to the realm of practice, their work deskilled, their labor devalued, their expertise unacknowledged.

<24> Archivists themselves are partially to blame for constructing their own feminized service roles as "handmaidens to historians." As archival scholar Terry Cook wrote:

> "[…]Until the 1980s, archivists… often described themselves-proudly-as 'the handmaidens of historians.' In retrospect, that phrase is astonishing for its servility and its gender connotations. Until recently, women remained largely invisible in social and historical memory, relegated as the silent and usually unrecognized supporters of male accomplishment; so too, archivists have remained invisible in the construction of social memory, their role also poorly articulated and rarely appreciated. I might go further to say that just as patriarchy required women to be subservient, invisible handmaidens to male power, historians and other users of archives require archivists to be neutral, invisible, silent handmaidens of historical research." [xlvii]

<25> Thankfully, the past decade of archival studies scholarship has put to rest any lingering illusions of neutrality and instead, archival studies scholars and archivists have embraced their active-and political-role as shapers of history.[xlviii] Humanities scholarship, as a whole, lags behind in realizing the influence of archival labor, and when archival labor is recognized, vocabulary for archival functions such as appraisal and representation are absent.[xlix] This gap in vocabulary limits humanities scholars because they are unable to address the specificities of archival interventions and to communicate meaningfully with archivists and archival studies

scholars.[l]

<26> When archivists are acknowledged, they are seen as mindless bureaucrats who hinder rather than aid access to records. For example, in a piece that recognizes how archivists shape history by allowing or denying access to records, historian Durba Ghosh refers to archivists as "beadle[s]" and as "archive dwellers," rather than highly skilled professionally-trained experts.[li] In that same volume, communications scholar Craig Robertson describes being denied access to Passport Office records at the National Archives and Records Administration and launches a diatribe against a particular archivist who he sees as an instrument of secrecy, power, and control. [lii] He writes, "The staff here, like all workers in documentary archives, knows the power of the printed and written word. They recognize the need to police the documents that enter and leave an archive, and to control them once they have been admitted." [liii] While I have no doubt that some archivists inhibit access to collections, Robertson downgrades professional archivists to "workers" and seems astonished that someone whom he perceives to be lower on the totem pole might dictate the conditions under which he is allowed to work. Then, despite his entreaty that "scholars who use archives need to critically analyze not only documents but also the institutions that house them," he does not cite any archival studies scholars, despite decades of archival scholarship that does just that. [liv]

<27> The gendered and classed nature of this disregard is particularly unsettling in the case of humanities scholarship that explicitly addresses issues of gender and class. Indeed, a well-known humanities scholar recently repeated the humanities-has-theory archives-have-practice trope and told me that there is so much in common between our fields because when her graduates fail to get tenure-track jobs as academics they can always become archivists! As if being an archivist was a fallback career that did not require its own postgraduate-level education and training. As if every act of practice was not laden with theory. As if archival studies could not offer its own important intellectual contribution.

<28> I tell this anecdote to show that there is a huge knowledge gap about the existence, nature, and contributions of archival studies to humanistic inquiry about "the archive." It is important to stress here the systemic nature of this divide; it is not an issue of a single scholar's ignorance, but a failure across the humanities. I can think of no other field whose erasure in this way would be acceptable, let alone the norm. It is impossible, for example, to think of humanities scholarship that engages the law without citing legal scholarship, or medical anthropology that does not take seriously the existence and knowledge base of doctors, even while remaining critical of that knowledge base.[lv] The failure is not that humanities scholars do not take professional knowledge seriously, it is that they only acknowledge the existence of *certain* professional knowledges; not coincidentally, those professions that have been predominantly male and well-paid are the most respected and legitimized. While it is

difficult to find evidence of an erasure, let alone the gendered and classed nature of such erasure (something with which many humanities scholars of "the archive" will agree), I argue that this erasure can be attributed to the fact that archival studies as a field has been feminized and relegated to the realm of 'mere' service-oriented practice rather than engaged with as a serious intellectual project. [lvi]

Ways Forward

<29> Although this analysis has painted a rather bleak picture, there are ways that we can heal this rift. For their part, archival studies scholars have to do more to articulate the existence and value of their perspectives to humanities scholars. Given that this article is aimed at a humanities audience, I will focus my recommendations on concrete actions that humanities scholars can take to learn about archival studies perspectives and engage archival studies scholars as intellectual equals. These recommendations center around three key actions: read and cite archival studies scholarship; organize and participate in joint conferences and reading groups between archival studies and humanities scholars; and jointly teach doctoral seminars about differing approaches to archive(s) as a pedagogical strategy. Through each of these recommendations, I assert that interdisciplinarity is a two-way street; humanities scholars must acknowledge and engage archival studies scholarship, just as archival studies scholars have engaged and should continue to engage more deeply with the humanities. Such engagement with archival studies will only deepen humanities scholarship, as humanities learn more about the theory and processes that inform archival labor.

<30> As a unique area of inquiry, archival studies has a well-developed body of published scholarship. Humanities scholars can begin to engage archival studies by reading archival studies journals. *Archival Science* is the top-ranked international journal in the field, publishing scholarship that is often theoretical in nature. Recent themed issues-on topics as diverse as archives and human rights, activist archives, and affect-draw on interdisciplinary scholarship from fields like anthropology, law, gender studies, and ethnic studies. The Australian journal *Archives and Manuscripts* publishes a wide range of scholarship with a particular emphasis on records continuum theory and Indigenous perspectives on the rights and responsibilities associated with records and their archivization. For a window into the rich Canadian lineage of archival thinking (the birthplace of concepts like macroappraisal and functional analysis), the Association of Canadian Archivists publishes *Archivaria*, a journal that spans both the theoretical and practical aspects of archival studies. The Society of American Archivists' journal *The American Archivist* focuses on practical concerns, often reporting on research anchored in social science methods to study the appraisal, description, and use of archives. The U.K. Archives and Records Association publishes the *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, which has featured articles on personal archives, community archives, and artists' collections.

<31> Edited volumes also provide fertile terrain. *Currents of Archival Thinking* (edited by Terry Eastwood and Heather MacNeil) provides a basic overview of core values and principles in the field, while the comprehensive *Research in the Archival Multiverse* (edited by Anne Gilliland, Sue McKemmish and Andrew J Lau) details dozens of archival studies approaches-ranging from the humanistic to the scientific-to answering research questions.[lvii] Increasingly, archival studies scholars are publishing sole-authored book-length manuscripts as well. *Archives and Justice: A South African Perspective* by Verne Harris, *Ephemeral Material: Queering the Archive* by Alana Kumbier; and *Conceptualizing 21st Century Archives* by Anne Gilliland all exemplify the (too often untapped) potential of archival studies to engage wider and more diverse audiences.[lviii] At the risk of being self-promoting, my own book *Archiving the Unspeakable: Silence, Memory and the Photographic Record in Cambodia* introduces records continuum theory to a general humanities audience and anchors its discussion of Khmer Rouge era mug shots to archival studies interpretations of provenance. [lix] It is one of the first books in archival studies published by a mainstream university press and geared towards in interdisciplinary audience (in this case scholars of human rights and Southeast Asian studies). Becoming familiar with archival studies literature is an important first step. Engaging with the ideas contained in them and acknowledging their intellectual merit by citing them is the necessary next step. Citation is a political act that legitimates intellectual lineages.[lx]

<32> Creating and supporting joint venues to present research, exchange perspectives, and hosting and taking workshops is another key step. It is not uncommon to see listings for humanities conferences on "the archive" that do not feature a single archival studies scholar or practicing archivist. This rift is untenable and easily remedied. Talk to each other. Reach out across departments to ask questions. Seek out and value each other's opinions. Invite archival studies scholars to present research at humanities conferences. Respect them as thinkers and not just as technicians. Locally, humanities scholars can reach out across the divide to archival studies scholars and archivists at their universities to form informal interdisciplinary reading clusters and research groups that address issues of archive(s). For example, archivists, faculty, and graduate students at the University of Texas at Austin formed the Archives and Human Rights Working Group at the Rapoport Center for Human Rights and Justice on campus.[lxi] In another example, together with historian Geoffrey Robinson, I co-founded a human rights archives working group at UCLA that hosted an interdisciplinary symposium, "The Antonym of Remembering," in October 2013. The symposium brought together archival studies scholars, practicing archivists, historians, anthropologists, legal scholars, and activists to talk about intersections and divergences in approaches to archives documenting human rights abuse and resulted in a special double issue of the journal *Archival Science*.[lxii] The perspectives of each field were strengthened by this exchange.

<33> Finally, train doctoral students to think interdisciplinarily by offering seminars jointly taught by humanities and archival studies scholars. Lay bare the differences between the approaches. Be honest about incommensurability and point out areas where more intellectual work is needed. Such seminars would teach humanities doctoral students to appreciate archival thinking and practice and teach archival studies students how humanities scholars view archive(s) and what they expect from them as users and theorists. These seminars may be difficult to co-teach, but the pedagogical potential is immense. At UCLA, archival studies scholar Anne Gilliland and anthropologist Hariz Halilovich (visiting from Monash University) co-taught a graduate seminar called "Migrating Memories: Archives, Diasporas and Human Rights," which was listed in the department of information studies, but drew students from Chicana/o studies, gender studies, history, and anthropology. As a result, there has been more interest in taking additional archival studies courses among graduate students in the humanities. This model is easily replicable at other universities and could lead to a generational shift in humanities scholars' understanding of archival theory and practice.

Conclusion: Extinguishing the Fire

<34> This paper has described some of the intellectual concerns of archival studies, delineated the intellectual rift between archival studies scholarship and humanities scholarship about "the archive," and proposed a few concrete steps we can take to heal this rift. Archival studies scholars and practicing archivists are more than willing to meet humanities scholars halfway, but there has to be a willingness to engage and a baseline of respect in interdisciplinary exchange that is currently lacking. Humanities scholars can begin to demonstrate respect for archival studies by reading its literature, engaging its scholars in dialogue, and co-teaching seminars with archival studies scholars. Throughout, it is key that humanities scholars acknowledge the existence of archival studies as a legitimate academic field rather than just a prescription for practice. This paper, I hope, will spark such a mutually respectful interdisciplinary exchange. Let's put out the metaphoric fire and start talking to-and reading and citing and co-teaching with-each other instead.

Notes

[i] After writing and titling this article, I was made aware of Jessa Lingel's short but spot-on blog post "This Is Not An Archive," which makes similar observations. Jessa Lingel, "This Is Not An Archive," November 2013, http://jessalingel.tumblr.com.

[ii] Kemal Bakarsic as quoted by Andras J. Riedlmayer, "Crimes of War, Crimes of Peace: Destruction of Libraries During and After the Balkan Wars of the 1990s," *Library Trends* 56:1 (2007): 107-108.

[iii] Harbour Fraser Hodder, "Libraries Afire: Bibliocide," *Harvard Magazine* (November-December 1996).

[iv] Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge and The Discourse on Language*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972): 129. Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

[v] Marlene Manoff, "Theories of the Archive from Across the Disciplines," *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 4:1 (2004): 10.

[vi] For a more detailed discussion of the differences between the use of "archive" in humanities scholarship and "archives" in archival studies scholarship, see the introduction to Alana Kumbier, *Ephemeral Material: Queering the Archive* (Sacramento: Litwin Books, 2014), 1-35; Terry Cook, "The Archive(s) Is A Foreign Country: Historians, Archivists, and the Changing Archival Landscape," *American Archivist* 74 (2011): 600-32; and Jessa Lingel, "This Is Not an Archive," November 2013, http://jessalingel.tumblr.com.

[vii] Emphasis mine. Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings* (Durham: Duke, 2003), 268. To complicate matters, archival studies is not interested *only* in "actually existing archives," but rather, in "imaginary records" as well, but read through an archival studies lens, that is, demonstrating concern about archival concepts such as record, evidence, etc., as later addressed. See Michelle Caswell and Anne Gilliland, "Dead Perpetrators, Imagined Documents, Emergent Evidence and False Promises: Deconstructing an Archival Paradox," *International Journal of Human Rights* 19(5) 2015: 615-627 and Anne Gilliland and Michelle Caswell, "Records and Their Imaginaries: Imagining the Impossible, Making Possible the Imagined," *Archival Science*, forthcoming, preprint available online.

[viii] The reverse can also be said about archival studies, but to a much lesser extent, as archival studies scholars routinely draws from fields like philosophy, history, anthropology, memory studies, and cultural studies. For example, while an article by Trond Jacobsen, Ricardo Punzalan and Margaret Hedstrom called on archival studies scholars to expand their citation pools, the accompanying citation analysis showed that archival scholars routinely cite Jacques Derrida, Maurice Halbwachs, David Lowenthal, and Ann Laura Stoler on collective memory. See: Trond Jacobsen, Ricardo Punzalan and Margaret Hedstrom, "Invoking 'Collective Memory': Mapping the Emergence of a Concept in Archival Science," *Archival Science* 13 (2013): 217-251.

[ix] For a comprehensive demonstration of the range of archival studies methods, see: Anne Gilliland, Sue McKemmish and Andrew J Lau, Eds., *Research in the Archival Multiverse* (Melbourne: Monash University Press, forthcoming).

[x] For a detailed bibliographic essay on the history of the dominant archival studies tradition, see: James M. O'Toole and Richard J. Cox, *Understanding Archives and Manuscripts* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2006). Two edited volumes also serve as compilations of important American archival studies thinking: Maygene Daniels and Timothy Walch, Eds., *A Modern Archives Reader: Basic Readings on*

Archival Theory and Practice (Washington, DC: National Archives and Records Administration, 1984); and Randall C. Jimerson, Ed., *American Archival Studies: Readings in Theory and Practice* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2000).

[xi] For a more detailed history of how the contemporary archival profession emerged out of the conflicting strands of the public records tradition and more humanistic manuscripts tradition, see Luke Gilliland-Swetland, "The Provenance of a Profession: The Permanence of the Public Archives and Historical Manuscripts Traditions in American Archival History," *American Archivist* 54 (Spring 1991): 160-175.

[xii] This shift is not entirely complete. As Richard Cox notes, between 1970 and 2000, 30 archival studies faculty joined LIS programs, while 15 joined history departments. Richard Cox, "Graduate Archival Education in the United States: Some A Personal Reflection About Its Past and Future," *Journal of Contemporary Archival Studies* 2 (2015): http://elischolar.library.yale.edu/.

[xiii] "Archival Education and Research Institute," accessed 7 December 2015, http://aeri2015.umd.edu.

[xiv] "iSchools," accessed 7 December 2015, http://ischools.org.

[xv] Geoffrey Yeo, "Concepts of Record (1): Evidence, Information, and Persistent Representation," *American Archivist* 70 (2007): 334.

[xvi] Furner, Jonathan. (2004). "Conceptual Analysis: A Method for Understanding Information as Evidence, and Evidence as Information." *Archival Science* 4: 233-265.

[xvii] Brothman, Brien. (2002). Afterglow: Conceptions of record and evidence in archival discourse. *Archival Science* 2, 311-342.

[xviii] Shannon Faulkhead, "Connecting through records: Narratives of Koorie Victoria." *Archives and Manuscripts* 37: 2 (2010): 60-88.

[xix] Verne Harris, "Genres of the Trace: Memory, Archives, and Trouble," *Archives and Manuscripts* 40(3) (2012): 150.

[xx] The continuum model represents a radical shift from the previously predominant records life cycle model, which sees archival deposit as the final resting place for inactive records.

[xxi] Frank Upward, "Modelling the Continuum as Paradigm Shift in Recordkeeping and Archiving Processes and Beyond," *Records Management Journal* (December 2000): unpaginated.

[xxii] Sue McKemmish, "Placing Records Continuum Theory and Practice," *Archival Science* 1 (2001): 336.

[xxiii] Ibid., 335.

[xxiv] Eric Ketelaar, "Tacit Narratives: The Meaning of Archives," *Archival Science* 1:2 (2001): 138.

[xxv] Society of American Archivists, "Provenance," *A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology*, accessed 7 December 2015, http://www2.archivists.org/.

[xxvi] Jennifer Douglas, "Origins: Evolving Ideas about the Principle of Provenance," In *Currents of Archival Thinking*. Terry Eastwood and Heather MacNeil, eds. (Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited, 2010), 24.

[xxvii] Tom Nesmith, "Still Fuzzy But More Accurate: Some Thoughts on the 'Ghosts' of Archival Theory," *Archivaria* 47 (1999): 146.

[xxviii] Laura Millar, "The Death of the Fonds and the Resurrection of Provenance: Archival Context in Space and Time," *Archivaria* 53 (2002): 12-13.

[xxix] Joel Wurl, "Ethnicity as Provenance: In Search of Values and Principles Documenting the Immigrant Experience," *Archival Issues* 29:1 (2005).

[xxx] Jeannette Bastian, *Owning Memory: How a Caribbean Community Lost Its Archives and Found Its History* (Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2003).

[xxxi] Ibid., 5.

[xxxii] Jeannette Bastian, "Reading Colonial Records Through an Archival Lens: The Provenance of Place, Space, and Creation," *Archival Science* 6 (2006): 269.

[xxxiii] Hurley defines parallel provenance as "the coterminous generation of the same thing in the same way at the same time." However, I would add that in many contentious examples, particularly those involving disputes over the physical custody of records, the provenance is not parallel, but on a collision course. Chris Hurley, "Parallel Provenance," http://www.infotech.monash.edu.au, 10. See also: Chris Hurley, "Parallel Provenance: What If Anything Is Archival Description?" *Archives and Manuscripts* 33:1 (2005): 110-145.

[xxxiv] Livia Iacovino, "Rethinking Archival, Ethical and Legal Frameworks for Records of Indigenous Australian Communities: A Participant Relationship Model of Rights and Responsibilities," *Archival Science* 10 (2010): 353-372.

[xxxv] For an excellent, more detailed overview of the concept of value in archival studies, see Ciaran Trace, "On or Off the Record? Notions of Value in the Archive," In Terry Eastwood and Heather MacNeil, Eds. *Currents in Archival Thinking* (Santa Barbara: Libraries Unlimited, 2009): 47-68.

[xxxvi] Society of American Archivists, "Descriptive Metadata," 2010.

[xxxvii] Elizabeth Yakel, "Archival Representation," *Archival Science* 3 (2003): 2.

[xxxviii] Ibid.

[xxxix] Wendy Duff and Verne Harris, "Stories and Names: Archival Description as Narrating Records and Constructing Meanings," *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 276.

[xl] Terry Cook, "Fashionable Nonsense or Professional Rebirth: Postmodernism and the Practice of Archives," *Archivaria* 51 (Spring 2001), pp. 14-35; Wendy Duff and Verne Harris, "Stories and Names: Archival Description as Narrating Records and Constructing Meanings" *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 263-285.

[xli] Duff and Harris, 2002, p. 275.

[xlii] Ibid, p. 277.

[xliii] Ibid., p. 279.

[xliv] This list includes books on "actually existing archives" and on "the archive" in the broader humanistic understanding. Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire* (Durham: Duke, 2003); Carolyn Steedman, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History* (New Brunswick: Rutgers, 2002); Ann Cvetkovich's *An Archive of Feelings* (Durham: Duke, 2003); Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Antoinette Burton, Ed., *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

[xlv] Kate Eichorn, *The Archival Turn in Feminism: Outrage in Order* (Philadelphia: Templue University Press, 2013).

[xlvi] The archival profession in the U.S. is majority female, with 65% of respondents reporting as women in a recent professional survey conducted by the Society of American Archivists. Society of American Archivists, A*Census (2006): http://www2.archivists.org/.

[xlvii] Terry Cook, "Remembering the Future: Appraisal of Records and the Role of Archives in Constructing Social Memory," *Archives, Documentation, and Institutions of Social Memory: Essays from the Sawyer Seminar* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, 2006), 170.

[xlviii] Verne Harris, *Archives and Justice: A South African Perspective* (Chicago, Society of American Archivists, 2006).

[xlix] For a classic example of this, see Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995). Trouillot is oblivious to the archival function of appraisal, though he is acutely aware that not all records make it into archives.

[l] For another illustration of this gap, see Anjali Arondekar, et al. "Queering Archives: A Roundtable Discussion," *Radical History Review* Special Issue on "Queering Archives: Intimate Traces," 2015 (122): 211-231.

This conversation would read as largely unintelligible to the majority of archival studies scholars and archivists, even to the more theoretically-oriented among them.

[li] Durba Ghosh, "National Narratives and the Politics of Miscegenation," in *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005): 41; 32.

[lii] Craig Robertson, "Mechanisms of Exclusion," in *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005): 76.

[liii] Ibid., 68.

[liv] Ibid., 77. He bases his analysis on the work of Allan Sekula, a photographer and art critic who, while having much to say about archives and much to offer archival theory, is not trained as an archival studies scholar.

[lv] Terry Cook makes a similar claim about nursing and engineering. See Cook, "The Archive(s) is a Foreign Country," 614.

[lvi] The feminization of the field as a whole occurs despite a preponderance of unhelpful male archivists described in humanities scholarship.

[lvii] Terry Eastwood and Heather MacNeil, Eds. *Currents in Archival Thinking* (Santa Barbara: Libraries Unlimited, 2009); Anne Gilliland, Sue McKemmish and Andrew J Lau, Eds., *Research in the Archival Multiverse* (Melbourne: Monash University Press, forthcoming).

[lviii] Verne Harris, *Archives and Justice: A South African Perspective* (Chicago, Society of American Archivists, 2006); Alana Kumbier,*Ephemeral Material: Queering the Archive* (Sacramento: Litwin Books, 2014); Anne Gilliland, *Conceptualizing 21st Century Archives* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2014).

[lix] Michelle Caswell, *Archiving the Unspeakable: Silence, Memory and the Photographic Record in Cambodia* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2014).

[lx] Sara Ahmed, "Making Feminist Points," September 11, 2013, http://feministkilljoys.com.

[lxi] For more information, see: http://www.utexas.edu.

[lxii] For more information on the symposium, see: UCLA Human Rights Archives Working Group, accessed 7 December 2015, https://uclahumanrightsarchives.wordpress.com/. See also "Special Double Issue on Archives and Human Rights," *Archival Science* 14:3-4 (2014).

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