Austin Spiller

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Problem Statement and Starting References: Archival Diversity or Disrupting Archival Collections Bias

Archival collections in the United States reflect and embody values from the colonial origins of *history* (specifically a counterpoint to prehistory) and the capitalist philosophies that the US is still laboring under. Values such as inequity, exploitation, and what it means to be (and to be recognized as) not just “important” but as human have infiltrated and become internalized in our collective consciousness. Archives, as human designed containers of “what has come before”, are just as susceptible to internalizing these values. However, the primary sources archives tend to be most concerned with remain unaltered and open to new (or newly legitimatized) interpretations. Decolonizing efforts began decades ago and are picking up more traction with each passing moment and incendiary action by the current president.

The problem of how to shrug off the burden of colonial histories while retaining important, pertinent, and necessary information at the same time as adding un(der)represented histories, voices, and items does not lend itself to a simple solution. The aim of the literature review to follow is to reveal aspects of colonial history mechanisms, understand how to situate archives in contemporary context, and most importantly how and to what effect archivists have begun to disrupt colonial collections biases.

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