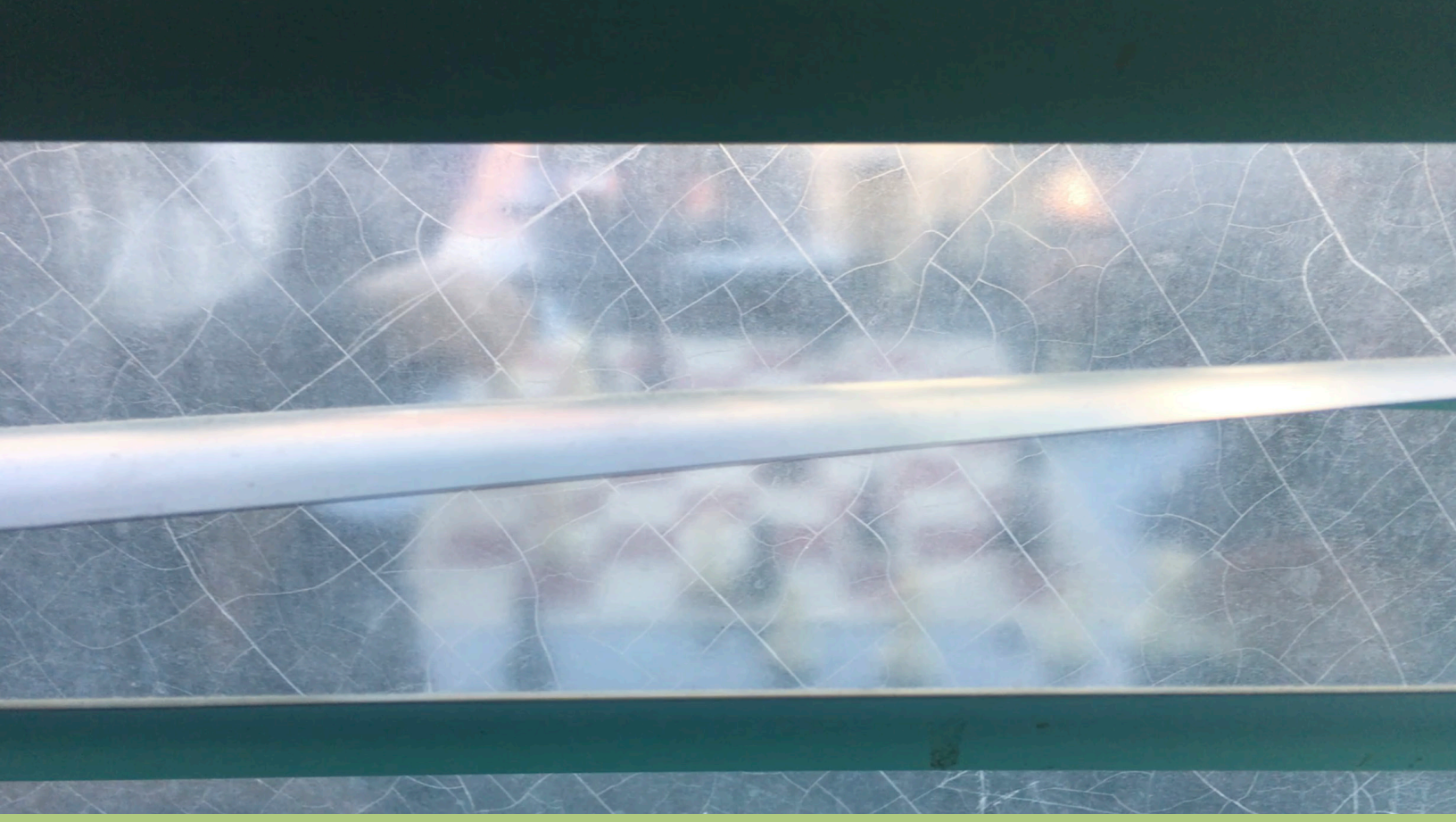

Dylan Karlsson
mlis portfolio

University of California, Los Angeles
Department of Information Studies
Spring 2020

UCLA is a land grant institution. As a student of this university and local resident, I acknowledge and pay my respects to the Tongva peoples as the traditional land caretakers of Tovaangar (Los Angeles basin, So. Channel Islands).

This territory acknowledgement and accompanying pronunciation has been adapted from and is attributed to the UCLA World Arts and Cultures/Dance Department.

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50 Word Statement

As archival institutions struggle to remain independent and operational amidst a lack of funding and resources, the labor of preserving public memory becomes an excess expenditure, often undertaken by volunteers. I will assess the mission, role, and logistical organization of volunteer-run archives in developing sustainable labor practices and future models.

A Collective Capacity:
Labor and Sustainability in Volunteer-Run Archives

ISSUE PAPER – SPRING 2020

This paper builds off of the research and work of Bergis Jules and the *Architecting Sustainable Futures* project, which explores funding and organizational models for small, community-based archival organizations. I narrow the focus of this capacity-building project on the models and practices of volunteer-run archives. I survey the organizational structure of the Interference Archive, a volunteer-run community archive in Brooklyn, NY that collects activist and social movement ephemera. In recognizing the paucity of resources available for these institutions, this paper presents recommendations and guidelines, upon which various volunteer-run archives can develop sustainable models and practices that cohere to the capacity and needs of each institution.

Introduction

Within the capacity-building project of community archive organizing, there is a need for focus on building sustainable infrastructures for small, volunteer-run archives. Volunteer-run archives present an organizational model where the traditional, professional practices of archiving are largely undertaken by community-members, "amateur experts," and other un-paid participants. Within this essay, I will contextualize the state of volunteerism in the archival field, particularly in small, volunteer-run archival organizations. As a case study, I will survey the organizational structure of the Interference Archive, a volunteer-run community archive in Brooklyn, NY that collects activist and social movement ephemera. In recognizing the paucity of resources available for these institutions, this paper presents recommendations and guidelines, upon which various volunteer-run archives can develop sustainable models and practices that cohere to the capacity and needs of each institution.

Volunteer-Run Archives

Throughout this paper I make reference to volunteer-run archives, defining them as archival institutions that are organized, operated, and built wholly through volunteered, unpaid labor. Where the oft-used term "community-based archives" might apply to a large set of archival institutions operating with similar priorities and practices, I use "volunteer-run archives," here, as a means of narrowing in on the particularities of archives using this organizational model. While this also entails the caveat that not all volunteer-run archives operate as, nor would consider themselves to be, community-based archives, there is a significant overlap in guiding ethos and methodologies, as well as in positioning outside of mainstream memory institutions.

It is equally important, in my view, to reject a linear framework of institutional growth, which may suggest that volunteer-run archives merely haven't yet established themselves to a point of maturity. The coupling of sustainability and institutional growth neglects the important ways that an archive's organizational strategies are formed around and by particular communities' ontologies and epistemologies, and thus their incumbent political ideologies.[1] As Yusef Omowale suggests in his piece "We Already Are," where marginalized communities have always had to ground their archival practices in opposition to the dominant norms of the archival profession, the very notion of sustainability necessitates a refusal of "inclusion and recognition," and instead entails "demanding redistribution."[2] The challenge of sustainability concerns not only the archive's operational capacity, but also their autonomy and ability to realistically plan for the next stage of their life-cycle, whatever form it may take.[3] Some volunteer-run archives may formally attain non-profit status, and thus commit to forming bylaws and governance structures, where others may opt to maintain more informal, localized forms of governance. Occasionally labelled as "DIY archives"[4] or "participatory heritage" projects,[5] there is concern that volunteer-run archives are situated precariously, with volatile sources of funding and labor. While it is true that community support may be unstable and in flux with the

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[1] Shilton, Katie, and Ramesh Srinivasan. "Participatory Appraisal and Arrangement for Multicultural Archival Collections." *Archivaria* 63, no. 0 (2007): 87–101.
Shilton and Srinivasan use the concept of *community ontologies* to reveal how archival, organizational practices of appraisal, arrangement, and description are specific and contingent upon the documentary practices of their originating communities. I extend this specificity to the practices of administrative organization that an archive employs, in its labor structures as much as its archival workflows.
[2] Omowale, Yusef. "We Already Are." Medium, September 3, 2018. https://medium.com/community-archives/we-already-are-52438b863e31.
[3] Flinn, Andrew. "Archival Activism: Independent and Community-Led Archives, Radical Public History and the Heritage Professions." *InterActions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies* 7, no. 2 (May 31, 2011).
[4] Baker, Sarah. *Community Custodians of Popular Music's Past: A DIY Approach to Heritage*. Routledge, 2017.
[5] Roued-Cunliffe, Henriette, and Andrea Copeland, eds. *Participatory heritage*. Facet Publishing, 2017.

changing dynamics of any population. Hinging long-term sustainability solely on community engagement and patronage can be a risky endeavor, yet it is still a valuable strategy for small institutions to pursue. This method of grassroots funding and staffing effectively ties the institution to the communities whom it is accountable to, rather than involving the tangential priorities of third-party funders. Despite this, there is still a need to build structures of support that can sustain both the institution, its independent status, and its participating communities.[6]

Volunteerism in the Archive

Volunteers are a vital resource used by archival institutions of all sizes, presenting a rotating labor force that is often justified by the proliferation of processing backlogs, as well as staff and budget cuts.[7] Amidst the economic reality that archives face, archivists must make challenging decisions in determining the level of volunteer participation and their own operational capacity of taking on volunteers. As noted by Kevin B. Leonard, while volunteer labor can aid in reducing processing workloads and backlogs, it merely transfers the costs and labor towards the training and supervision of volunteers.[8] While the cost-benefit analysis of using volunteers is different for every archival institution, the use of volunteer labor is an issue that concerns the archival profession as a whole. Within the context of neoliberalism, where logic of scarcity is embedded into the functional models and processes of archives, volunteerism can be justly critiqued for normalizing unpaid

[6] Sheffield, Rebecka Taves. "Archival optimism, or, how to sustain a community archives." *Community Archives, Community Spaces: Heritage, Memory and Identity* (2019): 8.
[7] Frevert, Rhonda Huber. 1997. "Archives Volunteers: Worth the Effort?" *Archival Issues* 22 (2): 148.
[8] Leonard, Kevin B. 2012. "Volunteers in Archives: Free Labor, But Not Without Cost." *Journal of Library Administration* 52 (3–4): 313–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/01930826.2012.684529.

positions.[9] Marika Cifor and Jamie A. Lee challenge these models as professional norms, stating that therein the "archival profession opens itself just to those in the privileged financial situation to be able to undertake such labors thereby replicating problematic inequalities in the profession."[10] The pervasive use of short-term contract and uncompensated labor has led professional organizations like the Society of American Archivists to take measures against its further entrenchment.[11]

Arising both in response to and in parallel with present critiques of institutional norms and practices, community archives have restructured discourses surrounding the collaborative practice of archiving.[12] In contrast to the extractive model of volunteer labor, community and volunteer-run archives present alternative archival models where "shared expertise, dynamism, and bottom-up approaches" are guiding values of their principle organization.[13] These spaces reconstitute modes of archival participation, such that volunteers are understood to be active participants in the record-making process, and may even be the initial creators themselves. Though still affected by the contemporary dynamics of the archival profession writ large, archives oriented around volunteer support occupy a unique perspective on how archival labor is accumulated and organized. The participatory methods employed in these repositories create new incentives for involvement, as shown in a study conducted by Flinn and Stevens, where volunteers and

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[9] Wildenhaus, Karly. "Wages for Intern Work: Denormalizing Unpaid Positions in Archives and Libraries." *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies*. 4. https://journals.litwinbooks.com/index.php/jclis/article/view/88.
[10] Cifor, Marika, Lee, Jamie A. "Towards an Archival Critique: Opening Possibilities for Addressing Neoliberalism in the Archival Field." *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies*. 13. http://libraryjuicepress.com/journals/index.php/jclis/article/view/10.
[11] "Only Paid Internships to Be Posted to the SAA Career Center." *Society of American Archivists*. https://www2.archivists.org/news/2019/only-paid-internships-to-be-posted-to-the-saa-career-center.
[12] Cook, Terry. 2013. "Evidence, Memory, Identity, and Community: Four Shifting Archival Paradigms." *Archival Science* 13 (2): 113. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-012-9180-7.
[13] Roued-Cunliffe.

participants in grassroots archives were motivated by a number of factors, including political organizing, community coherence, and self-determination.[14] As spaces often centered around the preservation of marginalized communities and their attendant materials and histories, there is a need to re-evaluate traditional standards in an effort to respond to the transformation of archival space, practices, and labor in these institutions.[15] It is vital for these archival organizations and their volunteer laborers to build sustainable models, such that their work can extend into the future.

Interference Archive: A Case in Organized Volunteerism

In the summer of 2019, I visited the Interference Archive (IA) in Brooklyn, a small, volunteer-run archive that collects activist and social movement ephemera in hopes of keeping those materials active within the communities organizing around them. The archive's organization parallels its "preservation through activation" ethos, which differs from a traditional paradigm of preservation through conservation.[16] Notions of sustainability at IA might not resemble those of a typical cultural heritage site – posing itself as a "counter-institution" in more than name – however, their funding and labor models are built according to their mission, scale, and institutional values.[17] Here, volunteering organizers describe their organizational strategy:

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[14] Flinn, Andrew, and Mary Stevens. 2009. "'It Is Noh Mistri, Wi Mekin Histri.' Telling Our Own Story: Independent and Community Archives in the UK, Challenging and Subverting the Mainstream." In *Community Archives*, edited by Jeannette A. Bastian and Ben Alexander, 1st ed., 3–28. Facet. https://doi.org/10.29085/9781856049047.003.

[15] Caswell, Michelle, Joyce Gabiola, Jimmy Zavala, Gracen Brilmyer, and Marika Cifor. 2018. "Imagining Transformative Spaces: The Personal–Political Sites of Community Archives." *Archival Science* 18 (1): 73–93. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-018-9286-7.

[16] "How New York's Interference Archive Keeps Activist Design History Alive." 2018. *Eye on Design* (blog). February 16, 2018. https://eyeondesign.aiga.org/new-yorks-interference-archive-preserves-activist-design-history-by-activating-it/.

[17] Gordon, Bonnie, Jen Hoyer and Maggie Schreiner. 2018. "Sustainability at Interference Archive." Medium. August 6, 2018. https://medium.com/community-archives/sustainability-at-interference-archive-4c33ebed69d8.

> "We aim to operate along similar lines to the organizational structures of many of the social movements represented in our collection: these are largely nonhierarchical, consensus-based groups from the political left. Initially run by a core collective, IA's volunteer community has evolved into a network of working groups that each focus on different projects or tasks. These include the Admin, Cataloging, Audio, Born Digital, Education, and Fundraising working groups, as well as ad hoc groups that come together to develop exhibitions. All labor at Interference Archive is volunteer and commitments vary depending on an individual's desire and availability. Operating on volunteer energy necessitates careful budgeting of labor. At IA we choose to focus our labor in ways that serve experiential access."[18]

Notably, the use of distinct working groups to structure volunteer labor according to archival projects and tasks underpins IA's distributed organization. Whereas in traditional archives a single archivist may manage several different workflows or must manage the delegation of tasks from top-down, IA operates by diffusing labor across many volunteers, though still within the boundaries defined by their working groups. Critics may prudently pose the issue of accountability and oversight with a volunteer-run system, as Flinn identifies that participatory archives are consistently critiqued for an "attack on professionalism, standards, and scholarship."[19] Volunteer-run archives are key sites to observe changing professional dynamics, inhabiting a space of "heterogenous participation," where multiple levels of archival knowledge and expertise co-exist, and must work dynamically to produce a cohesive vision.[20] Rather than view this as a liability

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[18] Gordon, Bonnie, Lani Hanna, Jen Hoyer, and Vero Ordaz. 2016. "Archives, Education, and Access: Learning at Interference Archive." *Radical Teacher* 105 (0): 56. https://doi.org/10.5195/rt.2016.273.

[19] Flinn, Andrew. 2010. "An Attack on Professionalism and Scholarship? Democratising Archives and the Production of Knowledge." *Ariadne*, no. 62. http://www.ariadne.ac.uk/issue/62/flinn/.
Flinn pulls this quote from a review he received regarding his ongoing research project, in studying the impact of community archival practices on the professional archival field.

[20] Konzack, Lars. "Viking re-enactment." In *Participatory Heritage*, pp. 37-46. Facet Publishing, 2017.

for the field as a whole, it can be a valuable strategy for a singular, independent institution to accept non-traditional perspectives. Where volunteer participation opens up access to a plurality of knowledges, it also allows for the wider proliferation of archival literacy and professional practices, where skills are shared on the basis of "horizontal mentorship."[21] IA operates on the understanding that open access and community use are their highest priorities, above the traditional values of provenance and authenticity.[22] Central to this description is the emphasis on reflecting the organizational structures of the social movements that the archive hopes to preserve *more than* just their ephemera. Preserving the institution's core values and ethics is a high priority for IA, as well as many other volunteer-run archives. This commitment to building independent structures can be both an asset and a challenge to long-term sustainability.

According to archival volunteers and organizers, IA is supported primarily by "sustainers," who donate monthly sums from $10 to $50, in addition to one-time contributions from visitors, small grants, and partnering institutions.[23] This crowd-sourced funding model was inspired by the struggles of one of their founding members, Dara Greenwald, who while undergoing cancer treatment was supported by a recurring health fund set up by friends. After her untimely passing, many of those same contributors diverted funds to supporting her life's work, manifested in IA. As shown in a healthcare system that forces individualized rather than collective care, the marks of austerity are too

[21] Gordon et al. 2018

[22] Gordon et al. 2016.
While this claim may seem rather heretical to a traditional archival perspective, it is evidence of the pluralizing efforts of the community-based archival movement and critical scholarship on dominant Western archival paradigms.

[23] Gordon et al. 2018.

revealed in an archival ecosystem that prioritizes funding individual, short-term projects rather than community projects. Mainstream funding structures, which are often tied to a "product-driven focus and resource intensive evaluation processes,"[24] produce the priorities of collecting institutions and therefore enable the archival inequality that leaves small, independent archives adrift.[25] The sustainer model employed by IA demonstrates how community commitment is central to their operations, where traditional forms of revenue generation like grant-writing requires more intensive labor than a volunteer-based system can handle.[26] Though IA does receive funding from grants and institutional partnerships, a significant portion of their budget is developed from sustainer donations and the leasing of a coworking space.[27] Because IA's voluntary archival practices are beholden to their communities' active use of materials, leveraging community support, monetary and otherwise, is integral to building a system of accountability. The models presented here offer a specific view into how volunteer labor can be organized and sustained in the service of archival preservation, as defined by the terms of an archive's participating communities.

Recommendations and Conclusions

Informed by the work being done by Interference Archive and the *Architecting Sustainable Future* project coordinated by Bergis Jules, the following section reviews the

[24] Flinn. 2011.
[25] Cifor.
[26] Jules, Bergis. 2019. "Architecting Sustainable Futures: Exploring Funding Models in Community-Based Archives." *Shift Design.* 9. https://architectingsustainablefutures.org/key-finding.
[27] Hoyer, Jen. "2018 at Interference Archive: The Perspective from Our Bank Account." April 2, 2019. http://interferencearchive.org/2018-at-interference-archive-the-perspective-from-our-bank-account/. This blog post details IA's income and expenses for 2018, listing that $30,000 arrived from donations, in comparison to $12,000 from the coworking space, and over $26,000 in small grants funneled towards programming and operational costs.

recommendations and considerations for volunteer-run archives laid out in **Appendix A**. As learned from IA, the organizational structure of volunteer labor and funding will affect the archival practices performed by participants. In designing these models to ensure sustainability, volunteer-run archives will need to continually re-assess how participants facilitate and interact with the archive. This entails creating documentation and systems in which archival workflows are instantiated, as well as a basis for how administrative decisions are to be made.

As institutions reliant on grassroots support, volunteer-run archives are necessarily founded on internal trust and consensus. Rebecka Taves Sheffield suggests that there is an essential "archival optimism" that undergirds the building and maintenance of a community-based archive; where the effort of preservation concerns the active community's preservation, first and foremost, sustainability may mean that archives should "focus less on the product of archival work and more on collective practices."[28] A collective approach may also include external collaboration. For instance, building mutual aid networks has been explored by the *Community Archives Collaborative*, which is a partnership between community archives, including the Interference Archive, Densho, SAADA, and Texas After Violence Project.[29] Building horizontal networks between

[28] Sheffield.
Sheffield builds her notion of *archival optimism* off of Lauren Berlant's *cruel optimism*, where the justifiable effort of establishing community representation itself reifies the limited structures of community. Her argument affirms that communal archival practices should be situated in the present, in developing methods to sustain the community *itself* through material support as a means of developing sustainable stewardship.
[29] Caswell, Michelle, and Bergis Jules. "Community Archives Collaborative." South Asian American Digital Archive (SAADA), October 30, 2019. https://www.saada.org/project/community-archives-collaborative.
These partnering institutions met for three days in 2019 to develop strategies for peer-to-peer mentoring, pooling resources, and skill-sharing across institutions.

independent archives, is a valuable strategy for developing resilience amongst small institutions vying for limited resources.

Volunteer-run archives may want to partner with larger academic institutions under certain conditions, where their values and operating organization are not undermined.[30] Partnerships with larger academic archives and professional organizations not only legitimate the mission and practices of the archive in the eyes of external funders, but also offer a valuable transmission of skills and practices that may be applied and appropriated. Although volunteer-run archives are tasked with the labor of justifying their work in opposition to the wider deprofessionalization of the field, it is still important that volunteers employ ethical practices and work with knowledge of professional standards. As Andrew Flinn reflects the evolving dynamic between the professional and the volunteer, he states:

> "it may be that in an era of cuts and reduced resources there will be an ever-increasing role for volunteers in preserving and disseminating archives and heritage at a local grassroots level, but these volunteers and the collections they care for will benefit from frameworks of support and guidance from skilled heritage professionals."[31]

There are many reasons these partnerships can be mutually beneficial for both academic institutions and volunteer-run archives, but all involved parties should establish equitable terms on which to base communications and decisions.[32] Addressing the disparity of power and resource, it is reliant on academic partners to build trust between the archive and its communities of participants.

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[30] Jules. 2019.
[31] Flinn. 2011.
[32] Jules. 2019.

In working towards building a sustainable future for both the institution and its communities of volunteers and users, volunteer-run archives must continually re-negotiate the value(s) of their archival practices. While sustaining the use of volunteer labor should not come at the expense of archival practices, similarly, maintenance of the archive should not come at the expense of its volunteers and participants. The project of capacity-building within volunteer-run archives might require that the organization has the ability to change and adapt to new conditions. Amidst the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, archives and their communities are being forced to make decisions that will affect their long-term sustainability, especially when exposed to the aftermath of economic downturn and bolstered austerity measures.[33] Ensuring the sustainability of the archival profession as a whole means preserving the full-breadth of contemporary archival practices, including those of volunteer-run archives. Beyond any single institution or community, this requires a larger shift in the redistribution of resources. Pending this systemic overhaul, volunteer-run archives, in conjunction with other independent, cultural heritage sites, should focus on building sustainable fundraising strategies, engaging opportunities of collective support, and developing archival practices that not only invite community support, but that reflexively support the community. As volunteer-run archives operate with the guided mission of protecting and preserving their materials and histories, there is also a need to protect their communities—such that capacity-building efforts should be aimed not only at institutional growth but sustaining archival workers, including volunteers.

[33] Jules, Bergis. "Supporting Community-Based Archives Through the Covid-19 Crisis." Medium, April 4, 2020. https://medium.com/community-archives/supporting-community-based-archives-through-the-covid-19-crisis-394fb672b37a.

Appendix A: List of Recommendations for Volunteer-Run Archives

Organization and Labor:

- Develop organizational structures and policies to guide volunteer participation, with open and transparent documentation
- Define the terms on which administrative decisions are made, ensuring that the mode of consensus does not breach internal organizational trust
- Design archival workflows that engage horizontal mentorship, integrating and leveraging volunteer expertise with co-existing professional practices

Fundraising and Partnerships:

- Cohere local fundraising support around the issue of sustainability, with the option for regular, scheduled donations where possible
- Build mutual aid networks and coordinate resource and skill-sharing opportunities between independent archives
- Assess opportunities for grants, in-kind donations, or partnerships with academic and larger cultural heritage institutions, such that contractual obligations and partnerships are founded on mutual trust and do not compromise institutional values, nor over-extend the archive's labor capacity

Project-Building and Community:

- Evaluate community impact using multiple and varied methods of assessment
- Advocate for a growing understanding of archival knowledges and preservation practices, which treats community-specific practices with respect and adopts professional practices with ethical awareness
- Operate towards building capacity for broader community inclusion and support

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Outside Agents:
Co-Appraisal and the Capacity for Multiplicities in the Participatory Archive

MAJOR PAPER – SPRING 2019

Professor Anne Gilliland
IS 438A: Archival Appraisal

In this paper, I outline the foundations of the participatory approach to appraisal and address the potential breakthroughs and challenges that may face such models in the future. It is through the discussion of the participatory model's concrete barriers and speculative dimensions that I argue for its implementation, through a diversity of methods and with varying scopes particular to each institution. Key to the participatory framework, and why it is a desirable strategy, is not only the distribution of resources in creating and preserving historical memory, and therefore agency, but also as a means of recognizing the alternative forms of archival agencies already active within the archival repertoires of underrepresented communities.

Appraisal decisions may be seen as the foundational activity upon which an archivist's agency is enacted, where the methods used to accession records and cultural materials act as a first step in the process of the institution's identity formation. Conceptions of agency and identity formation in the archives have been significantly problematized and reconfigured, as archivists, historians, and theorists have labored to render the biases of "objective" appraisal decisions into a visible system to be studied and challenged. Through this work, a variety of participatory models have been conceived and enacted as a means to pluralize the materials and perspectives contained in archive. In this paper, I will briefly outline the foundations of the participatory approach to appraisal, a framework within which it can be activated, and address the potential breakthroughs and challenges that may face such models in the future. Acknowledging the contingency upon which "participation" in the archives can be consented to or coerced, my focus lies on the pluralistic landscape of archival repositories in the United States, particularly in universities and large cultural institutions concerned with education. It is through the discussion of the participatory model's concrete barriers and speculative dimensions that I argue for its implementation, through a diversity of methods and with varying scopes particular to each institution. In focus here is transparent, open-source documentation, participatory collecting drives, and cross-institutional projects and partnerships, among other strategies. Key to the participatory framework, and why it is a desirable strategy, is not only the distribution of resources in creating and preserving historical memory, and therefore agency, but also as a means of recognizing the alternative forms of archival agencies already active within the archival repertoires of underrepresented communities.

Appraisal has undergone large transformations in its application and understanding, and while never fully situated, its current context imbues it with considerable power. Previously Jenkinsonian notions of the archivist's objective role as custodian of the fonds, and thus its authenticity, served to diminish the role of the archivist by relying on the inviolability of the records and their arrangement. This positivistic approach to appraisal was challenged in the American context, where the archivist's role as a conscious actor was acknowledged in Schellenberg's introduction of values into the archival discourse. In the 1970s, major upheavals in archival theory reconceived of the role of the archives in relation to documenting social movements and articulations of culture that previously went undocumented in the historical record. As archivists are charged with the slippery, limited, and power-laden task of appraisal, they work with the knowledge of their own role in the material process of history described by Michel-Rolph Trouillot, where "the production of traces is always also the creation of silences."[1] Trouillot's framework activates the archival process as one intimately tied to socio-historical production, thus creating an imperative for archivists to address their own role as shapers of one of many possible histories. Postmodern and postcolonial critiques of appraisal's hand in instantiating bias and replicating existing structures of power in the historical record sparked new applications of appraisal.

In order to establish the need for a participatory approach to appraisal, the power and role of the archivist first needed to be rendered visible, such that it could then be seen from different perspectives and ultimately challenged. In 1972, Hans Booms expressed the

[1] Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. "The Power in the Story." *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (1995). 29.

social responsibility of including all of society in appraising historical documentation, and thus the necessity of cooperation across domains, making the claim that "all archivists in public archives at the various administrative levels cooperate with each other in their appraisal efforts, as well as with all other archivists in non-governmental institutions."[2] Gerald Ham's address to the Society of American Archivists called for a coordinated effort of cooperation and linkages between specialized archives and state records repositories as a means of casting a wider net, and catching the "instant archives" vulnerable to loss.[3]

Within her book *Varsity Letters*, Helen Samuels proposed a dynamic blend of functional analysis and documentation strategy to address in part the functional need for university archives to document student life via cultural records.[4] Samuel's documentation strategy required communication and interconnection between institutions and called for outside expertise where needed, engaging participation at an administrative level. The failures of documentation strategy's wider implementation is itself a marker of the limitations imposed by the rigidity of institutional structures that view their functions as siloed and separate. Taking up the task of documenting at the peripheries, community archives present a participatory vision that calls on members of a particular community to document their own experiences by re-collecting records of their own.[5] Vital to the articulation made by community archives is the developing post-custodial role of the archivist, as a consultant and mediator for distributed access to community memory.[6]

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[2] Booms, Hans, Hermina Joldersma, and Richard Klumpenhouwer. 1987. "Society and the Formation of a Documentary Heritage: Issues in the Appraisal of Archival Sources." *Archivaria* 24 (0): 107.
[3] Ham, F. "The archival edge." *The American Archivist* 38, no. 1 (1975): 5-13.
[4] Samuels, Helen Willa. *Varsity letters: documenting modern colleges and universities*. Scarecrow Press, 1998.
[5] Shilton, Katie, and Ramesh Srinivasan. "Participatory appraisal and arrangement for multicultural archival collections." *Archivaria* 63 (2007): 87-101.
[6] Bastian, Jeannette A. "Taking custody, giving access: a postcustodial role for a new century." *Archivaria* 53 (2002): 76-93.

Terry Cook claims that the shifting identity of the archivist is now one of the "conscious mediator aiding society in forming its own multiple identities."[7] The strategy of participation, in all these cases and formulations, coalesces around the effort to distribute the power of appraisal in a more equitable fashion, as a means of documenting a wider range of perspectives that have previously been systematically under-valued.

The value or indeterminacy of placing appraisal wholly on the agency of a single archivist is often not pragmatic or realistic, but most of all it does not present a material understanding of how agencies are enacted in the appraisal process. Participatory archives are typically built using the records continuum model, as also applied to digital records shared across institutions and functions, because of the model's emphasis on the co-creation of records.[8] The shared responsibility and agency enacted through co-creation creates a multi-provenancial record, that can thus be reflected in its custodial and descriptive nature. Building off of this model of co-creation, Terry Cook's own use of the term "co-appraisal" can be invoked here to address the shared determination of value. Truly, no record is ever appraised without competing systems of value. Archivists are always subjected to the agencies enacted in the structural, economic, and legal environment they are situated in.[9] Archivists must operate with the pretense of these formations, always implicated within the structures of the institution which itself determines the value of their labor.

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[7] Cook, Terry. "Evidence, memory, identity, and community: four shifting archival paradigms." *Archival science* 13, no. 2-3 (2013): 113.
[8] Gilliland, Anne J., and Mirna Willer. "Metadata for the information multiverse." *iConference 2014 Proceedings* (2014).
[9] Cook, Terry. 2011. "'We Are What We Keep; We Keep What We Are': Archival Appraisal Past, Present and Future." *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 32 (2): 173–89.

How might archivists within large educational and cultural institutions develop appraisal decisions that do not *merely* reify those structures of institutional identity and valuation? At this institutional level, a participatory strategy of appraisal is vital because it actively engages agencies that are extant and outside of the formalized institutional structure. To be clear, this should not always be inherently valued, as the issue of incorporation into this institutional structure comes with considerable care. Issues of exploitative labor practices, defanging political materials or restrictive access may be addressed through community engagement, description, post-custodial retention, and collective bargaining.[10] Beyond the unsettled issue of the pacification and displacement of archival materials, there is valuable, subversive potential in a participatory approach. To incorporate capacity of outside models of memory-making within the established appraisal policy allows for the potential reconstitution of previously enclosed, non-permeable identities of memory institutions.

Useful to this discussion is the term "archival autonomy," which invigorates the participatory approach with the possibility of self-determination in historical memory: "Archival autonomy is tentatively defined as the ability for individuals and communities to participate in societal memory, with their own voice, and to become participatory agents in recordkeeping and archiving for identity, memory and accountability purposes."[11] The importance of building trust and forming symbiotic connections with community sources outside of the institutional structure is a vital activity in which archivists should be involved. For institutions to choose to allocate space and resources directed to

[10] Shilton.
[11] Evans, Joanne, Sue McKemmish, Elizabeth Daniels, and Gavan McCarthy. 2015. "Self-Determination and Archival Autonomy: Advocating Activism." *Archival Science* 15 (4): 337–38.

participatory projects and to work with communities and organizations with differing missions is in itself a determination of value.

In order for a participatory model to work within the constellation of agents involved, there must be transparency and documentation of the appraisal methodology and progress. Transparency's role in the participatory process allows for the archivist's values, methods, and motivations to be accessible to participants and outside parties.[12] Using digital publishing platforms, such as GitHub or self-designed blogs, documentation of the participatory strategy and its progress can be treated as open-source material. In Web 2.0, access to the digital tools necessary for disseminating policy and internal guidelines allows for institutions to facilitate what documentation strategy called for back in the 1980s. Here, Elizabeth Snowden Johnson estimates the changing values afforded by such technological advancements:

> "Believing in the professional value of intellectual neutrality, archivists in the past often strove to make their own activities and influence on their collections invisible to researchers. In contrast, today's archivists increasingly realize that their own decisions regarding appraisal, processing, and description should be documented and made available to researchers"[13]

Participatory archives should not be solely determined by the invitation of outside agents, but also based on how the archive can itself participate as an agent within communities. Publishing non-sensitive documentation and instructional materials is not just useful for researchers studying archival practices, but it also allows communities and organizations

[12] Huvila, Isto. "Participatory archive: towards decentralised curation, radical user orientation, and broader contextualisation of records management." *Archival Science* 8, no. 1 (2008): 15-36.
[13] Theimer, Kate. 2011. "What Is the Meaning of Archives 2.0?" *The American Archivist* 74 (1): 61.

understand the functioning of the archive. Archivists can learn a lot from critical librarianship and how instruction can aid information literacy. This mode of transparency creates inclusion and can even be used as an instructional methodology that further distributes archival awareness and records literacy.[14]

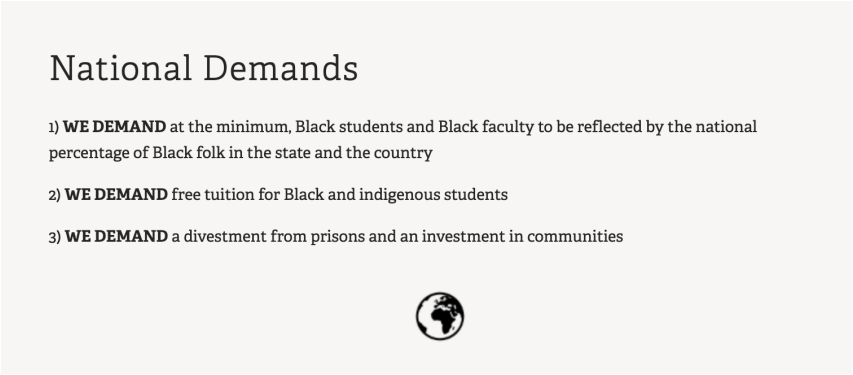

Figure 1. National Demands listed on the Black Liberation Collective's website.

To illustrate how participation and active agency can occur within the digital, the Black Liberation Collective's initiative "Our Demands" compiles, archives, and synthesizes the demands made by Black student organizations across United States universities.[15] The national demands listed (Figure 1.) are synthesized from the overall 86 different student organizations, creating a cohesive narrative to unite the demands contextually beyond their disparate institutional goals. The repository is not inherently a static list, as student organizations are called to send in demands by email, allowing for expansion of the project. Giving space for these demands to co-exist and sit in relation with one another is vital as a means of calling to attention the power and agency of Black student organizations in spite of systemic oppression. Furthermore, the demands of Wesleyan University in particular have desired effects that would alter the archival record. In their demand for the creation of a Multicultural Center and a Director of Multicultural Affairs, the students of color

[14] Elmborg, James. "Critical information literacy: Implications for instructional practice." *The journal of academic librarianship*32, no. 2 (2006): 192-199.
[15] "Our Demands." Black Liberation Collective. http://www.blackliberationcollective.org/our-demands.

community at Wesleyan petitioned for archival autonomy: "The multicultural center must be provided with institutional support and additional financial resources. Furthermore, it would be the location of an archive specifically for student activism around SOC - related issues and empowerment."[16] The demands were presented to the University President Michael Roth on November 18th, 2015, and backed by the support of 85 student groups on the campus.[17] In 2017, a Resource Center was created, with an "intellectually grounded mission in social justice and a focus on intercultural development and literacy," which does not appear to house a student-led archive but a library instead.[18] The preservation of the students' demands through the Black Liberation Collective allows for a marker of accountability on behalf of the university's actions in response to said demands, and places this accountability in a larger framework.

There are active efforts to make participatory projects surrounding the complicated power relations of documenting student activism within the university archive. At Princeton's University Archives, the Archiving Student Activism at Princeton (ASAP) initiative was designed as a collecting drive for students on and off campus to deliver their materials to the archive for digitization.[19] The implementation of collecting drives in archival institutions is a productive way of inviting outside engagement and gauging interest in archival memory creation. This type of open and invitational appraisal strategy

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[16] "Wesleyan University Demands." Black Liberation Collective. http://www.blackliberationcollective.org/our-demands.
[17] "Students of Color and Allies Present Demands to Roth." *The Wesleyan Argus* (blog). http://wesleyanargus.com/2015/11/19/national-day-of-solidarity/.
[18] "New Resource Center Celebrates Multicultural, Diverse Identities." *News @ Wesleyan* (blog). https://newsletter.blogs.wesleyan.edu/2017/09/29/new-resource-center-celebrates-multicultural-diverse-identities/.
[19] Drake, Jarrett. "Announcing ASAP: Archiving Student Activism at Princeton." Mudd Manuscript Library Blog. December 2, 2015. https://blogs.princeton.edu/mudd/2015/12/announcing-asap-archiving-student-activism-at-princeton/.

requires clear messaging on the part of the organizing archivists, as the framing of the drive will play a part in the kinds of materials brought in for accessioning. Archivists need to consider their methods of outreach, as the activation of certain networks will determine what communities are called upon, and to what extent they will form initial trust with the archive. Developing trust with communities is never developed overnight, but happens "through a consistent and sincere effort to consult, co-operate and collaborate."[20] This consistent effort is required when specific communities being reached are actively marginalized by the institutional structure, as in the case of student activist materials.

As Jarrett M. Drake argues though, the "explicit function of the liberal arts college *commands* institutional archivists to collect and preserve records that highlight the conflicting nature of the liberal arts' implicit function."[21] This command might even be expanded to archivists at wider cultural institutions, who would be delegated with the imperative to document resistance to the institutions they represent. Acquiring materials of this nature requires transparency around the donor's rights to privacy and the rights to access afforded to the materials, securing a "principle of prior, free and informed consent" within the collecting policy.[22] This process involves a negotiation of power on the part of both participating parties. For instance, the ASAP intitiative gave participants the option to restrict access to the deposited records for up to 20 years into the future.[23] This practice of integrated, informed consent extends the dynamic flux of archival agency to the participant.

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[20] Faulkhead, Shannon, Livia Iacovino, Sue McKemmish, and Kirsten Thorpe. "Australian Indigenous knowledge and the archives: embracing multiple ways of knowing and keeping." *Archives and manuscripts* 38, no. 1 (2010): 221.
[21] Drake, Jarrett M. "Documenting Dissent in the Contemporary College Archive: Finding Our Function within the Liberal…." *Medium* (blog). November 7, 2016. https://medium.com/on-archivy/documenting-dissent-liberal-arts-e1c69e574ff8#.3dhx1z8pp.
[22] Gilliland, Anne J., and Sue McKemmish. "The role of participatory archives in furthering human rights, reconciliation and recovery." (2014). 6.
[23] Ibid. Drake, ASAP.

Archivists need to interrogate their own best practices in these scenarios and assess what rights can be afforded to participants in collecting drives, and what is out of the purview of the archive's own mission and available resources.

The participatory archive necessarily requires a distribution of resources to be directed towards parties and agents that are outside of the institutional structure; however, this does not mean that these resources are not being used in the interest of the archive. Archivists can conduct assessments of the resources available to them, and even look to other institutions for opportunities of collaboration and connection when appropriate. Participatory appraisal can occur across institutions, but we should be careful in what we call a participatory archive. The foundations of a truly participatory appraisal process aim towards extending archival autonomy to communities and organizations that do not have access to the resources, platform, or repository space contained in the archive. It is important to distinguish the ways in which multiple forms of representation are enacted in a participatory archive:

> "[The] concept of a participatory archive acknowledges that multiple parties have rights, responsibilities, needs and perspectives with regard to the archives. Participatory archives consequently become a negotiated space built around critical reflection in which these different communities share stewardship and expertise—they are created by, for and with multiple communities, according to and respectful of community values, practices, beliefs and needs."[24]

Gilliland and McKemmish address the ways in which representation is instantiated in the participatory model. Here, appraisal is opened up to the concerted efforts of multiple communities, rather than the monolithic, black box of the institutional appraisal policy. The

[24] Gilliland. 2014. 4.

concept of the archive becoming a "negotiated space" has significant impact on the way institutional identity should be conceived. Generating room and capacity for multiplicity in the archive's institutional identity will lead to potentials for a more equitable record. This contestation over the historical record is not about the prestige of institutional validation, but rather the infrastructure and platform that exists within the archive as it exists. As Verne Harris states, "beyond the dynamics of remembering and forgetting, a more profound characterization of the struggle in social memory is one of narrative against narrative, story against story."[25] Without reifying the power of value embedded within the archive as an organ of the colonial state, it is important to recognize how power can be opened and distributed to locales outside of this traditional site. It should go without saying that the negotiation of space is also a material concern of resource management. The act of opening up access to reading rooms and physical storage space are costs incurred by the institution and are reflective of this larger project of expanding institutional identity.

Considering the limited human and financial resources and the expectations of various stakeholders, building and managing a participatory approach to appraisal is practically difficult to manage. Mindful of how the archive's own limited resources can affect an appraisal policy, archivists should understand how this may limit the community's valuation of the archive as a site of collaboration. This being said, pragmatism can often function as a rhetoric employed to obstruct change within the archival process. Depending on the willingness of outside groups, developing a participatory framework of appraisal can be mutually beneficial for all participants. This comes with recognizing that there are

[25] Harris, Verne. "" They should have destroyed more": the destruction of public records by the South African state in the final years of apartheid, 1990-1994." (1999). 205.

archival dimensions beyond the scope of the institutionalized archival framework. Communities may have their own memory models and ontological frameworks for retaining memory. Without diminishing the value of these extant forms of memory-making, appraisal of alternative sources of community documentation can create new ways to conceive of archival collections, in effect pluralizing the historical record. Shilton and Srinivasan speak to the co-existence of these archival dimensions and the symbiotic relationship that can be formed between them:

> "Reconciliation between community efforts and the preservation resources of information institutions can allow communities, archival institutions, and larger publics to learn and gain reciprocally in the creation of a collective memory that acknowledges multiple cultural contexts."[26]

In addressing the varying contexts which materials might be situated within, a participatory appraisal can integrate outside formulations of value in preservation. Incorporating alternative forms of media and giving room and credence to the framework as it exists within the community is a way of respecting the co-creation of the record. Essential to the development of a participatory appraisal strategy is the mutual belief in the value of preserving access to the collections and materials being included in the archive.

Postmodern and postcolonial critiques of the silences compounded in the archival record through the enactment of appraisal decisions have revealed the limits at which archival agency can operate within the boundaries of the archivist's singular authority. In attempting to address the accumulated silences that disproportionately affect marginalized communities, distributing archival agency through the means of co-appraisal strategies.

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[26] Shilton. 92.

Expanding the notion of what is representative of the institution's archival record, allowing for external input to what determines the institutional identity of the archive is, can enable those participating communities begin to see themselves reflected in that identity. Always a complicated and contested space – the participation in identity, and by vector, the institutions we are implicated in – Fred Moten iterates, via philosopher and poet Edouard Glissant and jazz musician John Coltrane, his poetic estimation of the web that creates boundaries between our agencies and those outside ourselves:

> "This involuntary consent of the volunteer is our descent, our inheritance, should we choose to accept it, claim it, assent to it: forced by ourselves, against force, to a paraontological attendance upon being-sent, we are given to discover how being-sent turns to glide, *glissando*, fractured and incomplete releasement of and from the scale, into the immeasurable." [27]

From Moten, we can imagine the invitiation of participation into the archive, the complex and difficult implications that may arise from such a proposal. And yet, we may also see the missed opportunity and continued silences compounded if no such invitation were to be made. It should be a goal for archivists to develop participatory methods within their own appraisal policy, in creating records that rectify elisions from the past and look towards a more inclusive future. As Gilliland and McKemmish invoke, "spread[ing] a participatory ethos more broadly in networks of archives and archival partnerships around the globe is one of the grandest archival challenges of all"[28] While implementing a truly participatory approach is a near impossible task, it is a necessary limit potential to approach, and a challenge archivists should be taking.

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[27] Moten, Fred. "To Consent Not to Be a Single Being." *Poetry Foundation*, 10 Nov. 2018. https://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet/2010/02/to-consent-not-to-be-a-single-being.
[28] Gilliland. 2014 10.

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“Capacity to Save”:
Preservation and Ownership of Archival Memory in the Near-Future Caribbean

CORE PAPER – SPRING 2019

Professor Sarah Roberts
IS 212: Values and Communities in Information Professions

This paper seeks to outline the complicated ownership issues that exist in Caribbean collections as a result of colonial history and its present formations. As climate change creates ruptures in the archival record, by the reinstatement of neocolonial control or by disaster’s effects, it is crucial to view these ruptures as part and parcel of same project, the accumulation and extraction of the Earth’s resources in order to support the unequal balance of globalized capitalism. I argue that the issue of custody and community ownership of records in the postcolonial context is more crucial than appeals to conservation, which can be used to conceal and further neocolonial control and displacement of community memory.

In 1988, the Barbadian poet Edward Kamau Brathwaite's house in Irish Town, Jamaica was destroyed by Hurricane Gilbert. Within his house was his own personal archive and library, "one of the largest & most important archives of Caribbean literature & culture in the world… It contains a record – since I keep almost everything – of many of our writers' progress (drafts unpublished manuscripts letters diaries artifacts books books books thousands of miles of tapes LPs)."[1] The destruction of Brathwaite's archive at the hand of climatic disaster is explored in his book *Shar (Hurricane Poem)*, which calls for a sense of urgency and action *before* the disaster comes. As Herron advises in her introduction: "Don't wait until you hear that fire or flood destroy Bratwaite house to say that you sorry an start runnin arounn about what to do what to do how can we help etc etc etc."[2] Climate change is present and already posing ontological and epistemic threats to known modes of being. Not all such modes of being are given the same value within the current global economic system. So too are the documents and records of a nation, a people, or a community inherited into this value system, as storytellers for their lived experience. These divisions of value become increasingly defined and disparate when confronted with the threat of global precarity. Within the Caribbean context, the long extensions of drought and increasingly intense catastrophic storms[3] exacerbate a region already fraught with socioeconomic pressure, created by a history of colonial control and underdevelopment. I look to write alongside Jeanette Allis Bastian and Alison Donnell's

[1] Herron, Carolivia and Kamau Brathwaite. "Shar: Hurricane Poem." *Mona, Kingston, Jamaica. Savacou* (1990). The introduction to this text, titled "Saving the Word," was delivered by Carolivia Herron in 1988 prior to a reading of Brathwaite's nascent text that would become "Shar: Hurricane Poem."
[2] Ibid. Herron.
[3] Taylor, Dr. Michael. "Climate Change in the Caribbean – Learning Lessons from Irma and Maria." *The Guardian*, October 6, 2017, sec. Environment. https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/oct/06/climate-change-in-the-caribbean-learning-lessons-from-irma-and-maria.

work in outlining the complicated ownership issues that exist in Caribbean collections as a result of colonial history and its present formations. As climate change creates ruptures in the archival record, by the reinstatement of neocolonial control or by disaster's effects, it is crucial to view these ruptures as part and parcel of same project, the accumulation and extraction of the Earth's resources in order to support the unequal balance of globalized capitalism. I argue that the issue of custody and community ownership of records in the postcolonial context is more crucial than appeals to conservation, which can be used to conceal and further neocolonial control and displacement of community memory. In this paper, I will layout a general framework, and subsequently conduct a literature review assessing current conceptions of disaster preparedness and alternative archival dimensions emerging in the wake of climate change.

The archival project as constructed in its continental, professionalized context is one that gathers up the past and organizes and coheres it into narrative, in hopes that it will shape the future. In determining the values of a future archival record, there must be understanding around the archives' past role in the colonial state apparatus and how the same structures persist today in new contexts. Jeannette Allis Bastian's book, *Owning Memory: How a Caribbean Community Lost Its Archives and Found Its History*, discusses the case of the U.S. Virgin Islands and how its records' displacement to Denmark and the United States has affected the creation of a collective historical memory.[4] Beyond the acquisition of colonial records into Rigsarkivet (the Danish National Archives), the accessioning of records to the United States National Archives persisted until 1959. Few historical records

[4] Bastian, Jeannette Allis. 2003. *Owning memory: how a Caribbean community lost its archives and found its history*.

remain in the custody of local repositories in the Virgin Islands due to the process of records extraction. Along with the designated mandate of a National Archives as a centralized repository for governmental records, preservation was an issue that acted as a driving force for the removal of records from the Virgin Islands.[5] Compounded with the tropical climate's deteriorating effects on paper, hurricanes and emancipation rebellions threatened the existence of government buildings and their records repositories. Alison Donnell writes of the "dual sense of belonging" experienced by Caribbean authors, particularly Caribbean writers of color, who at once are implicated as colonial subjects, both politically and culturally, while also acting as representatives of the postcolonial nation born out of independence.[6] This notion of duality is represented in Caribbean archival holdings, as the grip of colonial rule creates a shared provenance in the records created surrounding the colonized nation. Many of these records hold information crucial to marginalized communities affected by histories of slavery and indentured labor. The contestation around archival custody exists in the colonial context as mandated by ownership and governance of the land, but as Bastian argues, records are also crucial to the ownership of community memory.[7] While the notion of a totalizing community memory can be problematized, it must be acknowledged that the tools for record creation, preservation, and access are unequally distributed. Supporting information systems built by and for communities requires transforming traditional resource allocation and foundational principles on which LIS institutions are built. Achille Mbembe writes on the

[5] Ibid. Bastian. 26.
[6] Donnell, Alison. 2018. "Caribbean Literary Archives and the Politics of Location: Challenging the Norms of Belonging." In *The Future of Literary Archives*, edited by David C. Sutton and Ann Livingstone, 15–32. Diasporic and Dispersed Collections at Risk. Arc Humanities Press. https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvfxvcqc.6.
[7] Ibid. Bastian. 3-5.

insidious nature of colonization in memory institutions, calling for an "expansive sense of citizenship… which itself means nothing without a deep commitment to some idea of public-ness."[8] Conceiving of the archives from outside of its traditional framework of evidential or informational value requires an assessment of impact that takes into account the affective value of archival materials.[9] Working towards a decolonial framework from within the archival paradigm means contesting the historical grounds on which it was founded, and for whom it was built.

In situations of catastrophe, how are information professionals to respond to the preservation of communities and their memory, rather than the conservation of static materials? This question is prescient for the future of Caribbean memory institutions, which are faced with the biases of an archival field rooted in its traditionalist values. In review of the first Caribbean Archives Conference located in Grenada in 1965, American archivist T.R. Schellenberg summarizes the issues of preservation faced by the archivists present, qualifying his description with a value-judgment: "Although less sophisticated than the discussions at meetings of the Society of American Archivists, the general sessions, in a very practical way, served to elucidate the elementary problems that are encountered in countries where inadequate attention has been given to research materials."[10] His comment reveals the bias present in discussions surrounding preservation and expertise in the Caribbean. Rather than evaluating the structural problems that create barriers to adequate resources, Schellenberg critiques this simply as "inadequate attention."

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[8] Mbembe, Achille. "Decolonizing knowledge and the question of the archive." *Aula magistral proferida* (2015).
[9] Caswell, Michelle, Alda Allina Migoni, Noah Geraci, and Marika Cifor. 2017. "'To Be Able to Imagine Otherwise': Community Archives and the Importance of Representation." *Archives and Records* 38 (1): 17.
[10] Schellenberg, T. 1966. "Caribbean Archives Conference, 1965." *The American Archivist* 29 (3): 387–88.

Schellenberg's influence in archival practices is felt today in the modes of discourse surrounding the values given to records. Despite Schellenberg's judgment of the work being done in the Caribbean, the second conference in 1975 included a draft of resolutions and commitments for participating nations, with one concerning the issue of records custody:

> "That overseas countries holding archives of interest to the region be asked to make them known by similar means, to assist in their microfilming and dissemination wherever possible, and to give favorable consideration to requests to transfer documents originating from archives formed on the territory of other countries or relating to their history."[11]

This resolution reveals the need for autonomy over the colonial record, as formed around the 1960s and 70s, an era when many Caribbean nations were gaining independence. While tied to nation-building and postcolonial reconstruction, the restored public record also plays a key role in constructing a sense of the "public," as a concept. The archival field's rhetoric around preservation is and will surely change due to climatic shifts; and as such, it is important to keep the issues of custody and ownership closely tied to preservation.

In response to the effects of climate change, both studied and felt, disaster management has become a key area of focus in record-keeping and cultural heritage organizations. The Caribbean Branch of the International Council on Archives (CARBICA) has set its focus on disaster planning with the formation of Caribbean Archives Taskforce for Disaster Preparedness (CARTAS), created in response to Hurricane Ivan's effects on Grenada's archives in 2004.[12] This project focuses on "building infrastructures for rapid

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[11] Holmes, Oliver. 1976. "The International Scene: Report on the Second Caribbean Archives Conference October 27-31, 1975." *The American Archivist* 39 (1): 72.

[12] Matthews, Graham, Yvonne Smith, and Yvonne Smith. 2016. *Disaster Management in Archives, Libraries and Museums*. Routledge. 79.

post-disaster assessments, and developing a risk and vulnerability assessment component" through partnerships of support, in attempting to mitigate archival loss.[13] Layered within the larger network of the ICA, which has its own ties to UNESCO, CARBICA creates a more local and vital network of support from within the Caribbean. Due to histories of underdevelopment, limited resources available for Caribbean memory institutions can often mean that organizational models are borrowed from established and heavily standardized organizations. This raises the question of power and perspective in the models that are used to address preservation in the Caribbean. For instance, at the University of the West Indies Mona Library in Jamaica, librarians worked to institute a Preservation Awareness Week to address the challenges of developing preservation strategies for libraries, archives and museums, developing their strategy off of the model used by the American Library Association (ALA).[14] The resources provided by ALA are important for creating accessible practices, but we must also consider how universalized strategies are often inadequate to fit the needs of diverse populations. Librarians Tereza A. Richards and Dunstan Newman acknowledge the role human and financial resources play in allowing for the establishment of preservation practices, which can be difficult to advocate for (let alone design) amidst more pressing public service concerns. The danger of importing infrastructures from the United States or Europe is revealed and exacerbated by the precarity generated through climate change. Information & Communication Technology companies and private contractors infiltrate these spaces at risk and replace the public safety net with devastating effects on communities, a process Naomi Klein identifies as

[13] "CARTAS." *CARBICA*. https://carbica.org/Projects/CARTAS.aspx.
[14] Newman, Dunstan, and Tereza A. Richards. "Caribbean Library Journal Volume 3" 3: 18.

disaster capitalism.[15] Implicated within a neocolonial global economic system, projects and contracts written under the guise of disaster aid are not unconditional. They are rather designed with intent to further the extractive flow of resources[16] and systematize erasure of the most vulnerable.[17] As climate disasters in the region continue to ramp up, the dissolution of autonomy and systems governance can result in the loss of crucial infrastructures and networks for preserving community memory.

While preventative disaster planning has taken root in the discussion of climate, one can see the existing support infrastructures (and the lack thereof) in the mobilization of relief for post-Hurricane Maria Puerto Rico. Hilda Teresa Ayala-González has created a useful timeline of recovery efforts for Puerto Rico's libraries, archives and museums, which spans the year following the 2017 disaster.[18] The timeline outlines the constellation of partnerships, relief funds, reconstruction projects, and donations made in the effort to establish security for memory institutions, their collections, and their workers. Compounded, the diverse aid networks that came to the fore show the plurality of methods used to recover damaged materials and bolster reconstruction. As an archive itself, the timeline makes a case for the utility and power of grassroots documentary projects as one such tool.

The framework outlined by Anthony Carrigan in his paper, "Towards a Postcolonial Disaster Studies," is useful here for addressing the structural and cultural inequalities

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[15] Klein, Naomi. *The battle for paradise: Puerto Rico takes on the disaster capitalists*. Haymarket Books, 2018.
[16] Gómez-Barris, Macarena. *The extractive zone: Social ecologies and decolonial perspectives*. Duke University Press, 2017.
[17] Boyles, Christina. "Decolonizing Disaster: Surviving Surveillance in Post-hurricane Puerto Rico" *Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities* (blog). https://mith.umd.edu/dialogues/dd-spring-2019-christina-boyles/.
[18] Ayala-González, Hilda Teresa. "Puerto Rico's Libraries, Archives and Museums Road to Recovery: Introduction." http://scalar.usc.edu/works/prlamrecovery/introduction.

embedded in disaster planning and recovery efforts.[19] As applied to the preservation of records and cultural materials in the Caribbean, there needs to be wider understanding of how "neutral," technocratic solutions erase the particular needs of communities and institutions. In expanding the definition of disaster to include the colonization of information systems and erasure of public memory, the postcolonial lens calls upon the massive, abstract timescales of climate change as a socio-political process concerning human, extra- and non-human actors.[20]

As repositories in the Caribbean continue to feel the dramatic effects of climate on their own preservation, efforts to recuperate and manage ownership have taken form in the realm of digitization. The Digital Library of the Caribbean, in partnership with the University of Florida and the Florida Digital Archive, have begun to back-up their collections in direct response to the preservation issues felt by local repositories and archives:

> "In addition to its mission of providing scholars with open access to rare Caribbean resources, dLOC is also dedicated to the long-term digital preservation of all materials hosted in its collections. The present need for such action in the Caribbean is urgent, especially in consideration of the region's volatile climate, which renders a more traditional approach to preservation a daunting challenge for even the finest archives and repositories."[21]

This policy note, titled "Preserving Caribbean Heritage," points to the urgency of altering preservation methods due to climatic upheaval. While not invoking climate change

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[19] Carrigan, Anthony. "Towards a postcolonial disaster studies." In *Global Ecologies and the Environmental Humanities*, pp. 135-157. Routledge, 2015.
[20] Lindblad, Purdom. "Archives in the Anthropocene." *Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities* (blog). March 20, 2018. https://mith.umd.edu/archives-in-the-anthropocene/.
[21] "About dLOC: Digitization." *Digital Library of the Caribbean*. https://www.dloc.com/dloc1/digit.

explicitly, there is awareness of the present and future need to act in response to the increasing precarity of Caribbean heritage materials. Another digitization project of note is the British Library's Endangered Archives Programme (EAP), which offers grant funding to create digitized records of at-risk materials (pertaining particularly to "pre-industrial societies") to be retained both locally and at the British Library. Here, provisions are made regarding the custodial retention of the original materials:

> "The original archival material will not leave the country of origin except in exceptional cases when it is required to do so temporarily for specific conservation or copying purposes. Even then, this will only be permissible with the written approval from the relevant governmental authority and the material will be returned to the country of origin once the reason for its temporary removal has been fulfilled. At least two surrogate sets of all material copied are made – one to be deposited at the British Library and the other to remain in the country of origin at the designated archival partner institution to facilitate access by local researchers."[22]

The EAP reserves ownership and custody of the original materials with the local institution or repository, while retaining a digital copy for the British Library's online archives. This globally sourced archive has created several Caribbean collections, including materials from Anguilla, Cuba, Barbados and more. It is important to consider the practical benefits that such a project has offered to communities, by providing a preservation infrastructure, bolstering local capabilities, and enabling wider access to the materials.[23] Without discounting the real need being fulfilled for local institutions at the British Library's expense, it is important to consider the context in which these online repositories are being

[22] "About." Endangered Archives Programme. September 11, 2017. https://eap.bl.uk/about.
[23] Kominko, Maja, ed. *From Dust to Digital: Ten years of the Endangered Archives Programme*. Open Book Publishers, 2015.

designed, and how their epistemological structure can underserve these communities. Katie Shilton and Ramesh Srinivasan suggest using participatory models to "[position] users as the designers of their own systems," such that community knowledge is framed itself by the community.[24] Truly participatory projects are incredibly difficult to implement, as they entail a great amount of labor and resources that are not often available across institutions. The Caribbean Memory Project (CMP) is one case of a participatory, digital archive that exists for Caribbean individuals, families, and institutions to digitize their own stories and materials, with the mission of "counteracting the effects of erasure and forgetting."[25] Projects such as the CMP are important for establishing a foundational infrastructure that is born out of community production, and in service of that community. Digital efforts to remedy the preservation issues facing the Caribbean are complex and multi-directional; however, Jessica Marie Johnson credits digital work as a space for emergent forms of community:

> "I think the digital humanities, or doing digital work period, has helped people create maroon — free, black, liberatory, radical — spaces in the academy…DH has offered people the means and opportunity to create new communities. And this type of community building should not be overlooked; it has literally saved lives as far as I'm concerned."[26]

It should be noted that Johnson's vision for digital practice is rooted within community production, not conceiving of the digital as a space absent of sociohistorical formation.

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[24] Shilton, Katie, and Ramesh Srinivasan. "Participatory appraisal and arrangement for multicultural archival collections." *Archivaria* 63 (2007): 96.
[25] "About Caribbean Memory Project." The Caribbean Memory Project. http://www.caribbeanmemoryproject.com/about.html.
[26] Johnson, Melissa Dinsman interviews Jessica Marie. "The Digital in the Humanities: An Interview with Jessica Marie Johnson." Los Angeles Review of Books. https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/digital-humanities-interview-jessica-marie-johnson/.

Issues of community memory and ownership can be addressed using the networked relationships made possible by digital systems, yet this is always contingent on the involvement of community within such a system's production.

Amidst disaster, archivists, librarians, and information workers will be called upon to preserve records and information that can be activated to aid their communities, in the Caribbean and beyond. By building information systems that prepare for a future of potential catastrophe, the preservation of community memory, and its agency within that community, should be a priority for record-keepers and cultural institutions. Working with communities to preserve their memory can take many forms, from developing disaster planning strategies to digitally copying materials to supporting community-led documentation. None of these efforts escape the issue of the historic and globally ingrained unequal distribution of resources, and therefore, information workers must act (pro-actively) with this knowledge in mind before restorative work can be done. To return to the words of Carolivia Herron in facing the wreckage of Brathwaite's literary archive: "many times the Western epics supersede the Third World epics to such an extent that there is not enough energy or interest in those of us who have the capacity to save words, to go to the places where these poems and epics are being spoken and sung, to save them."[27] As offered here in Herron's words, the role of the archives and archivists might not be merely to save these materials, a task that is always reactionary and working amongst scarcity, but rather to actively give communities the capacity to own and preserve their own histories and futures.

[27] Herron, Carolivia and Kamau Brathwaite. "Shar: Hurricane Poem." *Mona, Kingston, Jamaica. Savacou* (1990).

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Beyond Description:
Revealing Institutional Values and Labor in Administrative Records

ELECTIVE PAPER – WINTER 2019

Professor Kathy Carbone
IS 438B: Archival Description and Access Systems

In this essay, I explore the ways in which the archive constructs institutional identity. I compare and contrast the archival workflows and labor practices employed in the Beyond Baroque archive, a literary nonprofit, and the University of California, Los Angeles' University Archives. I situate my experience within contemporary debates around efficient and ethical processing practices, particularly around the widespread set of practices called "More Product, Less Process." In analyzing the ways in which institutional identity is instantiated through archival description and processing, and the various labor models engaged for such instantiation, I address the issues of institutional memory loss and provide examples of potential recuperative archival interventions, both performed and speculative.

Introduction

As economic models have shifted in the neoliberal turn, so too have archives' best practices and workflows for archival description and processing. The limitations put on archival workers are compounded with the continual changing of institutional functions, practices, and structures, replete with problems of underfunding, incentivized profit motives, and resulting precarity. Archivists and record-keepers within the stewarding administrative records of arts and education institutions must still, despite these issues, develop methods to describe and process the extant collections, whether in a backlog or a storage closet. The narrowing of viable economic models for archives therefore affects the archival representation of an institution's identity and memory. This process is described in Marika Cifor and Jamie A. Lee's "Towards an Archival Critique: Opening Possibilities for Addressing Neoliberalism in the Archival Field," which addresses the ethical concerns of how changing labor practices affect the archival field. In this essay, I will explore the ways in which the archive constructs institutional identity, parsing the differences between two archives, looking at their description and processing practices and its intersection with their labor structure. These archives include the Beyond Baroque archive, a literary nonprofit, and the University of California, Los Angeles' University Archives. My research will be conducted through a thorough analysis of the debates around efficient and ethical processing practices, particularly around the widespread practices called "More Product, Less Process." I will reflect on my experience and involvement with the varied manifestations of these practices in two distinct archives. In analyzing the ways in which institutional identity is instantiated through archival description and processing, and the various labor models engaged for such instantiation, I hope to address the issues of

institutional memory loss and provide examples of potential recuperative archival interventions, both performed and speculative.

More Product, Less Process

In 2005, Mark A. Greene and Dennis Meissner wrote the seminal article, "More Product, Less Process: Revamping Traditional Archival Processing," which argued for a stream-lining of the methods used in description and processing, and a priority shift from preservation to user access.[1] The article was written in reaction to the significant amount of unprocessed material sitting in archives, even as time-intensive preservation practices such as removing metal fasteners and refoldering twentieth-century materials were still part of the current workflow. What Greene and Meissner argue for in terms of description and processing is an adherence to a "golden minimum" that values processing productivity, and keeping description relegated to higher-levels of arrangement.[2]

Cifor and Lee cite MPLP as evidence for the neoliberal model archives currently inhabit, claiming that "[u]nder MPLP archivists become workers on an assembly line[,] aiming for standardization, ever-greater amounts of linear feet processed, and at increased speed."[3] This claim perhaps overstates the role by which MPLP contributes directly to the atomization of labor, viewing it as cause rather than effect. However, this motivation to accelerate processing productivity does have ramifications on the labor output of archives. As the wider field of LIS has moved towards "a discursive framework in which the value of information is determined by its ability to be monetized," institutions have placed value in

[1] Greene, Mark, and Dennis Meissner. "More product, less process: Revamping traditional archival processing." *The American Archivist* 68, no. 2 (2005): 208-263.
[2] Ibid. 255.
[3] Cifor, Marika, and Jamie A. Lee. "Towards an Archival Critique: Opening Possibilities for Addressing Neoliberalism in the Archival Field." *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* 1, no. 1 (2017): 12.

the collection metrics rather than the research value of the materials.[4] The precautionary critique is that MPLP's focus on productivity may let the more granular, detail-specific elements of archival description and processing slip through the cracks of new, heavily-standardized procedures.

Cifor and Lee continue that MPLP often supercedes "critical approaches that are social justice-oriented and that recognize heterogeneous collections and records creators as integral to the breadth and depth of archival collections."[5] Oversight in MPLP is a concern, as efficient processing does not necessarily allow for interventions such as describing along ethical standards or conducting outreach to creators and stakeholders. This may not preclude the option, however, as Greene and Messnier do call for flexibility above all. They state that a combined consideration of both user-needs and reality of limited resources "will determine the level of descriptive detail, as it does the level of arrangement."[6] As the archival institutions change accordingly to the squeezing of funds and the subsequent freezing on hiring new staff, awareness of the limitations of an archivist's processing labor has become essential for adapting best practices. The diffusion of skills and workload management required to keep up with institutional demands may make the option of stream-lining description and processing collections attractive, and sometimes even necessary. The Society of American Archivist's *Describing Archives: A Content Standard* (DACS) does not prescribe a one-size-fits-all level of description, but similarly allows for flexibility and agency on the part of the archivist: "Archivists should

[4] Cope, Jonathan. "Neoliberalism and library & information science: Using Karl Polanyi's fictitious commodity as an alternative to neoliberal conceptions of information." (2014). 6
[5] Cifor and Lee. 12.
[6] Greene and Meissner. 216.

follow the prescriptions of their institutions and apply their own judgment in making such determinations."[7] Within the changing context of archival labor, description and processing practices inhabit an area of contention between the archive's identity and values, and the limitations imposed by economic constrictions and incentives.

Processing and Narrative Power

Descriptive choices and interventions in archival processing contribute to the context built around the existing structure and contextual relationships of records. Archival description has always been about power. Luciana Duranti traces the beginning of archival description – the act of writing about records – to the "rise of the municipal autonomy in the twelfth century, that is, until there was a need to study precedents, document rights and defend the interests of the city against the central power."[8] As Jennifer Meehan describes of the postmodern view of archival representation: "in the course of interpreting and representing provenance and original order, practitioners are in effect creating the external boundaries and internal ordering of a body of records."[9] To give a brief history of this development Meehan describes, original order is a foundational principle in the archival field, established as a concept in Germany and France before being systemized by Muller, Feith, and Fruin in their 1898 *Dutch Manual* and later by Sir Hilary Jenkinson. Terry Cook describes the functionality of original order, viewing it as "designed so that archival records were arranged, described, and maintained to reflect the context of their creation, rather than rearranged (as earlier) by subject or theme or place, thereby destroying their

[7] "Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS)." *Chicago: Society of American Archivist* (2004). 7.
[8] Duranti, Luciana. "Origin and development of the concept of archival description." *Archivaria* 35 (1992). 48.
[9] Meehan, Jennifer. "Arrangement and Description: Between Theory and Practice." *Archives and Recordkeeping: Theory into Practice*. (2014). 76-77.

contextual validity and meaning in favour of their informational content."[10] This had direct consequence on the processing of material, which to the highest priority had to preserve the contextual relationships already established by the "order" of a collection and its records.

Heretofore, archives were teleologically tied to the notions of "Truth," and thus the role of the archivist was primarily preservation rather than interpreting and representing.[11] Description was tied to the arrangement of the materials, and as an archival tool was meant to reveal meaning rather than take part in crafting it. However, as the number of documents produced increased with greater administrative and media production, archivists were faced with the complex task of selecting and appraising what would be preserved. The act of archival appraisal gave pause to theorists who now had to consider the subjectivity and curation of the archive and what it represents, taking on a new constructivist perspective. Original order, while still a foundational concept, is integrated into this framework as well. Because it is not inherently a given that the archival collection will preserve the relationships of records and their context, it is important to draw attention to the curated and constructed nature of arrangement and description.

The narrative told by the records is contested within description, as Jennifer Meehan states: "In describing the content and context of the records, the practitioner is, in effect, constructing stories and names that highlight certain aspects of context, while downplaying or ignoring other aspects."[12] The decisions made in the processing of records

[10] Cook, Terry. "Evidence, memory, identity, and community: four shifting archival paradigms." *Archival science* 13, no. 2-3 (2013): 106.
[11] Ibid. 106.
[12] Meehan. 81.

will ultimately affect how users select, interact with and interpret materials from archival collections. The remedial power of description is not something that should fall to the wayside when using MPLP techniques and workflows. This power has not gone un-interrogated, as Anne Gilliland has questioned how representation occurs in archival descriptions, stating that "the metadata generated when these materials are first created and used, or by the government, academic, and other institutional repositories that later preserve and provide access to them, rarely directly or adequately addresses the concerns and needs of all parties involved in their creation and use within the relevant community of records."[13] Archives within institutions have a responsibility to address the address concerns of transparency, ownership and process in their archival representations, especially when external communities are affected. As archives in arts and education institutions undergo structural changes, description remains a powerful intermediary between the records and the public.

Beyond Baroque

Beyond Baroque is an independent Literary Arts Center in Venice, California. Since its founding in 1968 by George Drury Smith, it has become a cornerstone of the literary community in Los Angeles.[14] Community focused events like readings and performances double as experimental space for writers and artists, as well as hubs for education for the wider public community. Beyond Baroque is also well-renowned for its weekly, community workshops that have been attended and led by some of Los Angeles' leading literary talents. Throughout its history, the space has undergone changes along with the city of

[13] Gilliland, Anne J. "Contemplating co-creator rights in archival description." *KO: Knowledge Organization.* 39, no. 5 (2012): 340-41.
[14] Beyond Baroque. "About." http://www.beyondbaroque.org/about.html.

Venice, as influxes of real estate interest and capital have terraformed its neighborhoods. Its first location was on West Washington Boulevard, described as a derelict stretch for down-and-out artists and crime, it was remodeled and rebranded in the 80s as Abbot Kinney Boulevard (named after Venice's prime investor and millionaire founder).[15] Now, Abbot Kinney is the city's center for tourism and luxury shopping, while Beyond Baroque inhabits Venice's old City Hall building. Herein lies the symbolic shift from outsider artist space to public arts institution. This shift is reflective of Beyond Baroque's nonprofit status, a designation that was vital to creating a distribution network for publications as a result of discounted postage rates.[16] Thus by leveraging their ability to produce publications, they created a community/network of artists and writers through this production of text. The foundation of the space and the communities which circulate and revolve around it is tied indelibly to materials gathered in the archive. By moving to a nonprofit status there is more potential for varied flows of federal, state, and local funding than there was formerly, but they may also experience tradeoffs in independence from outside stakeholders. The Beyond Baroque Foundation is funded by memberships, sponsors, and grants.

The Beyond Baroque archive is housed on premises, retained within record cartons within shelved closets. With the aid of Library and Information Studies students and other area graduate students from University of California, Los Angeles, Johanna Drucker took to the task of organizing and performing minor descriptive work on Beyond Baroque's archival collections. In developing a working filing system for the purposes of keeping track

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[15] Groves, Martha. "Abbot Kinney Boulevard's Renaissance a Mixed Blessing." *Los Angeles Times*, October 25, 2013. http://articles.latimes.com/2013/oct/25/local/la-me-abbot-kinney-changes-20131026.

[16] Drucker, Johanna. "Fifty Years of Beyond Baroque: 1968–2018." *Los Angeles Review of Books,* April 5, 2018. https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/fifty-years-beyond-baroque-1968-2018/.

of the many cartons on-site, the records were split between institutional records (IR) and publication records (PR). I was brought on to assist this process in the fall of 2018, doing file level description of select cartons of administrative materials and digitization for non-unique materials such as calendars and event flyers. Beyond Baroque's managing staff did not have much interaction with the archival materials outside of storing them on premises. Beyond Baroque entered into a fortuitous, mutually beneficial relationship with Johanna Drucker and students, opening the archive for the benefit of research.

Among the graduate students assisting in the project, some joined the project on a volunteer basis and some working through the MLIS program received compensation through the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies. This outsourcing of labor in the arrangement and description process allows for opportunities in research and training when using the materials, as well as offering archival expertise and work. This decision was surely affected by the current formation of the institution, as administrators and staff do not have the resources to tackle the organization and description of the materials themselves. The formation of this de facto archival processing unit reflects the structure of arts nonprofits, which traditionally select from "volunteer and paid labor pools."[17] One can infer that this may be a result of the current infrastructural model, as there used to be a "librarian" position at Beyond Baroque.[18] The effort to "catalog" these materials is both advantageous for Beyond Baroque as an artistic community, concerned with the preservation and curation of legacy, as well as a nonprofit organization, concerned with the upkeep, housing, and cost of labor. The end goal of the archival description project

[17] Kushner, Roland J., and Peter P. Poole. "Exploring structure-effectiveness relationships in nonprofit arts organizations." *Nonprofit Management and Leadership* 7, no. 2 (1996): 121.
[18] Mohr, Bill. *Hold-outs: The Los Angeles Poetry Renaissance, 1948-1992*. University of Iowa Press, 2011.

is to create an inventory that can be appraised for its value, and potentially acquired by another institutional archive. With this in mind, it may not be suitable for Beyond Baroque to train or hire staff to handle and describe their archival materials. The labor structure of the archive certainly imposes limitations on the methodology of the archival project at hand.

The description of institutional records was completed on a file level at its most granular, with some cartons only being recorded for its general contents as a means of efficiency. The description process used spreadsheets to record the collection data, using a filing system designed to distinguish each record by its record carton and type of document (institutional or publication record). The metadata elements used in the description includes "Date," "Document Type," "Description," "Condition," and "Notes/Digitize." The process, while barebones in constitution, transposes essential elements from DACS and leaves the typical hierarchical structure at the wayside for a more functional model. This model does not try to define the relationships between each carton of materials beyond its generic function and designation as an "Institutional Record" or a "Publication Record." Within the elements discussed, the workflow emphasized scanning for information that would benefit research. For instance, the processing methodology privileged descriptions of events and people represented in the records rather than the genre or form. In this way, research value as determined by the archivists says something about the nature of the institution, and how meaning is derived and constructed from its records. What does it mean for a nonprofit's archive to describe their own materials, abandoning the typical hierarchical model in support of values held within the institution? And how do archival actors fulfill these values when regulated by the physical, temporal, and monetary

limitations? What results could perhaps be equated to Greene and Meissner's "golden minimum," as a flexible reaction to the limitation of resources and the needs of the users, here being Beyond Baroque's administrators and the archive's eventual appraisers. In this way, the particular methods of description and processing can be used as a lens through which one views the archive's identity. Jennifer Meehan describes the ways in which archival practices are formed by externals forces:

> "At any given time there are various forces… shaping what is or is not required, feasible, and/or desireable in terms of processing. Such forces include: the needs of the records as both physical and intellectual objects; the demands of archival theory (the set of ideas about the nature of the records); the practical limitations of archival methodology (the set of ideas about how to treat records based on their nature); and the even more practical limitations of available resources, systems and tools."[19]

It is no question that what is conscripted by an institution's mission and their labor practices will have an inevitable effect on what formation the archive takes, but I argue that there is agency within the choices made in archival processing, that distinguish the archive as subject to the present state of its institutional structure and as active shaper of the institution's memory, past and future.

University Archives

College and university archives here can be defined as the archival repository and official record holder of the parent institution.[20] The official records can consist of a multitude of different record types, including administrative, and historical records, or records of cultural significance. Christopher Prom describes the primary responsibility of

[19] Meehan. 64.
[20] Maher, William J. *The management of college and university archives*. Rowman & Littlefield, 1992.

university archives to "document and provide verifiable information about its parent institution," and thus act as an intermediary between users of the records and the institution's records.[21] University archives play the important role of crafting the historical record of the parent institution, a place and entity that is already suffuse with its own mythological status and lore. John Thelin in his paper "Archives and the Cure for Institutional Amnesia: College University Saga as Part of the Campus Memory," discussed the difficulty university archives face in systematically collecting and retaining records when confronted with changing legal demands, rapidly advancing technologies and stagnant staffing practices.[22] For Thelin, university archives are directly connected to the "legends and lore of campus life" as a vessel for preserving the parent institution's identity and distinct culture.[23] It is no surprise that universities go to great lengths to develop this type of identification. Thelin describes a quite amusing and telling anecdote of this type of crafted "instant history":

> "At the new UCLA campus, opened in 1929, acres of bean fields and vacant tracts did not evoke collegiate nostalgia. First, there were no alumni yet. Second, something crucial was missing from the academic landscape. Resourceful trustees and donors had a good, prompt solution: they paid to have a huge boulder imported to the campus and immediately anointed it as Founders' Rock."[24]

As the focus of my study, UCLA's University Archives is thus continually contending with and working alongside the massive identity curated by a larger administration and the

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[21] Prom, C. (2010). Optimum access? Processing in college and university archives. *The American Archivist*, *73*(1), 147.
[22] Thelin, John R. "Archives and the cure for institutional amnesia: college and university saga as part of the campus memory." *Journal of Archival Organization* 7, no. 1-2 (2009): 4-15.
[23] Ibid. 4.
[24] Ibid. 8.

cultural understanding of the parent institution. Within this context, it is true that university archives in particular are challenged with developing dynamic systems that can collect crucial departmental and administrative materials, even while there are backlogs of material yet to be processed. This dilemma compounds itself into absences within the university archive.

One approach that university archives have developed, including UCLA's University Archives, is the MPLP method of processing. Greene and Meissner's findings on the lack of productivity of archival processing methods speak to this directly, as 64 out of the 100 archives surveyed in their report were college or university archives.[25] Their analysis advocates against the archive's "strong tendency to set as a benchmark the creation of a substantial, multilayered, descriptive finding aid," and to rather work with each collection flexibly, towards a processing minimum. In a statistical analysis of the findings presented by Greene and Meissner, Christopher Prom interrogates their recommendation to focus on changing processing practices in a shift towards "repository-, collection-, and series-level descriptions" of the materials in an effort to save time and labor.[26] His findings indicate that there is an evident, but very weak relationship between "intensive processing and slower processing speed," though these marginal differences in processing speed are because of the varying methods used by different institutions. Prom points out the widely-varying relationships that exist within the findings:

> "The fact that productivity must be plotted on a logarithmic scale is sadly telling. Some archives out-process others by a factor of 10 or more. But the lack of a strong correlation between the use of intensive processing techniques and slower processing speed is even

[25] Greene and Meissner. 210.
[26] Prom. 151.

> more significant. It means we must examine the whole range of archival activities, management techniques, and outside factors if we wish to improve productivity and collection access."[27]

In this way, Prom's analysis points out that MPLP is by no means a blanket solution, but rather a specific tool to be used by archivists when necessary. He states that in many cases, "it will make more sense to change appraisal and reference practices, address personnel issues, or improve descriptive workflows before implementing 'processing lite.'"[28]

The University Archives at UCLA collects departmental and administrative records as part of the Library Special Collections. The collections are viewed in the Ahmanson-Murphy Reading Room located on campus in the Young Research Library, while collections are held in the nearby Southern Regional Library Facility. Through the Center for Primary Research and Training, a program that hires graduate students to conduct research through archival processing work, I was hired to help transfer legacy materials in Microsoft Access to the new content management system, ArchivesSpace. As institutions change, so do the technologies used to act as content management systems, UCLA has gone from using Access to Archivists' Toolkit to ArchivesSpace in a relatively short period of time. Transference of this material has considerable effects on the labor output of archivists, though it may offer chances for redescription projects to be undertaken. Description in UCLA's University Archive implements ArchivesSpace to write EAD that can be exported as finding aids to the Online Archive of California (OAC). A correlating MARC record is also created and hosted on an internal cataloging system Voyager ILS in order to grant access to the record series through the catalog. This transfer of archival data was not performed

[27] Prom. 158.
[28] Prom. 159.

without remediation and adjudication of form, as the archival data needed cleaning and further re-processing to remain in compliance with current institutional standards.

DACS is used as a content standard for description and UCLA-specific processing guidelines have been developed alongside guidelines created for the University of California system. The document *Guidelines for Efficient Archival Processing in University of California Libraries*, written in 2012, specifically cites MPLP as a methodology for drafting iterative and minimally-tasking techniques and workflows. Perhaps in anticipation of some pushback on the part of archivists, one passage invokes the reasoning of efficiency as a means to empowerment:

> "In sum, the efficient processing techniques described in this manual do not devalue your work or your collections. They empower you to make complicated, informed choices about the work you perform so that you may surface more of your institution's important research material to its users. You may still take pride in all that you accomplish and all the researchers you serve when you use efficient processing techniques."[29]

However this language may be interpreted by an archivist, it is important to reconcile the changing institution-wide practices and guidelines with the agency behind archivists in implementing and altering these suggested workflows. MPLP is a reality in university archives because of collection policies that hyperextend the archival net and thus extend the archivists' resources and labor. In relation to this context, MPLP is one very useful tool for archivists to cut back on over-describing records and stream-lining processing practices in ways that still treat collections effectively and with care. In fact, developing standards for assessing and determining value and labor costs at several checkpoints through the

[29] Bachli, Kelley et al. Next Generation Technical Services POT 3 Lightning Team 2. "Guidelines for Efficient Archival Processing in the University of California Libraries." Version 3.2. September 18, 2012. 8.

accessioning and processing trajectory is quite an important practice. The document does acknowledge that this is also an issue for management and curation: "Backlogs in UC special collections and archives are not merely a problem for technical services, they are also a collecting problem. Backlogs can be the result of institutions acquiring more material than their staffing and resources can handle."[30]

Other administrative decisions, like the changing of staffing policies and labor practices also have ramifications on a university archives' processing capabilities. For instance, temporary archivist positions that span two years have been widely used at university archives and UCLA in particular, as a method of keeping up with backlogs while skirting the investment of hiring full-time, permanent positions.[31] Temporary workers at the UCLA Special Collections have collectively felt the harm of these contract positions, and with the support of their union, the University Council – American Federation of Teachers, have petitioned for UCLA to end and ameliorate the hiring practice. Cifor and Lee identify this issue as a development within the pervasive neoliberal framework of the archives, and one that acts as a detriment to the preservation of materials:

> "This puts the long-term survival of archives at risk, which challenges the archival paradigm of long-term preservation and historical importance. These labor models, especially of unpaid internships mean that the archival profession opens itself just to those in the privileged financial situation to be able to undertake such labors thereby replicating problematic inequalities in the profession."[32]

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[30] Ibid. 8.
[31] Monaghan, Peter. "Are Temporary Appointments a Threat to Archiving? |." *Moving Image Archive News*. February 8, 2019. http://www.movingimagearchivenews.org/are-temporary-appointments-a-threat-to-archiving/.
[32] Cifor and Lee. 13.

This current issue is reminiscent of earlier uses of temporary librarian practices used by UCLA, and the fight over the language specifying when such positions were appropriate. This practice is contextualized by the massive amount of unprocessed material retained by UCLA's archives, holding a backlog of "more than 2,000 collections that total more than 8,500 linear feet" of unprocessed materials, some accessioned decades ago.[33] Even as there is an inordinate amount of material yet to be processed, UCLA only has one permanent processing archivist on its staff, while there are five permanent, full-time curators. UCLA is not necessarily unique in this practice, as many archives have been faced with shrinking funds and increased workloads. My position as a graduate student worker was not immune to this either, as a change of scope for the CFPRT program eventually cut the University Archives Processing Scholar position short, leaving work to be done with many of the archives' unprocessed and untransfered collections. Temporary positions certainly contribute harm to the archival field, as it fosters precarity (which may also be attributed to a market saturation in the archival field), leaving archivists to hop from position to position, institution to institution. A considerable amount of training investment and institutional and research knowledge leaves with the archivist as their contract term ends.

The condition archivists work under does have an effect on the quality, efficiency and flexibility of their description and processing output. The actions taken by UCLA's temporary archivists have shown the value of their labor; collectivized efforts to coalition-build and petition the administration for change is in effect an effort to change the conditions of their labor. In creating a better environment for workers, archivists essentially create opportunities to instill processing methodologies that better reflect the

[33] Monaghan.

values of the archive. Exhibiting their agency in a myriad of ways, archivists in the university develop description and processing practices that expand the scope detailed by MPLP and UC base guidelines. For instance, the CFPRT is working on developing a Redescription Project that aims to survey existing finding aids and develop best practices for using terminology that better reflects self-description of the communities represented in collections. This project, although not completed, is yet one example of a heterogenous method of description that is not covered in MPLP, though it can work compatibly with such practices if standardized. As MPLP was designed to mollify the issues of busy collecting and increased backlogs, it is effective in revealing the ways in which record description can be overwrought and at times inappropriate. In some cases, record series were previously over-described, going into granular item-level detail to an excruciating extent. As the truism goes, once described, a finding aid data can go from more granular to less but cannot become more granular. Therefore, it is important to develop standards to determine what level of granularity is appropriate and necessary. Because my appointment was a reprocessing project, part of the workflow included rearrangement and redescription of the records. Elizabeth Yakel espouses redescription as a necessary component of archives, recommending that "archivists … not only be reorganizing collections and revisiting poor descriptions, but completing periodic redescriptions of entire archives to accommodate these changing meanings."[34] Viewing description and processing as continuous, ongoing negotiations, the archive thus becomes a very active participant in the representation of records. Such are examples of how description and processing practices can be adapted to reflect the identity of the archive, and its values.

[34] Yakel, Elizabeth. "Archival representation." *Archival Science* 3, no. 1 (2003): 4.

Returning to Thelin's concept of institutional identity, we may see that the labor practices of university archives have direct effects on the description and processing of record series. MPLP may be a coping mechanism but it may also be just one tool in a toolbox. In my experience at the University Archive, working through the remediation and re-processing of record series revealed the ways in which description and processing shape an archive's identity. Of course, within the University Archive the question of a holistic identity is fraught, as an academic archive is composed of the record series of many different departments and administrations. In this way, it is not the collections themselves that define the identity of the archive, but the methods and practices of archival description and processing, which imbue the extant records series with meaning. It is in their archival representation that research-value and, indeed, narrative is held. As the work of Michel-Rolph Trouillot and Terry Cook tell us, archivist's decisions of appraisal and documentation affect the construction of history and its memory. One can see that description and processing have a hand in the artifice of the archive, as methods of inscribing records with meaning and context.

Interventions and Potentials

In making meaning from these two distinct experiences of archival practice – both constricted by their independent reactions to the same economic forces – I turn to their methodologies of archival description and processing as a means of identifying their institutional identities and value. Amongst uncertainty and fissure in the relationship of the archives to their parent institution, both the limitations and the agency of the archivist are contained within their decisions of description, communicating the values of the archives in conjunction with the perceived needs of the users. In the case of Beyond Baroque's

archives, emphasis on surface-level descriptions of folders and pulling out data on important community figures and events were essential to the processing workflow. Though limited in funds and physical space on-site, the symbiotic relationship between Beyond Baroque and Johanna Drucker's work was founded on a trust that the archival collection and the values of the institution contained within would be preserved in their processing.

The UCLA University Archives contained a much more codified experience of processing workflow, with conscription to industry standards like DACS, EAD, and RDA outlining what elements of description should be used and what they should look like. This is not to say that there is not relative freedom and creative license when describing university materials, though the robust system of peer-reviews provides much needed accountability in the description process. It is the modified MPLP methodology crafted from UC guidelines that archivists in the Library Special Collections developed their descriptive practices to best fit the needs of their users and potential ethical considerations. Accountability and trust are built into these archives in different ways, both as methods of inscribing checks and balances on the preservation of the archive's identity and as a constitution of the social relationship of the archives to its stewards. Both archives have systems built in to avoid the process of institutional memory loss. This can take many different forms, even creative ones such as digitization as preservation, outreach and programming in relation to the materials, write-ups, blog posts, or digital projects surrounding the records. Policies and standards can shape the way that records are retained within the archive. Records retention schedules in the university archives also ensure that some records are not held forever, rather having a determined shelf-life.

Though absences in the archive are ever-present, it is archivists' task as active-agents to "consciously creat[e] public memory" through the collections selected for preservation as Cook describes.[35] Description is one site of intervention through which archivists contribute to public memory.

The development of recuperative and transparent interventions for making the description standards and practices employed by archives reflective of the needs of users and the communities represented. Meehan provides suggestions for specific practices that could tailor archival description practices to process:

> "To better document archival context, specifically as it concerns arrangement and description, additional information might be included in the finding aid (or other access tool) and further documentation might be provided to users that sheds light on both the institutional context of arrangement and description practices and the process of the individual practitioner."[36]

Documentation of archival practices is a useful method for highlighting the institutions own practices, and at once reveals to the user the constructed nature of records and their descriptions. As an embedded system of accountability, documentation allows the user to come to conclusions about the archivist's decisions.

Interventions have also taken place in description to better reflect the complicated nature of provenance and creatorship of records. As Eric Ketelaar summarizes of this growing practice: "More and more, government and business archives will contain records of parallel provenance from two or more entities each residing in a different context, even when they are involved in different kinds of action, for example creation and control."[37]

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[35] Cook. 108.
[36] Meehan. 88.
[37] Ketelaar, Eric. "Archives as spaces of memory." *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 29, no. 1 (2008): 15.

The establishment of parallel provenance in archives offers many potentials for re-thinking the ways in which archival descriptions are made to accredit records to agents. Though typically used in archives that use the series system, exploring new ways of describing attribution and creating links between collections has become a promising development. Creating access to beneficial relationships and communities is integral to the opening of potentials for processing archivists, as Beyond Baroque did when developing a working relationship with Johanna Drucker and her students, and as the UCLA Library Special Collections staff did when taking union action in support of their temporary archivists. Community archives are an important venue for re-negotiating the terms on which archival materials are collected and owned, developing new methods of crafting archival relationships in an economic era where there is little value attributed to communities' heritage and historical materials.[38] How can emerging practices and structures within community archives be adapted to open descriptive practices up to participation? Does an institutional repository have a duty to co-design representation with the creators? Questions such as these have potential to guide the discourse of description practices into the future. Protection against harm and precarity and putting communities and values first in the archive is a methodology of its own. When coupled with informed description and processing practices, new participatory methods can expand the potential for the ways in which archives are currently instantiated at-large.

Conclusion

Archival description acts as a powerful tool used in archival processing practices, as a means of establishing narrative and thus distinguishing the values and identity of the

[38] Cifor and Lee. 14.

archive. Wendy Duff and Verne Harris speak to this process of narrativization, and how contemporary understandings of archival description can be leveraged in the future memory crafted by archival collections:

> "In describing records, archivists are working with context, continually locating it, constructing it, figuring and refiguring it. Context, in principle, is infinite. The describer selects certain layers for inclusion, and decides which of those to foreground. In this process, there is analysis, listing, reproduction, and so on, but its primary medium is narrative."[39]

Creating context in the archival environment is thus an act of selection. Even more so, creating context is an act of direct, agentic archival intervention, as limitations imposed upon archivists relegate the possibilities in processing work. As Cifor and Lee identify, neoliberal economic models have infiltrated the archives, shaping the administrative decisions behind the policies, standards, hiring practices, and to some extent processing methods. Greene and Meissner's MPLP remains a hugely influential piece of literature and methodology for processing collections with flexibility and efficiency. Although MPLP is not necessarily harmful to the production of ethical and responsible descriptive practices, it should not be an excuse for a one-size-fits-all finding aid description. Many archives are currently engaged in a struggle to keep up with massive accruals of unprocessed backlogs, which has a multitude of reasons for existence and effects on the condition of archival labor. When confronting the realities of the archive under neoliberal policies, MPLP is one effective method of reducing harm and keeping descriptive practices user-focused.

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[39] Duff, Wendy M., and Verne Harris. "Stories and names: archival description as narrating records and constructing meanings." *Archival Science* 2, no. 3-4 (2002): 276.

Certainly, there is no blanket solution that can be adopted in all archives, as each archive will have a distinct set of guidelines, missions, and policies that will alter their workflow.

Within my experience at Beyond Baroque and UCLA's University Archives, the description and processing of materials manifested itself in differing ways. Whereas Beyond Baroque's archives were better suited for quick, file-level descriptions that emphasize the particular research and community values of the arts nonprofit, UCLA's University Archives has robust guidelines adapted from industry standards like DACS. Descriptive methods have multifarious effects on the ways in which users and the public interacts with archival materials; it is one way that institutional identity is inscribed in the archive. Though the subjectivity of archival description is cloaked by normalcy and previous claims to professional objectivity, postmodern critiques have illuminated the judgments that go into representing records. Although the archival practices employed were determined by the mission of the parent institution and limited by resources and labor practices, there is agency both collective and individual that can make an imprint on the archival representation. Recognizing this agency acknowledges that archivists can take part in establishing archival representations. Emerging descriptive methods and archival interventions have been developed in conjunction with the belief that archival representations hold responsibility in espousing institutional values and identity. Looking ahead, archives and archivists must determine what descriptive practices will effectively and ethically work within the structure of their institution.

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Growing, Sustainably:
Community Garden Initiatives in Libraries

METHODS PAPER – FALL 2019

Professor Johanna Drucker
IS 289: Sustainability and Information Professions

Executive Summary

This paper seeks to address the institutional relationships between libraries and community gardens, with the purpose of building on community efforts to create spaces where sustainable gardening practices can be shared, promoted, and practiced in the public setting. This paper attempts to share the work being done by librarians in transforming facilities to incorporate garden spaces, and connecting library users to community gardening organizations, and programs. In synthesizing the various benefits and challenges experienced by libraries implementing community garden initiatives, the goal of this paper is to present sustainable guidelines and practices for future institutions. In addition, this paper attempts to define key areas where libraries can intervene in tying environmental information literacy to the project of building sites of community production and sustenance.

Introduction

The mission to make libraries "green" has been undertaken by information professionals as a necessary movement towards developing sustainable resources, practices, and grounds. This paper takes up the call for "greening" the library quite literally. Community gardens present a cohabited space of production, where sustainable living practices are enacted in its development and maintenance. Many libraries have been taking initiative in fostering these spaces, such that the American Library Association has devoted press to the kinship between librarianship and gardening.[1] As libraries work to assess their own environmental impact and standardize sustainable practices, it is vital that sustainability initiatives address not only sustaining the institution, but also its communities of users. The contemporary public library inhabits a unique and contested space where individuals, communities, and organizations can acquire access to crucial, environmental information.[2]

Addressing collaborations between community gardening organizations, library staff, and facilities is always a negotiation of the many factors of scale, scope, and funding that will shape a gardening project. In recognizing the many challenges that face both libraries and gardens, there is potential in finding partnerships where sustainable practices can work in tandem, to serve both the institution and its communities.

The Many Benefits of Library Gardens

This section collects and coheres a variety of case studies into actionable items that may be leveraged when advocating for a community garden initiative. Most importantly, such initiatives can be dynamically adjusted to fit the particular needs of the user communities, and

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[1] Banks, Carrie Scott, and Cindy Mediavilla. 2019. Libraries & gardens: growing together.

[2] Feldstein, Sarah. 1996. "Expanding the Capacity of the Public Library: Partnerships with Community Based Environmental Groups." Electronic Green Journal 1 (6). https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3636x9pd.

the capacity of the library.[3] As outlined here, there are numerous benefits to consider when introducing gardening opportunities to the library grounds.

Foremost to establishing a community garden is to recognize their potential value in combatting food insecurity and providing an infrastructure for community sustenance. Gardens that can accommodate food production offer users access to self-grown produce, as well as an economic return for their labor.[4] This can be vital in urban areas and food deserts, where access to organic and nutritional foods is limited.[5] At the Olympia Timberland Library in Washington, raised-bed gardens were built and maintained in partnership with a non-profit organization and a nearby homeless shelter, resulting in a multilateral effort to provide avenues of access to sustainable, locally-sourced foods.[6] Libraries near agricultural zones are opportune areas to build networks between farmers and library users, as in the case of McQuade Library in Massachusetts, where a community supported agriculture (CSA) program was engineered to contribute to local food relief efforts.[7] Beyond the realm of sustenance, gardens present net health benefits in reducing stress and providing spaces of healing for patrons and communities who have experienced trauma, growing individual and communal capacity for resilience.[8]

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[3] Wilkins Jordan, Mary, Dudley, Michael Q., ed. "Public Library Gardens: Playing a role in ecologically sustainable communities." *Public libraries and resilient cities*. American Library Association, 2013.

[4] Flachs, Andrew. 2010. "Food For Thought: The Social Impact of Community Gardens in the Greater Cleveland Area." *Electronic Green Journal* 1 (30).

[5] Alaimo, Katherine, Elizabeth Packnett, Richard A. Miles, and Daniel J. Kruger. 2008. "Fruit and Vegetable Intake among Urban Community Gardeners." *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior* 40 (2): 94. The results of this study outline: "Adults with a household member who participated in a community garden consumed fruits and vegetables 1.4 more times per day than those who did not participate, and they were 3.5 times more likely to consume fruits and vegetables at least 5 times daily."

[6] Feddern, Donna. "Community Garden Engages Homeless Patrons and Non-Profit Neighbors." *Washington Library Association*.

[7] Wong, Catherine, and Kathryn Geoffrion Scannell. 2016. "Don't Panic, It's Organic*: Supporting Sustainable Agriculture and Hunger Relief Efforts at McQuade Library." *2016 ACRL/NEC Annual Conference- Holistic Librarianship: Broad Thinking for Diverse and Creative Solutions*, May.

[8] Okvat, Heather A., and Alex J. Zautra. 2014. "Sowing Seeds of Resilience: Community Gardening in a Post-Disaster Context." In *Greening in the Red Zone: Disaster, Resilience and Community Greening*, edited by Keith G. Tidball and Marianne E Krasny, 73–90. Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.

Community gardens, like libraries, are foundational sites of community coherence. In addressing the sustainability of the library's communities, information professionals should not only be working to create accessible pathways to information, but also accessible spaces that foster a sense of belonging.[9] Acknowledging that gardening practices are inflected by cultural and environmental contexts, community identity can be forged in developing a relationship to the earth.[10] Where the privatization of public urban space is endemic in many cities, public gardens present a space where local control can be negotiated and managed by the community.[11] Supporting urban green spaces is a necessary project for libraries to undertake in serving a diverse array of user communities, especially those most effected by social and economic marginalization. Gardens offer the potential to expand the sensorial experience of the library, creating an accessible and welcoming space for users who may not have previously accommodated by learning environments.[12] Indeed, interactive spaces expand the library's capacity to address the needs of a more diverse user-base, and can even be vital spaces to support community-formed networks, including environmental activist and advocacy groups.[13]

Designing green spaces in the library has direct, positive impacts on the local environmental quality, which lead to indirect impacts on the broader environment. There is evidence to support adopting "green roofs" or rooftop gardens as an effective strategy to mitigate

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[9] Barbakoff, Audrey, and Brett Barbakoff. "Building on Green: Sustainable Thinking Goes Beyond Green to Unite Library Space and Community." In *Greening Libraries*, vol. 225, no. 240, pp. 225-240. Litwin Books in association with GSE Research, 2012.

[10] Klindienst, Patricia. 2006. *The Earth Knows My Name: Food, Culture, and Sustainability in the Gardens of Ethnic Americans*. Beacon Press.

[11] Smith, Christopher M., and Hilda E. Kurtz. 2003. "Community Gardens and Politics of Scale in New York City*." *Geographical Review* 93 (2): 193–212.

[12] Banks & Mediavilla. 38.

[13] Feldstein, Sarah. 1996. "Expanding the Capacity of the Public Library: Partnerships with Community Based Environmental Groups." *Electronic Green Journal* 1 (6).

building energy consumption and broader carbon sequestration efforts.[14] Garden implementation can be flexibly adapted to fit local environmental needs: where rainfall is abundant, gardens can reduce runoff and aid water recycling practices, while in hotter climates, "vertical gardens" or living walls can contribute to cooling effects and fighting the "urban heat island" effect.[15] In addressing efficient energy and resource management practices, libraries have utilized gardens to achieve higher scoring LEED certification.[16] While this should not be the only metric of standard for a library's sustainable facilities, it is an effective tool in communicating environmental needs and investing in sustainable spaces.

Most pertinent to the issues of librarianship is the need for increased need for advocacy and work around environmental information literacy. Many libraries have used gardens to facilitate programming situated around environmental learning, which may span a wide range of age groups and topics, from STEM learning to ethnobotanical practice.[17] There is a myriad opportunity in forging these community relationships, as gardening education programs can offer a venue for librarians to demonstrate sustainable practices, distribute environmental information resources, and on some level, contribute to the very maintenance of the garden. For example, the Sam J. Racadio Library & Environmental Learning Center used their garden as a space to teach users about native plants and composting practices.[18] Librarians and educators can use more engaging spaces to develop their own environmental resources and networks; the process of

[14] Shafique, Muhammad, Xiaolong Xue, and Xiaowei Luo. 2019. "An Overview of Carbon Sequestration of Green Roofs in Urban Areas." *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening*, November, 126515.
[15] Banks & Mediavilla. 51-53.
[16] Ibid. 51-53.
[17] Ibid. 26-28.
[18] Wilkins Jordan.

funding and programming the garden can stimulate local connections, bringing local government and organizational resources to users attention.[19]

Information professionals should not view the implementation of a community garden as divergent from efforts to make LIS practices more sustainable, but rather see how it actively contributes to an institution's culture and practice of sustainability and lifelong learning.

Challenges and Considerations

As with any sustainability-driven initiative, there are numerable challenges to consider before designing a library garden initiative. The scope, size, and organizational agenda of the garden should be built reflexively depending on local environment, community needs, availability and access to funding, and projective labor and resource. The following section details generalized issues drawn from particular scenarios, with particular solutions that may be widely-applicable.

The issue of funding will often make or break the viability of developing a library garden initiative, and so it is of great value to begin undertaking a garden project by not only assessing sources of potential funding, but to also establish connections with local partners. While budgetary shortages plague library administration and staff,[20] gathering monetary support will most likely come from outside sources. Most library gardens are established primarily and initially through grant-funding, but additional sources may be needed to cover annual operational costs.[21] The Pottsboro Area Public Library in Texas experienced a spike in city funding after the implementation of a community garden, which was initially funded through a mix of public and

[19] Feldstein.
[20] Feldstein. 6.
[21] Banks & Mediavilla. 70-72.

private grants.[22] The flexibility of community gardens is an asset when grant-writing, where sponsor goals can be met with tangible developments in the functional space of the garden.[23] Fund-raising projects and donations are potential sources of support, but fluctuations in that support might result in instability. Building connections with local community gardens, environmental advocacy groups, and businesses can be pivotal in amassing resources, guidance, and participants.

Getting a gardening project off the ground requires the upkeep, maintenance, and nurturing attention of the gardeners who will tend it. This means a community garden should have an organizational plan for facilitating the involvement of participants and defining their roles accordingly. When assessing the garden's scope, one should determine if it is within the library's capacity to hire a garden manager and coordinator. While many library gardens rely on volunteers formed of staff and community members,[24] high volunteer turnover may affect participation rates and continual upkeep of the garden grounds.[25] Securing partnerships with local, state, and federal agencies can provide incentives to ensure the commitment of participants and provide access to skilled volunteer pools, such as the Master Gardeners and Cooperative Extension programs run through the U.S. Department of Agriculture.[26] A truly sustainable garden will reward its gardeners for their labor, by developing workshops and classes that allow garden participants to foster new skills and even open up career opportunities through certifications.[27] During the school year, inviting classes to participate in the garden is a great way

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[22] Programming Librarian. "Growing Your Library's Role: Creating a Community Garden with Impact - YouTube." May 2, 2018. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EJF7HcYEHO4.
[23] Ibid. YouTube.
[24] Wilkins Jordan. 104.
[25] Laycock Pedersen, Rebecca, Zoe P. Robinson, and Emma Surman. 2019. "Understanding Transience and Participation in University Student-Led Food Gardens." *Sustainability* 11 (10): 2788.
[26] Banks & Mediavilla. 77.
[27] Edwards, Julie Biando, Melissa S. Robinson, and Kelley Rae Unger. 2013. *Transforming Libraries, Building Communities: The Community-Centered Library*. Scarecrow Press. 148-149.

to use curricular tie-ins to both educate and maintain the grounds.[28] Facilitating the garden's functional operations and upkeep takes communication as well, to confirm that library administration, staff, and building facilities workers are aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the garden.

The maintenance of garden grounds is tied to the library's geographic environment, as seasonal changes and boundaries of property ownership will necessarily limit the scope and size of the garden. Because gardens will require use of library grounds, locating a site
Among the many priorities of facilities access to consider, access to water is crucial when choosing a space for the garden. In the unfortunate case of Zion-Benton Library in Illinois, the nearest water spigot was located on the opposite side of the building.[29] Libraries that do not have outdoor space for maintaining a garden can still participate in greening their community by creating indoor potted gardens, or establishing seed and tool libraries.[30] Accessibility of the gardening facilities and flexibility of its use should also be an area of concern when selecting a garden site and when establishing standard gardening practices. Ensuring safe and sustainable garden practices requires creating library policies and guidelines that outline restrictions of use, i.e. how the garden is to be shared, what organic materials can be used, and what types of plants are allowed.[31] Standardizing resource and waste management practices are important facets of sustainable gardening, and can assure that sustainably sourced materials are being used. Training library staff to abide by standard gardening practices can be a useful opportunity to build understanding of LEED certification requirements and sustainable building management.[32]

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[28] Lynch, Grace Hwang. "Dig It! Library Gardens Sprout Up Coast-to-Coast." School Library Journal. https://www.slj.com?detailStory=dig-it-libraries-are-creating-gardens-to-expand-their-mission.
[29] Wilkins Jordan. 107.
[30] Banks & Mediavilla. 35-38.
[31] Ibid. 58-59.
[32] Barnes, Laura L. "Green Buildings as Sustainability Education Tools," August 2012.

Measuring the impact of gardening initiatives can be conducted both through quantitative metrics of use and harvest output, and qualitative methods of conducting surveys, interviews and garden observation.[33] With this data, the garden's policies and operation can be adapted to fit the updated needs of its users. Environmental education is an ongoing process, and education efforts do not only apply to library patrons but also to information professionals. Recognizing that the goals of sustainability at the library go beyond individual actions and institutional metrics will allow for more productive conversations and dynamic projects. Implementing library gardens is one tool in the librarian's sustainability toolkit, and a necessary one to consider in providing effective, meaningful services for the library's user communities.

Recommendations

In outlining the many benefits and challenges libraries face when creating community gardens, these generalized guidelines and action-points are proposed for ensuring a successful and sustainable garden initiative:

- Assess particular needs of library patrons and wider communities as they reflect the particulars of the library's geographical environment and resource capacity
- Build connections with potential partners, determine what gaps in resource can be filled, and communicate community needs
- Address sources of funding for ongoing maintenance and develop organizational structure for participating gardeners and/or site coordinators
- Design to fit the limitations of the library facilities or environment, with an eye for flexibility in the case of future expansion or adaptation
- Plan community events and educational programming to put the garden to use

[33] Banks & Mediavilla. 88.

- Evaluate overall impact on library/garden users and modify guidelines where appropriate

The overall success of a sustainable library garden will be determined by the community's investment and use of the resources. Libraries are foundational spaces to assemble resources and foster the community connections necessary for building an active community garden. As communities are invariably affected by the accelerating changes in climate, building productive centers of interdependence and resilience will be crucial to living sustainably.[34] The potential and power of collaborations between libraries and community gardens reflect a wider need for active, public spaces of convergence, where community education and production go hand-in-hand. Librarians and information professionals are in strategic positions to organize these spaces, responsibly, in hopes that they will grow towards a more sustainable future.

[34] Wilkins Jordan.

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Professional Development Statement

I began pursuing a Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) after working as a student library worker in UCLA's Charles E. Young Research Library. There I learned an appreciation for the vital functions of the library, and more importantly the ways these functions interacted with users: students, scholars, and the wider public. As a student myself, earning my degree in English with an emphasis in Creative Writing, access to informational resources and channels of support shaped my experience at such a large public university. Leaning into this pivot in my academic path, I took IS 431 Archives, Records, and Memory with Anne Gilliland as an undergraduate; this experience informed my own emerging interest in archival studies and practice. I became familiar with the work of Michelle Caswell, SAADA, and the larger community-based archiving movement. This introduction to the contemporary archival field assured me of my own desire to follow this line of work, particularly in strengthening the ongoing project of community-based archiving. I am deeply interested in building structures of support for communities to collect and preserve their own cultural memory, with their own intellectual control.

Beginning my entry into the program, I was fortunate enough to be accepted as the University Archives Processing Scholar by the Center for Primary Research and Training, located within YRL's Special Collections. This opportunity allowed me to experience the University Archives, processing departmental records and materials relating back to the early founding of the campus in Westwood. Here, I developed my own professional practices in the archives, and fostered my emerging interests in archival processing, description, and management practices. I published finding aids for University materials and worked to organize and update many of the records that had gone unprocessed for

years. In pursuing the archival field, I am interested in creating more accessible and widely-inclusive archives that bend towards social justice and equity.

This past year, I was lucky enough to be selected to intern at Visual Communications (VC) through UCLA's Community Archives Lab, as funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. VC is an Asian and Pacific American media arts organization, which houses a large archival collection sourcing from APA communities and legacies of social movement and film production. As an archival intern, I have continued the work previously undertaken by Yuri Shimoda in digitizing and indexing VC's massive photographic collection. I have expanded my own technical breadth of expertise while working for VC, building on my contributions to digitization projects with Beyond Baroque, UCLA Digital Library, and Los Angeles Museum of Natural History. In interfacing with these materials, I have also had the opportunity to collaborate with community members through metadata tagging parties, in efforts of accurately describing and documenting the history and lives they contain. My engagements with the community have been deeply affecting, as I have seen in the tagging events how events, people, and memories are recalled and re-connected to lived experience. The archive has also been an important site of community resilience in Little Tokyo, especially during a public health crisis that has affected the livelihoods and stability of many Asian and Pacific American and diasporic communities, through both the lack of healthcare infrastructure and pervasive racism and xenophobia. Witnessing firsthand the functioning of a community archive has been a rewarding process.

I have worked within a diverse range of institutions, operating at varying scales and with different communities of users in mind. For instance, my first archival project was in the Venice poetry landmark, Beyond Baroque, a formative and creative space I have visited

since my time as an undergrad at UCLA. With Johanna Drucker, I worked alongside students and the institution's staff to organize, arrange, and digitize materials that were tied directly to my own understanding of poetic lineages and genealogies in Los Angeles. In another period, I worked at UCLA's Mildred E. Mathias Botanical Garden, working in the Herbarium to sort, package, and collect botanical specimen collected over two centuries. While my working title was herbarium technician, I was gifted my very own plant press and designated as an Herbarium Fellow, in the interest of collecting future specimen. Processing both living and once-living material, this environment required a shift of technical practices, adding to my understanding of what conservation and access entails for differing research communities.

My academic interests have led me towards implementing digital humanities practices in the archives, where computational and data-driven tools are used critically to aid humanities research questions. This framework has allowed me to both look critically at the data-centric narratives that are compounded in LIS professions, while also not shying away from supporting quantitative data with qualitative methods when applicable. As Digital Humanities practices are becoming increasingly incorporated into libraries and archives, and I hope to support the critical application of emerging technologies to provide aid to students, users and the public. Throughout the program I have been a member of README, a forum for UCLA IS students that advocate for digital rights to privacy and agency. As an emerging professional, I intend to use my voice to promote ethical and critical practices within the field.

I view my own archival practices as existing in line with a community of archivists, whom I have learned from and engaged with in my academic and professional experiences.

Within my time working at UCLA Special Collections, I was privileged to work alongside members of the "UCLA Six," a group of six temporary archivists whose experiences with contracted archival labor informed my own understanding of labor relations within institutions. Integral to my own work ethic, I believe in building networks of support for budding information professionals and the communities that rely on the vital resources we provide. By attending conferences and professional events such as the 2019 Society of California Archivists' annual general meeting and "Sustaining Visions and Legacies: The Future of Special Collections Libraries" hosted by the Clark Library, I have endeavored to stay actively engaged with the issues and discourses concerning the LIS community. I hope to participate more directly in the future by contributing conference papers or posters.

My immediate professional goal is to continue building my own professional experience and skillset, whether within a community archive, academic archive, special collections, or museum role. In whatever role I undertake, **I aim to work towards integrating sustainable practices and building capacity for underserved communities within the institutional setting.** Moving ahead, I hope to use my skills gained from the MLIS program to support the archival field in constructing more accessible, stable, and resourceful structures that can better serve our user communities. Developing my nascent professional career during this junction in history, I am committed to working alongside a community of archival professionals in acting to preserve the materials that spawn from the present moment of ongoing crises, and in doing so, developing an understanding of what this work will entail in the future.

Dylan Karlsson

UCLA MLIS Archival Studies 2020

(909) 362-2123
karlsson.dylan [at] gmail.com

EDUCATION

- **University of California, Los Angeles** – Masters in Library and Information Studies, 2020 Candidate
- **University of California, Los Angeles** – Graduate Certificate in Digital Humanities, 2020 Candidate
- **University of California, Los Angeles** – BA in English with minor in Digital Humanities, 2018

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- **Visual Communications, Intern** – September 2019 - Present
    - Digitized and processed photographic material
    - Trained student interns on archival procedures
    - Planned and facilitated community metadata tagging events, in person and online
    - Conducted background archival reference
    - Organized and curated an online photography exhibition

- **Young Research Library Digital Library, Assistant** - September 2019 - December 2019
    - Prepared digital materials for ingest into Digital Library catalog
    - Appended metadata according to UCLA standards
    - Edited and cleaned audio files using Audacity

- **UCLA Herbarium, Herbarium Technician** – June - September 2019
    - Collected and arranged plant press specimen
    - Input and cataloged specimen data
    - Organized and idetified botanical specimen
    - Packed and shipped delicate herbaria materials

- **CFPRT, University Archives Processing Scholar** – October 2018 - March 2019
    - Processed 22 record series, 37.6 linear feet
    - Produced seven DACS compliant finding aids to be published on OAC
    - Transfered legacy data into new data model
    - Reprocessed and redescribed legacy collections
    - Merged record series based on provenance
    - Updated collection description in compliance with current standards
    - Performed data remediation
        - XML editing and round-trip implementation
        - Transformed EAD into CSV using command line and ArchivesSpace plug-ins

- **Beyond Baroque, Digitization and Social Media Assistant** – October - December 2018
    - Digitized key administrative and promotional materials
    - Organized and arranged physical storage
    - Managed social media presence leading up to Gala event

- **Young Research Library Access Services, Student Supervisor** – April 2016 - August 2018
    - Facilitated public service relations for the library
    - Managed important library functions for patrons
    - Delegated and organized tasks for students to perform
    - Trained new workers necessary skills

AWARDS & FELLOWSHIPS

- **Mellon-UCLA Community Archives MLIS Internship**, Visual Communications, 2019-2020
- **Herbarium Fellow**, UCLA Herbarium, 2019
- **Library & Information Studies Alumni Fellowship**, 2018

SKILLS

- Excellent writing capabilities
- Experienced with Photoshop and InDesign
- Copy-editing and critical editing
- Video and audio production
- Proficient in Microsoft Office Suite
- Public speaking and public service

TECHNOLOGY

• Content Management Systems:	Archivesspace, MS Access, Adobe Bridge
• Data Management:	OpenRefine, MySQL
• Cataloging Tools:	Voyager ILS, OCLC Connexion
• Metadata Schemas:	MODS, Dublin Core, VRA Core, METS, TEI
• Data Cleaning:	OpenRefine, R Studio, Excel
• Web Development:	GitHub, Mobirise, HTML, CSS

REFERENCES

Lori Dedeyan (Project Archivist, UCLA University Archives)
ldedeyan@library.ucla.edu
Abraham Ferrer (Archives and Distribution Manager, Visual Communications)
(213) 680-4462 • abe@vcmedia.org

Record of Advising History

I have been fortunate enough to have built a relationship with Professor Miriam Posner since my time as an undergraduate student at UCLA. I sought her guidance when considering the Digital Humanities minor and also when I was initially deciding to apply for the Information Studies graduate program. Seeking her counseling again as she transitioned to the Information Studies Department faculty, I have met with her consistently each quarter to discuss my progress both academically and professionally.

During my second quarter in the program, I enrolled in Professor Posner's Digital Humanities 201 course in pursuit of the Digital Humanities graduate certificate. This course was engaging and enriching, as I challenged myself to undertaking a project that tested my own technical limitations. Professor Posner's collaborative and critical pedagogical style allowed me to explore this potential to improve and fail, if need be. She was supportive throughout, connecting me to the people and resources on campus that could help me succeed. During this time, I met with Dave Shepard at UCLA's Humtech to dive deeper into Natural Language Processing. Through the process of working with the guidance of Professor Posner and Dave Shepard, I was able to complete my digital project, Beyond Venice. This project used materials from the Beyond Baroque Archive to create a narrative of changes in the Literary Arts Center's administration and programming amidst a changing environment and demography. The project used data gathered and collected from a series of OCR PDFs produced by Johanna Drucker and several student helpers, including myself.

Professor Posner was supportive in providing me with resources for jobs when I was searching for more experience. Her advice also helped me prioritize my own well-being when undertaking too much at once.

In lieu of the exciting arrival of Professor Posner's newborn (endless congrats!), I was able to meet with Professor Johanna Drucker. Since entering into the program, I have continually sought her academic and professional guidance. I have worked with her as a GSR archival assistant at the Venice poetry space Beyond Baroque and have taken several formative classes with her, including a methodologies course on Sustainability in LIS Professions and a PhD Seminar on Materiality of Information, Media, and Texts.

I am assured that these professional relationships will aide me in my future professional development and practices, and my own pursuit of life-long learning. It also serves as a personal reminder of the importance of supporting and advocating for younger professionals.

I am also grateful for those who guided me and took the time to offer counseling during my time in the program, including Michelle Caswell, Kathy Carbone, Courtney Dean, Lori Dedeyan, Eunsong Kim, Mario Ramirez, Danny Snelson, Shawn VanCour, and more. I would also like to thank everyone in my cohort, and both the previous and successive cohorts, who supported me and shared their own experiences the past two years.

List of Courses

Fall 2017

IS 431 Archives, Records, and Memory with Professor Anne Gilliland*

Fall 2018

IS 211 Artifacts and Cultures with Professor Johanna Drucker
IS 260 Description and Access with Professor Greg Leazer
IS 289 Audio Archiving with Professor Shawn VanCour

Winter 2019

DH 201 Introduction to Digital Humanities with Professor Miriam Posner**
IS 270 Systems and Infrastructure with Professor Jean-François Blanchette
IS 438B Archival Description and Access Systems with Kathy Carbone

Spring 2019

IS 212 Values and Communities in Information Professions with Professor Sarah Roberts
IS 438A Archival Appraisal with Professor Anne Gilliland
IS 464 Metadata with Professor Jonathan Furner

Fall 2019

ENG 203 Computers and Literary Research with Professor Danny Snelson**
IS 289 Sustainability and Information Professions with Professor Johanna Drucker
IS 434 Archival Use and Users with Professor Michelle Caswell

Winter 2020

IS 241 Digital Preservation with Professor Anne Gilliland
IS 289 Moving Image Technology with Dino Everett
IS 400 Professional Development and Portfolio Design with Professor Safiya Noble

Spring 2020

IS 291C Materiality of Information, Media, and Texts with Professor Johanna Drucker
IS 433 Community-Based Archiving with Professor Michelle Caswell
DH 299 Special Projects in Digital Humanities with Professor David Shorter

Notes
* Taken for credit as an undergraduate student
** Taken towards the fulfillment of the Graduate Certificate in Digital Humanities