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## Review

Decolonial Archival Futures. Krista McCracken and Skylee-Storm Hogan-Stacey.

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***Decolonial Archival Futures***. Krista McCracken and Skylee-Storm Hogan-Stacey. Chicago: ALA Neal-Schuman, 2023. 112 pp. 9780838937150

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*Decolonial Archival Futures* explores the attempts made in recent decades within archives to prioritize Indigenous communities as the stewards of their cultural and historical materials. The authors, Skylee-Storm Hogan-Stacey and Krista McCracken, take great care in situating their positionality at the outset of this publication. McCracken positions herself as a non-Indigenous person with settler roots and describes their perspective as being inspired by lessons learned from their extensive history of working with Elders and Survivors, specifically at the Shingwauk Residential Schools Centre. Hogan-Stacey, an Indigenous professional from the Mohawk Nation of Kahnawà:ke on her paternal side and from settler origins on her maternal side, is guided by her cultural teachings as well as her experience in the field of archives. Both authors' positionalities are key to the ways in which they approach complex archival theories on decolonization, writing from a place that is informed by both lived experience and a sense of humility and responsibility to the Indigenous communities they work with. This situating of the self, which the authors are careful to observe, is important for readers to note as it often represents the crux of relationship building and healthy engagement in many Indigenous contexts.

The book begins with a discussion about the international framework of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and its relevance to the protection of culture and heritage. The authors introduce UNDRIP's foundational work and its implications for archival theory as a starting point. They then move from a broad international perspective to focus more specifically on several countries, notably the four that initially failed to

support UNDRIP, in order to show the progress that has been made within the landscapes of these colonial entities since their original failures to endorse.

Chapter one starts its analysis by establishing the United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand within the context of their colonial ties and similarly structured archival legacies. Hogan-Stacey and McCracken explain that “their connection to Indigenous communities, their shared British colonial pasts and current trends in community archives in each country” (p. 1) make them ideal candidates for examining the impacts of colonization on archival traditions and the subsequent effects on Indigenous communities as well as the reparative influence of decolonial methodologies. This chapter describes the specific ways in which colonial frameworks evolved as representations of Western knowledge systems in each country’s archives.

Hogan-Stacey and McCracken’s approach to critiquing decolonial methods by focusing on these countries is compelling, and chapter two delves into the protocols related to Indigenous cultural stewardship they have each subsequently developed. As countries that initially rejected UNDRIP, all have strong histories of promoting colonial archival traditions as well as strong imperial ties. The attention the authors pay to these histories is significant because it allows the reader to observe the advancements made as well as the challenges faced in countries that were notable opponents of asserting Indigenous rights and control within the archival space. As professionals from Canada, the authors have made both humble and genuine choices in attempting to demonstrate the need for massive introspection within the field of archives when reflecting on its engagement with Indigenous communities. The chapter concludes by noting the importance of established protocols reflecting the attitudes of UNDRIP in creating a foundation for dialogue; however, the authors are also careful to note the need for institutions and professionals to meaningfully implement these protocols and the gaps that currently exist in doing so.

Chapters three and four address established archival concepts and functions with respect to decolonial community-based work. Chapter three examines the concepts of original order and provenance in terms of how they have contributed to the displacement and marginalization of Indigenous voices within the historical narrative. As Hogan-Stacey and McCracken explain, “Provenance and original order can perpetuate extractive systems, which remove Indigenous knowledge from communities”; this issue “is connected to the problem of archival organizations holding records about Indigenous communities without

their consent or knowledge . . . [and] reinforces colonial understandings of history and ownership” (p. 31). The authors provide examples of various projects from the four countries under study that demonstrate how the concepts have been reframed to support recognition of Indigenous provenance. Many of these projects are rooted in cultural knowledge and community-controlled access and organization of collections, and they benefit from the flexible functionality of digital archival environments.

The authors then examine the archival function of description with respect to community-based work in chapter four. They demonstrate how moving away from descriptive practices that centre the archivist as the authoritative voice of the record and toward the use of participatory archives, which privilege the voices of Indigenous communities, can be a useful tool in archival decolonization. Participatory description could involve a myriad of cultural experts, including “Elders, knowledge holders, youth and other Indigenous community members” (p. 46). Moreover, participatory description can be practised not only when records are first donated but also as part of redescription, recontextualization, and reparative descriptive work. The authors provide case studies that both illustrate the diverse ways in which participatory approaches to archival work can be applied and emphasize the social aspects of community-based work and the critical importance of relationship building within this process.

The book concludes with a look toward the future – at the potential that decolonial archives and archival work hold – and makes recommendations for where and how this work might begin. The authors describe how archives can move beyond their established frameworks, which are embedded in settler, colonial pasts, to share in the “future of Indigenous communities that are reclaiming and preserving their stories for future generations” (p. 61). This process, Hogan-Stacey and McCracken explain, will take work and meaningful engagement with Indigenous peoples in order to appropriately integrate Indigenous ways of knowing and doing within the archival space. Indeed, this is a process that will require a paradigm shift on the part of archival studies and practice to recognize the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples over their ideas, culture, and land. Critically, the decolonial archival process must be led by Indigenous peoples, and it has the potential to reframe not only archives but history as well. This message is inspiring and hopeful, and the reader is left with a sense of not only the scale and importance of the work but also the enormity of its transformative potential.