

Editorial

Nau mai, haere mai, ki Te Huinga Mahara. He māngai te putanga tuarua nei o 2018 mō ngā whakaaro, mō ngā reo, mā ngā tūmanako o tēnā, o tēnā o tātou o ngā pāpori e tiaki nei i ngā tini putunga mauhanga o Aotearoa, nō reira e kai ō whatu ki ngā koha kōrero nei kua tāpaea e ngā kaituhi ki mua i a tātou te whānau o ARANZ. Mauri ora!

Kia ora and welcome to Archifacts 2018 point 2; a mouthpiece for differing thoughts, voices, and information visions within Aotearoa's records and archiving communities. Feast your eyes on the korero gifts laid before us, the whānau of ARANZ. Mauri ora!

Pulled together late in 2018, the editorial team pushed on through the quagmire that is Christmas and the shock of returning to work, to bring you this special issue. Following on from the kaupapa of the 2018 ARANZ hui, *Ngā Taonga Tuku Iho*, this issue asked our contributors to consider, "decolonise the archives?" Having given *Archifacts* this theme the editorial team chose to prioritise indigenous voices, particularly those working outside of the mechanisms of government. And given this theme it is no coincidence that, a common thread runs throughout; knowledge, power and privilege.

This extended editorial will contribute to that kōrero. We, the editorial team acknowledge that white supremacy exists at all levels of society, and as such believe that archivists should seek to dismantle it through their work. But more on that later, first to our content.

We begin by paying our respects to our recently passed archival colleagues; Emalani Case remembers Teresia Teaiwa; Kathryn Patterson recognises Alison Mary Fraser and her many contributions; Brad Patterson reflects upon Thérèse Ann Angelo's distinguished career.

Tharron Bloomfield then redirects our focus towards the taonga of te reo Māori. Here we are taken down a new path by analysing the conflicting power of ephemera in its relationship with te reo. Ephemera can capture moments of the everyday and the dynamics of an ever-changing society, and te reo's place within it. Ephemera can also show how te reo can be another victim of commodification and appropriation, and used as an insincere tool. However, Tharron also talks to the power of ephemera to decolonise physical space and create an atmosphere where all bodies are welcome.

The next two articles look inwards to institutions and the environments indigenous people work in. Kirsten Thorpe examines the

extent to which we as archival practitioners are culturally competent and how that impacts on the cultural safety of indigenous staff working in mostly white institutions. Her article shows how professionalism and professional practice can be misused when it ignores the needs, ethics, and values of indigenous people. The paper focuses on library and archival practice in Australia, but there is much that we in Aotearoa can learn from Thorpe's work.

Nathan Sentance's short piece, "Diversity means Disruption," complements Thorpe's article and reminds us that decolonisation demands change. This article, originally published online, argues that diversity initiatives within our organisations will never be successful, for either the institution or Indigenous and other non-white staff, unless we honestly name and understand the *whiteness* that is mostly unspoken, but is the default way our organisations understand and structure themselves. To truly make our organisations more diverse and inclusive we need to be prepared and make room for real change. Fortunately for us, Sentance generously suggests five things we can do to change our organisations and profession for the better.

In her article "Indigenous Archives through time and space", Viviane Frings-Hessami discusses two altered versions of the Records Continuum Model that explain the recordkeeping processes that occur when archives are politically appropriated, repurposed or reclaimed by the subjects. She discusses how these versions of the model may help us understand how Indigenous archives have been misappropriated and mis-interpreted by colonising forces – and also why these situations "necessitate the application of Recordkeeping processes that are different from those applied to other archival records and that must be designed by the Indigenous communities who are the rightful owners".

Nina Whittaker's, "Arrangement and Description in Two Dissenting Archives" is distinguished in being awarded the 2017 LIANZA David Wylie prize, an annual prize to a Victoria University of Wellington student. The article is also distinguished for its nuanced examination of the way dissenting, or non-institutional archives disrupt and challenge our notions of correct archival arrangement and description. While the article doesn't specifically address an issue of decolonisation, its attention to power and the way arrangement and description can serve to either obscure violence and oppression or make it visible fits squarely within this issue's themes.

The next section "Getting to know you" follows the issue kaupapa in introducing our membership to three practitioners within archives and

libraries – Helen Brown (Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu), Mishelle Muagututi'a (Ngā Taonga Sound and Vision) and Moata Tamaira (Tūranga Christchurch Central Library – and yes, my sister).

Finally, we have four book reviews for your further reading. First, examining Aotearoa history, Belinada Battley reviews Rachel Buchanan's, *Ko Taranaki te Maunga*, and Seán McMahon tells us about Vincent O'Malley's, *The Great War for New Zealand Waikato 1800-2000*.

And because history is still being made, we have reviewed two books that can help us understand archives in the digital world. Heather Ryan & Walker Sampson's, *The No-Nonsense Guide To Born-Digital Content* is reviewed by Elizabeth Charlton and Jessica Moran discusses the recently published, *Algorithms of Oppression: How Search Engines Reinforce Racism*, written by Safiya Umaja Noble.

So ... decolonise the archives?

For many readers the issue theme, 'decolonise the archives?', may raise a few questions. Why curate a thematic issue, why not publish these articles separately within a standard print-run? In many ways the issue is an open admission that we, the recordkeepers, archivists, librarians, conservators, technicians, and administrators, and the institutions we work in, still have a way to go – in the way we create and organise information and who we make it accessible to. However, one of the questions the issue flags for me is, what do we mean by decolonisation?

The politics graduate in me sees formal decolonisation as structural change at the national level, of colonies becoming independent from their former rulers. A retreat from Empire. Informal decolonisation is generally much harder to see and define. In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in Christchurch, and as a woman of colour who was literally born and raised in Linwood, the decolonisation question takes on new meanings. Meanings I have struggled to articulate in this editorial and re-written many times over.

Although I have more than 40 years of lived experience with racism, the terrorist attacks have created a new type of sorrow and a new type of anger. I can't help but think that if we (New Zealand, Australasia, the world!) had learned from the histories and stories held in our repositories the tragedy could have been avoided. 50 people did not need to lose their lives.

One of the occupational hazards of working with archives, ironically, is having access to information and I regularly see traces of white supremacy woven throughout the records. Some, like those from the New Zealand War period are blatantly racist in their content and

intended function. Paternalistic correspondence, land survey maps and government surveillance working against Māori societies striving to maintain political autonomy. Others are more nuanced. Records with evidential value to Māori rarely include Māori metadata. A piece of land is confiscated for development, but did a hapū live there? Is there an urupā? Māori and Tangata Pacifica names, like my own, misspelled again and again.

What I'm trying to highlight here is a pattern from way-back to the now, we have some recordkeeping and archival issue to own. Yes, the gunman was Australian, but he bought his weapons in Aotearoa. He was enabled and flew under the radar here in Aotearoa. So, let's ask a difficult question; does the way we record, archive and curate information enable the idea the Western/Pākeha/non-Pacific ways of doing things are inherently better?

If you answered yes and acknowledge an inherent bias within our practices, institutions and workplaces then the next step is a refusal to accept that is the way it has to be. I know that many of us are already enhancing descriptions, digitising and preserving, but what else can be done? In all honesty, I don't have the answers. Although there are others in the sector to take guidance from.

Rather than focusing on personal choices with her information studies students, Michell Caswell discussed the "structural problem"² of white supremacy. Caswell's students were asked "to identify the ways in which white privilege is embedded in archival situations and to collectively strategize concrete steps to dismantle white supremacy in their own archival practice."³ This approach implicitly names the problem and encourages a reflective practice. Just like the broader society archival practitioners need to learn from their mistakes too.

From a personal perspective there are changes I want to see.

Where are the indigenous and people of colour lecturers and tutors? I don't want to complete my MIS if it means having no cultural safety or support.

Where are the recordkeeping, archives and library scholarships for Māori, Pasifika and Refugee students? For the disabled? Statistics repeatedly tell us who in society are struggling.

Once these students enter the sector how do we make sure they are safe and want to stay? Living across different cultural worlds is hard and can take an emotional toll.

I want to be clear in stating that increasing diversity is not a radical idea and will not decolonise archives. If anything, it is a dangerously easy approach to tokenise and co-opt, to tick some boxes. Nevertheless, I do

hope someone with the capability can pick up and run with answers to these questions because from a purely selfish viewpoint, I get tired being the only Māori person in my team.

I know I've thrown a lot at you in this editorial, but we don't each have to be responsible for everything. Sometimes it's about choosing your battles and at others it's as simple as stepping back or just riding along in that waka.

Katrina Tamaira, May 2019

Endnotes

1. Gamal Fouda, 22 March 2019, 'Hate will be undone, and love will redeem us': Imam Fouda, a week on', *Spinoff*. Accessed can't remember when.
2. Michelle Caswell, "Teaching to Dismantle White Supremacy in Archives," *The Library Quarterly* 87, no. 3 (July 2017): 222-235. <https://doi.org/10.1086/692299>
3. *Ibid*, p. 224.