

## Revising History and Re-authoring the Left in the Postcolonial Digital Archive

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In November 2013, the National Archives of Britain revealed a secret stash of declassified colonial documents that had been hidden illegally by the Foreign Office for decades past their allotted 30-year suppression period. The archive includes:

[M]onthly intelligence reports on the ‘elimination’ of the colonial authority’s enemies in 1950s Malaya; records showing ministers in London were aware of the torture and murder of Mau Mau insurgents in Kenya, including a case of a man said to have been ‘roasted alive’; and papers detailing the lengths to which the UK went to forcibly remove islanders from Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean.<sup>1</sup>

Among the horrors revealed in the million-plus files appear tales of bonfires held at the end of empire. The Orwellian-titled “Operation Legacy” spawned diplomatic missions to British colonies on the eve of independence charged with destroying evidence that, in the words of colonial secretary Iain Macleod, “might embarrass Her Majesty’s government ... embarrass members of the police, military forces, public servants or others, e.g. police informers.”<sup>2</sup> The missions were planned in excruciating detail: “the waste [burnt documents] should be reduced to ash and the ashes broken up ... [records disposed at sea] packed in weighted crates and dumped in very deep and current-free water at maximum practicable distance from the coast.”<sup>3</sup> News of the records first came to light during a trial in which Kenyan men and women alleged mistreatment during the Mau Mau revolt against British colonial rule. British historians, in particular, were enraged by the secret archive; as Cambridge professor Anthony Badger, who was appointed to oversee the declassification, has written, “It is difficult to overestimate the legacy of suspicion among historians, lawyers and journalists...”<sup>4</sup> that has resulted from news of the hidden archive’s existence. Indeed, disclosure of these records reminds us that the imperial archive remains with us, in both literal and figurative terms.

Much of contemporary discourse on the archive is influenced by Michel Foucault’s definition of “archive” as a discursive system of statements comprised of events or things<sup>5</sup> and by Jacques Derrida, who theorizes the socially constructed dimensions of the archive.<sup>6</sup> In these traditions, postcolonial scholars have suggested that colonial archives reveal intimate links between textuality and power, their records attest to the history of colonization while revealing how writing has been marshaled in service of power.<sup>7</sup> The power to colonize is inextricably linked to the power to shape the history of modernity.

The ability to read the imperial archive critically, however, has revealed countercurrents within dominant historical narratives. The colonial archive shapes narratives of who counts in such narratives. For example, Durba Ghosh proposes that colonial archives “have been very successful at keeping the voices of native women out.”<sup>8</sup> To recover such voices, Gyan Prakash suggests, historians have read both colonial and national archives “against the grain and focusing on their blind-spots, silences, and anxieties.”<sup>9</sup> Through their work, these historians “uncover the subaltern’s myths, cults, ideologies and revolts that colonial and nationalist elites sought to appropriate and conventional historiography has laid to waste by their deadly weapon of cause and effect.”<sup>10</sup> Indeed, recovery is an important trend for contemporary scholars of imperial archives. However, as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak reminds in “Can the Subaltern Speak,” the distinctions between *Darstellung* — “placing there” as a portrait — and *Vertretung* — “stepping in someone’s place” as a proxy — complicate possibilities for representation.<sup>11</sup>

Yet, in reading the colonial archive critically, we must remember that it is not simply a textual collection. For example, Thomas Richards describes the archive of the British Empire as “not a building, nor even a collection of texts, but the collectively imagined junction of all that was known or knowable, a fantastic representation of an epistemological master pattern, a virtual focal point for the heterogeneous local knowledge of metropolis and empire.”<sup>12</sup> To define the imperial archive simply by its textuality is to miss the inextricable relationship between preservation, knowledge production and the colonial apparatus.

To understand such links — or, indeed, to undo them — we must understand the colonial archive as a dynamic force in the production, distribution and construction of history. Tony Ballantyne suggests that even historians who attend to omissions of imperial archives “typically view archives as enclosed, static and discreet.”<sup>13</sup> He reads them instead as “the product of the constant circulation of information and the heavy intertextuality of many forms of knowledge.”<sup>14</sup> The archive is not “a store of transparent sources from which histories that recover a total image of the ... past might be assembled” but “a site saturated by power, a dense but uneven body of knowledge scarred by the cultural struggles and violence.”<sup>15</sup> Moreover, objects comprising an archive — whether manuscripts, court records, periodicals, parliamentary documents — do not simply provide access to colonial history but “themselves were constitutive of the multiple inequalities of that past.”<sup>16</sup> As such, the archive is imbued with not only determining power for colonial structures but also for how we view colonial pasts. In turn, this understanding of the archive has implications for how we might understand postcolonial archives.

### Whither the Postcolonial Digital Archive?

Such critiques of imperial archives prove instructive as well for cultivation of postcolonial archives in general and postcolonial digital archives in particular. Postcolonial studies scholarship has reconfigured the objects of the archive, challenging notions of what belongs. For example, Antoinette Burton suggests that the home holds archival possibilities for representing women in Indian colonial histories.<sup>17</sup> Also expanding the notion of evidence, Gyanendra Pandey has made the case for the role of fragments of events, depicted in periodicals, testimony, pamphlets and even poetry, in the archive. Pandey suggests that a more expansive definition “provides a commentary on the limits of the form of the historiographical discourse and its search for omniscience.”<sup>18</sup> That is to say, the archive is always already fragmentary.

The postcolonial archive, then, emerges from these revisions to the colonial archive. The lessons of postcolonial critique alert us to omissions and exclusions, of the tales, objects and voices that may be absent. Postcolonial archives are readily dynamic and unstable, underpinned by meta-discourse on archival practices and the exigencies of information transfer. For example, in her work on Irish nationalist women, Karen Steele describes the postcolonial archive as “capacious and wily.”<sup>19</sup> Its components “seem to materialize serendipitously and disappear unpredictably.”<sup>20</sup> The postcolonial archive is paradoxical in nature, like Jorge Luis Borges’s Library of Babel, at once limited and infinite. Through such an archive, Steele proposes, “[w]ithin its elastic walls, we can discover objects capable of altering our knowledge about the past and providing new tools to confront the present.”<sup>21</sup> The archive is also decentralized, comprised of artifacts that may be scattered amid universities, libraries, and databases. Despite the logistical difficulties posed by these archives, they are polyvocal and distributed, decentring the power of a single repository.

What of the postcolonial *digital* archive? Confronted with the plurality of platforms that constitute postcolonial digital archives, we are charged to think not of archival practice but of practices, of the forms of knowledge produced through the affordances and limitations of platform. While the political and social forces shaping archives are perhaps the most obvious ones, Derrida includes technology as one such shaping force. Accordingly, Derrida suggests, “The technical structure of the archiving archive also determines the structure of the archivable content even in its very coming into existence and in its relationship to the future. The archivization produces as much as it records the event.”<sup>22</sup> Attending to the role of platform in the construction of postcolonial digital archives, I consider two types: postcolonial digital humanities scholarship and archives produced through Twitter hashtags. In doing so, I examine how postcolonial digital archives offer the possibility of rewriting power dynamics that control archives and influence which stories are told.

The social web has muddied the boundaries between producers and consumers of content and knowledge. The advent of ready public access to the Internet in many places around the world has granted consumers access to means of archival production, giving rise to digital archives that exist beyond libraries and institutional repositories and which may be created by individuals with no training in archival practice. Such developments are not without their problems or pitfalls. Decentralized archives are often beyond the reach of institutions, exemplifying Derrida's observation that "Nothing is less clear today than the word 'archive.'"<sup>23</sup> As such, we are forced to revisit the question of what, in fact, constitutes the archive. For our purposes here, the postcolonial digital archive takes advantage of the affordances of technology to "write back" to dominant narratives, to insert new stories that reshape the power dynamics that distinguish between centres and peripheries.<sup>24</sup> In this definition, however, we must guard against a sense of techno-utopianism in digital archival practice and not view Internet access as the answer to the lingering problems of the colonial archive.<sup>25</sup>

For the postcolonial digital archive, the rise of the Internet and advent of social media offer the possibility of shifting the putative power of archiving practices from center to periphery, from Global North to Global South, from institution to individual. Such a shift begs the question of who the postcolonial archivist is. After all, a range of websites like Pinterest, Facebook, or even Twitter tout the role of user as curator for anyone with access. As a result, these sites exemplify how Web 2.0 troubles the distinction between consumer and producer of archives. Postcolonial digital archives are postmodern by definition: decentralized, fragmentary, a challenge to hegemony. Postcolonial in their epistemology, these archives actively resist residues of colonialism subtending knowledge production. Therefore, they are reminiscent of the archival values advocated in postcolonial analog archives — producing forms of knowledge that decentralize dominant narratives — but doing so through Internet technology.

What do postcolonial digital archives contain? An area that has seen the most growth is digitization for cultural heritage projects in postcolonial nation-states.<sup>26</sup> Elizabeth Povinelli, who has worked with Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians to create a postcolonial digital archive for rural Australia, suggests, "The postcolonial archivist is charged with finding lost objects, subjugated knowledges, and excluded socialities within existing archives or to repatriate exiled objects, knowledges, and socialities."<sup>27</sup> Digitization may be viewed as an act of retrieval and representation, restoring agency that colonial archives omit. Because the archive is steeped in power, Povinelli argues, "The *postcolonial archive* cannot be merely a collection of new artifacts reflecting a different, subjugated history. Instead, the postcolonial archive must directly address the problem of the endurance of the otherwise within — or distinct from — this form of power."<sup>28</sup> As such, the work of the postcolonial archive is not simply about

additive logic; rather it must interrogate the structure of archives proper. According to Povinelli, this could range from “the material conditions that allow something to be archived and archivable” to “compulsions and desires that conjure the appearance and disappearance of objects, knowledges, and socialities within an archive” or “cultures of circulation, manipulation, and management that allow an object to enter the archive and thus contribute to the endurance of specific social formations.”<sup>29</sup>

These issues appear prominently in the case of *Aluka*, a transnational African digital archive that is available through JSTOR and has been subject of much debate. The project emerges from international collaboration to build a digital library for southern Africa. Holdings focus on cultural heritage sites and freedom struggles, representing the work of local and international scholars. Stakeholders have raised a host of issues about *Aluka*, from intellectual property rights to misappropriation of national heritage. Yet advocates suggest that the histories represented in the archive, drawn from across southern African countries, shed new light on narratives that might otherwise be read exclusively in national contexts when they are, in fact, transnational. At heart of the debates, as well, is the commodity value of national heritage, given the profit that the JSTOR database generates. As project directors Allen Isaacman, Premesh Lalu, and Thomas Nygren note, “As it relates specifically to the domain of history as a discipline, the digitization process places contested archives in a cyberspace that is highly commodified.”<sup>30</sup> Indeed, digitization has a range of material repercussions beyond facsimile.

Yet, digitizing alone is more than a matter of creating a digital copy; arranging, representing, and exhibiting digital content requires attention. Contemplating these issues, Povinelli describes her unrealized vision of an augmented reality smartphone app that creates a “digital overlay containing additional information ... contain[ing] a small segment of the archive ... geotagged so that it could not run unless the phone was proximate to the site to which the information referred.”<sup>31</sup> Her ideal archive is fragmentary and incomplete, fully experienced only in particular locations, a nod to geographical specificity. Land, itself, becomes part of the archive, through which Povinelli imagine “re-storying the traditional country of families,”<sup>32</sup> with multiple interfaces to mediate between tourists, land management, and Indigenous families. In a geotagged location, a user would be able to interact with archive images or texts, hear stories, watch videos, or even add to the archive. The postcolonial digital archive renders consumer of the archive a co-creator, displacing the archivist in favor of multiple curators and interpreters. In such a project, Povinelli imagines “an endless expanse of digital space where there seems no limit to what can be stored and what can be found”<sup>33</sup> limited by only server space.

Yet, we are plagued by a vast sea of objects to digitize, as we contend with the limits of labour and server space. Among those who digitize, difficult choices are made about what is digitized and what is not. Resources for digitizing are unequally distributed. Local communities may resist digitizing. Additionally, pre-existing knowledge biases may influence what gets digitized. For example, *Bichitra Tagore Online Variorum Project* from Calcutta University in India has digitized nearly 150,000 pages of Bengali writer Rabindranath Tagore's writing while distinguished but lesser known Bengali writer Mahasweta Devi's work has not received such treatment. Therefore, we must be wary, in the creation of post-colonial digital archives, of not replicating biases that subtend knowledge production. In fact, as the work of scholars like Tara McPherson, Wendy Chun, and Lisa Nakamura suggests, technology and the development of platforms and tools is influenced by social forces, perpetuates these biases, and forms them as well.

To attend to these issues in the creation of postcolonial digital archives, Martha Nell Smith suggests we recall the ways that social relations can be frozen in the production of digital archives. She suggests:

Makers and users of postcolonial digital archives should take care to recognize that there tends to be an amnesia or blindness to the fact ... that 'Systems of classifications (and of standardization) form a juncture of social organization, moral order, and layers of technical integration. Each subsystem inherits, increasingly as it scales up, the inertia of the installed base systems that have come before.' Tools cannot be separated from the knowledge systems in which they have been imagined and made.<sup>34</sup>

Smith goes on to argue that postcolonial digital archives should "be explicit about who is producing the resource and for what purposes."<sup>35</sup> She proposes this happen through the questions that have been central to intersectional feminist analysis: "How have these items of knowledge and the organizations and working groups who made them come into being? Who has stakes in their presentation? What is visible in these new media archives and what might not be?"<sup>36</sup> These are all central questions being examined within postcolonial approaches to the digital humanities.

While scholars in new media studies, rhetoric and composition, and humanities computing have been examining humanities and technology for years, "digital humanities" has come into vogue. In 2009, William Pannacker declared digital humanities "the next big thing."<sup>37</sup> We are in "the digital humanities moment,"<sup>38</sup> as Matthew Gold has put it; newsmakers are noticing the field, universities are hiring for tenure-track and non-tenure track positions in digital humanities, centres are popping up around the world, and grantors are funding innovative projects. While the definition of digital humanities is subject of debate, broadly speaking the field brings computational and other digital tech-

nologies to bear on humanities scholarship and uses humanistic tools to understand technology. Postcolonial digital humanities embraces the project that Smith describes as making “effort to make clear what has been occluded by remediation, by principles and practices of selection, and to unfreeze old binaries of authority and involve users in knowledge production.”<sup>39</sup> One such project, *Around Digital Humanities in 80 Days* (*AroundDH*), exemplifies the complexities of producing postcolonial digital archives.

### Around DH in 80 Days

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Directed by Alex Gil, *AroundDH* annually produces 80 days of entries on digital humanities projects around the world written by Gil and editors, including myself. *AroundDH* reshapes the cartography of digital archives by writing back to existing narratives of how we define digital humanities, producing a decentralized map of ongoing work.

While a few of the projects that make up the *AroundDH* map are not from postcolonial nation-states, *AroundDH* exemplifies the promise and possibilities of the postcolonial digital archive by creating a meta-archive that makes visible the complications of digital archival praxis. For example, the *African Online Digital Library*, which is comprised of cultural heritage, oral history, film and video – is accessible through dots in West Africa and the US because it is facilitated by a digital humanities center in Michigan. As digital humanities tend towards collaborative design, individual projects engender power dynamics between collaborators. With crowd-sourced submissions, *AroundDH* embraces the notion of Internet user and producer. As an archive of archives designed with the intention of challenging dominant narratives of what the digital humanities is, *AroundDH* revels in its fragmentary and decentralized composition. Moreover, the site is designed with attention to minimal computing standards so it loads quickly for users in low bandwidth environments. Though the site is



housed on a server in the US, its form and content are designed in part by and largely for users within the global South, important considerations for postcolonial digital archives.

Such a conception of the postcolonial digital archive perhaps mitigates paradoxes of the postcolonial archive itself. In his examination of creating a postcolonial archive in northwestern Alaska, Matthew Kurtz explores contradictions between institutional practice and postcolonial theory, identifying a tension between the decentring of power advocated by postcolonial theory and the geographical centering implied by the construction of a historical archive. The archive itself, he suggests, reifies the historical subject.<sup>40</sup> In the task of building an archive to counter colonial histories, the practice “re-inscribes various powers of colonialism.”<sup>41</sup> By designing the postcolonial digital archive as open, flexible, decentralized, optimized for access worldwide, we actively resist such reinscriptions.

### **Postcolonial Twitter Archives and the Cyber Left**

Conceiving of Twitter hashtags as archives provides an epistemology for rethinking Kurtz’s concerns about the postcolonial archive. Over the past few years, Twitter has caught the attention of the Left as a locus for activism. The first large-scale social movement to play out in the public space of Twitter was Arab Spring, the waves of demonstrations that spread throughout the Arab World between late 2010 and mid-2012. Twitter became a locus of communication for individuals who wished to organize outside of state outlets. The Occupy Movement, notably Occupy Wall Street but later global movements, first gained attention in September 2011. Activists took advantage of the Twitter platform to facilitate a decentralized movement of activists. The hashtag #IdleNoMore has provided a site of digital rallying around First Nations rights in Canada. Founded in 2012 by three Canadian First Nations women and one non-Native ally Canadian, Idle No More uses the hashtag to coordinate political actions, which have included round dances in public space and blocking the railroad. Later, in 2013, Asian American activists led by organiser Suey Park, began the Not Your Asian Sidekick movement on Twitter, engaging a global audience. These movements enabled activism on Twitter through the hashtags like #Jan25 for the 2011 Egyptian Revolution, #ows for Occupy Wall Street, and #NotYourAsianSidekick.

Not everyone recognizes the role of Twitter in activism. The Occupy Movement gave rise to the notion of “hashtag activism,” a pejorative term used in the United States mainstream media to describe activism that is carried out and spread via social media. Eric Augenbraun, a political journalist, coined the term to describe the Occupy movement. He questions whether hashtag activism should be called “activism” at all.<sup>42</sup> The term “hashtag activism” is often used to



suggest that those engaging social media for political ends are not activists but *slacktivists*.<sup>43</sup> The portmanteau of “slacker” and “activism” presupposes that a social media user is doing little more than signing a petition or retweeting a tweet; while doing little, the “slactivist” is rewarded with immense feelings of self-satisfaction. While the nature of “true” activism is beyond the scope of this essay, hashtag activism offers us a unique archive of contemporary movements that intersect with the values of the Left.

On Twitter, the hashtag (a # and a key term) functions as an archiving tool. Clicking on a hashtag on Twitter returns recent tweets that have used the same hashtag. The idea has gained such currency that Facebook has implemented hashtag functionality to enact the same archiving function across user posts. As tweets or Facebook posts flow across feeds and timelines, the data represented there appears horizontal and flat. Tweets or status updates appears one after another, each appearing in a column with apparently identical valances. A savvy user will understand the complications and intricacies to this apparent flatness. On Facebook, algorithms produce the visual display of what a given user sees, based on calculations and automated reasoning that account for usage, likes, and user interaction. Recently, Twitter announced that it intends to introduce algorithms in 2015. In the meantime, subtle visual cues direct user attention: posts with more “favorites” or “retweets” appear larger than others on a user’s timeline, calling attention to relatively popular content and influencing replication; after all, user engagement is Twitter’s product and profit.

Counter to the apparently flat timelines that users see, the hashtag provides vertical engagement, an opportunity to plumb the depths of the archive — an archive that one would not even know was there without the hashtag to traverse it. Purportedly, the hashtag enables access to the archive, to the narratives that run counter to the flattened timeline. The narratives, however, are incomplete and contestatory. While a hashtag on Twitter can be used to archive tweets on a similar category, the Twitter application programming interface itself is not guaranteed to accurately retrieve all the hashtags. As a result, a host of external sites (e.g. Topsy) have appeared to facilitate the archiving and retrieval of tweets. In such contested narratives, however, we are reminded of what we cannot know, of the glitches in the technologies that produce gaps, failures, and fragments. Hashtags are not without their ethical complications, namely the commercial nature of Twitter. However, all digital archives, postcolonial or otherwise, contend with such issues.

As activists continue to embrace social media for organising, the very definition of the Left will be shaped by, or perhaps even become synonymous with, the hashtags that gain prominence. The Occupy Movement, for example, became one of the most visible manifestations of Leftist activism by virtue of its social media presence. With hashtags like #NotYourAsianSidekick and its predecessor #SolidarityIsForWhiteWomen, started by organiser Mikki Kendall,

intersectional feminism has become part of public discourse and challenged the perceived colour-blindness of both mainstream feminism and the Left. We may be in the midst of a re-authoring of the Left, affected through the solidarities forming through Twitter. These hashtags offer the Left possibilities for challenging limitations of geography and for a public archive of organizing and action. As these affinities take on global dimensions — like they did with #NotYourAsianSidekick — we can look to these hashtags as another component of postcolonial digital archival practice. Yet, we also must remain conscious of the unarchivable: voices of those without access to platforms; those whose immigration status forecloses the possibility of a digital presence; and those who resist digital engagement for politics, ethics, or to protect themselves.

The bits and bytes that constitute the fragments of postcolonial digital archives are vast indeed. Like imperial archives, they contain a multitude of objects and practices that are shaped by complex politics and power relations. In contrast, they contain multitudes of voices that converge in fluid and flexible ways, offering the possibility of writing back to dominant narratives. The archive is necessarily incomplete, its fragments resisting wholeness or truth. Within the postcolonial digital archive — whether digital cultural heritage, a meta-archive, or an intersectional feminist hashtag — we are offered the opportunity to embrace the affordances of digital media and learn from the limitations of the colonial archive.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Ian Cobain, Owen Boycott, and Richard Norton-Taylor, “Britain Destroyed Records of Colonial Crimes,” *The Guardian*, April 17, 2012, accessed September 22, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2012/apr/18/britain-destroyed-records-colonial-crimes>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Anthony Badger, “Historians, a Legacy of Suspicion and the ‘Migrated Archives,’” *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 23, no. 4-5 (2012): 799.

<sup>5</sup> Michel Foucault and Alan Sheridan, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon, 1972), 128.

<sup>6</sup> Jacques Derrida and Eric Prenowitz, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 3.

<sup>7</sup> Subaltern studies historians including Ranajit Guha, Gyanendra Pandey, Dipesh Chakrabarty, and Partha Chatterjee have been particularly influential, as have Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Ann Laura Stoler.

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- <sup>8</sup> Durba Ghosh, *Sex and the Family in Colonial India: The Making of Empire*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 17.
- <sup>9</sup> Gyan Prakash, "Postcolonial Criticism and Indian Historiography," *Social Text* 31/32 (1992): 9.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>11</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues* (London: Routledge, 2014), 108; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*, eds. Bill Ashcroft et al. (London: Psychology, 1995), 25.
- <sup>12</sup> Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire* (London: Verso, 1993), 11.
- <sup>13</sup> Tony Ballantyne, *Webs of Empire: Locating New Zealand's Colonial Past* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2014), 191.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid., 102.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>17</sup> Antoinette Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive: Women Writing House, Home and History in Late Colonial India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 5.
- <sup>18</sup> Gyanendra Pandey, "In Defence of the Fragment: Writing about Hindu-Muslim Riots in India Today," *Economic and Political Weekly* (Mar. 1991): 569.
- <sup>19</sup> Karen Steele, "Gender and the Postcolonial Archive," *CR: The New Centennial Review* 10 no. 1 (2010): 54.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid., 54-55.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid., 55.
- <sup>22</sup> Derrida and Prenowitz, 17-18.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid., 90.
- <sup>24</sup> Postcolonial scholars Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin suggest that postcolonial writers "write back" to empire. In doing so, writers demand inclusion within dominant narratives and reshape power dynamics within knowledge production that are legacies of colonialism. See Bill Ashcroft et al., *The Empire Writes Back* (London: Routledge, 1989), 6.
- <sup>25</sup> Harold Segal, a leading theorist of "technological utopianism" describes techno-utopianism as a belief in "technology — conceived as more than tools and machines alone — as the means of achieving a 'perfect' society in the near future." See: Howard P. Segal, "The Technological Utopians," in ed. Joseph Corn, *Imagining Tomorrow: History, Technology and the American Future* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986), 119. The term has come to be used more loosely, however, as an uncritical celebration of the affordances of technology.

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- <sup>26</sup> A few examples are *Indiacine.ma*, a database of 30,000 Indian films; the Global Egyptian Museum, a virtual collection of 15,000 images of Egyptian objects in public collections around the world; and Allama Iqbal Urdu Cyber Library, the first digital library of Urdu Literature hosted by Iqbal Academy Pakistan.
- <sup>27</sup> Elizabeth A. Povinelli, "The Woman on the Other Side of the Wall: Archiving the Otherwise in Postcolonial Digital Archives," *differences* 22, no. 1 (2011): 152.
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 154-155.
- <sup>30</sup> Allen Isaacman, Premesh Lalu, and Thomas Nygren, "Digitization, History, and the Making of Postcolonial Archive of Southern African Liberation Struggles: The Aluka Project," *Africa Today* 52, no. 2 (2005): 70.
- <sup>31</sup> Povinelli, 147.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.
- <sup>34</sup> Martha Nell Smith, "Frozen Social Relations and Time for a Thaw: Visibilities, Exclusions, and Considerations for Postcolonial Digital Archives," *Journal of Victorian Culture* 19, no. 3 (2014): 408.
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 409.
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>37</sup> William Pannacker, "The MLA and the Digital Humanities," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, December 28, 2009, accessed September 29, 2014. <http://chronicle.com/blogPost/The-MLAthe-Digital/19468/>.
- <sup>38</sup> Matthew K. Gold, "Introduction: The Digital Humanities Moment," *Debates in the Digital Humanities*, ed. Matthew K. Gold (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), ix.
- <sup>39</sup> Smith, 409.
- <sup>40</sup> Matthew Kurtz, "A Postcolonial Archive? On the Paradox of Practice in a Northwest Alaska Project," *Archivaria: The Journal of the Association of Canadian Archivists* 61 (2007): 81.
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.
- <sup>42</sup> Eric Augenbraun, "Occupy Wall Street and the Limits of Spontaneous Street Protest," *The Guardian*, September 29, 2011, accessed September 22, 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/cifamerica/2011/sep/29/occupy-wall-street-protest>.
- <sup>43</sup> Henrik Christensen, "Political Activities on the Internet: Slacktivism or Political Participation by Other Means?" *First Monday* 16, no. 2 (2011).