THE WILDERNESS GARDEN: DECOLONIZING MUSEUM/ARCHIVE CONVERGENCE

by

JUNIPER GUTHRIE

B.A., Georgia College & State University, 2021

A thesis submitted to the

Faculty of the Graduate School of the

University of Colorado in partial fulfillment

of the requirement for the degree of

Master of Science

Department of Museum and Field Studies

2025

Committee Members:

Dr. William Taylor

Dulce Aldama

Kerrie Iyoob

Adrian Johnson

Guthrie, Juniper (M.S., Museum and Field Studies)
The Wilderness Garden: Decolonizing Museum/Archive Convergence
Thesis directed by Dr. William Taylor

The disciplines of museum collections and archives, after decades of separation, have finally begun to converge again. Despite the rise in prominence of museum archive literature beginning in the 1990s, practical guides for museum archive work and structuring of collections are still few and far between. Colonialist values of knowledge stratification and prioritization of a Western worldview have contributed greatly to the divide between fields, and decolonial work in both fields must include an assessment of the superstructures they fall under.

In this thesis, I explore the current intersection of museum cataloging and archival description by interrogating their colonial histories and the rationale behind their current standards, and by outlining the work that needs to be done to create a decolonial approach to museum archives. Through this work, I hope to contribute to the ongoing relationship between archivists and museum professionals in a way that allows both fields to appropriately preserve their forms of cultural heritage, and present a potential avenue for a new kind of museum archival practice that is capable of handling multiple contexts simultaneously.

Introduction 1
Historical Background 6
Museum Decolonial History 6
Archives Decolonial History 12
Wildness 16
Museum/Archive Convergence 19
How They Worked Together in the Past 19
Splitting the Fields 21
The Coloniality of Division 25
Theories of Reconvergence 29
Decolonization 33
Museum Decolonization 33
Archives Decolonization 36
State of the Fields 44
Museum Collections 44
Archives 45
Standard Metadata Fields for Museums and Archives 46
Shared Values 48
Problems and Solutions 50
The Numbering Problem 50
Linked Data, EAD, RDF, and XML 52
The Ideal Solution 55
Case Studies 55
UCAI Phase 2 56
Review of the Archival Systems of the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea 58
The ANZAC Connections Experience 59
Bridging the Gap: Integrating Archival Descriptive Best Practices in an Item-Level Dominated Museum Culture 60
Mukurtu 64
Case Study Results 65

UCAI 66
MMCA 66
ANZAC 67
Bridging the Gap 67
Mukurtu 67
Convergence and Decolonization 70
Conclusion 73
Bibliography 77

Tables

1. Positive and negative opinions on convergence……... 33
2. Museum and archive metadata field comparison……. 47
3. Aspects of current museum and archival practice…… 49
4. Aspects of my ideal solution…… 65

Figures

1. Metate with collector's name written on surface…….. 11
2. Elements of a sample unique identifier……. 52
3. Example museum/archive arrangement list…….. 63

Introduction

When choosing which graduate school to go to, my choice ultimately came down to what I wanted my professional focus to be: museum collections or archives. While I technically chose collections, I was lucky enough to later also work in the archives of the museum whose collections I worked with: the University of Colorado Museum of Natural History (CUMNH). From the start of my work at CUMNH, I noticed a persistent disconnect between the archival and collections fields, although to me, they were nearly the same. In both, I meticulously recorded data, updated management systems, carefully handled knowledge, and structured how to find information. In both, I got frustrated with the decisions of previous curators and collectors, bemoaned the lack of available space to store objects and records, and struggled to read old handwriting. But the museum and archival workers around me didn't see the similarities between the fields. Collections staff often struggled to understand archival arrangement; their archival counterparts tended to have little knowledge about collections best practices.

I didn't understand why these two worlds that complemented each other so well, that were housed in the same building and even had collections that came from the same archaeological expeditions, had such a failure to communicate with each other. What was I missing? Of course, the fields had different professional standards, but the core values–preservation, public access to information, organization–were the same. The histories of libraries, archives, and museums (LAMs) are intertwined, with library practices informing the development of museological standards, and museum collectors producing material for archival collections (MRM6 2020, 3). As each field grew more specialized in the early twentieth century, however, they communicated and shared less–especially so for archives and museums. While

libraries play a major role in the convergence conversation, I have far less experience with them than the other two fields, and thus will only discuss them as they relate to museums and archives.

As I started to research, the answer became even less clear. I found plenty of articles on possibilities for museum and archive *convergence*–the merging of the library, archive, and museum fields–but they tended to focus heavily on theory. I frustrated myself reading article after article looking for a practical solution, someone saying "Here, we merged our collections and archives and this is what happened!" Even when I found practical examples of convergence, they were so specific to their institutions and databases that a solution for my institution's museum/archive disconnect continued to elude me.

But as I kept reading–not, notably, museum or archive literature, but decolonial texts and Indigenous theory–I began to understand. I hadn't zoomed out far enough. I needed to see the superstructures, understand why in both fields, localities and donor names were required information. Why everything had to neatly fit into categories that never seemed adequate. Why collections and archive workers put so much time and energy into the impossible: stopping the progression of time, of age. Why such an artificial boundary had been drawn between "object" and "document," and why the literature seemed so fervent to defend it.

The answer lay in *coloniality*–more precisely, decolonial approaches to academia and museums (Smith 2012). Coloniality is a concept stemming from decolonial literature that acknowledges the continued repercussions of European colonization and imperial domination, particularly as it relates to systems of knowledge. Decolonial writer Walter Mignolo differentiates coloniality from *colonialism,* which is the historical Western expansion and colonization beginning in the Americas and expanding across the globe (E-International Relations 2017). *Colonial* indicates a concept or institution that is or was part of the European

structure of colonialism, whereas *colonialist* refers to something that expresses coloniality. Conversely, *decoloniality* signifies a rejection of the colonialist mode of thought in pursuit of restoring frameworks of knowledge that coloniality hopes to eradicate (E-International Relations 2017).

I finally saw the colonial reasons for the fields' separation, and why the fields continued to drift further apart as they progressed. I recognized the crucial colonial underpinnings that held up and separated archives and museums. If museums and archives do not shove the world into smaller and smaller boxes and assign each item a single meaning to embody, their workers–as well as the colonialist structure–lose the fragile control they have over the world. If the system decolonizes and thus allows for multiplicity, the boundaries begin to crumble, and it is not so clear what is museum or archive, natural or human, valuable or worthless, us or them. Decolonization means that there is no automatic system in which to place everything that is unfamiliar and put it into a precise order, so that nothing is outside of the colonialist ability to know and therefore control. If the system affirms that there is no absolute truth and knowledge, that Western science cannot understand everything about the world, then the colonialist system may be forced to accept that there is little information to hold onto, that nearly everything is out of humans' control, and that white European values are actually just a single option among many.

If the archival and museum fields truly want to move away from coloniality, as many institutions purport, they cannot continue in isolation. Isolation only allows for the barriers between them to become stronger. Decolonization work in one field can greatly benefit the other–for example, the gradual attitude change in collections work that occurred after the implementation of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA)

could provide an essential framework for archives to work more closely with Indigenous communities (Reijerkerk & Nyitray 2023, 25). Many workers in both fields do this work because they want to share knowledge with the world–but how can they achieve that goal when the fields fail so consistently at sharing knowledge with each other?

The need for decolonization and the need to question the way things are done in the museum and archival fields come from the same place. Not only must those doing the work of decolonization acknowledge their personal places within the system of coloniality, they must also examine the sacrosanct fundamentals of their practices. The systems forming the base of both fields' work–the catalog that serves as the "internal mechanism of the museum" (Turner 2020, 189)–must be examined. The work must make the obfuscated clear.

The disciplines of museum collections and archives, after decades of separation, have finally begun to converge again. Despite the rise in prominence of museum archive literature beginning in the 1990s, practical guides for museum archive work and structuring of collections are still few and far between. Colonialist values of knowledge stratification and prioritization of a Western worldview have contributed greatly to the divide between fields, and decolonial work in both fields must include an assessment of the superstructures they fall under.

In this thesis, I explore the current intersection of museum cataloging and archival description by interrogating their colonial histories and the rationale behind their current standards, and by outlining the work that needs to be done to create a decolonial approach to museum archives. Through this work, I hope to contribute to the ongoing relationship between archivists and museum professionals in a way that allows both fields to appropriately preserve their forms of cultural heritage, and present a potential avenue for a new kind of museum archival practice that is capable of handling multiple contexts simultaneously.

I am a white American graduate student, researching, writing, and working at the University of Colorado, Boulder. I am queer, which I feel allows me to more easily see outside of rigid categories and false binaries, but does not excuse me from causing colonialist harm. Writing about Indigenous issues and decolonization on unceded Indigenous land as a colonizer is, by nature, paradoxical. Through my work, I hope to uplift the voices of those who are more directly impacted by the violent legacy and current reality of colonization.

First, I outline a brief history of the museum collections and archival fields as they relate to coloniality and convergence. I explore the concept of wildness as it relates to decolonizing museums and archives. I define convergence, examining museum/archive history, how professionalization affected the division between the two, and the colonialist nature of the division of the fields. I identify current decolonization measures in museums and archives, and the issues therein. Then, I summarize practical issues relating to convergence, and present five case studies to explore solutions. I then argue that bringing the fields back together is decolonial. I conclude with my recommendations for the fields moving forward.

While I began writing this paper using the academic structure of introduction, background, methods, results, discussion, and conclusion, I found myself struggling to fit all my information into prescribed categories. The more I tried to make my work fit into this rigid structure, the more ridiculous it seemed. My work revolves around breaking down categories and resisting colonialist categorization–why was I trying to fit my thesis into those same frameworks? I cannot confine my decolonial practice to the words I say, but mirror it in the way I present information. Learning from decolonial and Indigenous theory, I release the expectations of what an academic paper should look like, and allow the information I present to find its natural course.

Historical Background

Museum Decolonial History

Colonial modes of thought operate around categorizing, defining, and creating distinctions and divisions. As departments, fields, and disciplines split into smaller and more specialized groups, they shirk responsibility for the actions and biases of their contemporaries and become insular. The current Western knowledge system (incorporating schools, universities, and "imperial views of culture", which in my view includes museums and archives) is drawn from "classical" (Greek and Roman philosophy) and Enlightenment modes of thought (Smith 1999, 74).

Nearly all of museum history is influenced by colonialism. Much museum literature explores the manifold ways that colonialism appears in every facet of museology (Lonetree 2012, Turner 2020, Doyle 2006, Soares 2023, Decker 2015, Kassim 2017). Here, I will focus on the colonial history of collections management and its related documentation, although I recognize that colonial influence appears in many, many other iterations.

The history of American museums is inextricable from the development of American anthropology. Here and throughout this thesis, "America" refers to the colonialist nation of the United States of America. While many museologists readily accept the deeply violent and colonial legacy of anthropology, they tend to be more resistant to acknowledging the imprint of that same legacy in modern museums (Zeitlyn 2012, 465; Butler 2009, 59; Lonetree 2012). Turner (2020) traces the intertwined histories of the two fields and argues that nineteenth century anthropological practices continue to show up in modern museum work, the work of gathering human history as data and categorizing said data (Turner 2020, 6). The imposition of a

hegemonic European worldview over Indigenous cultures constitutes a form of epistemic violence. The colonial worldview itself is built on upholding a hierarchy of societies and the values of elite white society, particularly regarding the genocide of Indigenous populations (Turner 2020, 12). The Organic Act of Congress in 1879 funded anthropological and ethnological research to study Indigenous language and culture, with the Smithsonian as the collecting body. The Organic Act had the explicit goal of using the research it generated to inform the government's treatment of Indigenous nations, particularly in the American West (Lea & Emmelhainz 2024, 88). The end goal of the American anthropological project was to extract as much data from Indigenous communities as possible to add to the grand theory of European supremacy before erasing Indigenous nations from their homelands (Hinsley 1981, 20).

Every iteration of museum collection documentation has stemmed from the collecting lists and field notes of late nineteenth-century anthropologists, many of whom worked in the service of the Smithsonian. These collecting lists of desired objects and related information, called "circulars," established both the collecting interests of museums, and as the basic structure of documentary evidence for museum objects that continues to this day (Turner 2020, 34). From catalog cards, to microfiche coding sheets, and finally to computerized databases, the same fields and standards persist (Jones 2022, 57).

Museum emphasis on documentation arose from multiple sources: the European prioritization of the written word, colonial understandings of ownership, anthropologists' and ethnologists' need to prove themselves as "real" scientists, and the colonial extraction of knowledge (Turner 2020, 41).

The primacy of the written word in the colonial system was well established by the late nineteenth century. Anthropologists assumed that Indigenous nations had no history due to their lack of written records that colonial actors could understand (Hinsley 1981, 151). This assumption gave anthropologists the goal of reconstructing a history of Native peoples through their objects–a history they did not know, and objects they did not understand (Turner 2020, 51). Museums only collected documentation in established and approved written forms, excluding all other kinds of memory–such as other writing systems, oral records, etc (MRM6 2020, 3).

Documentation also reinforced European ideas of ownership. Many "specimens" acquired in the field were stolen or obtained under duress, which anthropologists considered a valid method of collecting (Hinsley 1981, 23). Paperwork was then required to bring the object into the museum, establishing the collector as an authority on the object and the museum as the owner, regardless of the people or nation(s) from which the object may have originated (Hinsley 1981, 71). Western forms of documentation would supersede any Indigenous claim to the object–a practice which continues today under regulations for NAGPRA compliance. Documentation also increased the ideological and monetary value of collections–Western recognition via documentation ascribed Western value via economic value (Turner 2020, 60). In the early 20th century, along with the emergence of the registrar job title in collections work, standards regarding museum object documentation and provenance became more stringent (MRM6 2020, 3). While this increased concern for accuracy in documentation reduced the free-for-all nature of early anthropological collecting practices, it also relied on colonial standards of authentication. The information tracked and knowledge produced may have been more accurate, but only accurate according to Western standards. Documents like deeds of gift and receipts of purchase helped to establish provenance of objects–but these documents came almost

exclusively from white sources. Greater emphasis on proper (Western) documentation further prohibited other kinds of documentation, like any input from Indigenous communities, from affecting collections records.

Similarly, Western science–that is, the practice of science stemming from European scientific models–rejected Indigenous input. Western science relies on the extraction of knowledge to generate an understanding of the world. This model is not inherently negative, but greatly informs the scientific worldview and creates a decisive relationship between the scientist and the world. In this relationship, the world is there to be understood by the scientist (Smith 1999, 49). Western scientists believe that through scientific analysis, everything can and should be known, that there is no knowledge that is off-limits in the pursuit of science. In the Western scientific view, context is important to collect as data, but not important enough to maintain as inherent to the object by letting the object remain in its environment.

Current accepted language in the museum collections care field leans more towards objects or belongings to refer to anthropological items, but the scientific language used in the past informed the Western science worldview used by early anthropologists, and I use it here to underscore that particular view. As a science, anthropology necessitated “specimens”, which were found in the field and required “data”, which included locality, nature of the specimen, date collected, measurement, method of acquisition, collector, number of specimens, and remarks (Turner 2020, 74). The collected data ostensibly created a context for the specimen.

The context, however, was filtered heavily through the bias of the collector. This was by design: nineteenth-century Smithsonian collecting guides recommended that anthropologists in the field disregard any input from Indigenous populations regarding their own culture, and only by careful scientific evaluation and categorization could the white scientist come to understand

his specimens (Turner 2020, 58). Since the late nineteenth century, creating a so-called true or correct sequence of objects that reflected the development of humanity's progress has been a foundation of collections work (Jones 2022, 119). This sequence placed Indigenous nations at the undeveloped end, and European and white American societies as the natural progression towards progress. There is no singular timeline of humanity's progress from uncivilized to civilized, and classifications like this rely on European colonialist ideas of what constitutes a civilized society.

Another long-lasting integral value of collections work is the need to preserve objects (MRM6 2020, 30). In the case of preserving objects from dominant cultures within the colonialist system, preservation can be positive, as it enables the longevity of culturally important objects. The same impulse reveals much about the colonialist worldview and the values contained therein. The conflicting colonialist values of eternal youthfulness and valuation of age meet in conservation work. Museum objects then become both valuably young in appearance, and valuably old in temporal age (Clavir 2002, 35). The appearance of the object becomes paramount, rather than its function or cultural meaning.

Through preservation, an object is continuously removed from its context–including its temporal one. The need for preservation speaks to a Western cultural anxiety around death, which refuses to let objects continue in the natural cycle of degradation. Preservation artificially extends the lifespan of objects, attempting to assert human control over time and the natural forces that act on everything. Once again, collections management reveals itself as a form of control. When these values and processes of preservation are imposed on artifacts and belongings outside of the colonialist sphere, such as those from American Indigenous cultures,

preservation turns from a positive or neutral aspect into an actively harmful one for cultures who do not share the same values around preserving objects (Clavir 2002, 31).

Physical numbering of museum objects is another form of colonialist museum documentation that has the potential to harm the very objects museums purport to protect. Historical numbering practices had little concern for how the act of numbering would affect the objects. Collectors and curators used any available material to mark the objects–I have personally seen paint, permanent ink, and plaster used to write numbers on objects. Historical numbering practices can interfere with the visual perception of objects, which complicates the analysis, identification, and subsequent cultural valuation of a belonging (MRM6 2020, 541). In addition to museum or field numbers written on objects, collectors would often write their names directly on the object, physically asserting their dominance and ownership over the object and transforming it, often permanently, into a piece of the colonial project, becoming yet another physical manifestation of the aggressive dominance of coloniality (see Fig. 1) (MRM6 2020 quoting Ellen Carrlee, 541). Current best practices emphasize minimal interference with the object and reversibility of any numbering procedure, which greatly reduces the harm done to objects, and provides an avenue to remove this vestige of dominance. However, the practice of numbering remains, attempting to create an enduring connection between the object and its donor, and yet again establishing the collector as the authority on the object (Turner 2020, 50).

Fig. 1: A metate from the CUMNH Anthropology section collection. The collector, Earl H. Morris, permanently wrote his name and the date of collection directly on the metate.

While the museum collections management field has changed and grown over the centuries, its colonialist threads persist. Decolonizing efforts must address these colonial histories and the ways they continue to impact every aspect of current collections work. Acknowledging that the data gathered in collections care stems directly from genocidal anthropologists is uncomfortable–and we must sit in that discomfort, because it is where we find the capacity to change practices for the better. In trying to care for the belongings in museum collections, we may have harmed their source communities. It may be distressing for collections workers to understand this harm, but it is only through this understanding that we can begin to address the damage of the past and present, and do better in the future.

In a similar fashion, archival practices have long histories that require a decolonial examination.

Archives Decolonial History

American archival practices stem mainly from European archival history, with some influence from early American historians and manuscript traditions (Meissner 2019, 7). European archives were ultimately another expression of governmental and colonial power which, along with the link between archives and the state, grew exponentially during periods of European global domination (notably the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries) (Yale 2015, 336). Many archival histories pinpoint the post-revolution period in nineteenth-century France as the critical moment in European consciousness where the expectations of public access to records and those records' arrangement and description crystallized (Meissner 2019, 6). It was around this period that the fundamental principles of *respect des fonds* (respect for the original

institution) and *original order* came into popular archival consciousness. These two concepts espouse the same idea from different angles: the method of organization employed by the creator of the archival materials should be regarded as an inherent part of the collection, and preserved as much as possible (Meissner 2019, 7). *Respect des fonds* originated from governmental archives, and made the administrative organization of the government the organizing principle of the archival practice (Meissner 2019, 7). In a non-governmental setting, such as anthropological research, this practice translated to records grouped by collector, leading any knowledge they collected (especially Indigenous knowledge) to be attributed to the usually white man who collected them, rather than to the Indigenous originators and owners of that information (Miron 2024, 48). Furthermore, white researchers appropriating Indigenous knowledge and presenting it as the result of their own research froze Indigenous nations in the past. By attributing Indigenous knowledge to white researchers, archives communicated the view that Indigenous nations were incapable of producing their own knowledge in the current day, and that they required white researchers to bring their knowledge into the modern era.

The early American manuscript tradition (the American alternative to *respect des fonds* in the nineteenth century) prioritized facilitating historical research over the bureaucratic values of European archiving (Meissner 2019, 7). The manuscript tradition came from library classification methods, distinct from European archival practices with its focus on individual items rather than department structure (Meissner 2019, 7). American archives made the switch to the European bureaucratic method in the early twentieth century, when the sudden proliferation of recordmaking technologies produced more records than the archives of the day were prepared to handle (Meissner 2019, 8).

While the manuscript tradition relied less on the colonial bureaucratic approach, it was colonial in its own way. Local historical societies often wrote their towns' histories in a way that framed Indigenous histories as disappearing (the "vanishing Indian" trope), thus crafting a sanitized prehistory of white settlement that neatly sidestepped the violent genocide of the land's previous occupants (Deloria 2018, 110).

Archivists have held distinct beliefs about their profession that both stem from and contribute to colonialist values. Prominent archival theorist Dennis Meissner posits that archivists of the past and present harbor an individualistic streak stemming from "beliefs that *our* mission, *our* collections, and *our* users are unique and, therefore, *our* approaches, methods, and finding aids must also be unique" (emphasis original, Meissner 2019, 9). Viewing archivists as entirely unique reinforces a colonialist sense of exceptionalism that separates archives from other similar institutions, enforcing arbitrary boundaries between types of knowledge collection and reducing the ability to create a more diverse community around archives.

Some archivists tend to view their work as more colonially neutral than that of other heritage institutions, given that they tend not to actively collect ancestors and other culturally sensitive materials (O'Neal 2015; Christen and Anderson 2019). But archives are not exempt from coloniality, and archives have an implicit violence in their creation–the nature of an archive is to collect and preserve certain stories, inherently suppressing other views, formats of recording, and possibilities for historical narratives (Yale 2015, 332-334). Archivists are the mediators between records and the public, and this can be a very powerful position (Zeitlyn 2012, 466). Moreover, Western culture tends to view archives as *the* place where knowledge, particularly historical knowledge, is kept, and anything not kept within the archives has not made it into the historical canon, leaving archivists in a particularly powerful position.

The ability to see oneself as neutral and bias-free, especially in a position like archivist, is deeply connected to white supremacy, where white people (particularly white men) see themselves as the "default" to which characteristics like race, class, and gender are added. There is no default, and to pretend anything different is a method of colonialist violence. Information is power, and those who can control that information wield that power, whether or not they are comfortable admitting it (Yale 2015, 344).

Many archives have also explicitly contributed to other forms of colonialist violence. For example, the very structure of post-colonial Namibian archives' arrangement reinforces pre-independence apartheid and influences the public's ability to locate essential family records by separating records by race (Namhila 2016, 114). Similarly, Palestine's colonial archives played a role in creating a Western idea of the "Orient," contrasting with the personal archives built by Palestinians in their homes as a means of resistance and remembrance of a culture actively undergoing genocide and erasure (Butler 2009, 59). In Australia, the system housing many archival records forces them to maintain their colonialist role by prioritizing colonialist values over the needs of modern Indigenous nations (Indigenous Archives Collective 2021, 247). Australia's legal and archival frameworks continue to present obstacles to Indigenous nations' ability to access records that could provide essential aid for Indigenous issues–such as finding evidence to support land claims, locating historical examples of human rights abuses, and tracing familial histories. The information held hostage in Australian archives is directly related to the determination of Indigenous rights and culture (McKemmish et al. 2010, 42).

While colonialist archives have caused significant harm to marginalized communities, including particular Indigenous nations, archiving and the archival impulse are not necessarily to blame. Many societies have forms of archiving, of recording and preserving collective memory

for the benefit of the group. Archival practices look different in every iteration and society, and many non-Western documentary or memory practices are rooted in place, community, and context, in ways that many colonialist archives are not. The Stockbridge-Munsee Mohican Band of Indians have preserved and transmitted their history across the centuries in an oral history tradition, which has since transformed into a more Western physical method of recordkeeping (Miron 2024, 8-9). The nation considers their library, archive, and museum as one element, one arm of knowledge keeping. Similarly, the Koorie nation in Australia also values oral storytelling as a way to transmit knowledge. Stories are told not for the sake of preserving information, but to provide information to a specific person for a particular purpose (Ross et al. 2006, 10). The multiplicity of knowledge keeping reveals a way of archiving that does not enact colonialist harm, as well as the fact that there is a deeper, more structural issue with the way that colonialist archives operate.

Wildness

The idea of *wildness*–that humans and nature are separate, and that there exists pristine nature unspoiled by human activity–in the colonial project of the United States has always been a violent one, and it is one that deeply informs museological and archival practices. Western science (that hegemonic system that anthropology, as a newer field, longs to prove itself to) operates around taming wildness and wild things through research, documentation, analysis, and categorization. Wildness is an immature, insecure concept, one European colonists invented to make sense of a continent entirely unfamiliar to them (Whyte 2024, 73).

Wildness enforces another false dichotomy of colonial thinking: humans (civilized) and nature (wild). By calling environments wild, colonists erased the relationship between humanity

and nature, making separate worlds out of what is actually one interconnected web. This separation between humans and the world around them allows for a shirking of responsibility to live in relationship with nature and a denial of the human position in the greater world, making exploitation of land and animals easier to justify and allowing humans to theorize new, hierarchical relationships between themselves and all they saw as wild.

The concept of wildness created a hierarchy that allowed colonial actors to place themselves in a superior position. Of course, Indigenous nations were classified as wild, and thus subject to the same exploitation as everything else deemed uncivilized (Smith 1999, 52). Wildness not only dehumanized entire nations of people, but also aided in the colonial project of erasing Indigenous history and culture. Seeing the American landscape as wild erased any existing Indigenous cultural beliefs and practices relating to the care of the world around them, and even eliminated the possibility that such beliefs could exist in the first place (Whyte 2024, 77). Maintaining a Western idea of wildness in nature–pristine landscapes unspoiled by human activity–became another justification for the "war of extermination" of Indigenous nations, especially in the American West (Johnson 2014). Colonists did not have to consider themselves as equal agents in a deeply complex web of actors including animals and land, but rather positioned themselves as the masters responsible for–no, duty-bound to–bringing all of nature under their dominion and making it useful. A stark example of this misconception and its harm lies in the beginnings of colonial environmental conservation. The John Muir model of maintaining a pristine, garden-like natural scene not only displaces Indigenous nations from their homes, but also leads to declining biodiversity and increased wildfires (Johnson 2014). Colonialist ideas of wildness are extremely pervasive to this day, and continue to inform

scientific practice and museum and archival values. Wildness is also central to colonialist values of knowledge, through which control is asserted over the terrifying unknown.

Museums and archives assert that control over the world, and over wildness, by "bringing order" to it–supposing that it *needs* order, and needed Western institutions to bestow the gift of categorization to recognize its full potential. Even when museums do not see themselves as asserting control and order, it is in their very nature, from the first catalog ledger to the newest collections management system (CMS). Archives, however, have the explicit value of "achiev[ing] physical or intellectual control over [archival] materials" (Meissner 2021, 1). While intellectual control is not an inherently positive or negative value, it is important to note that it places the archivist in the position of assuming control over their materials, rather than building a relationship with them. A relationship founded on control draws from principles of Western science, assuming that the world and its knowledge can be fully understood. An archivist asserting control over an archival collection believes that they fully understand everything contained within that collection, that the collection has nothing to teach them. This closes the archivist off from the potential multiplicity of the collection, from achieving a deeper understanding of the material through a relationship of humility.

Coloniality has always stemmed from a fear of the unknown, the fear of losing control over the world. Our current colonialist system is built out of that fear. What if we were to build a system rooted in love?

Museum/Archive Convergence

How They Worked Together in the Past

Museum-archives convergence literature usually begins with an affirmation of how museums, archives, and libraries once worked together in the past. Frequently cited convergence articles are “What’s Old Is New Again” by Given and McTavish, Ruth Hedegaard’s "The benefits of archives, libraries and museums working together", “Archives, Libraries, Museums: Coming Back Together?” by Deanna Marcum, and “Beyond the Silos of the LAMs” by Zorich et al. Given that these were some of the first convergence articles I read, I was confused as to how I’d missed the fundamental examples of historic combined institutions. As I reread my sources, I found that I had missed very little. Given and McTavish offered a few examples of nineteenth-century Canadian museums with libraries, and Marcum traced the museum-archive relationship back to the Library of Alexandria. The literature rarely deigned to provide further examples. I find it strange and a little distressing that museologists–people very often concerned with the affairs of the past–did not seem to consult history any further than a cursory glance to affirm their suspicions: museums and archives used to work together, until a nebulous point where they split, and we must find that collaborative solution again. The lack of dedication to historical precedent in convergence literature has many causes, but I believe one of them is the inability or refusal to address the role of coloniality in both fields. We fear delving too deep into museum-archive history, because we suspect we know what we will find, and it isn’t pretty. It doesn’t help us write our journal articles on archival theory.

One historical example of museum/archival cooperation is the Renaissance theory of knowledge, which stated that knowledge and its related objects, regardless of form, belonged

together to aid in academic study (Marcum 2014, 81-82). The theory reflected the personal collections of wealthy European men, who believed in a strong relationship between acquiring knowledge through exploration and active scholarship (Jones 2022, 23). While the inclusion of many types of knowledge in one collection opposes the colonialist idea of the division of fields, it is important to remember that the collections within the Renaissance theory of knowledge were frequently "collected" (stolen) from nations that European explorers saw as inferior and thus considered appropriate for scientific study. While the knowledge may have been more centralized, its contents and use were inarguably colonial. Examples of early museum/archive/library conflation occasionally pop up in the literature–natural history collections in Canada in the nineteenth century such as the Natural History Society of New Brunswick had a library to directly complement the museum collections, and the Natural History Society of Montreal followed suit (Given and McTavish 2010, 5-6).

So was there ever a utopic point in the past where museums and archives worked together in harmony? Possibly, but I also find that searching for that mythical example of cooperation does not help much in the modern day. Not only have the technologies of all fields vastly progressed since the Renaissance, an older model also lacks the decolonial framework essential to ethical reconvergence today. A past example of convergence could potentially provide a model for compromise between museum protocols and archival arrangement, but it would not be a solution that I consider actionable. This hypothetical example would be rooted in Western systems of knowledge, and as such would remain hostile to other worldviews. Simply resolving the fields' split will not rectify their entrenched coloniality.

Splitting the Fields

The splitting of museum and archives fields was a long and slow process over hundreds of years, and it continues to this day despite efforts at reconvergence. Over time, but particularly around the beginning of the twentieth century, museum and archival professions grew more specialized. Notably, however, the museum registration field borrowed many of its fundamental principles from those of libraries–even while actively separating, the three fields could not help but rely on each other (MRM6 2020, 3). Professionalization also further delineated the concepts of skilled and unskilled labor–a distinction that usually left women and people of color on the devalued side, and white men with professional degrees on the respected one. The stratification of labor left behind the previous interdisciplinary work of women in secretarial fields, both cutting them off from the opportunity to participate in a different kind of labor than they were usually allowed to access and also devaluing the labor they had performed without "proper" training (Lea and Emmelhainz 2024, 97).

Histories of the collections profession tend to see the move towards specialization as a positive development, as it allowed museum workers to devote more time to documentation and physical stewardship of collections, rather than balancing multiple conflicting roles (MRM6 2020, 4; Given and McTavish 2010, 22). While an increase in training and standards for the field improved collections care by allowing workers to devote more time to the physical care aspect of the job, specialization also raised the barriers of entry for anyone unable to financially afford or devote time to a training program (MRM6 2020, 5; Lea and Emmelhainz 2024, 97). Professionalization further established museums as a respectable job field and an intellectual authority, without a corresponding examination of practices and values to bring the field ethically into the modern day. Instead, museums grew more entrenched in their colonialist ways,

further developing methods of preservation and documentation to align more closely with colonialist values.

Archives had a slightly different timeline of professionalization than museums, but followed a similar inclination towards specialization in the twentieth century. After the proliferation of recordmaking technologies in the early 1900s forced American archivists to shift to the European model of *fonds*, the next major development in archival practice did not occur until the 1980s, when descriptive standards for cataloging archival records solidified (Meissner 2019, 9).

The main emphasis on the differentiation of archives and museums lay in what they collected–objects to museums and documents to archives. Archives differentiate themselves from museums and libraries by their collection of primary materials, the creation of their collections with an implicit original order, and perhaps most crucially, that their significance derived from a collection rather than from individual objects (Meissner 2019, 12-13). I find these distinctions unhelpful at best and untrue at worst. All institutions collect a variety of objects, documents, and books–many museums have rare books and photographs, archives frequently house objects, and libraries often have special collections that could easily fit into archives or museums. Crucially, creating an individual/collection distinction between museums and archives dissolves the essential context that museum objects gain from viewing their accessions as collective entities.

Scholarship on the separation of the fields generally sees the split as positive, arguing that separate fields support an increase in specialization, better physical and intellectual management, and separation of audiences based on research needs (Jones 2022, 34). While specializing jobs does increase each person's ability to focus on a particular area, it also limits their knowledge of

and interaction with the rest of the field, ultimately harming the museum/archive as a whole. A collections manager with little knowledge of archives might find it difficult to navigate an archival database to research an object, cutting them off from potential knowledge that could help them best care for the object. An archivist with no experience in museum collections might have trouble handling objects in their institution. Both fields suffer, unable to best serve their colonialist values. The intellectual barriers erected by specialization also prevent decolonial work that would allow the knowledge contained in museums and archives to follow its natural path, enriching the institutions and the knowledge itself by embracing chaos and multiplicity.

Separating collections by material increases the ability of staff to provide the ideal environment for each material type, which increases the success of preventive conservation measures. Storage based on material can be beneficial for the types of materials usually included in colonialist collections. For example, paper collections typically require lower temperature and relative humidity (RH) levels to prevent mold growth and other deterioration. Objects made of glass or ceramic can withstand greater environmental fluctuations (Canadian Conservation Institute 2017).

However, separating institutions based on what they collect and how they preserve their collections relies on a particular knowledge system and set of values surrounding preservation, as previously discussed. Museums and libraries also collect primary materials. Museum collections can also have an implicit order to them–such as date of accession, order of collection as determined by the collector, or a location-specific order.

Some convergence literature pinpoints the individual vs. collective nature of museum and archival collections and their management (Meissner 2019, 12-13; Beasley 2007, 21; Bogan 2024, 30). On a management level, this is true: museums tend to process, document, and describe

their collections on an individual item level, whereas archives employ a hierarchical, relationship-based structure. Archival finding aids and arrangement authorities create a structure wherein the materials must be understood as part of a collective.

However, on a fundamental basis, I disagree with these elements being presented as irreconcilable differences. Museum accessions are fundamentally collectives, and the other items they arrive with provide crucial context. Many objects are processed as lots, such as collections of potsherds, arrowheads, jewelry, bones, or beads remain in one container, described in the database under one number. Some archival collections have a particular document that holds a greater amount of significance than others–such as the first edition of a rare book or the original copy of a historic treaty–and can be more easily understood on its own.

The individual vs. collective distinction creates a secondary separation which has become a major issue in practical convergence: numbering. Museum numbering systems vary by institution, but a widely accepted practice is the trinomial system that groups objects by accession and year (MRM6 2020, 216). Archival numbering tends to follow a more staggered approach, with a record's unique identifier broken into different sections to indicate collection, series, folder, and item. The numbering difference is a crucial logistical issue, one which I will address in the Problems section.

I do not see a valid argument for the separation of museum and archival collections that does not hinge on colonialist values and arbitrary separations that contradict both collections management and archival principles of retaining context and documentation. Colonialism is, by nature, contradictory and nonsensical, as it struggles to uphold an inherently false worldview. So too is the separation between museums and archives. Those who argue for separation have typically been in their field for a long time, entrenched in its values. Separation is the only way

they can make sense of their work, and thus, their world. They fiercely defend the way things are because colonialist thought cannot allow for uncertainty or gray areas. Threatening colonialist categories threatens the integrity of the entire colonialist structure.

The Coloniality of Division

The "concept of the West," as developed by cultural theorist Stuart Hall, splits into four main modes: classifying societies into categories; simplifying the complexities of other cultures into a system of representation; creating a standard model with which to compare all other cultures; and creating ranking criteria for evaluating all other societies (Hall 2011). All four of these modes are integral to museums and archives, but I will focus here on the first, characterizing and classifying societies into categories. Museums and archives are built on characterizing and classifying.

The colonial act lay not simply in the collecting, but in arranging, presenting, and distributing knowledge according to Western values (Smith 1999, 71). Museums express this colonial action outright. From their early anthropological days to the present, museums thrive off of creating Western arrangements of cultural artifacts, presenting them in new ways, and distributing that newfound "knowledge" to the public. By nature, museums separate the signified (context and cultural knowledge) from their signifiers (objects) (Sandoval and Davis 2000, 34).

Internally, heritage institutions tend to function similarly to the knowledge systems of universities (especially so in institutions connected to universities like CUMNH). As Smith argues, hastily-constructed colonial frameworks which aimed to make sense of the "new world" found validation in the imperial core, making museums and archives an integral part of colonization, marking their communities as bulwarks of civilization and maturity (Smith 1999,

74). Within these bastions, different forms of knowledges are sorted into disciplines and fields. These designations are rooted in colonial beliefs that actively invalidate other belief systems, and thus have no way to handle other systems of knowledge (Smith 1999, 74). Sorting knowledge under a colonialist framework naturally includes excluding, marginalizing, and/or delegitimizing Indigenous ways of knowing–a process in which museums and archives have demonstrably participated in (Smith 1999, 78). "Boundary disputes" arise when academic endeavors are rigidly split and defined (Sandoval and Davis 2000). Museums and archives, I argue, have fallen into similar disputes. These disputes have led them to suffer the apartheid of their theoretical domains to such a degree that their divisions have begun to threaten the intellectual production for which they were created (Sandoval and Davis 2000, 7).

While colonialist disciplines may be hostile to other knowledge systems, the disciplines themselves are not necessarily set in stone–there is always room to compartmentalize further. Disciplines become infinitely partitioned, to differentiate individuals and more effectively supervise departments (Smith 1999, 78). I find this decolonial view an effective framework for interrogating the division between the museum and archive fields. Despite their shared history, the fields have split and found reconciliation difficult, and I propose that the colonialist division of knowledge is in part responsible for this situation. By following the colonialist "need" for specialization and departmentalization, knowledge institutions followed the path set out for them and differentiated fields the way they knew best: by dividing along an arbitrary line (objects vs. documents) and letting the fields drift further and further apart until they became unable to communicate with each other. As with all systems of categorization, there are many outliers that fall outside the binary division of objects and documents. Many archives house objects that are related to their document collections–for example, the Cleveland Museum of Art's archives

contain artists' materials like paint, brushes, and pencils (Hernandez 2024). Museums frequently care for works on paper, including works of art, books, and collection documentation. Professionals in both fields find themselves chafing against the arbitrary divisions, even when not working specifically with museum archives.

Many museums, when forced to cross the museum/archive divide, find their work impeded. Employees at the Peabody-Essex Museum, in searching for documentation to research their NAGPRA claims, found they were stymied by the chaotic organization, cataloging, and storage of their archives (Jones 2022, 105). Not only does this issue point to the fact that division causes increased difficulty in performing job functions, but it also shows the coloniality of the division impeding repatriation work. At CUMNH, the division creates an environment that is challenging to navigate, even within a single institution. Collections managers and other collections employees find navigating archival finding aids and hierarchies very difficult when they try to locate information about collections, and must rely on the expertise of an archivist or professional with similar subject area training.

Divisions between information and material are deeply rooted in Western epistemic traditions. Western traditions of knowledge rely on a binary division between mind/reason and world/nature (Mbembe 2015, 7), which can be extended to the division between object (world) and document (mind). Both hold information, but archival information can be easily read, whereas object information must be discerned through other means of analysis, and therefore can inspire more subjectivity. As Western structures of knowledge stress the difference and separation between body and mind, museums and archives mirror the same concept in the split between object-focused collections and document-focused collections.

Moreover, in the particular case of collections donated to a museum or an archive, separation happens on a literal, physical level. The case of the Thomson collection at Museum Victoria in Australia demonstrates the damage separation does. The museum stewards both the physical artifacts collected by Thomson (such as spears, fishing equipment, and hammerstones), and their related documentation (mainly field notes). They chose to separate the paper-based items from the more traditional museum collections items, storing them in separate locations and effectively dissolving the record of their related nature across the collection. It took multiple researchers nearly a decade to reconstitute the knowledge inherent in the collection, as items became physically and intellectually removed from their narratives and contexts (Jones 2015). The loss of information is an example of dissociation or curatorial neglect, one of the ten *agents of deterioration*, which refers to the forces acting upon objects that cause their condition to worsen. A major role of workers caring for collections is to protect the objects to the best of their ability from these agents. Even solely within the museum collections field, the division between archives and collections causes an inability to fulfill the standards of care for objects, and makes collections workers unwitting agents of deterioration themselves.

Not only does this division inhibit the work of the museum, it enables the history and culture of the objects to vanish. In the case of items from Indigenous nations, it adds to the long legacy of erasing their history and culture. When researchers are forced to rely on observation and Western scientific practices rather than on the associated documentation, it leads to further colonialist extraction of knowledge directly from objects, and a higher likelihood that the (often white) researcher's bias will distort the information obtained (Turner 2020, 67). While museum documentation is often highly colonialist and reflective of a white supremacist worldview, it still provides historical background and traces of knowledge that may be closer than guesswork to

that of the culture of origin. Separating documentation from the rest of the museum erects yet another barrier to the free flow of information and integrating the collections (Jones 2022, 32). The rigidity of colonialist disciplines cannot accommodate gray areas and in-betweens, thus forcing collections staff to arbitrarily choose a category for each item (Jones 2022, 32). Not only does the strict divide between disciplines reinforce colonialist binaries and categorization, it also diminishes the colonialist worth of the object by reducing the potential information extracted from it.

Truly merging the fields, however, will require a deeper look at both institutions' histories and value systems. For the good of the public, researchers, students, interested laypeople, and museum and archives professionals, the two fields must find a way to join forces again, and I believe the answer lies in decolonization.

Theories of Reconvergence

Museologists and archivists have not reached a consensus on whether or not convergence could benefit museums and archives. Some museologists and archivists believe that separation is beneficial to their respective fields, and allows them to conduct their work more efficiently, or even that the fields are inherently different. One "fundamental difference" between libraries/archives and museums presented by librarian Gerald Beasley sees libraries as made of systems within which to categorize knowledge, and museums as dedicated to public-facing programs (Beasley 2007, 24). Others, such as Jones quoted above, believe that separation between the fields causes harm to all involved. Even if they do not consider coloniality, many still understand the damage done by removing context (Ghaddar 2016, 25).

Similarly contentious are conversations about reuniting the modern, professionalized museum and archival fields that have been going on since the 1990s. Some theorists recognize the limitations of the divided fields: differentiating libraries, archives, and museums based on what each institution collects is inherently invalid, as each one collects everything to some degree (Dupont 2007, 16). Others acknowledge the coloniality of the distinction, stating that there will never be a single model applicable to all, "as the same reality can be interpreted in multiple ways" (van Hooland 2014, 24). Embracing convergence allows some theorists to release the anxieties and technicalities that come with the use of a colonialist approach by heritage fields (museums, archives, libraries, and others), as letting go of one rigid distinction makes it easier to question others. In attempting to define the boundaries of libraries, archives, and museums, heritage institutions continue the futile practice of naming the unnameable, attempting to create certainty in a chaotic world (Zeitlyn 2012, 465). Archivist Hugh Taylor offers a metaphorical framework through which to view convergence: "division makes for tidiness, for order and control; dare we risk the wilderness garden?" (Taylor 1995, 16). Taylor's metaphor sees the divided fields as sterile, manicured gardens, in contrast with convergence as a natural space where all knowledge can bloom in concert with each other and cross-pollination is encouraged. These views veer into a decolonial perspective, as they release the colonialist need for control and embrace the inherent complexity and multiplicity of work in heritage institutions.

However, not everyone is open to or optimistic about converging fields: Librarian Gerald Bealsey wrote "I take it as a fact that books generally fail as museum objects, just as museum objects generally fail as library materials" (Beasley 2007, 27). Some see museums, archives, and libraries as performing entirely different functions. Some theorists espouse an idea that libraries and archives can provide access to knowledge without the interpretation inherent to museum

exhibits, although all institutions interpret their information in their own ways that may be less obvious than a curated display (VanderBerg 2012, 140). One archivist expressed that they did not think merging archives with museum collections would be beneficial as their museum did not have collections management systems that accommodated archival description (Hernandez 2024).

Others take issue with the idea that wider sharing of knowledge between the fields is automatically positive. Generalizing knowledge between fields allows workers to gloss over the differences in societal roles and expectations of each institution, and the infrastructures that come along with them (Robinson 2015, 211). While not explicitly arguing against convergence, considering the many forms knowledge takes pushes museum and archives theorists to remember that the potential of collections to create and transmit knowledge relies upon the organization, and thus context, of their original housing. Although bringing museums and archives together can help to restore the context of the original collection, crossing the institutional barrier may serve to erase the context of the museum or archive. Museums and archives must consider what they view as knowledge and what they hope to gain by sharing it. Robinson and others see convergence, particularly in digital collections spaces, as a de-contextualization of collections.

Issues surrounding de-contextualization, I believe, are a response to the impulse in convergence literature to rely on technological solutions rather than investigating the issues within collections spaces that led to the need for convergence in the first place (Isaac and Baker 2015; Zorich et al. 2008; Dempsey 1999). Robinson's perspective also introduces another aspect to convergence–tracking the institutional provenance of converged collections, as whether an item was stored in a museum, archive, or library can provide essential contextual and care information. Examining what is meant by knowledge forces archivists and museologists to not

become so caught up in the excitement of convergence that we lose the reason we are doing this work in the first place: to provide deeper, further context to collections, and create a more ethical information landscape.

The following table summarizes the major arguments for and against convergence.

Positive	**Negative**
Divisions based on material type are invalid	Fields are specialized for a reason
Reality can be interpreted in multiple ways	Not all knowledge is the same
Futility of maintaining artificial divisions	Lack of appropriate management systems

Table 1: Positive and negative opinions regarding museum/archive convergence.

Decolonization

Museum Decolonization

Decolonization in museums has become so prevalent in the past five years that it has begun to lose its meaning. Many institutions have implemented surface-level "decolonizing" initiatives, usually involving a land acknowledgment on their website, changing outdated racist language in exhibits and databases, publicizing NAGPRA efforts, short-lived programming highlighting various racial groups, and hiring consultants to advise on increasing diversity (Chilcott et al. 2021; Lonetree 2012; Sundström 2023).

The main issue I find with many museum decolonizing approaches lies in their superficiality. Removing potentially harmful language from public spaces is generally positive (although there is discussion regarding the erasure of historical racism). Land acknowledgements are, if nothing else, a start. However, limiting museum decolonization to actions like these is deeply harmful. Calling these efforts "decolonization" cheapens the concept, leading people to assume that decolonization is not a serious, long-term process. It allows museums to declare themselves decolonial, when issues like racist work environments, unethical collecting practices, and colonialist structures of knowledge remain (Chilcott et al. 2021, 44). It does not involve decolonizing the minds of staff. True decolonization requires deconstructing the colonialist system. It is a long, long process that cannot be completed in a few months, and is difficult to advertise on social media (Kassim 2017). As I have shown, colonialist values run deep in museums, and therefore necessitate an equally deep examination.

What, then, is the point of museum decolonization? Decolonial theorists offer multiple positions: To change the mythic perception of history, to make the museum not a dumping

ground for history, but rather a place to expand beyond colonialist frameworks (Mbembe 2015, 3-6). To think beyond the comfortable Western epistemological frameworks and understand that mainstream theories of collections management cannot apply to all types of collections, particularly those from communities historically sidelined by the colonial structure. To ultimately improve stewardship of all collections (O'Neal 2015, 15). To develop a framework that allows for a balanced perception of the relationship between individual, institution, community, and the wider world (Mbembe 2015, 18). Some museums make the mistake of attempting to decolonize solely through internal measures, and while sorting out internal priorities is an essential step, the museum must go beyond its doors to the communities that it serves.

One recent example of successful decolonial practice in museums is the Sand Creek Massacre exhibit at History Colorado. In 2012, the museum opened an exhibit about the massacre, which received substantial criticism due to its lack of Indigenous input (History Colorado 2022). Following this criticism, History Colorado entered a long-term partnership with tribal representatives from the Cheyenne and Arapaho nations to create an exhibit that told the story of the Sand Creek Massacre from the perspective of those affected by it. The exhibit took ten years to reopen, demonstrating a commitment to not just fixing mistakes, but to truly create a well-researched, community-vetted representation of Indigenous history and culture.

When discussing museum decolonization, especially in collections, it is essential to understand the role NAGPRA has played in the last thirty years of museology. The act, passed in 1990, required any museum receiving federal funding to inventory their collections and identify any Indigenous human remains, funerary objects, and other cultural objects to prepare for their return to their nations of origin (MRM6 2020, 498). NAGPRA is a very complex topic with

enough decolonial issues for multiple theses to cover adequately. Here, I will only address the aspects of NAGPRA that affect collections management, although I recognize that it has much further-reaching impacts.

NAGPRA forced museum professionals to rapidly change the way they thought about ethics, institutional culture, and collaboration with external communities (Reijerkerk and Nyitray 2023, 25). It began a long-overdue conversation. Indigenous-led institutions such as tribal libraries, archives, and museums were created as one method of caring for belongings and ancestors returned under NAGPRA, which allowed for greater development of Indigenous archival and museological theory (Reijerkerk and Nyitray 2023, 26).

However, it is still legislation created by the American government, with a lot left to be desired. Crucially, NAGPRA still leaves decision-making control in the hands of the colonialist museum. Tribes must work within a hostile system to regain ancestors and belongings stolen from them. Ultimately, the responsibility to prove rightful ownership rests on the tribe, and not with the museum (Deloria 2018, 11). Tribes must also be federally recognized to make a NAGPRA claim, forcing nations to submit to a deeply colonialist structure to even attempt a return of their heritage (Reijerkerk and Nyitray 2023, 26).

I do not expect museums to become fully decolonized. Many of the potential avenues for decolonization require time, money, and staffing that many museums do not have. Moreover, museums are a product of the culture in which they exist, and until society at large commits to true decolonial values, museums will never be able to entirely rid themselves of colonialist impulses. However, committing to a decolonial framework costs nothing. Museum workers can start the decolonial process in their own institutions by questioning the frameworks around them and the vocabulary that they use to refer to objects, nations, and cultures. They can learn about

the communities their museum serves, and what those communities want and need from the museum. They can begin creating a professional environment that welcomes diversity in all its forms, not just tokenism. Each slow, small step towards making museums and collections management less colonialist is one more piece of the colonial matrix crumbling. It is a long, long process. The best time to start decolonial work was thirty years ago. The second best time is today.

Archives Decolonization

Decolonization in Western archives has followed a similar path to that of museums. Efforts to diversify workforces, remove or flag offensive language, and spotlight diverse voices in publications and online exhibits have swept through the field, with little support given to in-depth, long-term work towards effective decolonization.

Archives in America, however, do not have a formal, government-mandated NAGPRA equivalent, and have therefore had less legal impetus to develop relationships with Indigenous nations and rethink their collecting and management frameworks. Independent of government regulation, a group of Indigenous archivists formed the First Archivists Circle and, in 2006, gathered with non-Indigenous archivists to develop the Protocols for Native American Archival Materials, a document outlining the best archival practices for culturally responsive care of Indigenous archival materials (First Archivists Circle 2007). More recently in 2022, the Society of American Archivists (SAA) established an Archival Repatriation Committee to ensure that SAA supported archivists in repatriating archival materials (SAA 2023). Archives in other colonial nations like Australia have made great strides in decolonizing their practices. The 1997 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Thesaurus– a thesaurus of terms for place names,

languages, peoples, and subject areas, created in long-term partnership with Australian Indigenous communities–was one of the first major forays into decolonizing archival practice (Lee 2011, 3). The Thesaurus embodied decolonial principles by including Indigenous nations in decisions involving their communities and eschewing the colonialist value of efficiency in favor of embracing the complexity of language.

Archives and the workers within still hold great potential for colonialist harm, and often enact that potential whether they intend to or not. Silences in colonial archives–where little to no records exist from the perspective of oppressed groups, sometimes to the extent that all evidence of oppressed groups has been erased–still affect members of those groups in "post-colonial" societies (Namhila 2016, 117). These vestiges of colonial power point to the central tension in decolonizing archives: the colonial memory can never truly acknowledge the harm contained within it, but must constantly be revisited to build a collective colonial identity (Ghaddar 2016, 20). Archives contain both these identities and these atrocities, often in the same collection. Reconciling with one means reconciling with the other, and facing centuries of violence that ultimately benefited you is difficult, to put it lightly. But that difficulty and discomfort will never outweigh the right of Indigenous communities to their knowledge, history, culture, and belongings.

A major point of discussion in Indigenous archival literature is whether all information should be universally known (Faulkhead et al. 2010; Christen 2012; Thorpe 2019; Indigenous Archives Collective 2021). Whereas the prevalent Western view of knowledge (especially that contained in institutions like archives) promotes open sharing and distribution of (nearly) all information, other systems of knowledge do not share this approach. Some communities share cultural knowledge "based on systems of obligation and reciprocity" and believe that open

access to information inherently disrespects (Christen 2012, 2875). Widespread sharing of knowledge removes context, yet knowledge circulation is generally treated as an unquestioned positive (Christen 2012, 2878). Ultimately, information sharing without regard for context continues the colonialist violence of exploiting the culture and knowledge of Indigenous communities. Dominant white societies continue to profit from Indigenous knowledge, while the knowledge itself remains divorced from the context that makes it meaningful (Christen 2012, 2880).

In assessing how information should be shared, the Protocols for Native American Archival Materials asks, "Who is the information intended to serve? What is the natural life cycle of the information?" (First Archivists Circle 2007, 17). These questions force archivists to reconsider their expectations around information and reintroduce context to their records. Sharing knowledge without restrictions greatly reduces the amount of control the record owners have over the material.

Indigenous control over archival material related to their nations is paramount to decolonizing archives. Rose Miron defines the three elements of Indigenous archival activism as "access, sovereignty, and new narratives" (Miron 2024, 3). The ability of a nation to control the story told about them through archival material speaks to all three of these elements. Indigenous people have been controlled and harmed through the use of archival material; that control must be returned to them (Ross et al. 2006, 21). Historian William T. Hagan referred to Indigenous North Americans as "archival captive[s]" in regards to the control of Indigenous documents by non-Indigenous forces (O'Neal 2015, 6). Many records contained in colonial archives were taken from its culture without consideration for the lasting effects of that removal. Much of the information on Indigenous nations in archives is sensitive–such as painful histories, family

records that were never meant to leave their context, and sacred knowledge only suitable for a specific group of people. Understandably, the trust between Indigenous nations and colonialist archives is often fraught, if not lacking entirely, even if workers in the colonialist archive have the best of intentions.

Giving source communities the ability to restrict access to information that should be under their stewardship is a means of extending trust in the hope of rebuilding a relationship centered around respect. The Indigenous Archives Collective, an Australian Indigenous group formed in 2018 to support Indigenous archivists and develop culturally safe archival practices, recommends that an archive housing Indigenous material needs to understand their relationship to the material as custodial rather than controlling "organisational custody of collections rather than ownership and control" (Indigenous Archives Collective 2021, 245). A custodial relationship to collections is familiar to heritage institutions–many museums, such as CUMNH, house objects belonging to government agencies, caring for them but not exerting control over them. In an Indigenous context, a custodial relationship involves respecting Indigenous approaches to managing archives, and basing access, use, and preservation practices on Indigenous approaches (First Archivists Circle 2007, 8).

Colonialist archives may be uncomfortable with releasing the knowledge held captive in their basements to their rightful caretakers; while this view should be challenged, the duplication of records regarding Indigenous communities for tribal archives is a step in the right direction (O'Neal 2015, 16). Indigenous-developed collections management platforms, such as Mukurtu, allow Indigenous communities to collaborate with institutions like archives and museums to append their restrictions and Traditional Knowledge (TK) labels to online catalogs. While this is far from a solution, it is one step on the path to Indigenous control of Indigenous knowledge.

A large element of decolonizing archives involves making them culturally safer for Indigenous visitors and workers. Not only do many colonialist archives contain records of historical violence towards Indigenous nations, but the archives are also usually unequipped to respond to archival visitors experiencing strong emotional responses to historical trauma (Miron 2024, 49). Creating an environment that is open to expressing difficult emotions, or even just providing a quiet place to sit and recover, can go a long way towards creating a more compassionate archive. Australian archival and Indigenous communities have made great strides towards a decolonial approach in this regard. The Indigenous Archives Collective published a report on the Right of Reply to Indigenous information held in colonialist archives, which outlined principles for improving the Indigenous experience in archives, especially regarding cultural safety in archives. Cultural safety is the creation of an environment (in this case, an archive) that does not challenge, deny, or attack the identities of the people within, and where respect is paramount between all (Thorpe 2018, 36). In the spirit of decoloniality and transparency, the Collective advocates for tagging or providing alternatives to offensive materials rather than eliminating the words or materials altogether (Indigenous Archives Collective 2021, 250). The most important element of this recommendation is giving advance notice to visitors that a record or set of metadata could be harmful, allowing them to make the choice (Indigenous Archives Collective 2021, 250).

However, a major element of harm to Indigenous communities in archives is not so easily solved. As previously mentioned, the very infrastructure of colonialist archives can be harmful to Indigenous knowledge and nations, and its imposition on already fraught and stolen knowledge and records can create a painful experience for Indigenous visitors. Western archives are organized around Western understandings of knowledge, including hierarchies and vocabulary.

Respect des fonds, or the *fonds* system, prioritizes the creator or collector of records in their organization, labeling, and retrieval. Australian archivists have presented an alternative, called the series system. The series system maintains and documents original order, as does the *fonds* system, but does not stop there. It links all related contextual entities (i.e. creator, owner, user) to the records, aiming to describe the plurality of the records' context. The series system centers the collection's creation when recording provenance, but all records are multi-provencial by nature (Duff and Harris 2002, 268-269). Expanding the definition of provenance enables archivists to include nations of origin in the information surrounding a record while maintaining the convenience of colonialist recordkeeping. By expanding the expectations surrounding provenance, the series system loosens the colonialist grip on records and naming (Duff and Harris 2002, 279). While this solution does not entirely eliminate the violence of organizing records by their colonial collector, it offers another possibility for archiving, one that straddles multiplicity and structure.

In a similar vein, the accepted means of categorizing information in Western archives can often constitute colonialist harm. Widely accepted standards of organization, such as the Dewey Decimal System, carry with them long histories of discrimination. Particular terms used within the Dewey Decimal System have changed over the years, but the structure of information presented has not: though the old ableist terms used to describe people with disabilities have been replaced, the position of that category within social pathology belies an ableist conception of the group (Adler 2016, 631). Similarly, the Library of Congress classification system categorizes the Indigenous nations of North America alphabetically, which runs counter to Indigenous knowledge organization and ignores geographic and linguistic relationships between nations (Cherry and Mukunda 2015, 551). Systems like these directly influence how information

is organized, presented, and found (Adler 2016, 631). On a small scale, hostile systems reduce the ability of Indigenous users to use resources like libraries and archives. On a larger scale, using hegemonic knowledge systems continues the colonial tradition of eliminating Indigenous culture and knowledge in favor of white structures (Cherry and Mukunda 2015, 551-552).

While there is no model that does not cause some degree of violence, there are ways to lessen the harm (Duff and Harris 2002, 281). The Mashantucket Pequot Thesaurus Project aimed to create a supplementary thesaurus for the Library of Congress' Subject Headings based on their community knowledge and philosophy (Littletree and Metoyer 2015, 647). The Brian Deer Scheme of classification for Indigenous materials eschewed the idea of a universal classification system for North American Indigenous nations; rather, the scheme was intended to reflect the materials of the specific library, and be organized according to the present concerns of the local community (Cherry and Mukunda 2015, 552). Relying on local community knowledge, concerns, and values welcomes the adoption of non-Western systems of knowledge and organization. Going beyond the benefit to the community, basing organizational systems and vocabularies on Indigenous philosophies aid in the documentation and retrieval of their knowledge (Littletree and Metoyer 2015, 653).

The archival community and the communities that surround it cannot rely on legislation and other measures from the colonialist superstructure to make things right, and these measures will never be comprehensive and compassionate enough to begin to heal centuries of violence. Some library and archival communities have developed their own collections management practices based in Indigenous concerns surrounding information privacy and control over materials rather than relying on legislation to force their hand (Reijerkerk and Nyitray 2023, 23).

We–the archival community and its multitude of users–must create our own kinder standards and expectations to make things right in a rogue way.

State of the Fields

Museum Collections

Museum collections management has changed in the years since circulars and ledgers (although ledgers are still very much in use in many institutions), but they carry similar values to their predecessors. Many museums use computer-based collections management systems (CMS), which can vary in complexity and cost from a simple spreadsheet to relational database programs like PastPerfect, TMS, and Mimsy. Categorization of objects is paramount to their inclusion in a collection, but potential categories have greatly expanded and are no longer solely based on visual cues. Documentation is central to modern collections management, in both physical and virtual forms, although standards have increased along with legal strictures. Associated data still gives objects their worth–provenance that can be proven is what makes an object museum worthy, or determines its status for deaccession. Preservation and the prolonging of objects' life cycles is central to every action taken by collections workers, and we know considerably more now about successful methods to do so. In my experience, all work undertaken by collections workers is in service of causing the least amount of harm to objects as possible while facilitating their use. Superseding all of these values is the wider museum field principle of everything in service of a central mission, which trickles down to collections as a collecting scope. Facilitation of research and use of collections has become a larger part of collections management (MRM6 2020, 70).

Archives

Archives continue to maintain similar values to their historical origins. Original order and *respect des fonds* are still used in processing archival material. Creating meaningful arrangement and description and asserting intellectual control over material is a core value for archivists (Meissner 2021, 1), and the provenance of collections is paramount to identifying their archival value. Like museums, archivists focus on preserving and prolonging the life cycle of their collections, as well as protecting them from other agents of deterioration. Facilitating the access and use of collections for research remains central to the work of many archivists. The greatest paradigm shift for archival work in recent decades has been the move towards digital asset management and the digitization of collections. Given the recent developments in and increased accessibility of digital technologies (as well as increased user interest in online access methods), many archivists have used digitization as an opportunity to create new standards that break away from practices rooted in historical oppression. However, the majority of digital archival content retains the colonialist issues of their predecessors. Additionally, not all potential archive visitors have access to the necessary technology to access digital archives. Digital archiving exemplifies another partial solution that tends to neglect the same historically unrepresented groups that archives have failed to serve in the past. Similar to how anthropological information standards maintained many of the same fields between nineteenth century circulars and modern databases, the information collected in digital asset metadata follows many of the same standards of physical archives. Ideas surrounding provenance, arrangement, and preservation remain much the same, although the techniques may look different.

Coding has been an element of archiving since the 1980s (Meissner 2019, 9). Encoded archival description (EAD) is a structure for encoding descriptive content surrounding archival

materials, often expressed in extensible markup language (XML). Archivists use EAD and XML to create finding aids and share them through a machine-readable format with the archival community (Meissner 2019, 10). A linguistic alternative to XML for expressing archival data is resource description framework (RDF), a less structured form of data organization. Archival content management platforms like ArchivesSpace streamline the production of detailed finding aids and subsequent web publishing for greater discoverability of archival material.

Standard Metadata Fields for Museums and Archives

Museums and archives record similar information for their respective collections, though they often use different terms for the same concept. The table below outlines the overlaps and distinctions between commonly accepted metadata fields. Archival metadata fields and descriptions are taken from DublinCore. Museum metadata fields and descriptions are taken from the Cataloging Cultural Objects VRA standards. Grey rows indicate common metadata fields between museums and archives.

Area	Museum Term	Description	Archival Term	Description
Identity Area	Title	Title(s), identifying phrases, or names given to an object.	Title	Name(s) by which the resource is formally known.
	Storage Location	Location within the museum where the object is stored.		
	Number	Number assigned to object for identification.	Identifier	Unique reference to the resource.
	Dimensions	Information about the dimensions, size, or scale of the object.	Extent	Size or duration of the resource (often measured in linear feet).
	Description	A descriptive note detailing the content and context of the object.	Description	Description of content of the resource.
	Condition	A description assessing the overall physical condition, characteristics, and completeness of an object at a particular time.		
Background Area	Creator	Agent that contributed to creating, designing, producing, manufacturing, or altering the work.	Creator	Agent primarily responsible for creating the resource.
	Date	The date or range of dates associated with the creation of the object.	Date	Date(s) or range(s) covered by the resource.
	Culture	The name of the culture, people, or nationality from which the object originated.	Source	Relationship between the current resource and another related resource.
	Material(s)	The materials used in the creation of an object, as well as any production or manufacturing techniques, processes, or methods incorporated in its fabrication.	Format	File format, physical medium, or dimension of the resource.
	Locality	Where the object was created.	Contributor	Agent making a contribution to the resource.
			Language	Language of the resource.
	Category/Class	Used to relate a specific object to others with similar characteristics.	Type	Nature or genre of content.
			Publisher	Agent responsible for making the resource available.
Content and Structure Area	Subject	An identification, description, or interpretation of what is depicted in and by a work or image.	Subject	Resource with a relationship to the subject matter of the current resource.
			Coverage	Temporal and/or spatial characteristics described by the resource.
Conditions of Access and Use Area	Restrictions	Any conditions relating to accessing the object.	Rights	Information concerning IP/copyright/access rights.
Related Materials Area	Related Works	A related object.	Relation	A related resource.
Notes Area	Notes	Any information related to the object that does not fit in another field.		

Table 2: Common metadata fields between museums and archives, organized by the fields' subject matter.

Shared Values

Museums and archives share a desire for standardization. From the collections management perspective, this looks like controlled vocabularies, lexicons, authority files, data standards, and metadata structures (i.e. DublinCore). Standardization is intended to make communication and sharing knowledge easier, especially in a digital format. However, stratifying all possible options down to a narrow set of terms tends to deprive knowledge of its context by forcing it into predefined categories which will never account for all possibilities. The standards and schemas widely used by collections communities tend to enforce dominant structures of knowledge organization that are frequently based on deeply problematic structures (i.e. the Dewey Decimal system).

Standardization also prioritizes efficiency in collections management. Efficient workflow is not a bad thing, but its priority status reveals the colonial origins behind this value. In the current colonialist structure, and especially in the grant-funded landscape of heritage institutions, efficiency is a necessity. However, looking towards a decolonial option requires decentering efficiency in favor of compassion, understanding, respect, and deepening community relationships.

The main differences I find between the values of the fields are the structured organizing of collection items in archives, and the fact that museums typically do not store accession items together. Museum storage varies greatly by institution, but preference is usually given to size, material, or type of object over keeping all the items in a collection in one place (MRM6 2020, 333). Oversized objects like furniture and vehicles are often stored separately, in an entirely

different storage space, or even outside. Some museums store pest-prone materials like fur and feathers in a designated area to reduce spread of pests and for ease of monitoring (MRM6 2020, 337). Objects that can tolerate greater environmental fluctuations like ceramics and glass may live in storage areas with less climate control.

Separating materials by type is not uncommon in archives either–items like large photographs and maps are typically grouped by size for efficient use of storage space. Physically sensitive materials like nitrate film, which requires refrigeration to reduce the risk of fire and off-gassing, are often stored separately from the rest of the collection. Neither practice is superior, but neither are they all that different.

The following table compares relevant aspects of current museum and archival practice.

Aspects	Museums	Archives
Numbering	No standard; trinomials	Hierarchical
Processing	Item level	Collection and Series level
Storage	Depending on size and material type	Archival boxes (varying by size)
Values	Standardization, efficiency, preservation	Standardization, efficiency, preservation

Table 3: Aspects of current museum and archival practice.

Problems and Solutions

Here, I will present a few viable options for practical reconvergence that I encountered in my literature review. Every solution is necessarily tailored to its institution, but the techniques are flexible enough that they can be applied in a variety of situations. Many of these solutions rely on specific technical frameworks or proprietary data management systems. I lack the requisite experience to adequately explore technological solutions, but present a process for assessing those solutions that can theoretically be applied across platforms. Moreover, I believe that an ideal solution would not require a high degree of training or specialized education, which are barriers that only serve to further colonialist ideas and values.

The Numbering Problem

The first issue I began trying to solve with convergence was that of different numbering systems. Archives are structured in hierarchies from collection down to item. Museums like to pretend that they work solely on an item level (Bogan 2024, 30). This is simply untrue. Most items come into the museum as part of an accession, a group of objects bound together by their donor. Museums that use a trinomial numbering system forever bind together that accession and communicate the year and order of donation. For example, the first accession received in 2015 would receive the accession number 2015.001. The third object in that accession would receive the catalog number 2015.001.0003. Even museums who instead use serial numbering systems tend to group their accessions with sequential numbers–three objects from the same accession might receive the numbers 15223, 15224, and 15225. While archival collections may have more

levels to their numbering and ordering, the end result is not so different. I believe that the convergence community can find a compromise between the two systems.

One possible solution is something akin to a URI or reference code. The precise development of unique identifiers greatly depends on the needs of the institution/collection. A policy for instituting a composite numbering scheme would require an assessment of the technological and personnel resources of the institution, the CMS in use, and the nature of the collection. However, there are some considerations that must be addressed for any application of this strategy. Will the identifier contain only numbers, or also include letters? How many characters will be in each identifier? Do different sections of the identifier indicate specific qualities (i.e. first two characters for collection, third character for material type, etc.)? I would recommend prioritizing human readability over machine readability, but ideally the identifier would serve both.

For example, an accession donated by a collector with the last name Morris in 1935 would receive the accession designation MO1935. This example accession contains two field notebooks, six photographic prints, three letters, five pottery sherds, and three bone fragments. The field notebooks and letters, which are primarily made of paper, would receive the material type indicator PA. The photographs would receive PH for photographic prints (as opposed to slides or film). The sherds would receive the ceramic designation CE, and the bone fragments BO. The objects in each category would then receive numerical designations to differentiate between objects of the same type. The first field book's complete number would then be MO1935-PA-1. The third photograph would have the number MO1935-PH-3.

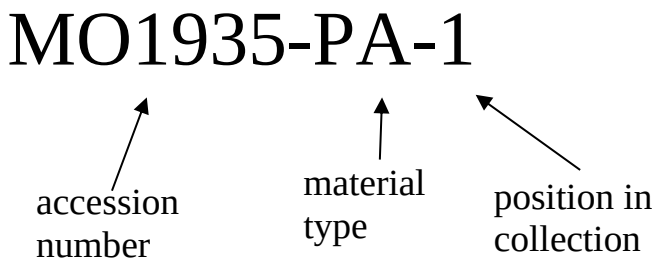

Fig. 2: A sample unique identifier with labeled components.

For this example, I chose alphabetic designations rather than entirely numeric, as I find letters easier to remember. I also chose hyphens instead of periods as I find hyphens easier to distinguish visually as space between sections of the number. However, developing a museum/archive composite numbering system requires an extensive consideration of the makeup of the institution's collections, as well as potential future acquisitions. Thus, each institution's numbering system would necessarily be unique.

Linked Data, EAD, RDF, and XML

Some convergence literature argues for utilizing the principles of linked data to solve their collections issues, praising its minimalism and the interoperability of data (Isaac and Baker 2015, 35; Eito-Brun 2014). Others criticize linked data as an overused concept that has lost meaning, or that it has less potential in reality than many imagine. Linked data, when applied properly, can create novel links between collections, but meaningful application requires a high degree of familiarity with computer science and coding (Isaac and Baker 2015, 1). Linked data is, in fact, a very general term that can take many forms in developing convergence CMS.

I began looking into linked data for a solution to the problem of negotiating between archival arrangement and museum numbering. In the process of stumbling through linked data, EAD, and RDF, I realized that the solution I needed may not lie in a set of standards or data model at all. Rather, it lies in a reframing of how we think about our various types of collections. Linked data stems from the desire to maintain old practices and standards in the technological landscape of the twenty-first century, rather than truly uprooting the archival system.

Still, it is important to understand the basics of linked data in order to engage with a large amount of convergence literature. A concise definition of linked data is "a set of best practices for the publication of structured data on the web" (Isaac and Baker 2015, 3). Linked data encompasses a huge variety of schema, databases, aggregators, and more. Ideally, all these options share a set of principles to make their versions of linked data as user friendly and interoperable as possible. These include using uniform resource identifiers (URIs) as "names" for data points, linking those URIs to uniform resource locators (URLs) to allow users to look up those names, use standards such as RDF or SPARQL, and crucially, including links to other URIs (Linked Data 2006). I became interested in RDF for its flexibility and ability to (supposedly) relate any online resource to any other resource in the world through the framework of triples (Isaac and Baker 2015, 44). Using this schema, there is the potential to create one's own custom system, as "each vocabulary is expressed in terms of other vocabularies" (Isaac and Baker 2015, 44-45). By expressing metadata in RDF, an archivist could share their schema virtually and maintain the contextual relationships between records (Meissner 2019, 147). Once I looked into the actual operability of RDF, however, I realized that the possibilities were not quite so limitless. No matter how loose and deconstructed your schema, it still needs to be read by a

content management system to be functional. In that regard, RDF was not much different from EAD and MARC. It simply used different terms to mean the same thing.

Of course, I am not a data scientist, and it's possible that the true ability of RDF is far beyond my capabilities and even my understanding. I now have a better sense of what linked data entails and what the back end of finding aids looks like. I have also joined the ranks of convergence theorists disillusioned with the magic of linked data. There are many benefits and possibilities in the linked data field, but it is far from the end of the technical convergence conversation. I believe that content management systems like ArchivesSpace have a similar amount of flexibility and potential for relationality if explored properly. Rather than relying on the seductive potential of new technologies to solve convergence problems, both fields should assess the systems already in use and what those systems are truly capable of. By creatively examining the abilities of technologies designed specifically for museums or archives, both fields can broaden their assumptions of what those technologies can do. This, too, is decolonial work–by pushing colonialist products past their rigid boundaries, we embrace the multiplicity embedded in everything and open a window for convergence.

The Ideal Solution

Were I to have the resources to create my ideal CMS solution, its central functions would be relationships and multiplicity. The ability to relate records to each other would be simple and obvious, allowing the user to easily navigate between linked records and to better grasp the context around them. The vocabulary would be inherently flexible and rely on community input, with a thesaurus linking different terms for the same concept. It would have varying levels of access, not only between front-end and back-end users, but also for specific collections and items based on culture of origin and other restrictions. Collections would be organized together in finding aids regardless of type of content (archives vs. museum). The system would be low cost or free or charge, allowing any size of institution to use it. It would require little technical knowledge to set up and maintain, so users would not need training in colonialist technology or have to rely on often expensive technical help.

Crucially, however, this CMS is not the end of my solution. Decolonizing and reconvergence cannot rely on technology alone; people are at the center of this work. A management system is one small part of that.

During my research, I looked into practical convergence solutions enacted by other institutions to understand the range of methods employed by both museums and archives. I found a variety of approaches, some of which aligned with aspects of my ideal solution that I believe could be applied to other institutions.

Case Studies

Here, I present five case studies of institutions pursuing various elements of convergence that contribute to my ideal solution. These elements include community-sourced controlled

vocabulary; categories for elements of description; hierarchical tree database models; multi-discipline finding aids; and a CMS based around cultural protocols.

UCAI Phase 2

The Union Catalog for Art Images (UCAI) published several reports in the early 2000s regarding their process of creating a community-based standard for visual material metadata. The project was divided into several phases. Here, I will address Phase Two, which aimed to create an infrastructure for a communal cataloging resource centering on a standardized set of metadata (Barnhart et al. 2006, 2). In Phase Two, UCAI acknowledged that visual resource cataloging is highly subjective, and the visual resource community needed a central authority to create a standard cataloging practice (Barnhart et al. 2006, 3). The UCAI team surveyed members of the Visual Resources Association to determine community needs and concerns around creating a metadata standard, and processed extant visual resource records to identify the most common terms already in use (Barnhart et al. 2006, 16). UCAI began developing several conceptual data processing tools (a data mapping tool, a data standardization tool, a record merging tool, and a record clustering tool), but found that their proposed tools were less necessary to the visual resources community than previously assumed (Barnhart et al. 2006, 18-20).

While this was not technically a reconvergence project, the challenges they faced around different metadata standards and terms applies well to combining museum and archives CMS. I am particularly interested in their approach to resolving inconsistent cataloging practices and vocabulary use, as a major element of my ideal solution incorporates a flexible vocabulary system. The report also identifies unique object identifiers (such as ISBNs and ISSNs) as a potential solution for improving search and retrieval of records (Barnhart et al. 2006, 8).

The report recommends a minimum level of record standards so that every record regardless of type will contain a base amount of information. These minimal standards could be used for both archival and museum records. Their recommendations are Title, Agent or Culture, Date, Site or Repository, and WorkType. To implement this solution, I would identify different minimal standards that are fitting for museums and archives.

In the "Recommendations" section, Barnhart et al. present potential avenues for future work in this sector. A major effort they support is the creation of a central digital hub for the cultural heritage community to increase the standardization of image records' metadata (Barnhart et al. 2006, 15). I understand the necessity of this type of resource, especially for an international community sharing resources. However, I do not find that increased standardization of records is a solution I want to pursue, as discussed above. I am not interested in expanding a group of standards, but rather in eliminating the need for standardization entirely. The group's work on a merging tool presented a possible solution for the issue of synonyms within defined vocabularies. They defined "Preferred Values" separately from "Merged Values." Using the catalog's algorithm, "Preferred Values" are automatically chosen based on the most common value used by the contributors for that metadata field (Barnhart et al. 2006, 20). "Merged Values" are any other terms used for that field. The system allows for multiplicity of terms by displaying all unique values, as well as any repeated values with their frequency of use (Barnhart et al. 2006, 20). The UCAI approach centers community input by displaying multiple values for a field and how common a value is, allowing for a flexible "controlled" vocabulary that is sourced from its community.

Review of the Archival Systems of the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea

The National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea (MMCA) used four separate CMS for different sections of their collections management. Their Collection Material Management Division is separated into the museum Collection Management Team, the Library Management Team, and the Archive Management Team (Lee 2023, 223). Even within one institution, the separation of fields has led to the same issues of creating a CMS capable of handling collections with different metadata requirements that many cross-institution efforts face (Lee 2023, 223). MMCA also confronts the issue of needing various levels of access to collections information based on the user, as they serve casual visitors, researchers, and employees. The MMCA CMS also presents information in multiple languages and scripts, including English and Korean. The incorporation of multiple languages relates to my desire to find solutions that do not solely rely on the Latin alphabet, as many Indigenous nations use writing systems with different scripts.

MMCA's Collection Archive system displays different amounts of information depending on the level at which the user is browsing (i.e. collection, series, or item). Elements of description are divided into areas–each level of the system contains information in each area, but not always the same element. Their listed areas are Identity Area, Background Area, Content and Structure Area, Conditions of Access and Use Area, Related Materials Area, Notes Area, and Description Control Area (Lee 2023, 230). Dividing metadata elements into areas could prove beneficial to a solution for crosswalking discrete metadata schema.

The MMCA acknowledges that archives have become more relevant to the Korean art world in recent years, and that improving both public and museum access to archives is an urgent

task (Lee 2023, 233-234). They also recommend investing time and effort in linking the information contained in the MMCA archives with information from other Korean public art institutions (Lee 2023, 234).

The ANZAC Connections Experience

The Australian War Memorial's digitization project *Anzac Connections* faced the challenge of publicly displaying and providing access to archival collections through a museum database framework (Cronk 2015, 1). The major issues faced were a lack of data entry standardization, the ability to create archival hierarchies in Mimsy XG CMS, and the need to create a public interface with an easy search function that allowed researchers to find information from all databases from a single point (Cronk 2015, 5).

As part of the process of creating a conceptual model for the structure of records, a "hierarchical tree" concept was created. The tree separated physical assets from digital assets, as specified by the particular digitization needs of the project, but the separated model could be a useful foundation for bringing together museum and archival collections. An accession number record acts as a parent for the collection. Two sections split off under this record, one for curatorial work and one for digitization work (Cronk 2015, 7). The project also entailed adding a prefix to extant accession numbers to simplify human readability and retrieval, with the prefix indicating digitized records and the physical collection of origin (Cronk 2015, 8).

Major issues in the project arose when the team attempted to map fields of the records from an in-house Access database into the CMS Mimsy XG. The Access metadata fields did not record the same type or format of information as Mimsy required, so importing the extant data would require intensive data cleanup. Importing partially corrected data resulted in hundreds of

duplicate records. Data cleanup continued after the rest of the project was completed (Cronk 2015, 11-12).

For my purposes, the hierarchical tree model could serve to crosswalk metadata between museum and archival sides of a database. Within a database, it inherently connects all parts of an accession, regardless of record type. It would also allow museum and archival workers to operate within the system in which they are most comfortable, reducing the need for additional training. I think this is a viable solution on a practical level. However, I feel that it solves the technical issue while circumventing the theoretical one. The fields are not any closer together than they were before, and there is little incentive for professionals from both fields to learn more about each other's work and communicate on a deeper level if they effectively remain in separate databases. In an institution with limited resources, however, it is an effective stopgap solution.

Bridging the Gap: Integrating Archival Descriptive Best Practices in an Item-Level Dominated Museum Culture

While there exist a multitude of high-tech reconvergence solutions, the most compelling and clear-cut solution I have found lies in a basic archival practice: the finding aid. Finding aids are used in archives to organize parts of a collection into groups and hierarchies, and, as the name suggests, aid in archival users' search for material. SAA notes that a finding aid contextualizes archival records by creating a composite document that incorporates acquisition, processing, provenance, scope and content, arrangement, and an in-depth inventory at the series and folder level (SAA). Including museum collections in a finding aid provides greater context for the archival materials. Bogan (2024)'s proposed process is breathtaking in its simplicity: "a

finding aid can be created for the overall collection and detailed records can be interlinked to that finding aid" (Bogan 2024, 35).

Bogan's institution, The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum (NBHFM), contains library, archival, and museum collections across three departments, each with their own database. The NBHFM collections team initially used Islandora, a digital asset management system, to attempt cross-database consolidation. However, the digital asset management system did not have the necessary cataloging infrastructure to support library, archival, and museum records. NBHFM decided to use a separate digital system for each type of record, connecting the databases with ArchivesSpace finding aids that linked to the other databases.

I find this strategy appealing because it incorporates a concept already familiar to (at least) half of the convergence community, and focuses on the context of a collection as the focal point for convergence. It provides a simple format that is already supported by archival systems, but can also be easily mapped to other systems. It also does not require the purchase of a proprietary CMS, and instead relies on what the institution already has. This solution relies on finding aids, which are inherently hierarchical in nature. Ideally, a convergent strategy would not incorporate a hierarchical structure, and instead understand all parts of a collection as equal. The finding aid also requires categorizing each item, which can lend itself to relying on colonialist frameworks of categorization. A decolonial use of the finding aid solution would consider the cultural origins and contexts of the collection at hand to determine an appropriate method of categorization. Despite these issues, I consider the finding aid solution the best I have found. There will never be a perfect solution, and this one fits neatly into existing archival frameworks.

To demonstrate how a cross-collection finding aid might work, I draw from my experience at CUMNH. I spent a portion of my first semester there developing an arrangement

authority and a finding aid for the Olsen-Chubbuck collection (Olsen-Chubbuck collection 2023). The archival collection contains materials related to two archeological expeditions in 1958 and 1960, including field notes, maps, photographs, correspondence, and a manuscript written about the expedition. I chose this collection because CUMNH also houses items excavated on those same expeditions, including bison bones, environmental samples, and lithic materials like projectile points. This collection partially inspired my research into convergence, as many of the archival materials directly reference objects in the museum's collection.

What follows is a sample hierarchy for the entirety of the Olsen-Chubbuck collection, including both archival materials and museum objects. While it is not a complete finding aid (which would incorporate the collection's history, context, and complete metadata structure), the example below includes a collection, series, and file-level structure that shows various archival material types with the addition of museum collection objects as an individual series.

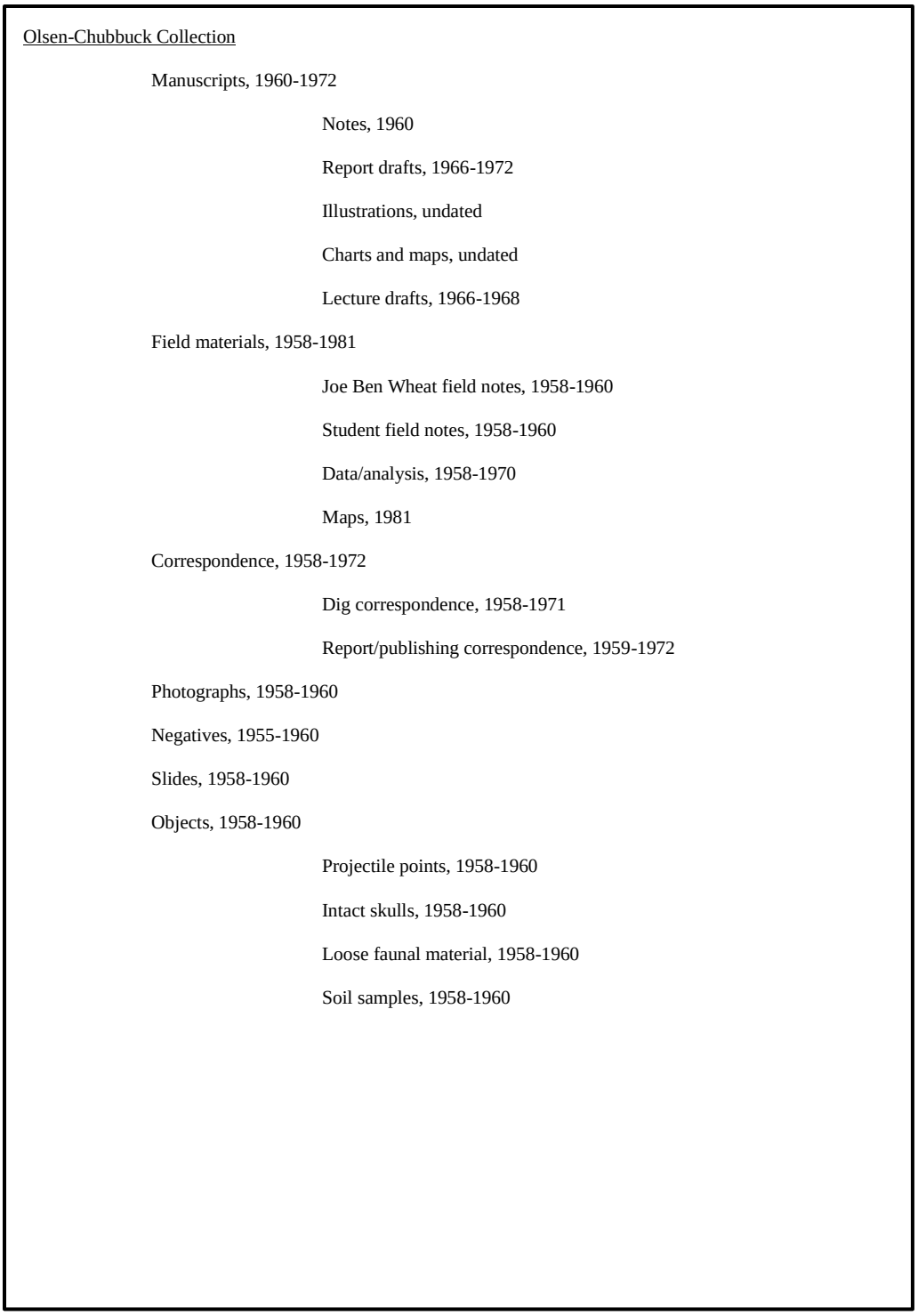

Fig. 3: A numbered list of archival and museum items in the Olsen-Chubbuck collection.

Mukurtu

The CMS Mukurtu provides a very good example of the principles I have laid out. Mukurtu was initially created to provide one Indigenous community with a CMS built around mediated levels of access to information informed by their cultural values surrounding knowledge (Decker 2015, 62). Mukurtu prioritizes cultural protocols and Traditional Knowledge (TK) in its data entry and display. The original version of Mukurtu was intended for a single Aboriginal group to organize and share digital versions of their cultural materials according to their cultural protocols. However, the developers discovered such a profound need for an Indigenous knowledge-informed CMS across the world that the project expanded into a global community of users (Decker 2015, 64). Mukurtu is a free, open-source software that is supported by a community of "hubs and spokes"–regional training centers to provide technical support to users and to encourage localization in its use (Christen et al. 2017). Although the full potential of the Mukurtu platform relies on institutional access to someone well-versed in the software side of data management (which reduces the capabilities of many communities who might benefit from its use), its highly customizable nature is what makes Mukurtu so valuable. It gives a community the ability to structure the database according to local knowledge systems, and to share their digital heritage and metadata with other communities on the platform. It also provides a portal to display digital content, associated metadata, TK labels, and cultural narratives (including oral histories) in one record (Christen et al. 2017). An object record with these fields exemplifies the multiplicity of information that a decolonized database requires. Mukurtu aims to show the multi-layered, chaotic, confusing, communal, and developing conversations regarding heritage institutions and memory that most commercial CMS neglect (Christen et al. 2017). Mukurtu allows users to choose their own set of metadata, but recommends using a unique ID

number, related dates, related names and places, and culture-specific protocols related to families, gender, and country (Christen et al. 2017). Each community group defines the terms of access and distribution for their own materials, which is a fundamental principle of Indigenous archival safety (Decker 2015, 64; Indigenous Archives Collective 2021, 245).

The only element that Mukurtu lacks is a designated section or a set of metadata for archival material. However, there exists an opportunity to envision how archival and museum material might coexist in a less colonialist collections management system.

Case Study Results

The following table outlines how each case study aligns with each element of my ideal solution.

	UCAI	MMCA	ANZAC	Bogan	Mukurtu
Localized vocabulary	Community sourced vocabulary, still focuses on creating a standard	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Vocabulary determined by each institution
Levels of access	Not mentioned	Differentiated by type of user (visitor, researcher, employee)	Museum and archives employees have different areas of access	Not mentioned	Users create profile based on cultural markers (age, gender, family), access determined by cultural requirements
Museum/archive interoperability	Ability to use data in both types of system	Crosswalks metadata fields and links disparate databases	Links databases but does not crosswalk data	Creates a page that links archival and museum records	Supports both object records and document records; customizable metadata fields allow for crosswalking of data
Financially accessible	Developed as a collective of institutions, so requires community support	Proprietary solution developed in-house	Developed in-house, requires institutional support	Only requires use of computer	Free software and free community training and support
Technically accessible	Specific solutions require coding algorithms, but the model could likely be replicated in a simpler way	Requires IT support to implement and manage	Created with IT support, easily accessible after setup	Can be used with any archival platform or basic knowledge of XML	Requires knowledge of GitHub to install, support is readily available and free

Table 4: A table comparing aspects of my ideal solution with information presented in five case studies.

UCAI

The UCAI community-centered vocabulary strategy reflects values of the library field, which often examines users' information-seeking behavior to inform policy decisions. By relying on community input, a museum/archive centers the needs and tendencies of its user base and reduces the potential for colonialist bias. When the opinions of hundreds or thousands inform a decision, rather than the views of a few staff members, individual bias is lessened in favor of reflecting the many views of a community.

The main issue I find with the UCAI approach was their method of gathering vocabulary data, which relied on advanced knowledge of coding to collect and review said data. However, I believe their approach could be emulated in a less technically complex way, such as an online form or questionnaire. Such a strategy might require greater human effort to analyze the data collected, but I see this as a benefit. Efficiency is decentered in favor of deeper understanding and analysis of the information.

MMCA

The MMCA approach of creating metadata areas to group different fields breaks down colonialist barriers by making the similarities between museum and archive metadata fields obvious. By establishing areas of information rather than specific metadata fields, users must examine what information they record and why it is necessary. Areas instead of specific fields also allows for greater flexibility of information recorded. For example, rather than having a "collector" field and a "creator" field, the "identity" area can record all people and groups involved in the creation and donation of an item, regardless of role or label.

ANZAC

The ANZAC hierarchical tree model is perhaps the least decolonial strategy among these case studies due to its limited engagement with convergence theory. This model retains the divisions between the fields by only connecting discrete collections under a single accession record, and not further examining how the collections are structured. However, it is important to examine a spectrum of convergence options, as all institutions are different and thus require different solutions. Joining an archival and museum collection under one accession record acknowledges the fields' overlap, and enables their connection in a single CMS.

Bridging the Gap

The finding aid model, which I find most viable, requires little in the way of technology or expertise, while simultaneously allowing for a highly technical adaptation if appropriate for the institution. An institution can employ whatever CMS they already use to create a simple webpage that links out to existing records. A museum or archive with more resources could use archival coding schema like EAD or RDF to create a more structured finding aid that fits their needs. Regardless of technological ability, the finding aid method is highly flexible and prioritizes context for each collection.

Mukurtu

Mukurtu centers community collaboration in its setup and use. As with any approach, there are particular issues that arise when relying on community input. Some communities, particularly those who have faced colonial violence in the past and present, do not trust Western heritage institutions due to centuries of harm. Colonialist institutions must acknowledge this harm if they hope to build trusting relationships with these communities. Before trying to gather

information from a community, the institution must first work towards an equitable relationship based on mutual respect. Relationships like these take many years to establish, but slowing down adds to the decoloniality of this approach.

No community or culture is a monolith, and conflicting opinions will arise when surveying many community members. These conflicting opinions are beneficial in a decolonial strategy. Conflicts make the work take longer, but they also force all involved to acknowledge the multiplicity inherent in the work. Even within one knowledge system, there exist many conflicting views. There are situations where this type of multiplicity is beneficial–creating a large thesaurus requires many different terms. Of course, there are situations where multiplicity becomes more of a challenge, such as deciding how to care for a particular cultural item. No decision will please every community member, but that is not the ultimate goal. Finding a solution that causes the least harm will ultimately result in a stronger relationship between the institution and the community it serves.

Community input can include collecting incorrect and harmful information. Even when the institution has good intentions, some community members may seek to harm or discredit them. Some people may submit wrong information in good faith. However, this is no different from the current museum/archive method of collecting contextual information. Databases abound with errors and typos from professionals, and I have already discussed the sheer volume of harmful information in many CMS. There will always be mistakes, but in this model, at least, they come from the community.

I've presented several existing options for a decolonial convergent framework. Why, then, do I need to create another system? Because I have yet to find a convergence solution that acknowledges the necessity of decoloniality in convergence. Without a decolonial mindset, any

convergence solution will ultimately fail. Colonial division of knowledge is the issue at the root of convergence. To bring museums and archives back into meaningful relationship with each other, we must understand the reason for the divide. To find a workable solution, we must decolonize our minds.

Convergence and Decolonization

While some scholars see the reunion of museums and archives as a "return to tradition," convergence presents an opportunity to reevaluate the values of each type of institution and their place in the modern day (Marcum 2014, 81). Many professionals from both fields claim that the purpose of their discipline is to spread knowledge and educate the public (Wythe 2007). However, due to a variety of factors–funding, institutional barriers, time constraints, deeply held academic beliefs–their actions do not reflect this goal.

Museums and archives share the values of preservation, organization, and education. While these values may be colonially motivated, I believe that by interrogating what each discipline finds important, the aspects that are worth keeping within a decolonial framework become clear. Ultimately, museums and archives aim to safeguard the past for the sake of the future.

Many communities, both Western and not, find value in maintaining a record of their past, in a variety of forms (Ross et al. 2006). The mindset of Western heritage institutions, therefore, should not fully drop the work of preservation, but rather adjust what preservation means (Christen and Anderson 2019, 100). Some communities may find that preserving their history (through documents, objects, and other sources) in inert environments designed to extend the life of the object as long as possible aligns with their cultural values, and have no quarrel with the methods of colonialist heritage institutions. Some groups may hold that preservation lies in the telling and retelling of their stories, and that their physical objects are not involved in the process. Still others may opt for no preservation at all. Preserving history can look many different ways, and museums and archives must internalize the complexity inherent in their work. Decoloniality allows for a multitude of options.

Organization is another deeply held tenet of Western heritage institutions. As I have shown, previous and current methods of organization and categorization have long colonial histories and continue to perpetuate harm. This is not to say that the field should abandon all methods of categorizing. An effective means of organizing information helps make it more accessible to the public, which is a cornerstone of archival practice. Similarly to preservation, the fields must accept the multiplicity of organizational and categorizing methods that exist, and become comfortable with uncertainty.

Finally, education and distribution of knowledge are central to the existence of museums and archives. While dissolving the boundaries between fields aids in the sharing of information and increases opportunities for education, not all knowledge is meant to be shared. Many Indigenous communities have been harmed by colonialist institutions distributing their cultural information without permission or consideration for potential harm. Decolonizing museums and archives therefore includes both access to and restriction of information. The Indigenous Archives Collective's statement on Indigenous information rights stresses the importance of sustained advocacy for Indigenous data rights (Indigenous Archives Collective 2021, 245). Communication with nations of origin in regard to how they want information to be shared, and respecting those wishes, is an essential part of decolonizing.

Colonialist museums and archives thrive on strict taxonomies. Decolonial museologists look towards the "coral model", which sees collections not as data points, but as a living coral reef of relationships. Mike Jones argues that with this model, the end goal is not a definitive order of information, but a welcoming of the multiplicity of stories (Jones 2022, 122). In focusing less on hard data and more on context and relationships, the work loses the antiseptic sting of clean colonialist data gathering, and embraces getting dirty. In the coral reef model,

points of information lose a predetermined sequence, and instead find unconventional and unexpected connections, allowing for confusion, questions, and the unknown (Jones 2022, 125). The value given to Western documentation decreases, although documentation can still be crucial to establishing context. Both heritage institution workers and their visitors engage with a knowledge community, rather than a hegemonic structure, following paths forged by those working with the collections in years past, rather than firm policies and procedures. We acknowledge the role we play in the information landscape around us (Jones 2022, 125). Coloniality also thrives in obscurity–a decolonial method must be transparent, and not further conceal the matrix of power that created it (Duff and Harris 2002, 284).

By bringing museums and archives back into conversation and relationship with each other, we, as heritage institution workers and the communities around them, defy the colonial categories set upon us. We reject the separation between mind and body, and acknowledge that the world is more complex than the rigid boxes coloniality forces it into. We accept that there are more ways of knowing than we can imagine. We lower the barriers to entry for anyone looking for knowledge that may not have the specific academy training required to navigate a colonialist museum or archive space. We take a step towards democratizing the knowledge that wants to be shared. We find reassurance in our discomfort. We engage more with the world and communities around us than we do with the boxes in our basement. We remember that this work ultimately connects us to the larger story of humanity, across continents and centuries, and that connection comes with complexities and uncertainties. We stop trying to know everything. We look to fear and find curiosity in its place.

Conclusion

What could a different world look like?

Previously, I detailed what my ideal technical solution to convergence would entail. It would look much like the Mukurtu CMS, with the ability to customize vocabulary, cultural protocols, levels of access, and metadata fields. It would be inexpensive or free, and require a low degree of technical expertise to set up and operate. While I believe there is rich possibility in technology, it is not the cornerstone of the solution. We must decenter data, code, and standards, and remember why we are doing this in the first place: people. People created everything that we work with, archives and objects alike, and we lose our way when we forget that. Technical solutions can only get us so far. Controlled vocabularies with stilted terms can exclude so many people and prevent them from accessing knowledge that they have a right to. Speaking in natural terms with a person opens doors that XML can never hope to approach.

Finding a balance between the utility of standardization and its potential harm is difficult. Standardization makes interoperability between institutions much easier, but it can easily tip into cultural assimilation. To find a workable solution, I turn to “Toward Slow Archives” by Kimberly Christen and Jane Anderson. They recommend changing the way we think about time, and consider temporal sovereignty–learning about and respecting Indigenous conceptions of time and events (Christen and Anderson 2019, 89). Slow archives decenter the continual grind of processing and arrangement, and move away from preservation as the main goal of archival work (Christen and Anderson 2019, 100). Instead, relationships with communities of origin become central, as well as developing relationships with the museum or archival material itself.

Following the slow archives model, as well as the Brian Deer scheme’s philosophy of fitting an organizational framework to the community it serves, I argue that the best solution is to

develop localized vocabularies and systems of categorization for every institution (Cherry and Mukunda 2015, 552). Theoretically, this would make communication (especially data sharing) between institutions more difficult. However, this difficulty can deeply enrich the research process. Anyone looking for information from a specific group or location must become immersed in the context of their research in order to find what they're looking for. A more locally-rooted research process would necessitate community interaction and connection, and foster a deeper respect for the subject matter. Rather than being able to quickly obtain a specific piece of information and remove it from its context, a researcher would have to become familiar with the knowledge system in which that information lives. A location-specific approach necessarily lessens the risk of an external researcher accessing community information and using it for exploitative or malicious purposes, as they must become familiar with real people and a living culture. Being a community-sourced and -focused knowledge repository greatly encourages research by members of the community, as it organizes knowledge in a system that is familiar to them and reflects their worldview. Relying on local vocabulary helps to spread awareness of local languages and knowledge systems that are in danger of disappearing due to centuries of colonial erasure. Making the research process slower goes against the colonialist value of efficiency, replacing it with valuing community and relationships. When a community is in charge of the organization and stewardship of their own knowledge, it becomes much easier to restrict knowledge according to their customs and values. This approach would also normalize the idea of culturally-based knowledge restriction as it would come with a deeper understanding of knowledge's place in the system at large.

When there is not one standard to which all knowledge and heritage institutions must conform, it becomes much easier to use non-Latin scripts in the creation of organization systems.

Heritage institutions can de-center visual cues and text if so desired, as colonialist museums and archives rely almost exclusively on text, which excludes cultures that do not use written text for record keeping and communication.

While machine-readable interoperability becomes more difficult with more localized structures, this type of specialization encourages deeper relationships between institutions, as they would have to become familiar with each other's system of knowledge and organization to communicate effectively and share collections. Basing organization and vocabulary on local knowledge also encourages collecting based on place and culture of origin, rather than the indiscriminate collecting practices of many colonialist museums. Ultimately, localizing instead of standardizing bases the museum and archives fields in community, equality, and a shared sense of responsibility and stewardship, rather than an overarching organization deciding standards for the rest of the field.

Can we maintain archival structure in a decolonial database? Have we really found a solution for the initial museum/archive divide?

Yes and no. There will never be a perfect solution, nor will there be one applicable to all museums and archives. But a flexible framework of minimal metadata standards and a robust thesaurus of terms solves many of the problems laid out above.

When I began research for this thesis, my initial goal was a practical solution to managing archival and museum collections in a single database. Along the way, I found that the problem I wanted to solve ran much, much deeper than I realized. To solve the museum/archives divide, we–museologists, archivists, and the communities affected by heritage institutions–have to confront the colonial history, legacy, and continued harm of both fields. To truly decolonize museums and archives, we must radically reframe the way we think about them. We cannot lean

so heavily on standardization which robs us of complexity. We cannot see our knowledge and our collections as something to safeguard from the rest of the world, but as an inextricable part *of* the world. We must value context and place more than efficiency and marketability. We must listen more than we speak. We must let go of control, and look for community instead. We must be brave. We must embrace the wilderness garden.

Bibliography

Adler, Melissa. 2016. “The Case for Taxonomic Reparations.” *KNOWLEDGE ORGANIZATION* 43 (8): 630–40. https://doi.org/10.5771/0943-7444-2016-8-630.

“Alaskan Tribes Came to Denver to Reclaim Their Cultural Heritage. They Left Empty-Handed.” 2024. *The Denver Post* (blog). April 5, 2024. https://www.denverpost.com/2024/04/05/tlingit-tribe-denver-art-museum-repatriation/.

Baca, Murtha, ed. 2006. *Cataloging Cultural Objects: A Guide to Describing Cultural Works and Their Images*. Chicago: American Library Association.

Barnhart, Linda, Brian E. C. Schottlaender, Brad Westbrook, Kevin Esme Cowles, Trish Rose-Sandler, and Ardys Kozbial. 2006. “Further Development of a Shared Cataloging Resource for the Visual Resources Community: UCAI Phase Two: Final Report,” February. https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6nz3q2d6.

Beasley, Gerald. 2007. “Curatorial Crossover: Building Library, Archives, and Museum Collections.” *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage* 8 (1): 20–28. https://doi.org/10.5860/rbm.8.1.272.

Bogan, Kelli. 2024. “Bridging the Gap: Integrating Archival Descriptive Best Practices in an Item-Level Dominated Museum Culture.” *International Journal of Librarianship* 9 (2): 28–41. https://doi.org/10.23974/ijol.2024.vol9.2.359.

Bountouri, Lina, Christos Papatheodorou, Vasilis Soulikias, and Mathios Stratis. 2009. “Metadata Interoperability in Public Sector Information.” *Journal of Information Science* 35 (2): 204–31. https://doi.org/10.1177/0165551508098601.

Brawley-Barker, Tessa. 2016. “Integrating Library, Archives, and Museum Collections in an Open Source Information Management System: A Case Study at Glenstone.” *Art Documentation: Journal of the Art Libraries Society of North America* 35 (1): 86–113.

Brothman, Brien. 1999. “Declining Derrida: Integrity, Tensegrity, and the Preservation of Archives from Deconstruction.” *Archivaria* 48:64–88.

Buckland, Michael K. 1991. “Information as Thing.” *Journal of the American Society for Information Science* 42 (5): 351–60. https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1097-4571(199106)42:5<351::AID-ASI5>3.0.CO;2-3.

Butler, Beverley. 2009. “‘Othering’ the Archive—from Exile to Inclusion and Heritage Dignity: The Case of Palestinian Archival Memory.” *Archival Science* 9 (1–2): 57–69. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-009-9095-0.

Carter, Rodney G. S. 2006. “Of Things Said and Unsaid: Power, Archival Silences, and Power in Silence.” *Archivaria*, September, 215–33.

Chatalbash, Rachel, Susan Hernandez, and Megan Schwenke, eds. 2022. *Museum Archives: Practice, Issues, Advocacy*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists.

Cherry, Alissa, and Keshav Mukunda. 2015. “A Case Study in Indigenous Classification: Revisiting and Reviving the Brian Deer Scheme.” *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* 53 (5–6): 548–67. https://doi.org/10.1080/01639374.2015.1008717.

“Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes to Present Their Perspectives on the Sand.” n.d. Accessed March 25, 2025. https://www.historycolorado.org/press-release/2022/07/25/cheyenne-and-arapaho-tribes-present-their-perspectives-sand-creek-massacre.

Chilcott, Alicia, Kirsty Fife, James Lowry, Jenny Moran, Arike Oke, Anna Sexton, and Jass Thethi. 2021. “Against Whitewashing: The Recent History of Anti-Racist Action in the British Archives Sector.” *The International Journal of Information, Diversity, & Inclusion* 5 (1): 33–59.

Christen, Kimberly A. 2012. *Does Information Really Want to Be Free? Indigenous Knowledge Systems and the Question of Openness*. *International Journal of Communication*. Vol. 6. https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/1618.

Christen, Kimberly, and Jane Anderson. 2019. “Toward Slow Archives.” *Archival Science* 19 (2): 87–116. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-019-09307-x.

Christen, Kimberly, Alex Merrill, and Michael Wynne. 2017. “A Community of Relations: Mukurtu Hubs and Spokes.” *D-Lib Magazine* 23 (5/6). https://doi.org/10.1045/may2017-christen.

Christian, Michele. 2005. “A Curatorial Challenge: Managing Artifacts in Academic Archives.” *Collections: A Journal for Museum and Archives Professionals* 1 (4): 329–46.

Clavir, Miriam. 2002. *Preserving What Is Valued: Museums, Conservation, and First Nations*. UBC Museum of Anthropology Research Publication. Vancouver: UBC Press.

“Collection: Olsen-Chubbuck Collection | Rare and Distinctive Collections – University of Colorado Boulder.” n.d. Accessed March 26, 2025. https://archives.colorado.edu/repositories/5/resources/2634/collection_organization.

Cook, Terry, and Joan M. Schwartz. 2002. “Archives, Records, and Power: From (Postmodern) Theory to (Archival) Performance.” *Archival Science* 2 (3–4): 171–85. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02435620.

Cox, Richard J., and Ronald L. Larsen. 2008. “iSchools and Archival Studies.” *Archival Science* 8 (4): 307–26. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-009-9092-3.

Cronk, Theresa. n.d. “Digitising and Accommodating Archival Collections in a Museum Collection Management System: The ANZAC Connections Experience.” Research Centre at the Australian War Memorial.

“DCMI Metadata Terms.” n.d. DCMI. Accessed March 3, 2025. https://www.dublincore.org/specifications/dublin-core/dcmi-terms/.

Decker, Juilee. 2015. *Technology and Digital Initiatives: Innovative Approaches for Museums*. Innovative Approaches for Museums. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Deloria, Philip J. 2018. “The New World of the Indigenous Museum.” *Daedalus* 147 (2): 106–15. https://doi.org/10.1162/DAED_a_00494.

Dempsey, Lorcan. 1999. “Scientific, Industrial, and Cultural Heritage: A Shared Approach.” *Ariadne*, no. 22. https://www.ariadne.ac.uk/issue/22/dempsey/.

“Digital Heritage Metadata Fields (2.1) | Mukurtu CMS.” 2020. April 16, 2020. https://mukurtu.org/support/digital-heritage-metadata-fields-2-1/.

Doucet, Michelle. n.d. “Library and Archives Canada: A Case Study of a National Library, Archives, and Museum Merger.” *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage*.

Doyle, Ann M. 2006. “Naming and Reclaiming Indigenous Knowledges in Public Institutions: Intersections of Landscapes and Experience.” In . Ergon Verlag. https://repository.arizona.edu/handle/10150/105581.

Duff, Wendy M., and Verne Harris. 2002. “Stories and Names: Archival Description as Narrating Records and Constructing Meanings.” *Archival Science* 2 (3–4): 263–85. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02435625.

Dupont, Christian. 2007. “Libraries, Archives, and Museums in the Twenty-First Century: Intersecting Missions, Converging Futures?” *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage* 8 (1): 13–19. https://doi.org/10.5860/rbm.8.1.271.

Eito-Brun, Ricardo. 2014. “Description of Engineering Artifacts and Archival Data: EAD Meets VRA.” *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 147 (August):341–44. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.07.109.

Everitt, Sian. 2007. “Archives or Museum-Does It Matter?” *Collections: A Journal for Museum and Archives Professionals* 3 (2): 135–54.

Faulkhead, Shannon, Livia Iacovino, Sue McKemmish, and Kirsten Thorpe. 2010. “Australian Indigenous Knowledge and the Archives: Embracing Multiple Ways of Knowing and Keeping.” *Archives and Manuscripts* 38 (1): 27–50.

Ghaddar, J.J. 2016. “The Spectre in the Archive: Truth, Reconciliation, and Indigenous Archival Memory.” *Archivaria* 2016 (January):3–26.

Gierke, Bettina, and Margret Schild. 2024. “Museum Libraries in Germany: Ambassadors for Standardized Data, Building Bridges between Archives, Libraries and Museums.” *International Journal of Librarianship* 9 (2): 42–50. https://doi.org/10.23974/ijol.2024.vol9.2.366.

Given, Lisa M., and Lianne McTavish. 2010. “What’s Old Is New Again: The Reconvergence of Libraries, Archives, and Museums in the Digital Age.” *The Library Quarterly* 80 (1): 7–32. https://doi.org/10.1086/648461.

Godby, Carol Jean, and Ray Denenberg. 2015. *Common Ground: Exploring Compatibilities between the Linked Data Models of the Library of Congress and OCLC*. Washington, DC, USA: Library of Congress ; Dublin.

Government of Canada, Canadian Heritage. 2018. “Nomenclature for Museum Cataloging.” September 1, 2018. https://page.nomenclature.info/apropos-about.app?lang=en.

Greene, Mark, and Dennis Meissner. 2005. “More Product, Less Process: Revamping Traditional Archival Processing.” *The American Archivist* 68 (2): 208–63. https://doi.org/10.17723/aarc.68.2.c741823776k65863.

Hall, Stuart, and Bram Gieben, eds. 2011. *Formations of Modernity*. Reprinted. Understanding Modern Societies 1. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hand, Sarit, and Francesca Pitaro. 2019. “When Archives Have Artifacts: From Inventory to Cataloging at the Associated Press Corporate Archives.” *Journal of Archival Organization* 16 (2–3): 88–108. https://doi.org/10.1080/15332748.2019.1679011.

Hardesty, William W. 2021. “Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts. Archival Fundamentals Series III, Vol. 2. By Dennis Meissner. [Review].” *Archival Issues* 41 (1). https://doi.org/10.31274/archivalissues.13208.

Hedegaard, Ruth. 2004. “The Benefits of Archives, Libraries and Museums Working Together: A Danish Case of Shared Databases.” *New Library World* 105 (7/8): 290–96. https://doi.org/10.1108/03074800410551048.

Hernandez, Susan. 2024. Conversation with Susan Hernandez, Cleveland Museum of Art Archivist Interview by Juniper Guthrie. Zoom.

Hillmann, Diane I., and Elaine L. Westbrooks, eds. 2004. *Metadata in Practice*. Chicago: American Library Association.

Hinsley, Curtis M. 1981. *Savages and Scientists: The Smithsonian Institution and the Development of American Anthropology 1846 - 1910*. Washington, D.C: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Hjerppe, Roland. 2014. “A Framework for the Description of Generalised Documents.”

Hooland, Seth van, and Ruben Verborgh. 2014. *Linked Data for Libraries, Archives and Museums*. London: Facet Publishing.

Hyry, Tom, Diane Kaplan, and Christine Weideman. 2002. “‘Though This Be Madness, Yet There Is Method in 't’: Assessing the Value of Faculty Papers and Defining a Collecting Policy.” *The American Archivist* 65 (1): 56–69.

Ilik, Violeta. 2015. “Cataloger Makeover: Creating Non-MARC Name Authorities.” *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* 53 (3–4): 382–98. https://doi.org/10.1080/01639374.2014.961626.

“Indigenous Referencing Guidance for Indigenous Knowledges.” 2023. Indigenous Archives Collective and the UTS Jumbunna Institute of Indigenous Education and Research.

Institute, Canadian Conservation. 2017. “Caring for Ceramic and Glass Objects - Preventive Conservation Guidelines for Collections.” November 20, 2017. https://www.canada.ca/en/conservation-institute/services/preventive-conservation/guidelines-collections/ceramics-glass-preventive-conservation.html.

———. 2018. “Caring for Paper Objects - Preventive Conservation Guidelines for Collections.” May 11, 2018. https://www.canada.ca/en/conservation-institute/services/preventive-conservation/guidelines-collections/paper-objects.html.

Isaac, Antoine, and Thomas Baker. 2015. “Linked Data Practice at Different Levels of Semantic Precision: The Perspective of Libraries, Archives and Museums.” *Bulletin of the Association for Information Science and Technology* 41 (4).

Johnson, Eric Michael. n.d. “Fire Over Ahwahnee: John Muir and the Decline of Yosemite.” Scientific American. Accessed March 13, 2025. https://www.scientificamerican.com/blog/primate-diaries/how-john-muir-s-brand-of-conservation-led-to-the-decline-of-yosemite/.

Jones, Michael. 2018. “From Catalogues to Contextual Networks: Reconfiguring Collection Documentation in Museums.” *Archives and Records* 39 (1): 4–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/23257962.2017.1407750.

Jones, Mike. 2022. *Artefacts, Archives, and Documentation in the Relational Museum*. London ; New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.

———. n.d. “Artefacts and Archives: Considering Cross-Collection Knowledge Networks in Museums | MWA2015: Museums and the Web Asia 2015.” Accessed September 22, 2024. https://mwa2015.museumsandtheweb.com/paper/artefacts-and-archives-considering-cross-collection-knowledge-networks-in-museums/index.html.

Kalenov, N., I. Sobolevskaya, and A. Sotnikov. 2021. “Archival and Museum Information as a Component of the Common Digital Space of Scientific Knowledge:” In *Proceedings of the 10th International Conference on Data Science, Technology and Applications*, 144–49. Online Streaming, --- Select a Country ---: SCITEPRESS - Science and Technology Publications. https://doi.org/10.5220/0010512401440149.

Kassim, Sumaya. 2017. “The Museum Will Not Be Decolonised.” *Media Diversified* (blog). November 15, 2017. https://mediadiversified.org/2017/11/15/the-museum-will-not-be-decolonised/.

Kirchhoff, Thomas, Werner Schweibenz, and Jörn Sieglerschmidt. 2008. “Archives, Libraries, Museums and the Spell of Ubiquitous Knowledge.” *Archival Science* 8 (4): 251–66. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-009-9093-2.

Klimaszewski, Cheryl. 2015. “Lumping (and Splitting) LAMs: The Story of Grouping Libraries, Archives, and Museums.” *Canadian Journal of Information and Library Science* 39:350–67.

Lea, Mary Margaret, and Celia Emmelhainz. 2024. “Organizers of Museum History: Honoring the Labor of Librarians and Archivists in the Bureau of American Ethnology.” *International Journal of Librarianship* 9 (2): 87–102. https://doi.org/10.23974/ijol.2024.vol9.2.365.

Lee, Deborah. 2011. “Indigenous Knowledge Organization: A Study of Concepts, Terminology, Structure and (Mostly) Indigenous Voices.” *Partnership: The Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research* 6 (1). https://doi.org/10.21083/partnership.v6i1.1427.

Lee, Jeehee. n.d. “Review of the Archival Systems of the National Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Korea.” *The Review of Korean Studies*, 221–35.

Lester, Peter. 2018. “Of Mind and Matter: The Archive as Object.” *Archives and Records* 39 (1): 73–87. https://doi.org/10.1080/23257962.2017.1407748.

“Linked Data - Design Issues.” n.d. Accessed February 26, 2025. https://www.w3.org/DesignIssues/LinkedData.html.

Littletree, Sandra, and Cheryl A. Metoyer. 2015. “Knowledge Organization from an Indigenous Perspective: The Mashantucket Pequot Thesaurus of American Indian Terminology Project.” *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* 53 (5–6): 640–57. https://doi.org/10.1080/01639374.2015.1010113.

Lonetree, Amy. 2012. *Decolonizing Museums. Representing Native America in National and Tribal Museums*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.

Marcum, Deanna. 2014. “Archives, Libraries, Museums: Coming Back Together?” *Information & Culture* 49 (1): 74–89.

Matsumoto, Mieko, and Espen Uleberg, eds. 2018. *CAA2016: Oceans of Data : Proceedings of the 44th Conference on Computer Applications and Quantitative Methods in Archaeology*. Computer Applications and Quantitative Methods in Archaeology: Conference Proceedings. Summertown, Oxford: Archaeopress Publishing Ltd.

Mbembe, Achille. 2017. *Critique of Black Reason*. Duke University Press. https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822373230.

“Mbembe, Achille. 2015. ‘Decolonizing Knowledge and the Question of the Archive.’ Africa Is a Country. | Platform for Experimental Collaborative Ethnography.” n.d. Accessed November 14, 2024. https://worldpece.org/content/mbembe-achille-2015-%E2%80%9Cdecolonizing-knowledge-and-question-archive%E2%80%9D-africa-country.

Mechanics, Interactive. n.d. “Disrespect Des Fonds: Rethinking Arrangement and Description in Born-Digital Archives - Archive Journal.” Accessed October 3, 2024. http://dev.archivejournal.net/?p=4722.

Meraz, Gloria. 1997. “Cultural Evidence: On the Common Ground Between Archivists and Museologists.” *Provenance, Journal of the Society of Georgia Archivists* 15 (1). https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/provenance/vol15/iss1/2.

Millar, Laura. 2007. “Subject or Object? Shaping and Reshaping the Intersections between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Records.” *Archival Science* 6 (3–4): 329–50. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-007-9042-x.

Miron, Rose. 2024. *Indigenous Archival Activism: Mohican Interventions in Public History and Memory*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Mugridge, Rebecca L. 2007. “Cataloging Cultural Objects: A Guide to Describing Cultural Works and Their Images.” *Library Collections, Acquisitions, & Technical Services* 31 (3–4): 230. https://doi.org/10.1080/14649055.2007.10766172.

“Museum Definition.” n.d. International Council of Museums. Accessed November 4, 2024. https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/.

Namhila, Ellen Ndeshi. 2016. “Content and Use of Colonial Archives: An under-Researched Issue.” *Archival Science* 16 (2): 111–23. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-014-9234-0.

Nemmers, John R., Steve Duckworth, Jessica Belcoure Marcetti, and Lourdes Santamaría-Wheeler. 2018. “From Museum to Archives: Managing the Panama Canal Museum Collection.” *Archives and Records* 39 (1): 42–56. https://doi.org/10.1080/23257962.2017.1407749.

O'Neal, Jennifer. 2015. "'The Right to Know': Decolonizing Native American Archives." *Journal of Western Archives* 6 (1). https://doi.org/10.26077/fc99-b022.

"Protocols for Native American Archival Materials." n.d. Accessed January 23, 2025. https://www2.nau.edu/libnap-p/protocols.html.

Reijerkerk, Dana, and Kristen J. Nyitray. 2023. "(Re)Moving Indigenous Knowledge Boundaries: A Review of Library and Archival Collection Literature since the Enactment of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA)." *Collection Management* 48 (1): 22–47. https://doi.org/10.1080/01462679.2022.2033144.

Relations, E.-International. 2017. "Interview - Walter Mignolo/Part 2: Key Concepts." *E-International Relations* (blog). January 21, 2017. http://www.e-ir.info/2017/01/21/interview-walter-mignolopart-2-key-concepts/.

Robinson, Helena. 2015. "Knowledge Utopias: An Epistemological Perspective on the Convergence of Museums, Libraries and Archives." *Museum & Society* 12 (3): 210–24. https://doi.org/10.29311/mas.v12i3.260.

Ross, Fiona C., Sue McKemmish, and Shannon Faulkhead. 2006. "Indigenous Knowledge and the Archives: Designing Trusted Archival Systems for Koorie Communities." In . https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:158065314.

"SAA Council Approves FY 2023 Budget, Creates Archival Repatriation Committee | Announcements." n.d. Accessed March 27, 2025. https://connect.archivists.org/discussion/saa-council-approves-fy-2023-budget-creates-archival-repatriation-committee#bm6274b4fd-1adc-4b5f-8a65-70ddb5b00f5e.

"SAA Dictionary: Archives." n.d. Accessed November 4, 2024. https://dictionary.archivists.org/entry/archives.html.

"SAA Dictionary: Finding Aid." n.d. Accessed February 18, 2025. https://dictionary.archivists.org/entry/finding-aid.html.

Sandoval, Chela. 2000. *Methodology of the Oppressed*. Theory out of Bounds, v. 18. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Seth, van Hooland, Bontemps Yves, and Kaufman Seth. 2008. "Answering the Call for More Accountability: Applying Data Profiling to Museum Metadata." In *Proceedings of the International Conference on Dublin Core and Metadata Applications*. Dublin Core Metadata Initiative. https://doi.org/10.23106/DCMI.952109211.

Sieglerschmidt, Jörn, Frank von Hagel, and Jörn ; Hagel Sieglerschmidt. 2008. "Convergence of Internet Services in the Cultural Heritage Sector - the Long Way to Common Vocabularies, Metadata Formats, Ontologies. Beitrag Zur CIDOC-

Jahrestagung Im September 2006 in Göteborg 'Wider Perspective - Broader Base.'" http://opus.bsz-bw.de/swop/volltexte/2008/277/.

Simmons, John E., and Toni M. Kiser, eds. 2020. *MRM6: Museum Registration Methods*. 6th edition. Lanham Boulder New York London: Rowan & Littlefield.

Sium, A, C Desai, and E Ritskes. 2012. "Towards the 'Tangible Unknown': Decolonization and the Indigenous Future." *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1 (1): I–xiii.

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. 1999. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London ; New York : Dunedin, N.Z. : New York: Zed Books ; University of Otago Press ; Distributed in the USA exclusively by St. Martin's Press.

Soares, Bruno Brulon. 2023a. "Redistributing the Museum: Towards a Museology of Hope." In *The Anticolonial Museum*. Routledge.

———. 2023b. *The Anticolonial Museum: Reclaiming Our Colonial Heritage*. London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003385127.

"Standards & Best Practices Resource Guide | Society of American Archivists." n.d. Accessed October 3, 2024. https://www2.archivists.org/groups/museum-archives-section/standards-best-practices-resource-guide.

Sundström, Admeire Da Silva Santos. 2023. "Ethical Issues from Decolonial Practices in Knowledge Organization: The Case of Indigenous Collections in Världskulturmuseet." *KNOWLEDGE ORGANIZATION* 50 (6): 439–51. https://doi.org/10.5771/0943-7444-2023-6-439.

Sutherland, Tonia, and Alyssa Purcell. 2021. "A Weapon and a Tool: Decolonizing Description and Embracing Redescription as Liberatory Archival Praxis." *The International Journal of Information, Diversity, & Inclusion* 5 (1): 60–78.

Taylor, Hugh A. 1995. "'Heritage' Revisited: Documents as Artifacts in the Context of Museums and Material Culture." *Archivaria*, October, 8–19.

"The Indigenous Archives Collective Position Statement on the Right of Reply to Indigenous Knowledges and Information Held in Archives." 2021. *Archives and Manuscripts* 49 (3): 244–52. https://doi.org/10.1080/01576895.2021.1997609.

Thorpe, Kirsten. 2019. "Ethics, Indigenous Cultural Safety and the Archives." *Archifacts* 2 (July):33–47.

Trant, Jennifer. 2009. "Emerging Convergence? Thoughts on Museums, Archives, Libraries, and Professional Training." *Museum Management and Curatorship* 24 (4): 369–87. https://doi.org/10.1080/09647770903314738.

Turner, Hannah. 2020. *Cataloguing Culture: Legacies of Colonialism in Museum Documentation*. Vancouver Toronto: UBC Press.

VanderBerg, Robert. 2012. "Converging Libraries, Archives and Museums: Overcoming Distinctions, but for What Gain?" *Archives and Manuscripts* 40 (3): 136–46. https://doi.org/10.1080/01576895.2012.735826.

Waibel, Günter, and Ricky Erway. 2009. "Think Globally, Act Locally: Library, Archive, and Museum Collaboration." *Museum Management and Curatorship* 24 (4): 323–35. https://doi.org/10.1080/09647770903314704.

Wan, Jing, Yubin Zhou, Gang Chen, and Junkai Yi. 2014. "Designing a Multi-Level Metadata Standard Based on Dublin Core for Museum Data." In . https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Designing-a-Multi-level-Metadata-Standard-based-on-Wan-Zhou/b5d2372108af8382dfc88972703ed9bf6e6756f2.

Whyte, Kyle. 2024. "Why Does Anything Need to Be Called Wild?," January.

Willey, Eric. 2017. "An Examination of the Convergence of Theory in Libraries and Archives." *Archival Issues* 38 (2): 42–62.

Witcomb, Andrea, and Kylie Message, eds. 2015. *Museum Theory*. First edition. The International Handbooks of Museum Studies / General Editors.: Sharon Macdonald and Helen Rees Leahy. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Wythe, Deborah. 2007. "New Technologies and the Convergence of Libraries, Archives, and Museums." *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage* 8 (1): 51–55. https://doi.org/10.5860/rbm.8.1.276.

Yale, Elizabeth. 2015. "The History of Archives: The State of the Discipline." *Book History* 18:332–59.

Zeitlyn, David. 2012. "Anthropology in and of the Archives: Possible Futures and Contingent Pasts. Archives as Anthropological Surrogates." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 41 (1): 461–80. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-anthro-092611-145721.

Zorich, Diane, Günter Waibel, and Ricky Erway. 2008. "Beyond the Silos of the LAMs: Collaboration Among Libraries, Archives and Museums." OCLC Research. https://doi.org/10.25333/X187-3W53.