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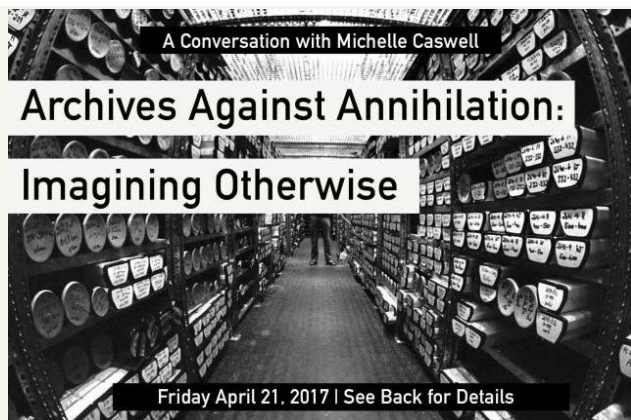
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Announcement: "Archives Against Annihilation: Imagining Otherwise," A Talk by Michelle Caswell

by American Studies

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Please join us today at 11:00 AM in the Prothro Theatre in the Harry Ransom Center for a talk by Michelle Caswell entitled *Archives Against Annihilation: Imagining Otherwise*.

The talk, sponsored by the UT Chapter of the Society of American Archivists, is described below:

In the 1970s, feminist communication scholars first proposed the term "symbolic annihilation" to describe the ways in which women are absent, underrepresented, or misrepresented in mainstream media. Taking this concept as a starting point, the first part of this talk will examine the ways in which mainstream archival practice has symbolically annihilated communities of color and LGBTQ communities through absence, underrepresentation, and misrepresentation. In the face of such symbolic annihilation, marginalized communities have formed their own independent community-based archives that empower them to establish, enact, and reflect on their presence in ways that are complex, meaningful, and substantive. Based on interviews with dozens of



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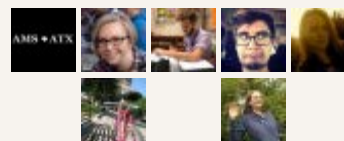
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community archives founders, staff, and users, this first act will propose a tripartite structure for assessing the impact of such archives on the individuals and communities they serve: ontological impact (in which members of marginalized communities get confirmation "I am here"); epistemological impact (in which members of marginalized communities get confirmation "we were here"); and social impact (in which members of marginalized communities get confirmation "we belong here"). In the second part, this talk will examine the relationship between symbolic and actual annihilation using the state-sponsored mass murder of Black people by the police in the U.S. as a prime example. Symbolic annihilation both precedes and succeeds symbolic annihilation in that communities are rendered nonexistent, invisible, or expendable before they are subject to violence, and then, after violence, such acts are often rendered invisible or expunged from the record, magnifying and mimicking the violence itself. Finally, this talk will end with a proposition for archivists to "imagine otherwise," that is, to conceive of and build a world in which communities that have historically been and are currently being marginalized due to white supremacy, patriarchy, capitalism, gender binaries, colonialism, and ableism are fully empowered to represent their past, construct their present, and envision their futures as forms of liberation.

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After the talk, we hope you join us for the American Studies Undergraduate Thesis Symposium, 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM in Burdine 436A. We hope to see you at both events!

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