

**Victoria Hoyle, *The Remaking of Archival Values*,**  
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In an era marked by profound social and political transformation, the field of archival studies is undergoing a significant reimagining. Victoria Hoyle's *The Remaking of Archival Values* critically examines how archival theory and practice are evolving in response to emerging critical discourses surrounding neoliberalism, racism, colonialism, and patriarchy. Hoyle argues that these discourses are disrupting traditional archival principles and challenging the foundational values that have long underpinned the field. She asserts that the archival profession, traditionally regarded as neutral and objective, is, in fact, shaped by ideological forces that have historically privileged certain social, political, and epistemological structures over others. The book explores the tensions between traditional and emerging values in archival practice, emphasizing the role of these critical discourses in reshaping the field. Hoyle begins by positioning contemporary critical approaches within the archival context, acknowledging the resistance these approaches face (Chapter 1). While many scholars critique the foundational principles of archival theory, she contends that the discursive structures, such as institutional, legal, and historical frameworks, have not been fully interrogated. This chapter introduces her central argument: to fully understand the ongoing debates, it is essential to trace the system of archival values throughout history, revealing how these values have evolved and been challenged in light of contemporary social issues.

Hoyle asserts that the dominant Western archival values, which she terms the “evidential orthodoxy”, continue to persist despite emerging critical approaches (Chapter 2). These values have their roots in historical, legal, and governance systems that reinforce notions of authenticity (the idea that archival materials should be genuine and unaltered), integrity (the preservation of the full and unbroken context of records), and neutrality (the notion that archives should remain unbiased and free from external influence). The evidential system positions archives as objective, impartial repositories of historical truth,

inherently linked to institutional power structures, such as the state. According to this orthodoxy, the role of the archive is to preserve and present evidence of the past, framing it in terms of continuity, legality, and authority. Hoyle traces the historical development of this discourse through key archival texts, such as Hilary Jenkinson's *Manual of Archive Administration* (1922) and the UNESCO Declaration on Archives (2011). The persistence of these values, Hoyle argues, limits how archives are conceptualized and challenges efforts to embrace more inclusive, diverse practices that reflect the complex realities of the modern world.

In response to the dominance of the evidential orthodoxy, a new set of values has begun to emerge within archival practice, particularly those informed by feminist, critical race, and social justice frameworks (Chapter 3). These values are often referred to as the “affective alternative”, as they shift the focus from neutral, institutionalized representations of the past to a more personal, communal, and lived experience of archival materials. The affective approach, in contrast to the evidential, places emphasis on the relationships between people and archives, emphasizing how archives affect and are affected by communities. These values prioritize identity, agency, and autonomy, highlighting the importance of representation and inclusivity in archival work. Through her examination of community archives and participatory action research projects, Hoyle demonstrates how these values are embodied in practice. The shift from an object-centered to a people-centered approach in these alternative archival practices signals a potential remaking of the profession, one that recognizes the social, political, and emotional dimensions of archival work.

Yet, despite these developments, the dominant evidential discourse remains deeply ingrained in archival practice (Chapter 4). Hoyle's interviews with archival practitioners in England and Wales reveal how entrenched the evidential system is, even as practitioners express awareness of and engagement with the emerging affective values. The practitioners she interviewed navigate between traditional and new archival values, often constrained by the institutional and cultural contexts in which they operate. The evidential values continue to dominate not only the professional identity and institutional frameworks within which archivists work but also the ways in which archival work is perceived as authoritative and legitimate. The shared conception of archives, rooted in neutrality, authenticity, and legal authority, remains a powerful force, reinforcing the boundaries of archival practice. At the same time, many practitioners express frustration with the limitations of this approach, recognizing the need for a more

inclusive, socially engaged archival practice, though institutional resistance and entrenched professional norms hinder their ability to enact change.

The tension between evidential and affective values is particularly evident in large-scale public history projects, where the values ascribed to archives often diverge from traditional norms (Chapter 5). Hoyle examines case studies from the north of England, focusing particularly on the “York: Gateway to History” project, which was awarded a £1.68m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in 2012, supplemented by additional funding from the city council. The project, which ran from 2011 to 2016, aimed to create a modern archive service for York that reflects the diverse communities and cultures of the city, both past and present. The “York” project included significant community engagement, especially during the consultation phases leading to the development of the funding bid, and again in the delivery phase when it was overseen by Explore York Libraries and Archives after 2014. Hoyle also draws on two comparable projects, the “Heritage Quay” project at the University of Huddersfield (£1.58m, 2012–2017) and the “West Yorkshire History Centre” (£4.09m, 2012–2018), both of which were similarly funded by the HLF and focused on engaging communities with archival resources. These projects, like “York”, sought to emphasize the importance of archives to community identity and inclusion. However, Hoyle argues that while these initiatives claim to embrace diversity and inclusion, they often rework traditional archival principles, such as neutrality, authenticity, and truth, in ways that accommodate multiple perspectives. Despite these efforts, the fundamental evidential values associated with archives are not displaced. Instead, these projects subtly reinforce the traditional discourse, leading to a dissonance between the goals of archival practitioners and the lived experiences of the communities they aim to engage. In essence, while these projects expand the scope of archival engagement, they often fail to fully challenge the authoritative values of the evidential system, limiting the potential for transformative change.

In the final chapter, Hoyle grapples with the possibility of dismantling the evidential orthodoxy altogether (Chapter 6). She explores whether the radical transformation called for by critical archival theorists is achievable within the current institutional framework. Can the authorised archival discourse be dismantled without a complete rejection of the institutional and custodial models of archival work? Hoyle draws on the work of feminist philosopher Sara Ahmed, suggesting that change in archival practice may not follow a straightforward path. Instead, change is shaped by proximity and orientation, reflecting the ways

in which individuals and communities engage with and are affected by archives. Rather than seeing traditional and critical approaches as oppositional, Hoyle suggests that a more productive path forward lies in fostering dialogue between these approaches. This interlocutory model, drawing on Vygotsky's theory of knowledge production, encourages an exchange between communities and archives that identifies and critically examines the values ascribed to archival materials. By centering these values in the production of knowledge, Hoyle proposes a way forward for remaking archival practice in a more inclusive, socially just direction.

*The Remaking of Archival Values* is an intellectually rigorous and timely contribution to the field of archival studies, offering a fresh perspective on the intersection of archival theory, practice, and critical social issues. The book's central strength lies in its ability to blend historical analysis, critical theory, and empirical research to reveal the evolving nature of archival values. Hoyle demonstrates the persistence of traditional, evidential values in archival practice, while also exploring the emerging alternative values shaped by feminist, race, and social justice discourses. This dual exploration provides readers with a nuanced understanding of the tensions that define the contemporary archival field, and it does so with depth and sophistication.

One of the book's primary strengths is its use of critical discourse analysis to examine how archival values have evolved over time and how they continue to be shaped by power structures. By comparing archival theory and practice from the UK and the broader Anglophone world, Hoyle situates contemporary debates within a long historical trajectory, tracing the influence of colonialism, patriarchy, and neoliberalism on archival values. This historical depth offers invaluable context, allowing readers to better understand how seemingly neutral archival practices have been shaped by broader societal forces. The focus on critical archival theory, particularly in relation to issues like race, gender, and social justice, provides a significant contribution to the growing body of work that critiques traditional archival methodologies and highlights the need for a more inclusive, equitable approach to archival practice.

Hoyle's integration of qualitative and participatory research further strengthens the book. By conducting fieldwork with community archives and participatory action research projects, she illustrates how new values are not just theoretical but manifest in practice. The inclusion of real-world examples provides empirical evidence of how affective values, which focus on identity, agency, and

lived experience, challenge and coexist with the traditional evidential orthodoxy. These case studies offer a grounded and practical perspective on how the field can evolve, making the theoretical arguments more tangible and accessible to practitioners in the field.

Another key strength of the book is its ability to balance theoretical depth with practical implications. In examining how traditional and new archival values are expressed in the day-to-day work of archival practitioners, Hoyle doesn't merely present abstract concepts but connects them to real-world practices. This makes the book highly relevant not only to scholars of archival studies but also to practitioners working in the field. Hoyle's detailed analysis of the tensions that archivists experience between adhering to established values and incorporating newer, more inclusive frameworks is a valuable resource for anyone navigating the complexities of contemporary archival work.

Finally, the book's relevance to a wide array of academic disciplines is another significant strength. While focused on archival studies, Hoyle's discussion extends to cultural heritage, museum studies, public history, gender studies, and race studies, making it an interdisciplinary work that will resonate with scholars and practitioners across multiple fields. By drawing parallels between the debates in archival theory and similar discourses in other fields of cultural heritage, Hoyle broadens the scope of her analysis, offering insights that are relevant not only to archivists but also to those working in closely related fields.

In a nutshell, this book is a masterful examination of the intersection of archival theory, practice, and critical social discourse. Hoyle's blend of historical analysis, empirical research, and theoretical innovation makes the book a vital resource for scholars, students, and practitioners. By challenging entrenched notions of archival neutrality and objectivity, Hoyle opens up new possibilities for how archives can be reimagined to reflect more inclusive, diverse, and socially engaged practices. The book is a significant contribution to the field and will undoubtedly provoke further discussion and debate on the role of archives in shaping public history and memory.

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