

## CfP: The Future of Archives

*Deakin Downtown, Melbourne, 21 October 2024.*

Hayim Yosef Yerushalmi opens *Zakhor* (1982), his remarkable and ambivalent book on memory and history, with the words of the Book of Job: ‘For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing’ (Job 8:8). The commandment to remember is built into the world of memory and that Yerushalmi surveys – it is fundamental to the Hebrew Bible. But as Yerushalmi points out, it is forgetting and *then* remembering that makes the Law. ‘As in any collective anamnesis, what is retrieved is also metamorphosed’, he writes, and it is this which guides how we live.

What is the future of archives? This question has only been complicated by the digital revolution. Never before have we been as able to reconstruct a life, conscious or unconscious, as it is logged through its traces. Most of what we have ever done is logged in our digital maps, text messages, keystrokes, and swipes. We leave an extraordinary ‘data exhaust’, which can be visualized, remixed, and translated into implied subjects. Yet other parts of our digital lives are remarkably ephemeral. How are we to interpret both this persistence and this ephemerality in the context of literary meaning, or our cultural lives? To whom do archives belong? How are we managing transitions between lack and excess? How safe is our memory – and with whom is it lodged?

This one-day symposium, hosted by Reading Writing Futures and the Gender and Sexuality Research Network, will focus on the future of archives. We invite proposals for 15 minute papers and/or 1 hour panels of any format from academics, practitioners, creative writers and artists, and information holders, who are working with archives – whether those archives be physical, digitized, or born-digital.

Our keynote speaker, [Dr. Benjamin Lee](#) (University of Washington), will be speaking about his work creating search and discovery with the vast archival holdings of the Library of Congress, as well as new developments in machine learning and artificial intelligence.

Papers and panels might consider:

- Digital and paper archive transitions;
- The uses of archives;
- Problems facing archival security in any sense;
- How institutions sustain archival investment;
- Creative and new approaches to using archives;
- Theories of archival practice;
- Political dimensions of archival presences, absences, and retrieval;
- Accessibility of archives;
- Archives and artificial intelligence;
- Problems and innovations of archives in your research;
- Creative practice and archives;
- Archives, hegemony, and structure (colonial, heteropatriarchal, national).

Deadline for submission of abstracts/panels: Wednesday 28 August.

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