

**Confronting the Curriculum: Incorporating Radical Empathy into Archival  
Training  
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- I. From human rights to feminist ethics: Radical empathy in the archives by Michelle Caswell and Marika Cifor
  - A. All work in this presentation is owed to the theoretical framework created by Michelle Caswell and Marika Cifor.
  - B. In their article they propose that rather than using a rights-based framework to frame archival studies and the task of archiving, feminist ethics of care could be incorporated to create a more inclusive and empathetic archive with archivists concerned with their “affective responsibilities” (Caswell and Cifor 23).
  - C. Feminist ethics of care and radical empathy help negotiate the issues of power, exclusion, and silences inherent in the archival field.
- II. Cifor and Caswell position the archivist as caregiver
  - A. Specific relationships of care and affect that are incorporated in their article are those between:
    1. Archivist and Record Creator
    2. Archivist and Record Subject
    3. Archivist and Record User
    4. Archivist and Community
- III. Caswell and Cifor use two examples that were particularly provocative for my consideration of empathy in archives
  - A. South Asian American Digital Archive
  - B. Lesbian Herstory Archive
- IV. How we apply to this to our own world (especially our educational world):
  - A. LIS 407: Reference
    1. Although this is archivally focused I did consider one class where radical empathy beyond the archival record can be considered:
    2. Empathetic Engagement with users
    3. Acknowledgment of emotional stakes
      - a) The fear of not knowing
      - b) The fear of discovering what you don't want to know
      - c) Frustration with current structures of learning
  - B. LIS 438: Introduction to Archival Methods & Services
    1. Introducing a broader definition of processing

- a) Move beyond just talking about how to acknowledge your narrative bias in archives
    - b) Understand the effect of your interpretive acts of processing
    - c) Remember there is a life in your object
  - 2. Seek to understand not to confirm
  - 3. Create a broader definition of service
- C. LIS 440 & 442:
  - 1. Broaden the definition of record
  - 2. Broaden the definition of users
  - 3. CHALLENGE THE FINDING AID
  - 4. Challenge the reading room
  - 5. Create conversation
  - 6. Consider more than one definition of access and repercussions of granting access
- V. We are all caregivers
  - A. Embrace the learning community
  - B. Challenge one another empathetically
  - C. We contribute to everyone's learning

**Works cited:**

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