

“So that Future Organizers Won’t Have to Reinvent the Wheel”: Activating Digital Archives for Liberatory Uses

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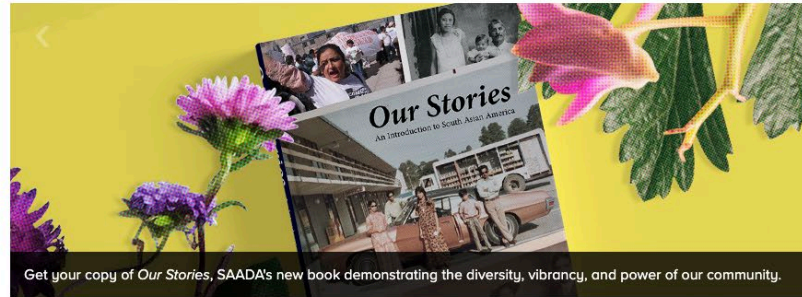
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www.communityarchiveslab.ucla.edu



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SAADA ensures that South Asian Americans are included in the American story: past, present, and future.

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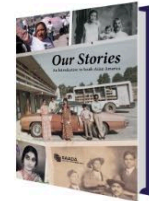
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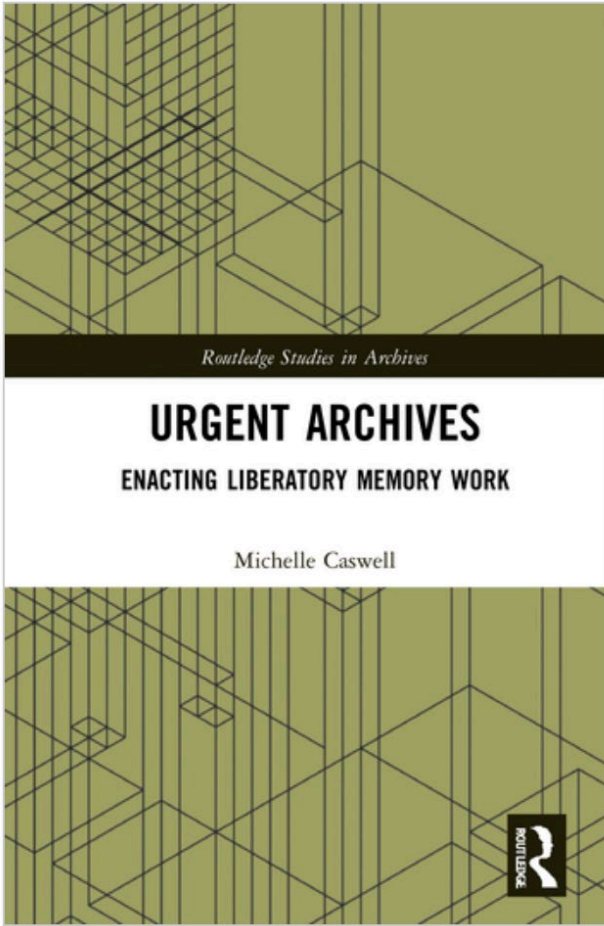
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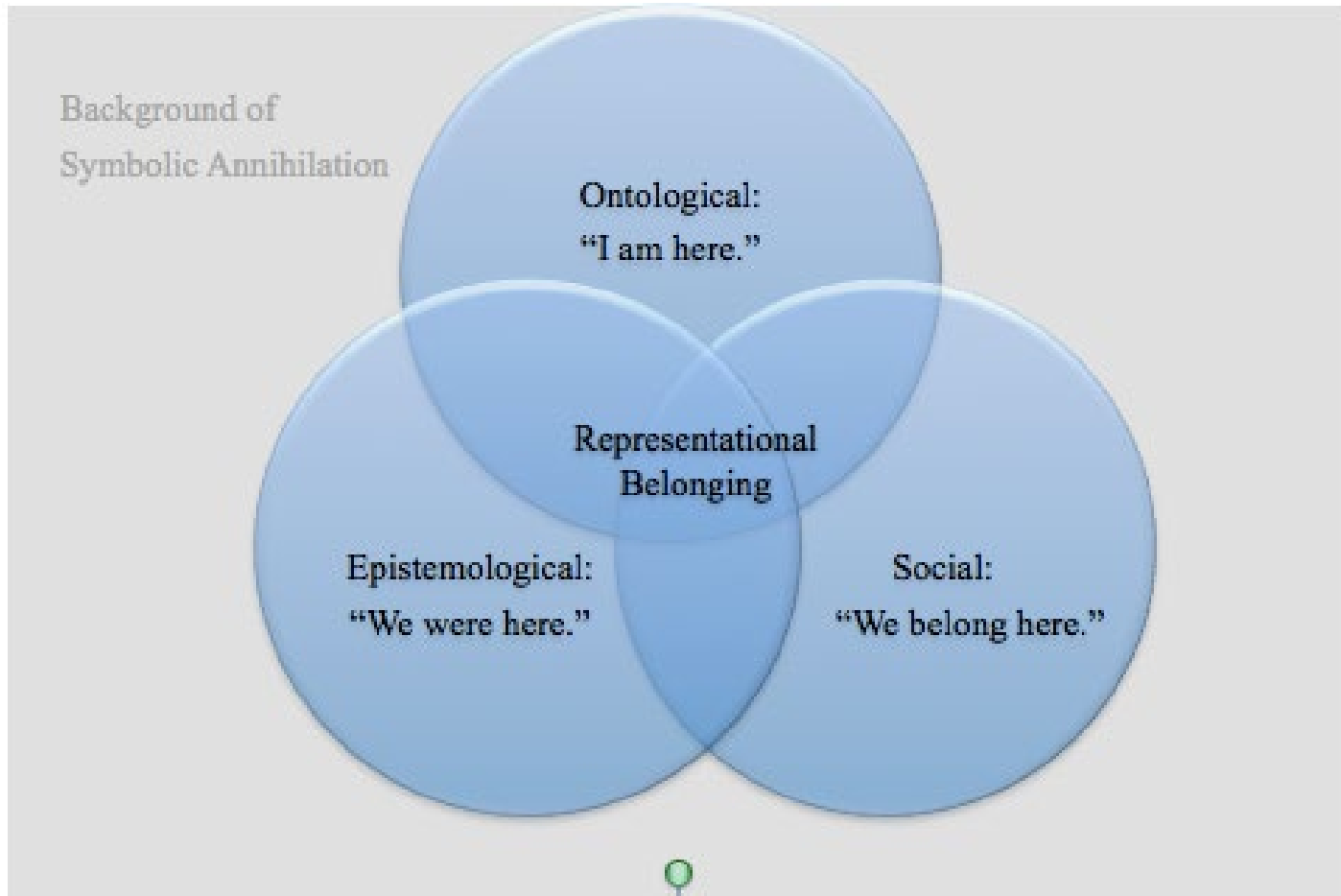
Routledge Studies in Archives

URGENT ARCHIVES
ENACTING LIBERATORY MEMORY WORK

Michelle Caswell



Impact of Community Archives in Response to Symbolic Annihilation



What is a community-based archives?

“Collections of material gathered primarily by members of a given community and over whose community members exercise some level of control.... The defining characteristic of community archives is the active participation of a community in documenting and making accessible their history of their particular group and/or locality ***on their own terms.***”

Andrew Flinn, Mary Stevens and Elizabeth Shepherd,
“Whose Memories, Whose Archives? Independent Community Archives,
Autonomy and the Mainstream.” *Archival Science* 9 (2009), 73.

Independent, Minoritized Identity-based Community Archives

- Independent: not part of university or government agency
- In which the history in common is that of a *minoritized* identity
- May be based on racial, ethnic, religious, sexual orientation, gender, linguistic, geographic, and other marginalized identities

- Grassroots collections in which those who have been left out of mainstream archives document their own histories.
- Power is central.
- Autonomy & authority
- **Not** “community-centered” collections at universities
- **Not** white supremacist historical societies

SAADA

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SAADA digitally *documents, preserves, and shares* stories of South Asian Americans. [Learn more.](#)

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An update on SAADA's future

by SAADA [Follow](#)

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Join us to hear some happy news about SAADA's future!

About this Event

In the midst of these uncertain times, we are very fortunate to have some happy news to share about SAADA's future.

Join us for a 30-minute Zoom meeting at 1pm ET / 10am PT on Thursday, July 9 to learn more.

Date And Time


Thu, July 9, 2020
10:00 AM – 10:30 AM PDT
[Add to Calendar](#)

Location

Online Event

saada.org/letters

saada.org/letters

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Letters from 6' Away

South Asian American experiences during COVID-19

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We hope you and your loved ones are safe, in good health, and doing as well as possible during this difficult time.

There is little doubt that we are living through a historic moment. To ensure that our community's experiences of this moment are preserved, today we're launching a new project, Letters from 6' Away, to document South Asian American experiences during COVID-19.

Just as archives preserve stories from yesterday for our benefit today, we also preserve stories from the present for our understanding tomorrow. While we are all eager to move past the difficulties of this time, there are also personal memories, lessons, and revelations that we will want to hold on to.

Help us document this moment by following the prompts below to write a letter to yourself one year in the future.

We'll include your story in the archive with your permission and we'll send you your letter in the mail (or by email) one year from now, in hopefully better days ahead.

Note: If you lost a loved one to COVID-19, please [send us an email](#) so we can honor them in the archive.

Dear Self,

I am currently located in...*
(City, State)





I am social distancing...*

by myself

with others


During this period, my time is being spent...

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Letters from 6' Away...

“I would remember the first news that we need to store food. My first instinct was to buy rice and salt at Gandhi Bazar [sic]. It was a reaction to a historic trauma that my community went through. Bengal had a big man-made famine post WW-2 and rice and salt were in scarcity. I had heard stories of what my family went through. I was surprised that this deep-seated insecurity had surfaced.” –Samira Ghosh

SAADA Tides

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**MODEKS**
MAGAZINE

H.G. Mudgal, Harlem Editor

BY MANAN DESAI, TIZARAT GILL | FEBRUARY 1, 2018



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by Ifadul Haq



FEBRUARY 22, 2021
Assemblages of an Archive
by Chandani Patel



On February 15, 1931, a crowd of gatherers had packed into Fulton Studio in Brooklyn to watch a heated debate unfold on the topic of race in America. Organized by the Frederick Douglass Interracial Forum, the debate pitted two powerful 20th century ideologies of liberation against one another. "Communism or Garveyism," a notice in a newspaper read: "Wherein Lies the Solution of the Race Question?"¹ Representing the Communist side was Edward Welsh, the editor of *Revolutionary Age*, who argued that the "Negro problem was essentially a class problem." His opponent, the editor of Marcus Garvey's newspaper *Negro World*, retorted, "No Non-Negro could pretend to give a philosophy to just suit the needs and moods of the black masses."² That editor's name was H.G. Mudgal, and ironically, he was not Black either. An immigrant from India, Mudgal had become a familiar figure in Harlem political circles in the late '20s and '30s. His story reveals the complex pathways by which immigrants from South Asia had not only navigated the racial terrain of America, but directly participated in African American struggles against white supremacy.

Hucheshwar Gurusidha Mudgal was born in the city of Hubli in what is now modern-day Karnataka, India. Where exactly he spent his time between his birth and his arrival in the U.S. is the subject of some debate. While one source suggests that he was raised in Trinidad before coming to the U.S., a 1931 profile



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By Shebani Rao

You've heard about the recent murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, & Ahmaud Arbery. These killings are part of a history of violence against Black people in the U.S., which is why communities are rising up in protest.

The mainstream news describes these protests as riots. Remember, even our struggle against the British- which Black activists in America supported -was also described as riots!

Let's be on the right side of history and support our Black community as they fight for freedom and safety!

DONATE to end state violence
against Black people **TODAY!**

northstarhealthcollective.org

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Your local Black Lives Matter
chapter:

[blacklivesmatter.com/
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Your local bail fund:

[community
justiceexchange.org/
nbfn-directory](http://communityjusticeexchange.org/nbfn-directory)



The Gilded Cage

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m9ylgBRIFr>

ba

Corollary records

Corollary records document reoccurring moments in time in which the same or similar oppressions get repeated. A *corollary moment* is a point in time with historical precedence.

At their most useful, records can be activated in *corollary moments* in the present, so that community members can learn activist tactics and strategies and get inspiration to keep going. “We have been here before, we have survived this before, we have resisted before,” corollary records assert, “*here’s how.*” By activating corollary records, SAADA’s community members are, if only for a second, interrupting reoccurring oppressions by learning from previous generations of community members facing corollary moments. This is one way archives can dismantle systemic oppression and engage in liberatory memory work—by catalyzing the activation of corollary records in the past to inspire and strategize activism in the present.

SAADA Archival Creators Fellowship



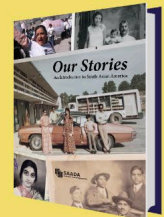
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“... I found the meeting minutes of when the Gay Liberation Front was proposed to be passed as a recognized student organization and it was approved.... That was one thing I was really impressed by, especially with activism happening today. I think that people think that activists who came before our time were this entity that had power and control and were official, but the records show it’s just a handful of people to get together and scribble some things down on a notepad and that it evolves into something you could never have foreseen.... I don’t know if [activists] are currently using [the archives] but I think certainly one way that they could use it is just as pure motivation to believe in the work that they’re doing and see it is important, and... also to learn how activism has and hasn’t been successful in this specific context of the city of San Diego, what tactics have worked, what haven’t...”

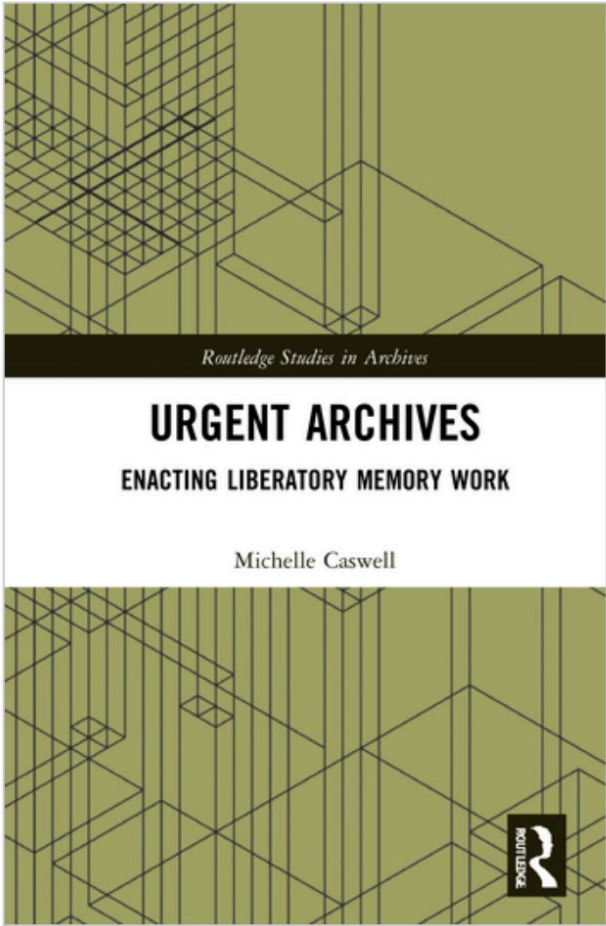
--Angela Risi

“...My hope and ideal is that in 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 100 years that engagement with these [Tamil feminist queer] conversations will have grown and there will be greater interest in how these ideas percolated... People feel like they have to reinvent the wheel over and over and over again and or people are put in a position where they have to learn as they go, which has been the position that I've been in for most of my political life and artistic life.... There's a gap in eldership for my generation within Tamil feminist queer community. So, I'm probably amongst the few Ilankai Tamil queer... folks my age who is actually engaging with and mentoring and supporting the leadership of younger folks. And I didn't have that for myself.... I felt that absence so wanted it for a younger generation.... Maybe this interview [I did for SAADA] could be mentorship access for younger generations so they don't have to feel like they're creating the wheel from scratch, that they can actually take things from where we've got them to... and then, you know, dissect it, critique it, challenge it, evolve it,... so we're not like getting stuck in the same place over and over again because of lack of access to information and ideas that have already been, hard fought to be part of the public discourse.”

--Yalini Dream

“So, that's why I agreed to do the video in the first place is because we so desperately need changes within our criminal justice system for those who are currently incarcerated, especially in the State of Texas, this is a horrible place to be incarcerated. And so, I just wanted to be as open, honest and transparent as I could to make sure that that you know, people might be drawn to stand up and do something for their loved ones as well.”

--Kirsten Ricketts



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