

volume, but Derrida. Geoffrey Bennington's dense poststructuralist meditation on the index sets an agenda as the opening chapter, and after this the archive fever is contagious, with roughly half of the 14 chapters engaging with Derrida's *Mal d'Archive* to one extent or another. Perhaps Martin McQuillan deploys the deconstruction of the library to most enlightening (and readable) effect, showing, via Derrida's *Post-Card*, how its authority is always compromised from within; its classification systems never more than a secondary outcome of their own performance.

A similar point is conveyed, albeit in a quite different mode, by Elizabeth Evenden in her chapter on early modern collector Archbishop Matthew Parker, whose library created an authoritative version of church history, harnessed to his own political agenda. Parker not only selectively bound and categorised Anglo-Saxon manuscripts into codex books to suit his own ends, but even counterfeited material where necessary, effectively producing the very texts on which he based his authority. The strength of Evenden's piece lies in its thorough grounding in historical and material specifics. Elsewhere, 'The Library' threatens to become a rather diffuse term, with a tendency to slip too easily between designating physical books, buildings, cultural institutions or, more nebulously, a rhetorical figure or a concept. 'The Archive' is even more mutable; assuming forms as diverse as a landscape, the contents of a carrier bag, a general and abstract 'encyclopaedic principle' and a shared store of cultural memory.

Indeed, following the train of Derridean logic, as Tom Cohen does in his chapter, there is no 'outside' to the archive. Its logic is inescapable; it is simultaneously everywhere and nowhere in particular. And yet, even if this collection risks losing purchase on its object at times, its attempt to map out this speculative and interdisciplinary field of study is nevertheless a bold, not to say necessary one. Its diverse perspectives on archives and libraries may not quite cohere into a whole, but their juxtaposition hints at future trajectories for research and at conversations yet to be had across boundaries of period and discipline.

Gill Partington
Birkbeck College
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Arlette Farge, *The Allure of the Archives*, translated by Thomas Scott-Railton, foreword by Natalie Zemon Davis, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 2013. xvi + 131 pp. ISBN 978 0 30017 673 5. US\$25.00.

This is a remarkable book that offers the reader not only pleasure and instruction, but also opportunities for thought. Although it is plainly intended for an academic audience, it is an unusual academic work, combining a vivid, funny and touching description of the experience of working in an archive with an account of archival materials (especially those in the judicial archives of Paris), some advice on reading, organising, interpreting and writing about historical documents, and some reflections on history as a discipline. These different aspects of the book are interwoven, so that the book itself becomes the kind of document that interests the author: personal, sensory, complex and yet written in plain language.

The Allure of the Archives is a reflection on the practices that allow a researcher to produce historical scholarship. It is so uncommon to read a description of academic work as it is conducted that it is hard not to be surprised by the familiarity of what is described and the strangeness of finding it described. The researcher we meet in this book feels the cold of the room, touches papers that are covered in 'stiff dust', is surrounded by others who irritate (by sniffing, or playing with their rings, or making repeated trips across the room in high heels), experiences the thrill that comes from feeling she is somehow in direct contact with the past (while knowing that is an illusion) and is surveyed by an archivist who 'reigns, gives advice that bears a strong resemblance to orders, speaks very loudly, and does not understand what she does not wish to understand' (p. 119). For anyone who has worked in an archive or a rare books room, it will come as a relief to discover that others share the ignoble sentiments, the excitement that is also a trap, the bureaucratic frustrations, the feeling that one is still a slave to the discomforts of the body.

The archives that Farge describes here include a range of eighteenth-century papers: records of 'criminal complaints, trials, interrogations, case summaries and sentencing' (p. 3). These were not documents intended for publication, and their value lies in the kind of immediacy they transmit, especially insofar as they capture the speech of the poorer inhabitants of Paris. Farge argues that these archives allow the women of eighteenth-century Paris to speak, and that their speech suggests that they were not simply captives of circumstance but also agents, as they arrive in the city from the provinces, wait at the port to send their children off to wet nurses, lodge complaints, protect their men from the police and circulate information in their neighbourhoods. Her claim is not that these women wielded real power, or enjoyed freedom, but that they were assuming economic and political responsibilities, as evidenced by their activities and their words. Farge does not claim that the words recorded in the archive are necessarily true. But she argues that they reveal important truths about authority, and about norms, because how a person set out to convince her interrogator tells us something about what she thought would be believable and persuasive.

As a guide to historical research, this book sets out to explain how it is done, and why. Archival work begins of course with reading, selecting and, often, with the transcription of texts. Farge acknowledges that these are banal tasks, fraught with practical difficulties – making out what is written through dirt and damage, deciphering the writing, identifying the words despite eccentric and illiterate spelling – but also insists that they create a new object, a new archive. And she describes the process of combing through the archives with that object in mind, collecting all the materials that might be relevant and then dividing what has been collected into coherent categories. Farge is especially good on the pitfalls of archival research. She identifies the process of accumulating detail as one of the 'traps and temptations' which haunt the archive, but also insists that such detail is 'the soil in which historical thinking takes root' (p. 70). In a similar vein, she allows that identifying with the characters in the archive is both necessary and dangerous for the historian. She cautions us that extracting facts from the archives is not enough, that the archive cannot by itself provide proof for anything and, more generally, that the archive will not provide a ready-made interpretation. What the documents in the archive mean must be determined by the historian whose work, done well, 'should retain the hint of the unfinished' (p. 123).

The Allure of the Archives is the English translation of *Le Goût de l'Archive*. As a translation it is elegant and readable, but the full meaning of the original title has been

lost; it refers both to a taste *of* the archive, and a taste *for* the archive: this book captures both the experience of and the desire for what the archives hold and how they operate.

Marguerite Deslauriers

McGill University

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Kate Eichhorn, *The Archival Turn in Feminism: Outrage in Order*, Philadelphia. Temple University Press, 2013. 188 pp. ISBN 978 1 439909 51 5. US\$69.50.

The expanded field of the archive as historical object and theoretical subject, what we now ubiquitously refer to as the ‘archival turn’, has precipitated a rethinking of how the archive is imagined beyond the obvious sites of museums, libraries and other institutional structures or as an extant historical record. The recent interventions of cultural theory point to the archive as a discursive structure that authorises regimes of truth (Foucault) as well as the contingent nature of ‘archivisation’ as both preservation and amnesia (Derrida). Feminist and queer accounts of the archive have similarly interrogated what counts as public culture, calling for unorthodox forms of archival collecting that acknowledge psychic and emotional absence alongside material presence.

Kate Eichhorn’s *The Archival Turn in Feminism: Outrage in Order* intelligently builds on these debates but also offers something original. Aware of the dangers of ‘semantic drift’ (p. 18) that pervade the archive’s expanded theoretical terrain, but not willing to give up its rich critical exegesis, Eichhorn’s approach to feminist archives is as an ethnographer *and* cultural theorist. Indeed, one of the most rewarding aspects of Eichhorn’s book is its commitment to combining participant observation carried out in archives and special collections with interviews with archivists, librarians, researchers and donors. Influenced by Janice Radway’s early feminist work on the study of texts and textual communities, Eichhorn’s three case studies (the Zine Collections at the Sallie Bingham Center at Duke, the Riot Grrrl Collection at Fales Library, NYU and the Barnard Zine Library) provide an illuminating account of the ‘day-to-day labor’ (p. 20) that goes on in archives as well as the political commitment (and vital activism) that informs the broader archival community. Eichhorn’s thick description of feminist archives works to ‘denaturalize the presumptive boundaries of official archive space’ (p. 18) without evacuating the concrete material conditions that inform the experiences of archivists and researchers.

The Archival Turn in Feminism also provides a sophisticated grappling with the feminist archive’s seemingly paradoxical mission: the movement from ‘outrage’ to ‘order’, from the often-anarchic politics and community spirit of grassroots feminism and its ephemeral legacy to the privileged and orderly space of the archival institution. Eichhorn, however, is impatient with this simple opposition, persuasively arguing that the processes and conditions of collection continue to inspire active and engaged uses of the past to open up the present. Offering the wonderful example of coming across a reproduction of the Bitch Manifesto (a product of second-wave radical feminism) in a Riot Grrrl zine from the early 1990s, Eichhorn illustrates how this collision of two