

higher education on progressive achievement and definitive research findings, it is barely possible to assert the value of a humanities that promises *the* meaning of texts, let alone one grounded in the impossibility of ever telling the truth about a document. In this respect, missing from McGann's analysis of the demise of philology is acknowledgement of how the ascendancy of Higher Criticism was necessitated – as well as enabled – by a mandated research culture that continues today. While this inattention to institutional socialities is jarring in a book so attuned to those of works, and of print and Internet cultures, McGann clearly demonstrates how, far from diminishing their importance, the digital age emphasises the particular and material, and the value of rigor and scholarly method.

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Lisa Gitelman, *Paper Knowledge: Toward a Media History of Documents*, Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 2014. 224 pp. ISBN 978 0 822356 57 8. US\$22.95 (paperback).

I was asked to review Paper Knowledge by a colleague whom I'd met through the symposium ARCHIVE + FEMINISM at McGill University (winter 2012), and with whom I also participated (virtually) in 'Archive Futures: Manuscripts, Materiality, Method', an invitational research workshop that led to the formation of the Archive Futures research network (summer 2013). It is from this place, at the intersection of media studies and archives, that I review Gitelman's most recent book.

Lisa Gitelman's most recent book, *Paper Knowledge: Toward a Media History of Documents*, addresses precise moments in what the author identifies as the scriptural economy. In four stand-alone chapters, she manages to convey the importance of the document as both object of inquiry and epistemic practice.

In her introduction, Gitelman argues that the document is important in no small part owing to its potential to be referenced, activated and recovered in an undetermined archival future. But just *what* constitutes a document is a more complex question here than *why* it may be deemed important archivally. Gitelman, riffing off the work of early documentalists, proposes that the act of 'framing' and 'entering into evidence' renders an object a document proper, most typically in paper form. Documents are ubiquitous, and as they reappear and are reinforced as metaphors in the digital realm, they further complicate the concept of 'print cultures' that underpins much of the argument of *Paper Knowledge*. Gitelman's book becomes both a plea and a quest for meanings over logics. It emerges from media uses specifically attributed to exploring the multiplicity of the document genre through a selective 150-year history. The book veers away from technological determinism, and instead adopts a carefully crafted, dense and detailed, anecdotal and archival retelling style that foregrounds the humanism in and of technological inquiry.

Each chapter benefits immensely from an iterative process and the careful edits of many of Gitelman's peers across the globe (whom she fully credits for their support,

contributions and insights). Working from revised lectures, email exchanges, conference presentations and a job talk, each chapter becomes a testament to the highly collaborative nature of media studies. Her approach is also proof of the important conversational component of authorship in an interdisciplinary academic context, even – if not especially – for the so-called monograph. Presented to various academic audiences internationally as a testing ground of sorts, toward a more formal final document in book form, Gitelman's scholarship is solid, inspiring and reflexive. Because of her ability to channel a myriad of voices, the tone and contents of *Paper Knowledge* speak to archivists, designers and media scholars alike – or to anyone wanting and willing to read (and often reread) historically rich and precise stories about paper.

Beyond content, an important contribution of this book is also in what it does to the document, reflecting the mission of the book to analyse not only the document but also what it enables at a particular juncture and within a specific context. So too this book, as a finality, on paper, can be analysed for the ways in which it enacts the context and politics within which it is written. Such a reflexive burden is imposed onto its readers, and on scholarly readers in particular. With the book (any book) comes an expectation of cohesion between and across chapters, a lack that is often lamented by book reviewers. However, while this book's strength is not in its seamless flow or cohesion across chapters, we come to see how possible conceptual refractions speak to a new modality of writing, reading and academic publishing. Given the state of academic publishing – with its hierarchies of venues, asymmetrical economics and often restrictive intellectual property regimes – alongside the institutional importance placed on monographs as well as the pressure to publish peer-reviewed articles, this book in effect provides an intersection where both needs are met. For those readers who are also academics, chapters construed first as articles that often also best suit course syllabi can circulate independently and be cited without concern for the overall context that a book offers and demands in return. As a kind of meta-chapter, when Gitelman's methods are espoused by her book (as document itself), we see evidence of her own positioning as a scholar at a particular juncture of academic publishing. For young scholars navigating the worlds of online and print publishing, and all the meanings and values placed on those outputs, Gitelman's reflections prove immensely insightful at a defining moment when paper no longer rules.

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