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This article explores methodologies from the fields of library archival science, human geography, composition and rhetoric, and established editorial practices in English studies. By elaborating on the role of a researcher's subjectivity in archival creation, this work expands the conversation regarding methodology and archives, especially how archives present us with new ways of seeing and making narratives during the editorial decision-making involved in their creation. Writing about my own experience, I privilege the researcher's point of view with a narrative about my construction of a digital archive. With archival research, we should promote the revelation of methods and methodology to shape the expectations of our scholarship to include such discussions and consider how metacommentary—through explication of methods and methodology—enriches the research process. This article offers an affective methodology of archival work through an exploration of theory, the research narrative, and a pedagogical narrative. I also address the paradox of destruction and preservation in an archive and how embodied pedagogy both extends and complements archival inquiry.

Introduction

This article explores methodologies from the fields of library archival science, human geography, composition and rhetoric, and established editorial practices in English studies from the perspective of a researcher-archivist. By elaborating on the role of subjectivity in archival creation, I expand the conversation regarding methodology and archives, especially how archives present us with new ways of seeing and making narratives during the editorial decision-making involved in their production. I offer a feminist methodology of archival work by investigating the relationship between archival research, subjectivity, and narrative; the paradox of destruction and preservation; and how embodied pedagogy extends

and complements archival inquiry. Like Gillian Rose (1997), I "reflexively examin[e] my positionality" (305) as part of my research practice and recognize the "feminist task" (305) as "less one of mapping difference . . . and more one of asking how difference is constituted, of tracing its destabilizing emergence during the research process itself" (313). As such, I situate feminist, archival methodology as an *affective methodology*, in which I define *affect* as contingent, active reading, speaking, and listening with empathy. In their edited collection on affective methodology, Britta Timm Knudsen and Carsten Stage (2015) identify *affect* as "bodily, fleeting[,] and immaterial and always in between entities" while encouraging research with "*strong situational specificity*" (2). Affect, when applied to methodology, characterizes methodology as a web of mutual and interdependent actions imbued with power relationships. As Anna Gibbs (2015) writes, in response to de Certeau's (1984) *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other, affective methodology* demands that researchers re-evaluate the research process: "If, since Michel Foucault, we are used to describing methodology as a toolkit, affect theory has never represented simply one more tool in the bag, but rather requires us to rethink what it is we do when we use any of our tools. It emphasizes the "*relationality* of empirical research, especially with human subjects, and it directs our attention to the ethics and the politics of the incorporation of the voices of those subjects in our writing" (223). Writing about my own experience, I privilege the researcher's point of view with a narrative about my construction of a digital archive.

Primarily a researcher, I nevertheless became a *de facto* archivist in practice, albeit not one schooled with the rigor of an academic degree, qualifications, or experience in the field. The two professions—archivist and researcher—though related, have dissimilar objectives, but the "line" between researcher and archivist is not definitive. Not only does an archivist's activities affect research, but an archivists' professional duties also involve some amount of research when categorizing materials for preservation. Since I usually work as a researcher, I needed to adjust to my role as an archivist's intern when I held an internship in Special Collections at my university archive. I learned the university archivist's perspective of archives and found that positioning myself as an archivist was difficult because I wanted to pursue research on the collection and often wrote with more detail or description of the documents than was the norm. For example, there were several times when I was unable to decipher signatures on letters when creating finding aids. Rather than cataloguing the letter as an unknown, I spent hours reading about the recipient of the letter as well as other clues that might lead to identifying the author, often with no success. Researching detracted time from creating the finding aid (my assigned task) and I realized I acted as a researcher rather than as an archivist. Despite archivists' occasional forays into historical research, time constraints prevent their focusing on chasing leads. In my case, the roles of archivist and researcher were conflated once I created a digital archive.

Methodology, Context, and the Archive: Subjectivity, History, and Narrative

Although commonplace in composition studies, linguistics, and rhetoric, as well as in archival scholarship within library science, methods and methodological criticism seldom appear in literary studies, my "parent" field of study. Literary criticism stems from a tradition in which transparency in methods and methodology is neither expected nor required, reflecting a stylistic and philosophical slant against metacommentary. One exception in literary studies is editorial theory, which offers a rich tradition of metacommentary in the sense of an overt

unmasking of both the *methods* of a project, the step by step tasks of performance,[1] as well as its *methodology*, the researcher's theoretical stance. Barbara L'Eplattenier (2009) points out the difference between methods and methodology, often conflated terms, and how "methodology allows us to theorize the goals of our research, [whereas] methods allow us to contextualize the research process of the researched subject and materials. Methods make the invisible work of historical research visible" (69). Publishing one's methods is revelatory, and a complement to philosophical or ideological views expressed in a methodology. Some scholars, such as literary critic Tim Milnes (2009), regard methodological criticism as little more than extraneous commentary. Milnes observes that metacommentary "is the product of a more basic misconception that underpins much institutionalized literary criticism and commentary today: namely, that interpretation requires a 'methodology' in the first place" (23). Milnes indicates that interpretation does not *require* a methodology, meaning that it is either unnecessary to criticism or that it is simply superfluous to include explanation of one's methodology. However messy, interpretation inherently does have a methodology and Milnes's comment, instead of causing us to disregard methodology, should prompt us to question how we write our criticism and our research overall, including that of archival work.

When scholars explain the steps of creating and interpreting, they may attempt to unmask some of the mysteries of unseen thinking processes, even of epistemology itself. Revealing our own positionality (as researchers, archivists, or researcher-archivists) follows a tradition in feminist scholarship across a number of disciplines, and such revelations are always incomplete, contingent, local, and marked by institutional ideologies. Gillian Rose (1997) warns against the "god-trick of claiming to see the whole world while remaining distanced from it" (308), or what Donna Haraway (1988) exposes as "the impossibility of entertaining innocent 'identity' politics and epistemologies as strategies for seeing" (585). Likewise, Knudsen and Stage (2015) remark upon the "trap of the researcher inventing the world" (6). In my own work, following Rose's (1997) critique of how reflexivity is often used to avoid a sense of "false neutrality and universality of so much academic knowledge" (306), I do not claim reflexivity as a "strategy for situating knowledge" (306).[2] Instead, I embrace the ambivalences, the slippery and elusive acts of interpretation, and I acknowledge the messiness of transparent reflexivity as innate to the research process. Pamela Moss (1995) discusses the "fluidity and simultaneity within betweenness," in which "researchers must engage in reflexivity," what she defines as "those introspective aspects of thought that are self-critical and self-consciously analytical," and which "[permit] us to position our own involvement in the production of knowledge" (445). Moss's work, like those of a number of theorists across disciplines, underscores a belief in transparency, a foundational principle of affective methodology.

Methodological metacommentary reveals praxis, the linking of theory and practice, and exposes institutional, pedagogical, and even activist obligations of theory. With archival research, researchers and archivists alike should therefore promote the revelation of methods and methodology to shape the expectations of our scholarship to include such discussions, and we should contemplate how metacommentary—through explication of methods and methodology—enriches the research process. Methodologies published for material culture studies influence my own archival work as both a researcher and creator of a digital archive, including Ian Hodder's (2003) discussion of interpreting documents. Hodder describes how documents require contextualization in order to be understood, and that documents

themselves are always contextualized by their material, social, or historical conditions. These "conditions" reflect the same circumstances of the researcher, what Clare Madge (1993) calls "issues of identity (nationality, race, gender, age, class)," or "where the researcher is 'coming from'" (297)—their position.[3] Both Hodder and Madge, in addressing the positionality of texts and the researcher, underscore what I see as a built-in tension between text and context pursuant to any written artifact. Editorial theory has addressed this tension for decades, and the advent of cultural studies and composition—both interdisciplinary fields within English studies—influences how we represent archival material in our work. Much of my own recovery work preserving and digitizing a nineteenth-century scrapbook focused on how materials are situated or conditioned by their containers. The scrapbook held letters and manuscripts from a nineteenth century newspaper, an archival "container" in its own right. Containers—the archive itself, the collection within the archive, the scrapbook within the collection, the original newspaper in the scrapbook—all involve exchanging of artifacts, such that the action of transferring an artifact creates intertextual, social, historical, and cultural relationships.

Recovery projects like my own often culminate in digital archives used for display, and as counterparts of print publication, digital archives constitute a relatively new genre (in the history of textual genres). In literary studies, genre theory has shifted from viewing genre as a type of classification to situating genre as constituted by social action.[4] Action makes meaning, and in the case of archival work, the action often involves the recovery, usually by researchers, of little known authors or texts. Constructing digital archives influences what exists in scholarship about a topic such as my own, American women writers who published in the newspaper *The Independent.* Through my work, I hope to encourage interest in nineteenth-century women's authorship in American periodicals by representing primary source materials from a physical archive—the manuscripts and letters to the editor of a major newspaper, *The Independent*—and by developing biographies and critical resources. My larger goal is to help scholars develop, or even reveal, networks of social groups, discourse communities, and circles of influence, such as those of the women (many of whom knew one another) represented in my work. Thus, construction and editing involved in such a project translates to recovery, not only for the women writers in the project, but also today among scholarly and editorial circles. Recovery work constitutes a public, social act, broadening these "recovered" authors' space in scholarly, literary culture, while potentially doing the same for the researcher.

Methodology and Subjectivity: History, Archive, and Narrative

Historians, archivists, archaeologists, and other researchers using archives participate in the discourse of power and knowledge of constituting history: from the vetting and accepting of materials, to the organizing and ordering of documents, to their interpretation and representation. During the nineteenth-century, Leopold Ranke (as cited in Wallerstein 2004) charged that history should be written *wie es eigentlich gewesen ist*—or, as it "really did happen" (4)—as a reaction against hagiography in historiography. Ranke proposed that history should be written according to the scientific method, and that historical documents penned when events occurred should be protected in archives as methods to guard against presumably corrupt interpretation. Historical writing is thus a compensatory act, a substitute for what cannot be retrieved. It is what F. R. Ankersmit (2001) calls "instant epistemology"

(74). Historical representation is a means by which ideologies become universal and eternal, with history acting as a narrative construct; this does not, of course, mean that every scholar's historical work will achieve such eminent status, but that the process reflects *historical representation*. It is impossible to record something exactly as it happened and separate writing from perception and interpretation. Creation and the unification of personal interests with historical voices mark the role of artist, of storyteller, of archivist, and archival researcher alike. The researcher becomes part of the story they want to represent while they interact with the materials and when they labor to create something significant. The work is always already personal, mirroring themselves, their passions, hobbies, life's work, burgeoning career, or activism.[5] The process is what Linda Markowitz (2005) refers to as a "feminist struggle," a challenge to "the various ways reality is often divided into simplistic dichotomies of nature/culture, public/private, rational/emotional" (40).

Although not expressly articulated, a similar methodological slant to those outlined here emerges from essays concerning archival work, including in *Beyond the Archives: Research as a Lived Process*, edited by Lucille Schultz (2008), and *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History*, edited by Antoinette Burton (2005). Both collections focus on the researcher's experience in the archive. There is no separate, specific methodology chapter or discussion in either collection, but a methodological perspective manifests itself—that the personal experiences of the research process ultimately affect how we read and understand history. In a similar fashion, Elena Trivelli (2015), in her exploration of archival work after a crisis, offers a research methodology in which she describes her responses as "*entangled with,* rather than *by-products of,* the material and the absences" (128) she encountered in the archive. A researcher's task may depend on an archivists' work but focuses on continual discovery and decision-making regarding how to contextualize archival materials through archiving, editing, and authoring. Researchers must sift through an often-vast amount of information that has already been partially catalogued or dissected, often before arriving at an archive, and then they must dissect even further.

In the archives, I became one of many centers, physical and digital, as my subjectivity and identity determined aspects of archival creation while I constructed a digital archive. I created a story from the materials, incorporating narratives they inherently suggested, what Eric Ketelaar (2001) calls "tacit narratives." Ketelaar describes how such narratives are unstable and contingent, evolving over time depending on how records are used. Likewise, Antoinette Burton (2005) posits that "archives are always already stories" (20). Objects in a collection begin to speak about their world as we invest time in them. For example, the scrapbook I worked with has its own narratives—a story of its creator, who placed letters written to the editor of *The Independent* by a number of authors, mostly during the years 1880 and 1881; it also suggests a narrative about the importance of periodicals in the late nineteenth century in America. To create the digital archive called *Independent Women*, I separated the women's materials in the scrapbook from the materials authored by men contained in the scrapbook, thus removing the texts from their context and creating a new one. My decision-making to begin the project developed in stages—knowing first, that my university library needed someone to organize the collection; second, that there was some interest in the topic in scholarly circles; third, that I would have institutional support for my digitizing work once finished with the finding aid; fourth, that I was intellectually invested in the materials.

During this research project, my discoveries about the scrapbook maker, and nineteenth-century scrapbooks overall, have brought me to weigh how scholars have separate personal fulfillment from potential scholarly value. The cultural import of the scrapbook includes how it presents evidence of nineteenth-century leisure activities and a window into the world of American periodicals—and how hobbies and periodicals overlapped in the late nineteenth century. In a study of scrapbooking, Katriel and Farrell (1991) identify three activities of scrapbook keeping, all of which overlap with archival creation: saving items for "future appreciation"; organizing with "spatial arrangement" and placement of items on pages; and "contemplating and sharing" (4-5) or inviting others to view the work. Construction of a scrapbook, then, is not unlike that of an archive, as both participate in exhibition and memory-making. The ephemeral becomes material because of its preservation, and the act of including an item in an archive, digital or otherwise, assigns the item value.

Prior to the entrance of the researcher on the scene, an archivist, among many other potential actors, participates in the "drama" of material objects. After arrival at an archive, materials must be accessioned, meaning that an archivist takes items in to the archive. Then the archivist must act as a gate-keeper for an archive, often accessioning items depending on a budget. After, the archivist must decide what to keep or "weed," a term from archival science, on some level determining trash from treasure. At many institutional archives, patrons will call the archive to offer to donate an item that they think is important, sometimes asking for a fee in return. At times, gate-keeping has begun before the "gate" of the archive with donors' agendas. In addition, when items are first acquired by an archive, a record is made of their provenance, marking the pedigree or genealogy of the items, ensuring their institutional authority by virtue of the records. Although the moment of accession, or of being "accepted" into an archive, is not the origin point on a time-line for any materials, the provenance or story underscores a faith in origins or origin stories. Both Donna Haraway (1991) and Sandra Harding (1991) discuss why such faith in origins is suspect, given that knowledge is, in fact, knowledge*s,* with an "s," such that emphasizing the origin of any knowledge mistakenly values claims to origins that are always indefinite. Instead, the "interpretive act" of research serves more as a source of what Gillian Rose (1997) calls "a key site of academic feminist power" (307),[6] which I position on an imaginary time-line *after* materials are accessioned. Here, I imagine a time-line to suggest the usual order of events for materials entering an archive, but I do not mean to imply that the process is clear-cut or linear, as my use of the term "time-line" might intimate.

Continuing the work of an archivist, the researcher likewise cuts and categorizes, making sense of the parts of the archival body in order to create a new text, whether an article, monograph, digital archive, or other work. Decision-making involves technical skills and the intellectual work of contextualizing. The application of meaning to materials is what "makes" the materials an archive. Archival materials can break historical silences when researchers give them voices, and the silent object speaks through the experiences of those who interact with it. In the collection I studied, the scrapbook presented a cultural object, fascinating in its own right, despite its contents. I envisioned the number of people involved in handling the documents, from the authors who wrote them; to their editor and typesetter, whose newsprint-fingerprints appear on some pages; to the woman who carefully glued these papers onto the pages of a scrapbook, itself her mini-archive. Because the pages of the scrapbook were not acid-free, according to archival preservation practices, I was made

to dismantle the scrapbook by slicing out the pages with a razor blade in order to "free them up" to fit in acid-free folders—in other words, "for their own good."

This sort of destructive activity, although necessary for preservation, does not square easily with the archival principle of *respect des fonds*, which the Society for American Archivists explains as a tenet of preservation.[7] The term *respect des fonds* means to categorize things as they arrive, or if it is the case, as they are found, with the practice of preserving the original order or the *fonds*, or "found objects." The term *respect des fonds* is related to the aforementioned concept of provenance, with the provenance of materials marking their inception or "birth" into an archive. However, the term *respect des fonds* imparts an idea of respecting, or honoring what is found in as close to a state to accession as possible. "Respecting" the "found objects" sanctions what are often already-created historical products or those which have a potential to *become significant* by the very fact of their acceptance. Additionally, the word *fond* means "base" or "foundation," suggesting a directional order to how we perceive evidence; origins are located at a base or root, and from there we build up knowledge, even if we construct on footing often resulting from chance. Therein lies a paradox—that the "origins" archivists must respect are built upon suspect faith—in the vein of Haraway (1991) and Harding's (1991) argument.

Acquisition by an archive contributes to the idea that knowledge can be owned, ordered, categorized, or hierarchically arranged. Once materials are "processed," a *finding aid* is created for researchers, reinforcing the idea that records are "hidden" and await discovery. In this narrative, a researcher is later fortunate enough to discover the materials, which lie, like a static, sleeping virgin in a fairy tale who "comes to life" with the researcher's "kiss," or entrance on the scene. In my own work, the process of preserving the scrapbook was a form of textual violence, a cutting and ordering, the anatomical dismemberment of an archival body, a sort of creation of a textual Frankenstein's monster. As I filed papers into acid-free folders, items became unglued, tape lost its stick, and newspaper clippings crumbled. Saving the scrapbook meant reversing the process of its creation, and recreating it in a new form, not only in folders in a Hollinger box housed in Special Collections, but again in a digital archive. Just as at the site of an archeological dig, as objects were uncovered and removed from context, the "dig"—in this case the scrapbook—was itself destroyed even though preservation was achieved, enacting an inherent paradox of archival methodology.

Destruction can bring the opportunity for reinvention or rebirth, despite violent, or even morbid, associations. As the would-be editor of a digital archive representing materials in a new textual body, I became not just textual anatomist of stored work, but undertaker and caretaker of texts, their curator. Dana Gioia (1996) likens the display of rare manuscripts under glass cases in library exhibits to the exhibition of "waxy cadavers of the blessed in the churches of Southern Europe" (25), comparing preservation and representation of actual and textual bodies. Definitions of the word curator capture the paradox of discipline involved—with curing as *healing*, *guardianship*, and *restriction,* and the *Oxford English Dictionary* provides the etymology of "curator" as the Latin *curare*, to cure or to heal.[8] Curation is central to the humanities and a particular responsibility of digital humanities because curation in the digital humanities surpasses preservation or traditional custodial responsibilities by emphasizing public display, often of recovered materials, with revelation in new, digital textual bodies. Julia Flanders (2005) argues that textual editors working in digital humanities operate as curators to "preserve the propriety" (32) of the relationship

between the physical medium and the textual meaning—in other words, to discipline the text. This sort of control can be likened to Foucauldian discipline, as institutional, as part of how bodies function in systems.

For textual bodies, editors or curators discipline texts by dismantling, anatomizing, and encoding them for display. As Stephanie Jed (1989) argues, we make texts "chaste" and defines the term "chaste thinking" as a

> figure of thought constituted at the join of two conflicting lexical families of terms, one representing the impulse to touch and the other, the impulse to be cut off from contact. These lexical families include, on the one hand, words related to touching or the absence of touching—*tangible, contaminate, contact, integrity, intact,* etc., and, on the other hand, words related to cutting—*chastity, castigate, caste,* and Latin *career*. (8)

The irony is that in order to make a text chaste, it must be touched—not unlike the paradox inherent in medical anatomies, wherein cutting leads to an understanding of wholeness. For instance, when I dismantled the scrapbook with the razor blade, I violated a textual body with the agenda of preservation and eventual representation. Taking an archival collection from accession to its display reveals a series of dualities that are at the heart of creating a new archive from an old one: recovering/covering up; destroying/preserving; dismantling/re-assembling; anatomizing/totalizing. I was motivated not only by a desire to correct a record but by fears of making errors, of perpetuating mistakes or creating a distorted body. Writing about a Renaissance anatomy textbook, Devon Hodges (1995) comments that the anatomist threatens existence with "his painful procedure for revealing truths . . . [and although] he tells us that he will expose a tangible truth, the anatomist instead turns up depths, displaces parts from a coherent whole, and flattens out bodies . . . turning finally into fragments that are not immediately placed in a new order" (6). When scanning the collection in my role as the creator of a digital archive, I felt a researcher's anxiety about potential failure to grasp all details, perhaps by error or mis-transcription, a fear I would use the digital archive to misrepresent the physical.

With the creation of a digital archive for public display, new problems arose, such as deciding how to display some of the materials, and not knowing how the efforts on "my end" will translate to a user's screen, a problem of representation and reception. I wondered, *how does one scan letters that are folded in half with writing on each side folded page, the way someone writes on a card? Should I scan that as one page or two, when the letter writer meant it to be two separate, but attached pages, something the original recipient and a contemporary would understand? To what degree can I control representation?* Because a digital archivist often must adopt principles other than *respect de fonds* and make choices based on themes or resemblances, digital copies do not necessarily mirror the contents of a folder (or of a material reality). Classification may determine organization but not actual location, and the design of a website or digital archive that contains a database could emphasize certain items more than others, such as with color, arrangement, and the number of links. Full control over a representation is impossible because representational possibilities do not end with the display created on the editor's end, but continue with each individual view of a site, or an item on a site.

Processes of preservation and its theoretical questions are inseparable from representation and questions of authorial intention. Archives present a constant tension between preservation and creation, characteristics that are more complimentary than opposite. When scanning the pages (now loose from the scrapbook), I regretted not having photographed the intact pages of the scrapbook before its dismantling. I could have attempted to preserve the context of the original letters, or at least recorded it, in a fashion closer to the scrapbook-maker's intent (though some items had fallen loose). The maker had already altered the original context and intention of the letters and manuscripts of poems and essays in the collection, which had initially been addressed to *The Independent*'s editors. In other words, the original authors'—those who had written the items glued in the scrapbook—intentions had already been violated when the private and business correspondence to the editors were given to the scrapbook maker for her personal collection.[9] The manuscripts and letters were intended to be final copies, what are often thought of by scholars to best reflect authorial intent, yet the scrapbook embodied a new, parallel text. Likewise, all the manuscripts in the scrapbook became printed articles in *The Independent* and then, in the twentieth and twenty-first century, became public—even social—again in digital archives, both in the historical newspaper databases housing periodicals and even in my own small project.

Final Reflection: Affective Pedagogy and the Archive

As a conclusion, I offer a narrative relating my experience with teaching students about archives because the affective methodology I describe in this article would be incomplete without its complement, *affective pedagogy*. I situate affective pedagogy as an extension, or even culmination of, my own research processes. In "Affect as Method: Feelings, Aesthetics and Affective Pedagogy," Anna Hickey-Moody (2013) discusses affective methodology as performing research that expresses *affect as method* during the "processes of making meaning" (85), calling for an awareness of how we feel to be part of pedagogy. As with a number of other learning experiences, I have and continue to learn a great deal about theory and methodology from teaching. For an undergraduate second-level composition course, I created an assignment derived from my own research experience using archives and from the narratives collected in *Beyond the Archives: Research as a Lived Process*, in which Lucille Schultz (2008) remarks that the authors of the essays in the collection "name the subjectivities with which they intentionally and unavoidably approach the print materials, the ephemera, and the physical sites they interrogate" (vii). I asked students to choose a text from the university archives, meaning anything from a letter, to an oral history, to a photograph, a map, a drawing, scrapbooks, etc., and to explain what the item is, how it reflects a historical context, and how they reacted to the object.

Using the archive in the classroom can encourage students to reconsider what they know or expect about gender, identity, class, history, culture, and the canon. Archives can move us beyond anthologies as a site for textual selection for our classrooms and shape our pedagogy. In a review of anthologies of women writers, Karen Kilcup (2009) noted that anthologies "represent a form of what we might call embodied pedagogy, enabling and engendering certain kinds of teaching via their shape, content, and apparatus" (7). Just as it does for researchers, the archive affords students the opportunity to question power and choices—not only in what gets into the archive—but also through what students select and represent from the archive. It can fill in some gaps, populate some spaces, provide possibilities, confront

norms, and bring us beyond the standard of "read a book, write a paper" in so many of our classes. Working with the archive always involves a negotiation of assumptions and tensions. Thus, to complete my exploration of archival methodology, I provide an overview of three related tensions that emerged when students worked with archival projects, researching and then displaying their work on a course website/digital archive.

The first tension concerned perceptions of "real history" and archives. Any researcher—and our students—faces an interplay between what one finds in the archive and what one expects based on individual assumptions, the ideologies of our research, and the language of our disciplines. Stephen J. Milner (1999) argues that "the historian is as conditioned by the archive as the archive is by the historian's disciplinary and ideological standpoint" (95). If anything, our students are even more "conditioned"—or, as it were, *constrained* than instructors, because when their encounter with an archive is based upon an assignment we give them, the assignment will express (implicitly or overtly) our interests—and perhaps not only our disciplinary conventions but our own background. In addition, the archivist at my institution guided students towards what she thought they might find interesting based upon what had been popular with other students, what appealed to their intellectual or personal interests, and the students' majors.

My assignment read, "Students will choose their own topics from any collection held in the archive and will have the opportunity to work with historical materials ranging from Civil War letters to Civil Rights documentation—a wide range of fascinating, real historical artifacts." The last part of this description that reveals what I will call a "celebratory" approach to archival work—an expectation that students would enjoy the work because they were able to touch materials from the past. I took students to Special Collections for an orientation because of my anticipation of their fear and my desire to unmask the secrecy of the archive. Also, most of them did not know where to find the room and told me they were intimidated.

Nearly all students noted that the sensory experience of the archive, the tactile aspect, made their work seem to them more "real," and that they felt more "invested" in their work than in most projects they create for classes. Students' sensory experience indicated a shortening of what Mark Salber Phillips (2003) calls the construction of "historical distance," the way historical writing necessitates imagining a reader's nearness or remoteness, or the perception of time or space between ourselves and a historical moment or object. Actual or imagined, we conflate physical and historical proximity in our experience with texts. This feeling of proximity depends, in part, on a reader's ability to transport herself to an imagined place or space, that is, on the reader's perception of reality. The more real, the more tactile, the more authoritative, the more pleasurable; thus, we can repeat these experiences with historical objects, reliving the perception of closeness. Sara McLafferty (1995, 438) remarks on how, when researching, she must continually "remind" herself that the connection she senses is "false." This connectedness results in a sort of seduction, which students, returning a number of times to the archive over several weeks, recalled as a desire or pleasure; one student explained that working in the archive began as something potentially "boring" to something they couldn't "drag [themselves] away from." The students' desire was an expression of what Jacques Derrida identifies as "archive fever" in the eponymous text, in which he describes such desire as a sickness, as he confronts his longing for the past in the Freudian archive, where he tries to meet his desire for knowledge by delving further into the archive. Derrida

describes the sense of longing as a "need" for archives—in the sense that "mal d'archive" is not so much a sickness as a "passion" to search through records that are traces of the self/subject, and that the historian/researcher tries to reassemble the traces/impressions collected or left in an archive. For Derrida, the archive is not only the site of cultural memory, but the site by which individuals structure their own memory, and ultimately, their identities.

Often, students experienced nostalgia after handling or viewing the objects even when the objects had nothing to do with their personal experience. It is something any researcher might feel—a nostalgia for a past world unrelated to ourselves, a romantic sort of desire or fantasy. The object freezes a moment in time, a point in history. As Linda Markowitz (2005) explains, "When students participate in learning, they come to discover how their personal experiences are situated in larger social systems, systems which help them give rise to their interpretations of reality" (42). Markowitz's statement reflects Donna Haraway's (1991) situated knowledges and echoes Gillian Rose's (1997) remark that "reflexivity may be less a process of self-discover than of self-construction" (313). With experiential learning in an archive, students participated in multiple systems (social, historical, institutional, among others) that allowed for a feeling of intimate connection with a historical object, not unlike how often, upon a first visit to a place we have seen only in photographs, we feel an intimate connection to our pre-existing knowledge of people, places, or time, whether real or imagined.[10] The student's sense of "reality" also suggested their perception of the archive as impartial (despite my attempts to dispel that). Students recognized that because history is a discipline born of science, the archive, by extension, participates in a scientific paradigm of knowledge organization. In a lecture prior to our archive visit, I explained how, historically, archives were established to function as controlled repositories of the past, supervised spaces with guarded and limited access, which made research an activity under the watch of gatekeepers. Importantly, guardianship need not mean preventing access, but protecting documents for preservation and posterity, and most archivists and librarians today promote access to collections as a form of stewardship.

The second tension when teaching with and from the archives involved false binaries, especially what I will call an "objectivity/subjectivity dichotomy," in keeping with my earlier discussion of Gillian Rose's critique research claims regarding transparency. I asked students to write a paper about "their" archival collection in two parts, an "Introduction to the Materials" section and a "Research Narrative." My division of the assignment into these two parts reflected my own struggle at the time with incorporating affect and subjectivity in my own work and reveals my scholarly "upbringing." The "archive assignment" revealed my training to disconnect "serious" research from the personal, and my anxieties were influenced by disciplinary boundaries in the academy, including the conflation of what is called "personal opinion" with subjectivity. Likewise, students expressed anxiety, having difficulty in their papers transitioning from what they assumed to be an "objective" analysis of an archival item to their "subjective" research narrative. My students' struggle with what they perceived as an objective/subjective split resulted in my changing the assignment to remove the two parts, working with students to create a less restrictive, less divisive set of guidelines for representing their experiences working with the archive. The divided paper became one narrative, an archive narrative that blended research methods with narrative, all expressions of embodied experiences in the archive.

In Karen Kilcup's (2009) discussion of anthologies as "embodied pedagogy,"

which I apply to archival work, she argues that we should "consider moving from creating anthologies that embody a pedagogy of diversity toward those that also encourage a pedagogy of connection, ... mean[ing] that we should shift emphasis from a recognition and celebration of difference to an acknowledgment of responsibility and action" (32). The last part of this idea—an emphasis on responsibility and action—emerged in my students' work with archives. Two students worked with the papers of the Florence Crittenton Home, an institution with over 3,100 occupants that housed unwed mothers during their pregnancies from 1894 to the 1960s. The site of the home stood on the edge of our university campus, and my students expressed a desire to raise funds to have a historical marker placed at the site in order to raise awareness of local women's history. Because of this sort of extension beyond what I called "read a book, write a paper," I can tentatively suggest that students working with archival materials can glean an enriched view of the past, however "real" within the choices they make and that are made for them.

Part of the students' experiences reflected tensions associated with archival discovery, limits, and organization. Not understanding provenance or *respect des fonds*, most students have a faith in institutional and scientific methods that, to them, seems "natural," again echoing Ranke's historiographical approach to record history as it happened. Many students view records as akin to scientific proof or as commemorative data (perhaps conflating the two), to the degree that with the creation of any archive, there is an ever-present threat of hagiography, cultural engineering, and monument building, what Antoinette Burton (2005) describes as the "evidentiary elitism" of much history-making, despite the good that comes from archival work (5). Students read objects as evidence of their times, and we archive some materials because of the sheer improbability that they have survived time.

Students believe archival materials to be legitimate because of the inclusion of items in the archive, a process always informed by its counterpart—exclusion—a dialectic that suggests the archive as a metaphor for research. The archive is a scene of creation composed by author and researcher, what Barbara Biesecker (2006) calls a site of "doubled invention" rather than a site of a "singular discovery" (124). Students need to understand the seen and unseen archive and know the types of choices already made regarding their objects—that is when it can be known. They select within a range of texts that have been taken into the archive (sometimes because the papers belong to a prominent donor to the university)—and choose from among what has been processed. Our students' abilities to discover hidden or marginalized voices thus depends upon the history of local sites. Archives reflect gender norms and past practices but are limited by how collections were accessioned, weeded, and catalogued. For example, for many women, their names, work, papers, and images, were catalogued under the names of men, often their husbands. The organization of the archive often hide or silence, and we often lack a textual apparatus to approach the archive beyond a surface layer of organization offered by a finding aid (if we even have that).

Students worried about not having enough detail in their research and representations, a consistent problem in most research, archival and otherwise, and they feared incompletion. As Walter Benjamin (1999) remarks,

> What is decisive in collecting is that the object is detached from all its
> original functions in order to enter into the closest conceivable relation
> to things of the same kind. This relation is the diametric opposite of

> any utility, and falls into the peculiar category of completeness. What
> is this 'completeness'? Is it a grand attempt to overcome the wholly
> irrational character of the object's mere presence at hand through
> its integration into a new, expressly devised historical system: the
> collection. And for the true collector, every single thing in this system
> becomes an encyclopedia of all knowledge of the epoch, the landscape,
> the industry, and the owner from which it comes. (204-205)

Benjamin's comment concerns infinite collecting and endless knowledge-seeking, a specter haunting archival work, the ability to finish archiving at all. To preserve something does not mean to finish, and even with a small-scale project like my own work I had to decide when to stop adding information inseparable from decisions about preserve the digital archival material. Knowing when something is finished arises from educated guesses about how useful more information would be to an audience. By extension, in institutional, corporate, and private archives, millions of items sit in boxes "awaiting" processing. Even as we process them, more items enter the physical archives, and although salvaging might become an object's salvation, the work of an archive is never complete, fraught with endlessness of possibilities, the dream of the archive.

This dream of potential creation and endless opportunity informs how we position ourselves, and teach our students how to do the same, in relation to archives. And, despite the tensions I have outlined, the archive assignment provided students and myself with opportunities to consider what Jennifer Fleissner (2002) describes as a feminist "form of historical reading," which "must always insist both on the structuring force of 'gender' or 'culture' in producing texts and subjects and on the way in which these processes are never complete" (57). There need not be what Gillian Rose (1997) exposes as a binary in much feminist methodology, when she notes that "the relationship between researcher and researched can only be mapped in one of two ways: either as a relationship of difference, articulated through an objectifying distance; or as a relationship of sameness, understood as the researcher and researched being in the same position" (313). Instead, blurring the "either-or" by acknowledging a *lack of transparency* even while self-disclosing one's position, can at least offer a more nuanced understanding of archival research. Gender, culture, texts, and subjects, as both constructed and incomplete, are thus not unlike the archive itself—social—always process, forever incomplete, endlessly productive, inventing, generative, and a source for finding and representing ourselves and others. Students, like myself, went to the archive looking for a research topic and found themselves to be the topic of the research, but the idea of an archive as a mirror of society is always limited. The archive can only be a partial reflection of social mores that students, researchers, and archivists can explore, even as we write ourselves into existing narratives, and even as we create new ones.

Endnotes

1   Although outside the scope of this article, Judith Butler's (1990) arguments regarding performativity, agency, and identity inform my consideration of researcher as performer. Likewise, Knudsen and Stage (2015) discuss research as a performative process as part of affective methodology edited collection Affective Methodologies: Developing Cultural Research Strategies for the Study of Affect.

2   Also see McDowell (1992), Nast (1994), and Katz (1992) regarding how reflexivity cannot provide a stable framework for making knowledge claims.

3   Like Madge, I will reveal my own position, in my case as a middle-aged, heterosexual white woman of a middle-class background, and I offer this information also as a response to Erica Schoenberger (1992) and others who call for feminists to explore how their own identity affects their knowledge production (even as knowledge production affects one's identity).

4   See Carolyn R. Miller's (1984) seminal article, "Genre as Social Action" and Miller's (2014) follow up, "Genre as Social Action (1984), Revisited 30 Years Later."

5   For more regarding visibility of position and avoidance of definitive claims, see Gilbert (1994), Katz (1992), Kobayashi (1994), Mattingly and Flaconer-Al-Hindi (1995), McDowell (1992, 1994), Nast (1994), Farrow et al. (1995), and Staeheli and Lawson (1994).

6   For more regarding the researcher's privileged position in relation to the act of research and its material processes or products, see McLafferty (1995).

7   See the Society of American Archivists (2005) glossary at http://www.archivists.org/glossary/term_details.asp?DefinitionKey=196.

8   Oxford Dictionaries, s.v. "curator," accessed November 10, 2017.

9   One prominent example concerns two letters written by P. T. Barnum, who labeled his correspondence PRIVATE in capital letters. From other letters in the collection, we can determine that the editor of The Independent, William Hayes Ward, shared such private correspondence with Miss Jefferis, a family friend and the scrapbook maker, giving her the letters for her personal autograph collection.

10   For a related perspective from the field of digital humanities regarding the romantic attachment to virtual objects, see Alan Liu's discussion of "found originals" in Local Transcendence: Essays on Postmodern Historicism and the Database.

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