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Affect & Archives

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Upcoming Book Chapter

As part of an upcoming Critical Keywords in Library and Information Studies, this book chapter delves into the key term: Affect

Most present in fields like Feminist, Ethnic, and Cultural Studies and Psychology with many notable scholars including Tomkins, Ahmed, Berlant, Sedgwick, Cvetkovich, Clough, Spinoza, Deleuze, Massumi, Bergson, Guattari and many more.

AFFECT - a flexible yet constantly evolving term, yet scholars tend to struggle with utilizing Affect as a theoretical lens given its muddy and often conflicting definitions and applications.



Affective Archival Turn

Since the first Affect & Archives conference in 2015

Affective Turn as it relates to archival practice and not just the material things first came into archival zeitgeist in the 2010s with increased visibility occurring after a 2015 UCLA Affect and the Archive symposium and the subsequent special journal issue.

Affect as a epistemology in Archival Studies & Practices

Prior to the 21st century, few archival scholars or practitioners considered the significance of human emotions and feelings as it related to the ways humans participate in cultural and collective memory keeping. This in the United States is likely due to how the professional practice of archiving in public and private institutions traces most of its origins to the French, British, or Dutch archival traditions including ideas around Enlightenment and Positivism.

1 Affect & Relations

2 Affect and Spaces/Places

3 Affect and Labor

Notable Areas of Research



Affect & Relations

Important discussions on the relationships between archivists, record creators, record subjects, users, and archival donors. Many scholars now emphasize people and relationality with a focus on questions of protocols or ethics like Feminist Ethics, Data or Access rights for and about Indigenous People to purposeful affective strategies like Radical Empathy as well as increased reciprocity and much due colonial reckonings.



Affect and Spaces/Places

Archival buildings as the physical holding place for archival materials carry perceived reverence or self-proclaimed prestige. This can induce emotions such as apprehension or physical discomfort when interacting with archival spaces or feelings of distrust or disinterest due to lack of familiarity. Additionally there are affective responses to losing buildings and the collections held within these spaces due to Climate Change or continued austerity.



Affect & Labor

Increased attention to the issue of invisibilized and discredited archival labor as noted through feminized labor framework and the systematic devaluing of certain fields, practices, or forms of work. Additionally scholars now note the Affective responses or internalized states of donors and users resulting in what some consider vicarious impact such as secondary trauma or compassion fatigue.

THOUGHTS AS BREADCRUMBS

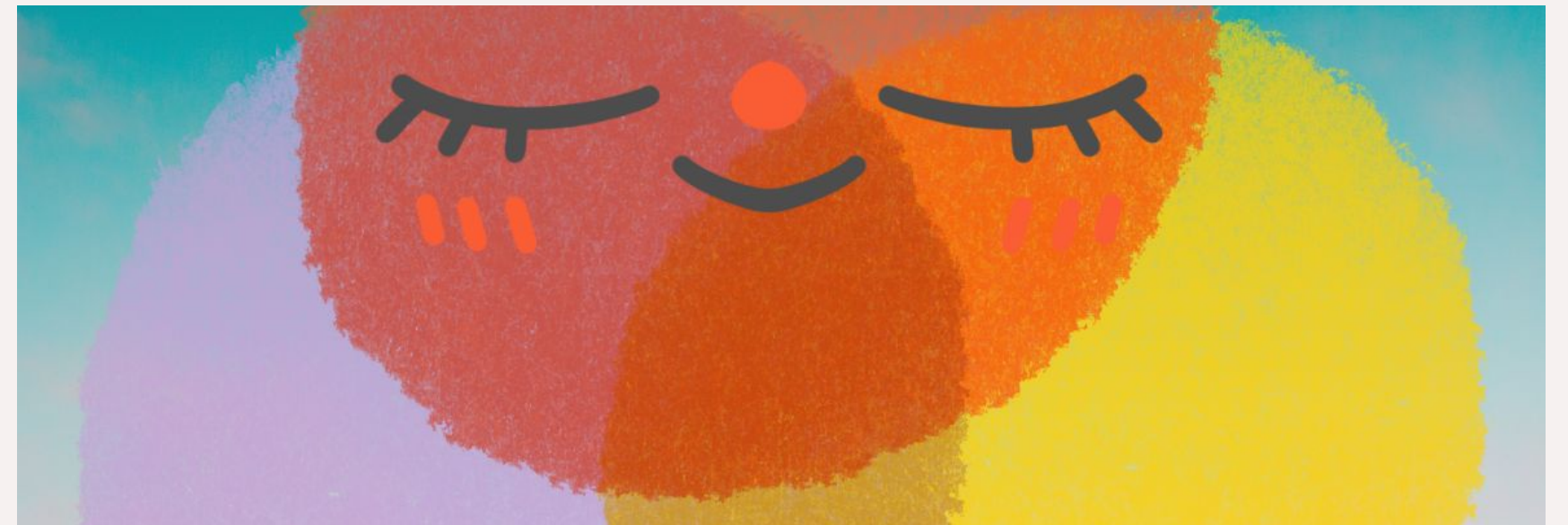
what discussed
areas resonate
most with your
archival work or
research?



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Thank You

Please reach out if you have questions, ideas, or concerns

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