



On Currents and Comparisons: Gender and the Atlantic 'Turn' in Spanish America

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Abstract

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The cluster is made up of the following articles:

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'Women and Families in Early (North) America and the Wider (Atlantic) World', Karin Wulf, *History Compass* 8.3 (2010): 238–247, doi: 10.1111/j.1478-0542.2009.00659.x

'Family Matters: The Early Modern Atlantic from the European Side', Julie Hardwick, *History Compass* 8.3 (2010): 248–257, doi: 10.1111/j.1478-0542.2009.00660.x

The following essay originated as one of these three contributions to a roundtable discussion held at the 14th Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, June 2008. The roundtable, 'Rethinking Gender, Family, and Sexuality in the Early Modern Atlantic World', was meant to be as much invitation as inventory and was astonishingly well attended at 08:00 in the morning, with standing room only for a thoughtful, lively audience whose comments, questions, and suggestions are reflected here (although in no way fully represented). As historians of gender and family in the North Atlantic, European, and Iberian worlds, we had hoped to encourage more central and systematic attention to gender within the Atlantic World paradigm by cataloging some recent works in their fields and pointing the way for future studies. Yet, a funny thing happened on the way to the conference. Independently, each of us began to engage with the challenges of simply inserting family and gender into 'the Atlantic' as both as conceptual place and a historical practice. The essays that emerged, therefore, departed from conventional historiographies that survey the state of the field. Rather, these are theoretical and methodological reflections on the implications of de-centering national and colonial narratives about the history of gender. At a time when transnational historical scholarship on early modern women promises to explode, these essays aim to inspire debate about the conceptual utility of the Atlantic as a paradigm for understanding issues of gender, family, and sexuality, as well as its ramifications for feminist scholarship everywhere.

Scholars of gender in the 'Iberian Atlantic' – conventionally known as colonial Latin America, and early modern Spain and Portugal – only recently have begun to consciously situate their work within the paradigm of Atlantic history. This might be surprising as the framework seems a natural fit for students of Latin America. The concept of the Atlantic world is, in its most commonsensical definition, the notion that Europe, West Africa, and the Americas and the Caribbean 'were sufficiently integrated in many ways to lend themselves to treatment as a single unit'.¹ The end point for this integration is not fixed, ranging from the late 18th century to today, but many agree that the interdependencies of the Atlantic began with Colón's maiden voyage and crested on the infamous Middle Passage.²

And there certainly is plenty to say about Spain and Spanish America along these lines. After all, Spain built the first modern Western empire atop the gold and silver ruins of distant Amerindian civilizations, into whose noble ranks conquerors married. What is more, after eight centuries of Moorish occupation, Spain's inhabitants joined others in the unprecedented endeavor of enslaving millions of human beings from the African continent and sending them to overseas colonies. For scholars of Spanish America, it is hardly surprising that the geography of history is dotted with a network of connections between the continents through sex, commerce in goods, human enslavement, warfare, and ideas and images.³

Yet despite the deep association between 'colonial Spanish America' as it is conventionally defined and Atlantic thematics, some Latin Americanists nonetheless have found themselves carried away by the new currents whipping up the waters along the Atlantic basin. Beyond mainland Latin America, the publication of articles and monographs that place their topics in an Atlantic frame, or at very least place the ocean in their titles, has reached its high watermark in the last five years, and the tides might grow higher still.⁴ A few scholars of gender in the Spanish empire working on both sides of the ocean have dived in with published works that explicitly adopt Atlantic perspectives, and many more seem poised to do so.⁵

Their studies will, at the very least, add unique facets to an Atlantic where women are scarce; at most they promise to undo what we thought we knew about the early modern world. In the glowing words of historian Alison Games, the Atlantic paradigm offers us a chance to 'deepen our understanding of transformations over several centuries and cast old problems in an entirely new light'.⁶ Her comments on the Atlantic parallel those the editors of a recent edited collection on gender and religion in the Atlantic World make about 'women's studies'. This field, Daniella Kostroun and Lisa Vollendorf write, 'has a proven ability to uncover new sources, overturn received knowledge, and open up new lines of inquiry'.⁷ Combining these two approaches thus doubly promises to unearth sunken treasures, the rewards for seeking out the until-now unseen supranational connections and interimperial dependencies that inflected, and perhaps in some cases caused, what were taken to be local or national phenomena.

If the Atlantic approach showcases how 'the migration of ideas and people ... resulted in transactional, dynamic relationships among and between people and institutions', it should mesh particularly well with the historiography of women in the Spanish colonies.⁸ Attention to interaction, dynamism, and linkages form the cornerstone of scholarship on women in colonial Spanish America. US-based gender scholars of the region trace their roots to the international feminist movement of the 1970s, which tended to privilege the 'international' over the 'national' and to see in the local larger lessons about transnational phenomena such as imperialism and patriarchy.⁹ Historians of women and Spanish colonialism have from their earliest days been interested in issues such as miscegenation and its centrality in the creation of colonial society, marriage as a key to transatlantic commercial networks, and how Spanish (i.e., Western, patriarchal, proto-capitalist) gender norms and practices were imposed upon, refashioned by, and sometimes resisted by colonial women of all races. Surely as a rather illustrious roster of established scholars and a newer generation of dissertators begin to set off on the Atlantic turn, they will find these traditional themes of study more than compatible with the Atlantic's 'transactional' focus.

This essay is not an attempt to throw cold water on their scholarly efforts. Rather it aims to chart the depths and directions of this current for historians of gender and women. It assesses the unique implications of Atlantic models and methods for colonial Spanish America by beginning with an overview – more panoramic than traditionally

'historiographical' – of how historians of women and gender in the field have participated in recent articulations of Atlantic studies, pointing out where we have been going with the flow and where we are just getting our feet wet. The essay then considers some traditional critiques of the Atlantic paradigm, discussing the promises and problematics that it brings to historians of gender in the Spanish empire. In particular, I argue that certain methodological approaches that privilege a quest for similarities and connections between Atlantic peoples and regions risk displacing the *colonial* as an object of study and as a violent process simultaneously making and erasing difference. By promoting an explicitly intraimperial and comparative version of Atlantic history, I urge us to reconsider our traditional commitment to examining how specific historical forms of colonial power affected women's lives.

Of course, dissolving notions of imperial isolation – undoing of myths uniqueness and the insular development of the Spanish, the Portuguese, the British, or the French empire – has been a meaningful commitment in its own right. One of the most vibrant and exciting bodies of work that use an 'Atlantic' framework are histories that cross imperial boundaries within the New World to demonstrate how Europeans' scramble for political and economic purchase in the Americas shaped the modern nations we live with today. A growing array of articles, anthologies, and monographs compare British, French, Spanish, and Portuguese America, and reveal the gendered discourses in colonizing strategies and regimes of violence, place the history of women into studies of borders and slave emancipation, and connect histories of gendered political strategies during the Age of Revolution.¹⁰

Yet as quickly as the comparisons of colonial Spanish America with other New World regions have come, direct comparisons within Spanish American colonial regions have been slower.¹¹ Colonial Latin Americanists teaching at US institutions are expected to integrate the Spanish and Portuguese colonial experiences in the Americas into a single syllabus, yet only an intrepid few historians of colonial Brazil and Spanish America have shortened the voyage and toured each other's neighborhoods in their monographic research.¹²

This is especially pronounced in studies of gender. Most cross-colony research undertaken on women and gender in Latin America takes the form of edited volumes: one could easily compare chapters in collections on Latin American women, the family, and sexuality edited by historians such as Asuncion Lavrin, Pablo Rodríguez, Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpurú, Scarlett O'Phelan Godoy and Margarita Zegarra, and Pete Sigal.¹³ Yet as fine – indeed as groundbreaking – as these works are, the nature of edited volumes is to line up individual studies of regions that more or less correspond to modern nations or political constructs, including 'Latin America' itself. More often than not, edited collections pluck out a few common themes that draw 'Latin America' together in a single historical tapestry; few structure their works in a way that identifies the causes of these similarities or explains difference between peoples or regions.¹⁴ An overarching difference between Spanish and Portuguese colonizing strategies was the earlier, stronger institutional presence of the colonial Church in Spanish America. Were we to do more than simply point out 'Iberian ways' in our edited volumes, we might learn whether and how access to local tribunals of the inquisition or the option of entering homegrown convents made a discernable difference for Spanish American women's experience or made gender (and racial) norms different in Bogotá versus Bahia.¹⁵

At the same time that we increasingly have moved through the New World along the longitudinal axis, it is curious that not more scholars of the Spanish empire have taken the latitudinal, 'imperial turn' in their studies of women and gender.¹⁶ The imperial turn

is, as Antoinette Burton describes it, is a renewed interest in the connections and disjunctions between metropole and colony, a trend notable in the last decade or two of scholarship on colonial Africa and South Asia.¹⁷ Except in the field of migration studies, there has been until recently a paucity of works that travel from Spanish American colony to mother country or from peninsula to colony. This stands in marked contrast to Atlantic studies in British North America, where the Atlantic turn has been undertaken as essentially an east–west voyage.¹⁸

Gender historians have noticed this gap, and there seems to be a growing urgency to integrate Spanish and Spanish American studies of family, sexuality, and gender. But using the history of women to pull the two sides of the Atlantic together is still a new, and at times strained, endeavor. Take, as an example, the recent appearance of the 'early modern' installation of Spanish historian Isabel Morant's three-volume *Historia de las Mujeres en España y América Latina*.¹⁹ Although its featuring of Spanish America is a novelty and to be commended, the volume is decidedly 'un-Atlantic' in that its structure reproduces notions of separateness – a first, vibrant section on Spain with chapters on analytically rich topics is followed by, in words of one reviewer, an 'encyclopedia-like' section cataloging three 'races' of women in the New World.²⁰

The volume reveals that even the best intentions to write a history of women in the Spanish empire can run up against long-standing conceptual frameworks that juxtapose the history of the 'West' and that of the (non-White) 'rest'. When seen outside a national perspective, Latin American history is often reduced to a lesson on race and cultural diversity and perhaps on little else. I believe that gender historians who want to scramble this conceptual structure have a unique opportunity to do so by linking the histories of Spain and its American possessions. But is it the best way to deepen these histories for us to think Atlantic when writing histories of women and gender in the Spanish empire?

In the rest of this essay, I wish to propose that adopting Atlantic models entails certain theoretical and methodological implications, and that these are issues that gender scholars of Spain and its American colonies would be wise to consider before they launch into their studies. Readers familiar with Atlantic history might note that some of the problems I identify here are general, meaning that there is nothing particularly troubling about them for gender historians or historians of women. Others, however, are indeed uniquely complicating for us. In particular, I want to call for gender historians to reflect more thoughtfully on the relationship between Atlantic, transnational approaches and comparative history. To deepen our understanding of the gendered past in Spanish America and its mother country, it just may be that a more old-fashioned, if modified, intrainperial comparative approach is preferable to the kinds of Atlantic history that put the sea in place of the nation.

As with any academic trend, the popularity of the Atlantic paradigm has bred criticism – some trenchant, some crotchety. The complaints can be summed up in the following way: the Atlantic World, as it actually appears in historical scholarship, is simply too amorphous to be analytically useful. In one work, it appears as an analytical or regional unit; in another as a method; and in another, as a topic in and of itself.²¹ I am less troubled by the historiographical slipperiness of the Atlantic concept than are other critics, but each facet of Atlantic studies – as region, method, and topic – does present certain problems, as well as open certain unique possibilities, for scholars of gender in the Spanish empire.

Let me tackle first the question of whether the Atlantic is a useful regional designation. Scholars who unquestioningly adopt the 'Atlantic' as a geographical framework reproduce early 19th-century Enlightened notions of a world history in which the European

epicenter reverberates out to the Americas and Africa. The most obvious problem with this too-literal geographical rendering of the 'Atlantic' is that it cuts Spain's eastern colonies, and specifically the Philippines, out of the picture. It also obscures the importance of huge swaths of Spanish America that barely touched Atlantic shores but did meet the Pacific and faced away from Europe for thousands of miles.²² Still, the clash between region as idea and region as geography – particularly the truncation of the Philippines from our vision – has plagued historians of the Spanish empire long before Atlantic studies came into vogue, so while the problem is significant it is not uniquely problematic for gender scholars.²³

Putting aside the rather arbitrary nature of the geographical designation of 'Atlantic' to capture so vast a territory or concept as was Spain's early modern empire, the Atlantic-as-a-region paradigm does offer the benefit of unmooring scholars from the unquestioning use of the nation as a self-evident unit of analysis that is prevalent in so much historiography. Yet this may feel more liberating for scholars of other empires or areas than it does for students of women in Spain and its empire, and this is so for several reasons.

While historians of colonial Spanish women write, no different than any other historian of Latin America, within the confines of often traditionally nationalistic individual historiographies – producing accepted anachronisms such as 'colonial Ecuador' – the notion that Spain and Mexico, or Spain and Chile were connected in the colonial period is obvious. Spain puts the 'colonial' in 'colonial Spanish America'. And this is particularly true in women's history, where colonialism often assumes an explanatory pride of place as a particularly gendered form of legal domination (as with the study of indigenous women and Spanish inheritance laws or labor regimes), or of violence and coercion (as in studies of non-elite women's interaction with Mediterranean honor systems.)²⁴

For this reason, it has become a near iron-clad requirement that scholars of colonial Spanish American women make a trip to Seville's Archivo de Indias or the 'Ultramar' section of the Archivo Histórico Nacional in Madrid to undertake at least part of their research. Yet even as we have become experts on imperial issues such as gendered property practices, religious prescriptions, or women's custody rights, this has not meant that we have mastered the complexities of gender history in the mother country. Although historians of other New World empires might deracinate from the nation to adopt 'Atlantic' perspectives, they often show the significance of their findings by dipping into relatively rich national historiographies of the metropole. Spanish colonial gender historians who go to peninsular historiography – as opposed to peninsular archives on the Americas – to contextualize their findings, in contrast, confront a different, less unified and more qualified national historiography.

This is in part because historical work on Spain suffers both more and less from the tyranny of the nation than other historiographies. According to Spanish historian Josep M. Fradera, in the 20th century, Spanish historiography tended to squelch critical perspectives on its empire in favor of a defense of Catholicism as the national essence.²⁵ After (or, quietly, before) this celebratory historiography went the way of Franco, Spanish historians made a mad dash for local archives to reconstruct intensely regional, rather than integrated, histories.

Given the degree of historiographical atomization in Spain, Isabel Morant's endeavor to advance a unified history of women in the early modern dominions of Spain emerges as a truly ambitious rather than limited undertaking: to engage in Atlantic- or even Ibero-American studies, we must confront the fact that there still is not (and perhaps never will be) a cohesive Spanish national or even imperial narrative of the history of gender.

Allyson Poska's intriguing scholarship on peasant women in early modern Galicia underscores the way in which region makes all the difference in Spain; *gallegas* were unique both because they exercised a surprising degree of gender autonomy and defiance of idealized honor codes, and because in the 18th century, the Spanish government targeted them in a campaign for migration to South America.²⁶ Poska's most recent work follows these Galician immigrant women across the Atlantic to Buenos Aires to see how their specific gender culture translated in the colonies. Such a study, attentive to local conditions in dual settings, holds the potential to undermine stereotypes of 'Spanish' machismo. I am presently engaged in research on women and gender in the Spanish empire that underlines this local diversity of gendered experiences: in the Montes de Toledo, a rural region in central Spain, women were indeed highly legally subordinated to men in the 1600s and 1700s, particularly in comparison with women in Mexico and Peru. Such studies then, taken together, can prove not so much that Spanish machismo is nationally mythic as it is locally specific.

The dizzying regional variation in gender practices and norms across the empire makes patent the tricky practical issues involved in choosing just which women we will study as we take the Atlantic turn, and just where we study them. Such issues lead to the second set of critiques of Atlantic studies, as a method. In his essay on three 'types' of Atlantic history, David Armitage points to only one type, the 'transatlantic' version, as inherently methodological. What he labels as *circum-* and *cis-*Atlantic histories are essentially about the Atlantic as a topic – as a site of circulation or an influence on a region or people. Transatlantic history, however, implies a distinctly comparative approach, a way of setting up a study that allows for the discovery of contrasts as well as points of commonality between different Atlantic regions, and most importantly, a way of setting up a study that explains as much as it describes.

Transatlantic history, as Armitage defines it, makes comparisons between two or more regions 'meaningful' by virtue of the fact that they were somehow connected by the Atlantic. But Armitage allows that such a connection might figure as only one of many variables in a comparative study of Atlantic peoples or places, and indeed he goes so far as to offer that the connection 'might be excluded from study, as a common variable, or it might itself become the object of study'.²⁷ There is a troubling methodological circularity to this description of transatlantic comparison. If the answer to the question 'What effect did the Atlantic (circulation of ideas, goods, peoples) have on the lives of *these specific* women in Spain and/or colonial Spanish America?' can be 'None', then the Atlantic is not a method but instead a metaphor for a presumed, but testable, set of connections or influences.

More recent attempts to grapple with the place of comparison in a new 'transnational' order do not quite lead us out of this methodological circularity. Micol Seigel has brilliantly championed the transnational approach in an exploration of the limits of comparative race studies in the Americas. She shows that the comparative method traditionally has been used obscure rather than illuminate connectedness, to set up contrasts that serve nationalist and racist ends.²⁸ Focusing on the decades-long conversation between the United States and Brazil over slavery's legacies, segregation's selectiveness, and the myths of equality both nations perpetuate, Siegel reveals that, far from a neutral social scientific endeavor, comparison has exoticized non-US notions of race. Thus the comparative method, which she claims 'discourages' scholars from looking for connections between two or more units of study (be they nations, or groups, or phenomena), should be considered a politically rigged, epistemological trick – a trick certainly worthy of our study as a subject but not a template to be followed.²⁹

To be sure, just because some comparative studies have been used to explain (national) difference and have failed to account for transnational phenomena does not mean that they must. Comparison does not make difference any more than following connections makes similarity. Put more concretely, the notion that comparative histories are ineluctably nation- (or empire-)bound parallelisms is a narrow caricature of what comparison can do.

Nonetheless, Seigel's criticism of comparative studies should not be taken lightly. It makes stark the directional choice that gender historians on the verge of the Atlantic turn must make. Shall our studies privilege stories of connections and interdependencies in political gestures that further expose the lie of dominant narratives of national difference or imperial isolation? Or can transnational or Atlantic studies mean comparative, causative analyses in which the twain – our units of study, be they regions or peoples – meet only briefly? Perhaps even in which, as Armitage permits, the twain meet not at all? I suggest that the comparative method is not only a still viable option for scholarship on women and gender in the Spanish Atlantic; open-ended comparisons might even be a preferable method, given our own historiography and our particular moment.³⁰

When taking the Atlantic turn, gender historians of the Spanish empire need not automatically adopt a vision in which defying national or imperial boundaries is what gives salience to our scholarship. No more or less explicitly than other types of scholarship, work that proclaims itself transnational, transimperial, or Atlantic is still, in a larger sense, comparative. As it has been practiced, Atlantic studies generally set the discovery of interdependence against presumptions of isolation, usually national in character.³¹ Putting aside the (telling) fact that many Latin America-based historians who write within national historiographies prefer to discuss the 'viceregal' rather than 'colonial' periods, the utility of 'colonial Latin America' itself as an analytical category has been based not on a presumption of isolation but rather on the acknowledgment of (violent) integration and (coerced) Atlantic connections.³²

In our case, then, the Atlantic turn can do more than lead US-based historians of gender in the Spanish empire away from the 'nation.' It can position us to confront, head on, the 'colonial' as historical explanation. Some of our earliest and most path-breaking works took for granted that the labor regimes, rigid color/class hierarchies, and religious and cultural impositions of colonialism made it worse to be an average woman in Mexico City than in Madrid.³³ I am not certain that more recent scholarship has moved us entirely away from that as a foundational notion. Comparisons within the Spanish empire provide us an opportunity to cast our own, unique 'old problems in a new light', to reengage our own historiography, and to potentially explode our own myths.

What a specifically comparative approach to conceiving of the 'Atlantic' offers gender scholars of the Spanish empire is a chance to finally scrutinize our own presumptions about the gendered nature of colonialism by systematically chronicling whether, how, and when the connections between Spain and its American dominions made a difference in the lives of women on both sides of the ocean. Tracing the circulation of people, cultures, or institutions throughout Atlantic circuits is not the only or necessarily the best way to answer such questions. Intercolony comparisons can too easily leave undisturbed the category 'European colonialism' as factor or variable that had gendered consequences. Instead, the questions must be approached comparatively, locally, and carefully. We might adopt traditionally 'Western' points of departure by considering data about the property practices of rural women in Valencia, Spain with those of indigenous women in Villa Alta, Oaxaca. But not all of our starting assumptions need set up 'Spain' as normative. We might search out what have been assumed to be 'American' gender norms and practices across the sea, using, for instance, the deep literature on female domestic slavery in

the Americas to compare the labor routine of an African-born domestic servant in Zipiquirá or her relations with her master to the work life and relationships of an orphan-servant taken by wealthy patrons in Zaragoza. Ultimately, what we can determine through such comparison is whether and how much – not just how – the flows of ideas, pesos, and peoples between Spain and its American possessions impacted women's lives and the concepts of gender that shaped them.

The second reason to pause and consider the theoretical and methodological stakes of Atlantic history is to assess what the turn means in our own historiographical moment and for our (mostly shared) commitment as feminist scholars. The political potentialities of the Atlantic paradigm are not the same for gender historians today as they were for scholars of race in Atlantic history writing in the late 20th century. Pioneering scholars of the Black Atlantic took up the notions of 'black' or 'African religion' as unified categories of study, even if their conclusions highlighted how supralocal connections fed back into the diversity in historical experience among peoples of African descent.³⁴ Scholars of women and gender have, in contrast, faced in the last three decades a true sea change in our understanding of women as sovereign, self-evident subjects.

Operating from a perspective far away from the Atlantic basin, scholars from French gender historians to South Asian post-colonial critics have alerted us to the problematic use of 'women' as a homogenizing unit of analysis.³⁵ Such work was just as subversive to our conventional presuppositions about the unfolding of world history as was Black Atlantic scholarship, but precisely because it took apart our notions of 'women' and 'non-Western' women, rather than celebrating our connectedness. Given these contributions to our understandings of how gender power and imperial power have together imbued the very questions feminist academics ask, how many of us would feel at ease with a book that takes as its starting point the notion of a 'women's Atlantic'? Who would not blink when confronted with a grant proposal that labeled women of diverse social classes, castes and regional origins residing on three Caribbean islands as a 'diaspora' based on their sex alone?

In sum, the unique perspective of gender historians of Spain and Spanish America – as historians of the Spanish empire, of colonialism, of women – should give us special insights into both the limitations and the potentialities of Atlantic-as-method approaches. We study colonial societies that were neither coeval with the rise of the modern nation nor coterminous with the ocean; we draw from a metropolitan historiography on gender that is too regionally diverse and perhaps too new to offer a neat foil for the 'Atlantic'; and our backgrounds as feminist historians – not to mention feminist historians of the so-called non-West – make us acutely aware that the politics of imposing analytical categories on our subjects are no less thorny when we are setting up comparisons than when we write narratives celebrating the supranational solidarities, fluidities, and hybridities that expose the limits of past scholarship.

As for the idea that the Atlantic world is a topic in and of itself, this seems to me to be the least inspiring of all except at the epistemological level. Historians of gender in the Spanish empire should not be content to merely repeat what we all have come to accept: that there was an interconnected Atlantic World inhabited by women. We cannot hope that we have advanced the study of women and gender in the past by only pointing to the movement of women across the ocean, or to merchants connected by kinship and marriage beyond imperial borders, or to the fact that literate women (who made up such a small percentage of the early modern world) read and very occasionally wrote the same kinds of texts. We must engage in a more systematic interrogation of what those connections meant for the lives of ordinary women. And we must permit the possibility

that the answer is 'not much'. This can only be achieved through comparison of how the lives of women differed and converged between (and within) colony and metropole, and through a reassessment of what this divergence or convergence means in terms of power – and particularly colonial power.

Not only should we be bold enough to do the old-fashioned work of comparing, we also need to be fearless enough to explain why between metropole and colony there were commonalities in addition to contrasts; to see similarity born of circumstance as well as contact; to allow for the possibility that particular types of gender oppression were specific to the colonial setting, and others not. Thus, as we accelerate forward into the Atlantic in search of connections and interdependencies, we should be wary of leaving in our wake other possibilities. We need comparative local studies of women in Spain and Spanish American colonies not because our traditional conviction that colonialism was a uniquely gendered form of oppression must be preserved, but because the time has come to finally test it.

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Short Biography

Bianca Premo is an associate professor of History at Florida International University. Her first book, *Children of the Father King: Youth, Authority and Legal Minority in Colonial Lima* (2005), which has been honored with several prizes, reveals how Lima's children were socialized into colonial hierarchies and how adults viewed and practiced their roles as authority figures over children in a legal culture that favored elite fathers and distant kings. She also co-edited *Raising an Empire*, a volume of historical scholarship about children and childhood in early modern Spain, Portugal and colonial Latin America, and is the author of various articles and book chapters on women, children and the law in colonial Peru. For her second monograph, Prof Premo is undertaking a comparative study of civil litigation in Peru, Mexico, and Spain in the 18th century.

Notes

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¹ Peter A. Coclanis, 'Atlantic Worlds or Atlantic/World', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 6/2 (Oct. 2006), 725–42.

² For the periodization question, see Lara Putnam, 'To Study the Fragments/Whole: Microhistory and the Atlantic World', *Journal of Social History*, 39 (2006): 615; José Moya, 'Modernization, Modernity, and the Trans/formation of the Atlantic World in the Nineteenth Century', in Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra and Eric Seeman (eds.), *The Atlantic in Global History, 1500–2000* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2006), 179–97.

³ Here, even a representative sampling of classic works that connect the continents would be long and lopsided. Leaving aside a great deal of scholarship that uses Latin America as a foil for 'rise-of-the-West', 'European/capitalist-expansion' tales, I nonetheless will gesture to some starting points for those who wish to explore the origins of Atlanticism in Latin America. Those interested in tracing the voyage of commodities across the Atlantic might begin with Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Penguin, 1986), and might find Fernando Ortiz's notion of 'transculturation' indispensable for connecting commodities to culture in the New World (*Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* (reprint in 1940; Durham: Duke University Press, 1995)). Nationalist

scholarship within Latin America calls forth more than a century of blended attention to the three continents; Brazil's Gilberto Freyre studied Africa and Portugal to understand Brazil, and in some sense 'Atlanticized' the very bodies of slave women in his foundational sociological statement on the Brazilian national character, *The Masters and the Slaves (Casa-Grande and Senzala) a Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilization* (reprint in 1933; Random House, 2000). Studies of New World African slavery would seem the most obvious to integrate European, Africa, and New World regions. And, in fact, pioneers such as Philip Curtin, David Eltis, and Herbert Klein often sail away from national or continental narratives altogether and to locate history among the humans transported on the sea. Nonetheless, even with such an illustrious Atlantic pedigree, it is worth noting that recent attempts to further integrate African and New World history have had uneven results in terms of the amount of attention paid to Spanish America and Brazil. Compare the deep attention to Africa in James Sweet, *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African-Portuguese World, 1441–1770* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2003) with the scant attention to Spanish America and Brazil in Jennifer Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); and Linda M. Heywood and John K. Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles and the Foundation of the Americas, 1585–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Finally, in the last two decades, post-colonial approaches and the 'new historicism' in literary studies have also dovetailed with what might be called an 'Atlantic' approach to the history of native peoples of Spanish America, primarily focused on the contact and early colonial periods. Studies or anthologies by Tvestan Todorov, Walter Mignolo, Nathan Wachtel, Stephen Greenblatt, and Stuart Schwartz display a concern not only with grasping both indigenous and diverse European ways of knowing and telling, but also connecting these epistemologies to the larger history of European dominance and colonial violence.

⁴ Eric Slauter pinpoints the height of popularity of Atlantic history, measured by publications, in 2005 when 45 books, 52 articles, and 21 dissertations invoked the phrase, 'History, Literature, and the Atlantic World', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 65/1 (2008),

⁵ Published works include Noble David Cook and Alexandra Parma Cook, *Good Faith and Truthful Ignorance: A Case of Transatlantic Bigamy* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991); Alida Metcalf and Caroline Brettell, 'Family Customs in Portugal and Brazil: Transatlantic Parallels', *Continuity and Change*, 8/3 (1993): 1–24; Mary E. Giles, ed., *Women in the Inquisition: Spain and the New World* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); Nora Jaffary, *Gender, Race, and Religion in the Colonization of the Americas* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2007); Daniella Koustron and Lisa Vollendorf, eds., *Women, Religion and the Atlantic World (1600–1900)* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009). Also note María Elena Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza de Sangre, Religions and Gender in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), esp. ch. 2. Historians of gender who are crossing the Atlantic for works in progress include Allyson Poska, Ann Twinam, Jane Mangan, and Karen Graubart.

⁶ Alison Games, 'Atlantic History: Definitions, Challenges, and Opportunities', *American Historical Review*, 111/3 (2006): 741. In fairness, Games has been an astute critic as well as proponent of Atlantic studies. See, for example, 'Beyond the Atlantic: English Globetrotters and Transoceanic Connections', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 6/2 (Oct. 2006): 725–42.

⁷ Daniella Koustron and Lisa Vollendorf, 'Introduction', in Koustron and Vollendorf, *Women, Religion*, 20.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁹ See Sueann Caulfield, 'The History of Gender in the Historiography of Latin America', *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 81/3 (2001), esp. 452.

¹⁰ For a monumental recent study that takes on the 'comparative empires' approach, see J. H. Elliot, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492–1830* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006). Other recent works include Patricia Seed, *Ceremonies of Possession in Europe's Conquest of the New World: 1492–1650* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Donna Guy and Thomas Sheridan, eds., *Contested Ground: Comparative Frontiers on the Northern and Southern Edges of the Spanish Empire* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1998); Camilla Townsend, *Tales of Two Cities: Race and Economic Culture in Early Republican North and South America* (Austin: University of Texas, 2000); Rebecca Scott, Thomas Holt, and Frederick Cooper: *Beyond Slavery: Explorations of Race, Labor, and Citizenship in Postemancipation Societies* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); John Smolenski and Thomas J. Humphrey, eds., *New World Orders: Violence, Sanction, and Authority in the Colonial Americas* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Pamela Scully and Diana Paton, eds., *Gender and Slave Emancipation in the Atlantic World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *Puritan Conquistadors: Iberianizing the Atlantic, 1550–1700* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006); Sarah Chambers and Lisa Norling, 'Choosing to be a Subject: Loyalist Women in the Revolutionary Atlantic World', *Journal of Women's History*, 2/1 (Spring 2008): 39–62. For a clear articulation of the logic of the 'Americas' as a single analytical unit, see James Dunkerley, *Americana: The Americas in the World around 1850 (or 'Seeing the Elephant' as the Theme for an Imaginary Western)* (London: Verso, 2000). For a thoughtful reflection of the concept of Latin American history as a unit of analysis, see Marshall C. Eakin, 'Does Latin America have a Common History?', *Vanderbilt E-Journal of Luso-Hispanic Studies*, no. 1 (2004): 29–49.

¹¹ Exceptions of recent vintage include Robert H. Jackson, *Race, Caste, and Status; Indians in Colonial Spanish America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1999); Tamar Herzog, *Defining Nations: Immigrants and Citizens in Early Modern Spain and Spanish America* (New Haven: Yale University, 2003); Cynthia Radding, *Landscapes of*

Power and Identity: Comparative Histories in the Sonoran Desert and the Forests of Amazonia from Colony to Republic (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

¹² The long-held belief that Brazil followed a distinct historical path from Spanish America is captured in Guillermo Céspedes del Castillo, 'Brazil: The View from Spanish American History', *The History Teacher*, 3/2 (1969): 44–9. Yet leading US-based scholars of Latin America are now publishing books on the Iberian Atlantic that, rather than simply presenting separate studies of colonial Brazil, Spanish America, and Iberia, attempt a more integrated, and comparative, perspective, perhaps signaling a new direction in scholarship. See Jeremy Adelman, *Sovereignty and Revolution in the Iberian Atlantic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Stuart Schwartz, *All Can Be Saved: Religious Tolerance and Salvation in the Iberian Atlantic World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008). Also note the recent dissertation by Elizabeth Cooper, 'Freedoms Betwixt and Between: Work, Revelry and Race in the Urban Post-Emancipation Atlantic World, Salvador da Bahia and Havana, 1880–1930', PhD Dissertation, University of Chicago, August 2007.

¹³ Asunción Lavrin, *Sex and Marriage in Colonial Latin America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989); Pablo Rodríguez, *La Familia en Iberoamérica, 1550–1980* (Bogotá, Convenio Andrés Bello/Universidad Externado de Colombia, 2004); Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpuru and Berta Ares Queija, *Las mujeres en la construcción de las sociedades iberoamericanas* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 2004); Pete Sigal, ed., *Infamous Desire: Male Homosexuality in Colonial Latin America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

¹⁴ Ann Twinam, *Public Lives, Private Secrets: Gender, Honor, Sexuality and Illegitimacy in Colonial Spanish America* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999) stands as an exception here, finding critical regional differences in the treatment of upper-class illegitimates in different parts of the empire.

¹⁵ For recent works that call for deeper study of convents across place, see Patricia Seed, 'Women in the Atlantic World', in Jaffary, *Gender, Race, and Religion*, esp. 169–70; Barbara Diefendorf, 'Rethinking the Catholic Reformation: The Role of Women', in Kostroun and Vollendorf, *Women, Religion*, 31–59.

¹⁶ Works on Spanish immigration to the New World in the early modern period – some that touch on issues of gender but do not necessarily focus on them – include Rocío Sánchez Rubio and Isabel Testón Núñez Cáceres, eds., *El hilo que une: las relaciones epistolares en el Viejo y el Nuevo Mundo (siglos XVI–XVIII)* (Editora Regional, 1999); Rocío Sánchez Rubio, *La emigración extremeña al nuevo mundo: exclusiones voluntarias y forzadas de un pueblo periférico en el siglo XVI* (Badajoz: Siruela, 1993); Juan Javier Pescador, *The New World in a Basque Village: The Oiartzun Valley and its Atlantic Emigrants* (Reno: University of Nebraska Press, 2003); Ida Altman, *Transatlantic Ties in the Spanish Empire: Brihuega, Spain and Puebla, Mexico, 1560–1620* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002). It is worth noting that some renowned English-language (political) historians of the peninsula are also respected scholars of the American colonies. See, for example, John H. Elliot's long trajectory from *Spain and its World, 1500–1700* (New York: Yale, 1990) as well as Kenneth Maxwell's *Conflicts and Conspiracies: Brazil and Portugal, 1750–1808* (reprint in 1973; New York: Cambridge, 2004); *Naked Tropics: Essays on Empire and Other Rogues* (New York: Routledge, 2003) and *Pombal: Paradox of the Enlightenment* (New York: Cambridge, 2005).

¹⁷ Antoinette Burton, 'Introduction: On the Inadequacy and Indispensability of the Nation', in Antoinette Burton (ed.), *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking with and through the Nation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 1–23; 2. Burton is gesturing toward the groundbreaking turn toward connecting colony and metropole exemplified by Laura Ann Stoler and Frederick Cooper, eds., *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

¹⁸ Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, 'Some Caveats about the Atlantic Paradigm', *History Compass*, 1/4 (2003): 1–4. It is critical to note here that the direction of our studies, meaning whether they are concerned with the Europe– or Africa–America axis, is not the same as the method we use to study our subjects. Even though scholars of British America, for example, have been very concerned with east–west connections, they, like their counterparts in Spanish America, have been less likely to engage in east–west comparisons. See David Armitage, 'Three Types of Atlantic History', in David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick (eds.), *The British Atlantic World* (London: Palgrave, 2002), 20.

¹⁹ Isabel Morant Deusa, dir., *Historia de Las Mujeres en España y América Latina II: La Edad Moderna* (Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, 2005). Another, similar edited volume was published in 2007 by María Teresa López Beltrán and Marion Reder Gadow, coords. *Historia y género. Imágenes y vivencias de mujeres en España y América (siglos XV–XVIII)* (Málaga, Ediciones de la Universidad de Málaga, 2007). In this volume, the editors connect the first (Spain) and third (Americas) sections with a 'bridge' section comprised of one work on the colonial importation of Spanish publications about gender.

²⁰ Camilla Townsend, review of *Historia de las Mujeres en España y América Latina*, Vol. 2. *El mundo moderno*, directed by Isabel Morant, *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 88/1 (2008): 113–14.

²¹ See Slauter, 'History, Literature'; Cooclanis, 'Atlantic Worlds'.

²² Lima, for example, was a jewel in Spain's silver crown precisely because it was a hub connecting the 'South Seas', an important regional designation for contemporaries that should make us wonder whether Atlantic is anachronistic. See Alejandra B. Osorio, *Inventing Lima: Baroque Modernity in Peru's South Sea Metropolis* (New York: Palgrave/MacMillan, 2008). For work on coastal Peru that makes important inroads in connecting conventionally 'local' indigenous history with conventionally 'Atlantic' African diasporic studies, see Rachel S. O'Toole, 'Castas y representación en Trujillo colonial', in Paulo Drinot and Leo Garofalo (eds.), *Más allá de la dominación y la resistencia: Estudios de historia peruana, siglos XVI–XX* (Lima: Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, 2005), 48–76; and 'From the

Rivers of Guinea to the Valleys of Peru: Becoming a Bran Diaspora within Spanish Slavery', *Social Text*, 92/25:3 (Fall 2007): 19–36.

²³ There are exceptions, such as Pedro Borges, ed., *Historia de la Iglesia en Hispanoamérica y Filipinas*, Vol. I (Madrid, 1992.)

²⁴ See, for example, Irene Silverblatt, '“The Universe has Turned Inside Out ... there is No Justice for Us Here”: Andean Women under Spanish Rule', in Leacock and Etienne (eds.), *Women and Colonization: Anthropological Perspectives* (1980), 140–85; Susan Schroeder, Stephanie Wood and Robert Haskett, eds., *Indian Women of Early Mexico* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997); Bianca Premo, 'From the Pockets of Women: The Gendering of the Mita, Migration and Labor in Colonial Chucuito (Peru)', *The Americas*, 5/1 (July 2000): 63–94; Karen B. Graubart, *With our Labor and Sweat: Indigenous Women and the Formation of Colonial Society in Peru, 1550–1700* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007). On honor, the literature is thick. Two exemplars are Steve J. Stern, *The Secret History of Gender: Women, Men and Power in Colonial Mexico* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Lyman Johnson and Sonya Lipsett-Rivera, eds., *The Faces of Honor: Shame, Sex and Violence in Colonial Latin America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico/Diálogos, 1998).

²⁵ Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, 'After “Spain”: A Dialogue with Josep M. Fradera on Spanish Colonial Historiography', 157–69 in Burton, *After the Imperial Turn*, 160–1, 165.

²⁶ Allison Poska, *Gender and Authority among the Peasants of Early Modern Spain* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005).

²⁷ Armitage, 'Three Types', 19.

²⁸ Micol Siegel, 'Beyond Compare: Comparative Method after the Transnational Turn', *Radical History Review*, 91 (2005): 62–90.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 65.

³⁰ My suggestion is partially indebted to Lauren Benton's call for 'open-ended comparisons' rather than only studies of 'circulation' to place Latin America more firmly within the main of 'world history', 'No Longer Odd Region Out: Repositioning Latin America in World History', *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 84/3 (2004): 423–30; 429. By 'open-ended', I mean historical comparisons between places within the same span of time in which 'analogies on which new and convincing narratives of eventful sequences can be formed', rather than 'experiments' in which pre-formulated propositions (such as national uniqueness) are tested, William Hamilton Sewell, *The Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 100; 93–6.

³¹ On this point, see Putnam, 'To Study', 618.

³² If anything, the radical political project in Spanish American history has been in discovering subaltern resistance to, and even immunity to, such imperial and pratonationalist efforts at integration. For this trend in histories of indigenous people in colonial Spanish America over three decades, see Steve J. Stern, *Peru's Indian Peoples and the Challenge of Spanish Conquest: Humanga to 1640* (reprint in 1984; Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1993); James Lockhart, *The Nahuas after the Conquest* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992); Eric Van Young, *The Other Rebellion: Popular Violence, Ideology, and the Mexican Struggle for Independence, 1810–1821* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003). More recently, van Young has argued that the 'nation' – as an Atlantic construct – was important in late colonial Mexico only in its absence. See 'The Limits of Atlantic World Nationalism in a Revolutionary Age', in Joseph W. Esherick, Hasan Kayali, and Eric Van Young, eds., *Empire to Nation: Historical Perspectives on the Making of the Modern World* (New York: Rowman Littlefield, 2006), 35–67.

³³ Here, I think of works such as June Nash, 'The Aztecs and the Ideology of Male Dominance', *Signs* (1978): 349–62; and Irene Silverblatt, *Moon, Sun and Witches: Gender Ideologies in Colonial Peru* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

³⁴ See, for example, Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993); James Lorand Matory, *Black Atlantic Religion: Tradition, Transnationalism in the Afro-Brazilian Candomblé* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

³⁵ Two foundational starting points on the deconstruction of 'women' are Joan W. Scott, 'Gender as a Useful Category of Historical Analysis', *American Historical Review*, 91/5 (1986): 1053–75, and Chandra Mohanty's classic 1984 essay, 'Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonialist Discourses', which was updated and reprinted in *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, Chandra Mohanty Tapade, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres (eds.) (Indianapolis, University of Indiana Press, 1991), 51–80.

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