

## Archives, Bodies, and Imagination

### The Case of Juana Aguilar and Queer Approaches to History, Sexuality, and Politics

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In July 1803, *La gazeta de Guatemala* published a report written by the surgeon Narciso Esparragosa y Gallardo of the sexual body parts of Juana Aguilar, a suspected hermaphrodite who was being tried by the Real Audiencia (royal court) for committing *pecados nefandos*, or “abominable sins,” with women.<sup>1</sup> Esparragosa, an enlightened creole (descendant of Spaniards), had been commissioned by the Protomedicato (the colonial medical tribunal) to study Aguilar’s anatomy and offer his opinion on her sexual status. After several sessions of observing her body and probing her vagina, ovaries, and especially her clitoris, Esparragosa concluded that she was not a hermaphrodite, as was rumored and had been affirmed by midwives and physicians who had inspected her before he had. Although Juana “la Larga” (“the Long”)—as she had been nicknamed by townspeople presumably because of her genitalia—did have an enlarged clitoris, the *protomédico* (protomedic, or royal physician) asserted that she did not have a “union of the two sexes” and therefore was not both a man and a woman.

However, because Aguilar had not developed the full sexual and reproductive organs of either a man (her clitoris could not become erect or emit semen) or a woman (her vagina lacked an opening), she also could not be considered either male or female. Instead, Esparragosa concluded, she was sexually “neutral,” like some bees. Convinced that his conclusions were rational and enlightened, informed

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by the most advanced knowledge on sex and nature that “wise men” such as the French naturalist Comte Georges-Louis Leclerc de Buffon had produced in the previous century, the doctor ended his report by noting that because the law (and in particular the crime of *pecado nefando*, or “sodomy”) required that the parties involved be of one or another sex, the court should exonerate Aguilar.<sup>2</sup> Esparragosa presented his opinions to the Audiencia in February 1803, along with a note offering to also submit illustrations of Aguilar’s sexual organs that he had commissioned a local artist to draw. Because the papers from the criminal trial are missing and other documents on the accused have not yet surfaced, it is impossible to know what impact his report had on the court’s ruling, let alone what her fate afterward was. Murkier still are the details of Aguilar’s life before her legal persecution, which apparently took place in El Salvador in the early 1790s and eventually forced her to flee to Guatemala.

Despite (and because of) the dearth of documents on Aguilar, the case raises a number of intriguing historical questions about her life, discourses of sex and sexual difference in late colonial Spanish America, and the influence of the new or “enlightened” science on theories of the sexed body in different parts of the Atlantic world. This article alludes to some of these topics, but it does not discuss them or Esparragosa’s report in detail since they have been analyzed elsewhere.<sup>3</sup> Rather, its main objective is to use the case to explore a series of problems related to the colonial archive and queer history, including the power dynamics involved in the production and preservation of documents, the structural limitations that they place on studying sexuality in the past, and the possibilities and challenges that approaching them from different angles, disciplines, and performative acts can present for both history and politics. Interweaving discussions of theoretical scholarship on the archive, the violent processes by which most cases of sodomy and other sexual practices became part of the historical record, and parts of conversations with the Mexican theater director and actress Jesusa Rodríguez about how she is using the Aguilar case on- and offstage to critique homophobia and other forms of discrimination in Latin America, the essay focuses on the role of the imagination in historical reconstruction and the place of embodied or performative practices in radical queer art, history, and politics. It also reflects on some of the ethical questions that using history to make political claims raises for historians, performers, and others who mediate between the past and the present publics.

### **The (Aguilar) Case for the Repertoire**

I first turned to the Aguilar case in 2011, as part of my current study of race, sex, and gender and the Enlightenment in the eighteenth-century Spanish Atlantic world. Since that time, the investigation has taken some unexpected turns not only in terms of the historical and theoretical questions the case led me to formulate but because of the discussions I had about it with Rodríguez, one of Mexico’s most accomplished

cabaret and political performance artists. For fifteen years she and her longtime partner, the singer and actress Liliana Felipe, operated the legendary Teatro Bar El Hábito, an alternative performance space in Mexico City, and during that time took some of their shows to the United States, Europe, Canada, and other parts of Latin America. The insertion of piercing social critiques in many of Rodríguez's performances (which often blend different theatrical genres) established her reputation as one of the most politically uncompromising and influential voices in Mexico's cultural scene.<sup>4</sup>

Since closing El Hábito in 2005, Rodríguez has continued to utilize performance, satire, and her body on and off the stage to denounce the Mexican political system's corruption and lack of democracy, the Catholic Church's views toward women and sexuality, and, more generally, social inequality, discrimination, and injustice. As part of her involvement with Resistencia Creativa, a movement that she founded after the contested 2006 presidential elections and that uses art as a weapon of peaceful resistance, she regularly stages "mass cabarets" with searing political critiques in Mexico City's Zócalo (central plaza) and other public spaces. Whether on a theater stage or in a civil rally, Rodríguez has thus turned to theatrical performance—part of what performance studies scholar Diana Taylor calls "the repertoire" of practices performed by human bodies that can be linked to knowledge and memory but that Western culture distinguishes from "the archive" because of their ephemeral nature—to make political claims and try to enact social change.<sup>5</sup> Even her weddings to Felipe (which include a symbolic ceremony in 1991 when Mexico City passed a domestic partnership law and a more formal one in 2010 when the capital city legalized same-sex marriages) have been performative public events, or *espectáculos*, meant to proclaim the rights of gays and lesbians in Mexican society and incite debate about the history of what the poet Adrienne Rich called "compulsory heterosexuality" and its profound implications for people who have not fit or rejected sexual norms.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, when during a casual conversation in Mexico City I first brought up the Aguilar case with Rodríguez, she seemed to be immediately captivated, as if she were already picturing it on the stage. It was the theatricality of the name *Juana la Larga*, she later explained in a workshop; "there is the word's sonority and the strong imaginary that it unleashes, because it is at once concrete and derogatory and yet can take your mind in so many possible directions."<sup>7</sup> In the months that followed, we continued to talk about the case and its potential as a performance piece. Rodríguez studied Esparragosa's report, and subsequently she and Felipe used parts of it in a presentation they gave in a panel on "diversity" at the Fourth Iberoamerican Congress on Public Cultures in Argentina in September 2011.

Titled "Diversity and Equality," the presentation, which opened with Felipe reading a lengthy passage from the report graphically referring to Aguilar's clitoris and vagina, was intended to provoke a discussion of contemporary politics, sexual-

ity, and violence (gendered and otherwise) in Latin America. In particular, it aimed to critique the “obsolete” gender norms, biological definitions of sex, and homophobia that persist in the area. With the Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano’s 1971 historical-literary text *Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent* as a reference point, the presentation also made parallels between the repeated subjection of Aguilar’s body to invasive physical probes and the history of European and US imperialism in Latin America, between her forcibly opened legs and the violently “opened veins” of the region.<sup>8</sup>

Playing with the idea of transgendered human and geopolitical bodies, Felipe asked the audience to participate in an exercise in “geographic transgenderization” (*transgenerización geográfica*). Emphasizing not only the plunder of Latin America’s natural resources and other sources of wealth by foreign interests and the church but also the European creation of categories for American territories and peoples as acts of control and domination, the exercise called attention to classification as a type of violence. According to Rodríguez, the audience (which included government functionaries, artists, academics, and political activists from twenty-two countries) had a strong reaction to the presentation during both the reading of Esparragosa’s text and in the discussion that followed. Attributing the reaction to the peculiarity of the text and the different angle that the Aguilar case provided for the topic of sexual diversity in the present, Rodríguez believed that the presentation had achieved the desired result of offering new lenses for thinking about contemporary sexual discourses and their links to other forms of power. If nothing else, she observed, it managed to jolt the audience out of the typical conference stupor that sets in after hours of speeches and lectures.<sup>9</sup>

After the event in Argentina, Rodríguez and Felipe continued to entertain the idea of turning the Aguilar case into a theatrical performance and took advantage of a trip to Guatemala in January 2012 to visit the country’s national archive, where they consulted Esparragosa’s original report and discovered that the story of “Juana la Larga” was part of local folklore. An archivist told them that the house in which she had lived was well known and that her nickname implied that she was a thief and cheat because that is what the word *long* can connote in Guatemala (as in to have long arms and be wily or deceitful, or *tramposa*). At a bookstore the couple also purchased a copy of Carlos Martínez Durán’s 1941 *Las Ciencias médicas en Guatemala, origen y evolución*, which devotes several chapters to the *protomédico*’s contribution to medical science in that country.<sup>10</sup> By then, Rodríguez was finding the colonial doctor an equally, if not more, compelling figure than Aguilar, and the idea of a performance began to revolve around him. At the symposium “Race and Sex in the Eighteenth-Century Spanish Atlantic World,” held at the University of Southern California (USC) on April 12, 2013, she gave a preview of that show, turning herself into Esparragosa before an interactive audience that weighed in on how he should look during a workshop discussion on archives, history, and theatrical performance.

At that discussion, Rodríguez explained that the case interested her not only because of its unusualness (in particular, the size of Aguilar's clitoris she quipped) and dramatic components but also because of her concern with confronting discrimination and colonization. Esparragosa's reading of Aguilar's body through European lenses and a Western medicine that labeled her as strange and monstrous to exert its authority over her, she pointed out, as well as his misogyny, homophobia, and paternalism offer the opportunity to think critically about the continued prevalence of those problems in Latin America and how to dismantle them, including through art/performance. When asked what was fair game in terms of using the past in performance for political purposes, her answer not surprisingly (given her notorious irreverence) was that pretty much anything goes.

Although she did concede that the representation of a particular past has to seem feasible, Rodríguez noted that actors and artists in general are not shackled by rules of historical writing and argumentation. Taking license with some details—for example, the racial status of Aguilar, which is not specified in existing sources—is acceptable, she stated, as is using the case to raise present political and social concerns. Rodríguez's process of turning the Aguilar case into a theatrical piece study thus raises a set of issues pertaining to history and performance, beginning with the possibilities and limitations of traditional archives for the study of the “queer past.”

### **Queer Sex and the Colonial Archive**

In the past three decades, the traditional archive—generally defined as a place where documents deemed to have historical value are stored and organized, usually by government or other institutions, and made available for consultation<sup>11</sup>—has been subject to much theorization and critique by scholars in different disciplines and “postdisciplines,” including performance studies. These scholars have emphasized the strong relationship between institutional archives and state projects (sovereign or liberal); the power dynamics and silencing effects involved in the collection, organization, and use of written sources; and the ways in which privileging writing as a site of information and knowledge comes at the expense of other forms—oral, visual, and “embodied” or “performatic”—of constructing historical memory and meaning.<sup>12</sup> Driven in part by the postmodern suspicion of the evidentiary status of historical documents, scholarship on the archive has highlighted its role in shaping the politics of both the past and the present, thereby undermining its status as an innocent bystander in history and turning it into an object of inquiry rather than just a source of information.

Historians, for the most part, are not oblivious to the politics and limitations of archives and their implications for historical study. A questioning of sources is in fact part of the “craft.” It is true that the discipline privileges written sources and that some of its practitioners approach the archive with the confidence of a nineteenth-century positivist that they will find clear facts, certainty, and unmediated access to the past there. But there is no one way of writing history and differ-

ent approaches (social, intellectual, economic, political, and cultural to name a few) can involve various methods (including textual, discursive, and empirical analyses), sources (among them oral and visual), as well as healthy doses of doubt. The bogeyman that the historian becomes in conversations outside the field in which the discipline is dismissed as antiquated, politically and intellectually conservative, naively empiricist, and so forth, more often than not turns out to be a straw man.

Perhaps because of the particularly challenging nature of their subject matter, historians with the most suspicious approaches to the archive tend to be those who focus on history “from below” or histories of (nonelite) women, slaves, peasants, colonized populations, and others who until relatively recently did not normally get to produce written sources with their views on events and themselves. Historical scholarship on colonial Latin America, for example, has long recognized—in part through the influence of social history and more recently subaltern and colonial/postcolonial studies—that documents must be examined carefully, taking into account who produced them and why, that any information they contain about ordinary people is mediated (say, by royal officials, inquisitors, local political leaders, priests, or notaries), that they can be read from different angles, and that different ones can reveal contrasting views on the same event.<sup>13</sup>

The insight that the politics and structural limitations of archives can hinder as much as allow the study of the past has thus not been lost on historians themselves, and some have warned about considering archived documents the only source of knowledge about history. To mitigate those problems they turn to analytical strategies such as reading “against the grain” (for problematizing imperial and other dominant perspectives lodged in sources), emphasizing the interpretative nature of historical analysis, and scrutinizing not just the content of documents but also their form (such as narrative techniques in legal sources) and the context in which they were produced.<sup>14</sup> The need for these strategies becomes all the more evident when venturing into topics as charged and filtered as that of same-sex desires and relationships in colonial situations because of the way that sexuality, race, class, and gender were central organizing vectors in colonial social orders and in the very constitution of their archives. In most cases, archived documents were not only produced by or for colonial authorities or institutions, but they are testaments to the administrative technologies devised to produce and reproduce racial and gender categories.

Most colonial Latin American archives, for example, are replete with birth and marriage records, tribute lists, censuses, medical examinations and reports on sexual status, legal procedures to determine race/caste, genealogies, and other sources that reflect the colonial archive’s function as less a place than as process and epistemic practice, its embeddedness in, and collusion with, systems of rule.<sup>15</sup> In these archives, in which the presence of the state and church (their laws, institutions, projects, officials, and categories) looms exceedingly large, when people with same-sex desires or who are more generally rendered as “queer” (because their sexual organs, behavior, or longings don’t conform to dominant definitions of the nor-

mal) appear, it tends to be because they were subjected to investigation, discipline, and punishment.<sup>16</sup> The church and state considered same-sex desires to be unnatural and acting on them a sinful crime (labeled “*sodomía*” or “*pecado nefando*”) that when tried often required ordering a medical examination of the accused to ascertain if the deviance was located in her or his body. “Making it” into the historical archive therefore was normally not a sign of positive developments for the person associated with those desires or acts. Given the juridical, theological, and medical processes and discourses that influenced how “queers” normally entered into the archive and the way they are inscribed in the sources themselves, what (if anything) can be known or recovered about them as real people?

Aguilar, for example, became material for historical study mainly because of Esparragosa’s report, in which fragments of her life, and especially of her body, appear through different filters, among them colonial, misogynist, and homophobic. She is present in the archive because of efforts by the doctor and others to inspect, classify, and regulate her, and the archival source does not provide “access” to Aguilar’s person, sexual practices or desires, or thoughts. It mainly reveals a series of assumptions about gender and sex that shaped the way the *protomédico* perceived and examined her and ruled on her body’s potential to commit “sodomy” with other women. These assumptions, the central being that a man or woman is defined fundamentally by the capacity to reproduce, stemmed from colonial Latin America’s patriarchal culture of honor, Christian views of sex and marriage, and the preoccupation among eighteenth-century naturalists, anatomists, and physiologists with reinforcing the binary of male and female and basing it on sexual organs.<sup>17</sup> Esparragosa’s views were also colored by what Katherine Park and Robert A. Nye refer to as a “phallogocentric science” that since the high Middle Ages set “procreative, heterosexual sex at the heart of the natural universe and associated sodomy with heresy, as a rejection of the physical and metaphysical order created by God.”<sup>18</sup>

The sources on Aguilar illustrate both the possibilities and limitations of the colonial archive for queer history. The documents provide rich historical material about the importance of sexuality and its control in late colonial Guatemala, the circulation of new scientific texts and theories about the sexed body in Spanish America, and the role of eighteenth-century sexual and medical discourses in determining the boundaries between the normal and the anomalous, the natural and the unnatural (or artificial), and the human and the monstrous. The sources also hint at how an early modern Spanish American “technology of the body” developed mainly by the clergy to study, determine, and punish sinful conduct (especially in women linked to witchcraft, mysticism, and sexual deviance) was connected to, and altered by, the Enlightenment period’s secular obsession with observation and classification and incessant probing of nonnormative bodies.<sup>19</sup>

Throughout the Atlantic world, not just hermaphrodites but also albinos, “spotted blacks” (people of African ancestry who developed white marks or the skin pigment condition now called vitiligo), and other “types” that seemed to defy

established sexual or racial schema and binaries supporting them were the subject of relentless scrutiny and debate on the part of natural historians, anatomists, and other eighteenth-century thinkers, and some were displayed in London, Paris, and other European cities.<sup>20</sup> Underlying the acute preoccupation with these bodies was not just a fascination with what was perceived and labeled as odd (part of a longer history of the construction of the “abnormal”)<sup>21</sup> but also a desire to identify the roots of, and thus criteria for, sexual and racial difference through the rational study of nature. Race and sex being sociohistorical constructions, identifying such criteria proved to be a vexing problem. Thus, although generally anatomists and physiologists made sex and race binaries more rigid during the latter half of the eighteenth century,<sup>22</sup> the period gave way to the profusion of categories and theories, some of which located racial difference in the blood, skin, skull, or maternal imagination, others which located sex in genitalia, humoral processes during fetal formation, or other anatomical or physiological characteristics.

As tortuous, confused, and futile as the eighteenth-century impulse to permanently fix criteria for sexual and racial difference was, however, it not only had real consequences for the people slotted into nonnormative categories but also was linked to and helped mold emerging modern medical-legal discourses on sexuality and race. When Esparragosa concluded that Aguilar was sexually neutral, for example, he hoped that category would exonerate her (he pitied her “condition” and the twisted sexual desires it might have led her to have) but even more so that it would be recognized by the law and thus be subject to proper regulation. By contending that the accused should be liberated because the law recognized only two sexes and implying that only with the official creation of the category of sexual neutrality could the court legitimately punish her for her alleged behavior, the doctor’s arguments point to the potential that classification has to produce subjects subject to regulation—the power dynamics, exclusions, and violence that categorization, even when ostensibly well intentioned, can enable.

Beyond helping to unravel important aspects of the complex relationship of medicine, law, and science in the history of sexual classification, the written sources for the Aguilar case provide a powerful example of how queers are produced by and through multiple operations of power, including the archive. More to the point, they demonstrate how queerness does not exist independent of the processes—here including legal and medical investigations, reports that claim authoritative opinions about the sexed body, and the archival storage and use of those documents—that construct it. Moreover, placing Esparragosa’s report within the light of the longer history of colonial Latin American society’s production of heteronormativity in public and private life (law, religion, medicine, intimacy) and in the traditions of narrativity in archival and other documents (such as medical reports on sexual “deviance”) can further illuminate how heterosexual relations were produced and made to seem natural and the most normal option for sexual, conjugal, familial, and

communal arrangements. In short, through attentiveness to operations of historical and discursive power, the archive can be used to expose the socially and politically constructed nature of heterosexuality—an approach with radical potential because it helps not only to historicize it but also to denaturalize it.

But if critical reading approaches can destabilize the logics of positivism, colonialism, and heteronormativity in written sources by denaturalizing heterosexuality and other socially constructed categories, the question of the limits of historical archives and methods for understanding the past still remains. In the Aguilar case, for example, the documents make evident the futility of trying to find the “real”—the real person, the real story, the real history. Her life is and will remain a mystery, and through their categories, silences, and gazes, the sources shape, if not determine, the terms of historical discourse. Can applying analytical strategies and categories from other disciplines or approaches enrich understandings of the Aguilar case and history more generally?

What would happen, for example, if there were more trans- or postdisciplinary convergences, to borrow Taylor’s terms,<sup>23</sup> and historians paid greater attention, say, to embodiment (acts, practices, and rituals performed by human bodies) as scholars of performance studies do or consciously allowed themselves to engage in practices of the imagination, as, say, a theater performer trying to give a historical figure flesh onstage might? How would those eclectic—and in some respects methodologically and epistemologically disobedient—approaches to the archive affect the historian’s relationship not only to history but in particular to bodies in the past? What effects would relying on different types of archives, altering the way we normally read sources, and expanding definitions of knowledge have on how we understand and write history and especially on the past lives we decide to study?

### **Archives, Bodies, and the Imagination or Fine Line between History and Fiction**

The archaeologist has in his hands the power to give life to that which has died and to come face to face with what it once was. That is how he comes to confront the face of death to give it life.

—Eduardo Matos Moctezuma, *Vida y muerte en el Templo Mayor*  
(*Life and Death in the Templo Mayor*)

Different disciplines and professions have their ways of making history “come alive” or “channeling the voices” of the dead. Historians’ conceit of reconstructing past lives and worlds through documents is matched, for example, by that of archaeologists piecing together (sometimes literally with stones) ancient societies through analyses of material remains such as buildings, pottery, and bones in order to “give life to that which has died” or by that of actors staging a historical drama/performance and drawing on historical sources as well as their own bodies to embody dead people onstage. Rodríguez, referring to her first incursion into a his-

torical archive and search for details about Aguilar, for example, stated that she wanted to find out whether Aguilar was indigenous, whether she had breasts, “and all those other things you ask yourself because you are going to embody [*personalizar*] this person, to put her in your body, so you have to imagine what she was like . . . and every detail matters.”

Historians, archaeologists, and performers may all attempt to “access” and represent historical figures, but their methods, expectations, and standards of evidence are different. The first two don’t usually think of using their bodies as sources for their scholarship, and actors and other artists are granted creative license, especially when there is no pretense, in their work, of historical accuracy. Even when dealing with historical topics, the performance, novel, or film can be cast as an artistic interpretation, and as such there is flexibility (and often little accountability) in terms of correctly depicting the details of a historical person, event, or context. The imagination can be explicitly summoned, recognized, and valued as a source and resource, and in performance the body can function as a kind of archive such as when acting, singing, or dancing serves to access and transmit knowledge.

These aspects of performance were described by the Mexican theater director Ludwik Margules (1933–2006). In a documentary about his work, he explained that when his actors were preparing for their characters he demanded that they reach their own innermost interior spaces, the limits of their physical and mental selves, until they were able to “detonate their imaginations” to create images and meaning that spoke to aspects of the human condition.<sup>24</sup> In this creative process, images, meaning, and truth are to be achieved through the knowledge and memory that the body has stored. Evoking Jacques Derrida’s psychoanalytic approach to the archive in which he compares it to the Freudian unconscious, the body and the psyche act as repositories of information connecting the past to the present. The analogy has its limits, partly because archives and human memory do not function in the same way,<sup>25</sup> but is nonetheless useful for thinking about how the relationship of two “archives”—the one that stores documents and other historical fragments and the one that stores human memory—is at the heart of all connections to the past.

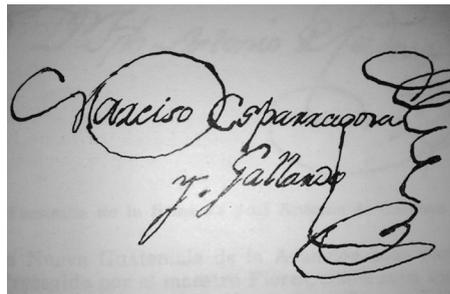
At the aforementioned USC workshop, Rodríguez discussed the factors that had drawn her to the figure of Esparragosa, including her recollection of her father’s practices as a thorax surgeon. She remembered how for decades the latter performed five to seven operations on tuberculosis patients almost daily and came to treat the cutting up of bodies in detached and routine ways, which, in retrospect, helped her understand the colonial doctor’s views of Aguilar and how the handling of her body, including the rubbing of her clitoris to see if it would become erect, in all likelihood seemed natural to men with his training. The *protomédico* could not see what an utterly “delirious scenario, at once comical, tragic, and terrible, it all was: the enlightened, impeccable, unpolluted Dr. Narciso Esparragosa trying to study this woman’s body with clinical distance while having to masturbate her repeatedly!”

Rodríguez elaborated that because she was very close to her father, as a child he would take her to his surgeries, which were

sheer butchery because back then they would slice open the back entirely, rip all its layers, tear some ribs, and go into the lungs. . . . And I was thrilled to see the heart, lungs, all of it was beautiful because the human body is very beautiful inside too. . . . So perhaps this proximity to surgeons that I had as a child influenced my interest in Esparragosa and how I understood him. . . . And as I learned more about him . . . he was no longer a kind of inquisitor over Juana but a very human physician, full of prejudices and with a colonial mind-set but with a measure of sensibility . . . and genuinely committed, as a doctor, to the case.

In the sources Rodríguez also found details that had sparked her imagination about Esparragosa's character, including his name ("Narciso, how appropriate!"), his signature ("every letter and detail meticulously drawn and that O encircling his first name, how anal retentive!"), and his Bourbon-era doctor's jacket ("how Francophile!").

Personal experiences, details of the case in archival sources, and the imagination allowed her to humanize Esparragosa while not letting him off the hook for his paternalism, heterocentricism, and phallogocentric views toward women's bodies and sexuality. Rodríguez's use of the Aguilar case in performance would rely on humor and gesture to ridicule some of the *protomédico's* views, in particular about women's inability to experience pleasure while engaging in nonheterosexual or nonreproductive sex. By turning him into the object of the gaze she would subvert his authoritative voice in the medical report, his claim to enlightened reason and objectivity, and his presence in the archive as the normal, ideal, and unmarked body. Insofar as it succeeds in making audiences reflect on the ways in



Esparragosa's signature, *Las ciencias médicas*, 226



Esparragosa's coat, *Las ciencias médicas*, 427

which heteronormativity has been constructed and functioned historically and into the present, or at least on the violence it has often implied for people who do not conform to established definitions of the normal, such a union of the archive and the repertoire, of historical sources and performative acts, would be in the service of “politics,” a queer imaginative use of history for provoking thought on current social concerns and change.

Some historians cringe at the thought of unleashing the imagination on the past, especially for present political purposes. The main fear is that having a “political agenda” can contaminate history and lead to the mapping of present categories and concerns onto past societies in which different ones operated, to a highly selective and self-serving use for sources that conveniently ignores those that have information that does not fit the intended argument, or to an “anything goes” approach where historical claims are made without any grounding and outright invention replaces informed interpretation. The concerns with anachronism and evidence are at least partly legitimate. After all, what would history be if it did not *at least try* to understand the past on its own terms? What would it accomplish if it did not attempt to carefully chart concepts, practices, and social relations over time and their changing cultural and political meanings? How could that charting be achieved without the consultation of written documents and other material remains? But if history cannot dispense with the archive, the great unease that some historians express with the imaginative and political components of their craft often ignores the fabricated dimensions and dialectical relationship between past and present that are part of any historical study.

Although it is not acknowledged much (and is sometimes exceedingly difficult to detect), the use of the imagination is not absent from historical writing, particularly but not exclusively when it is in narrative or story-based form. The limited information that documents provide on a given event or life, the difficulty of doing justice to lived time (to represent its passage with only the written word), the need to decide what and who to foreground and describe in detail—these and other factors involve selection, interpretation, and the imagination. These factors, however, tend to be underplayed in the profession because recognizing their role not only risks wresting objectivity from the craft but also calling attention to its fictional components and to the part that the historian’s own life experiences plays in shaping her or his understandings of the past. The discipline involves a kind of performance of objectivity, through standard writing practices such as the use of the third-person voice, which creates an omniscient and invisible narrator and distance from the subject matter, and through the almost ritualistic and surgical approach to documents that many archives require, such as the wearing of gloves and masks when untying bundles of papers and “treating” or “examining” manuscripts. In form, if not effect, these practices resemble those of the enlightened *protomédico*, his apparent distance to the object of study, his authoritative voice but unmarked presence,

his blindness to the ways his biases and normative ways of understandings of the world shaped his analysis of Aguilar, his fictions . . .

History's fictional components derive not from falsehoods necessarily but from its fragmented and representational nature. Because there are no real events or people in archival documents, only their textual representations, narrativizing by necessity involves filling in gaps in the story, taking informed guesses on aspects of the given event based on clues in the sources, and deciding on how to organize the description.<sup>26</sup>

Furthermore, determining what things, people, places, and developments to highlight and what plot/argumentative structure, temporality, and importance to grant

the given case or event also involves, consciously or not, reading that historical topic not just through tools gained in academic training but through one's other life experiences and more generally through the memories, conceptual categories, and world understandings archived, living, and fluctuating in the historian's own body and psyche.

Despite some differences in methods and evidentiary requirements, then, the ways that a historian and an artist approach the past are not necessarily that different, and to some extent we are all looking for truth, not for the "real" or absolute truth but for "truths," studying historical processes and people to understand aspects of the past, the present world, and the human condition. Historians, however, don't normally think about their craft as a process that entails the imagination and use of the body and experiential knowledge as (re)sources. It was not always that way. Various ancient societies had professions that recognized certain bodies as "living archives." The folksinger and poet-chronicler of classical antiquity who belted out songs, poems, or stories with epic content, for example, or the Mesoamerican specialist in codices who read them in public performances that could involve singing and dancing, transmitted historical knowledge that linked the community's past, present, and future.<sup>27</sup> Historical memory resided in their bodies and minds and was shared through speeches and embodied acts, and that knowledge was supposed to



Bound colonial documents in Mexico's Archivo General de la Nación. Photographs taken by author

orient the community in relation to its purpose and destiny. In this approach to the past, history is not divided into discrete periods and the body is the great articulator of different temporalities.

In eighteenth-century Europe, when history as a modern Western discipline was born and the first archives surfaced as manifestations of centralized power and enlightened despotism, older forms of preserving historical memory—and memory itself—lost ground to the written document, its apparent permanency equated with reliability.<sup>28</sup> “As a historian,” responded Eric Hobsbawm when asked (shortly before he died) by Mexican journalist Sylvia Lemus why he did not talk much about his own life, “I know not to trust memory.”<sup>29</sup> But the privileging of writing by historians cannot entirely conceal the interpretative and imaginative dimensions of historical writing, the role that the experiential knowledge lodged in our bodies and minds plays in shaping how we understand and write about the past and the ways that the study of history in turn influences how we view the present.

Indeed, there is a corpus of scholarly literature that recognizes those aspects of the craft.<sup>30</sup> Engaging in more inter- or postdisciplinary discussions, however, can not only make them more apparent and productive but also expand definitions of archives to include embodied and other sources of historical memory and, more generally, to make bodies more central in historical analysis. Paying greater attention to how broad historical processes such as colonialism, slavery, racism, scientific revolutions and so forth may have affected people in the flesh in turn would heighten awareness of the different forms of violence those processes implied for colonial, raced, queer, and other nonnormative bodies, of how we connect to their lives, and of the ethical responsibilities of how we represent them.

### **The Limits, Violence, and Politics of Historical Representation**

Whether we rely on traditional or alternative archives to consider different readings of past lives and worlds, what are our obligations, if any, to both the past and the present? For if the two are indeed inseparable, then all historical representations carry the responsibility of thinking not just about how they are colored by present categories, memories, and political concerns but about how they can avoid enacting or re-reenacting forms of historical violence. Thus, whether for historians, artists, or others who represent people who lived in the past, what is acceptable in terms of what is projected onto those bodies, in terms of what is assumed and claimed about them and in terms of what they are made to symbolize, particularly if they are used to draw political lessons or points for present politics, queer and otherwise? More to the point, what are our ethical obligations as scholars, performers, and/or activists, to raced or sexed bodies like those of Aguilar and the way we deploy images of them that are inextricably tied to the violent logics of domination?

In Aguilar’s case, for all the mysteries surrounding her life, the documents make clear, first, that her body—its alleged sexual anomalies, excesses, and relations

with other women—was central to her criminalization and, second, that because of her body's presumed queerness, she was subjected to different forms of historical violence. The violence of being shamed by members of different towns for her supposed sexual organs and practices was followed by that of being disciplined by the courts, physically probed by different medical authorities for a period of about ten years, and publicly exposed by the trial and Esparragosa's publication of his assessment in Guatemala's gazette. The enlightened doctor might even have disseminated the illustrations of her genitals that he reportedly commissioned and had in his possession.

The archive did some damage too. Not only was Aguilar inscribed in the written record mainly as the object of the surgeon's gaze, but when Martínez Durán, the twentieth-century historian, used the colonial surgeon's report to refer to her life, he reproduced some of its main heterosexist and paternalistic assumptions about her body and behavior.<sup>31</sup> A Guatemalan doctor and scholar, Martínez Durán considered Esparragosa the founder of modern medical science and surgery in his country and thus devotes much of *Las Ciencias médicas en Guatemala, origen y evolución* to lauding his work. He was less interested in Aguilar as a historical subject in her own right than in what the colonial doctor had published on her, which he conceived as a brilliant contribution to forensic science.

Thus, whereas in Martínez Durán's historical text Esparragosa is made to stand as a kind of founding father of modern medicine and surgery in Guatemala, in his brief section on Aguilar she figures as the pathetic hermaphrodite with queer desires who was saved from the shackles of the law by the *protomédico* but whose "tragic" life and ending (by virtue of her deviance) was basically preordained. One body stands for the nation and modernity, the other for the abnormal, abject, and doomed. Martínez Durán's postindependence historical recuperation of Aguilar, which is marked by pity and slippages between Esparragosa's heteronormative discourses on her sexual organs, sex, and sexual desires and his own, underscores again the importance of distancing historical claims and narratives from archival ones—of arriving at conclusions without a critical examination of sources and power.

Avoiding the collusion with power, however, can be trickier than it seems precisely because of the difficulty of disentangling social, archival, and historical inscriptions—of dismantling the archive's transformation of social markings into historical ones. Given the ways in which the nonnormative tends to figure in archival sources, how can treatments of bodies as "texts," as metaphorical expressions of the effects of power (patriarchy, conquest, colonialism, racism, etc.), avoid reducing them to disembodied fragments, to mere parts as Esparragosa does when he produces a report that inserts Aguilar into the archive—and thus to history—essentially as sexual organs? The crux of the problem is that of exposing historical violence and power without reproducing their forms.

In studying or using cases such as Aguilar's, which requires reproducing at

least part of what is in the colonial archive (after all, as historians also like to think, the devil is in the detail), the challenge for scholars and nonscholars alike is how to lessen the possibility that whatever is generated does not simply provide salacious or “juicy” information about race and/or sexed bodies or reduce them to just that. Even a well-intentioned provocation such as the sharing of parts of Esparragosa’s report by Rodríguez and Felipe at the conference on public cultures in Argentina has to contend with tensions stemming from the fine line that can exist between subverting and reproducing images birthed through sexual and/or racial power and violence and therefore connected to some kind of pain. And yet fragments of lives are all that archives offer, if that. The connections of record-keeping practices, power, and history, or traps set up by the “long arm” of the archive, can be tenacious, deceitful, and wily indeed.

As has been suggested throughout this essay, one strategy to avoid colluding with power is to subject the source to a relentless scrutiny, treat the archive as an ethnographic subject itself, and use critical reading practices to deconstruct heterosexuality and other dominant discourses. Another is to turn the historical gaze around through creative approaches as Rodríguez decided to do with Esparragosa in her performance. That is not to say that anything goes—not even for artists, for to the extent that they are implicated in politics they too have a responsibility to the past and the present and to think about the ethical or other problems that might be involved in their representational strategies. Deciding to use the term *lesbian* to refer to Aguilar in order to make her more accessible to a nonacademic audience or simply to make her a part of “gay and lesbian history,” for example, does not just risk committing an act of historical anachronism. It can also imply succumbing to a classificatory impulse not unlike that which is present in Esparragosa’s investigation and report on Aguilar, thus reproducing the very practice a radical queer approach to the archive aims to critique and dismantle.

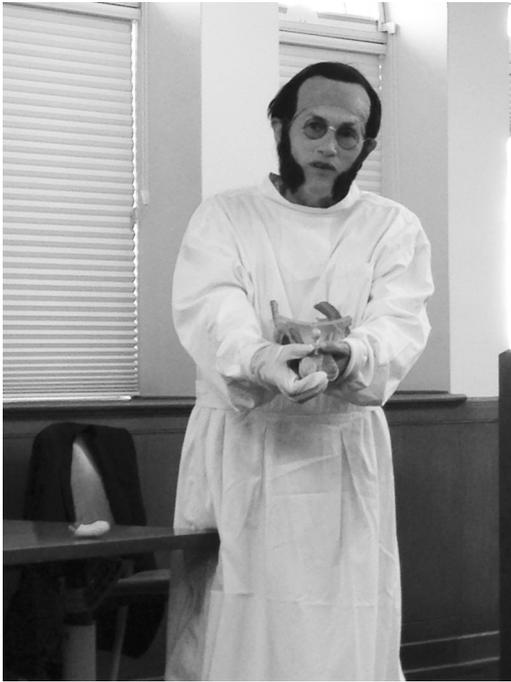
Apart from summoning the imagination to explore different forms of subverting the terms and categories of power embedded in archival documents, then, such an approach involves thinking about the links between classification and power in both the past and the present, how the two might be connected, and what possible implications for our understandings of sexuality, subjectivities, and social arrangements might there be if we abandon the idea that concepts such as “man,” “woman,” “lesbian,” and “homosexual” are transhistorical and transcultural. The act of mapping a category onto subjects who may not have recognized the practices, lifestyles, notions of body and self, and so forth that it references, for example, aligns itself with a genealogy of power—one that imposes, distorts, or forecloses certain desires, identifications, and experiences. It can also entail missing an opportunity to discover in the past human possibilities and imaginings that were suppressed or left unfulfilled but that can provide guidance in the present for creating better worlds in the future.

For historians, creative archival approaches and thinking strategies imply not inventing details but focusing—indeed insisting—on the possibility of different readings, being more cognizant of the role of our subjectivity in our work, and paying greater attention to bodies in history and how we connect to them. More than empathy for people who lived in the past, more than attempts to understand them within and in relation to their historical context, a queer approach to archives requires an exercise of the mind that endeavors hard to treat classification schemes not just as abstractions but as systems of power that have multiple effects on lives and bodies.<sup>32</sup> It also entails recognizing that we can only begin to imagine the memories and histories that those bodies can contain, unleash, and perform.

Trans-, inter-, and postdisciplinary conversations about the archive and the repertoire can advance our thinking on these and other problems of historical investigation and representation. The workshop at USC, for example, showed that performers and academics who engage with history but don't normally think about problems related to archival uses and abuses can benefit from discussions with historians and that the latter can learn a great deal from actors, performance studies experts, colleagues in different disciplines, and, in general, people who are trained to think about bodies and embodiment, to focus on the bodily life, as opposed to the "head life," of humans. The workshop cleared a space to talk about our continued need to classify, in academic writing and otherwise, and the dangers that operation can carry with it. It also provided an opportunity to discuss methods, the place of experience and political concerns in connections to the past, and alternative ways of approaching the violence of Enlightenment rationality. In the process, it revealed the potential that conversations about the archive and the repertoire have not just to inform our understandings of the past and ignite our collective imaginations but to take our work and gazes in unexpected directions.

In hearing Rodríguez discuss her decision to feature Esparragosa in her performance, for example, it became evident that her approach to the case could well serve to get at certain problems related to the archive onstage. Although she explained the decision mainly in terms of her childhood memories of her father and better understanding of the *protomédico* than of Aguilar that they afforded, it was impossible not to see that it was also partly dictated by the nature of the sources for the case, especially the report, which say much more about the doctor than about Aguilar. Rodríguez's transformation of the case into a performance (which she intends to have ready by mid- to late 2014) featuring Esparragosa giving a "master class on anatomy" in which the authoritative physician provides a long lecture on a human subject that never appears onstage can powerfully dramatize this problem of archival presence/absence and lead to discussions about it with audiences in the question sessions that the artist normally has after her shows.

The workshop also placed the lens on historians in unexpected ways. For me at least, when Rodríguez vividly referred to being struck by Esparragosa's detached



Rodríguez as Esparragosa lecturing on sexual organs at the USC workshop. Photograph by Laura Gutiérrez

tone while describing his probing of Aguilar's body, by his lack of awareness of how his subjectivity and understandings of the world shaped the way he approached, understood, and classified her, and by the performative aspects of his "scientific objectivity," she inadvertently made some telling parallels between the figure of the enlightened doctor and that of the professional historian come to the surface. Given that the historical period that produced him also started to give life to modern medicine and to history as a profession, perhaps the parallels should not be surprising but be worth further exploration, along with the role of sentiment in historical research and writing. The general expectation that the historian has to have a

rational, objective approach to historical sources and apply methods that rely more on reason than emotion to study past lives and subjects might have more than a little relationship to the importance of the rationality/passion dichotomy in the early modern world, one that in colonial contexts was mapped on to both gender and race (with reason coded as masculine and passion/emotion as feminine).

If the workshop discussion productively shifted the focus of the queer critical gaze from the doctor to the historian, it also ironically led to a valorization of the traditional historical archive, for when Rodríguez described her visits to Guatemala she essentially confessed to contracting the historian's "fever," or feeling at once euphoric by the "treasures" to be discovered and overwhelmed by the vastness of information. Although she has embodied historical characters before (Mexican president Francisco Madero, Charles Darwin, and Leonardo da Vinci among them), this was her first experience at a physical archive, and she found it nothing short of fascinating and enlightening, describing it as "the process of realizing all that can be discovered from a single detail [you find in a document] and the different threads that exist in a story and how if you start to pull one you find that you can keep pulling and find an infinite bundle of threads until you get to the bottom of things." And then there was the materiality of the objects, "because it is one thing to read a typed or printed copy of a report . . . and another to get the original manuscript, open its

pages, and read it in its own handwriting and ink on an old parchment, all these elements and textures and smells affect you too.”

In describing the potential mental, emotional, and sensorial components of being with some of the material fragments of the past—or archival work as embodied practice—Rodríguez demonstrated how, for all of its associations with power, the one archive (documents) can serve to denote the imagination of the other (bodies) and the possibilities that their convergence can have for history and its performance. As a whole, the workshop highlighted different forms of recording, remembering, and representing history and how disobeying disciplinary boundaries and sharing different methodological techniques can be enlightening, in a post-Enlightenment way, for all involved in the discussion. Rodríguez’s theatrical approach to Aguilar and Esparragosa played a key part in the conversation because it showed that, though it might take creative license with some historical details, use humor and irreverence as critical weapons, and last only for the hour or two that it is performed onstage, it was not necessarily less insightful and consequential than that which a historian might produce on paper. After all, if embodiment can be linked to memory and knowledge and if the body can act as an archive that articulates the past, present, and future, then the act of representing Esparragosa onstage, critically making him the object of the gaze, and parodying the discourses that shaped his colonial and phallogentric mentality is part of the process of radically making and remaking history and politics, no matter how ephemeral.

#### **A Final Note to and about Audiences**

From when it first took place to the present, the Aguilar case has had multiple audiences, among them the Audiencia officials for whom Esparragosa wrote the report and the imagined enlightened community (scientific and otherwise) that he wished to impress when he published his findings in *La gazeta de Guatemala*. It is not clear how the Audiencia judges responded because the legal dossier for the case is missing, just as it is also difficult to assess how the readers of the gazette responded because no one wrote to the editor or author to register a reaction (and if they did, the letters were not published in subsequent issues). What is clear is that Esparragosa wanted to impress those audiences not only to bolster his status as a knowledgeable and enlightened doctor but also to leave his mark in history. For the *protomédico*, the apparent unusualness of the case (and of Aguilar’s body) coupled with what he saw as his unique findings was to spark great public interest and put not only Aguilar but also him in the archive.

Another audience for the case has consisted of academics who have learned about it from what historians who have studied it have written or said about it. Having presented on it myself, it seems that the interest the case generates among this public is also partly due to a general sense that the Aguilar case is unique, an archival rarity that allows for some fascinating if disturbing glimpses at sexual dis-

courses of the past as well as some amusing moments (such as when the nickname “la Larga” is mentioned). Finally, there are the audiences for Rodríguez’s uses of the case, whether in cultural events like that in Argentina or on the stage when it fully materializes as a theatrical performance. If Rodríguez’s assessment of the reaction to the reading of parts of Esparragosa’s report in Argentina is correct, then these audiences too will be captivated in some measure by the “unusualness of the case.”

Assuming that the different readings of audience interest in Aguilar are correct, what the vastly different publics for the case seem to share, then, is the perception that it is exceptional or unique. This perception is correct in the sense that, like all cases or events in history, it has its particularities (here these might include the ten years of investigations, the escape to Guatemala, and the doctor’s publication of the report in a gazette). But as many early modernists who work on sexuality and the history of medicine, natural science, anatomy, or criminality know, in many respects it is not unusual. The quantity should not be exaggerated, but there are plenty of cases of people tried for nonnormative sexual practices and hermaphroditism in various parts of the Atlantic world,<sup>33</sup> and, as discussed earlier, during the eighteenth century and beyond the heightened preoccupation with classification among certain scientific circles and a broader enlightened community led to the observation, study, and probing of countless bodies that fell outside the norm.

At least for Spain and Spanish America, these cases and topics had not, until recently, received much attention, in part because they are “hidden” in the archives (not classified in such a way as to make it easy to find them or at all) but mainly because only in the past few decades have they gained significant legitimacy as subjects of inquiry. That more scholars are turning to those cases can be attributed mainly to the growing presence and theoretical interventions of gender studies, queer studies, and transgender studies in academia and related current discussions in the humanities about, among other things, sexuality, the performativity of gender, and archives, power, and knowledge.<sup>34</sup> As more cases of criminalized nonnormative bodies and sexual practices are brought to light, examined with critical queer lenses, and made available to different audiences through different venues, not only will the idea that a case like that of Aguilar is unique be dispelled, but more occluded histories, knowledges, and experiences will be unveiled and new narrative and interpretative frameworks for understanding the past and the present be produced. That, at least, is a case for uniting the archive and the repertoire, history and performance, queer theory and politics.

### Notes

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History of the Americas, held in Tepoztlán, Mexico, July 26, 2013. I am grateful to the participants at both events for their comments as well as to the anonymous reviewers of *Radical History Review* for their suggestions.

1. The gazette's publication of the report can be located in a number of places, including Mexico's Archivo General de la Nación (Mexico City), Indiferente Virreinal, box 5216, folder 12.
2. In the early modern Atlantic world, the concept of sodomy was linked mainly to anal penetration, but it referred to nonreproductive or nonnormative sexual acts more generally and thus was applied to different kinds of sexual activities between women. For more on the category of "female sodomy," see María Elena Martínez, "Sex, Race, and Nature: Juana Aguilar's Body and Creole Enlightened Thought in Late Colonial New Spain" (paper presented at the symposium "Race and Sex in the Eighteenth-Century Spanish Atlantic World" at the University of Southern California, April 12–13, 2013). The broader literature on sodomy in colonial Latin America and early modern Spain includes Federico Garza Carvajal, *Butterflies Will Burn: Prosecuting Sodomites in Early Modern Spain and Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003); Zeb Tortorici, "'Heran Todos Putos': Sodomitical Subcultures and Disordered Desire in Early Colonial Mexico," *Ethnohistory* 54, no. 1 (2007): 35–67; and Pete Sigal, ed., *Infamous Desire: Male Homosexuality in Colonial Latin America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).
3. In addition to Martínez, "Sex, Race, and Nature," see Martha Few's pathbreaking article "'That Monster of Nature': Gender, Sexuality, and the Medicalization of a 'Hermaphrodite' in Late Colonial Guatemala," *Ethnohistory* 54, no. 1 (2007): 159–76.
4. For more on the work of Rodríguez and Felipe, refer to the website of the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics, [hemisphericinstitute.org/hemi/en/mission](http://hemisphericinstitute.org/hemi/en/mission); and Laura G. Gutiérrez, *Performing Mexicanidad: Vendidas y cabareteras on the Transnational Stage* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010).
5. Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 3–8. For performativity and video, see José Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999). For performance, theater, and gay politics in the United States, refer to the works of David Román, particularly his *Acts of Intervention: Performance, Gay Culture, and AIDS* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998).
6. Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 5, no. 4 (1980): 631–60.
7. Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations of Rodríguez are from a workshop discussion on archives, history, and performance held at the University of Southern California on April 12, 2013; the translations are mine.
8. The text for the presentation was written by Rodríguez and read by Felipe.
9. Personal conversations with Rodríguez about the cultural event in Buenos Aires, fall 2011 and 2013.
10. Carlos Martínez Durán, *Las Ciencias médicas en Guatemala, origen y evolución (Medical Sciences in Guatemala: Origin and Evolution)* (Guatemala City: Tipografía Sánchez y de Guise, 1941), 423–73.
11. Besides public ones run by state institutions there are many other kinds of archives, including church, family, and personal ones, and some scholars define an archive as anywhere the past has left some of its traces, whether in written form or not. For an introduction to some of the literature and debates on the subject, see Carolyn Hamilton

- et al., eds., *Refiguring the Archive* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 2002); and the special issue on the archive in *History of the Human Sciences* 12, no. 2 (1999).
12. Scholarship on the archive and its relationship to the law and authority includes Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), esp. the opening note; and Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. Alan M. Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 2010), 129–31. On power dynamics in the preservation, collection, and interpretation of sources, see Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon, 1995). On written and other archival sources versus embodied culture, see Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*.
  13. Recent examples include Jan de Vos, *La guerra de las dos vírgenes: La rebelión de Los Zendales (Chiapas, 1712); Documentada, recordada, recreada (The War of the Two Virgins: The Rise of the Zendales [Chiapas, 1712]: Documented, Remembered, Recreated)* (Mérida, Mexico: Centro Peninsular en Humanidades y Ciencias Sociales, 2011); and Kathryn Burns, *Into the Archive: Writing and Power in Colonial Peru* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).
  14. See, e.g., Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1987); Carolyn Steedman, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002); and Antoinette Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive: Women Writing House, Home, and History in Late Colonial India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003). Works by historians of sexuality who have used feminist, queer, and/or postcolonial theories and diverse sources and analytic strategies to tackle challenges of the archive include George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Makings of the Gay Male World, 1890–1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994); and Nayan Shah, *Stranger Intimacy: Contesting Race, Sexuality, and the Law in the North American West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).
  15. On colonial Latin American archives and race/caste classifications, see María Elena Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza de sangre, Religion, and Gender in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), 142–70. On archives, notarial culture, and power in colonial Peru, see Burns, *Into the Archive*. On the colonial archive more generally, see Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009). See also Anjali Arondekar, “Without a Trace: Sexuality and the Colonial Archive,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 14, nos. 1–2 (2005): 10–27.
  16. This use of the term *queer* underscores its social constructedness and interdependence with discursive operations. For an early and influential definition of queerness as resistance to “regimes of the normal,” see Michael Warner, introduction to *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory*, ed. Michael Warner (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), xxvi.
  17. Martínez, “Sex, Race, and Nature.” On eighteenth-century science reinforcing the two-sex binary, see Thomas Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990); and Londa Schiebinger, *The Mind Has No Sex? Women in the Origins of Modern Science* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).
  18. Katharine Park and Robert A. Nye, “Destiny Is Anatomy,” review of Laqueur, *Making Sex*, *New Republic*, February 18, 1991, 56.

19. The term “technology of the body” is from Jean Franco, *Plotting Women: Gender and Representation in Mexico* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 74.
20. The extensive literature on the eighteenth-century obsession with studying, probing, and classifying raced and sexed bodies includes Londa Schiebinger, *Nature's Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006); Andrew Curran, “Rethinking Race History: The Role of the Albino in the French Enlightenment Life Sciences,” *History and Theory* 48, no. 3 (2009): 151–79; Rebecca Haidt, *Embodying the Enlightenment: Knowing the Body in Eighteenth-Century Spanish Literature and Culture* (New York: St. Martin's, 1998); and Nicholas Hudson, “From ‘Nation’ to ‘Race’: The Origin of Racial Classification in Eighteenth-Century Thought,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 29, no. 3 (1996): 247–64.
21. Michel Foucault, *Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1974–1975*, ed. Valerio Marchetti and Antonella Salomoni, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Verso, 2004), esp. 55–80.
22. In addition to the sources cited in note 17, see Londa Schiebinger, “The Anatomy of Difference: Race and Sex in Eighteenth-Century Science,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 23, no. 4 (1990): 387–405.
23. Diana Taylor, “Performance and/as History,” *TDR: The Drama Review* 50, no. 1 (2006): 71.
24. See the documentary *En batalla: El teatro de Ludwik Margules (In the Struggle: The Theater of Ludwik Margules)*, directed by Verónica Quezada, Mexico City, Centro de Investigación Teatral Rodolfo Usigli and Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, 2013.
25. Carolyn Steedman, “The Space of Memory: In an Archive,” *History of the Human Sciences* 11, no. 4 (1998): 66.
26. In addition to Davis, *Fiction in the Archives*, see Carlo Ginzburg, *Threads and Traces: True False Fictive*, trans. Anne Tedeschi and John Tedeschi (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).
27. Enrique Florescano, *Memory, Myth, and Time in Mexico: From the Aztecs to Independence*, trans. Albert G. Bork (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994), 30–64.
28. See Jacques Le Goff, *History and Memory*, trans. Steven Rendall and Elizabeth Claman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 51–100; and Thomas Osborne, “The Ordinarity of the Archive,” *History of the Human Sciences* 12, no. 2 (1999): 55.
29. Hobsbawm made his comments in an interview on Lemus's television program *Tratos y retratos (Relations and Portraits)*, which aired on Mexico's Canal 22 on October 10, 2012.
30. In the English tradition, literature on the dialectical relationship between the past and the present, or the role of the historian's subjectivity in “reconstructing” the past, goes back to R. G. Collingwood's 1946 book *The Idea of History*. For more recent treatments, see David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Le Goff, *History and Memory*, 120–21; and Eric Van Young, “The Cuatla Lazarus: Double Subjectivities in Reading Texts on Popular Collective Action,” *Colonial Latin American Review* 2, nos. 1–2 (1993): 3–26.
31. Martínez Durán, *Las ciencias médicas*, 463–65.
32. Following Foucault, Susan Stryker eloquently stresses this point in “(De)Subjugated Knowledges: An Introduction to Transgender Studies,” in *The Transgender Studies Reader*, ed. Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle (New York: Routledge, 2006), 3.
33. As Sherry M. Velasco points out, there are numerous representations of “female homoeroticism” in early modern Spanish historical and literary texts as well as secular and inquisitorial court cases involving women tried for having sexual relations with other

women. Sherry M. Velasco, *Lesbians in Early Modern Spain* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2011), 1, 7–8.

34. It is not possible to do justice to all the contributions in these studies, but for an insightful recent discussion of debates about historicism in queer studies, see Valerie Traub, “The New Unhistoricism in Queer Studies,” *PMLA* 128, no. 1 (2013): 21–39. For an introduction to transgender studies, see Stryker and Whittle, *Transgender Studies Reader*; and Susan Stryker and Aren Z. Aizura, eds., *The Transgender Studies Reader 2* (New York: Routledge, 2013).