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the Divine

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VISCERAL ARCHIVES OF THE BODY

Consuming the Dead, Digesting the Divine

Zeb Tortorici

This essay focuses on how viscerality—understood as the experience of intense and highly mediated bodily feelings or affective responses that manifest themselves through conflicting corporeal and emotive reactions—refracts as an issue for archival studies of early modern sexuality (and beyond). I use the concept of viscerality as a theoretical framework to construct an understanding of how criminal and Inquisition cases became archived in New Spain in the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth. Viscerality has significant implications for those who create and use archives, and it is intimately linked to the metaphors of consumption that undergird the archive (in both a textual and a corporeal sense). After a theoretical discussion of “consuming archives,” which is centered on the idiom of consumption that has filtered through archival theory and scholarship, I analyze three case studies from the historical archives of colonial New Spain, focusing on how bodies and desires come to be archived through a chain of visceral reactions on the part of historical actors, colonial authorities, notaries and scribes, archivists, and modern-day historians. These visceral archives of the body go so far as to implicate me, the author of this essay, and the readers of this essay as well. Drawing such connections between the producers and consumers of documents across the centuries highlights a particularly queer archival, methodological, and temporal approach to the writing of history—one in which the historical/temporal/raced/sexed other is encountered (and partly rendered knowable and consumed) through visceral and other affective archival encounters.

By employing the term *visceral* throughout this essay, I allude to how certain individuals—upon encountering corporeal or textual spectacles that elicit the confused emotions of disgust and desire—experience intense affective

responses to specific corporeal encounters and criminalized bodily acts including necrophilia, fellatio, masturbation, and erotic religious encounters—acts that fell broadly under the purview of “sins against nature” but that remained partly illegible to colonial authorities in their desire to classify and categorize. In my view, the visceral is a response evoking an immediate reaction, often of disgust, which at multiple levels directly affects encounters with the other in relation to these criminal and Inquisition cases: from the initial accusation to the response of the authorities, from the archivization of these cases to our readings of them as scholars, from the writing of history to the interpretation of historiography. Such a theoretical framework seeks to link archive and affect, historiography and viscerality. Elizabeth Freeman has recently proposed the term *haptic historiography* to refer to “ways of negotiating with the past and producing historical knowledge through visceral sensations.”¹ This entire essay, then, might be seen as a micro-historical exercise in haptic historiography, one that allows us to explicitly link visceral sensations (and archival affects) to the production of historical knowledge and the very processes through which the bodies and desires of others come to be archived in the first place and thereby enter historicity. Such moments of archiving are explicitly linked to alterity and to (post)colonial corporeal/textual encounters between “self” and “other” (or subject and object), as mediated by the archive. For, if as David Hillman asserts, the entrails are “the place where the other is taken in, is acknowledged in his or her otherness,” then being attuned to the visceral encounters of the archive allows for a more nuanced critique of bureaucratic modes of knowledge (and document) production as they are tied to the literal and metaphorical consumption and incorporation of the other.² In essence, paying close attention to archival affects, particularly the visceral, enables us to think through the queer dimensions of the relations between affective and bureaucratic impulses—embodiment and documentation.

Consuming (in) Archives

To better theorize the relationship between bodies and archives as they are mediated by affect, in this essay I compare several late-colonial Mexican archivizations of “unnatural” desires and sex acts, paying attention to how bodies and desires are archived, and to how archivists and scholars interact with those archivizations. As part of the project of interrogating how sexuality enters the archive in a contingent and highly charged relationship with the consumption of bodies, images, and texts, here I want to briefly reflect on how archival theory has purposefully situated itself within a particular lexicon of food and consumption. If in a colonial

context, as Sara Ahmed has asserted, “the politics of ‘what gets eaten’ or consumed is bound up with histories of imperialism,” then we might say that the politics of consumption are intimately connected to specific modes of documenting, remembering, and recounting those very histories of imperial encounters: archival practice and historiography.³

I propose therefore that we think metaphorically about archiving as a mode of digestion. This maneuver allows us to situate instantiations of archives (as well as the archives’ documents, conventions, catalogs, and finding aids) within a long chain of affective responses inextricable from the acts of touching/digesting the past. If it is true that, as Arlette Farge asserts, “the archival document is a tear in the fabric of time, an unplanned glimpse offered into an unexpected event,” then the archival document, and the asynchronous interactions that social actors have had with that document over the centuries, connects the past and the present in ways that are not entirely anticipated or resolvable.⁴ Conceptualizing archival documents as tears in the fabric of time approximates a queer approach to both history and temporality, echoing the caveats and innovations of queer temporalities theorists, but with an eye toward the visceral reactions, gut feelings, and queer archiving of the past and the present. A queer studies methodology for mainstream historical archives—*queer archivalism*, in Freeman’s words—allows us, in essence, to explore the fraught (and anachronistic) relations between past and present, archive and document, historian and witness, writer and written of, consumer and consumed.

Colonial studies scholars, occasionally citing colonial fictional texts located within a similar framework, have situated the process of archival research within the savory rhetoric of consumption. In her theoretically rich *Along the Archival Grain*, Ann Stoler, referring to an early twentieth-century novel about colonial Java’s rising Indonesian nationalist movement in the Dutch East Indies, writes that for the author of *House of Glass*, Pramoedya Ananta Toer, “the colonial archives are the bitter aftertaste of empire, the morsels left for us, their voracious contemporary readers.”⁵ Understanding archives as “unquiet movements in a field of force” rather than repositories of state power, Stoler notes that the futile attempt to distinguish fiction from fact in colonial archives “has given way to efforts to track the production and consumption of facticities as the contingent coordinates of particular times and temperaments, places and purposes.”⁶ This *consumption of facticities* lies at the very heart of the colonial archive and amounts to the reason for its very existence. Colonial archives and the documents housed within them are consumed (and redigested) by colonial bureaucrats, scribes, archivists, and historians—all of whom produce their own carefully crafted narratives of truth, fact, fiction, and everything in between.

Other scholars too have turned to the tropes of archival and textual consumption. In *The Allure of the Archives*, originally published in French in 1989, Farge posits the following: “Archival discoveries are a manna that fully justify their name: *sources*, as refreshing as wellsprings.”⁷ Whether intentional or not, other scholars employ a similar lexicon. One historian of early modern Iberian sexuality, Cristian Berco, in his recent monograph on sodomy in Golden Age Spain, holds that “the often obsessive need apparent throughout early Spanish institutions to maintain a verifiable written record has provided historians with a veritable treasure of sources to peruse, a scholar’s heaven where the sought-after records of a past society flow like manna from thousands of dusty volumes in their archival repository.”⁸ The comparison of archival document to flowing manna—the edible substance that, according to the Bible and the Koran, God provided for the Israelites during their travels in the desert—is a calculated one: archival documents are the very sustenance that figuratively and metaphorically nourishes both historians and archivists. The archive is likened to “a scholar’s heaven” where documents—manna—are voraciously consumed, avidly digested.

Another oft-cited theorist of the archive, Carolyn Steedman, author of *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History*, productively frames archival consumption in a radically different mode: the literal and metaphorical inhalation of “the dust of others, and of other times.”⁹ For Steedman, in dialogue with the nineteenth-century French historian Jules Michelet and Jacques Derrida, “archive fever” is effected literally by “the historian’s act of inhalation.”¹⁰ Especially in the nineteenth century, as historians and archivists were constantly exposed to early printed books, old documents, leather bindings, glues, adhesives, parchments, and vellums (which were often laden with toxic chemicals and tanning agents), they breathed in “the dust of the workers who made the papers and parchments; the dust of the animals who provided the skins for their leather bindings.”¹¹ Even today, as anyone (like myself) who has suffered from itchy eyes, runny nose, and headaches in the archives knows, the mold, spores, dust, and airborne fragments of early modern books and manuscripts have an uncanny ability to produce severe allergic reactions in some scholars, archivists, and workers who breathe them in.¹² This is yet another dimension of the intimate relationship between bodies and documents, embodiment and archives.

Scholars have thus situated archives and archival documents within a lexicon of food and consumption—for the documents themselves are the “morsels,” “manna,” and “dust” that both sustain and afflict. Yet archives and archival consumption are about incomplete processes: as Steedman notes, in the archive, “you know that you *will not finish*, that there will be something left unread, unnoted,

untranscribed.”¹³ To this I add that there will always be archival somethings that will be left untouched, undigested, and unconsumed. As the bodies, emissions, and secretions of humans are consumed in the cases themselves, historians and archivists voraciously (and metaphorically) digest the colonial texts that they encounter, though they do so in a different vein. Here, I want to locate both consumption and viscosity as bound tropes that are central to archiving. Metaphorical forms of ocular and tactile consumption, both within the space of the archive *and* within the archival document itself, have the power to elicit visceral reactions—“moments of extreme bodily sensation”—among the readers of archival documents and the social actors described within them.¹⁴

Archival Offal

If the term *viscera* has historically referred to the soft internal organs—the blood and guts—of the body, then perhaps we might metaphorically think about the hundreds of thousands of documents housed deep in the vaults and shelves of historical archives and special collections libraries as the viscera of the archive. Yet I suggest that the viscera of the archive might refer not to *all* archival documents in general but specifically to those texts that have been effectively (and affectively) discarded, that have been left unconsumed, and that have been relegated to the margins of the archive itself—unpalatable archival offal, or, in the words of Freeman, “the archive’s stray dogs.”¹⁵ The viscera of the archive, as the early nineteenth-century criminal case discussed below demonstrates, challenge us to employ historiographical methods that are queer in nature and push us to connect the archival impulse and the processes of archiving to queerly cross-temporal affective formations. The viscera of the archive refer specifically to those “lost moments of official history, [through which] queer time generates a discontinuous history of its own, which included colonialist endeavors.”¹⁶ Such archival engagements amount to exercises in queer temporality, permitting us to “touch” the past and to selectively consume textual representations of bodies and desires in the present as well as the past.

How then might we, at multiple levels, meaningfully connect the viscera of the archive to those humanly visceral reactions produced by the marginalized bodies, desires, and acts described within the archives? Hillman tells us that visceral reactions are often closely interrelated to the “desire for irrefutable knowledge about the other,” but this desire is often simultaneously mixed up with a refusal to acknowledge the other and an attempt to incorporate the other epistemologically.¹⁷ Such attempts at refusal, incorporation, and consumption merge in

the following criminal and Inquisition cases, which emerged from deep within the entrails of the archive, often obscured by the euphemistic language of some archivists and the official categories of colonial bureaucratise. The case studies I analyze here demonstrate some of the many links between corporeality and archivization, highlighting the ambivalent ways that archivization obscures the visceral, yet it is only through the visceral that many acts and desires come into the archive, thus becoming part of the historian's trade.

Years ago, while conducting archival research on sodomy and other "unnatural" acts and desires in colonial New Spain between 1530 and 1821, I came across one particularly vague reference in the database of the Archivo General de la Nación in Mexico City. In the perfunctory, euphemistic language of the anonymous late twentieth-century archivist responsible for classifying the document and storing it in the computer database, the entry related that the criminal branch of the archive's colonial repository held an early nineteenth-century case of "profanation of cadaver" (*profanación de cadáver*). The database entry provided basic information on year (1810), location (Mexico City), name of the accused (José Lázaro Martínez), and that of the affected (Antonia Fontecho y Hurtado), and appears in the archive's computer online database as the following:

Archivo General de la Nación/Instituciones Coloniales/Real Audiencia/
Criminal (037)/Contenedor 313/Volumen 705

Título: Expediente 24

Fecha(s): AÑO 1810

Nivel de descripción: Unidad documental compuesta (Expediente)

Volumen y soporte: Fojas: 237–250

Productores: (Pendiente)

Alcance y contenido: DELITO: PROFANACION DE CADAVER;
ACUSADO: JOSE LAZARO MARTINEZ; AFECTADA: ANTONIA
FONTECHO Y HURTADO; LUGAR: MEXICO.¹⁸

General Archive of the Nation/Colonial Institutions/Real Audiencia/
Criminal (037)/Container 313/Volume 705

Title: File 24

Date(s): YEAR 1810

Level of description: Composite documentary unit (File)

Volume and support: Pages: 237–250

Producers: (Pending)

Scope and content: CRIME: PROFANATION OF CADAVER; ACCUSED:
JOSE LAZARO MARTINEZ; AFFECTED: ANTONIA FONTECHO
Y HURTADO; PLACE: MEXICO [CITY].

Given my interests in tracing the intersections of sexuality, desire, bodies, and colonial encounters in early Mexico, this document seemed of potential interest, but I thought it would likely prove either irrelevant or tangential to my larger research project of producing a social history on the regulation of the “sins against nature” (*pecados contra natura*) of sodomy, bestiality, and masturbation in New Spain. The document, despite archival equivocation about its contents, proved me wrong, no doubt in part because archival description is always a product of a locally specific social, cultural, and religious context. As Francis X. Blouin Jr. and William G. Rosenberg tell us in *Processing the Past*, “the concepts underlying archival description also reflect an assumed relationship between documents and their sociopolitical contexts,” and Mexico’s national archive is no exception.¹⁹ After filling out the necessary forms to access volume 705 and waiting to receive the tome, upon turning to folio 237, I immediately recognized that the nineteenth-century cover page affixed to the criminal case was more forthcoming. It read: “Mexico [City], Year of 1810. Against José Lázaro Martínez for having been found carnally mixing with a dead woman” (*Mexico, Año de 1810. Contra José Lázaro Martínez por haberse encontrado mesclando carnalm[en]te con una difunta*).

As it turned out, on February 15, 1810, a woman named Ignacia Gómez went, accompanied by a female friend, to the Hospital of San Juan de Dios to pay respects to her elderly aunt, who had died the previous day. Their plans to quietly place candles by the body were thwarted when, upon entering the graveyard, the two women were unpleasantly surprised (and affectively confronted) by the spectacle of an unknown man on top of the corpse, with his genitals exposed, moving in a manner that left “little doubt” as to what he was doing. The archived denunciation registers a highly affective, visceral response: the women—shocked and disgusted by what they had just witnessed—screamed loudly upon encountering this scene, and their screams alerted the resident priest. Lázaro Martínez, who was a servant in the convent adjoining the hospital, quickly fled over a wall only to be apprehended by the priest shortly thereafter.

The suspect, an eighteen-year-old unmarried indigenous man from Oaxaca who was “uninstructed in the Christian doctrine,” was handed over to colonial authorities and interrogated during his criminal trial, as was customary. In explicit detail, Lázaro Martínez confessed the following:

Two women found him in the graveyard of San Juan de Dios on top of a dead woman with whom he was fornicating, [and] that he did this because Miguel, the servant of Father Lastra, sacristan of the same convent, had advised him to do so. [And] who on two occasions he [Lázaro Martínez]

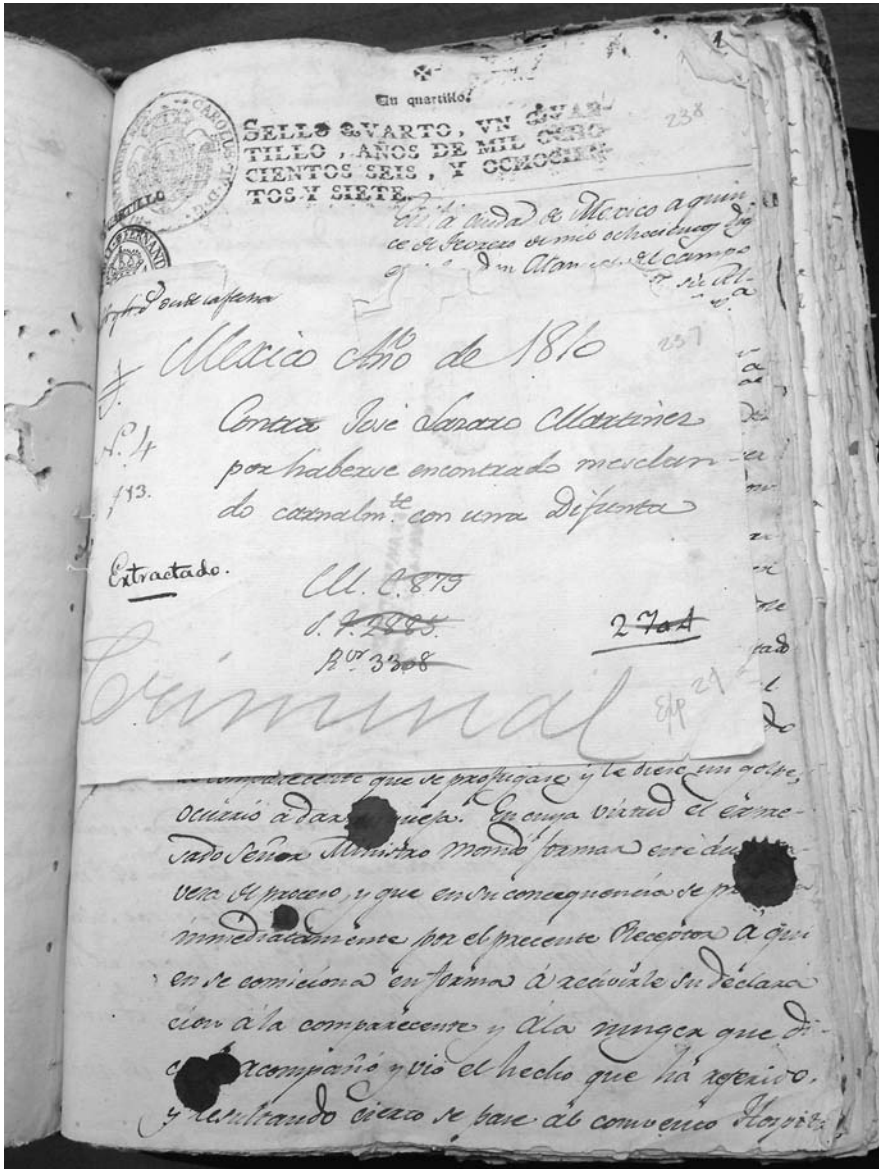


Figure 1. "Against José Lázaro Martínez for having been found carnally mixing with a dead woman." Archivo General de la Nación (México), Criminal 705, exp. 24

saw that he [Miguel] locked himself in the graveyard, and he told him that he was going to fornicate with the dead women because his mistress, who had died pregnant in that same hospital, was buried there inside. The said Miguel also advised him that he make a hole in the underskirt of the dead woman to be able to fornicate with her.²⁰

Lázaro Martínez asserted that although he had never actually seen Miguel engaged in a sexual act with a corpse, each of the two times he locked himself in the graveyard, Miguel stayed there for some thirty minutes. The day that Lázaro Martínez was caught, he told authorities that both he and Miguel had temporarily stolen the keys to the graveyard from the priest, drank the traditional fermented alcoholic pulque, and entered the graveyard with the intent of engaging in carnal acts with corpses. Miguel, however, escaped before he could be seen by anyone.

Lisa Downing, one of the few literary scholars to offer an extended analysis of necrophilia in textual production, writes, “In attempting to cross the threshold separating life from death, the ambition subtending necrophilia makes it one of the richest, liveliest and certainly most paradoxical desire types to be found in the lexicon of human sexuality.”²¹ Depending on the social position of the historical actor in question, however, that lexicon becomes confused. Depending on the subject in question, the act of fornication with a corpse generated contradictory affects of shock, repugnance, offense, and desire—each of them visceral in their own way. Necrophilia, however, also opens itself to the possibility of enacting an intimate affective act, especially if we are to believe the suspect’s assertion that the sacristan Miguel engaged in acts of necrophilia only *after* his pregnant mistress died and was buried there. Is it possible that, for Miguel, “carnal access” with the dead functioned as a mode of approximating the intimate or sharing something with his dead lover? What might be erotic or intimate for one person—such as sexual congress with the deceased—might be repugnant to another, for notions of the sacred and the defiled are relative categories: “What is clean in relation to one thing may be unclean in relation to another, and vice versa.”²² Disgust and delight—both of which are highly visceral responses to particular stimuli—are inextricably bound together, despite the efforts of colonial bureaucrats and contemporary archivists to parse these categories and separate them from each other in terms of morality and Christian practice.

Colonial criminal authorities, in trying to determine the punishment best suited for the crime, cited Lázaro Martínez’s inability to make the sign of the cross as evidence that he was indeed completely ignorant of Christian doctrine. Concep-

tually, the criminal court made sense of the act of “carnal congress” with a corpse by relating it to the unnatural and the nonhuman: “an act so scandalous, horrible and repugnant to nature itself and even to brute animals.”²³ Here, we must locate viscosity within local structures of power, colonial racism, and attempts to impose colonial hegemony. Javier Sanjinés, in a study on aesthetics in contemporary Bolivia, offers the following interpretation: “Viscosity represents a combative subject-object dialectic whose central term is the violence that emerges from the hidden nature of colonialism.”²⁴ The multiple and overlapping viscosities enacted in this criminal case—the viscosity done to the (inviolability of the) corpse, the viscosity of the colonial state in framing the crime as stemming from the ignorance of Christian doctrine, and the viscosity of the relations between colonizer and colonized—register visceral responses of witnesses, colonial authorities, and the criminal court. Indeed we might rightly interpret the disgust invoked by the act of sex with a corpse as embedded in a broader visceral response to the range of potential blasphemies, superstitions, and unnatural acts available to the never-fully-colonized indigenous subject in colonial Latin America. The common association of uncatechized indigeneity with the unnatural and the nonhuman is intimately tied to colonial perceptions of indigenous peoples as inherently more corrupted and perverse than were Europeans—a trope that we see repeated in criminal and Inquisition cases, even when the culprit was not fully indigenous.

Paradoxically, such visceral responses by the colonial state toward indigenous subjects could occasionally mitigate the severity of the sentences meted out to those convicted of such unnatural crimes and acts. Because Lázaro Martínez was an *yndio*—an indigenous person—of “extreme rusticity” who was unversed in Christian doctrine and because he was under twenty years old, the authorities declined to punish him to the full extent of the law, which would have condemned him to ten years of forced labor. On May 14, 1810, the court sentenced Lázaro Martínez to be whipped twenty-five times inside his prison and to be sent to labor for four years at a fort in Perote, Veracruz, on Mexico’s eastern coast. He was also to be properly instructed in the basic tenets of Christianity. No doubt, Lázaro Martínez was to be whipped in private, so as not to scandalize the public with or fuel local gossip about the obscene nature of his acts. The decision of the colonial court *not* to employ a town crier (*pregonero*), as was customary, to publicly shame the subject and proclaim the details of the crime to the masses is instructive, highlighting some of the ambivalences of archiving. Despite leaving behind highly detailed bureaucratic records about the case—thereby permanently archiving the body and desires of the criminal—the criminal court sought, at some level, to publicly eradicate any memory of the defiling nature of his acts.

We have already seen how, in the case of Lázaro Martínez, colonial authorities embedded a lexicon of viscerality in the very rhetoric they employed to describe such an act: sexual congress with a corpse was understood juridically as being *repugnant* to nature as well as to the very conceptions of the human and the animal. That such repugnance, however, oscillates between the past and the present allows us partly to explicate this case (and others like it) through the practices of queer historiography and queer temporality. Pointedly, the anonymous twentieth-century archivist who manually entered a redacted description of Lázaro Martínez's criminal case into the computer database, upon digesting the historical texts of the past, likely experienced some visceral response that rendered it necessary to describe this nineteenth-century case of necrophilia in more sanitized terms. In this sense, that archivist literally consumed particular words (not unlike earlier colonial scribes or later historians like myself), partly consumed them, and metaphorically vomited euphemistic terms for future researchers to more easily digest (or simply ignore). For as Sara Ahmed tells us, viscerality and speech acts are closely linked: "In disgust reactions 'words' are also cast out or vomited."²⁵

In this case we find a proliferation of abstracted language and categories being used to describe (and archive) the act of sex with a corpse: "carnally mixing with a dead woman," "congress with the dead," "profanation of cadaver," and an act "so repugnant to nature and even to brute animals" that it cannot otherwise adequately be described. In their recent genealogy of the oft-fraught relations between historians and archivists, Blouin and Rosenberg use the term *archive* "as an abstraction of the processes by which archival institutions and collections come into existence."²⁶ This notion of the archive as abstraction is particularly relevant to how the visceral archives of the body come into being by relying, partly, on documenting archival affects and tracing the politics of denouncing, transcribing, documenting, and archiving. This cycle of consumption and visceral response can be traced repeatedly in colonial textual production and reception within the very space of the archive. Acts and desires deemed "unnatural" are produced and consumed within the archive, and viscerality is central to these processes—witnesses, colonial authorities, archivists, and scholars have divergent, but all affective, responses to particular acts, desires, and substances described to varying degrees as being less than human or, in the case of Antonia Fontecho y Hurtado's corpse, no longer human.

Liquor, Pustules, and Semen

Fascinating as the details of this 1810 criminal case are, it serves primarily as a comparative entry point to trace the acts of consumption and affective ties that undergird colonial archives and archival representations. I have shown how criminal authorities, colonial bureaucrats, archivists, and historians attempt to mitigate the visceral affects of desire in the past by euphemizing, recategorizing, and relegating particular acts to the margins of archival ontologies and historical inquiry. As Jacques Derrida notes, “Archivization produces as much as it records the event,” and in my case study of the archiving of a colonial act of “congress with the dead,” the very act of archivization has the ability to produce a visceral reaction as much as it records one.²⁷ We can imagine, however, radically different affective responses to the types of bodies, desires, emissions, and encounters described and categorized by archivists in the first place.

Whereas an anonymous archivist at Mexico’s Archivo General de la Nación opted to euphemize Lázaro Martínez’s 1810 necrophilic act as one of “profanation of cadaver,” the archivists at UC Berkeley’s Bancroft Library responsible for creating the computer database and catalog entry for the 1775 Inquisition case of Manuel Arroyo—also charged with “unnatural” acts and desires that were not easily classifiable—were more forthcoming in their description.²⁸ In both cases, however, the “‘essentializing’ identifiers” that archivists used are necessarily reductionist. Computer database (or card catalog) entries, as Blouin and Rosenberg note, have necessarily “simplified the complexities of subjects that many documents reflected into a rigid set of subject constructions, reducing the range of descriptive tags.”²⁹ This late eighteenth-century Inquisition case of Arroyo is one of sixty-two Mexican Inquisition cases that the Bancroft Library possesses, amounting to a corpus of archival documents on sexual offenses, witchcraft, superstition, and religious offenses such as the maintenance of Jewish or Lutheran beliefs. The case of Arroyo, however, stands out among these cases, and it was indeed the Bancroft Library catalog entry and classification of the case that piqued my initial interest.³⁰ Located online and in the printed catalog of the Bancroft Library’s Mexican Inquisition holdings, the brief entry reads as follows:

BANC MSS

[Volume 13:1]

Dates:

1775

Place and Name:

Pachuca

Manuel Arroyo

of Leaves/pages:

96

Accusation/Subject:

Counseling that sucking semen from men was not a sin³¹

This database entry centers particularly “unnatural” corporeal acts of consumption—fellatio and the sucking of semen—that the Catholic Church framed within a discourse of animality and unhuman desires, not entirely unlike the criminal court’s rendering of Lázaro Martínez’s act of necrophilia. On the surface, this archival description appears not to implicate any visceral reaction from the archivist in question. On the contrary, we can almost gather a sense of voyeuristic glee or excitement on the part of the archivist responsible for penning the catalog description (“counseling that sucking semen from men was not a sin”)—itself an affective reaction to the textual material in question. The Bancroft Library’s Inquisition trial of Arroyo lacks the customary cover page that precedes most criminal and Inquisition cases in the archive, a fact that compelled the anonymous archivist to read enough of the case to gather the central components and devise a description. The language of this archival description, however, contrasts greatly with that of other archival documents housed in the Archivo General de la Nación in which Manuel Arroyo also makes an appearance for the very same crime.

In contrast to the candid and explicit archival description provided by the Bancroft Library archivist, the colonial scribes and notaries who recorded this case rendered its details in a particularly vague and bureaucratic language. Our point of comparison here is the existence of the two fragmentary summaries of Arroyo’s Inquisition case housed in the Archivo General de la Nación. In one instance, rather than mention the act of fellatio around which the case revolves, colonial scribes and notaries, in the composition of their heading for the summary of the case, refer simply to Arroyo being tried “for having engaged in obscene touches, and defending that they are licit and good” (*por averse ejercitado en tocam[ient]os obscenos, y defender que son licitos y buenos*).³² The second documentary fragment—a publication of the witnesses who testified against Arroyo—is also lacking a title page, but the language of the archival description is equally illustrative. The twentieth-century archivist who classified the case and described it in the national archive’s catalog and database describes the document as follows: “Publication of the witnesses who have testified in the case that, in this [inquisitorial] tribunal, the *fiscal* has pursued against Manuel Arroyo, mestizo or mulatto, about observed acts [*sobre hechos observados*], and having defended them as licit and Christian.”³³

Given that in this instance it is increasingly difficult to parse how spe-

cific affective responses (on the part of archivists) may or may not have influenced archival descriptions, how then is viscosity central to this case? To answer this, I must first trace the particulars of Arroyo's trial and narrative, for it is here that the visceral archives of the body come into being. On July 26, 1775, don Josef Badiola, a priest and missionary in the central Mexican town of Pachuca, denounced to the Inquisition a "damned doctrine" that he had heard about from don Mariano Yturria, a priest and ecclesiastical judge. Badiola told of a heretical belief that "it is not a sin to suck human semen from men with one's mouth for reasons of health . . . and that this act is good to rid them of bad thoughts with women, and to stop them from walking around and sinning with them."³⁴ Given that the primary aim of the Holy Office of the Mexican Inquisition—established in 1569 by royal decree of Philip II of Spain and founded in 1571—was to extirpate errant religious beliefs and police the boundaries of orthodoxy, it is no surprise that the Mexican Inquisition would take an interest in the fate of the person who had uttered such heresies.³⁵ To be clear, the act of fellatio did not constitute heresy. For this reason, the Inquisition did not have jurisdiction over *the act* itself. Unorthodox beliefs about oral sex, on the other hand, could signal other heretical beliefs, all of which fell under the jurisdiction of the Inquisition and of the ecclesiastical courts in New Spain. In this case, it was both the act of fellatio and its accompanying heretical thoughts that generated visceral responses that need to be understood in terms of how events and relations enter the archive.

The notion that sucking semen was not a sin was initially archived through the denunciation of a *mestizo* man in his midtwenties, José Antonio de la Peña, who had confessed his sins to Father Yturria in the local church of Real del Monte. After hearing this confession, the priest told Peña that it was out of his power to absolve him, and he should therefore denounce himself to the Inquisition. Peña complied and testified to inquisitors that approximately one year earlier, while he was working on a nearby hacienda, he befriended a mulatto man named Manuel Arroyo who was jobless, and who began to spend increasing amounts of time at Peña's place of work. The two men became closer, and one day, according to Peña's testimony, seemingly out of nowhere, Arroyo asked if "out of charitableness, he [would] give him a mouthful [*un bocado*]."³⁶ Only later would he find out exactly to what this *bocado* referred. Peña declared that he and Arroyo soon began to share the same bed, sleeping next to each other under the same blanket. Such proximity initiated other types of encounters between the two. One night, Peña told inquisitors, he awoke to the sensation of Arroyo touching his genitals. Peña then related the following to inquisitors:

Arroyo assured him that one night he had also touched his parts but that he just hadn't felt it, and that the reason for doing so was because he knew that this witness [Peña] had a hidden sickness [*una enfermedad oculta*], that only he [Arroyo] would be able to cure, and that he would do this in the charity of God. With this, he [Arroyo] persuaded this witness, and that same night he performed the remedy on him in this manner: shortly after they lied down, he [Arroyo] began to touch and play with his parts with his hands, and in this way his nature was altered [i.e., Peña became physically excited] and the spilling [of semen] began, [and] he Arroyo sucked him with his mouth [*se lo chupó con la boca*], telling him that he did not know the benefit of what he was doing, because he would not have bad thoughts [*malos pensamientos*] nor would he sin with women.³⁷

In the narrative he constructed for inquisitors, Peña went on to say that although Arroyo either played with him or sucked him almost every night for over a year, he himself never felt ill, and he did not know what his "hidden sickness" was. Especially odd, he told inquisitors, was that he had never heard of curing any illness with such oral ministrations, and when questioned by Peña, Arroyo always steadfastly avowed to be doing this "for his health, for his well-being, and for his remedy."³⁸

Despite his professed misgivings, Peña allowed Arroyo to continue administering these nocturnal oral ministrations. The surprisingly explicit details of the case, however, go much farther, implicating us—myself, as the author, alongside the readers of this essay (be they students, scholars, or a more public audience) in *GLQ*—in a chain of visceral reactions and affective responses that can be traced back to the original acts and denunciations that took place in the late eighteenth century. It is here that my own archival affects and visceral responses as researcher and historian came to surprise even me, thereby subsequently informing my selection of texts, my decisions about which quotes to include or omit, and my self-referential analysis of the 1775 document itself. Years ago, as I read through the ninety-six-folio Inquisition case of Manuel Arroyo in the Bancroft Library's reading room, little had prepared me for the mixed-up notions of medicine, intoxicants, sickness, healing, and bodily emissions—semen, and as I show, liquor and pustules—that converged in this particular archival document.

My own shock and surprise at the detailed yet fragmented traces of past bodies and desires as they unfolded in the case, I confess, made the document all the more interesting to me, especially since it challenged my own assumptions about sex in the past and my own engagement, on a personal level, with the docu-

ment itself. It is at this juncture that I was confronted with “raw traces” of the past—that so-called archival offal—that, in the words of Farge, “forces the reader to engage” with the archive, both affectively and intellectually.³⁹ And while the historian or researcher is methodologically trained to engage archival documents with methodological and theoretical rigor, sometimes disgust and desire (among a host of other visceral reactions) can creep up on her or him in surprising ways.

Following the denunciation and imprisonment of Peña, Arroyo was apprehended by authorities and interrogated by the inquisitorial tribunal, as was customary. In the process, Arroyo asserted that initially his own priest and confessor had counseled him to eliminate both sickness and wayward desire through the act of sucking another man. According to Arroyo, his confessor had told him that “although, with the said remedy, he will heal the soul of the witness who is mortally sinning, he would be lacking charity if he did not suck him; and the witness too would be sinning, and he would be a murderer if he didn’t let himself be sucked,” since the impending hidden sickness would eventually result in the death of Peña.⁴⁰ What, however, did these treatments consist of? And why was there the need for such a “remedy” in the first place? Here Arroyo’s testimony differed considerably from Peña’s confession and denunciation. Arroyo stated, for instance, that the first time he touched Peña’s genitals, he saw and immediately recognized that his foreskin was full of pustules (*tenia el capullo lleno de granos*), a fact that, if true, Peña failed to mention to the inquisitors perhaps out of fear, shame, or guilt.⁴¹

Arroyo told inquisitors that he thought Peña had contracted either gonorrhea (*purgación*) or syphilis (*bubas*) from sexual contact with a woman, and Arroyo asserted that he knew how to cure his pustules. Arroyo told inquisitors that the cure took the following form: “having taken a mouthful of camphorated liquor [*aguardiente alcanforado*] and, at the same time, putting the foreskin in his mouth with the aim of cleansing him, and this cleansing was executed some fourteen times.”⁴² Perhaps unsurprisingly, the very idea of sucking a foreskin full of pustules with liquor and medicinal herbs generated a certain feeling of unease and disgust in me as I read the case, as it similarly did for at least one of the reviewers of my article, who declared amid other more formidable comments to me that “this is just so gross on so many levels.” Perhaps it generated similar visceral responses for the eighteenth-century inquisitors who interrogated Arroyo and for the scribes who assiduously recorded the case. During the process of curing his friend, Arroyo also admitted to having touched and fondled his genitals, but he qualified his actions, stating that if Peña told inquisitors that these acts had taken place more frequently, it must have been because he had dreamed about them

taking place with more frequency than the fourteen times he confessed to. Only in November 1775, after spending months in prison, did Arroyo alter his story and confess that he had “cleansed” his friend about thirty times, two of which he had substituted liquor with unspecified medicinal herbs.

In November 1775 Arroyo—described as being of “regular height, brownish skin [*trigueño*], dark eyes, a flat nose not very high up, black hair and wearing a rosary around his neck”—was charged one hundred pesos by the ecclesiastical court to cover the costs of his imprisonment and was moved in shackles from the prison in Pachuca to the secret prisons of the Inquisition outside the city.⁴³ All his goods were confiscated, and Arroyo arrived wearing only his pants, shoes, and a shirt. Here in the secret prisons inquisitors interrogated Arroyo yet again. This time he delved deeper into his own past, thus shedding some more light on why he presumably attributed curative and devotional meanings to the act of fellatio. The pustules (*granos*) and blisters (*ampollitas*) on Peña’s penis were immediately recognizable to Arroyo because he too had suffered a similar sickness and was cured with oral sex by a now-deceased woman named María with whom he was then living. Asserting that she did this with the full advice of a medical doctor, who was also dead, Arroyo told inquisitors that on at least three occasions she extracted semen from him with her hand and brought it to show the doctor to “see if it was damaged.”⁴⁴ Despite the possibility that Arroyo may have genuinely believed that his bodily exchanges were “not contaminated by the sin of lust,” inquisitors were, at least in rhetoric, disgusted by this “medicine so obscene and repugnant to nature.”⁴⁵

This explicit linking of orality, fellatio, and consumption (of semen) in Arroyo’s case drew inquisitors discursively into a space of rhetorical repugnance and obscenity. Throughout Arroyo’s Inquisition trial, bodily consumption—alongside popular and official reactions to it—becomes central to archival processes and archival meaning, for it was the very act of consuming liquor, herbs, and semen that thrust Arroyo and Peña into the bureaucracy of a “paper empire” through which the maintenance of colonial difference and hierarchies in the Spanish empire was acted out.⁴⁶ The types of sex that took place between Arroyo and Peña were understood to be repugnant to nature (and most likely were repugnant to inquisitors themselves) in terms of their deviation from procreation. But what we see further on in this case is that human sexuality is metaphorically attached to animal sexual activity, while that activity, in turn, is interpreted outside the framework of human procreation—in its excesses. Despite the fact that Saint Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century repeatedly stressed that intercourse between males “is contrary to the union of male and female which is natural to all ani-

mals,” here a perversity is discovered that shifts the terms of these identities, evident in the analogy drawn by the inquisitors who declared that the “extremely vile act of sucking the spillage [of semen] is more canine-like than human-like [*mas canina que humana*], and is so shameful that not even among the Roman Gentiles, so full of obscenities, was this seen.”⁴⁷ Inquisitors repeatedly linked Arroyo’s “lasciviousness” and “lust” to his “brutal appetite” and his “most obscene heresies.” Wayward desire, manifested here through the act of fellatio, is tactically embedded in a conceptual framework of the repugnant, the shameful, the heretical, and the animal.

To apply the logic of Mel Y. Chen’s *Animacies*, this is one specific archival instance in which “animality, the ‘stuff’ of animal nature that sometimes sticks to animals, sometimes bleeds back onto textures of humanness.”⁴⁸ For inquisitors, the oral consumption of semen became an act legible only in relation to religious difference and animalistic desire. Perhaps not unlike the sticky and messy conglomeration of liquor, pustules, blisters, and semen, their disgust and desire adhered to archival representations of the case across time. Regarding such “sticky” substances, William Ian Miller cogently notes how particular excreta of the human body—menstrual blood, semen, excrement, vomit, mucus, and the like—have become substances that “have a gravitational attraction that bends social and cognitive structures along their lines of force.”⁴⁹ Such substances, as embedded in particular documentary sources, have the potential to queer (and disorder) classificatory systems of the archive. This is evident merely in the conflicting ways that Spanish priests, colonial notaries, archivists, and historians have struggled with the language and categories to best describe the bodies, desires, secretions, and heretical acts of individuals like Arroyo and Peña.

In reference to the bowels, the genital organs, the mouth, and the anus, Mikhail Bakhtin posits that “all these convexities and orifices have a common characteristic; it is within them that the confines between bodies and between the body and the world are overcome: there is an interchange and an interorientation.”⁵⁰ The act of sucking another’s penis (with rum and medicinal herbs) and the act of being sucked thrust these two men into the archive and into new modes of interchange and interorientation with ecclesiastical authorities, colonial bureaucrats, archivists, and researchers. This case of heretical acts, popular medicine, and religious devotion came to a seeming end when, on February 29, 1776, the Holy Office of the Inquisition proclaimed that the following day Arroyo would be paraded through the streets of the city and subsequently receive two hundred lashes in the public square. Afterward, he was to be banished from the city for ten years, the first three of which he would be forced to labor in a fort, then to

work with rations but without pay at the Castillo de San Juan de Ulúa on Mexico's eastern coast. Lastly, inquisitors mandated that Arroyo confess regularly and pray the rosary throughout the first year of his punishment. Not surprisingly, out of fear of "scandalizing the Christian community," inquisitors made it clear that Arroyo's crimes were *not* to be publicly proclaimed, as was customary, by a town crier. Inquisitors feared above all that any public announcement of such acts might be popularly archived in public memory, thus serving as an impetus for others to engage in similar acts. Ultimately, the case of Manuel Arroyo provides us with a particularly salient visceral archive of the body—one partly mediated by our own affective responses to the text alongside those of historical agents.

Divine Incorporation

The case studies presented here have thus far broached the overlapping consumption of dead bodies and bodily emissions in archival documents: the dead and the secret(ed). What does it mean, however, to open up the body and let someone else in (either voluntarily or involuntarily)? What is at stake in the consumption and incorporation of the other? If we think about consumption as being linked not simply to economic processes of exchange or to acts of digestion, we open up a range of possible meanings whereby consumption becomes, according to one scholar, "a symbolic activity deeply embedded in social relations and cultural conceptions."⁵¹ In addition to being sexual and digestive, as I have shown, consumption can be intimately religious in nature (and eminently affective in relation to the divine/diabolical). Such intimate relations with the divine engendered particular visceral responses among laypersons, many of whom struggled to reconcile religious tenets and personal faith with moments of doubt and skepticism. Here, I turn my attention briefly to the consumption of the divine as staged in a final case study: the 1752 Inquisition trial of an eighteen-year-old Spanish woman, Ana María de Leyba, who voluntarily denounced herself to a priest for various sins including diabolical pacts, sex with the Devil, and lascivious acts with holy images.

In the central Mexican town of Zinguilucan, María de Leyba voluntarily confessed her sins to a priest, who in turn denounced her to the Inquisition. Among the many sins that she confessed to her priest (and eventually to the inquisitors who interrogated her) was that for two years, some seven times, she had engaged in sexual relations with the Devil, who in each case had temporarily adopted the form of a man.⁵² María de Leyba went on to confess how "for about one year, she frequently had lewd contact with an image of the Virgin Mary. Furthermore, on these occasions, she would first have [carnal] access with beasts, and would then

come up to the image and attempt to get that very animal to have [carnal] access with the image.”⁵³ She confessed to similarly eroticized interactions with images of the saints, images of the baby Jesus, and, on three occasions, images of Jesus as an adult. To make matters worse in the eyes of inquisitors, María de Leyba confessed that on three occasions she told the Devil “from her heart that she did not believe in God” (*dixo de corazon que no creiya en dios*), though she asserted that she later regretted this.

In terms of literal consumption, María de Leyba enacted a particularly unique resignification of the Holy Eucharist, amounting to a partial reversal of the incorporation of the divine through digestion. In recounting her sins to inquisitors, María de Leyba briefly mentioned that one day she went to receive communion in church; however, instead of swallowing the Eucharist as she should have, she waited until she left the church and spit out the Host to give the partially digested body of Christ to an indigenous woman, Teresa López, who had requested it. Accordingly, López “tore it into bits and mixed the pieces [of Eucharist] with some herbs, and said that the virtue of that mixture was to provoke men to obscene acts” (*esta la despedazó, y las particulas mescló con unas yervas, y dixo que la virtud que aquel compuesto tenia era provocar a los hombres a cosas obscenas*).⁵⁴ Teresa López then added the herbal mixture of Leyba’s expelled Eucharist into the food, drink, and clothing of the men whom she wanted to inflame with passion. The passing (and partial incorporation) of the body of Christ between mouths and hands demonstrates the multiple ways and myriad ends to which the divine could be consumed.

Embodying yet another mode of divine incorporation, María de Leyba told inquisitors, almost as an afterthought, that once she had improper physical contact with the Eucharist: “and on another occasion she had impure acts of touching with the same Consecrated Host” (*y en otra ocasion tuvo tocamientos impuros con la mesma forma consagrada*). Although María de Leyba is vague here, her careful choice of words implied that she masturbated with the Eucharist, and in doing so corporeally consumed the body of Christ in a way that directly challenged Catholic orthodoxy. It is perhaps no coincidence that contemporary midwives and physicians occasionally referred to the vagina as “the mouth of the mother” (*la boca de la madre*), and in this sense María de Leyba improperly (and partially) incorporated the divine body of Christ through both of her “mouths,” never to be fully consumed, digested, or taken in.

At this point, we might question the reasons behind María de Leyba’s decision to open herself up to priests and inquisitors. The answer, I propose, has to

do with the visceral nature of the conflicted emotions and desires that she experienced. Despite the fact that she did not delve explicitly into her reasons for confessing to her priest in the first place, her narrative is teeming with conflicted affective responses, and the visceral seeps through the archival manuscript. María de Leyba's carefully crafted narrative is seeded with viscerality—from the erotic charges that she experienced with the Devil, holy images, and the body of Christ to the anger and mistrust she directed toward the divine. She herself repeatedly mentions the regret that she experienced after uttering particular statements or going through with certain deeds, such as violently hurling sacred images of the saints to the ground and spitting on them when they did not grant what she had prayed for.

Perhaps, however, the most visceral emotion she experienced was what drove her to expose her inner thoughts to her priest in the first place: an unshakable feeling of guilt. Given the compulsion María de Leyba felt to confess her sins to her priest, we gain a sense of how guilt in a Catholic context codes an affective (if somewhat tortured) relationship with God, Jesus, the Virgin Mary, and the priest. According to Brian Massumi, “The felt quality of guilt has its own affective ambience, which can transmute into a number of specific emotions: hatred, resentment, disgust, distrust.”⁵⁵ Indeed, it appears that the guilt María de Leyba experienced manifested itself through several interconnected emotions, including those discussed above, that she felt at both a corporeal and an emotional level. Raised in a convent between the ages of three and thirteen, María de Leyba told her inquisitors that her “perdition” (*perdición*) began when she vacated the convent and moved into her father's house at the age of fourteen. This is when she began to experience the emotions of guilt and regret that led her to denounce herself, thereby unknowingly committing her story to the archival record. María de Leyba's sense of guilt—or, more specifically, her demonstration of contrition—is what, in the end, spared her from being punished harshly by the Inquisition.

Although, during her trial, one priest declared María de Leyba to be indisputably “possessed by the Devil,” the other priests who assessed her took a more sanguine view of her “sicknesses of spirit and of body.” The majority declared to have discovered within her “a genuine contrition and a sincere intent to rectify her life.”⁵⁶ As a consequence, and no doubt because María de Leyba demonstrated to inquisitors that her contrition was “genuine” and “sincere,” the Inquisition absolved her of her sins with an unspecified act of penance “that corresponds to her weak constitution” (*penitencia que conforme a sus pocas fuerzas*). In the end, María de Leyba's literal and figurative consumption and rejection of the divine

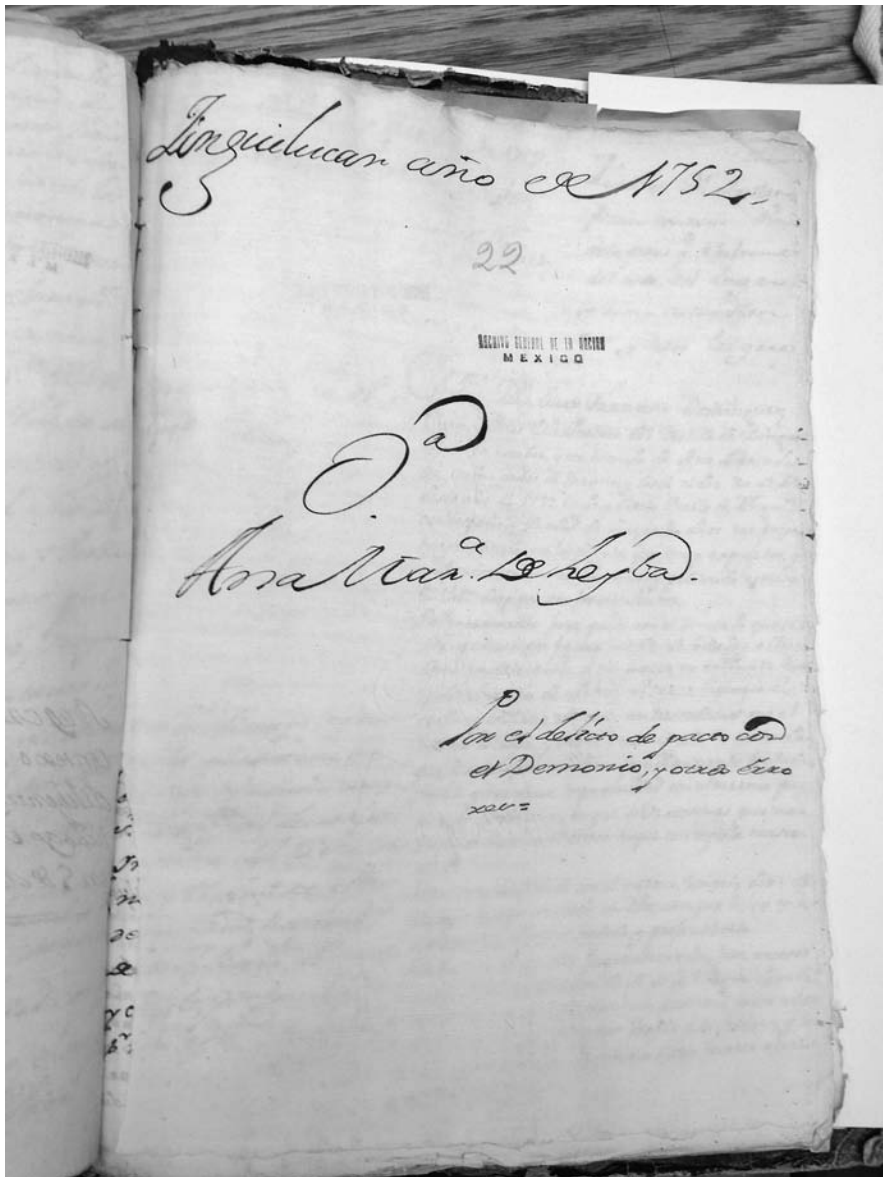


Figure 2. "Against Ana Mariá de Leyba. For the crime of pact with the Devil and other errors." Archivo General de la Nación (México), Inquisición 981, exp. 22

(and the diabolical) were embodied corporeally, affectively, and viscerally. This case points to one individual whose erotic reconfigurings of holy personae and sacred images were both the result of a desire for divine love and recognition as well as of a particular mental state, intimately connected to doubt, anger, and despair. It was the visceral nature of María de Leyba's guilt—inextricable from her desire, doubt, anger, and despair—that led her to confess her sins to a local priest, and eventually to come to be archived.

By working within and reading through the archive, we gain a more nuanced sense of how such embodied acts of religiosity and irreligiosity came to be recorded and documented through affect. The eighteenth-century cover page that introduces María de Leyba's 1752 Inquisition case only vaguely refers to these and other sins committed by María de Leyba, pointing to how archives and their documents have come to be assembled, partly by providing basic record information including name, place, date, and crime. The title page in this case reads simply: "Against Ana María de Leyba. For the crime of pact with the Devil, and other errors" (*C[ontr]a Ana Mar[í]a de Leyba. Por el delicto de pacto con el Demonio, y otros errores*).⁵⁷ The case, not unlike those of Lázaro Martínez and of Manuel Arroyo, is found within the classified files of colonial criminal and ecclesiastical authorities, which assemble a fascinating diversity of criminal acts and heretical thoughts—occasionally unclassifiable "other errors" in the lexicon of archival description. Here, archival conventions of describing the contents of Inquisition cases revolve around definitions of heresy, and, in this way, archival finding aids "serve to create (or occlude) conceptual categories that inscribe significance and meaning, and hence condition the ways the pasts they evidence are understood."⁵⁸ As such, visceral archives of the body come into historicity through the very acts of documenting and inscribing archival significance.

Affective Archival Engagements

Where, then, does all this leave us in terms of the links between consumption, archival affects, and viscosity? I want to conclude by asserting that textuality, consumption, and classification are intimately tied to colonialism and to colonial relations of power: paper documents (and the very act of writing) lie at the heart of colonial rule, and consumption—especially if we turn to the Latin word for digestion, *digere*—centers on the need to "separate, sort out, order or classify" textually and archivally.⁵⁹ If we allow consumption to do its full work, partly by subjecting the exposed bodies and bodily secretions of the archives to the varied

modes through which they may be consumed, we find that consumption becomes a mode of knowing the other with *and through* the sensory organs—the eyes, the ears, the nose, the skin, the genitals, and the guts. Consumption as a symbolic act is as much about ordering, classifying, and knowing as it is about economic exchange, digestion, or literal incorporation. This essay has focused on a handful of corporeal acts and desires—practices and rituals performed and consumed by human bodies—that largely fell outside the more easily classifiable sins and crimes of sodomy, bestiality, masturbation, adultery, incest, bigamy, and the like. In tracing the links between documentation and embodiment, I have articulated how visceral archives of the body come into archival being (and thus into historicity) through chains of consumption that elicited visceral responses—gut feelings—on the part of suspects, witnesses, colonial authorities, scribes, archivists, historians, and even the intended audiences of historiographical pieces such as this essay.

This essay has taken seriously calls by Ann Stoler, Nicholas Dirks, and others who have emphasized the importance of taking ethnographic approaches to the colonial archive.⁶⁰ As Stoler notes, “Ethnography in and of the colonial archives attends to processes of production, relations of power in which archives are created, sequestered, and rearranged.”⁶¹ The methodology of affectively (and ethnographically) engaging the colonial archives of New Spain and their systems of classification that I have elaborated in this essay does queer methodological and theoretical work on multiple levels—at the connections between past and present, the murky categorizations of desire, the acts described within the documentation, and the affects involved. Sexuality certainly enters the archive in a contingent and highly charged relationship with consumption and affective formations. Such affective encounters with archives (and with archivable bodies) cross temporal and historical boundaries, amounting to, in the words of Freeman, a “visceral encounter between past and present figured as a tactile meeting, as a finger that in the stitching, both touches and is touched, and that in reading, pokes and caresses the holes in the archival text even as it sutures them.”⁶² Admittedly, without access to the logic behind some archivists’ decisions to rename, reorder, and reclassify, we cannot know exactly what the archivists’ visceral responses to the archival documentation are (or were) actually constituted by. Nonetheless such visceral connections between past and present, archived and archiver—enabled by the archival document itself as “a tear in the fabric of time, an unplanned glimpse into an unexpected event”—amount to the type of haptic encounters and cross-temporal affective formations that can propel queer historiography.⁶³

As stated at the outset of this essay, visceral reactions often involve sensa-

tions of disgust. Sara Ahmed tells us that “disgust is clearly dependent on contact: it involves a relationship of touch and proximity between the surfaces of bodies and objects.”⁶⁴ Yet who or what comes into contact and touches one another in (auto)ethnographic archival moments? It may be the case that the disgust of previous generations (of witnesses, scribes, criminal and ecclesiastical authorities, etc.) becomes a key affective clue that can guide or obstruct our own archival work. Yet the explicit details of these cases clearly hold the potential to both seduce *and* disgust particular readers (and producers) of the original archival document or the historiographical writing in question. If we reformulate William Ian Miller’s theorization of an idiom of disgust as one that purposefully links the visceral to the archival, we see how an *archival* idiom of disgust “consistently invokes the sensory experience of what it feels like to be put in danger by the disgusting, of what it feels like to be too close to it, to have to smell it, see it, or touch it.”⁶⁵ Such archival proximity gets at the anxieties surrounding the knowledge of, interaction with, and potential incorporation of the historical other. The three colonial criminal and Inquisition cases I discuss here are intriguing partly because they confound archival categories of description in ways that confirm Farge’s assertion that “the archives bring forward details that disabuse, derail, and straightforwardly break any hope of linearity or positivism.”⁶⁶ In a sense, my decision to focus on these particular cases represents the chaotic, random, and discontinuous nature—the queer nature—of the colonial archive. By working through complex affective archival engagements, we are afforded a mere glimpse at the affective and erotic chains that structure and confuse the taxonomizing impulses of the archive itself.

The cases of necrophilia, fellatio, and sex with the Devil, holy images, and the Eucharist all present the colonial archive as a space that, in some regards, queers its own conventions. A quick glance at some of the principal terms used to refer to the “sins against nature” in Mexico’s national archive—*sodomía* (sodomy), *somético* (sodomitical), *pecado nefando* (nefarious sin), *contra natura* (against nature), and the like—shows how archive finding aids fall short in intimating the complexity of desire in the past. None of the cases discussed here were located using traditional methods of key word entry into catalogs and databases. Instead, these cases came to me often by chance, and each in its own way pushed my own thinking about the representation and categorization of desire in the past and in the present. The bodies, desires, and secretions represented in these three criminal and Inquisition cases—be it the “carnal mixing” with a dead woman, the “canine-like” sucking of semen, or desiring the divine alongside “other errors”—do not comply with the standard official and notarial terminol-

ogy of the archive despite the fact that they are replete with desires that secular and ecclesiastical authorities deemed “against nature.” This sample of colonial Mexican cases represents acts and desires that tend to be queerer, less legible, and more historiographically marginalized—for colonial notaries and scribes as well as for present-day archivists and historians—than other types of criminalized sexuality in the past.

The editors of this issue of *GLQ* have called attention to the “ways of bodily being obscured either by colonialist historiography or by the entrenched politics of the present.”⁶⁷ In thinking historically about these obscured ways of bodily being, we must insert the archival into this formulation. Carla Freccero, speaking of early/modern queer textuality, asserts that “*queer* continues to exploit its productive indeterminacy as a word used to designate that which is odd, strange, aslant; in this respect, I will argue that all textuality, when subjected to close reading, can be said to be queer.”⁶⁸ It is in this sense (and in the sense of acknowledging that some desires are resistant to archival classification) that all archives, especially when subjected to close ethnographic readings “along the archival grain,” can be said to be queer.⁶⁹ Archives and archival documents represent the queer slippages between experience and testimony, spoken words and handwritten text, popular terminology and colonial bureaucratized, archival document and database entry, archive and historiography.

The colonial Mexican criminal and Inquisition cases that I have discussed here offer us a window into Blouin and Rosenberg’s claim that “the processes of formation of an archive, whether its documentation is in paper or in digital form, produce and reproduce their own conceptualizations, as well as those of the institutions that it supports and is supported by, reifying the categories through which its materials are identified.”⁷⁰ Perhaps not unlike Ignacia Gómez and her friend, who unwittingly stumbled on a scene of necrophilia that shocked and disgusted them, historians and archivists constantly come into contact with archival references and documentation that elicits *some* visceral response. In ignoring this, however, they unwittingly relegate such representations of bodies and desire to the margins of archival ontology and historical inquiry. Viscerality—though never named as such in the archival documentation—is one such category produced and reproduced through the archive’s own modes of categorization and conceptualization. Affective archival engagements, and the visceral responses they engender, initiate queer modes (and desires) of archival being and of historicity.

Notes

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1. Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 123.
2. David Hillman, "Visceral Knowledge: Shakespeare, Skepticism, and the Interior of the Early Modern Body," in *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe*, ed. David Hillman and Carla Mazzio (New York: Routledge, 1997), 96.
3. Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 83.
4. Arlette Farge, *The Allure of the Archives* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 6.
5. Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 19.
6. Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*, 33.
7. Farge, *Allure of the Archives*, 8. Thomas Scott-Railton, the translator of Farge's text, notes that "the French word *source* can refer to either sources of information or natural springs of water" (131).
8. Cristian Berco, *Sexual Hierarchies, Public Status: Men, Sodomy, and Society in Spain's Golden Age* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 3.
9. Carolyn Steedman, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 17.
10. Steedman, *Dust*, 27.
11. Steedman, *Dust*, 27.
12. Peter M. McLellan and Gordon P. Baker, "Incidence of Allergy in Archival Work," *American Archivist* 28, no. 4 (1965): 581–84.

13. Steedman, *Dust*, 18.
14. Freeman, *Time Binds*, xi.
15. Freeman, *Time Binds*, xii.
16. Freeman, *Time Binds*, xi.
17. Hillman, "Visceral Knowledge," 94.
18. www.agn.gob.mx/guiageneral/.
19. Francis X. Blouin Jr. and William G. Rosenberg, *Processing the Past: Contesting Authority in History and the Archives* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 34.
20. Archivo General de la Nación, Criminal 705, exp. 24, fol. 242 (hereafter cited as AGN): "lo encontraron dos mugeres en el campo santo de San Juan de Dios sobre una muerta a quien estaba fornicando que esto lo hiso porque se lo aconsejó Miguel el moso del Padre Lastra sacristan del mismo conbento a quien por dos ocasiones vio que se encerró en el campo santo y le dijo que iba a fornicar a las muertas, porque alli estaba enterrada su amasia que habia muerta preñada en el proprio hospital que dicho Miguel le aconsejó tambien que le hiciera un agujero en las enaguas a la difunta para poderla fornicar."
21. Lisa Downing, *Desiring the Dead: Necrophilia and Nineteenth-Century French Literature* (Oxford: European Humanities Research Centre at the University of Oxford, 2003), 2.
22. Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York: Routledge, 1966), 9.
23. AGN, Criminal 705, exp. 24, fol. 247: "un echo tan escandaloso, y horrible repugnante a la misma naturaleza y aun hasta los brutos."
24. Javier Sanjinés C., *Mestizaje Upside-Down: Aesthetic Politics in Modern Bolivia* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004), 5.
25. Ahmed, *Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 94.
26. Blouin and Rosenberg, *Processing the Past*, 5.
27. Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 17.
28. Not to be overlooked here is the fact that, unlike in the criminal case of Lázaro Martínez, the Holy Office of the Inquisition—the highest ecclesiastical court in New Spain—tried Manuel Arroyo in an attempt to uncover his heretical thoughts and blasphemous statements. Rather than punish the actual act of sodomy, which was the job of the secular criminal courts in New Spain, the Inquisition focused on the thoughts surrounding the act rather than the act itself.
29. Blouin and Rosenberg, *Processing the Past*, 55.
30. There is one other outlier among the Bancroft Library's holdings of Mexican Inquisition documents—the 1621 trial of Agustina Ruiz for (according to the online catalog) "claiming sexual intercourse with the saints." While I could just as easily have used this case to demonstrate the role of affect and visceral reactions in the process of archivization, I have already explicated this case at length. See Zeb Tortorici, "Mas-

- turbation, Salvation, and Desire: Connecting Sexuality and Religiosity in Colonial Mexico,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 16, no. 3 (2007): 355–72.
31. This entry is also recorded online, in slightly different format, at bancroft.berkeley.edu/collections/latinamericana/inquisitionsurvey.html.
 32. AGN, Inquisición 1167, exp. 6, fols. 76–79: “RELACION DE LA CAUSA SEGUIDA CONTRA MANUEL ARROYO, NATURAL DE PACHUCA, DE ESTADO SOLT-ERO, OPERARIO DE MINAS, MAYOR DE EDAD. POR HABERSE EJERCITADO EN TACTOS OBSCENOS, Y DEFENDER QUE SON LICITOS Y BUENOS. MEX-ICO” (www.agn.gob.mx/guiageneral/).
 33. See also AGN, Inquisición 1179, exp. 30, fols. 287–89: “PUBLICACION DE LOS TESTIGOS QUE HAN DEPUESTO EN LA CAUSA QUE EN ESTE TRIBU-NAL SIGUE EL SEÑOR FISCAL, CONTRA MANUEL ARROYO, MESTIZO O MULATO, SOBRE HECHOS OBSERVADOS, Y HABER DEFENDIDO SER LICIT-OS Y CRISTIANOS. MEXICO” (www.agn.gob.mx/guiageneral/).
 34. BANC MSS 96/95m, 13:1 (1775), fol. 5: “no es pecado chuparle con la voca a los hombres el semen humano por razon de la salud . . . y que es buena esta obra para quitarse de los malos pensamientos con las mugeres, y para quitarse de andar pecando con ellas . . . [y] que es pecado no dejarse chupar el semen.”
 35. The history and establishment of the Inquisition in Mexico is of course more complex and must be discussed in conjunction with the earlier Spanish Inquisition. While the Spanish Inquisition did not come into existence until 1478, the institution goes back much farther in history. In the fifteenth century the Holy Office of the Inquisi-tion was conceived of as an important political tool that would aid the Catholic mon-archs Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile in their political unification of the Iberian kingdoms. Eventually, Spain boasted sixteen tribunals. In contrast, the Spanish overseas possessions—though geographically vastly larger than the Ibe-rian Peninsula—had only three tribunals: in Mexico City, Lima, and Cartagena. See Richard Greenleaf, *The Mexican Inquisition of the Sixteenth Century* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1969); and Solange Alberro, *Inquisición y sociedad en México, 1571–1700* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1988).
 36. BANC MSS 96/95m, 13:1 (1775), fol. 7: “que por caridad le daba un bocado.”
 37. BANC MSS 96/95m, 13:1 (1775), fol. 7: “le aseguró q[ue] una noche le havia tocado tambien sus partes pero que no lo havia sentido, y q[ue] la causa de hazerlo era porque conocia q este declarante tenia una enfermedad oculta, q[ue] solo él se le havia de curar, e que esto lo haria en caridad de Dios: que con esto persuadio al q[ue] declara, y aquella misma noche le hizo el remedio de esta suerte: luego q[ue] se acostaron empezó a tocarle y jugarle las partes con las manos y asi q[ue] se alteró la naturaleza, y comenzó el derramamiento, se lo chupó con la boca y diciendole que no sabia el beneficio q[ue] con ello le hacia, porque no pensaria en malos pensamientos, ni pecaria con las mugeres.”
 38. BANC MSS 96/95m, 13:1 (1775), fol. 7.

39. Farge, *Allure of the Archives*, 7.
40. AGN, Inquisición 1167, exp. 6, fol. 77: “aunq[ue] sanara con dho remedio la alma del test[ig]o que pecaba mortalm[en]te q faltaba a la caridade, si no lo chupaba; y que tambien el test[ig]o pecaba, y era un homicida si no se dejaria chupar.”
41. BANC MSS 96/95m, 13:1 (1775), fol. 16.
42. BANC MSS 96/95m, 13:1 (1775), fol. 16: “con aguardiente alcanforado tomado una bocarada de el y al mismo tiempo meterse el capullo en la boca con el fin de labarselo y este laboratorio estuvo executado lo unas catorze vezes.” Camphor is a whitish, translucent, crystalline, pleasant-odored substance obtained from the camphor tree, used chiefly in medicine as a counterirritant for infections and in the treatment of pain and itching.
43. BANC MSS 96/95m, 13:1 (1775), fol. 35.
44. BANC MSS 96/95m, 13:1 (1775), fol. 37.
45. BANC MSS 96/95m, 13:1 (1775), fol. 45.
46. Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire* (New York: Verso, 1993), 4.
47. Aquinas, quoted in John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 328; BANC MSS 96/95m, 13:1, fol. 19.
48. Mel Y. Chen, *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 89.
49. William Ian Miller, *The Anatomy of Disgust* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 44.
50. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 317.
51. Michael Dietler, *Archaeologies of Colonialism: Consumption, Entanglement, and Violence in Ancient Mediterranean France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).
52. AGN, Inquisición 981, exp. 22, fols. 327–46. I am grateful to Jacqueline Holler for alerting me to the existence of this case.
53. AGN, Inquisición 981, exp. 22, fol. 327: “por tiempo de un año frequentemente tuve accesos torpes con una imagen de N.S. la Virgen Maria es a saber que en estas ocasiones primero tenia estos accesos con bestias, y despues llegaba a la imagen, y tambien procuraba que la mesma bestia tuviese acceso a la imagen.”
54. AGN, Inquisición 981, exp. 22, fol. 327v.
55. Brian Massumi, “The Future Birth of the Affective Fact,” in *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed. Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 67.
56. AGN, Inquisición 981, exp. 22, fol. 332: “una verdadera contricion y serio animo de emmendar su vida.”
57. AGN, Inquisición 981, exp. 22, fol. 327.

58. Blouin and Rosenberg, *Processing the Past*, 121.
59. Michel Jeanneret, *A Feast of Words: Banquets and Table Talk in the Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 136.
60. See Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*; Nicholas B. Dirks, "Annals of the Archive: Ethnographic Notes on the Sources of History," in *From the Margins: Historical Anthropology and Its Futures*, ed. Brian Keith Axel (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002); and Durba Ghosh, "National Narratives and the Politics of Miscegenation: Britain and India," in *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History*, ed. Antoinette Burton (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).
61. Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*, 32.
62. Freeman, *Time Binds*, 110.
63. Farge, *Allure of the Archives*, 6.
64. Ahmed, *Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 85.
65. Miller, *Anatomy of Disgust*, 9.
66. Farge, *Allure of the Archives*, 42.
67. onthevisceral.tumblr.com/.
68. Carla Freccero, *Queer/Early/Modern* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 5.
69. Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*.
70. Blouin and Rosenberg, *Processing the Past*, 123.