

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
RIVERSIDE

“Freaking” the Archive: Archiving Possibilities With the Victorian Freak Show

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

English

by

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September 2017

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation has received funding through University of California Riverside's Dissertation Year Fellowship and the University of California's Humanities Research Institute's Dissertation Support Grant. Thank you to the following collections for use of their materials: the Wellcome Library (University College London), Special Collections and University Archives (University of California, Riverside), James C. Hormel LGBTQIA Center (San Francisco Public Library), National Portrait Gallery (London), Houghton Library (Harvard College Library), Montana Historical Society, and Evanion Collection (the British Library.)

Thank you to all the members of my dissertation committee for your willingness to work on a project that initially described itself “freakish.” Dr. Hernández, thanks for your energy and sharp critical eye—and for working with a Victorianist! Dr. Zieger, thanks for your keen intellect, unflappable demeanor, and ready support every step of the process. Not least, thanks to my chair, Dr. Childers, for always pushing me to think and write creatively; if it weren't for you and your Dickens seminar, this dissertation probably wouldn't exist. Lastly, thank you to Bartola and Maximo, Flora and Martinus, Lalloo and Lala, and Eugen for being demanding and lively subjects. I truly enjoyed writing with all of you. You're the real stars of this dissertation.

To my family and friends (feel free to group yourself accordingly) thanks for your patience, understanding, and good humor; and very special thanks to my mom and dad for passing down their love of word games and weird history. To Lord Windsor Coffee, thanks for keeping me caffeinated and alert; to too many breweries to name, thanks for

keeping me hydrated and mellow. To my best pup, Reggie, thanks for being a steadfast writing companion, even when you just wanted to play with your tuggie; I'm turning off the computer soon, I promise. And lastly, to my best dude, Greg, you know that I'm not good with sentimental words. So, thank you for being the best running, hiking, backpacking, complaining, and beer-drinking life partner ever—I could not have accomplished any of this without you. And now that I'm done, there will be snacks.

For Greg and Reggie

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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by

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Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in English
University of California, Riverside, September 2017
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My doctoral dissertation, “‘Freaking’ the Archive: Archiving Possibilities with the Victorian Freak Show,” proposes an archival research practice grounded in the nineteenth-century freak show’s peculiar conventions. Freak bodies are perplexing and material: hairy, leggy, squishy, rubbery, even electric. Freak bodies are also perplexing materials: forged autobiographies, grangerized travelogues, reported gossip. Through their taxonomizing imperatives, archives subdue these difficult bodies, but also risk stifling their lively histories. My “freak” archival research practice confronts this problem by generating new methods for accessing subjects underrepresented in the historical record through traditional research models. Anchored in case studies of Victorian freak performers and their contemporary performance art progeny, “‘Freaking’ the Archive” splits into three sections titled “The Archive,” “Archives,” and “Archiving,” which progress from broadly theoretical to increasingly practice based. I contend that freaks overhaul the normative orders of archival systems by breeding forms of documentation that simultaneously activate the freak show’s interlocking textual, visual, aural, and

performed narratives, requiring us to push beyond our inherited visual-empirical research methods. Broadening the archive's communicative capacities changes the goals of archival research. No longer concentrated on assembling stable bodies of knowledge, archival work becomes an experiment in provisionality committed to imagining more inclusive research practices.

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Introduction: The Official Program of Wonders

i. Human Freaks! Positively Alive! Blockhead and Spider Girl!

My dissertation ends where many probably have before, in a bar with a pint of beer. Unlike normal endings, this one was so curious it defied all explanation... so bizarre it needed to be seen to be believed. It featured the Merchant of Madness, the Freak, the genuine, living Human Blockhead—Lucky John!

On a lazy Saturday morning in July, my sleepy beach town's brewery vanished, swept up by a tidal wave of the carnivalesque. Balloon animals, acrobats, fizzy beer, and salty snacks had conjured the local watering hole into a three-ring circus just waiting for its ringmaster. But, move over Barnum and move over Bailey because this time the sideshow was taking center stage. Unassuming in all black, Lucky John stood perched on the bar top spurred by lusty chants of "Freak! Freak! Freak!" Although, if you took a look around you would be hard-pressed to figure out who exactly the "freak" was. The haberdashery skills of the Balloon Guy had transformed the room into the World's Most Amazing Cavalcade of Human-Ponies, Human-Platypuses, Human-Beer Cans, Human-Spiders, and a bevy of Real Live Authentic Mermaids. As Lucky John rolled out his spiel—The rarities of true Blockheads! Generations of secrets on display!— the raucous beer-freaks began to drink up his words almost as quickly as their suds. After much ballyhoo, Lucky John stood poised nail-to-nose and hammer-to-nail, ready to really drive the whole thing home. His hammer tilted up, a shout of "Oh God!" pealed out, and then! Nothing. An anxious but relieved titter rippled across the bar. Then, his hammer tilted up again, and... *poundpoundpoundpound*. In four taps so swift they were nearly

indiscernible by the naked eye, Lucky John impaled his nostrils with genuine steel nails. The amazed crowd flooded the bar with laughter, hoots, and howls. Lucky John nailed it.

For a form of entertainment seemingly so entrenched in the past, freak shows are still a lively part of our cultural landscape. A dive bar-bingo parlor on the outskirts of Santa Maria, California advertises “Freak Show Fridays” on its burnt-out sign. Tinkertown, a museum of miniature sideshow dioramas made of recyclable materials, is tucked away in the mountains north of Albuquerque, New Mexico. The former headquarters of the Ringling Brother’s Circus in Baraboo, Wisconsin is now home to Circus World, a museum, archives, and theme park complex. Rumors persist of a New Jersey relative of Charles Eisenmann, freak show photographer extraordinaire, whose home is a private freakatorium filled with the personal effects of many freak performers, which is only open to just the right people. Due north, Syracuse University boasts of the Ronald G. Becker Charles Eisenmann Collection, a stunning body of freak photographs. A pilgrimage across the Atlantic Ocean yields Oxford University’s famed Bodleian Library, featuring the extensive John Johnson Collection of “Human Freaks.” And, if nothing will satiate you except some slice-of-life Americana, then Gibsonton (“Gibtown”), Florida is a must. “Gibtown” is the former winter home of freak performers and circus folk whose oral stories and photographs have since been digitized by the University of South Florida library. From an outsider’s perspective, the only freak show items remaining in Gibtown are rusty circus equipment and some nasty gossip about the tempestuous relationship between the Lobster Boy (Grady Stiles) and the Electrified Girl (Mary Teresa.) But if you make a stop at the local carny watering hole, Showtown

Restaurant and Lounge, you will see many generations of freak show and carnival culture still alive, well, and enjoying the lounge's famous Pineapple Upside Down Cake shots.¹

Attempts to document and preserve freakery cut across institutional and vernacular archival spaces and practices. For an institution we are eager to place firmly in the past, the freak show manages to keep appearing in ways both anticipated and surprising. But maybe it is this anxiety about freakery as an exploitative, outdated entertainment that inspires such vigorous attempts to collect and recollect. After all, when we archive something we consign it to the past, making it part of a containable narrative of and within history both materially and ideationally. The archival availability of freak show materials has supported academic studies of “freak” cultures. However, this “freak” finds itself enmeshed in critical maneuvers that transform these flesh-and-blood bodies into metaphorical concepts, further separate freak histories from our present. The “freak” has dissipated into an allegorical figure for wrestling with the nineteenth-century history of body, national, and global politics. While useful frameworks, these critical recuperations reduce the freak to a recognizable yet elusive term that only nominally touches on materiality, much less the ways that it endures up through out contemporary moment. Freak bodies are perplexingly material: fleshy, bony, sinewy, hairy, leggy, squishy. Freak bodies are also perplexing materials: fictional autobiographies, grangerized travelogues, counterfeit medical records, and reported

¹ On the other hand, a trip to Giant's Camp Restaurant (named after Al Tomaini, “The World's Tallest Man” and Gibsonton's first fire chief) shows the locals to be not so chatty. Comprised of actively working “carnies,” the clientele at Giant's Camp is notoriously close-lipped in the face of snooping visitors.

gossip. We tend to think of archives as reflections of the self, which helps tame these freaks of the past by enfolding them into the story of how our regional, national, and global identities have been formed. Specifically, through its taxonomizing, ordering, and narrating imperatives, modern archival theory subdues these unruly freak bodies, but doing so risks stifling their lively histories. *Freaking the Archive* advances the opposite: archives are actually our “others,” and their documents initiate radical encounters with difference that only pass as constructions of the cultural self through the discursive history of modern archival management. To address how we may navigate ethical encounters with otherness, my dissertation works at the material intersections of freak show and archiving cultures to mobilize a more dynamic awareness of how archives continuously preserve, produce, and re-enliven the histories of underrepresented nineteenth-century subjects in unexpected ways.

The British Empire was an empire of information, as nineteenth-century archival theory and practice enabled models of knowledge dedicated to normalizing relationships among embodiment, space, and time. Even though they did not accord with the documentary and corporeal bodies of freak performers, these normative fantasies have since provided the foundational rhetorical logic for how the type of archives-based research underpinning critical studies of freakery is theorized and executed. In other words, our notions of what archives are and how they work are based on normative and normalizing orders of knowledge that inform every step of the archival research process in theoretical, rhetorical, and methodological ways. However, no study has yet attended to how archives actively inflect the historical and current understandings of freakery we

undertake to explicate and analyze. I address this blind spot by proposing a critical practice of archival research—a freak archival methodology—that I call “freaking” the archive. “Freaking” the archive looks to freakery’s various sites of archival inscription to reveal and disrupt the colonialist, sexist, and ableist orders of knowledge that implicitly structure the rhetorical, informatics, and representational systems of archives, as well as guide acts of historical transmission. This dissertation does not simply focus on the narrative production of freak histories through primary source materials, but rather elaborates on how archives, historically and currently, both promote and foreclose the viability of certain representations and receptions of freak histories. To this end, I perform ethnographies of archives in their theoretical, material, and digital forms, working within existing archival systems in order to coax out their typically elided points of resistance that in turn inspire alternative methods of archival research that are responsive to the materials that they enlist. Because freakery proves itself to be preoccupied with its own history of production, I bring together nineteenth-century freak performers, and contemporary performance and visual arts drawing from the Victorian freak tradition. In tracing the persistence of the freak across time, space, and context, “freaking” the archive demonstrates how freaks, far from passive objects of study, come to breed their own forms of documentation and knowledge making practices that expand our understandings of what archives can and should do. In revising theoretical and practical definitions of archives, “freaking” the archive changes the goals of archival research more broadly: no longer built on concretion of completion, archival work is undertaken as an extended exercise in possibility and provisionality to investigate how

archives actively form and organize bodies of knowledge. Archives are not simply unchanging repositories of facts at the researcher's disposal, but rather dynamics sites of renegotiation capable of envisioning and materializing new methods for accessing subjects underrepresented in the historical record through traditional research models.

ii. "Jo-Jo, the Dog-Faced Russian Boy": the History of the Freak Show

For "Jo-Jo," freakery was genetic. If his life story pamphlet is to be believed he was the son of the "Siberian Dog Man," Adrien Jeftichew who took Paris by storm in 1873. Not to be outdone by his father, "Jo-Jo" embarked on a very successful U.S. career helmed by Phineas Taylor Barnum. To transform the hypertrichotic into a human-dog mutt, Barnum launched a multimedia assault that culminated in a live medical inspection of "Jo-Jo" at Madison Square Garden in which "the Human Skye Terrier" was crowned "the most wonderful and inexplicable mystery of life."²

² "Jo-Jo," *Bismarck Daily Tribune*, August 12 1887.

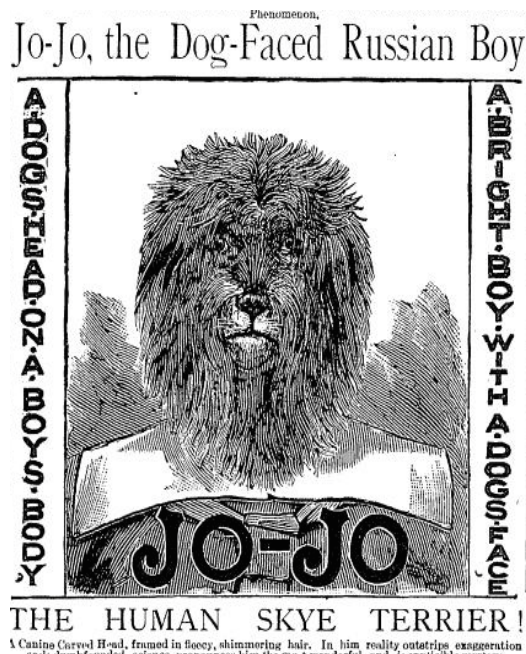


Fig. 1 Ink illustration of “Jo-Jo, the Dog-Faced Russian Boy” from *Daily Yellowstone Journal*, 1887. Courtesy of Montana Newspapers, Montana Historical Society.

During the mid-nineteenth century, the consolidation of the middle class and instatement of the Saturday half-holiday promoted an inexpensive leisure culture that accommodated for trips to circuses, theaters, music halls, seaside resorts, botanical gardens, museums, and zoos. Many of these entertainments featured a freak show, which was a type of exhibition profiting from public displays of people with “physical, mental, or behavioral anomalies, both alleged and real.”³ Far from promoting essentialist understandings of physical difference, freakery was fluid and socially constructed, meaning that different moments of cultural, political, scientific, and imperial self-fashioning elicited different

³ Robert Bogdan, *Freak Show: Presenting Human Oddities for Amusement and Profit* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1988), 2.

meanings from physical and cultural difference.⁴ As a “way of thinking about and presenting people,” the freak show required its own forms of narrative that helped to contextualize and interpret the bodies on display.⁵ A person, like Fedor Jefitchew, was not a freak because he simply possessed an atypical abundance of body hair. What made him a “freak” was the accompanying backstory that transformed a hairy child from St. Petersburg into the “Jo-Jo, the Russian Dog-Faced Boy.” To ritualize otherness into a performable fiction, the freak show relied on four interlocking forms of narrative Rosemarie Garland Thomson cites as the textual (life story pamphlets, handbills, news reports), the visual (photograph, woodcut, lithograph), the oral, and the staged (props, gestures, scenery).⁶ For example, the “Dog-Faced Boy” was built from the life story pamphlet detailing his wild days in Russia’s Kostroma Forest, close-up photographs

⁴ See Rachel Adams, *Sideshow U.S.A.: Freaks and the American Cultural Imagination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Robin Blyn, *The Freak-Garde: Extraordinary Bodies and Revolutionary Art in America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013); Robert Bogdan, *Freak Show: Presenting Human Oddities for Amusement and Profit* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1988); Nadja Durbach, *Spectacle of Deformity: Freak Shows and Modern British Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009); Rosemarie Garland Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); Rosemarie Garland Thomson, ed. *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body* (New York: New York University Press, 1996)

⁵ Bogdan, *Freak Show*, 3.

⁶ Rosemarie Garland Thomson, “Introduction: From Wonder to Error—A Genealogy of Freak Discourse in Modernity,” *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*, ed. Rosemarie Garland Thomson (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 7.

emphasizing his silky hair styled perfectly to span his entire face (fig. 1), and performances of him “barking[ing]” at audiences like an angry puppy.⁷

Robert Bogdan’s *Freak Show* (1988) stresses the importance of overarching narrative structure to the freak show by carefully sketching out the freak show’s two major modes of presentation. The exotic mode exaggerated the strange, bestial, and primitive qualities of the performer: “Jo-Jo” and his hypertrichotic father, Adrian, were captured from the Russian wilds where they had been living in a cave and using stone clubs as tools. On the other hand, the aggrandized mode emphasized the performer’s socially upstanding character and extraordinary talents. After a decade of exhibition, Jo-Jo became domesticated and the picture of refinement with an 1898 Barnum & Bailey catalogue proclaiming: Jo-Jo “spends long hours at home with the Russian novelists and writers of stories of adventure.”⁸ As Jo-Jo’s show suggests, the freak show’s narrative forms were not always commensurate and often evoked what Robin Blyn calls an “aesthetics of indeterminacy” capable of producing unlikely, radical forms of subjectivity.⁹ In taking up questions of narrative, this dissertation moves away from understanding archival documentation of freakery as actualized, unchanging products memorializing particular hierarchies of power isolated within a particular historical

⁷ “A Boy with a Dog’s Face,” *Evening Bulletin*, October 24th 1884.

⁸ ‘Jo-Jo’ quoted in Jane Goodall, *Performance and Evolution in the Age of Darwin: Out of the Natural Order* (London: Routledge, 2002), 79.

⁹ Robin Blyn, *The Freak-garde: Extraordinary Bodies and Revolutionary Art in America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), xxiv.

moment. Instead, freak archival representation is a series of contextually situated events that may work according to familiar scripts, but that also change in unpredictable ways.

“Freak” is a notoriously imprecise word, but that does not stop us from using it regularly— or maybe that is why we use it so regularly. Eavesdrop on any conversation and at some point, you will probably hear about somebody “freaking” out, something “freaky,” or someone who is a “freak.” Even nineteenth-century freak performers had problems with the word “freak” because, according to them, “freak” is “without any specific meaning in an anatomical sense.”¹⁰ The trend of referring to nineteenth-century performers of otherness as “freaks” was not just, well, a “freak,” meaning a strange or unexpected whimsy. Exhibitions of non-normative bodies were not simply a Victorian phenomenon, even though “freakery” as a specific dialect and set of practices for such displays was. Historians of freakery have located precedents stretching back to Antiquity and medieval Europe when these bodies were viewed as portents of a divinity’s wrath or pleasure. The sixteenth-century witnessed the growth of curiosity cabinet or *wunderkammer* (“wonder cabinet”) culture in which encyclopedic tendencies were given eclectic form through collections, both miniature and outsized, that possessed no firm categorical boundaries. Bringing together geology, fine arts, ethnography, and archeology, cabinets of curiosities remade divine omens into objects of wonder. Moving into the nineteenth century, these bodies were again rebranded as *luscus naturae*, or “freaks of nature,” which interpreted material aberrations of body primarily through modern scientific, medical, and political discourses. This is not to say that other terms

¹⁰“Indignant Freaks,” *The Atchison Daily Globe*, January 26 1899.

like “monstrosity” or “curiosity” were completely discarded. In fact, quite the opposite: these terms persisted but were gathered under the umbrella of “freakery,” which became a mode of discourse tracking “our collective cultural transformation into modernity.”¹¹

Nineteenth-century performers in the sideshow like “Jo-Jo the Dog Faced Boy,” the “Bearded Lady,” and the “Minnesota Woolly Baby” are freaks in the conventional Victorian sense, if freaks are ever conventional. Beyond its Victorian attachments, “freak,” has taken up a rich afterlife with the term becoming synonymous with zealous enthusiasts (“health-freaks”), drug addicts (“speed-freaks”), sex-positive fetishists (“super-freak”)¹², hard-edged counter-culture followers (Frank Zappa’s “freaks”), and more generally a strange person with a discernibly unusually appearance or behavior. This terminological free-fall has filtered into academic studies where “freak” has taken on critical life of its own, as well. Within disability, performance, and literary studies, “freak” has been vaguely synonymous with the “alien,”¹³ “the ultimate outsider,”¹⁴

¹¹ Rosemarie Garland Thomson, “Introduction: From Wonder to Error—A Genealogy of Freak Discourse in Modernity,” *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*, ed. Rosemarie Garland Thomson (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 3.

¹² *Oxford English Dictionary*, “freak, n.1,” accessed August 14th, 2016, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/74344?redirectedFrom=freak+of+nature>.

¹³ Jeffrey A. Weinstock, “Freaks in Space: ‘Extraterrestrialism’ and ‘Deep-Space Multiculturalism,’” *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles and the Freak Body*, ed. Rosemarie Garland Thomson (New York: New York University, 1997), 335.

¹⁴ Carrie Sandahl and Phillip Auslander, “Introduction: Disability Studies in Commotion with Performance Studies,” *Bodies in Commotion: Disability and Performance*, ed. Carrie Sandahl and Phillip Auslander (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2005), 3.

“wondrous, monstrous, or curious Otherness,”¹⁵ and even “ourselves.”¹⁶ It is also variously allied with a socially constructed form of commercial entertainment;¹⁷ exploitation, oppression, and unequal power relations¹⁸; and, a potentially transgressive tool of personal and political expression.¹⁹ As Elizabeth Grosz notes, defining “freak” poses difficulties because she or he is “neither unusually gifted or unusually disadvantaged ... a being who is considered simultaneously and compulsively fascinating and repulsive, enticing and sickening.”²⁰ I use the word “freak” strategically because of its imprecision and elusive “in-between-ness.” In juxtaposing “freak” with the taxonomic and organizational aims of archives and archiving, I demonstrate how freakery reveals and resists the implicitly normative frameworks of historical transmission traditionally

¹⁵ Anna Kérchy and Andrea Zittlau, “Introduction,” *Exploring the Cultural History of Continental Freak Shows and ‘Enfreakment,’* ed. Anna Kérchy and Andrea Zittlau (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 1.

¹⁶ Rebecca Stern, “Our Bear Women, Ourselves,” *Victorian Freaks: The Social Context of Freakery in Britain*, ed. Marlene Tromp (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2007), 200-233.

¹⁷ Bogdan, *Freak Show*, 2.

¹⁸ David Gerber, “The “Careers” of People Exhibited in Freak Shows: The Problem of Volition and Valorization,” *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body*, ed. Rosemarie Garland Thomson (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 39.

¹⁹ Rachel Adams, *Sideshow U.S.A.: Freaks and the American Cultural Imagination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Robin Blyn, *The Freak-Garde: Extraordinary Bodies and Revolutionary Art* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013); Simi Linton, *Claiming Disability: Knowledge and Identity* (New York: New York University Press, 1998).

²⁰ Elizabeth Grosz, “Intolerable Ambiguity: Freaks as/at Limit,” *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles and the Freak Body*, ed. Rosemarie Garland Thomson (New York: New York University, 1997), 56.

supported by archives. “Freak” has also since spawned its own critical cognates of “enfreaking” or “enfreakment.” These specify the processes of narration, mediation, and presentation through which physical and cultural difference becomes spectacularized.²¹ Though productive in critical approaches of freak show culture, “enfreaking” as it is typically deployed emphasizes the exploitative features of performed and photographic media in making the “freak.” To move away from this while still emphasizing the centrality of narrative, I instead use the word “freak” or “freaking” as a verb, as in “freaking” the archive. This calls attention to the processes and types of presentations archives use to actively produce, ritualize, and display “others” both in theory and practice. However, it also considers the more expansive linguistic history of “freak” to appeal to its more transgressive political and social possibilities.

The nineteenth-century is such an important touchstone in the history of human exhibition because of a confluence of industrial, scientific, and technological developments that made the world seem bigger and stranger, but closer than ever before. Print culture supported world exploration and colonial expansion by translating faraway peoples and places into easily reproduced travelogues that could give British readers ownership and entitlement over these distant lands.²² But soon living, breathing humans would eclipse text and illustration as evidence of overseas British imperial ventures. The advent of steamship and railway travel during the 1830s and 1840s supported the

²¹ David Hevey, “The Enfreakment of Photography,” *The Disability Studies Reader*, ed. Lennard Davis (Routledge: New York, 2006), 367-379.

²² Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992), xii.

movement of peoples and goods across long distances and fueled the opportunistic activities of “freak hunters” who euphemized their journeys as anthropological, ethnological, or archeological studies.²³ Underpinning these activities was a colonialist compulsion for collecting, categorizing, and hierarchizing the world’s objects and populations relative to their proximity to whiteness. The freak show was a transnational and transcontinental enterprise, equally popular in the U.S. as it was in England and the European continent. Most freak show studies separate down lines of geography choosing to focus on American freakery, British freakery, or European ethnographic showcases. I pursue another tack by following the migratory circuits of freak performers in order to situate Victorian freakery within broader systems of transnational and global movement and knowledge making practices. For that reason, a few remarks on general differences and overlap between British and U.S. freakery are in order.

Freak shows sought to ritualize physical and cultural difference through the “show-space,” a confluence of time and space that materialized historically specific relationships between colonizers and colonized.²⁴ In addition to this figurative space, the actual show venues of freak performers were important narrative devices that circumscribed the available discourses for advertising freak exhibition, as well as shaping

²³ For example, see Krao, *The Missing Link. A Living Proof of Darwin’s Theory of Descent of Man*, c. 1883. British Library, Evanion Collection, item 2474, 12. The pamphlet of Krao Farini, the “Missing Link” is framed as Carl Bock’s exploration into Southeast Asia looking for evidence of fabled hairy, tailed men after his success with the Headhunters of Borneo.

²⁴ Roslyn Poignant, *Professional Savages: Captive Lives and Western Spectacle* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 7.

public reception. In both the U.S. and England, modern freakery was rooted in traveling fairground culture, and even after brick and mortar establishments were erected, freak performers were standbys in traveling carnivals and circuses, like Barnum and Bailey or Adam Forepaugh in the U.S. and seasonal amusements like the Nottingham Goose Festival or the Greenwich Fair in England. British freakery's ties to the fairground, what Charles Dickens condemned as "a sort of spring-rash" and "three days' fever," made it a dubious affair that was not above employing some stage-managed trickery to dazzle the drinking, partying revelers.²⁵ Similarly, in the U.S. carnivals comprised of shooting galleries, rides, games of chance, and sideshows traveled the country and set up at the outskirts of agricultural fairs and expositions like the 1893 Columbian Exposition. These independently operated amusements imparted the otherwise-respectable fairs and expositions with some colorful and cheap sleaze, the biggest draw being the exhibition of living oddities that came to be known as "side shows."

Victorian culture was as a museum culture, as the compiling, organizing, and displaying activities fundamental to the museum extended into other "systems-building projects," ranging from encyclopedias and dictionaries, fossil and botanical collections, and miniature objects of all sorts.²⁶ Though museums inspired wonder and awe with their vast collections, they were also viewed as pragmatic tools of empire—evidence of a smoothly running society. The innovations in emergent scientific disciplines, world

²⁵ Charles Dickens, *Sketches by Boz: Illustrative of Every-day Life and Every-day People* (London: John Macrone, 1837), 278.

²⁶ Barbara J. Black, *On Exhibit: Victorians and their Museums* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 2000), 5.

exploration, travel technology, and print culture that helped build museums, both physically and figuratively, also promoted a new understanding of freak performers that recognized their potential merits beyond entertainment value. Unlike now when freak show archival materials are housed in reputable museums like the British National Portrait Gallery and the U.S. National Portrait Gallery, Victorian freak performers never managed to occupy the period's more respectable museums. But the nineteenth-century mania for museums engendered popular exhibition complexes combining art and antiquities collections, lecture halls, panoramas to provide suitable, modern spaces for freak presentation. In England, popular exhibition-hall museums, like William Bullock's Egyptian Hall, or small, semi-private performance quarters sponsored by eminent scientific or medical societies, like the London Ethnological Society, recast freak bodies as specimens of scientific and imperial interest. Changes in performance place from the fair to the institution also called for changes in advertising tactics. With private viewings just for women and reduced-price tickets for children, freak exhibition masqueraded as an inexpensive and educational treat for the whole family, effectively cutting across lines of gender, class, and age.²⁷ The lasting affect of this geography of presentation reveals itself in a major thread of freak show scholarship that continuously positions freakery as a sub-narrative in the history of science and medicine. Moreover, the archival history of the freak show reflects this trend, as freak show materials are now a part of special collections of medical libraries and museums, like the Wellcome Library and Hunterian

²⁷ Nadja Durbach, "On the Emergence of the Freak Show," *BRANCH: Britain, Representation and Nineteenth-Century History*, ed. Dino Franco Felluga. Extension of *Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net*. Web. July 31st 2016.

Museum at the Royal College of Surgeons in England, and the Mütter Museum of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia in the U.S..

While there is now some cross-Atlantic carry-over in where freak show materials are archived, nineteenth-century American museum exhibitions of freakery varied slightly from its British counterpart. P.T. Barnum, the grandfather of the U.S. freak show, jumpstarted a uniquely American way of presenting freak bodies with the creation of his American Museum in 1841, which hosted living curiosities until a fire as spectacular as its attractions burnt down the building in 1865. Post-Civil War dime museums in imitation of the American Museum exploded as populist amusements that featured eclectic and sometimes interactive collections of geological, ornithological, zoological, and ethnographic objects. What distinguished them from their more highbrow counterparts is that dime museums incorporated sensational forms of performance, like on-stage phrenology and beautiful baby contests.²⁸ Though more lurid than natural history or art museums, dime museums still nominally participated in discourses of edification and rationality in effort to attract audience who yearned for middle-class status. Freak presentations disguised as ethnographic lectures especially were mainstays of dime museums playing home to such freak luminaries, such as Krao Farini “the Missing Link,” and the “Wild Men of Borneo.” The phrase “ten-in-one” was coined to appeal to the eclectic and economical aspects of the U.S. freak show, as audience members got to see ten of the world’s most astounding curiosities for the price of one.

²⁸ Andrea Dennett, *Weird and Wonderful: The Dime Museum in America* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 66.

While eschewing any too-serious claims to scientific knowledge making, the dime museum and ten-in-one style nevertheless reflected a late-nineteenth-century American climate of exceptionalism hinging on the belief that the American experience was antithetical to an imperialist history.²⁹ However, this agenda to have no imperial agenda was precisely an assertion of an American imperial mindset. Barnum's presentations of freakery reflected this simultaneous disavowal and avowal of an American imperial presence through his slogans advertising his Congress of Freaks: "The World Its Field. America Its Home." Stressing the transnational aspects of freakery works to undercut the narrative coherency of the freak show in order to reveal its underlying systems of generating, organizing, and validating knowledge that usually go unnoticed.

iii. Archives and Archival Studies

Beginning in the early-1840s and continuing throughout the century, efforts to establish institutional archival collections documenting either the history of England or the cultures, habits, and customs of the empire's colonial holdings signaled the desire for comprehensive knowledge. Freakery explicitly intersects with discourses of collecting and presenting through the museum or the curiosity cabinet, but no substantial connections between freakery and nineteenth-century archival theory and practice have

²⁹ Amy Kaplan, "Left Alone with America: The Absence of Empire in the Study of American Culture," *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, ed. Amy Kaplan and Donald Pease (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 4.

yet been made. In order to reinvigorate the familiar pairing of freakery and the history of science, this dissertation explores the history of the Victorian freak show through the lens of information and archival sciences. And as I will map out in this introduction, freakery and archives share a special, overdetermined relationship to the practice of taxonomy that other material forms of nineteenth-century knowledge ordering fail to fulfill. With the noted “archival turn” that Ann Laura Stoler defines as the “move from archive-as-source to archive-as-subject,” the archive has become a now familiar body in humanities scholarship.³⁰ But, like the word “freak,” “archive” (or “archives”) is also an imprecise term that requires careful consideration of its theoretical, material, and practical dimensions.

Critical applications of the term “archive” formulate a tension between abstraction and literalism that drives a wedge between humanities and information science approaches. The term “archive” derives from the dwelling of the Archon, who is a civic official, where official state documents were filed and preserved, which has historically linked the word to a physical existence. While archives have also been familiar tools or materials of humanities scholarship, attempts to take up the archive as subject have evaporated some of its more tangible attributes. Theoretical treatments of the archive from Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault specifically have inaugurated expanded, mostly figurative, definitions of the archive. For Derrida, the archive provides a language for exploring the psychoanalytic process of recording history, specifically the

³⁰ Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2009), 44.

“irrepressible desire to return to the origin ... to the most archaic place of absolute commencement” that he calls “mal d’archive” or archive fever.³¹ If Derrida takes an inward approach to the archive, Foucault is more interested in the archive as broad conceptual framework based on “enunciability,” or the phenomenon of establishing the possibility of what can be said.³² These theoretical formulations have engendered a capacious figurative archive that not only includes all aspects of modern information technology, storage, retrieval, and communication, but more importantly also supplies the grammar for the processes of “collecting traces of the past, and for the forgetting of them.”³³ Inspired by these more metaphorical uses, cultural studies approaches have stretched the concept of the “archive” to correspond to any body of “selective omissions and collections.”³⁴ While useful in highlighting how different forms of knowledge are validated or dismissed, the abstract nature of the “archive” has raised concerns from scholars whose research methods are based in the primary sources found in archives.

A body of literature assuming the physical, intellectual, and emotional experiences of working with and in archives has taken shape in response to archival

³¹ Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 91.

³² Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A.M. Sheridan (London: Routledge, 2002), 146.

³³ Carolyn Steedman, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 4.

³⁴ Marie-Aude Baronian, “Archive, Memory, and Loss: Constructing Images in the Armenian Diaspora,” *Transnational Memory: Circulation, Articulation, Scales*, ed. Chiara De Cesari, Anne Rigney (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2014), 81.

abstractions with the goal of re-infusing the term “archives” with its original materiality. The scholarly trope of meditating on the evocative qualities of dwelling within the archives is not a new one, but rather one that grew out of nineteenth-century archives-based history writing. French historian Jules Michelet likened the work of the historical researcher to that of a magician who could through archival research resurrect the voices and incite a “galvanic dance” of the dead once-entombed in their archival sepulchers.³⁵ German historian Leopold von Ranke framed archival research as an ongoing experience of heady affective transport in which one could absorb “everything close to [their] heart” into “[their] being.”³⁶ In the last decade or so, the meta-narrative of scholarly research has enjoyed a renaissance through the work of Antoinette Burton, Arlette Farge, Nicolas Dirks, Carolyn Steedman, Ann Laura Stoler, and Helena Michie and Robyn Warhol.³⁷ Even though these critical reflections on archives have since sought to uncover how archives influence historiography, they still tend to be researcher-centered, swiveling around how one’s subject position primarily negotiates experiences with archives.

³⁵ Jules Michelet, *History of France: Volume One*, trans. G.H. Smith (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1892), 32.

³⁶ Leopold von Ranke, *The Theory and Practice of History*, ed. Georg G. Iggers (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2010), 77.

³⁷ Antoinette Burton, ed., *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); Nicholas B. Dirks, “Annals of the Archive: Ethnographic Notes on the Sources of History,” *From the Margins: Historical Anthropology and Its Futures*, ed. Brian Axel (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002); Arlette Farge, *The Allure of Archives* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013); Helena Michie and Robyn Warhol, *Love Among the Archives: Writing the Lives of Sir George Scharf, Victorian Bachelor* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016); Carolyn Steedman, *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002)

While this tactic strives to uncover the invisible workings of the archives, it still potentially reprises Victorian liberalism's privileging of the intellectual energies of individual subject, which can be remedied by a more integrative critical approach.

I propose a new direction for the archival turn that goes deeper into archives to think about the methods and goals of archival research. This requires the researcher take as objects of study not only archival materials, but also key texts in archival theory, the arrangement and descriptive practices of specific archives, and their affordances, whether material or digital. To this end, I adopt some major questions, theories, and concepts central to archival studies, a subfield of information studies, which is notably absent in humanities scholarship despite shared, parallel interests in archives. I put my own humanities spin on "archives" by approaching these questions with the eye and reading practices of the literary scholar paying attention to the narrative conventions, intertextual networks, and rhetorical frameworks that build archival systems. Archival studies concentrates its focus on further "understanding the nature, management, and uses of records" so as to unpack the political, social, technical, and cultural aspects of archives and archiving.³⁸ Along with the intellectual history of archives and archiving came the need for professional training, so archival studies actively addresses both the theory and practices of archivists and archival researchers. Defined thusly, the archives that archival scholarly work with are "actually existing archives," separable and aggregated bodies of records that occupy a specific physical or digital space. Defined primarily by its object of

³⁸ Michelle Caswell, "'The Archive' is Not an Archives: Acknowledging the Intellectual Contributions of Archival Studies," *Reconstruction* 16, no. 1 (2016)

study rather than method, archival studies invites a wide range of approaches including scientific, social scientific, and humanistic. For archival studies scholars, archives, always with an “s,” refer to collections of records, their physical storage locations, the institutions that care for them, and the practices that make them archival.

Archival studies and humanities both talk about archives, but use different languages to do so. I pull from archival studies not to approximate faithfully its received methods and “pass” as an archival studies scholar, but to introduce some of its key features that might benefit humanities approaches to archives with the goal of shrinking the perceived disciplinary divide. Archival studies’ core theoretical and practical concepts include the record, provenance, value, and description. The record is the base unit of archival studies and broadly refers to “any account, regardless of form, that preserves memory or knowledge.”³⁹ This is a fairly new intervention in archival studies, since the “record” originated as a written or printed work of “legal or official nature” that is fixed in content, context, and structure.⁴⁰ Some of the materials I work with in this dissertation may rightly be termed “records” in their original definition, especially in my reading of colonial administrative archives in the “Archives” section of this dissertation. I instead strategically use the term “document” in attending to this level of archives because “document” includes media both recognized and unrecognized as part of the official record, thereby calling attention to how archival theory’s available lexicon

³⁹ Shannon Faulkhead, “Connecting Through Records: Narratives of Koorie Victoria,” *Archives and Manuscripts* 37, no. 2 (November 2009): 60-88.

⁴⁰ Richard Pearce-Moss, “Record,” *A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005), 327-8.

actively contributes to privileging some histories over others. Where my dissertation really stakes its claim is in its revising dominant notions of the fixity of the document by calling for a more protean and fluid approach through my theorizing of “intermediated documentation,” which I will flesh out later on in this introduction. To order and preserve these documents, archives are arranged into bodies, or *fonds*, through the principle of provenance, which is a relatively modern practice of arranging records so as to preserve the originating socio-historical context of records.⁴¹ During the nineteenth-century provenance was applied, at best, haphazardly, but incipient archival practices all agreed that provenance required unbroken chains of custodianship to authenticate the documents as properly archival. In addition to arrangement practices, archives required their own grammar, or policies of description that the archivist employs to generate finding aids, abstracts, titles, and metadata for archival collections. While early archival theory constructed description as an unbiased practice initiated by the disinterested, lone archivist, it has since been reframed as representation to emphasize its equally factual and imaginative qualities. It is a story told by collaborating documents and archivists. And lastly, value is the evaluative processes that determine what records are archived.⁴² Though a core concept, value is more a product of mid-twentieth-century bulk

⁴¹ Jennifer Douglas, “Origins: Evolving Ideas about the Principle of Provenance,” *Currents in Archival Thinking*, ed. Terry Eastwood and Heather Macneil (New York: Pearson Education, 2010).

⁴² Ciaran Trace, “On or Off the Record? Notions of Value in the Archive,” *Currents in Archival Thinking*, ed. Terry Eastwood and Heather Macneil (New York: Pearson Education, 2010).

management difficulties, and while it inarguably contours our sense of history, it is out of this study's purview.

The abovementioned core principles are inventions of mid- to late-nineteenth century archival administrative practices, priming archival studies to be a generative theoretical touchstone for Victorian studies approaches committed to balancing historicist and formalist methods. By the 1850s the national archival institutions for nearly every European country had taken their modern forms, with the arrangement, description, and appraisal standards they instated finally formally articulated in Muller, Fruin, and Feith's seminal 1898 *Manual for Management and Description of Archives*.⁴³ Nineteenth-century archival repositories, like England's Public Records Office, were intimately tied to the welfare of the nation, its contemporary workings, and its sense of history. Consequently, foundational methods of collecting, arranging, and describing bodies of information were inextricable from a broad imperialist fantasy that promoted the infallibility of the British empire through the information management, processes Nicolas Dirks calls "sleight of hand."⁴⁴ Presently, not only are the materials we use Victorian in content, but also the staging grounds of our primary source research, archives both onsite and digital, are figuratively and physically structured by persistently Victorian ways of theorizing, organizing, and presenting knowledge that fueled the British empire's management of its colonies and peoples.

⁴³ Michel Duchein, "The History of European Archives and the Development of the Archival Profession in Europe," *American Archivist*. 55, no. 1 (Winter 1992): 18.

⁴⁴ Nicholas Dirks, *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 63.

iv. General Tomb Thumb: Norming Archives and Norming Bodies

General Thumb (born Charles Sherwood Stratton) may be most famous now for his horn-tooting rendition of “Yankee Doodle Dandy” in full military regalia. But, when he dropped his military personae and pants for his body-stocking “personations” of “Grecian statues,” his Classicist-inspired tableaux were acclaimed as “the most beautiful and wonderful portion of his performances.”⁴⁵ Thumb’s “Grecian Statues” encompassed renditions of the “Fighting Gladiator,” “Hercules Nemeaan Lion,” and “Discobulus.” Even as they emphasized his extraordinarily small stature, they resonated so well with audiences because Thumb was thought to be perfection in miniature, a prototype for the human form much like his Greco-Roman source materials.

The Victorian period has been eulogized as the time of archiving when the fetish for collecting and organizing combined with technological innovation to make anything and everything archivable. This narrative is curious, though, since the material and intellectual history of archiving shows that its practices and protocols during the nineteenth century were highly uneven and nearly non-existent until the last couple decades. What we can attribute to the rise of the archival, however, is the rise of the norm. Victorian concepts of “normal” and its various cognates, came into British

⁴⁵ *Sketch of the Life, Personal Appearance, Character, and Manners, of Charles S. Stratton, The Man in Miniature, Known as General Tom Thumb* (New York: Van Norden & American, Printers, 1851), 7.

consciousness roughly over a period from 1830-1860.⁴⁶ The rise of the “norm” overlapped the modern freak show’s 1847-1914 heyday, as the word “freak,” meaning a living curiosity exhibited for show, began to be used consistently around 1847.⁴⁷ Offsetting the individual peculiarities of freak bodies, the abstracted “normal” body emerged through different forms of media across different disciplines to articulate a new mid-century ideal type. This intellectual activity of this early-Victorian cultural moment has since influenced current attempts to theorize normativity dedicated to charting the discursive, and psychological processes whereby particular bodies transform into duplicable abstractions, the most notable being Michel Foucault’s work. The rhetorical strategies Foucault uses in his account of modernity in *Discipline and Punish* (1975) initially hinge on material and embodied practices of normalization that then move into the realm of discourse; for example, the training of the body’s motions became evidence of disciplinary power through attempts to transform singular soldiers into a cohesive unit. Such normalizing processes were then extended to asylums, schools, factories, among other institutions. So pertinent is this question of movement that Joseph Grigely maintains that “there is no way to define normalcy except through the abstract idea of locomotion,” a mindset most concretely realized in late-Victorian photographers,

⁴⁶ Lennard Davis, “Constructing Normalcy: The Bell Curve, the Novel, and the Invention of the Disabled Body in the Nineteenth Century,” *The Disability Studies Reader 2nd Edition*, ed. Lennard Davis (New York: Routledge, 2006), 3

⁴⁷ Durbach, *Spectacle of Deformity*, 2.

Eadweard Muybridge's human-figure-in-motion photographs⁴⁸ These tamable, in-sync bodies would become trademarks of cultural, political, economic, and not least of all, physical fitness vital to the empire's wellbeing.

The form of the norm has become such an integral component of studies in Victoria freakery because it relied on systems of bodily representation that spanned textual, visual, and performed media.⁴⁹ Early juridical uses of photography throughout the 1840s produced a visual-ethnographic poetics of the norm solidified as the white athletic male, muscular but not too muscular, who embodied an approachable form of physical and intellectual excellence, as opposed to the unworthy bodies of criminals, the poor, the non-white, and women. While the relative quickness of ease of photographic reproducibility helped to create a generalized archive of England's social terrain that privileged this new norm, the intellectual genealogy for its formulation can be traced to the late-eighteenth century. At this time, Hellenist aesthetics informed anatomical illustration practices that in turn instituted racial and gendered hierarchies. Dutch naturalist, Petrus Camper looked to the Greek physique as the pinnacle of perfection because of its supposedly ideal proportions, citing specifically the Belvedere *Apollo* as the best of the best.⁵⁰ Influenced by Camper's methods of applying Classist art to

⁴⁸ Joseph Grigely, "Postcards to Sophie," *Points of Contact: Disability, Art, and Culture*, edited by Susan Crutchfield, Marcy Epstein (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2000), 47.

⁴⁹ Ann Millet-Gallant, *The Disabled Body in Contemporary Art* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), 88.

⁵⁰ Pascal Blanchard, Gilles Boëtsch, and Nanette Jacomijn Snoep eds., *Human Zoos: The Invention of the Savage*, (Branly: Actes Sud, 2012), 121.

scientific studies of the human, early- and mid-nineteenth century schools of math and science, like statistics and anthropometry (the study of human proportions) employed Greek sculpture as the source material for their abstracted bodies designed to chart physical development.⁵¹ Unlike Camper, the goal was not to delineate what was perfect but rather to encode the norm visually through “l’homme moyen” or “average man” to produce a duplicable prototype.

Tom Thumb’s biography tried to stress his one-of-kindness, but his presentations suggests the persistence of the reproducible normative-body-in-movement. If we are to believe the May 1844 issue of *Hood’s Magazine*, dwarfs performing as “Grecian Statues” inspired by Tom Thumb were popping up all over London, illuminating the easy reproducibility of Tom Thumb’s performances.⁵² Consequently, what were once considered ideals became the new normal and sign of the fitness of the national body. Though it claimed pretensions to neutrality, the norm carried with it underlying connotations of class, race, and gender, for the “average man” was actually an able-bodied, middle class, white male, an image Thumb both reinforced and ironized through his stature. These ties to able-bodiedness were further solidified through Karl Marx’s contemporaneous writings on politics and economics, which marshaled the “average

⁵¹ Bird Thomas Baldwin, *The Physical Growth of Children from Birth to Maturity, Volume One* (Iowa City: Iowa University, 1921), 200.

⁵² “Threatening Letter to Thomas Hood, from an Ancient Gentleman. By Favor of Charles Dickens,” *Hood’s Magazine and Comic Miscellany, Volume 1: January-May 1844* (London: H. Renshaw, 1844), 412.

worker” to introduce notions of abstracted labor and average workdays.⁵³ And more generally, Victorian novels as a genre rest on ideological frameworks that support normativity, and even when disability is acknowledged as a central narrative feature and form it still requires its normative counterpart.⁵⁴ While attention to scientific, political, and literary reproductions of normalcy serve as convincing case studies, none of them quite get at how normative embodiment is the primary and privileged subject and means of historical transmission. The abstracted, norm-able body has implicitly shaped the conditions and methods of archival research. Addressing this blind spot requires adding to this already ongoing conversation about mid-century norming practices the birth of modern archiving.

Nineteenth-century archiving was also interested in normal and norm-able bodies, namely those of documentation, and their relationship to British nationalism and empire. Because archives were the keys to exploring the histories of great nations, archival bodies needed to be in top form. They were, after all, not simply depoliticized repositories of old, musty documents but rather co-authors of British national and imperial identities.⁵⁵ Nineteenth-century barrister and antiquarian, Luke Owen Pike, implored audiences in a 1907 lecture at All Souls College to think of records “as things which have a close connexion with our everyday life, as things telling of a past which is inextricably

⁵³ Lennard Davis, “Constructing Normalcy,” 5.

⁵⁴ Karen Bourrier, *The Measure of Manliness: Disability and Masculinity in the Mid-Victorian Novel* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015).

⁵⁵ Francis X. Blouin and William G. Rosenberg, *Processing the Past: Contesting Authority in History and the Archives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 136.

interwoven with our present.”⁵⁶ Pike’s speech was recalling his place of labor: the Public Record Office, a vital player in the British history of archival management. The 1838 Public Record Office Act ensured the proper care and preservation of government and court records delimiting the legal rights of English citizens, and by the 1850s, the Public Records Office was almost fully up and running. But in order for this to happen, the Act needed to specify what exactly counted as a record and what institutions were in charge of their stewardship.⁵⁷ Under the terms of the 1838 Act, records encompassed “all rolls, writs, books, proceedings, decrees, bills, warrants, accounts, papers, and documents of whatsoever a public nature belonging to Her Majesty”.⁵⁸ As “the “History of England since the Conquest runs parallel with the History of England’s Records,” this body of documentation became a textual proxy of the English body politic tracing back to the Norman Conquest, which was a rhetorical maneuver executed to ensure these public records were understood to be a direct extension of a sovereign.⁵⁹

As the Deputy Keeper of the Public Record Office, Sir Frances Palgrave was assigned to sorting, arranging, and making inventories of the records. This responsibility

⁵⁶ Luke Owen Pike, *The Public Records and the Constitution: a Lecture Delivered at All Souls College, Oxford, at the request of the Regius Professors of Civil Law and Modern History* (London: Henry Frowde, 1907), 9.

⁵⁷ John Cantwell, “The 1838 Public Record Office Act and its Aftermath: A New Perspective,” *Journal of Society of Archivists* 7, no. 5 (1984): 277-286.

⁵⁸“Appendix I. to the Second Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records,” *House of Commons Papers: Bills, Public; Reports from Committees; and Reports From Commissioners Volume One* (1841), 2

⁵⁹ Luke Owen Pike, *The Public Records and the Constitution*, 12.

posed major difficulties, since arrangement practices during the early- to mid-nineteenth century lacked continuity from archives to archives. While Public Record Office stewarded records that textually constituted the social, political, and cultural British body in its most expansive and abstracted terms, it employed a relatively new model for accumulating and ordering these records into collections recently adopted for Frances' Archives nationales. Born out of the French Revolution, Archives nationales was an enduring symbol of democratic access to knowledge and forerunner in modern archives-based historiography focused on the growth of great nations. Eighteen forty-one marked a decisive turning point in the history of archiving the year of the "fonds", a newly formulated concept of archival practice rhetorically grounded in the perfectible, abstracted body. An April 24th circular from the French Ministry instructed archivists to "assemble the different documents by fonds, that is to say, to form a collection of all the documents which originate from a body, an organization, a family, or an individual, and to arrange the fonds according to a certain order."⁶⁰ Now considered one of the most important intellectual contributions to the practice of archiving, respect des fonds was absorbed with preserving the context during with records were produced and accumulated, resulting in self-contained bodies of information that acted as reliable and direct evidence of lives and activities of individuals, communities, or organizations.⁶¹

⁶⁰ "Principle of *Respect des Fonds*," *Encyclopedia of Archival Science*, ed. Luciana Duranti and Patricia C. Franks (London: Rowan & Littlefield, 2015), 289.

⁶¹ Jefferson Bailey, "Disrespect des Fonds: Rethinking Arrangement and Description in Born-Digital Archives," *Archival Journal* 3 (Summer 2013).

Through respect des fonds, bodies of documentation became faithful, organic extensions of the bodies of their creators.

What the fonds helped do was to give discernible outlines to once disparate and loose collections of records. That we now speak of an “archival body” is due in no small part to the creation of the fonds. So compelling was its metonym of the body to describe archival collections that the Dutch Manual of 1898 echoed it in its authoritative definition of officially-sanctioned archival collections: “an archival collection is an organic whole, a living organism, which grows, takes shape, and undergoes changes in accordance with fixed rules.”⁶² In describing the benchmarks of an archival body, archival theory may not explicitly use the image of Hellenist sculpture, but it nonetheless implicitly relies on the same tropes of proportionality, orderly development, and abstraction that underwrote contemporaneous projects of normalizing bodies. Each body has its own distinct “personality, its individuality,”⁶³ but its status as an archival collection depended on its ability to submit to replicable processes of arrangement and description. Because of its commitment to systematizing the process of arranging and describing bodies of documentation, respect des fonds, in its particular mid-nineteenth-century cultural moment, was a fundamental yet overlooked normalizing technique that changed the practical conditions of how bodies could be ordered and managed. This sentiment has remained a defining conceit even as different features of respect des fonds have evolved

⁶² Samuel Muller, Johan Adriaan Feith, Robert Fruin, *Management for the Arrangement and Description of Archives* (New York: H.W. Wilson Co., 1968), 100.

⁶³ Muller, Feith, Fruin, *Management for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, 20

according to cultural, social, political shifts in society.⁶⁴ And as I move through this dissertation, I start with early normalizing procedures in “Archive” to show how they continue to inform late-nineteenth-century colonial India administrative archival projects in “Archives” and fin-de-siècle vernacular collecting practices in “Archiving.”

In characterizing state archives as “whole, living organisms,” early archival theory braided together rhetorical strands of imperialism and science to approximate through archival collections an unfixed but nevertheless norm-able body. In order to help concretize what exactly these “normal” archival bodies looked like or how they behaved, Victorian and early-twentieth century archival theory stipulated more clearly and readily what was *not* a typical archival body for which science too supplied a vocabulary. For this task, the Dutch Manual hones in on private archives and the “collectors of curiosities,” harkening to the wonderfully bizarre, dramatic, and idiosyncratic qualities of the curiosity cabinets—those collections that defied the aggregating imperatives of collecting. Instead of well-formed bodies growing and taking shape according to observable rules, those of curiosities or private families are more like *lusus naturae*, productions that appear to result from “sportive design”⁶⁵: their bodies leave evidence of having been “gathered together in the strangest manner” and, as a result, “lack the

⁶⁴ Terry Cook, “The Past is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift,” *Archivaria* 43 (Spring 1997): 20.

⁶⁵ *Oxford English Dictionary*, “Lusus Naturae,” accessed August 1st. 2016, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/111426?redirectedFrom=lusus+naturae#eid>

organic bond of the [state] archival collection.”⁶⁶ The Dutch Manual’s rather draconian decrees were responding to upticks in archives-based historical scholarship that recognized the merit of documents not technically considered public records. In 1869, England established the Historical Manuscripts Commission to identify, arrange, describe, and the preserve historically significant documents not under the purview of the Public Records Office,⁶⁷ since Luke Owen Pike reminded audiences the Public Records Office did not traffic in “must and forgotten precedents, or ... a collection of curiosities.”⁶⁸ Its holdings included papers and manuscripts belonging to private families and institutions that had been “rescued from oblivion and ... decay.”⁶⁹ These collections were treated as sensationally as the period’s “sports” of nature. The Historical Manuscript Commission’s annual reports were peppered with exciting headlines of unbelievable discoveries in cobweb-filled stables where parcels of twelfth-century documents emerged from layers of broken plaster and dirt like accidental, unexpected fossils.⁷⁰ They were “freaks” bodies that only became normalized once submitted to the normalizing practices

⁶⁶ Muller, Feith, Fruin, *Management for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, 20.

⁶⁷ Adrian Cunningham, “Archival Institutions,” *Archives: Recordkeeping in Society*, ed. Sue McKemmish, Michael Piggott, Barbara Reed, Frank Upward (Wagga Wagga, New South Wales: Centre for Information Studies Calres Sturt University), 30.

⁶⁸ Luke Owen Pike, *The Public Records and the Constitution*, 9.

⁶⁹ Roger H. Ellis, “The Historical Manuscripts Commission 1869-1969,” *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 2 (1962): 233.

⁷⁰ Roger H. Ellis, “The Historical Manuscripts Commission,” *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 2, no. 6 (1962): 233.

of early archival administration. Early-twentieth-century British archivist Hillary Jenkinson continued to designate these bodies “haphazard” and mid-twentieth-century American archivist Theodore Schellenberg likewise dismissed them as a “spontaneous, haphazard personal expression.”⁷¹ And currently, efforts to construct a critical genealogy of archival developments define the prehistory of modern archiving by citing the fonds to be the more orderly and reliable alternative to idiosyncratic, subject-based modes of classification, which potentially resulted in rather peculiar and subjective bodies.⁷² Sketching out the long-term rhetorical architecture of private archives illuminates longstanding anxieties pertaining to the potentially non-normative archival body. Lacking in discernible design, these bodies resist the protocols that allow the archivist to reproduce “normal” archival collections.

Charting the overlapping rises of modern archiving practices and modern freakery visualizes with new clarity a mid-nineteenth-century empirical mindset in the tradition of Enlightenment Encyclopaedists, even if archival theory did disavow subject, place, or chronological classification systems of the Enlightenment. During this moment, the nature of knowing was grounded in observing, describing, classifying, and taxonomizing in the name of gaining comprehensive knowledge and control over an increasingly expansive and complex world. Particulars mattered but only insofar as they could be integrated into a more generalized system. Empiricism is a familiar player in critical

⁷¹ Rob Fisher, “In Search of a Theory of Private Archives: The Foundational Writings of Jenkinson and Schellenberg Revisited,” *Archivaria*, 67 (Spring 2009): 11,17.

⁷² Shelley Sweeney, “The Ambiguous Origins of the Archival Principle of ‘Provenance,’” *Libraries and the Cultural Record* 43, no. 2 (2008): 196.

conversations about archives since its methods are now associated with the “archival impulse” to recover, make visible, and present information. In fact, histories of nineteenth-century archives and freakery both claim as forebears the taxonomy projects of Linnaeus in botany, Cuvier in anatomy, and Georges Leclerc, Comte de Buffon in natural science more generally. But, as I show throughout this study, in archives not all facts, objects, and collectibles are equal, and freak performers will provide evidence for this. The pursuit of comprehensive knowledge through empiricist practices also implicitly instated hierarchies favoring the norm or the cultural self, since archives were understood to be “a natural product of the agency that created them.”⁷³

Like archives, freak performers are often considered evidence of functional empirical systems at work: they were directly observable specimens that both produced and solidified knowledge in the name of the Victorian British self.⁷⁴ Or else, they are viewed as the failures of taxonomy, meddlesome objects and specimens that, as the Comte de Buffon worries, “belong in-between” and threaten to destroy the “general system.”⁷⁵ Freakery and archives, I argue, share a more dynamic relationship to knowledge making practices beyond understanding freakery as evidence of the success or

⁷³ Michel Duchein, “Theoretical Principles and Practical Problems of *Respect des fonds* in Archival Science,” *Archivaria* 16 (Summer 1983): 65.

⁷⁴ Richard Altick, *The Shows of London*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1978), 268-288.

⁷⁵ Georges Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, “Histoire Naturelle,” *Oeuvres avec des extraits de Daubenton et la classification de Cuvier* (Paris: Furne et comp, 1842), 46 quoted from Silvia Spitta, *Misplaced Objects: Migrating Collections and Recollections in Europe and the Americas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009), 40.

failures of modern empirical mindset driving archival theory and practice. Because the freak show co-opted a style of showmanship that rendered evidence simultaneously reliable and unreliable, it became a space for working out the promises and anxieties of an incipient archival society without submitting to the abstracting imperatives that efface the lived experiences of material bodies. Instead, freakery consolidated the epistemologies responsible for giving archiving its theoretical and practical contours only to reveal the inner-workings of archives' rhetorical, informational, and ideological systems and open these up for further negotiation. My "freak" archival research methods intend to illuminate and resist the ideological structures of normativity on which archives lie by looking at how freakery generates alternative bodies of knowledge, both figuratively and materially.

Theories and practices of archival description were dedicated to creating generally cohesive collections wherein the content of particular documents would not destroy the collection's status as a legible body. The inventory as the nineteenth-century precursor to the modern finding aid intended to provide "a guide" with an "outline of the contents of the collection," rather than an exhaustive study that renders the actual collection superfluous.⁷⁶ Similarly, freakery's display strategy of labeling and classifying echoes the logic of the inventory. The freak show loved labels, serious or otherwise. When we think of freak performers, their punchy titles initially come to mind, which group up like bodies and differentiate them against others. Like archival inventories, these descriptions

⁷⁶ Muller, Feith, Fruin, *Management for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, 100.

promised an exciting preview that could only be satiated by getting a good look at the real thing. The most common performing nickname specified the unexpected anatomical anomaly without leaving too much to the imagination, like Charles Tripp the “Armless Photographer,” his performing buddy Eli Bowen the “Legless Acrobat,” and Myrtle Corbin the “Four-Legged Woman.” Sometimes they embodied familiar geographies giving the freak show a little dose of home-spun regionalism like Daniel Lambert “Jolly Gaoler of Leicester,” Chauncey Morlan the “Indiana Fat Boy,” and Annie Bell, the “Ohio Giantess.”⁷⁷ Or, especially for colonial performers, they became ambassadors of foreign or exotic cultures, both real and fictional, like Saartje Baartman the “Hottentot Venus,” Caroline Crachami the “Sicilian Fairy,” Charles Byrne the “Irish Giant,”⁷⁸ and Iko and Eko (Willie and George Muse) the “Men From Mars” (originally from Roanoke, Virginia.) This was an especially popular tactic with ethnographic exhibits that tried to stay away from showcasing singular bodily anomalies, thus distancing themselves from the more tawdry freak shows even if the two shared similar display tactics. Across nineteenth-century Europe, impresarios were exhibiting exotic “natives” from distant lands, like George Catlin’s Ojibway troupe (1830’s), William Bullock’s Laplanders (1820-2), Carl Hagenbeck’s Indian and Ceylonese Village (1878), among others. Abandoning nearly all pretenses to good taste, freak shows also traded in witty double-

⁷⁷ Morlan and Bell married in 1892 and toured together until Bell’s death. At that point, Morlan slimmed down, remarried, and retired to Indiana.

⁷⁸ the “Sicilian Fairy” and the “Irish Giant” are eternal companions, as their skeletons are on display next to one another in the Hunterian Museum at the Royal College of Surgeons in London.

entendres, bizarre stereotypes, and silly puns when labeling their “specimens.” Human Skeletons called themselves “Slim Curtis” or “Shadow Harry.”⁷⁹ Fat People emphasized their jocularly above all as “Jolly Dolly” and “Happy Jack,” the notable exception being the Dwarf-Fat Lady-Bearded Lady triple threat “Quarrelsome Carrie” Ackers. And, pituitary dwarfs formed an impromptu militia emphasizing populated by General Tom Thumb Commodore Nutt, Admiral Dot, Baron Little Finger, and Major Winner.

As the freak show confirmed sound categorical integrity with some of its display practices, others vexed such efforts by highlighting the confounding presence of Comte de Buffon’s dreaded objects or specimens that “belong in-between.” This played out in a couple different ways, and with different outcomes. One way was to test the limits of taxonomy by adopting performance names that undid hierarchies instated to help to order every aspect of the earth from its tiniest particulate manner, to fossils, to plants, to animals, to humans. These names spectacularized breaches in boundaries of gender and sexuality, like Annie Jones the “Bearded Lady”; race, like “The Moss Haired Girls: human-nonhuman, like the “Lobster Boy” among other animal-type performers; and even human-object like “The India Rubber Man.” If these labels hinted at categorical instability, a certain class of freaks completely exceeded attempts at classification by appearing as “Nondescripts.” These “What Is Its?” traversed lines of gender, sexuality,

⁷⁹ The notable exception amongst the shades and shadows of the human skeletons was J.W.Coffey, the “Skeleton Dude,” who dressed to the nines in tuxedos and pinstripes (very slimming!) He made himself the toast of the town with his flashy jewelry, dandified duds, and eye-rolling puns like “Most women don’t like their Coffey thin.” A little self-deprecating wit went a long way: with his “fondness for clothes and notoriety,” J.W. Coffey became quite the ladies man and staged a nationwide contest to find a bride (“Freaks of Nature,” *The Illustrated American Volume 4*. November 8 1890.)

race, and humanity all at once, completely exploding even the strangest of freak taxonomies.

While these titillating titles, as well as the bodies interpreted according to said titles, satirized the taxonomic imperative, the freak show still managed to quell these major threats to the greater system. Popularized through Barnum's U.S. exhibitions, the ten-in-one style of freak presentation brought together under one tent the most dazzling and unbelievable casts of human oddities ever seen. While these alternate freak universes stake their roots in late-nineteenth-century regional and state fair midway or dime museums, they also took their shows abroad when Barnum started touring his prodigies in Europe. An 1895 promotional poster shows the cast of curiosities posed either on the main stage or in curtain-framed, human-sized diorama boxes lining the exhibition hall. Under each performer is small label with his or her performing nickname. Even though the eclectic mix of performers mocks the categorical similitude or hierarchal orderliness of taxonomic systems, the staging with its labels and boxes evoking glass display cases still rely on the visual and spatial grammars of taxonomy. Because principles of arrangement and description are a key part of the freak presentation, Barnum's 1895 tour may be read as a portable and embodied archive of freakery that works both within and against archival theories and practices. The caption for the promotional poster replicates the same tension guiding archival theory that pits the uniqueness of individual materials against the need for cohesion when defining the archival body. The show's emphasis on the particularity of these bodies, the "most unique wonders in the physical world" ("les prodigies uniques au monde des phenomenes

physique”), is tempered by the generalizing impulses of the whole body, “the biggest presentation of marvelous human and living curiosities (“la plus grande presentation des merveilleuses curiosites humaines et vivantes.) The caption is neither a wholesale ratification nor disavowal of archival discourse, but rather a sensational disclosure of the archives’ rhetorical system that usually goes unacknowledged.

Another tactic the freak show used to crack up the inner-workings of archival description practices was to undermine the efficacy of naming practices by emphasizing and unsettling potential behavioral associations that might accompany a given label. Nineteenth-century archiving and displaying sought to deanimate and detheatricalize objects or specimens by demystifying their aberrations through thorough labeling and analyzing. In characterizing the archival collection as a “whole, a living organism,” the Dutch Manual poses an important qualification in its footnotes: “at least an organism which *has lived*, for the archivist receives the archival collection into his custody when it is dead.”⁸⁰ In other words, a good archive is a dead archive. Robin Blyn notes that the freak show’s different narrative forms competed against one another to generate “aesthetic indeterminacy.” Moving beyond questions of aesthetics, I would argue that narrative discontinuities also promote an archival indeterminacy in which the freak show discloses the possible unruliness of information management systems even as it consolidates them. For example, a 1902 entry in *Living London* advertises a “Noble Savage” (at his “happy hunting ground” in Islington’s shooting gallery) for whom “good

⁸⁰ Muller, Feith, Fruin, *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, 20.

living and little exercise incline him to obesity,” even though he does muster up a war dance when enough spectators are present.⁸¹ Zeroing in on this newfound taste for the British good life glitches existing systems of human taxonomies that identify Noble Savage as a resiliently primitive figure and space holder of edenic pre-civilization. Instead, the freak show shows the Noble Savage for what he is: a mythological product of ethnographic systems of representation given body through prose, poetry, literature, and now performance. In this case, the presence of the freak performer realizes Buffon’s greatest concern that these “in-between” specimens have the ability to upset the whole general system. The freak show traded on the power of singular description, but then delighted in countering all expectations, showing the gaps between discursive abstraction and embodied specificity that contemporaneous archival theory sought to either bridge or hide. Once freaks were “named,” they typically countered any ready associations. The freak show reveals that the tactics employed for ordering and understanding the nature of knowledge relied on a carefully constructed representational system intended to benefit a certain type of normative embodiment.

v. The Tattooed Greek: “Freaking” Archives and “Freaking” Bodies

Allegedly hailing from Albania, Captain Costentenus (born Djordgi Konstantinus) was making a lucrative living in the U.S by the early 1870’s. Many would imitate, but he was

⁸¹ A. St. John Adcock, “London Sideshow,” *Living London: Its Work and its Play Its Humour and its Pathos Its Sights and Its Scenes*, ed. George R. Sims (London: Cassell and Company, 1902), 284.

the freak show's first tattooed man. His body was covered in 388 tattoos representing different Burmese patterns and his show was simple: he just peacocked around in a loin cloth flashing his remarkable body art. His backstory cast him as Greek freedom fighter taken captive by Chinese tartars who punished him with intense sessions with their tattooing needles. As the first of his kind, Captain George was incredibly successful, earning close to \$1000 each week, part of which he willed to his fellow freak friends in need on his demise.



Fig. 2 Promotional Poster "G.A. Farini's Tattooed Greek."
L0073709 Courtesy of Wellcome Library, London.

Whether intended to appeal to audience members' patriotism or ironize the quiet fetishization of the average, Tom Thumb's performances illustrate the persistence of the norm, but did so by giving it peculiar body. In the case of Tom Thumb, his "freak body" was not simply the highly visible "other" that give the invisible "norm" its shape, but a improvisation of the budding norm made possible through processes of bodily abstraction. As his fellow "Grecian" freak performers suggest, however, freak bodies posed very material responses to the processes of abstraction assembling to bring normalcy to cultural consciousness. Visual templates for the "norm" look different when separated from the white, middleclass, male body and mapped onto the bodies of the others. For example, Captain Costentenus's tattooed presentation laces the Grecian body with racial ambiguity as it also breaches boundaries between human and nature. He was exhibited as a freedom crusader-turned-victim subject to a three-month tattooing punishment at the hands of either Chinese or Burmese "barbarians," depending on the source, with his tattoo's signifying the indelible marks of imperial violence. The tattoos themselves comprised of "birds, beasts, fishes, serpents, fabulous monsters, and hieroglyphic," making it nearly impossible to tell if nature becomes man or man nature.⁸² In the case of Constentenus, Hellenism tells us more of the story of cultural otherness than it does of the self, of perplexing embodiment than of the norm. Freakery rewrites not only the visual histories of Victorian Hellenist revivalism, but also Hellenism's work as a discourse of historical transmission that traditionally supports sexist, racist, and

⁸²William Linn Keese, "Captain Constentenus," *The Siamese Twins and Other Poems* (New York: Edwin W. Dayton, 1902), 52.

ableist orders of knowledge masquerading as histories of the British self. Bringing together questions of embodiment, historical transmission, and normativity, this dissertation asks: what do archives look like when we strip away the expected narratives that guide our reading and research methods by looking to other bodies, especially freak ones, as models? Studies of freakery are necessarily intersectional, as discussions of their bodies constellate discourses of gender and sexuality, race, ethnicity, colonialism, and disability. Archival studies connects to each of these in different ways to grapple with how different bodies are included or excluded in history, and how these bodies revise the nature of archives and evidence.

In the world of the Victorian freak show, gender, sexuality, and love were hot topics. Krao Farini, the “Human-Monkey,” declined more than her fair share of wedding proposals, having learned “too much independence during wild life in the woods,”⁸³ to make her one of the first of the late-nineteenth-century “bachelor girls.” Miss Uno” the “Circassian Beauty,” routed all of her exuberant sexuality out through her abundantly “moss-like” hair and the charmed snakes wrapped around her body.⁸⁴ And, James Morris,

⁸³ “Krao Farini, the ‘Missing Link,’” *English Mechanic and World of Science* 60, no. 1553 (1894): 429.

⁸⁴ If she didn’t feel up to the job, Mlle. Zenobia Zalumma Agra, Zoe Meleke, Zuleika, Zumigo, Zoebida, or Millie Zulu were ready to take her place. “Circassian Beauties”/“Moss-Haired” girls were almost always “Z”-named because Barnum through it sounded faraway and exotic. For more on “Circassian Beauties see, Linda Frost, *Never One Nation: Freaks, Savages, and Whiteness in U.S. Popular Culture, 1850-1877* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005); Charles D. Martin, *The White African American Body: A Cultural and Literary Exploration* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002); Gregory Fried, “A Freakish Whiteness: The Circassian Lady and the Caucasian Fantasy,” accessed July 16, 2016, mirrorofrace.org.

the “India Rubber Man,” always evoked an “eloquent picture” whether he looked like a regular, mustachioed man or the “trunk of an elephant.”⁸⁵ These performers and others of their kind materialize the expansive possibilities embedded in the term queer that move beyond gender and sexuality exclusively to provide a language of penetrating boundaries of human/nonhuman, living/nonliving. Currently one of the most familiar alternative approaches to archiving is “queering” the archive, an expansive critical-methodological term for scholarship that resists the implicitly heterosexist structures of evidence, archives, and archiving. Within the last decade or so, queer theory has provided a theoretical framework for reinterpreting archives to respond to the systematic erasure and invisibility of LGBTQ subjects in the historical record. Queering the archive has provoked an eclectic and vast body of scholarship drawing from humanities, social science, and archival studies scholars with topics ranging from case studies of collections within queer community archives, how-to’s on building queer archives to theoretical repositionings of embodiment and evidence. While different in subject, methods, and scope, they cluster around the shared commitment to creating an alternative historical record that reconsiders the archive’s relationship to evidence, time and memory making.

While its subjects and concerns are many, for the purposes of this dissertation, queering the archive informs a “freak” archival methodology through its commitment to building alternative, non-normative archival bodies, both figuratively and literally. Queering the archive poses rhetorical and methodological revisions to the archival body and archiving as conceived by formative nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century

⁸⁵ “Morris, the ‘India Rubber Man,’” *Scientific American* 79 (1898): 26.

archival theory by resisting the deterministic and developmental teleologies implicit in normative archival discourse. Ann Cvetkovich's and J. Halberstam's works on queer archives have been foundational in expanding what we consider to be archives beyond the material, practical definition set out by the Society of American Archivists.⁸⁶ In their studies of queer and trans- subcultures, the queer archives Cvetkovich and Halberstam produce are idiosyncratic, expansive, and participatory, made by and belonging to members of their communities. By encompassing the material and immaterial features of LGBTQ cultural production, these studies advocate for a model of archiving that considers a broader range of remembering practices not traditionally sustained by institutional archives. Eschewing the "whole [dead] organism" ensured for posterity of linear time, queer perspectives build dynamic, unfinished—even mutant⁸⁷—bodies through imaginative and eccentric forms of time's passing, such as recursivity, deterioration, renewal, non-vertical inheritance, detritus, seriality, and randomness.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).; J. Jack Halberstam. *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (New York: New York University, 2005).

⁸⁷ For more on mutation and queer/trans- bodies, see Ch. 5, 'Technotopias: Representing Transgender Bodies in Contemporary Art,' in J. Jack Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place. In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (New York: New York University, 2005).

⁸⁸ See Anjali Arondekar, *For the Record: On Sexuality and the Colonial Archive* (Durham: Duke University Press 2009); Lisa Darms, "The Archival Object: A Memoir of Disintegration," *Archivaria* 67 (Spring 2009): 143-155.; Greg Youmans, "Elsa Gidlow's Garden: Plants, Archives, and Queer History," *Out of the Closet, Into the Archives: Researching Sexual Histories*, ed. Amy L. Stone, Jaime Cantrell (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015), 99-124. ; David Griffiths, "Queer Theory for Lichens," *UnderCurrents* 19 (2015): 36-45; Robb Hernández. "Drawn from the Scraps,"

Queer archival perspectives have also instated theoretical frameworks for exploring how archival documents communicate through affective and material registers to promote new modes of reading and evaluation. Affect and freakery move on parallel rhetorical tracks. The keys to both lie in their undefinability. Affect generally refers to a vital force preceding cognition or emotion that propels or suspects movement, thought, and relations within the world.⁸⁹ Like freak bodies, affect unhinges and makes inconsequential many of the recognizable footholds for cultural inquiry, such as subject/object, human/nonhuman, self/other, inside/outside. Affect theory is a relatively new critical interlocutor in archival studies because of the longtime suturing of archiving and science: the practice of archiving was an exercise in objectivity and neutrality and archival evidence was considered empirically sound and unchanging. However, queer theory's focus on ephemerality, alternative embodiment, feelings and trauma have introduced changes to the nature of archival bodies and evidence. Affect's potentiality, its yet-realized identifications and modes of being, unsettle archival bodies by giving them dynamic senses of time and space that draw archivists and researches alike into the power relations that the language of archiving as science forecloses. Archives become spaces of desire and emotional entanglement that has since provoked humanities researchers to

Radical History Review 122 (2015): 70-88; Jamie A. Lee, "Be/longing in the archival body: Eros and the "Endearing" Value of Material Lives," *Archival Science* 16, no. 1 (March 2016): 33-51.

⁸⁹ Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg, "An Inventory of Shimmers," *The Affect Theory Reader* ed. Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 3.

frame archival research as acts of intimacy and political engagement.⁹⁰ Queer theory's investment in affect has also opened up expanded possibilities for what we consider to be evidential. José Muñoz stresses that queerness is a terrain of "possibility" and a mode of sociality and relationality," which inspires bodies of evidence comprised of "traces, glimmers, residues, and specks"⁹¹ Similarly, in her reading of family snapshots, Tina Campt maintains that their affective architectures ignite "forms of emotion, sentiment, meaning, and value ... that register beyond the visual" to expand on the narrative capabilities of evidence.⁹²

While the non-normative body bears considerably on a "freak" method of archival research, the archive's relationship to normativity also stages a branching out point to differentiate queer and freak methods more definitively. Queer theory pledges a longstanding commitment to anti-normativity, an alliance only recently being called into question.⁹³ A vigilant suspicion of the norm is necessary for grappling with queer absences in archives, but a notable lacuna in these studies is the inevitable norming

⁹⁰ Arlette Farge, *The Allure of Archives* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).; Maryanne Dever, Ann Vickery, Sally Newman, *The Intimate: Archive: Journeys Through Private Papers* (Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2009).; Durba Ghosh, "National Narratives and the Politics of Miscegenation, Britain and India," *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History* ed. Antoinette Burton (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 27-45.

⁹¹ José Esteban Muñoz, "Ephemera as Evidence: Introductory Notes to Queer Acts," *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 8, no. 2 (1996): 7; 10.

⁹² Tina Campt, *Image Matters: Archive, Photography, and the African Diaspora* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012).

⁹³ Robyn Wiegman and Elizabeth A. Wilson, "Introduction: Antinormativity's Queer Conventions," *difference: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 26, no. 1 (2015): 1-25.

imperatives that drive archiving projects more general. Once we articulate something as archival or as an archive, we enter it into ideological, informatics, and representational systems designed to regulate and to norm. The act of instating rhetorical models for non-normative archival bodies tenuously deposits them into the archival taxonomies and orders that they seek to dissolve. What I am most interested is that point in which the disruptive or refusing body becomes legible as archival, a form of knowledge open to ordering and taxonomizing. The return to archival form, I argue, does not equate to a return to the original or the norm, but rather it signifies an alternative archival body different enough to call into question our assumptions of how archives work and look. More than just a disintegrative process, “freaking” the archive zeros in on the contradictory impulses guiding radically recuperative, integrative theories of archives: it takes up methods of close-reading archival materials and archives to reveal the continuous interplay between the disruptive and the regulatory that takes place when experimenting with models of evidence, archives, and archiving. The goal here is not to champion anti-normativity as the panacea for the archive’s complicity in favoring certain histories over others. My “freak” archival method puts into dynamic relief normativity and non-normativity through bodies of knowledge capable of revealing and revising the dominant ideological, discursive, and material structures of historical transmission.

An 1884 photograph of Professor Guillermo Antonio Farini’s African “Earthmen” looks like it was pulled straight out of an ethnographic archives for one of the British empire’s colonial holdings with its spare background, rigid poses, Khoisan artifacts, and expressionless faces. But rather than an article of scientific objectivity, it was the

promotional photograph for Professor Guillermo Farini's (born William Leonard Hunt of Canadian and funambulist fame) "Desert at the Aquarium" freak revue. Empire fueled engagements with technology, like photography, that bred new forms of archiving, as colonial photographic archives became authoritative bodies for ordering the world's populations by turning them into "types" or "specimens."⁹⁴ Beyond the "Earthmen" of 1884, freak performers were often colonial subjects. My dissertation's choice of case studies including performers from Central America, Africa, and India emphasizes the freak show's role in materializing the invisible transnational flows of humans and commodities that support British imperialism. Responding to these histories, Southeast Asian, African-American, Latino/a and Chicano/, and Indigenous studies wrestle with archival representations of race and ethnicity by offering analytical rubrics for studying visual and embodied archives. In her work with East Indies archives, historian Ann Laura Stoler approaches archives-as-subject through a method referred to as reading the "grain" of archives. This requires attending to material and ideological processes that transform collections of documents into narratives either supporting dominant voices of the colonizers and colonial state ("along the grain") or raising subaltern criticisms of the

⁹⁴ Eleanor Hight and Gary D. Sampson, "Introduction: Photography, 'Race,' and Post-Colonial Theory," *Colonialist Photography: Imag(in)ing race and place*, ed. Eleanor M. Hight and Gary D. Sampson (London: Routledge, 2002), 3.

archives' colonialist structures ("against the grain.")⁹⁵ Stoler's work has inspired a body of scholarship committed to archives and processes colonial governance.⁹⁶

Because the freak show is an embodied and visual phenomenon, a freak archival methodology must adjust, respond to, and create unique analytical rubrics for conducting archival research across different forms of media. Given my interest in exposing the infrastructures of colonialism, non-white and non-European archival perspectives provide an invaluable theoretical palate for experimenting with the different forms that evidence can take outside of the textual documentation exclusively supported by early archival theory. Studies focusing on nineteenth-century and twentieth-century African-American and African diasporic populations especially have laid foundations for critical formal examinations of photographic archives, and their relationships to racial objectification and self-representation. Their topics of study include scientific photography, lynching photography, vernacular domestic snapshots, and photograph albums, all of which have been used to picture and taxonomize blackness throughout the nineteenth-century.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Grain*, 47.

⁹⁶ See, Kathryn Burns, *Into the Archive: Writing and Power in Colonial Peru* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).; Antoinette Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive: Women Writing House, Home and History Late Colonial India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).; . Nupur Chaudhuri, Sherry J. Katz, Mary Elizabeth Perry, eds. *Contesting Archives: Finding Women in the Sources* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010).; Kirsten Weld, *Paper Cadavers: The Archives of Dictatorship in Guatemala* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014).

⁹⁷ See Shawn Michelle Smith, *Photography on the Color Line: W.E.B. DuBois, Race, and Visual Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).; Shawn Michelle Smith, *American Archives: Race, Gender, and Class in Visual Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).; Leigh Raiford, "Ida B. Wells and the Shadow Archive," *Pictures and Progress: Early Photography and the Making of the African American*

Expressing distrust for official text-based documents and archives that support histories of colonialism and human rights abuse, scholars of Latinidad further broaden the available suite of archival evidence by stressing the centrality of embodied forms of remembering and knowledge-making. Of particular interest to freakery is Diana Taylor's concept of the repertoire, which accounts for "performances, gestures, orality, movement, dance, singing—in short all those acts usually thought of as ephemeral, nonreproducible knowledge" in tracing the traditions and influences.⁹⁸ Similarly, pluralist viewpoints in archival studies have initiated changes to narrow definitions of records to account for indigenous forms of knowledge and archiving based in the body, like orality and performance.⁹⁹

Growing out of disability rights activism, disability studies is dedicated to revealing how the category of "disability" is produced through cultural, economic, legal, political, and artistic narratives that exclude, restrict, and disadvantage bodies

Body, ed. Maurice O. Wallace and Shawn Michelle Smith (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 299-321.; Tina Campt. *Image Matters: Archive, Photography, and the African Diaspora in Europe*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012).; James VanDerZee, "Putting Down Photographic Roots in Harlem," *Touching Photographs*, ed. Margaret Olin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 101-130.; Cheryl Finley, "No Auction Block for Me!" *Pictures and Progress: Early Photography and the Making of the African American Body*, ed. Maurice O. Wallace and Shawn Michelle Smith (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 329-348.

⁹⁸ Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 20.

⁹⁹ Shannon Faulkhead, Livia Iacovino, Sue McKemmish, Kirsten Thorpe, "Australian Indigenous Knowledge and the Archive: Embracing Multiple Ways of Knowing and Keeping," *Archives and Manuscripts* 38, no. 1 (May 2010): 27-50.

deemed physically or psychologically different.¹⁰⁰ This social model moves away from a prevailing medical model that limns disability in essentialist terms or physical conditions that are intrinsic to the individual's own body. Just as feminist studies differentiates between gender and sex, disability studies similarly distinguishes between disability and impairment, which Michael Oliver refers to as "lacking part or all of a limb, or having a defective limb, organism, or mechanism of the body."¹⁰¹ Accompanying the growth of disability across subjects and time periods of inquiry, David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder call for methods that more carefully historicize disability, emphasizing that is a "constructed category of discursive investment" that changes over time much like gender, sexuality, race, and class.¹⁰² Similarly, Catherine Kudlick maintains that disability materializes implicit social hierarchies built through intertwined notions of embodiment and citizenship by "reveal[ing] and construct[ing] notions of human difference." Because of its emphasis on the representational systems that render disability legible as a social category, albeit an unstable one, disability studies has taken "freak" as both a subject and

¹⁰⁰ Rosemarie Garland Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies*, 6.

¹⁰¹ Michael Oliver quoted from Eli Clare, *Pride and Exile: Disability, Queerness, and Liberation*. 2nd ed (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 6.

¹⁰² David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, "Introduction: Disability as Narrative Supplement," *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse*, ed. David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 2.

rhetorical device. Echoing historicist approaches to disability, “freak” is a “prismatic term that refracts the history of disability, including its most sordid past”¹⁰³

But, the freak show always, and consciously so, walks the line between exploitation and self-representation, which unsettles its relationship to nineteenth-century formulations of disability. During their 1898-9 London tour, Barnum and Bailey’s freaks convened an “Indignation Meeting.” The charge? They disapproved of the term “freak,” citing the term to be “without any apparent meaning.” They preferred the term “prodigies.” Their prepared statement refuted Victorian constructions of disability centered on personal affliction, emotional excess, or economic and political impotence.¹⁰⁴ They did not see their bodies as “defective” or “crippled,” but as extraordinary: “Some of us are really the development of a higher type, and are superior persons, inasmuch as some of us are gifted with attributes not apparent in ordinary beings.”¹⁰⁵ This event and others like it crystallize the relative instability of disability as a social category during the nineteenth century, part of which arises out of the fact that “the disabled” as a term distinct from “crippled,” “afflicted,” or “deformed” was a twentieth-century invention that appeared in the years following the Boer War to denote returning wounded soldiers.¹⁰⁶ Nadja Durbach cites as a potential critical shortcoming the trend of applying

¹⁰³ Leonard Cassuto, “Freak,” *Keywords for Disability Studies*, ed. Rachel Adams, Benjamin Reiss, David Serlin (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 85.

¹⁰⁴ Martha Stoddard Holmes, *Fictions of Affliction: Physical Disability in Victorian Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010).

¹⁰⁵ “Indignant Freaks,” *London Times* (London), January 22 1899.

¹⁰⁶ Nadja Durbach, *Spectacle of Deformity*, 17.

late-twentieth-century models of disability to nineteenth-century humans and conditions. Growing out of the age of the workhouse, Victorian understandings of ability and disability were rooted in the body's capacity for labor with the figure of the "crippled" beggar being forefront in the Victorian imaginary of disability. Freaks, however, considered themselves to be self-sufficient and able-bodied workers, not dependent on the state for aid according parameters set out by the 1834 Poor Law Amendment—a fact made clear when they briefly established their own trade-union.

While the material history of disability and freakery may not exactly coincide in terms of embodiment, labor, and the state, the freak show nonetheless capitalized off of nascent discourses of disability for its own benefit—and the benefit of its performers. Unlike the "prodigies", some freaks actually preferred the term "freak." A short manifesto penned by the "Freak Union" anticipates the discourse of medical models of disability, but uses it to upturn the normative social hierarchies based on embodiment that medical discourse potentially instates. In asserting their physical specialness, the "Freak Union" ballyhoos its relative cultural fitness to rewrite common narratives of bodily difference, impotence, and exploitation. Annoyed by the preponderance of tattooed people and Circassian Beauties clogging up the freak show circuit, the "Freak Union" manifesto declined to recognize these types of performers as "fit members of their union" asserting that "true freak is born, not made, and cannot be supplied to order in unlimited quantities."¹⁰⁷ The Freak Union and the Indignation Meeting might just be a series of

¹⁰⁷ "The Freaks' Union," *New York Times*, August 20 1883.

episodes supporting critical perspectives that the freak show was an exploitative enterprise intended to victimize and objectify disabled people,¹⁰⁸ since we have no way of knowing who actually helmed these movements, the performers themselves or their impresarios. However, what it does show is that freak performers were at least partially complicit in their own terms of exploitation in attempting to set the terms of their presentation, whether through their Indignation Meetings, their Freak Unions, or the freak-only management agency run by Count Orloff the “Transparent Man.” But this ambiguity also reveals a more complex set of relations among performer, showman, audience (“rubes” to be exploited), media, and archives that, as Eli Clare urges, pushes us to consider freak show exploitation as fluid and multi-lateral.

In addition to being a potential sub-sect of disability studies, freakery perhaps more effectively has been marshaled as a figurative signpost for addressing the visibility, or invisibility, of disability studies within broader academic discourses. At the conclusion of *Enforcing Normalcy* (1995), Lennard Davis uses freakery as a rhetorical device in his evaluation that the “concept of disability has been relegated to a sideshow, a freak show, far away from the academic midway of progressive ideas and concerns” with gender, sexuality, race, and class being the stars of the show.¹⁰⁹ In 2002, Michael Berubé slightly revises Davis’ original statement by casting disability studies as a “sideshow of a

¹⁰⁸David Hevey, “The Enfreakment of Photography,” *The Disability Studies Reader* ed. Lennard Davis (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2006), 367-379.

¹⁰⁹ Lennard Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness, and the Body* (New York: Verso, 1995), 158.

sideshow,” since discourses of race and gender are already “socially marginalized.”¹¹⁰ And, a decade later in the introduction to *Disability Quarterly*’s “Freak”-themed double issue, Michael Chemers ups the critical ante once again when he places “freak studies” as “sideshow of a sideshow of a sideshow.”¹¹¹ This rhetorical showmanship emphasizes the revelatory capabilities of freak shows, as freakery is continuously used as figurative touchstone for exposing the implicit hierarchies structuring academic “midways” that would other go unacknowledged.

Archiving and archives similarly reinforce the “sideshow” status of disability studies. Unlike, gender, sexuality, or race, disability does not yet have its own poetics or method of radical archiving. So, in what follows rather than offering a review of the existing literature, I would like to entertain how disability studies potentially offers a unique language for a freak archival method. Robert McGruer’s “Crip Theory” powerfully argues that systems of compulsory heterosexuality are imbricated with systems of compulsory able-bodiedness. “Crippling” is invested in collectively transforming “the substantive, material uses to which queer/disabled existence has been put by a system of compulsory able-bodiedness” by continuously imagining bodies otherwise.¹¹² Crippling supplies a visceral language for breaking apart, taking a

¹¹⁰ Michael Berubé, forward to *Bending Over Backwards: Disability, Dismodernism, and other Difficult Positions* by Lennard Davis (New York: New York University Press, 2002), viii.

¹¹¹ Michael Chemers, “Staging Stigma—A Freak Studies Manifesto,” *Disability Studies Quarterly* 25, no. 3 (Summer 2005).

¹¹² Robert McGruer, *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), 32.

“sledgehammer to,” concretized systems of sex and embodiment in the name of “remaking the material world.”¹¹³ I claim “crip’s” exciting expansiveness and shattering effects as a vital tool of a freak archival methodology, since freak performers potentially derailed the taxonomic systems that they occupied. Crippling’s investment in locating the “severe” and defiant cultural work of alternative bodies resonates with my goal of revising dominant understandings of the archival body as a self-contained “whole,” showing that in addition to colonialist and sexist logics archives work according to an ableist one as well. However, a freak archival methodology always proceeds with the understanding that these shattering, disruptive, and expanding efforts will eventually be re-concretized or economized into, at least partially, forms of archival management themselves, even as they are usually aestheticized as “errors,” “incongruities,” or “indeterminacies.” However, this inevitable return to the archive does not equate to a return to the norm. These “freaks” of archives expose the underlying and surface-level organizational, discursive, and ideological systems of archives that implicitly shape the conditions of archival research.

vi. The Magnetic Lady: “Freaking” Documents

Nothing about a prim photograph of Mattie Lee Price would tell us that she thrilled audiences nightly. In her promotional image, Mattie poses in a drawing room with her

¹¹³ Robert McRuer, *Crip Theory*, 35.

hands clasped and gazing serenely downward, as befits a middle class woman. But, as “The Magnetic Lady,” Mattie’s displays of extraordinary strength transcended explanation even by the most “Eminent Scientists of both Hemispheres.” Nor would we know that she was proclaimed by her impresario to be a living example of a new type of matter called “radiant matter.”¹¹⁴ Nor could we ascertain that she would travel to England and rebirth herself as the “Mysterious GAZA.” Nor is there evidence that she was that the defendant in a lawsuit waged by the Harris Museum of Cincinnati, Ohio after finding out that she really didn’t possess electromagnetic qualities.

The “Magnetic Lady” draws us to her. As the few visual tokens left of the Magnetic Lady, her cabinet cards prompts us to ask: what stories does photography tell or, more accurately, what stories can photography tell? What of her freak performance history can we discern from looking at Mattie Lee Price and what, like her “radiant matter,” eludes our powers of visual observation? Just by looking at it, the cabinet card appears defiantly secretive, offering us only a slip of the history of this colorful performer who has now been eulogized as Georgia’s Forgotten Wonder, banished to an archival purgatory where she is noted but not necessarily remembered. Depending too heavily on visual observation flattens the storytelling possibilities of this document, but how can we get to the “Invisible, Intangible, Yet Real” not actually decipherable in the photograph?

“Freaking” the archive expresses the will to remake the material world by transforming archives and archival documents into playful experiments in classification

¹¹⁴ Rellum, “Invisible, Intangible, Yet Real,” *St. Louis Medical Journal* 11, no. 10 (October 1884): 440.

and storytelling. This freak archival method entails exploring how freakery breeds unique forms of documentation in which the freak show's four interlocking narrative forms residually constellate long after the freak show has ended and has moved to archival collections. To emphasize this continued narrative interplay long after the freak show has ended and moved into archives, I refer to this type of freak documentation as "intermediated": any one document is an expandable mini-archive comprised of text, image, orality, and performance presenting us with histories both discernible and speculative. The goal of redefining the narrative possibilities of documentation is to broaden our understandings of how documents are supposed to perform acts of historical transmission by beckoning us to employ visual, tactile, aural, and speculative research methods. Defining freak documentation thusly undoes our reliance on empiricist research methods privileging direct observation that equate historical silences, absences, or elisions with critical foreclosure. Instead, freak documents reframe archival research as a critical-imaginative endeavor that simultaneously unlocks, resists, and rewrites the archive's information, ideological, and representational systems. The narrative possibilities enclosed in each document invite a keener critical awareness to the various analytical rubrics we implicitly bring to different archives. Archives supply us with ways of thinking textually, visually, aurally, materially, or digitally depending on their content and form, but rarely do we think about how these might coincide or clash, and when they do how they might be able to change the conditions of historical production and transmission. Through this increased critical acuity, freak documents fuel open-ended and speculative trains of thinking, feeling, reading, seeing, and writing to promote greater

awareness of how archives generate bodies of knowledge both normative and liminal, and how such processes are always ongoing.

In order to explore how the material history of the freak intersects with the emergence of different forms of documentation beyond text, “freaking” the archive brings together bodies of archival theory that have grown out of visual and performance studies. Freak photography mimicked a few different recognizable photographic genres, each with different relationships to the activity of archiving. More generally in its late-1830s inception, photography contributed to and expanded fields of archival management. Photographic reproduction seeded a widespread “archival madness” to translate one’s surroundings into image-facts, and then consequently an “archival system.”¹¹⁵ Specifically with its early use for medical and police purposes, photography visualized what Allan Sekula coins a “generalized, inclusive *archive*, a *shadow archive*” that contains and arranges into a social terrain both the bodies of civic leaders, cultural exemplars, celebrities and those of the insane, female, criminal, nonwhite, disabled, and diseased.¹¹⁶ In order to capture and order these “shadow bodies,” photography depended on attending narratives of its “truth-telling” capabilities: unlike other forms of visual documentation, photographs could furnish viewers with detailed, realistic, and precise images, thereby enhancing the powers of human observation. With its scientific and

¹¹⁵ Okwui Enwezor, *Archive Fever: Photography Between History and Monument* (New York: Steidl, 2008), 12.

¹¹⁶ Allan Sekula, “The Body and the Archive,” *The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography*, ed. Richard Bolton (Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1989), 347.

technological credentials, photography became a tool of knowing specially suited for fieldwork, geographical description, and, most importantly for this study, archival preservation. The French photographic atelier Mayer-Pierson went as far as to claim that “a photographic atelier should function in all of our national archival repositories and under the surveillance of our conservators, reproduce and replicate the treasures that they preserve” [“un atelier de photographie devrait fonctionner dans tous les depots de nos archives nationales, et, sous la surveillance severe des conservateurs, reproduire et multiplier les tresors qu’elles conservent.”]¹¹⁷ Photography’s story of scientific objectivity, however, was simply that—a story designed to grapple with and legitimize a new medium that had the potential to upend existing socio-political orders through making visible the invisible and democratizing visual art.

As touched on earlier in this introduction, freak souvenir photographs employed visual and staging conventions common to colonial photographic archives. Throughout this dissertation, clever freak impersonations of colonial photographs are one of the connective links between otherwise-eclectic choices of freak performer subjects. Even as photography made possible the understanding of the world as an archival system, early archival theory was still carefully limiting what exactly constituted an official archive, which during the early-1840s equated to official textual documents of the state. This changed, however, when camera technology traveled to the empire’s colonial holdings initially as a commercial endeavor, but soon became a technology of the state required

¹¹⁷ Mayer and Pierson, *La Photographie*, quoted in Joan Schwartz, “Records of Simple Truth and Precision: Photography, Archives, and the Illusion of Control,” *Archivaria* 50 (Fall 2000): 20.

for ethnographically ordering colonial subjects.¹¹⁸ Nineteenth-century photography helped visualize conceptions of race and humanity, and the freak show exploited this status as a tool of science to both emphasize the otherness of its performers and to increase its credibility. Brian Hochman also argues that popular understandings of race, ethnicity, and extinction likewise fueled experimentation with new photographic and aural media by endowing these new technologies with the authority to act as tools of archiving.¹¹⁹ Freakery's re-use of colonial visual conventions and aesthetics paces the development of the photographic archives, but, as I will argue, not just to reaffirm conventional wisdom of photography's supposed objectivity or its privileged status as a tool of colonial governance. Instead, freak show photography's posturing as colonial portraiture reveals the subtle aesthetic and discursive maneuvers that accrue to confer the photograph with archival authority. And often because of the collaborative and reciprocal relationship of the freak show photographer and freak performer¹²⁰, these allusions to colonial portraiture actually defamiliarized and questioned photography's role in promoting the hierarchies of human populations through archiving.

¹¹⁸ Sudhir Mahadevan, "Archives and Origins: The Material and Vernacular Cultures of Photography in India," *Archives* 4, no. 1 (Fall 2013).

¹¹⁹ Brian Hochman, *Savage Preservation: The Ethnographic Origins of Modern Media Technology* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

¹²⁰ Christopher R. Smit, "A Collaborative Aesthetic: Levinas' Idea of Responsibility and the Photographs of Charles Eisenmann and the Late Nineteenth-Century Freak Performer," *Victorian Freaks: The Social Context of Freakery in Britain*, ed. Marlene Tromp (Columbus: Ohio University Press, 2008), 294.

Because of freak photography's imitative qualities, these materials had sometimes surprising afterlives. Often, images of freak performers ended up in the pages of medical and scientific journals dedicated to either the study of the world's populations or unique case studies of bodily aberrations. However, specialist journals were not the original intended venues for these objects. Freak photographs were meant to be souvenirs at home in the Victorian drawing room and photo album.¹²¹ Even though domestic collections or photo albums were definitively not considered proper archival collections during the Victorian period (according to archival theory), they nonetheless activate their own unique form of memory transmission that sets them apart from colonial or medical portraiture, while expanding on the narrative possibilities of documentation. Freak show *cartes-de-visite* offer evidence for tracing patterns of archival movement, as the cards serve as informal records of chains of ownership that augment or contravene their official provenance. Adulterated by writing, tears, holes, and time wear, these *cartes-de-visite* introduce evidence in the form of their affective prehistories tied to domestic spaces now made accessible through archives. Derrida's description of "archive fever" frames archiving as an intensely affective process, one that complicates the archival rhetoric or ordering and cataloguing: "It is to burn with a passion. It is never to rest, interminably, from searching for the archive right where it slips away ... It is to have a compulsive, repetitive, and nostalgic desire for the archive."¹²² Attending to the traces of prior domestic lives found in the freak photograph suggests that archival documents have both

¹²¹ Rosemarie Garland Thomson, "Introduction: From Wonder to Error—A Genealogy of Freak Discourse in Modernity," *Freakery*, 7.

¹¹⁹ Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 91.

physical and affective architectures; and the histories circulating, handling, and collecting of freak images may account for both of these through photography's haptic qualities.

Photography braids together both visual and haptic forms of archival engagement, which serve as valuable theoretical models for identifying the sensory and affective nuances of touch. Firstly, touch and vision collaborate in terms of the photograph's exteriority: attention to the photograph's surface transforms photography into materiality, a "photo-object," whose production is a record of the tactile "like touching, wearing, handling, and manipulation, as well as the varied and elaborate forms of presentation, display, and circulation."¹²³ Moreover, the this question of touch also refers to its interiority, the modes of feeling and affective attachments produced by these images through their production and circulation in domestic spaces, as well as the archivist's encounters with them in the archive. Focus on touch and feelings allow photography to be draw into a broader network of embodied perceptions that I see as necessary part of a freak archival methodology. The freak show engendered feelings, whether of curiosity, disgust, pity, and ardor. These objects vibrate with unseen and unfinished affective histories that frame archival research not as a quest for detached observation and completion, but as one of intellectual and emotional connection, and ongoing speculation.

In addition to the textual and the visual, the freak show is primarily a form of performance, a fact not fully recognized by traditional understandings of what documents look like and how they work. Typically the archive and performance are odds with one

¹²⁰ Elizabeth Edwards quoted in Tina Campt, *Image Matters: Archive, Photography, and African Diaspora in Europe*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012).

another, as performance in its most traditional formulation is designated as the point of disappearance.¹²⁴ Because “freaking” the archive requires new and experimental modes of archiving, my dissertation engages with the archival turn in performance studies to think about how performance lasts or remains beyond its sense of immediacy or inability to be recorded. To consider performance as something that lingers opens up space for alternate modes of textuality and narrative in order to expand traditional definitions of documentation on which archival work usually relies. The freak histories that I trace are tenuously and contingently connected through cross-temporal networks created through the nineteenth-century freak show and contemporary visual and performance art. As a result, sewn into the fabric of these contemporary works, whether performances, photographs, or videos, are the disparate skeins of the past lives of Victorian freaks, giving the contemporary materials an archival quality. Marvin Carlson’s work on theatrical ghosting—how performance lingers in spaces, scripts, actors, and stage props—touches on the genealogical aspects of performance that continually shape audience reception.¹²⁵ In terms of performing bodies, freak performers, past and present, articulate David Román’s “archival drag,” which is a type of performance that sets out to “re-embody and revive a performance from the past.”¹²⁶ Acknowledging embodied

¹²⁴ Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked; the Politics of Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 19.

¹²⁵ Marvin Carlson, *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001).

¹²⁶ David Román, *Performance in America: Contemporary U.S. Culture and the Performing Arts* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).

practices as key documents of knowledge and memory transmission is central to addressing the silencing effects of institutional and colonial archives.¹²⁷

If Roman's work innovates on the archival potential of the performing body, Rebecca Schneider innovates on the performing potential of the archival body through the "performing remain." Archives themselves require or make possible certain kinds of performance while foreclosing others. One of the goals of a freak archival method is push against expectations and expand the performing capabilities of archives and documents. Schneider argues that performance does not disappear but remains present within a constellation of residues, networked objects, bodies, memories, and documents. Emphasizing the equal importance of material documents and the immaterial labor of performing bodies who "engage in and with [an] incomplete past: bodies striking poses, making gestures, voicing calls, reading words, singing songs, or standing witness," Schneider expands on traditional definitions of documents, as well as contesting archival mythologies that view the archive as an immobile seat of the past.¹²⁸ Contained not only in texts or photographs, but also articulated through performing bodies, "freaking" the archive is a necessarily incomplete act. It specifically attends to how the past and the present encounter one another and the forces they exert on one another. As a result, this

¹²⁷ María Elena Martínez, "Archives, Bodies, and Imagination: The Case of Juana Aguilar and Queer Approaches to History, Sexuality, and Politics," *Radical History Review* 2014, no. 120 (2014): 159-182.

¹²⁸ Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 33.

approach to archive research re-enlivens the archive, leaving it always open to the possibility of future renegotiation, regardless of archival arrangement or description.

vii. A Remarkable Family of Strange Human Beings

This introduction has called into service a handful of freak performers: Lucky John, JoJo the Dog-Faced Boy, General Tom Thumb, the Tattooed Greek, Krao Farini “the Missing Link,” the Circassian Beauties, and the Electric Lady. By dropping only a couple details of their colorful lives, they stood at the beginning of each section beckoning you to step right up and inspect for yourself some of the eye-raising spectacles of freakery and archives that the following pages will provide. These folks are the talkers, or the “blowers,”¹²⁹ tasked with attracting crowds and luring them into the freak show by promising all the wonders waiting for the cost of a single dime.

This dissertation takes its structural and rhetorical cues from the freak show. The freak show is steeped in convention, adhering to an agreed-upon set of practices that make it what it is. Academic writing too has its own received conventions—ways of structuring or arranging chapters or entire studies, as well as its own languages and stories that shape its methods—that perhaps we do not necessarily think about as much as we could. To explore how new understandings of archives might engender new forms of scholarship, I break from the received dissertation format of four or five written chapters arranged as discrete case studies or a chronology. Instead, this dissertation takes the form

¹²⁹ Bogdan, *Freak Show*, 94.

of a freaky three-ring circus, each section with its own unique performances and concerns but still interconnected by shared investments in matters archival and freakish. The three “rings” are “The Archive,” “Archives,” and “Archiving” moving from broadly theoretical to increasingly practice-based accounts of archives-based research. Punctuating these sections are short ethnographies of archival artists who draw from Victorian freak show materials or aesthetics. The point of these performing interruptions is to emphasize how freakery now serves as an aesthetics that resonates with anti-colonial, queer, and experimental artists, even if it has been historically marshaled as a conservative cultural force in the service of validating colonialist, heterosexist, and ableist systems of knowledge.

The first section, “Archive,” tackles archival prehistory: the cultural moments before archival theories became fully articulated and put into practice, but nonetheless existed in piecemeal. To this end, I take on the figure of the imperial archive, conceptualized by Thomas Richards as fantasy of comprehensive knowledge¹³⁰, through readings of prehistoric co-headlining freak performers, “The Aztecs” and the “Earthmen.” This section constellates nineteenth-century prehistoric “freak” exhibition materials with contemporaneous archival administration texts to argue that Victorian prehistoric exhibitions produce new paradigms for archival evidence at a moment when new theories of archival management are being articulated. This section revitalizes familiar takes on imperial archive as an impregnable whole in order to demonstrate how evidence of race, gender, and sexuality emerge in new and different ways in the historical

¹³⁰ Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire* (New York: Verso, 1993).

record even as standards for archival documentation are becoming increasingly visible. The “Aztecs” and “Earthmen” are followed by a short critical interlude on *The Couple in the Cage*, a documentary film starring performance artists Coco Fusco and Guillermo Gómez-Peña as the “Guatinau,” which is a fictional tribe of undiscovered Amerindians from the Gulf of Mexico. This section uses “glitching,” an art form dedicated to introducing stylized disruptions to information and representation systems, as a theoretical framework for showing how prehistory freak aesthetics reshape dominant records keeping models to account for intermediated forms of documentation.

The second section, “Archives,” explores the development of late-nineteenth-century colonial India archival administration through case studies of popular Double-Bodied “freak” performers, such as Lalloo and Lala, the “Healthy, Happy, Handsome Hindoo.” What makes these performers stand out is that their exhibitions consciously incorporated official colonial archival materials into their exhibitions, effectively reframing public reception of colonial archival projects. This section traces the archival histories of Double-Bodied ethnographic exhibitions to insist that freak show research creates “double-bodied” archives, ones that require interplay between official colonial archival records and vernacular archival materials, such as poetry, travelogues, and photography inspired by exhibition culture, so as to avoid privileging one archival form over another. “Archives” theorizes and performs a model of archival research that reframes records making and keeping as potentially collaborative relationships among artists and archivists through a rhetorical figure of the “double-bodied archive.” The critical set piece that follows focuses on onsite archival case studies of fourth-gendered

“freak” performers, the Cockettes, who were a do-it-yourself, anarchist, queer, performing troupe-commune in early-1970’s San Francisco. I push further on the potential interplay between artist and archivist implicit in the second section by looking at how their intimate archives now at the San Francisco Public Library retroactively stage aural collaborations between the Cockettes’ informal artist-archivists and the library’s archivists. What results are intermediated forms of documentation that disrupt visually based empirical methods of archival research.

My final section, “Archiving,” focuses on a single freak performer, strongman Eugen Sandow. Queer archiving tends to be a community-based, site-specific form of archival activism. I expand on the familiar locations of queer archival practices to include digital archival repositories built from libraries, archives, and museums (LAM) initiatives. Since the late-nineteenth century, photographs of strongman Eugen Sandow as a Grecian nude have circulated as commercial “Physical Culture” advertisements and subcultural tokens of male same-sex desire. These photographs have since become either inconvertible or unreliable evidence of Sandow’s connections to queer Victoriana. The contested state of Sandow’s archives is symptomatic of the “archival divide,” or gaps between the researcher’s needs and archivist’s standards. To bridge the divide, I contend that contemporary digital archiving practices reprise a late-nineteenth-century model of queer sociality built on making and informally archiving Sandow-related “Physical Culture” ephemera. I take as case studies two separate museum-based digital archives: the National Portrait Gallery London’s interactive “Digital Space” and the Houghton Library’s digital Theater Collection. I argue that the affordances along with digital

archival theories and practices dismantle Sandow's perfect body once a symbol of the ideal, self-contained Victorian subject. The digital archival initiatives redistribute Sandow through collaborative, conversational archival systems open to researcher and archivist interventions that revise the language of heteronormative, synchronic embodiment underpinning archival arrangement. Echoing the participatory qualities of queer fin-de-siècle collecting practices that resisted privileging the insular archivist, this digitization initiative exposes Sandow's photographs to continuous processes of recontextualization that imbue them with affective and material dynamism usually lost through archival dictates of categorization and preservation. While these digital sites open up spaces for queer historical presences, they are not utopian, as they also work to muffle potentially queer perspectives. Digital archiving practices and principles reimagine the whole, self-contained archival body as social bodies capable of recording both the existence and repression of queer Victorian archiving coteries. My dissertation finishes with a brief coda that charts the prolonged evolution of the "pinhead," from one of the most debased freak show performers to an icon of twentieth-century freak and punk subcultures.

Freak performers regarded themselves as part of a coveted "brotherhood," an "association of "fat women, giants, skeleton men, and other natural curiosities," even if they were a little wary of parvenu tattooed or sword-swallowing folk.¹³¹ The strange and seemingly random choice of freak subjects intends to reactivate the eclecticism of the ten-and-one presentation of late-nineteenth-century freak shows. This was not always the

¹³¹ "A Freaks' Union," *Portsmouth Evening News* (Portsmouth), September 12th 1883.

prevailing model, but more so than solo engagements in taverns or storefronts, the ten-in-one captures the panoramic scope of freak presentation. The image of freaks lined up in a row with their placards proclaiming “The Bearded Lady!” “The Skeleton Dude!” “The Wild Men of Borneo!” enjoys an enduring afterlife as the go-to visual of the freak show, reprinted regularly. But more so than a touchstone in a vast archives of freakery, the ten-in-one distills the simultaneously close-knit and expansive optics of the freak show that give it its affective and historical backbone. Freaks traveled in packs and, as potentially “singular” as each performer was, to make sense of one freak act meant to make sense the others. This later became a source of both fascination and horror distilled through Tod Browning’s invitation in *Freaks* (1932) to take a sip from the “loving cup” to become “one of us, one of us.” My hailing of the freak show’s performing, visual, and linguistic forms is not just clever stylistic flourish. Opening the archives and retelling freak histories risks replicating the same discursive and spectatorial violence that enfreaked them in the first place. My choice to work within these available freak conventions mounts an oppositional reading that coaxes out the ethical difficulties that we must confront when writing and reading about freakery. I emphasize the shared conventionality of the freak show and academic writing based on presentation, explication, and interpretation in order to reveal how they on implicitly normative orders of knowledge. But the writer is not alone in this endeavor: what of the reader who too participates in the freak spectacle through observation and evaluation? The language I use is also designed to pull the reader into the exciting and perilous engagements that come with spectating and speculating on freakery so that they too may become more

aware of how the act of reading works as both a regulatory and radical mode of historical transmission. As you move through this dissertation, each freak performer remains in your periphery and participates in the spectacle with you, entangling you intellectually and emotionally so that the “us vs. them” dynamic implodes.

Please take this introduction as your loving cup: welcome to the freak show.

Part One: "The Archive"

Chapter One: Unearthed Aztecs and Recovered Earthmen

In 2004, auto insurance company GEICO debuted a series of commercials placing cavemen in modern settings, the premise being that the Neanderthal time travellers were offended by GEICO's claim that navigating its website was "so easy, a caveman could do it." Rather than animal-skin wearing, stone-club toting primitives, GEICO's trio of cavemen were fashionable bachelors who enjoyed roasted duck with mango salsa and swanky parties. But their assimilative abilities only went so far since they could never totally shed their thick body hair and prognathous jaws, the visual cues of their prehistoric origins. One commercial shows a modern cave-bachelor confronting his uncanny prehistoric past in the airport: cruising along on a People Mover toting his matching luggage and tennis racket, the caveman sees his stereotypical likeness with leopard pelt and snarl on a poster for GEICO. The background music pipes in with the lyrics, "Everywhere I go, there's always something to remind me of another place and time" while the modern caveman bemusedly stares at his doppelganger.

In a 2007 *Esquire* article, Erin Schulte identified the GEICO caveman as postmodern because of his mash-up of contemporary masculinities. He is a little bit "emasculated metrosexual" and "the grunting ... brutish variety", "like Colin Farrell."¹³² GEICO's vice president of marketing, Ted Ward, noted that the ads were inspired by the potential visual juxtapositions of "technology and cave people coming together," but he

¹³² Erin Schulte, "The Evolution of the Postmodern Caveman," *Esquire*, March 22 2007.

had not quite imagined how the persistent presence of the prehistory would spawn delightfully strange iterations of masculinity.¹³³ Elizabeth Freeman’s eccentric model of time, “temporal drag,” accounts for the cavemen’s strange but pleasurable form of masculinity.¹³⁴ Temporal drag refers to the past’s visceral pull on the present that makes possible alternative ways of living. This model of time pulls back on itself while maintaining its vigilant sense of the present that allows for the novel, bizarre, or unpredictable to emerge into the mainstream in unprecedented ways. Temporal drag may be elegiac, like the sad caveman confronted with his own image. It can also be charged with energetic possibility, like cool, metrosexual cavemen mingling at hip rooftop parties. If time does drag, then what implications does this hold for extinction or any of the fossilized remains typically consigned to the distant narrative space of prehistory?

Prehistory is dust, rocks, bones, sediment—evidence of an unstable, primitive past hardened through the passage of time. But, for every prehistoric fossil there is an elusive specter of a deep past flitting through time not-fully recorded, or a speculative set of events thought to bring about a decisive change. This opening section, “The Archive,” excavates prehistory’s various definitional strata in order to rearticulate a venerable dinosaur of Victorian studies, “the imperial archive.” Introduced by Thomas Richards, the imperial archive refers to “the fantasy of knowledge collected and united in the

¹³³ Schulte, “The Evolution of the Postmodern Caveman,” *Esquire*, March 22 2007.

¹³⁴ Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).

service of state and Empire.”¹³⁵ His definition moves beyond actual archival repositories, libraries, or museums to signal the rise of an archival society bound by effectively managing bodies of information. Richards’ monograph is primarily a study of how the British Empire imagined itself, as he limns an imperial fantasy based on “comprehensive knowledge,” or the “the sense that knowledge was singular and not plural, complete and not partial, global and not local.”¹³⁶ While Richards does well to illuminate a particular Victorian imperial mindset, the consistent recourse to uniform comprehensiveness at the heart of the argument, distilled by the singular “archive,” still promotes the same discourses of wholeness that his study seeks to dissect. This slip toward equating the archive with generalized comprehensive knowledge now found across contemporary scholarship is a residue of mid- to late-nineteenth-century archival administrative theory entrenched in the rhetoric of whole, separable bodies of information. A “freak” archival research method, with its alliances to odd, singular, and potentially unclassifiable bodies is capable of redressing the aggregative abstraction of the imperial archive while still recognizing the productive potentials of its far-reaching nature.

“The Archive” digs deeper into early archival administrative theory to locate the nodes of discursive resistance that dissolve the bodies of knowledge that they are intended to solidify. These moments of resistance take form through imagery and language of prehistory. Prehistory comprises a series of practices dedicated to authoring the fiction of an unstable, primitive past containable through written, performed, and

¹³⁵ Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive* (New York: Verso Books, 1993), 6.

¹³⁶ Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive*, 7.

visual media. Even though prehistory was routinely marshaled in service of the British Empire and self, coaxing the deep past out of modernity's shadow spawns unruly possibilities. No better expressions of the unexpected and imaginative side of prehistory come courtesy of the prehistoric freak show, which featured allegedly "real" specimens of ancient man and woman. To rearticulate the figure of the imperial archive, my "freak" archival research method pieces together rhetorical patterns based on figures of the prehistoric found across incipient theories of archival management and the co-headlining exhibitions of the "Aztecs" and the "Earthmen." But instead of assembling entire bodies, I employ prehistory as a responsive interpretative framework capable of drawing out the messy, dynamic materiality and particulate embodiedness of empire making.

Prehistory situates the "Aztecs" and "Earthmen's" display strategies within larger fields of scientific, art historical, and archeological cultural productions. Beyond these explicit nods to popular scientific knowledge and arts heritages, the "Aztec" and "Earthmen" shows were also explicitly fascinated with what evidence should look like, how evidence should act, and how evidence should be adjudicated, so much so that these "freak" became unintentional, living precursors to foundational archival theory. As colonial subjects, the Central American "Aztecs" and Southern African "Earthmen" lacked a recordable history of their own making, only visible in the imperial archive as evidence of British progress. Their freak exhibitions, however, commandeered language and images that suggestively prefigured state-sanctioned archival texts, but filtered them through the lived, embodied experiences of the performers. So, the outcome did not contribute wholeheartedly to projects of Anglo-centric nation crafting supported by early

archival administration. If the imperial archive sought to pass off its knowledge as common sense, the prehistoric freak's visible and material participation in archival authorship tropes materializes eruptions of these practices to expose and resist the normative orders of knowledge guiding archiving. The bodies of evidence left behind by the "Aztecs" and "Earthmen" recontour the imperial archive's wholeness, along with its shadow discourses of absence, silence, and invisibility to show how evidence of colonial race, gender, and sexuality moves through the historical record in different forms.

"The Archive" models a "freak" archival reading practice that seeks to dismantle the coherency of the imperial archive. To resist reinforcing the imperial archive through critique, these practices revise the tropes of embodiment that currently archives-based research in order to account better for the prehistoric "freak" bodies embedded in modern archival theory. Popularized by the freak show, Victorian prehistory supplied the conditions of possibility for modern archival theories during the nineteenth century, as well as their undoing going forward through the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

"The Archive" resists readings gaps or absences as inalterable or threats the archive seeks to cover. Using prehistory as an interpretative framework for my "freak" archival research practice situates archival bodies as both historically specific and entrenched in our contemporary critical moment through a reading practice that counterbalances the material remains of these freak bodies with their ongoing, imaginative possibilities. The goal is not to build cohesive bodies but to illuminate how prehistory, as one of the freak show's rhetorical-embodied orders of knowledge, expands the communicative capacities of documents and archival bodies. Because prehistory exhibitions relied on interlocking

narratives forms of text, image, and performance, the documents take on equally visible and speculative dimensions that allow us to move beyond visual-empirical methods of interpretation and rethink their historical reception as evidence of primarily science, medicine, and anthropology. Recognizing the different material paradigms they erect and dismantle summons prehistory's queer, de-colonial, and non-anthropocentric possibilities. Just as "Aztecs" and "Earthmen" worked within to resist scientific-imperialist models of knowledge production, so do their remaining archival bodies draw on so as to revise traditional archival science knowledge making practices.

i. Victorian Prehistory

Prehistory as the study of the Earth's extended history grew out of mid-nineteenth-century innovations in archaeology, anthropology, biology, botany, and geology.¹³⁷ Attempting to piece together the Earth's deep past, prehistory concentrated on the time predating written records, and its ability to record these epochs was a testament to modern technology, industry, and science. Daniel Smail and Andrew Shryock define prehistory not as a historical era but as a "narrative space" occupied by recognizable traces of "temporal Otherness," making it a fixture of popular exhibition culture.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ Ben Stoltzfus, "Ekphrasis in Magritte and Verne Voyages Extraordinaires *to the Center of Art*," *The Comparatist* 35 (May 2011): 71.

¹³⁸ Daniel Lord Smail and Andrew Shryock, "History and the 'Pre,'" *The American Historical Review* 118, no. 3 (2013): 713.

Audiences came into contact with past worlds through zoological gardens boasting exotic animals, botanical gardens cultivating succulents, and natural history museums showcasing bones and fossils. This imperial management of the past also extended outside of the exhibition space proper: from insects to ferns, the everyday became a collectible and containable key to an earth's history that extolled British progress. Prehistory even enabled Victorians to forge connections to a deep past through commerce, since anyone could become an amateur archeologist by purchasing ready-made mineral collections. Promoting and justifying imperial progress, the display of prehistoric worlds symbolized the “primitive, unruly, and unstable in need of civilizing and stewardship” thought to be containable through the evidence that they marshaled.¹³⁹

Natural historians had a knack for transforming familiar environs into adventurous antediluvian landscapes for the reader to explore, and these exegeses were often framed as travelogues with author and reader as travel companions. Hugh Miller's wildly popular *Sketch-book of Popular Geology* (1852) maximizes the drama by mapping Jurassic thrills onto Scotland's familiar Pentland Hills. Dotted with sinister eyes of the “cold-blooded, ungenial reptile,” Miller's prehistoric forests were not meant for modern man, and he assures his readers they are lucky to be able to return to the “safer and better furnished world of the present time.”¹⁴⁰ In addressing the differences between prehistoric

¹³⁹ Michael Freeman, *Victorians and the Prehistoric: Tracks to a Lost World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 228.

¹⁴⁰ Hugh Miller, *Sketch-book of Popular Geology. Being a Series of Lectures Delivered before the Philosophical Institution of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh: Thomas Constable and Co, 1859), 152.

and modern geographies, Miller removes himself from his *Sketch-book*'s Jurassic diagenesis to ruminate on the "law of death" that consumes the geologist.¹⁴¹ His frame narrative demonstrates that in introducing evidence of environmental and human antiquity, prehistory also needed to acknowledge the potential for extinction and adaptation that nullified theories of species fixity. Rather than assuaging anxieties by putting "monsters" to sleep permanently, prehistory shook certainties offered by scientific evidence and method to question humanity's place within the Earth's history.

The combination of thrilling and erudite exposition in natural history texts paved the way for "Lost World," or prehistory genre fictions, which integrated scientific romance and imperialist adventure.¹⁴² Between 1871 and the First World War, tales of Western explorers encountering vestiges of ancient cities, empires, and races were a literary mainstay.¹⁴³ In *Allan Quatermain* (1887,) H. Rider Haggard may have characterized his immensely popular prehistory novels as respites from the "daily newspapers" and other dread modern conveniences, but they were not innocent of contemporaneous imperial projects.¹⁴⁴ Borrowing from contemporary political news, the

¹⁴¹ Hugh Miller, *The Testimony of the Rocks: Or, Geology in Its Bearings on Two Theologies, Natural and Revealed* (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1857), 132.

¹⁴² Patrick Brantlinger, "Victorian Science Fiction," *A Companion to the Victorian Novel*, ed. Patrick Brantlinger and William B. Thesing (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 373.

¹⁴³ Bradley Deane, "Imperial Barbarians: Primitive Masculinity in Lost World Fiction," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 36, no. 1 (2008): 206.

¹⁴⁴H. Rider Haggard, *Allan Quatermain*, ed. Dennis Butts (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995), 276.

novels presented fictionalized versions of Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Amazon to implicate them in contemporaneous imperial projects. Mapping the ancient world onto the British Empire's little-explored outposts produced a spatialized dimension of time: a phenomenon in which moving further away from the modern center of the empire was represented as moving back further in time.¹⁴⁵ This ratified the practice of taxonomically ranking geographically dispersed populations by banishing them to a "permanently anterior time" within modernity.¹⁴⁶

Freak shows sought to ritualize physical and cultural difference through the "show-space," a confluence of time and space that materialized historically specific relationships between colonizers and colonized.¹⁴⁷ As prehistory limned the Earth's history in service of naturalizing the authority of the modern British self, the prehistoric human became a ready template for presenting nineteenth-century colonial populations.¹⁴⁸ As a set of practices for presenting people, freakery provided reliable if perplexing visual grammars for unfamiliar bodies. The cohort of prehistoric freak

¹⁴⁵ Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 15.

¹⁴⁶ Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Context* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 42.

¹⁴⁷ Roslyn Poignant, *Professional Savages: Captive Lives and Western Spectacle* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

¹⁴⁸ John Reader, *Missing Links: In Search of Human Origins* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 77.

performers includes acts as diverse as the San Bushmen (1840s), “Aztecs” (1849-189?), “Earthmen” (1853), Caldecott’s Zulus (1852), Fiji Cannibals (1872), Farini’s Pygmies (1883), Farini’s Friendly Zulus (1880s), Krao Farini the “Missing Link” (1883), and North Queensland Australians (1880s). Displayed according to the exotic mode of presentation, they pandered to the public’s taste for the primitive and culturally alien in a period marked by tireless exploration and Western expansion. Featuring *ersatz* versions of Africa, ancient Mayan kingdoms, and Southeast Asian jungles, the exotic mode stressed the interrelated elements of a given habitat by replicating flora, fauna, and landforms compatible with the performers’ supposed origins.¹⁴⁹ Specifying certain performers as “prehistorics” clarifies how figures of biological and social evolution mapped onto one another. With its scientific imperialist underpinnings, prehistory became a flexible framework for interpreting the different ethnic, racial, and cultural categories presented in the exotic mode. For example, Bartola and Maximo as the ‘Ancient Aztecs,’ were sold as proof of species extinction to highlight prehistory’s supposedly inability to survive modernity. Others tapped into different narratives of prehistory: Krao Farini the “Missing Link” visualized the usually invisible persistence of the prehistoric within modernity and the North Queensland Australians embodied the warring impulses of the primitive imaginary by performing as royals and cannibals.

Prehistoric freak shows found their contextual footing through current news events, scientific treaties, and travel literature that then supplied the source materials for

¹⁴⁹ Robert Bogdan, *Freak Show: Presenting Human Oddities for Amusement and Profit* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 94.

the freak performers' life story pamphlets.¹⁵⁰ These pamphlets informed both contemporaneous audience reception of freak exhibitions, as well as their current historical or archival reception. As I will go into more detail later, the Aztecs' pamphlet was culled from a popular travelogue, *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan* (1841) written by American lawyer and diplomat John Lloyd Stephens, which positioned the "Aztec" exhibition as an organic extension of Stephens' history of the Americas. This connection was convincing enough that it has since subtly informed the acquisition practices that place Bartola and Maximo's fictitious pamphlet as a part of Latin American historical manuscript collections, regardless of authenticity. This is not limited to the "Aztecs," but symptomatic of a broader trend in which Victorian prehistory materials become the intellectual property of histories of imperialism, science, and medicine. For instance, the exhibition catalogue for Professor Farini's Pygmies, though fictitious, so cleverly mimicked popular mid-nineteenth-century missionary narratives that the only existing copy is held in the University of KwaZulu Natal Library in South Africa as piece of national history. Krao Farini's pamphlet, *Krao, the Missing Link: A Living Proof of Darwin's Theory of the Descent of Man*, framing her as a medical oddity, is now found in the Wellcome Library of medical history.

ii. Archival Bodies

¹⁵⁰ Sadiyah Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade: Exhibitions, Empire, and Anthropology in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 173.

Critical engagements with archives in Victorian studies usually fall back on the familiar figure of the imperial archive, but closer attention to the material and intellectual history of archival administration gives insight into how formative archival theory discursively pivoted on evolutionary embodiments that overlap with popular prehistory. The seminal 1898 *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives* defines an archival collection through the rhetoric of evolutionary biology: an archive is “an organic whole, a living organism, which grows, takes shape, and undergoes changes in accordance with fixed rules.”¹⁵¹ Although the exhibitions of the “The Archive” predate the publication of the *Manual*, innovations in archival theory did not exist within a vacuum. In 1841, the French Ministry of the Interior instituted respect des fonds, which precludes the language of whole organic embodiment found in the 1898 *Manual*, through their the April 24th circular stipulating that documents “which come from a body ... a family, or an individual form a fonds, and must be kept together.”¹⁵² Respect des fonds is composed of two principles: provenance and original order, both of which contribute to authoring the fiction of whole, unified bodies of information. Even though mid- to late-nineteenth-century archival administration sapped images from contemporaneous biological sciences to legitimize itself, these early definitions of provenance and original order were so invested in instating ascendant documentary chains that their language

¹⁵¹. Samuel Muller, Johan Adriaan Feith and R. Fruin, *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives* (Chicago, IL: Society of American Archivists, 2003), 19–20.

¹⁵² Nancy Bartlett, “The Origins of the Modern Archival Principle of Provenance,” *Bibliographical Foundations of French Historical Studies*, ed. Lawrence J. McCrank (New York: Haworth Press, 1992), 106-114.

more closely approximated earlier eighteenth-century discourses of the Great Chain of Being instead of the fashionable scientific-materialist perspectives that posited the mutable randomness of the greater environment.

Concerned with locating and following “the origins of an information-bearing entity or artifact,” provenance is an ambiguous, contested principle with archivists continuing to disagree about its constitution and application.¹⁵³ During the mid-nineteenth century, however, provenance generally referred to the unbroken chain of ownership that authenticated records. Its twin principle, *l'ordre primitif*, or original order, dictates that the order of the records imposed by the original creator must be preserved.¹⁵⁴ By the early-twentieth century, the “Golden Age” of archiving, Hilary Jenkinson solidified the “sanctity” of evidence by identifying the archivist as an unbiased custodian of complete, “untainted” collections.¹⁵⁵ The emphasis on whole bodies introduces a paradigm in which evidentiary value is based on the document’s assumed stability, its imperviousness to change or processing error. Under this early custodial model of archiving the material condition of individual documents went largely unexamined, the important task instead being the arrangement of aggregate collections.

Modern archives may have celebrated their birthday in France on April 24th 1841 with the fonds circular, but matters were not so clearly cut in England. If the beleaguered

¹⁵³ Shelley Sweeney, “The Ambiguous Origins of the Archival Principle of “Provenance””, *Libraries & the Cultural Record*, 43, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 194.

¹⁵⁴ Sweeney, “The Ambiguous Origins,” 198.

¹⁵⁵ Terry Cook, “What is Past is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift,” *Archivaria* 43 (Spring 1997): 23

Keeper of Records, Henry Bickersteth is to be believed, throughout the early-Victorian period, England's national records definitely lacked a functional means of arrangement.¹⁵⁶ During the 1830s, British archival management simply carried over eighteenth-century modes of archival arrangement based primarily on geopolitical categories: "Domestical," "Foreign," and later "Colonial."¹⁵⁷ Then, into the 1840's, the Public Records Office calendars (basically exhaustive finding aids) still kept this tripartite geographical categorization intact, but within these grouped the records according to their creators in chronological order to start approximating modern provenance. One of the potential wrinkles in instituting functional models of arrangement was that records administrators were most dumbfounded about how to go about defining records, much less how to arrange them. Attempting to assuage bickering committee members, Henry Cole contributed a possible paradigm that combined chronological arrangements erecting barriers between "ancient or dead records" and "modern or living records" with existing geographical arrangements.¹⁵⁸ Though hardly described as such, this loose form of arrangement braided together language of time, animacy, and geography that would similar organize distinctions between "pre" and "history," poising archives to be central plays in the development of the British Empire's sense of its own

¹⁵⁶ P.J.A. Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians, and Archaeologists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 101.

¹⁵⁷ Samuel Robert Scargill-Bird, *A Guide to the Principles Classes of Documents Preserved in the Public Office* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1896), xxxvii.

¹⁵⁸ Quoted in Elizabeth Shepard, *Archives and Archivists in 20th Century England* (London: Routledge, 2016), Ch. 3.

history. Lagging behind France by nearly a half-century, by the late-nineteenth century, British archival administrative finally considered itself truly modern, as intimated by the spate of histories concentrating on the trials and tribulations of sorting out early-Victorian records management practices.

Even though contemporary critics look deconstruct the myths of bounded whole and political-aesthetic totality through archives-based research or literary interpretation, nineteenth-century archival theory's focus on the singular body circumscribes the conditions for how we conceive of our methods. Archives-based or otherwise, literary interpretation relies on methodological narratives in which disparate pieces of evidences are soldered together through the intellectual activity of the critic. In *The Limits of Critique* (2015), Rita Felski outlines a common model of literary interpretation that echoes nineteenth-century prehistory: interpretation-as-excavation featuring the "critic-as-archaeologist" who "'digs deep' into a text to retrieve a camouflaged truth."¹⁵⁹ While Felksi mines the spatial-hermeneutic dynamics at play in interpretation-as-excavation to explicate different models of reading, I would like instead to consider the status of the body in the rhetorical patterns of archival theory and criticism to imagine an alternative narrative of archives-based research generated through prehistoric freak materials. Early archival theory's goal was to transform particulate and particular matter into abstracted structures and classification systems, as evident through its emphasis on the singular body: the "archive" and "the archival collection," the "archive group," all figured as the "whole, organic body." The drive to wholeness seeps into contemporary archives-based

¹⁵⁹ Rita Felski, *The Limits of Critique* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2015), 58.

research practices, which seek to construct “complete” or “cohesive” scholarly narratives that Tavia Nyong’o refers to as the “expected hermeneutic circle of traditional archival research, interpretation, and explication.”¹⁶⁰ Through her figure of the archaeologist, Felski similarly identifies a narrative for the literary critic whose job is to gather together “scattered shards and broken fragments” to form “a larger whole.”¹⁶¹ If late-nineteenth-century archival administration marshalled language intended to smooth out and standardize the process of creating bodies of evidence that has since seeped into the methods of literary and archives-based criticism, tropes of the prehistoric unintentionally provided an alternative by expanding on what could be archived and how.

iii. Unearthing the Aztec

To celebrate the Crystal Palace’s 1852 move to Sydenham, Benjamin Waterhouse Hawkins was commissioned to build dinosaur models for an extinct animals park. This less ferocious Victorian version of Jurassic Park intended to host an immersive experience in which visitors could come face-to-face with life-sized concrete dinosaur models, the first of its kind. For the park’s 1854 opening, the *Illustrated London News* printed a cartoon of the era’s distinguished geologists enjoying their New Year’s Eve supper in the hollowed-out shell of the Iguanodon. After the crew raised a silent toast to

¹⁶⁰ Tavia Amolo Ochieng’ Nyong’o, *The Amalgamation Waltz: Race, Performance, and the Ruses of Memory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 7.

¹⁶¹ Felski, *The Limits of Critique*, 58.

the memory of the deceased Gideon Mantell, the discoverer of “the monster in whose bowels they just dined,” the party got a little more raucous and culminated in a tipsy ode to the “Saurians” themselves who would “come to life again ... to speed sound knowledge near and far.”¹⁶² The official Sydenham guidebook acerbically judges the performance to be so “fierce and enthusiastic” that it “lead to the belief that a herd of iguanodons were bellowing from some of the numerous pitfalls in Penge-Park, in which they had been entrapped.”¹⁶³ Their cheer captures the promises and perils of prehistory: by revitalizing the past in material, embodied, and emotional ways with the goal of reshaping the present, the manageable artifacts of the deep past take on unlikely lives of their own.

While the extinct animal park was a large-scale imagining, the summer of 1853 witnessed a decidedly more diminutive, but arguably more sensational returned past: that of extinct man and woman. G. Wilkinson’s 1853 lithograph (fig. 3) visualizes the strange tale of the “Aztecs”: purportedly found in Central America amongst Mayan ruins, siblings Bartola and Maximo, known professionally as “The Aztec Lilliputians,” arrived in London in July 1853 after a three-year tour of the United States. Appearing at Sydenham as models representing Central America in the Crystal Palace’s Ethnological and Natural History display, “The wretched little Aztecs ... stated to be the only surviving descendants of some outcast Mexican tribe” frame Central America’s

¹⁶² Edward MacDermott, *Routledge’s Guide to the Crystal Palace and Park at Sydenham* (London: George Routledge, 1854), 20-21.

¹⁶³ MacDermott, *Routledge’s Guide*, 21.

contemporary population as fictional remnants of an ancient Mexican past.¹⁶⁴ These claims to prehistoric lineage, however, were humbug: Bartola and Maximo were actually born with microcephaly, a neurodevelopmental disorder that often arrests intellectual development and possibly impairs vision, speech, and movement. They were “discovered” in 1849 in San Salvador and came to be two of the more popular freak show performers of the latter half of the nineteenth century.

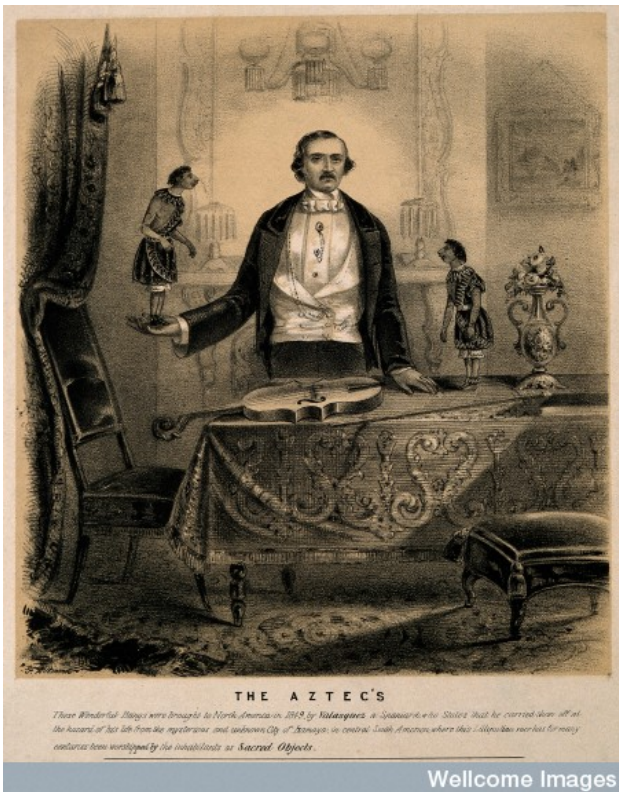


Fig. 3 G. Wilkinson’s lithograph of *The Aztec’s*, 1853.
V0007372 Courtesy of Wellcome Library, London

Bartola and Maximo’s show draws from source materials documenting relations between England and the Americas to highlight how mid-century prehistory could both

¹⁶⁴ MacDermott, *Routledge’s Guide*, 175.

animate and stymie progress-driven narratives of empire building. The “Aztecs” exhibition becomes a space of paleontological reconstruction dedicated to piecing together theories of and bodies for extinct species through the logic of the fossil. Weaving together empirical and speculative modes of evaluation, prehistory’s fossil shares ambivalent relationships with embodiment and documentation, poising it as a responsive framework for interpreting the “Aztecs” archival materials beyond what is visually present in order to resist the deadening, anthropocentric imperatives of archiving. On the one hand, the fossil discloses how the “Aztecs” become limit cases of non-European degeneracy by providing calcified proof of prehistory’s inability to survive modernity. The current state of Bartola and Maximo’s archives reflects this trend: just as nineteenth-century experts used these living humans to build a disarticulated body of documentation, their materials only exist now as scattered fragments within larger archives dedicated to modern medical, scientific, and anthropological histories. However, out of these dispersed fossils rise speculative creatures. Bartola and Maximo were not just ossified remains, as their exhibition created an expansive and entropic prehistoric landscape filled with crumbling ruins, deteriorating bones, and dwindling but undeniably living humans. The imaginative incipience of prehistoric evidence spectacularized through their show likewise enables an archival body composed of documents for tracing antiquity that rest on fundamentally ephemeral, piecemeal, unstable forms of materiality: live performances, grangerized pamphlets, disintegrating handbills. In unearthing the ancient “Aztecs,” the remains of Bartola and Maximo’s archival bodies retrace only to

collapse boundaries past and present, human and non-human, living and non-living that structure analytical distinctions between “pre” and “history.”

A subfield of prehistory, nineteenth-century paleontology participated in acts of ancient reconstruction that intertwined empirical and speculative practices. Early paleontology was correlative, meaning that scientists believed that each element of a critter corresponded with all of the others so that a single part, even the merest fragment of fossilized bone, could be a reliable key for reconfiguring the whole.¹⁶⁵ The relation of the part to the whole follows the logic of the synecdoche to ally correlative paleontology to a model of embodiment that prizes the representative over the idiosyncratic. Prehistory may have built bodies peculiar to the modern eye, but these bodies were still regarded as abstracted archetypes of once-living creatures. However scientific prehistory’s practices were, embedded in them were threads of speculation that tempered the empirical. Not only distanced objectivity but also immersive transport informed prehistory’s intellectual posture, as acts of successful reconstruction involved figurative feats of time travel so that paleontologists could literally inhabit prehistory’s speculative bodies. In order to re-piece together ancient mollusks, Richard Owen in *Paleontology* (1861) advises the scientist to occupy the physical interior of the extinct animal in order to understand its vertebral structure: “Transfer yourself in imagination within the shell ... with your head towards A and your back toward the dorsal border, and you will recognize the valve

¹⁶⁵ Gowan Dawson, *Show Me the Bone: Reconstructing Prehistoric Monsters in Nineteenth-Century Britain and America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 41.

figured as the *right* valve.”¹⁶⁶ With over-sized dinosaur models lounging around Sydenham’s lush grounds, by mid-century, prehistoric reconstruction had reached spectacularly large proportions, but as the years moved on persistent images of paleontological reconstruction filtered into the everyday on a much smaller scale.

Lorraine Daston’s “sciences of the archive” suture the library and the laboratory to inaugurate fields of inquiry that depend on collective collating and preserving practices that reach back into the past and forward into the future. Stressing the human agent in these processes, Daston notes that only since paleontology started to gather and preserve fossils systematically (as opposed to naturally-occurring geological records), “with an eye toward future users,” did it become a science of the archive.¹⁶⁷ This reading of the “Aztecs” illuminates an overlooked aspect of paleontology’s connection to archives through its rhetorical reuse in early archival theory to insist that paleontology actually served as a litmus test for the possibilities and limitations of modern archival management. Paleontological reconstruction supplied the rhetorical foundations for explicating arrangement and description standards for archival administration, as the *Manual* likened the process of arranging records into whole, organic bodies to rearticulating a skeleton from a heap of unorganized bones. The “skeleton,” however, was not a ready-made metonym, but rather highlights the relative unsteadiness and the difficulties of developing official administrative archival protocol during the nineteenth

¹⁶⁶ Richard Owen, *Paleontology or a Systematic Summary of Extinct Animals and Their Geological Relations* (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1861), 64.

¹⁶⁷ Lorraine Daston, “The Sciences of the Archive,” *Osiris* 27, no. 1 (January 1, 2012): 160.

century. The exact nature of the “skeleton” was cause for hot debate for the Association of Archivists tasked with drafting the manual. Everyone agreed that the “skeleton” of the archival collection refers to the “documents which contain the proceedings of the administrative body or one of its officials acting in his official capacity,” or in other words, the descriptive metadata for the archival collection typically found in finding aids. However, disagreements arose over the exact metonymic referent of the “skeleton”: one camp insisted it meant the “framework of a wooden house” with its “main timbers,” while the other assumed it was “the skeleton of an animal.”¹⁶⁸ The animal skeleton interpretation most closely resonated with the definition of an archival collection as an organic whole, but it also carried with it frustrating connotations of determinism, since it “naturally emphasizes the unchangeableness” of the archival collection. To solve this rhetorical quandary, the warring archivists settled on the animal skeleton interpretation, but with the rider that the skeleton is that of a “prehistoric animal.”¹⁶⁹ Their printed justification for this decision expands the conceit to liken the archivist to the paleontologist:

The archivist deals with the archival collection just as the paleontologist does with the bones of a prehistoric animal: he tries from these bones to put the skeleton of the animal together again. If, however, he wishes to form for himself a picture of the animal whose bones he has joined together again, he follows very closely in general the structure of the body, but he takes no account of the accidental circumstances, e.g. that one of the animal’s paws had grown bent because of a fracture or that one of its ribs is missing. Similarly, the archivist, once he has

¹⁶⁸ Muller, Feith Fruin, *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, 69.

¹⁶⁹ Muller, Feith, Fruin, *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, 69.

reconstructed the archival collection again to its old state, can remedy minor deviations in structure.¹⁷⁰

On the one hand, the *Manual* makes recourse to paleontology to reinforce the normalizing imperatives undergirding archival arrangement: like the paleontologist's, the archivist's goal is to fashion bodies remedied of any "minor deviations in structure," thereby implicating archival administration into broader projects of normalization that prehistoric reconstruction undertakes.

The overarching singularity of the imperial archive strips "disarranged" archives in need of reconstruction of their frustrating materiality, effectively discursively smoothing over the vexed intellectual history of nineteenth-century archival administration. However, ingrained in archival administration's prehistoric rhetoric are transgressive limitations to archival authority that question the enterprise of archival reconstruction. The skeletal metonym does not just evoke the finished product, the completed archival body, but rather the fraught processes of creating and ordering these bodies. In overseeing processes of dismembering and assembling, the archivist is plagued by the inevitable failure of comprehensive reconstruction. After all, both paleontologist and archivist can "restore only one particular state of the reconstructed organism, whereas the living organism changed its state again and again."¹⁷¹ Signaling to the present impossibility of reconstructing a dynamic, changing body simultaneously signals to its past possibility—that the skeletal bodies of animal comprised an embodied

¹⁷⁰ Muller, Feith, Fruin, *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, 71.

¹⁷¹ Muller, Feith, Fruin, *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, 71

archive of successive changes. So even though the Association of Archivists uses prehistory as a figurative device in order to foreclose or narrow down what we consider to be “official” archival collections, the same prehistoric discourses makes possible alternative, speculative archival bodies capable of documenting successive changes through fossilized remnants.

Even as it is used in service of archival administration, prehistory introduces a rhetorical framework for examining nineteenth-century archival practices outside of the potentially stifling dictates of archival categorization and preservation. Prehistory expanded on what could be archived and how: the Earth itself became a spontaneous, haphazard archive, and geological strata, ice cores, and fossils its forms of documentation that question rather than provide bodily stability and wholeness. In classifying shifting geological formations or incomplete skeletons as naturally occurring archives, prehistory presages only recent attempts by archivists to broaden definitions of the document beyond written texts. Assumptions remain that that documents must be “capable of repeatedly delivering up the same story at different points in time and space.”¹⁷² No strangers to change or corruptibility, prehistory’s documents are framed according to shift, fragmentation, decay, and deterioration. Still a relatively uncharted terrain, non-human-centered archiving practices that recognize environmental processes of flowering, decay and deterioration as forms of memory making rather than loss have begun to crop

¹⁷² David Levy, *Scrolling Forward: Making Sense of Documents in the Digital Age* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2001), 26.

up in fields as diverse as queer studies and cultural geography.¹⁷³ These perspectives initiate collaborative ethic in which “other-than-human agencies” can participate in acts of historical transmission.¹⁷⁴ Overlapping with this period of intellectual ferment, Bartola and Maximo’s freak show deliberates on the possibilities of fossilized icons coming to life again as their show enacts alternative ways of understanding embodiment’s relationship to time and historical documentation.

While Central America would come to provide a geographically specific set of visual icons for interpreting Bartola and Maximo’s show, the well-mined imaginary of early-nineteenth-century Mexico dictated their initial reception, since they were after all “Aztecs.” Eighteen fifty-three marked the revival of Robert Burford’s panorama, originally displayed in 1826 at Leicester Square, which was a testament Hernán Cortés’ conquest of the Aztec empire. The British Empire had set its sights on the Americas, as the end of Spanish control in 1821 spurred a series of attempts whereby Britain attempted to establish trade and domestic ties with Mexico.¹⁷⁵ In 1822, amateur naturalist and antiquarian William Bullock ventured to Mexico and returned with a variety of artifacts and specimens to exhibit as a “Panorama of Mexico” at London’s Egyptian Hall in 1824.

¹⁷³ Lisa Darms, “The Archival Object: A Memoir of Disintegration,” *Archivaria* 67 (Spring 2009): 143-155; Greg Youmans, “Elsa Gidlow’s Garden: Plants, Archives, and Queer History,” in *Out of the Closet, Into the Archives: Researching Sexual Histories*, ed. Amy L. Stone and Jaime Cantrell (Albany: SUNY Press, 2015), 99–124.

¹⁷⁴ Caltlin DeSilvey, “Observed Decay: Telling Stories with Mutable Things,” *Journal of Material Culture* 11, no. 3 (2006): 318.

¹⁷⁵ Richard Altick, *The Shows of London* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 246.

The panorama's goal was to re-invigorate Mexico, but it resulted in emphasizing its immovability by transforming the region into a system of signs easily mastered and controlled by the British observer.¹⁷⁶ The panorama with its all-encompassing views replicates the supposedly objective visual logics of the imperial archive that seeks to obscure the fact that it records history from a particular perspective through its all-seeing, objective eye. Upright and mobile against the still backdrops of Mexico's edenic geography, British spectators could easily imagine themselves as progressive and technologically advanced. To support these visual and embodied narrative forms, Bullock supplied a brief history of Mexico through an accompanying pamphlet in which he casts the British as travelers to the past responsible for transatlantic efforts to modernize Mexico's land and population: "a combination of foreign talent, capital, and machinery ... will raise [Mexico's population] from the lethargy and shackles in which they have been so bound by the narrow and barbarous policy of Spain."¹⁷⁷ Bullock's unsparingly Anglocentric point of view confirms naturalized analytical distinctions between "pre" and "history" by marking Mexico's prehistory in terms of amplified contrast that were easily discernible yet encouraged inattention.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ Robert Aguirre, *Informal Empire: Mexico and Central America in Victorian Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 25.

184. William Bullock and Robert Burford, *Description of the Panorama of the Superb City of Mexico, and the Surrounding Scenery, Painted on 2700 Sq. Feet of Canvas by Robert Burford, Esq. from Drawings Made on the Spot at the Request of the Mexican Government, By Mr. W. Bullock Jr* (New York: E. Conrad, 1828), 5.

¹⁷⁸ Smail and Shryock. "History and the 'Pre,'" 711.

The physical and symbolic appropriations of the pre-Columbian past filled dioramas, panoramas, and ethnographical exhibits at Piccadilly's Egyptian Hall (1824), Leicester Square (1826), and the British Museum (1851). The removal and recontextualization of these artifacts succeeded in constructing a purportedly fixed system of representing the Aztec,¹⁷⁹ which popular reception soon used as a byword for a person of traceable racial purity. Bartola and Maximo found themselves only nominally enmeshed in this particular imaginary of the "Aztec." In their early career they would sport costumes emblazoned with iconography meant to replicate the Aztec sun symbol. More often than not, these were considered to be "odd dresses," rather than authoritative proof verifying their connection to "Aztec" culture.¹⁸⁰ Their career stretched well into the early twentieth century, but Bartola and Maximo were especially popular in the 1850s, a moment of imperial self-fashioning when Britain presented itself as the height of modern civilization through its military superiority and industrial prowess. Nadja Durbach claims that within this particular context, the "Aztec" emerged as a recognizable historical figure and a cautionary tale of civilization decline that would resonate with British spectators, their diminutive stature emphasizing in no uncertain terms the allegory of a dwindling empire.¹⁸¹ Additionally, their presentation attempted to lend visual legibility to theories

8. Ann DeLeon, "Coatlicue or How to Write the Dismembered Body," *MLN* 125, no. 2 (2010): 259-286.

¹⁸⁰ "The Aztecs," *Chepstow Weekly Advertiser*, February 23 1867.

¹⁸¹ Nadja Durbach, *Spectacle of Deformity: Freak Shows and Modern British Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 115.

of species extinction by mapping them onto the legacy of Aztec empire. Tiny in stature, Bartola and Maximo were supposedly part of sacred priestly caste forbidden from intermarrying, which over thousands of years both caused bodily degeneration and a drop in birth rate. The rhetoric of species extinction accommodated the public's desire to see living examples of vanishing peoples within a contemporary context. Moreover, it curtailed the possibility that the sudden re-emergence of the ancient "Aztec" would permanently upset orderly trajectories of human development by ensuring they would perish.

While Mexico's "Aztec" may have superficially contextualized their reception, Bartola and Maximo's exhibition more accurately hinged on their ties to Central America, a region garnering interest during the mid-century for its Mayan antiquities. U.S. lawyer and diplomat, John Lloyd Stephens' 1841 travel narrative, *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan*, sparked interest in Central America in decades following its publication with its well-written accounts of indigenous archeology. Reflecting Mary Louise Pratt's claim that travel books conferred upon readers ownership and entitlement,¹⁸² *Household Words* nearly a decade later, designated the region "Stephens' Central America."¹⁸³ However, Stephens' text offers surprisingly incomplete glimpses of Central America for such an authoritative text. Every discovery of a Central American ruins (usually shrouded in "immense forests") leads to Stephens to

¹⁸²Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 3.

¹⁸³ "Lilliput in London," *Household Words* 7 (1853): 574.

proclaim “[a]ll was mystery, dark, impenetrable mystery,” robbing him of the clarifying mountain view afforded to Bullock and his Mexico travelers.¹⁸⁴ Not one to despair too heartily, Stephens later rhapsodizes Central America’s jungle ruins as prehistoric spaces of imaginative time travel where he might “one day hold conference with a perished race, and unveil the mystery that hung over the city.”¹⁸⁵ Little did Stephens know, Bartola and Maximo would provide a living answer to his dreamy ponderings when they arrived in London with their life-story pamphlet in 1853.

Material histories of colonialism are driven by “misplacements,” processes in which objects enter into a new cultural context and generate incongruities to defamiliarize the quotidian.¹⁸⁶ Freak show artifacts spectacularized the voids in meaning produced of misplacing through outlandish autobiographies, but still even this retroactive “filling in” did not ensure a complete or generalized archival body in the case of the “Aztecs.” Their pamphlet too is a performance of paleontological reconstruction, a necessarily incomplete narrative pieced together through bits and scraps of texts. Not entirely fictitious, Bartola and Maximo’s life story combined the fraudulent narrative of their escape with Stephens’ true-to-life travelogue. Instead of piecing together these different literary fragments to ensure a cohesive and whole narrative, this text-as-fossil takes on a speculative quality that emphasizes what is missing from the narrative body

¹⁸⁴ John Lloyd Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan Volume One* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1845), 105.

¹⁸⁵ Stephens, *Incidents of Travel*, 152.

¹⁸⁶ Silvia Spitta, *Misplaced Objects: Migrating Collections and Recollections in Europe and the Americas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009), 1.

equally through its content and its material condition. Presumably waiting on for the go-ahead to incorporate more pieces from Stephens' travelogue, the anonymous editor gestures to the pamphlet's incompleteness through a caveat about its contents: "the writer of this pamphlet less regrets the very limited use of it to which he is now restricted—which is but little more than that of making a mere abridgment and connection of such incidents as may serve to explain the origin and possession of those specimens of humanity, the Aztec Lilliputians, now exhibited to the public."¹⁸⁷ Totally shameless, Bartola and Maximo's impresarios did not even attempt to adapt Stephens' book, as the material condition of the pamphlet likewise replicates a fragmented optics of the prehistoric fossil by including layers of different typeface. Entire sections of travelogue were copied and laced together with schlocky *entr'actes* featuring the exploits of the "Aztecs." The presence of these two distinct narratives is communicated through the book's typography, as the Aztecs' narrative appears inserted as smaller typeface with tighter line spacing than the Stephens source materials. The typesetting decision to shrink Bartola and Maximo's parts of the text echoes the performance strategies that exploited the relatively small statures of the "Aztecs." If we are to understand this pamphlet as a fossil itself, a smaller piece of larger yet-articulated archival bodies of the Aztecs, then these material changes motivate us as researchers to imaginatively round out the pamphlet's surrounding, speculative archival body. Through the figure of size, pamphlet does not just transmit a visible textual-material narrative of the "Aztecs," but also a now-invisible performance narrative as well. This more integrative approach to

¹⁸⁷ *Illustrated Memoir*, 20.

evaluating the communicative potentials of archival documents pushes beyond the transparently visual by knitting together different fragments of human and non-human materiality.

With Stephens as the source material, the U.S. tours of the “Aztecs” were straightforward expressions of U.S. imperial might. However, in their British exhibition, the frequent recourse to Stephens, “his” Central America, and his ruins were plaguing reminders of the noisome rivalries and shifting power dynamics that threatened to dissolve the unified efficacy of the British imperial archive. Freak show materials then become evidence for retroactively materializing and speculating on what possibilities might arise out of British imperial archive’s inability to contain the imaginary of Central America it produced. In his travelogue, Stephens recalls a series of brief exchanges between him and the loquacious Padre of Santa Cruz del Quiche: a story of a “living city, large and populous, occupied by Indians, existing precisely in the same state as before the discovery of America” captured the popular imagination so thoroughly that *Household Words* reprinted it as a short story titled “A Mysterious City” in 1851.¹⁸⁸ Stephens never found this “great city” and the only explorer who made it to the top of the mountain was greeted with a “dense cloud,” producing more lacunae in the travel narrative.¹⁸⁹ Bartola and Maximo’s pamphlet fills in this gap with “Iximaya,” a fictional city that recycles and extends Stephen’s legend of the lost city with their pamphlet describing Iximaya as existing since “time immemorial,” and surrounded by nearly impassable mountain chains

¹⁸⁸ Stephens, *Incidents of Travel*, 195.

¹⁸⁹ Stephens, *Incidents of Travel*, 196.

and gnarly escarpments.¹⁹⁰ Home to a population frozen in a pre-discovery state, Iximaya becomes a “Lost World,” a fiction of prehistory against which British culture could define itself. According to the pamphlet, Iximaya translates to “the Great Centre”; not restricted to the edges of the imperial archive’s geography, the unknowability of Central America symbolized by the “Great Centre” resides at the core of the archive providing the dominant narrative register. On entering Iximaya, the Hammond party confronts a re-enlivened prehistoric past, “an antiquity of four thousand years,” untouched by modernity.¹⁹¹ The living Iximayans are statues come-to-life possessing “peculiar and strongly-distinctive lineaments ... to be traced in many of the sculptured monuments of the Central American ruins.”¹⁹² The description of the city’s inhabitants inaugurates a ghostly revivifying of a formerly complex civilization that maps over both Stephens’ source material and the original Central American ruins.

Stephens’ text included engravings by architect Frederick Catherwood that brought into partial view the now-famous ruins of Copán featuring Mayan stelae, scenery that Stephens believed “always left a pleasing impression.”¹⁹³ When paired with Stephens’ fanciful musings, Catherwood’s ruins, complete with sylvan *mise-en-scene*, conform to a romantic aesthetic that dwelled in emotional transport, ambiguity, and

¹⁹⁰ *Illustrated Memoir*, 25.

¹⁹¹ *Illustrated Memoir*, 28.

¹⁹² *Illustrated Memoir*, 29-30.

¹⁹³ Stephens, *Incidents of Travel*, 152.

obliqueness.¹⁹⁴ The images proved so intriguing that they inspired the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Palmerston, to attempt to acquire some of the ruins for the British Museum, which was an utter failure. The editors of the “Aztec” pamphlet capitalize off the Palmerston debacle by noting the “convincing resemblance” that the siblings bear in “general features” to the artist’s famous engravings, thereby interpolating them into an existing narrative of pre-Columbian antiquity that exists only in ruins and remnants.¹⁹⁵ The *Morning Chronicle* would solidify this allusion and ally it more explicitly to archeological discovery by claiming that the “Aztecs” “look like images from a mural exhumed from the impenetrable forests of the New World.”¹⁹⁶ Similarly, an 1854 London version of the “Aztec” pamphlet visually echoes this strategy of transforming the pair into archaeology remnants by interpolating them into an extant Catherwood illustration of Mayan stalae. Perched perfectly atop the stelae, Bartola and Maximo become miniature statues in *bas-relief* and extensions of Iximaya’s permanently anterior architectural landscape. This move to fossilize the “Aztecs” as statue relics reflects a broader cultural scientific trend of de-animating or detheatricalizing nature, and in this case *lusus naturae*

¹⁹⁴ Maureen Warren, “Romanticizing the Uncanny: Ernst Ohlmer’s 1873 Photographs of the European-Style Palaces in the Yuanmingyuan,” *Nineteenth-Century Photographs and Architecture: Documenting History, Charting Progress, and Exploring the World*, ed. Micheline Nilsen (Surrey: Ashgate, 2013), 242.

¹⁹⁵ *Illustrated Memoir*, 9.

¹⁹⁶ “Advertisements and Notices” *The Morning Chronicle*, December 21 1854.

(“freak of nature.”) For a specimen to be examined fully, it must be immobilized, dead, or rendered insensate.¹⁹⁷

Stephens’ aims in writing his Central American travelogue were to promote the myth of a national culture, which he accomplished by discursively declaring the extinction of Central America natives to make them live again only through writing.¹⁹⁸ Stephens’ figurative extinction of Central American populations played out through the exhibition strategies of the “Aztecs” that initially fossilized their body parts. Describing the pair as “atomies,” news reports stripped Bartola and Maximo of their fleshiness and reduced them to skeletal frames.¹⁹⁹ Ethnologists of the period legitimized the practice of interpreting the Aztecs by changing their peculiarly en fleshed bodies into knowable osseous structures through their attempts to pinpoint the Aztecs’ birth years by way of dental organization. What remains of these methods are fossil proxies in the form of dental casts now housed at the Hunterian Museum, which is part of the Royal College of Surgeons in London. Both Victorian and contemporary efforts to makes sense of existing evidence of the Aztec re-enact processes of piecemeal reconstruction that resonate with paleontology, as we both work with available fragments to imagine speculative bodies of the past. Even though the material remains do exist that should serve as the most authoritative pieces of evidence, Bartola and Maximo’s archived materials also produced

¹⁹⁷ Jane R. Goodall, *Performance and Evolution in the Age of Barnum: Out of the Natural Order* (London: Routledge, 2002), 28-9.

¹⁹⁸ R. Tripp Evans, *Romancing the Maya: Mexican Antiquity in the American Imagination, 1820-191* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004), 73.

¹⁹⁹ “Fine Arts,” *The Morning Chronicle*, August 23 1853.

a competing interpretative framework structured by the Victorian popular imperial imaginary of Central America as a region of indecipherability and lingering mystery which keeps alive through acts of speculation its fossils and ruins. After all, Bartola and Maximo may have been representatives of an otherwise-extinct species, but they were definitely not dead. The *Paisley Herald* made no bones about the Aztecs' "lively and intelligent" aspects, stressing their "aptitude for mental training" and "excellent health." If correlative paleontology could supposedly articulate entire bodies from the tiniest of scraps, Bartola and Maximo proved to be frustrating exceptions to this rule. Instead, the little that the public knew about them decoupled "Aztec" from its verifiable historical associations to reframe it as a course of curiosity, eluding total discernment or classification through the historical record."²⁰⁰

One of the reasons Central America proved so enigmatic to British commentators was that its populations exceeded the binaries that structured racial mapping in nearby regions. In adjudging Bartola to be "more mixed race origin than [Maximo], who is, perhaps, of the pure unmixed origin which some might call the Aztec,"²⁰¹ the *Morning Post* rehearses these difficulties. One imaginative commentator attempted to rectify visual-geographical puzzles the "Aztc's" presented by postulating that Bartola and Maximo were actually throwback Aztec refugees who "found refuge in some remote part of Central America" during Cortés' campaigning. This possibility well articulates how

²⁰⁰ William Henry Wills and William Weir, "Short Cuts across the Globe," *Household Words* 1, no. 3 (13 April 1850): 66.

²⁰¹"Marriage of the Aztecs," *Morning Post*, January 8 1867.

the freak show materializes the transnational flows often obscured by imperialism, but the author abandons further consideration by chalking up their continued existence as “a mysterious problem.”²⁰²

Although fossils are emblems of preservation, they are still organic matter and subject to change over long periods of time. One of the challenges of paleontological preservation is slowing down processes of deterioration, which for fossil resins materializes through cracking, darkening, and crazing into tiny spider web-like fissures in the surface.²⁰³ This concern serves as a reminder that, though inanimate, fossils are still evidence of dynamic forms of matter. Mimicking this dynamism of the fossil body, Bartola and Maximo were invoked to give body to theories of species degeneration or extinction that could threaten *anyone*. For instance, the bodies of “Aztecs,” visualized commonly stooped atop their stelae, served as cautionary tales to hard-working urban dwellers who, if they do not exercise freely, would similarly deteriorate into “into a puny dwarfish race, more resembling the Aztec or the Boscheman than the stalwart English yeoman of yore.”²⁰⁴ But, their deteriorative aspects were only one part of the story that their fossilized bodies told, since the other allure of Bartola and Maximo lied within how these “fossils” could reanimate and navigate the modern metropole successfully: “To view these children is less to inquire whence they came, than to regard them as they are;

²⁰²“The Aztecs,” *Morning Post*, July 14 1853.

²⁰³ Michael Foote and Arnold I. Miller, *Principles of Paleontology* (New York: W.H. Freeman and Compnay, 2007), 311.

²⁰⁴ Clerk of the Commission, “The Children’s Employment Commission,” *The Social Science Review* 3 (1865): 176.

to watch the progressive dawn of intelligence, and continually stronger development of individual characteristics.”²⁰⁵ As fossils now re-animating the deep past, Bartola and Maximo’s source materials dredge up unruly alterations to the dominant archival record, making their presentation capable of sustaining multiple historical narratives and time frames.



Fig. 4 Clifford’s “The Aztecs Maximo and Bartola,” 1867. L0032635 Courtesy of Wellcome Library, London.

An 1867 retrospective handbill (fig. 4) commemorating “The Aztecs” features illustrated photographs of the pair throughout their career overlaying a faint background

²⁰⁵ *Illustrated Memoir*, 33.

of Mayan stelae, suggesting these architectural roots to be foundational in their exhibition. Including images of the pair in wedding finery, everyday European wear, and traditional “Aztec” dress, the document discards linearity in favor of a temporal framework that materializes and accommodates for multiple, and sometimes recursive, embodiments in simultaneity. Robert Aguirre argues that Bartola and Maximo represent a process of cultural translation whereby they are flattened into fetishized and desirable museum artifacts no doubt spurred on by the Palmerston debacle.²⁰⁶ Even as it partakes in this flattening process, this poster likewise stages a rebuttal by entertaining the possibilities that might arise out of re-animating prehistoric relics through the freak show, what the outcomes of the Aztecs’ “development of individual characteristics” might look like.²⁰⁷ Unsteady the myth that archives remain stable over time and context, the poster’s panoply of images attempts, with imperfect results since it is a two-dimensional document, to replicate the dynamism that marks Bartola and Maximo’s bodies as archives of a population’s rise and decline. In terms of its imagery, the poster manages to condense the poetics of re-enactment that Rebecca Schneider defines through narrative “superabundance” in which original archival materials open themselves up to “a million insistent if recalcitrant possibilities for return.”²⁰⁸ The deteriorative vitality of the fossil also extends to the condition of this specific poster with its eaten-away pieces and frayed

²⁰⁶ Robert Aguirre, “Exhibiting Degeneracy: The Aztec Children and the Ruins of Race,” *Victorian Review* 29, no. 2 (Winter 2003): 41.

²⁰⁷ *Illustrated Memoir*, 33.

²⁰⁸ Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 30.

ends approximating the cracks and crazes of the fossil's osseal matter. As it is now, Bartola and Maximo's poster does not simply signal successful archival preservation, but rather memorializes an process of prolonged and imperceptible deterioration: the decomposition processes are not fully stopped but rather slowed to near imperceptibility. Interpreting this poster through the figure of the fossil helps to unlock not only the interlocking visual and performing narratives of the "Aztecs," but also the dynamic rearrangements of matter that their archival body still generates.

In order to supply interpretations of the past from fragments, paleontologists inevitably had to rely on speculation whether it be drawing conclusions from available fossil objects or translating from pre-existing written explanations.²⁰⁹ For some scientists, speculation was the paleontologist's pet peeve. Smarting after difficulties finding links between ancient amphibians and fish in Devonian rocks, paleontologist Henry Fairfield Osborn, refers to speculation as a "total failure" and "problem of problems," which could only be solved by finding more physical evidence.²¹⁰ However, the currents toward speculation as a necessary evil have shifted since the early-twentieth century, as paleontologists now are launching spirited defenses of speculation. Speculation becomes a tool for charting contextually bound shifts in scientific theory and practice that reconstruct these bodies. No longer considered "failures," the reconstructed prehistoric body takes on a number of different possible material configurations to offer a dynamic,

²⁰⁹ Allen A. Debus, *Prehistoric Monsters: The Real and Imagined Creatures of the Past that We Love to Fear* (Jefferson, NC: MacFarland & Co, 2010), 159.

²¹⁰ Henry Fairfield Osborn, *The Present Problems of Paleontology* (Popular Science Monthly, 1905), 236.

localized, and responsive understanding of embodiment than a more conservative paleontological perspective would allow. The “Aztecs” poster, with its web of images slowly eaten away, invites a speculative paleontological reconstruction of the “Aztecs” that reframes archives-based research not so much as an exercise promoting narrative wholeness and cohesion, as it is a diffractive, process capable of materializing and sustaining different and competing forms of embodiment. In what follows, I enact this speculative fossil method of archival interpretation by isolating specific images from the poster and using them as trace of evidence to imagine a series of different archival bodies for the “Aztecs.”

The “Aztecs” exhibition became a space for evaluating and developing different possible explanations for species extinction. The small image in the top center of the poster features pair perched on a temple offers one potential trajectory: their ostensible likeness to Mayan ruins made Bartola and Maximo proof for theories supporting biological determinism. In efforts to trace human antiquity, comparative anatomists and ethnologists used sculpture to help produce a comprehensive archive of humanity. James Redfield’s *Comparative Physiognomy; or, Resemblances Between Men and Animals* (1852), combines art objects and animals to produce a truly bizarre rubric for hierarchizing the world’s non-white populations relative to their proximity to whiteness. Included in his study were Bartola and Maximo, who managed to both possess the “sculptured head” of “Central American ruins” and the stature and habits of mice at the

same time.²¹¹ If Redfield's scientific imperialist sentiments are not clear enough, in an inspired move he likens the father of Aztec conquest, Hernán Cortés, to a puma. While he neglects fleshing out the mouse connection, Redfield runs with sculptural likenesses, referring to the siblings as "graven," "motionless," and "dead," even suggesting that Maximo was "made out of red clay."²¹² Seeking to prove that they are indeed part of a degenerate race, Redfield's description transforms them into interanimatory beings, statues come-to-life who may move but are not truly "of flesh and blood."²¹³ When he does accord them animacy, it is courtesy of galvanism through which the siblings' bodies may reimagine relations between the organic and machinic. Ursula K. Heise argues that genetically engineered animals in speculative fictions reveal anxieties pertaining to the extinction of their natural forebears.²¹⁴ Though only discursively so, Bartola and Maximo tap into a similar preoccupation with evaluating and solidifying eroding boundaries between human and non-human during a cultural moment marked by upheavals initiated by prehistory's discoveries.

Regardless of their costuming, a number of the images on the 1867 promotional pamphlet are shot in either full or three-quarters profiles, a trick intended to emphasize

²¹¹ James Redfield, *Comparative Physiognomy; or, Resemblances Between Men and Animals* (New York: W.J. Widdleton, 1866), 67.

²¹² Redfield, *Comparative Physiognomy*, 68-9.

²¹³ Redfield, *Comparative Physiognomy*, 69.

²¹⁴ Ursula K. Heise, "From Extinction to Electronics: Dead Frogs, Live Dinosaurs, and Electric Sheep," *Zoontologies: The Question of the Animal*, ed. Cary Wolfe (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 60.

the supposed slope of their skulls linking them to prehistoric humans. The “Aztecs” career also coincided with actual paleontological discoveries that further shook assumptions of species fixity. Their career bookended the 1856 discovery of fossils in Germany’s Neander Valley that came to be known as “Neanderthal 1” with the prognathous skull that would provide an authoritative marker by which contemporary non-white populations could be translated into primitive peoples.²¹⁵ No explicit links were forged between the “Aztecs” and Neanderthal, but the discovery of these early hominid skulls so lengthened the timeline of human antiquity that Bartola and Maximo’s connections to a deep past became a concrete possibility. Their pamphlet inserts Bartola and Maximo within an inscrutable prehistoric past by noting that they were even more “strange than the vast skeletons of the Mastodon, which have been exhumed in the same region.”²¹⁶ German scientist Carl Vogt’s craniological examination of the siblings represents the most prolonged attempt to place Bartola and Maximo on the timescale of humanity in his 1864 *Lectures of Man*, which frames prehistory primarily as a matter of human development and speciation. He concludes through careful observation and analysis of the “Aztec” skulls that “we find the human and animal character intermixed,” to imply that the pair are evolutionary throwbacks of an earlier stage in human development.²¹⁷ In 1867, Vogt’s study on microcephaly would pinpoint the “apelike”

²¹⁵ Reader, *Missing Links*, 77.

²¹⁶ *Illustrated Memoir*, 39.

²¹⁷ Carl Vogt, “Lecture VII,” *Lectures on Man: His Place in Creation, and in the History of the Earth*, ed. James Hunt (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1864), 200.

characteristics of the “Aztecs” that made them one of “the milestones of species evolution,” or the “Missing Link.” Though this theory never gained traction, it clarifies how Bartola and Maximo’s display mapped race and disability onto the animal to produce a popular interpretation of the prehistoric human. The success of his theories aside, Vogt’s focusing only on the skull rehearses the recognizable poetics of fossilization built on fragmentation,²¹⁸ casting Bartola and Maximo as traces of once-living organisms. In Vogt’s text Bartola and Maximo fulfill the one modern criterion of the fossil that they record the presence of a former living organism now marshaled to reconstruct the history of human life.²¹⁹

Vogt’s craniological diagnosis of the siblings does not completely ossify them, but instead becomes a canny exhibition trick to derail the narratives of acculturation, “the progressive dawn of intelligence,” that would submit their presentation to a too-linear developmental path. The longer the “Aztecs” remained in England, they more refined and “human” they became. Their intellectual development paced their physical development: in 1854 they could “spell some words” and “walk upright,”²²⁰ and by 1860 they had “grown about two inches.”²²¹ While Bartola and Maximo showed delight with modern

²¹⁸ Michael J. Benton and David A.T. Harper, *Introduction to Paleobiology and the Fossil Record* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), Ch. 3.

²¹⁹ S. Warren Carey, *Theories of the Earth and Universe: A History of Dogma in the Earth Sciences* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 33

²²⁰“Queen’s Concert Rooms,” *Morning Chronicle*, December 27 1854.

²²¹ “The Aztecs,” *Oxford Journal*, February 18 1860.

fashions, their presentation still operated partially according to visual aesthetic inverse to their British acclimatization.

Their 1867 commemorative poster stages oscillations between degeneration and evolution through a series of *tableaux* where the siblings sit facing one another dressed in fine European designs and their typical topknots. Because facial angle for scientists provided conclusive evidence of primitivity, the “Aztecs” typically wore their hair in piled high atop their heads to exaggerate the supposed slope of their skulls. While the skull may have been authoritative, Bartola and Maximo’s hair—a tool for Victorian racial classification—was endlessly puzzling to observers. But whether it was flowing, in ringlets, or standing “erect nearly a foot high,”²²² their hair nonetheless was telltale proof of their primitive otherness.²²³ Since the return of extinct humans was not an everyday occurrence, their show catalyzed efforts to assess current theories of imminent extinction that sutured racial difference and sexual debilitation. Proof of their status as an extinct species gained traction with proponents of polygenism, a theory of human origins that viewed human races as different and distinct, who viewed racial hybridity as a congenital malformation. In *Races of Men* (1850), anatomist Robert Knox cites Mesoamerica as the geographic source of species degeneration: “the hybrid was a degradation of humanity and rejected by nature ... instanced by Mexico, Peru, and the Central States of

²²² “Extraordinary Cheap Exhibition,” *Illustrated London News*, July 3 1853.

²²³ Durbach, *Spectacle of Deformity*, 137.

America.”²²⁴ The racial bearings of the visages etched into the ruins at Copán were so flummoxing to Knox that he confessed to be “wholly unequal to the explaining of any of these difficulties satisfactorily.”²²⁵ Knox’s acolyte, Josiah Nott postulated that racial hybridity caused sexual sterility, defining an interracial child as the result of “inter-*species* coupling and therefore sterile.”²²⁶ Nott would later abandon his spurious theories; but, the work of him and his cohorts laid the foundation for hybridity to become a byword that pathologized miscegenation and hierarchized different races and ethnicities relative to whiteness.

Bartola and Maximo became hard evidence of these theories through ethnologist John Conolly’s synthesis of anatomist Richard Owen’s anatomical observations of the “Aztecs.” Conolly mentions that Maximo’s “pelvis was not particularly remarked upon, although the peculiar attitude of the children seemed, and still seems, to indicate want of due proportion in it.”²²⁷ The pelvis, and by extension genitals, held particular resonance in Victorian anatomical discourses of race and sexual reproduction. The enfreakment of Saartje Baartman or the “Venus Hottentot,” a native Khoikhoi woman and one of the first modern freak performers, centered on illustrations of and exegeses on her non-normative, by European standards, genitalia. The pelvis became one metonym of non-white

²²⁴ Robert Knox, *The Races of Men: A Fragment* (Philadelphia: Lea & Blanchard, 1850), 496.

²²⁵ Robert Knox. *The Races of Men*, 124.

²²⁶ Quoted in Shawn Michelle Smith, *American Archives: Gender, Race, and Class in Visual Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 35.

⁵ John Conolly, *The Ethnological Exhibitions of London* (London: Churchill, 1855), 44.

sexuality that offered unimpeachable proof of her lasciviousness and degeneracy. Beyond the freak show, Baartman's presentation helped to develop an anatomical poetics of sexuality in which a narrow, aesthetically pleasing, and proportionate pelvis was a "sign of racial superiority."²²⁸ Preliminarily linking his "peculiar attitude," a perpetually childlike state, to his disproportionate pelvis casts Maximo as a living example of imminent species extinction. Whether true or not, the rumors of sterility that followed Maximo illustrate how prehistory was discursively constructed as unable to survive modernity. Redfield, Vogt, and Conolly's discussion of the "Aztecs' continuously qualify "Aztec" animacy broadly understood as a quality of agency, mobility, awareness, and liveness. Mel Y. Chen theorizes animacy not as undifferentiated matter, but rather as emerging through complexly racialized and humanized notions.²²⁹ These studies of the "Aztec" attempt to deploy discourses of sexual, racial and abled Otherness to render their bodies less animate than others. But, this unsteady mapping aligns the "Aztecs" with animacy Chen defines as queer in its ability to deconstruct the hierarchy of human-animal-vegetable-mineral on which it relies, showing the "Aztecs" to both submit to and resist such containment measures.

The two cameo-style oval portraits at the center of the 1867 poster commemorate Bartola and Maximo as bride and groom attired in the Russian dress they came love after

²²⁸ Sander L. Gilman, "Black Bodies, White Bodies: Toward an Iconography of Female Sexuality in Late Nineteenth-Century Art, Medicine, and Literature," *Critical Inquiry* 12, no. 1 (Autumn 1985): 219.

²²⁹ Mel Y. Chen, *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 17

their tour of St. Petersburg. The rumors of sexual sterility created a divergent possibility for the “Aztecs” marked by an unlikely combination of British acculturation and queer intimacy. 1867 was a big year for the “Aztec Lilliputians.” They got married to one another— “under civil contract” and “in the presence of the Registrar General” no less.²³⁰ Now deemed a cheap ploy to drum up fading interest in the pair, the “Aztec” marriage ennobled and de-pathologized the theories of species extinction that cast the pair as degenerative, and was viewed as the ultimate act in British social acclimation. The *British Medical Journal* was the only source skeptical of such imperatives, mourning that “to perpetuate a race of such deformities would be a misfortune.”²³¹ To waylay accusations of incest and species degeneracy, news sources re-told their origin story and emphasized their status as evolutionary throwbacks to a priestly Aztec caste forbidden from intermarrying, which rationalized and explained the gossip that Maximo remained “sexually a child” for his entire life.²³² In its coverage of the marriage, the *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer* emphasizes Maximo’s debility deducing that is “more degenerated” than Bartola since he possessed the “smallest head that was ever seen.” But rather than a source of anxiety, his diminution transforms into a source of pleasure through the minutiae of modern marriage: “‘Little Max,’ (‘as the bridegroom is familiarly known’) was gracious and intelligible during the post-ceremony breakfast held

²³⁰ “Marriage of the Aztecs,” *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, January 12 1867.

²³¹ “The Aztecs,” *South and North Lincolnshire Advertiser*, February 2 1867.

²³² Leslie Fiedler, *Freaks: Myths and Images of the Secret Self* (New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday, 1978), 45.

at Willis' Rooms for the "Aztecs and their intimate friends," and he cut a handsome figure in his "faultless suit of black cloth."²³³ The wedding too coaxed out of Bartola admirable qualities of "self-respect and retiring self-control" that position her as an reasonable approximation of bourgeois British femininity only offset by her decidedly "mixed extraction."²³⁴ The brother-sister wedding scheme re-enacts the cultural customs of ancient "Aztecs," but through a distinctly modern sensibility showing prehistory to be active in defamiliarizing British mores. What results is a surprisingly radical revision to the heteronormative reproductive ideologies that structured Victorian bourgeois marriage.

Prior to London arrival of the "Aztecs", Henry Morley in an 1851 *Household Words* column imperiously claims "Nothing but Anglo-Saxon energy will ever stir this sluggish pool of Central America to life."²³⁵ However, the type of ephemeral and unstable materiality that emerges out of the prehistoric fossil an archival reading practice reaches its apotheosis in Bartola and Maximo's live shows where performance becomes a form of evidence that would counter Morley's presumption. In *The Archive and the Repertoire* (2003), Diana Taylor traces memory production of the Americas through "the archive," defined as documents supposedly resistant to change over time and context, and the "repertoire," defined as forms of embodied practice such as performance, gesture,

²³³ "Marriage of the Aztecs," *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, January 9 1867.

²³⁴ "Marriage of the Aztecs," *The Morning Post*, January 8 1867.

²³⁵ Henry Morley, "Our Phantom Ship: Central America," *Household Words* 2, no. 48 (22 February 1851): 516.

dance, and orality.²³⁶ As a document, performance both maintains and changes choreographies of meaning, designating it as mutable but capable of tracing traditions and influences. Including performance in the “Aztecs” evidentiary arsenal confirms prehistory’s use of dynamic documentation to narrate the Earth and humanity’s history. Writing on its own strategically disavows the embodiedness it purports to depict, preserving histories of violence by burying or ossifying the embodied experience of colonial subjects. For Michel de Certeau the often-retraced “colonial encounter” rehearses violent discursive dispossession: it is the “initial moment of stupor” when “the conqueror writes the body of the other and traces there his own history.”²³⁷ The colonial encounter scenario authors the fiction of a decisive, isolatable moment in which pre-Columbian Central America and Mexico enter the historical record and their prehistoric pasts are seized for the imperial archive as art objects, sculpture, or texts. Performance decenters written documentation as the primary conduit of mnemonic transmission by stressing the interrelatedness of performatic, visual, and discursive fields. For Taylor, acknowledging embodied documentary practices recasts the colonial encounter scenario as a portable, multimedia framework that either reinscribes the white subject’s authority or subverts such predictable outcomes.

Performance reintegrates and reaffirms an embodied historicity usually denied to the large parts of the human past. Featuring physical contact, Maximo’s first meeting

²³⁶ Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

²³⁷ Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), xxv.

with the King of Hanover performs only to parody white historiographical authority. Their interim impresario, professional magician John Henry Anderson, recalls the blind King dandling Maximo on his lap so he could pass “his hand over the face of the little Aztec” and feel “the symmetry of the limbs, and the development of the features.”²³⁸ In replaying the scenario of colonial contact, this gesture spectacularizes the threshold of modernity, an abrupt emergence of a new kind of authority and agency, which preserves differences between “pre” and “history.” As with prior and subsequent work of anatomists and ethnologists, Maximo is reduced to an object of scientific query. But, “Little Max” countermands this narrative of colonizing indigeneity by initiating contact of his own when he makes “free to play with the face of royalty” and endeavors “to pull the king’s nose.”²³⁹ Counter-staging his own contact scenario, Maximo’s gesture broadly traces a long textual and visual tradition committed to depicting *the* pivotal moment when Mesoamerica entered into modernity through the imperial archive only to defamiliarize it and reorient it as satirical reappropriation. The interaction between the king and Maximo entertains simultaneously two divergent historical trajectories made possible through prehistory’s dynamic forms of evidence: one that perpetuates and one that overturns British historiographical practices, showing that far from its pretenses to neutrality the imperial archive is authored from decisive viewpoints. On a sweeter note, Bartola’s interactions also centered on touch, as she exchanged kisses with charmed female

²³⁸ John Henry Anderson, “The Aztecs,” *The Courier*, December 15 1853.

²³⁹ John Henry Anderson, “The Aztecs,” *The Courier*, December 15 1853.

spectators, reshaping the violent colonial touch into a source of unexpected, female-centered pleasure.

The visual disparities that performer and spectator present, non-white/white and small/big, encouraged British spectators to construct themselves as part of an unequivocally advanced culture and secure sweeping distinctions between “pre” and “history.” Certainly these scenarios document processes in which the spectators subsumed the history of Central America as the history of their own progress. But, we cannot ignore the potential of Bartola and Maximo’s performed equanimity, though their agency is at best speculative. For Eve Sedgwick touch promotes a relationality that undoes categorical surety and unleashes provoking intensities: “Even more immediately than other perceptual systems, it seems, the sense of touch makes nonsense out of any dualistic understanding of agency and passivity; to touch is always ready to reach out ... or to enfold.”²⁴⁰ In Bartola and Maximo’s hands, the touch of the colonial encounter neither fully acculturates the Aztec nor degenerates the British spectator, but blurs easily discernible boundaries between the two. Echoing this potential, the *Morning Advertiser* charmed by Bartola and Maximo’s interactions with British society even cheekily asks: “Who Would Not Be an Aztec?” Instead of faithfully reproducing the colonial encounter, the unpredictability of their actions undercuts the dominant narrative of the faraway, sluggish Americas by transforming them into resistant and living presences.

²⁴⁰ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 14.

The long career of the “Aztecs” shows prehistory to be a messy, lively and energetic set of practices giving form to the debates surrounding the Earth’s and humanity’s pasts.

iv. Recovering the “Earthmen”

In June 1853, Charles Dickens and his friend John Leech attended a showing of Charles Caldecott’s *Zulus*, a troupe of thirteen performers infamous for their extremely dramatic displays of everyday life in Southern Africa. Their show featured nuptials, wild animal hunts, and preparations for battle that involved “ a general stamping, ramping, and raving.”²⁴¹ The theatrics inspired Dickens to pen “The Noble Savage,” an 1853 philippic aimed at satirizing the performable archetypes of racial otherness that were met with popular approbation by theatergoers. Dickens found the interpretative frameworks available for making sense of these shows to be so distasteful that he wished them “to be civilized off the earth.”²⁴² His now infamous sentiment combines rhetoric of acculturation and extinction, a combination that would come to shape subsequent displays of African peoples. No stranger to exhibition culture, Dickens includes laundry list of popular ethnological performers in his short article, including George Catlin’s Ojibways, and the San Bosjeman of South Africa against which he evaluates the *Zulus*. Absent from this list are Flora and Martinus, the “Earthmen,” a heretofore-unknown tribe victimized by the Hottentots, Bosjeman, and *Zulus* whose performance coincides with Dickens’ piece.

²⁴¹ Charles Dickens, “The Noble Savage,” *Household Words*, June 11 1853, 113.

²⁴² Dickens, “The Noble Savage, 114.

Eventually paired with the “Aztecs,” the “Earthmen,” hailed from a mountainous, desert region of Southern Africa and were distinguished by their habit of burrowing underground for living quarters, earning them the nickname “Earthmen.” Unlike other Africans on display, Flora and Martinus’s show did not dramatize the native customs of the “Earthmen.” Theirs was a romance of conversion. When “two little half-naked savages” appeared at an Inn outside of Croydon in 1851, the George Family took them under their care.²⁴³ They were christened Flora and Martinus and spent two years cultivating their English speaking, drawing, pianoforte playing, and singing skills. For their May 1853 debut in London, they were advertised as two near-perfect examples of bourgeois Britishness, even if their physical appearance would seem to tell another story.

As co-headliners with the “Aztecs,” Flora and Martinus’ freak show deploys cultural signs of prehistory made popular by Bartola and Maximo that both support and thwart narratives of empire building. Both the “Aztec” and “Earthmen” freak shows centered on discourses of species extinction, but they each entertain different potential outcomes to offer different practices of archival interpretation. While the “Aztec” show treated questions of species extinction literally to revise the archival body’s relation to evidentiary stability, the “Earthman” show frames extinction more figuratively by linking it to acculturation to reconsider the archival body’s relation to evidentiary visibility and presence. In the previous section, I used the prehistoric fossil as interpretative tool to return to the archive its lost material and embodied qualities, focusing specifically on the actual shards or fragments of evidence. This section moves on to interrogate the

²⁴³ “Earthmen from Port Natal,” *Illustrated London News*, November 16 1852.

relationship between prehistoric materiality, space, and archival visibility— how the “Earthmen” occupy layers of the Earth, subterranean or otherwise. The “Earthmen” show becomes a space of paleontological reconstruction devoted to piecing together the prehistory of Africa through the logic of sediment. Sediment is a trace form of evidence that testifies to the equally cohesive and dissipative impulses of the archive: it evidences solidifying processes that make certain materials legible as archival, just as it paradoxically enhances the invisibilities the imperial archive seeks to cover. On the one hand, Flora and Martinus’ highly public show dredges up them up as sediment to make them a legible part of imperial record through geological discourse. Their exhibition materials retell a familiar story of discovering and excavating the prehistoric troglodyte to confirm the imperial archive’s ability to make visible and thereby contain colonial populations. However, their archival bodies, still partially buried within broader archives of freakery, attest to how sedimentation likewise generates forms of dispersive documentation that materialize absences in or limits to the archive. Rehearsing this flickering optics of sediment, Flora and Martinus’ archival bodies blur boundaries between past and present, underground and aboveground, Europe and Africa that reinforce only to undo analytical distinctions between “pre” and “history.” In expanding on how documents assert their presences in archives, the “Earthmen” show demonstrates how prehistory accommodates for African voices and acts of dissent to make possible new ways of accessing the history of colonial encounters in mid-nineteenth-century Southern Africa.

Even though unevenness marked developments in mid-nineteenth-century records keeping and managing practices, the period witnessed a general shift from a subject-based classification system, which excited suspicion because of its potentially subjective nature, to a fonds-based system, which was thought to be able to withstand heavy influxes of records. World exploration and colonial expansion were not the sole reasons for a major uptick in records production, but building an empire that exercised its power through information management nevertheless required a more complex bureaucratic infrastructure that in turn needed new archival administration practices. Administrative agencies such as the British Foreign Office and Colonial Office experimented with instituting an early fonds-based mode of archival arrangement to account for its continuously proliferating bodies of documentation while smoothing over any potential inconsistencies in records management.²⁴⁴ Fonds-based systems could more fully and accurately account for the physical presence of documents than subject classification schema potentially open to processing errors that misclassified, dispersed, and subsequently lost documents in repositories.²⁴⁵ This model of archival arrangement

²⁴⁴The move from subject-based to fonds-based archival arrangement was not a smooth one. The Foreign and the Public Records Offices still could not effectively process the records they were acquiring, and consequently, many of them remained unprocessed for years. Records were also transferred between repositories and could potentially “disappear” temporarily while awaiting processing. These unstable archival migrations was the source of the relative obscurity of the Palmerston Central America debacle; the series of dispatches between Palmerston and his agents in Honduras had been moved between the British Museum and the Foreign Office, remaining unprocessed for many years.

²⁴⁵Alain Giroux, “A Theoretical and Historical Analysis of Pertinence- and Provenance-Based Concepts of Classification of Archives” (MAS thesis, University of British Columbia, 1998).

discursively constructed documents as “precise instruments” impervious to archivist or researcher intervention and archival description practices ensured that the stories they told were self-evident and unchanging.

Ingrained in this formative nineteenth-century archival theory is the rhetoric of sedimentation that counteracts the impulses toward assuring the preservation of the archive collection’s whole visible bodies. Sediment is naturally occurring material that through weather patterns or erosion coalesces and settles into deposits, showing up as striated bands of landforms known broadly as the geological record. Palimpsestic layers of prehistoric sedimentation make visible the ancient and underground as “remnants from an earlier and different environment.”²⁴⁶ While the materiality of sediment was a form of evidence itself, geologists like Charles Lyell largely used sediment for what archivists now term its primary evidential value, or the information that documents provided about the “origins, functions, and activities of their creator.”²⁴⁷ In addition to its material existence, sediment was evidence of what could not be seen, the earth’s geological activities that were either so ancient, gradual, or buried underground they were only visible through sedimentary residues. Throughout *Principles of Geology* (1830-1833), Charles Lyell determines sediment’s evidential value either through cumulative processes, as in “the accumulation of sediment bears testimony,” or through dispersive

²⁴⁶ Donald J. P. Swift, “Relict and Palimpsest Sediments,” *Encyclopedia of Sediments and Sedimentary Rocks*, ed. Gerard V. Middleton (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2003), 913–15.

²⁴⁷ “Evidential Value,” *Society of American Archivists*, accessed March 11, 2017, <http://www2.archivists.org/glossary/terms/e/evidential-value>.

processes, as in “in regard to the distribution of sediments by current it may be observed.”²⁴⁸

In Victorian archival science, the term sediment is similarly employed as evidence of the process of archiving: Muller, Feith, and Fruin in the *Manual* define the archival collection as an outcome of “‘the sediment of actions’ of the entity forming the archive.”²⁴⁹ This use of the term sedimentation suggests the archive not as necessarily the living body, but rather the incomplete residue of former activities, or the embodied and particular practices of archiving. Currently, archival studies scholars interpret sedimentation as a cumulative process that still manages to preserve the individual pieces of particulate matter that make up an archival collection. Unlike the “whole, organic body,” processes of archival sedimentation give way to gaps or incompletions, since the “sediment” results from appraisal practices that define which archival materials are worth keep and which are not.²⁵⁰ Through what is visible, sedimentation materializes what is invisible as well. Throughout the second-half of the twentieth century, archivists have returned to sedimentation to flesh out further its uses for developing archival standards. Central to Italian archival administrative language, sedimentation coaxes out the similarities between archaeological ruins and archives, “in which findings emerge as they

²⁴⁸ Charles Lyell, *Principles of Geology Or the Modern Changes of the Earth and Its Inhabitants, Considered as Illustrative of Geology by Charles Lyell: Illustrated with Maps, Plates and Woodcuts* (London: J. Murray, 1867), 256; 573.

²⁴⁹ Muller, Feith, and Fruin, *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, xii.

²⁵⁰ Michael R. Hill, *Archival Strategies and Techniques* (SAGE Publications, 1993).

were stratified through time, in an organic and natural way, without any external or artificial classification or organization scheme.”²⁵¹ Voiced as process by which documents emerge spontaneously from subterranean spaces, sedimentation stresses the agential capacities of these once-underground materials to decenter the human labor of archivist, as well as researchers.

Moving away from the usual excavation-as-interpretation model that reinforces the agency of the critic-archaeologist, sedimentation as a mode of archival interpretation poses a potentially non-anthropocentric alternative to archives-based research. Approaching archival bodies as sediment potentially relocates the human researcher and the visible documents within a broader archival terrain populated by materials and acts both seen and unseen, both unearthed and interred. At once visible and invisible, this expanded field of interpretative possibilities revises the optics of the archival documentation to enable the usually buried voices, bodies, and affects of the nineteenth-century colonial subject. Grounded in the subterranean sediment of mid-nineteenth-century Southern Africa, Flora and Martinus prefigure official discourses of archival sediment, but their show nonetheless indicates prehistory’s receptivity to supplying rhetoric for evidentiary paradigms. In this section, I use “sedimentation” as an archival reading practice expansively. On the one hand, sedimentation serves as localized and contextually situated trope specific to the “Earthmen” show capable of summarily excavating the material and embodied conditions of Southern African peoples that the imperial archive tries to bury. Sedimentation also functions as an intentionally

²⁵¹ María Mata Caravaca, “The Concept of Archival ‘Sedimentation’: Its Meaning and Use in the Italian Context,” *Archival Science* 17, no. (2017): 113-124.

anachronistic interpretative archival framework that when read for of its twentieth-century re-uses reveals Victorian prehistory's historiographic import for both traditional and alternative archival perspectives.

Flora and Martinus' exhibition embodies the promises and perils of archival sediment as their show draws from materials preoccupied by limits to and invisibilities in the archive. In "completing" these records, Flora and Martinus do not confirm the sanctity of the archive and its evidence as whole and present bodies. Instead, their status as subterranean dwellers initiates revisions to foundational, nineteenth-century archival body discourse that prefigures recent accounts of subcultural archiving. Records management practices have changed since the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century "Golden Age" of archiving. Still many assumptions pertaining to the role of the archivist, archiving, and documents that grew out of the "old scripts" remain. Terry Cook and Joan Schwartz describe a persisting dynamic between the invisibility of the archivist and archiving as a "process" and the visibility of the document as a "precise instrument," suggesting that the latter has garnered the most critical attention.²⁵² At best, recent attention to how records are actively shaped by archivists' interventions is reported to be "fuzzy."²⁵³ Queer historiographical projects, however, have used this fuzziness, and its associations with limited and penumbral vision, as a rhetorical structure for accessing archives of subcultural populations; for queer communities, the subterranean was both a

²⁵² Terry Cook and Joan Schwartz, "Archives, Records, and Power: Form (Postmodern) theory to (Archival) Performance," *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 173.

²⁵³ Cook and Schwartz, "Archives, Records, and Power," 173.

necessity and survival strategy to against violence, physical and psychological. Flora and Martinus' show was not explicitly queer in its presentation of colonial sexualities or gender; in fact, of all the prehistoric performers, theirs is arguably the most silent on questions of sex, desire, or gender expression in comparison to the perpetually child-like "Aztecs" or the bearded Krao Farini. However, the importance of the subterranean to contemporary queer archival perspectives resonates with the "Earthmen's" status as underground prehistoric creatures. Instead perpetuating archival erasure, being figured as underground sediment allows the siblings to navigate and reshape official archival systems to avoid total crimination and pathologization, which suggestively prefigures how marginalized communities would build subcultures only partially visible through institutional archival practices. What I would like to stress is that Flora and Martinus do not enliven an insensate underground space, but rather serve as evidence for a population already in continual existence outside of the archival eye. As such, Flora and Martinus' show offers is a nascent critique of custodial archival practices retroactively that would be designated heteropatriarchal or colonialist through their inability to memorialize lives marked by ephemerality or displacement.

In mapping out histories of marginalized populations, sedimentation is typically deployed for its regulatory functions with the word connoting the insidious processes that naturalize and instantiate cultural, social, economic norms. For instance, in *Rogue Archives* (2016), Abigail De Kosnik cites "family time" and "factory time" as two types of heteronormative time taking form through "sedimentation of . . . certain cultural

norms,” which contrast the destabilizing and protean qualities “queer time.”²⁵⁴ Similarly, in a reading of history of sex laws, Gayle Rubin describes morality campaigns as depositing “new regulations as a kind of fossil record of its passage” with the “legal sediment” being the thickest in areas involving homosexuality.²⁵⁵ To resist this groundswell, this case study on the “Earthmen” stirs up sediment’s rhetorical sedimentation in order to see where transgressive evidence of prehistory might accumulate and what forms these deposits might take. This entails sifting through “sediment’s” etymological layers back to its Victorian uses and associations. In the Victorian prehistoric imaginary, subterranean strata possessed a material architecture that was necessarily incomplete.²⁵⁶ Through detrital or fossilized presences of the past’s remains, what geologists called “relict sediment,” the subterranean did not just preserve the deep past but also memorialized the absence of things, people, places, and ideas once whole or animate. But, since sediment was predominantly marshaled for its evidential value, as evidence of the Earth’s geological activity, sediment was likewise tapped for its productive potentials. In his description of Patagonia in *Geology of the Voyage of the Beagle* (1846), Charles Darwin speculates that wherever there is a “supply of sediment, fossiliferous strata are now forming, which at some future distant epoch will be upheaved

²⁵⁴ Abigail De Kosnik, *Rogue Archives: Digital Cultural Memory and Media Fandom* (MIT Press, 2016), 159.

²⁵⁵ Gayle Rubin, “Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality,” *Deviations: A Gayle Rubin Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 60.

²⁵⁶ David L. Pike, *Subterranean Cities: The World Beneath Paris and London, 1800-1945* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), 141.

and preserved.”²⁵⁷ With its emphasis on future formations, Darwin’s musings sketch a landscape that casts the future subterranean as the domain of new, peculiar fossilized life forms-to-come. Not yet fully materialized, Darwin’s “fossiliferous formations” are imaginative fancies, fine particles through which “we might theoretically have anticipated” future evidence of the past.²⁵⁸

Images of subterranean sediment work to organize the “Earthmen” display both literally and figuratively, drawing their archival body into conversation with contemporary historiography that confronts the myth of presence in the archive by latching prehistory to speculative bodies of documentation. In *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue* (1999), Samuel Delany posits subspaces to be fleeting but nonetheless valuable archival repositories, which “will be lost permanently unless people report on their own contact and experience.”²⁵⁹ Even if subcultural knowledge making practices may dissipate at the touch of those who disregard the potential of alternative epistemologies founded on ephemerality, the evidence still remains in specks and residues, or what Gayle Rubin refers to as “fossil rich” strata.²⁶⁰ The “Earthmen’s” living arrangements were one of their most notable features: the *Illustrated London News*’ inaugural article on the “Earthmen” describes how they dug “hollows in the ground to

²⁵⁷ Charles Darwin, *Geology of the Voyage of the Beagle, Under the Command of Capt. Fitzroy, R.N. During the Years 1832 to 1836: III* (Smith, Elder, 1846), 138.

²⁵⁸ Darwin, *Geology of the Voyage of the Beagle*, 138.

²⁵⁹ Samuel Delany, *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue* (New York: New York University, 1999).

²⁶⁰ Rubin, “Geologies of Queer Studies,” 354.

shield them in a measure from the wind.”²⁶¹ However, fascinating as this prospect was for general audiences, more serious ethnologists like John Conolly claimed that this was a just freak show fabrication. Calling attention to their “delicate feet and hands,” Conolly speculated that the “name of Earthmen ... is of very doubtful propriety, and associated with a more than doubtful account of their living in holes burrowed in the earth.”²⁶² Conolly’s counterclaim evaporates the potential of the Earthmen’s subterranean existence to render it an ephemeral piece of gossip. Though Conolly is committed to dispelling rumors, his inability to ascertain fully the “Earthmen’s” way of living shows an epistemology of the underground founded on the recognition that attempts to excavate knowledge have their limits. And as underground humans, Flora and Martinus undermine the visual empiricist and positivistic frameworks of the evidential that archives generate, surfacing ephemerally through rumor.

Flora and Martinus were neither the first nor the last Africans on display in London, so the key to understanding their rather unusual performances depends on their relationships to these other displays. Their exhibitions were bookended by Khoikhoi woman Saartje Baartman, the “Venus Hottentot,” (1810-1815), San Bosjesmen (1840s), Zulus (1850s), and later Farini’s Friendly Zulus (1870s) and Farini’s Pygmy Earthmen (1880s) all of whom maximized the supposedly “savage” qualities of African populations. Inarguably, the rhetoric of “savagery” has been applied trans-historically to

²⁶¹ “Earthmen from Port Natal,” *The Illustrated London News*, November 6 1852, 371.

²⁶² John Conolly, “Excerpts from ‘The Ethnological Exhibitions of London,’” *The Dublin Quarterly Journal of Medical Science* 20, no. 39 (1855): 166.

justify colonial intervention; however, during the early- to mid-nineteenth century political skirmishes throughout Southern Africa among the British, Dutch, and African populations inoculates the figure of the “savage” with a historically-specific bellicosity that would inform live exhibitions.²⁶³ The frequent frontier wars that the British waged against various Southern African indigenous populations guaranteed a steady supply of and unflagging interest in African displays in England. Throughout the 1830s, books about Natal trickled into London’s market, and during the era of the “Great Trek” when Boer farmers emigrated away from British colonial posts, England was flooded with reports of Zulu militaristic aggression.²⁶⁴ Sadiah Qureshi claims that print culture, especially travel narratives, shaped audience reception of live human displays so forcefully that spectators assumed that exhibitions were true-to-life living illustrations of exotic peoples.²⁶⁵ If a foundational textual account was unavailable, exhibitions, such as P.T. Barnum’s 1861 “Wild Savages of Africa” show, would replace the missing text with a trusted, usually white, emissary who had ostensibly lived in Africa and could furnish audiences with an accompanying lecture on language, habits, and customs of the

²⁶³The only potential departure from the well-trod convention of the warlike Zulu would be Farini’s “Friendly Zulus.” Although their handbill rather ironizes their ostensibly friendly dispositions by picturing them with arrows and shields, and mentioning that “the songs and dances are difficult to distinguish the expression of love from the gesture of martial defiance.” *From “Farini’s Friendly Zulus.”* Handbill. 1879. Evanion Collection. The British Library.

²⁶⁴ Bernth Lindfors, “Charles Dickens and the Zulus,” *Africans on Stage: Studies in Ethnological Show Business*, ed. Bernth Lindfors (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 63.

²⁶⁵ Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade*, 174.

performers. Listing different “tribes,” Barnum’s handbill betrays an awareness of the heterogeneity of Africa’s populations, but manages to efface any visible intertribal differences by posing them in interchangeable costumes comprised of furs, feathers, and draped cloth. Like Dickens’ “The Noble Savage,” Barnum’s extravaganza fails to include the Earthmen. Their relative invisibility within the broader context of African display positions them as a stubborn blindspot in the history of exhibition, which their life story pamphlet would later emphasize.

Even though sedimentation possessed reliable evidential value, the tangible outcomes of its processes, the sediment itself, accentuates the serendipitous promises of prehistory’s scientific materialist frameworks. Not simply conservators of the past, subterranean strata, as Darwin writes, is “charged with new and peculiar forms of life.”²⁶⁶ In tracing the charges, or affective atmosphere, of the underground, Darwin lends animacy to these fossils, which the “Earthmen” show would sensationalize through Flora and Martinus’ living bodies and their archival materials. One of the reasons for their continual absence in predominantly African displays is that impresarios chose to pair them with the “Aztecs,” a move that explicitly betrays the generalized empire-building impulses that drive the freak show, even if specific exhibitions did borrow from specific current events. After performing solo during the 1853-54 season in England, the “Earthmen” teamed up with the “Aztecs,” and their life story becomes a short addendum to the already popular and well-detailed “rescue” of the “Aztecs.” Unlike pamphlets before it, the 1860 “Aztec” *Illustrated Memoirs* concludes with a brief informational

²⁶⁶ Charles Darwin, *Origin of Species* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012), 326.

piece titled “The Ermanniges,” the Dutch term for “Earthmen,” which summarized their known habitations within the greater context of Southern Africa’s geographies and already-discovered cultures.

If we are to place, though speculatively so, the specific “Aztec” pamphlet that includes the “Earthmen” addendum within the broader record of the many other “Aztec” pamphlets, this document performs the processes of deposition that form “relict sediment,” which refers to a remnant from a different environment now in disequilibrium with the environment it currently occupies. The concluding paratext of the document includes an alternate cover that visualizes the diminutized and additive presence of the “Earthmen” in relation to the “Aztec” archives. The illustration is a popular one that was often used in the “Aztec” show: an image Bartola and Maximo in profile perched atop reproductions of Catherwood’s Mayan stelae. But, this particular version also features an impossibly small and young Flora inserted between the “Aztecs,” who both look unusually willowy in comparison. Allying them to the “Aztecs” interpolates the “Earthmen” into a pre-existing interpretative framework drawn from popular prehistoric knowledge, making them signify as vestiges of prehistory more prominently than their African cohorts, even as the rhetoric of primitivity informs many if not all of the contemporaneous African acts. Through her occasional, illustrative presence in extant “Aztec” source materials such as this one, Flora rehearses the serendipity of relict sediment. Once unearthed and imprinted into the text of the pamphlet, she comes to embody prehistoric discovery akin to Darwin’s “new and peculiar” life forms, detached from the Southern African subterranean environment of her creation and swept away to

Central America. As a reprint, the 1860 “Aztec” pamphlet including the “Earthmen” represents a single layer within a more expansive palimpsest of “Aztec” life pamphlets, which further emphasizes the peculiarity and novelty of both the “Earthmen” and this specific document. Not completely distinct from its current environment, the pamphlet also gives the “Earthmen” contextual footing as their exhibition drew from discourses of extinction common to the “Aztec” show and filtered them through earlier travel narratives and exhibitions that speak more directly to their African identities. As a result, the “Earthmen” show recontours the interpretations of prehistory popularized by the “Aztecs” to address how prehistory structures the history of Anglo-African colonial encounters specifically.

The additive “Earthmen” pamphlet employs the same rhetoric of geographic impenetrability and low visibility on which the “Aztecs” relied, marking their archival presence as speculative. The “true country” of the “Earthmen” is a liminal hinterland “walled in by two different climates—that of the Cape Colony, and that Caffre Colony” that impedes intercourse with any other populations.²⁶⁷ Though both acts hinge on archival absences, the politics of how and why they materialize these discourses differ slightly. Bartola and Maximo’s absence sprang equally from their geographic sequestering and their interdiction from intermarrying. Being the only two left of the sacerdotal Iximayans gave their performance a sense of inevitable finality. As the only

²⁶⁷“The Ermanniges; of the Earthmen of Africa: Their Country and History,” *Illustrated Memoir of an Eventful Expedition Into Central America Resulting in the Discovery of the Idolatrous City of Iximaya, in an Unexplored Region, and the Possession of Two Remarkable Aztec Children,*” ed. John L. Stephens and Other Travelers (New York: Wynkoop, Hallenbeck, Thomas, 1860), 4.

two “brought to any civilized nation,” Flora and Martinus are the sole representatives of “Earthmen” discernible through a Eurocentric historical record, but this statement also implies the continued underground presence of a larger “Earthman” population that exceeds the reach of the imperial archive.²⁶⁸ They are the shored up pieces of sediment that tell of the unseen biological processes of the “Earthmen” population. To stress their ontological and physical proximity to the local landscape’s geological features, the “Earthmen” were discursively constructed as extractable evidence of the Southern Africa’s environs, suggesting that colonialism was dependent on an anthropocentric worldview that understood the environment to infinitely minable for its natural resources. In a geographical study of Southern Africa, Francis Patrick Flemyng uses the living habits of the “Earthmen” to prove that they are of the “lowest, most degraded, and utter savage beings”: “they usually reside in holes in the earth, scraped out with their nails, or rightly termed their claws.”²⁶⁹ Flemyng fails to recognize, however, that his “proof” is little more than freak show fabrication, which calls into question rather than confirms the text’s authority, as well as the archival document’s status as a precise instrument of truth. Still, his recourse to geographical hostility aligns with a nineteenth-century conception of the underground as a space of degradation. Studies of Victorian British and Parisian undergrounds typically focus on cities, but the rhetoric of degradation and degeneration equally applies to colonial outposts, as Flora and Martinus demonstrate. If the

²⁶⁸ “The Earthmen,” 41.

²⁶⁹ Francis Patrick Flemyng, *Southern Africa: A Geography and Natural History of the Country, Colonies, and Inhabitants* (London: Arthur Hall, Virtue, and Co., 1856), 182.

subterranean space of the urban metropole abstracted and delimited where bodies could safely go, the subterranean space of the “Earthmen’s” rural frontier fails to work according to this logic of boundaries. Viewed as degraded humans themselves, Flora and Martinus become enmeshed in and interchangeable with the imaginary of the underground to reassert its lost embodiedness, a presence that would later connote potential absence as their show gained popularity in England.²⁷⁰

If the imperial archive is the fantasy of comprehensive knowledge of the entire British Empire, the geological record serves as its Earth-bound analogue, or as Prince Kropotkin nicknamed it in 1892, “the rocky archives of the earth.”²⁷¹ First appearing in 1811 in the *Retrospect of Philosophical, Mechanical, Chemical, and Agricultural Discoveries*, the geological record visualizes earthly changes through striated bands of rock created by environmental phenomena, such as the deposition of sediment and volcanism.²⁷² Like different geological strata signaling different versions of the Earth, the assortment of African freak shows served as venues through which spectators could

²⁷⁰ H.G. Wells’ *The Time Machine* (1895) would pick up on this potential dynamic with the Morlocks, a species of diminutive, apelike troglodytes who live in subterranean darkness. Like Flora and Martinus their subterranean status complicates attempts to document their presence, as they are seen as ephemeral flashes: “I turned, with my heart in my mouth, and saw a queer little ape-like figure ... running ... and in a moment was hidden in a black shadow beneath another pile of ruined masonry” (Wells 108). Also similar to the “Earthmen,” the Morlocks embody retrograde time; their underground world is comprised largely of ancient technologies that the rest of the novel’s futuristic England of AD 802,701.

²⁷¹ Prince Kropotkin, “Recent Science,” *The Nineteenth Century*, vol. xxxiii, ed. James Knowles (London: Sampson, Low, Marston & Company, 1892), 230.

²⁷² *Oxford English Dictionary*, “Geological, Adj.,” accessed March 12, 2017, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/77763>.

attempt to parse fine-grained distinctions among different races and ethnicities.²⁷³ The most vexing problem for nineteenth-century geologists was interruptions of gaps in the geological record, the niggling knowledge of its “fragmentary character and our imperfect knowledge of what it contains.”²⁷⁴ Flora and Martinus’ promotional materials provided a rubric for hierarchizing Africa’s various tribes, of course through a colonialist vantage point, that left the “Earthmen” in a state of comparatively obscured victimization. The tendency to confuse or conflate the various performers from Africa illustrates a colonialist logic of generalized otherness at work that Flora and Martinus’ show endeavored to dismantle. The *Sussex Advertiser* clarifies that by 1853 their guardian, Mr. George, believed Flora and Martinus’ exhibition to a “drawing room affair” that in no way resembles that of the Bosjesmen.²⁷⁵ The “Earthmen” pamphlet likewise distances the pair from other tribes by noting “the Earthman has no friends. He lives in a large, unvarying circle of enemies from whom his only escape is invisibility, and this he accomplishes by burrowing holes in the ground.”²⁷⁶ The “Earthmen” accounts complicate tropes of discovery or excavation hinging on total visual access in by textually uncovering the tribe only to recover them through repeated mention of their subterranean habits and unnavigable geography, always qualifying their visual presence in the archive. Theirs is not total archival exclusion, a complete failure to enter into the

²⁷³ Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade*, 175.

²⁷⁴ Kropotkin, “Recent Science,” 230.

²⁷⁵ “The Erdmanniges at Tunbridge Wells,” *Sussex Advertiser*, November 22 1853.

²⁷⁶ “The Earthmen,” 42

historical record, but rather their presence is articulated through their invisibility relative to other, more easily discernible, tribes. An under-documented layer in an otherwise well marked imperial-geological archive of Southern Africa, the presence of the Earthmen is signaled by their relative invisibility, as they embody prehistory's ability both to enable and foreclose performable fictions of archival completion and wholeness.

In emphasizing intertribal differences, the "Earthmen" pamphlet motivated both scientific authorities and amateur spectators to mete out distinctions among exhibited Africans, which worked to produce popular images of prehistoric cave man and woman through the "Earthmen." Johannes Fabian's conception of spatialized time is one of horizontality—the further one moves out from the centers of empire, the further back in time one travels. Sedimentation visualizes a different relationship between time and space that is based on verticality—the deeper down one burrows from the Earth's crust, the further back in time one goes, which Jules Verne would authoritatively depict for the popular literary market with *A Journey to the Center of the Earth* in 1864. As a result, the Earthmen's subterranean status was routinely marshaled as condemning evidence of their prehistoric primitivity. During the late-1840s and early 1850s, connections between prehistoric cave people and modern colonial subjects emerged in print travel narratives, but these were understood to be figurative, or parts of the "literary scene."²⁷⁷ The piecemeal scraps of bones and text ignited the popular imagination's interest in prehistory, but left it generally unsatisfied. But, in 1853, the "Earthmen" freak show solidified these links and presented a novel rendering of the troglodytic human.

²⁷⁷ "The Cape of Good Hope," *Morning Chronicle*, January 2 1850.

Predating the appearance of the “Earthmen,” South Africa’s San Bosjesmen in 1847 were considered to occupy the lowest notches of humanity standing “halfway between the man and the brute.”²⁷⁸ In 1854, after the “Earthmen’s” arrival, for the annual meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Robert Latham, the head of the Sydenham Crystal Palace’s ethnological department, delivered a paper reviewing some of the “more remarkable” peoples on display in London. His brief summary of the “Earthmen” presupposes knowledge of these earlier Bosjesmen since he deems the “Earthmen” to be “Troglodyte-Bushmen.” His distinction submits the two distinct groups to a hierarchy that privileges the Bushmen as the more civilized and sophisticated of the populations, effectively adding on another layer to the record.²⁷⁹ Latham’s “troglodyte” diagnosis refers both to their relative inscrutability because of geographic seclusion and their discursive status as representatives of a prehistoric race. His adjudication was informed by current discoveries of Paleolithic hominids and art in caves in France’s Loire Valley, the most famous at the time being Chaffaud (1852).²⁸⁰ Latham even tweaked the prevailing narrative of the “Earthmen’s” penchant for living in underground burrows in his exegesis, describing their habitations as “natural caves.”²⁸¹

²⁷⁸ “The Bosjemans,” *Bradford Observer*, June 17 1847.

²⁷⁹ R.G. Latham, “Ethnological Remarks upon some of the more remarkable Varieties of the Human Species, represented by individual now in London,” *Report of the Twenty-Third Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science* (London: John Murray, 1854), 88.

²⁸⁰ Paul G. Bahn, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of Prehistoric Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 57.

²⁸¹ Latham, “Ethnological Remarks,” 88.

Discoveries of troglodyte primate skulls designated Africa a mineable source rich in prehistoric artifacts and consequently a prime site for prehistoric knowledge making. Zoologists and ethnologists found these fossils alluring and dedicated many public meetings to presenting detailed descriptions to scientific communities and general audiences, so before Flora and Martinus began performing the public was aware of troglodyte primates and could apply this framework to the “Earthmen” shows.

Unlike the 1840s San Bushman who were derisively designated as “little above the monkey tribe,” Flora and Martinus avoided primatological comparisons in their presentation as troglodytes.²⁸² As Bartola and Maximo’s physical degeneration became a cautionary tale of the decline of civilization at the peak of its power, the threat of “extinction” for Flora and Martinus is tied to missionary narratives that catalyze processes of figurative extinction through acculturation. A constellation of geographic, agricultural, and colonialist discourses found in contemporaneous missionary tales of Southern African exploration provide source material for justifying the “Earthmen’s” status as out-of-place prehistoric peoples, preserved “relict sediment,” in need of evolutionary and cultural refinement. In 1857, Dr. David Livingstone delivered a series of lectures at Cambridge chronicling his seventeen-year sojourn to Africa wherein he lived with Bushmen, Bakwain, and Bakalahari tribes at the edges of the Kalahari Desert. Like the “Earthmen” pamphlet, for Livingstone, “savagery” is a natural outgrowth of an inhospitable landscape since the inhabitants choose their land “in accordance with their

²⁸² *History of the Bosjesmans, Or Bush People: The Aborigines of Southern Africa* (London: Chapman, Elcoate, and Company, 1847), 41

native energy and national predilections.”²⁸³ Livingstone’s sentiments designate both human and terrain as interchangeable metonyms of primitivity that can only be changed by a two-pronged approach to civilizing consisting of agricultural improvements and Western education. The “Earthmen” pamphlet would sensationalize Livingstone’s language through its description of the “Earthmen’s” ascetic way of living: lacking cattle and natural resources, they are reduced to a life and circumstances alone belonging to the “animal creation.”²⁸⁴ The emphasis on their agricultural lack or ineptitude coincides with popular imaginaries of Xhosa, Fingo, and Basuto laborers forced from their land because of more successful encroaching farmers.²⁸⁵ The inability to sustain animal and vegetative life justified British and Dutch colonial intervention in Africa, as well as attempts to acculturate Southern Africans who have migrated to the metropole.

Relict sediments are fascinating for their atavism, being evidence of geological processes having occurred completely in the past. Their correlates, “palimpsest sediment,” distill the flux of time, being particles of past and presently occurring geological processes.²⁸⁶ Though his lectures are testaments to the success of Christian conversion in Africa, dotting the edges of Livingstone’s narratives are shadowy traces of

²⁸³ Livingstone, David, “Lecture One,” *Dr. Livingstone’s Cambridge Lectures: Together with a Prefatory Letter by the Reverend Professor Sedgwick*, (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell, and CO., 1858), 1; 102.

²⁸⁴ “The Earthmen,” 41.

²⁸⁵ Deborah Shapple Spillman, *British Colonial Realism in Africa: Inalienable Objects, Contested Domains* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 147.

²⁸⁶ Dean A. McManus, “Modern versus Relict Sediment on the Continental Shelf,” *Geological Society of America Bulletin* 86, no. 8 (August 1, 1975): 1154–60.

the prehistoric that his text may acknowledge but necessarily fully contain. As a space that “has remained so long unknown to the rest of the world,” Africa’s interior possesses the same rhetorical unknowability as the subterranean.²⁸⁷ Through Livingstone’s prose, exploration does not fully uncover Africa’s interior, but paradoxically emphasizes its darkness, as well as the limits to such knowledge gathering and constructing endeavors. The presence of the prehistoric works according to the penumbral epistemology of the underground: it does not necessarily shed complete light on knowledge, but rather highlights a tension between knowability and unknowability that the imperial archive usually tries to mask in the name of present and comprehensive knowledge. In the appendix to his lectures, Livingstone occasionally references nearly extinct tribes tucked deep in “gloomy primeval forests” that make up Africa’s impenetrable interior who have not been duly civilized by European culture or religion.²⁸⁸ The ability to assimilate into and be managed by the imperial archive marks the difference between Livingstone’s privileged “modern African practice” and the customs of “the olden-times arising from animal-worship.”²⁸⁹ Livingstone’s description of the various South African tribes co-existing in various states of primitivity relative to British civilization upsets systematic understandings of a permanently anterior time in which Africa is thought to dwell.

Mirroring the compositional processes that form palimpsest sediment, these “remote”

²⁸⁷ Livingstone, “Lecture One,” 1.

²⁸⁸ David Livingstone, “Appendix: Religious State.” *Dr. Livingstone’s Cambridge Lectures: Together with a Prefatory Letter by the Reverend Professor Sedgwick*. (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell, and CO., 1858), 290.

²⁸⁹ Livingstone, “Appendix: South African Tribes,” 100.

pockets of atavistic prehistory blend with modern narratives of cultural advancement of African peoples through missionary work or political and social management through white settler colonialism.

Flora and Martinus' exhibition condenses this tension underpinning Livingstone's broad characterization of Africa's demography by mapping the qualities of the palimpsest sediment onto the individual. The representational logic governing their presentations as prehistoric peoples blended ethnographic visual conventions of contemporary African subjects and behavioral conventions of British bourgeois subjects. During their performances they appeared sporting heavily furred garments beaded necklaces, and feathered fascinators, much like Barnum's "Wild Savages" show. They only once bucked this trend when they appeared at Oxford in 1855 wearing the "academic costume" of an Oxford undergraduate, generating a "droll spectacle."²⁹⁰ Cruising around Croydon in their "beads, feathers, and strips of skin," Flora and Martinus caused quite the sensation and often "startled" onlookers by appearing not as fully materialized humans but as "apparitions," which lends an aura of evanescence to the pair.²⁹¹ As unusual as their appearance was to the British eye, Flora and Martinus were making headway on their paths toward acculturation, upsetting the links to the prehistoric past solidified through their visual iconography. "The Earthmen's" managers pledged that ticket proceeds would be donated to the children's scholastic fund, making their show an exercise of

²⁹⁰ "The Earthmen at Oxford," *The Era*, May 20 1855.

²⁹¹ "Earthmen from Port Natal," *The Illustrated London News*, November 6 1852, 371.

British colonial power through education and entertainment.²⁹² Because Flora and Martinus proved to be bright, teachable children, they became potential accessories to colonial African rehabilitation attempts through religious and cultural conversion. Connecting their show with the civilizing influences of modern British education, Conolly argued that England could “teach them useful arts, and send them away again to their distant homes as pioneers of that civilization which a better spirit evoked in this country will extend to these children of darkness.”²⁹³ Yet, even though Flora and Martinus were poised to be successful missionaries of Western culture, throughout their performances they maintained a sense of exotic primitivity in physical appearance, including “plenty of ornaments, few clothes, and bronze skin,” which contrasted with their newly refined affinities for dancing polkas and puffing cigars.²⁹⁴

Although the images of rock strata promise an orderly glimpse of the passage of time through sedimentary layers, these records are not always so clearly cut. Sedimentation as a potentially productive practice now appears as a rhetorical trope in contemporary alternative forms of historiography looking to eschew progressivist models of historical writing. Inspired by Deleuze and Guattari’s writings of crystallization, Jeffrey Skoller employs the image of a sedimentary rock to explain how the “past co-exists simultaneously with the present as sedimented layers become enfolded to produce

²⁹² “The Earth Men,” *London Evening Standard*, May 9 1853.

²⁹³ Conolly, *Ethnological Exhibitions*, 167.

²⁹⁴ “Domestic Intelligence,” *Lincolnshire Chronicle*, May 20 1853.

an object.”²⁹⁵ The “Earthmen” leave behind very few photographs, but the ones that do figuratively re-enact the processes of temporal enfolding that form an object like a sedimentary rock. The “Earthmen’s” remaining visual objects disturb the straightforward deployment of colonialist visual cues that would secure power differentials between the “Earthmen” and their European counterparts charged with caring for them. Notably, only a few photographs of the “Earthmen” are publically accessible, their current archival state echoing the relatively low visibility of the subterranean pair. An 1853 series of photographs by Nicolaas Henneman poses Flora and Martinus against an ascetic backdrop to draw the eye to the exoticized presentation of their bodies. With little to no specific visual anchors to contextualize and guide readings of these photographs beyond the bodies, the pair both reflects and perpetuates a photographic typology of the African that endeavors to communicate a scientific artlessness and objectivity common to colonial photographic archives. These discourses are ruses for justifying and replicating colonialist orderings of the world’s populations through carefully staged images. One photograph includes the daughter of the merchant who transported Flora and Martinus to England to condense and make visible the transnational networks of exchange on which their freak show depended—the “Earthmen” only become visible when authenticated by white European authority. Moreover, their staged conventionality, the daughter’s maternal arm embracing young Flora, reprises the image of British middle-class philanthropic femininity that hid behind the rhetoric of disinterested benevolence to sustain colonial intervention. This may offer the daughter increased independence beyond

²⁹⁵ Jeffrey Skoller, *Shadows, Specters, Shards: Making History in Avant-Garde Film* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), xi.

the domestic space, but it reduces Flora and Martinus to evidence of successful conversion. Any potential uncertainty they may pose as primitive subjects is subdued by the conventional intimacies shared by them and the daughter with the daughter's protective arms enfolded them into the British social order. Photographs such as this one were key in overshadowing the reality that the first few years in Croydon were traumatic for Flora and Martinus, as reports would periodically surface that they lived a "solitary and apparently miserable" talking only to one another.²⁹⁶ While this photograph would appear univocal in its deployment of colonialist imagery, attending textual accounts of their performances destabilize such simplistic readings.

So far this section has focused on the depositional character of sediment, the way that it coheres and physically occupies spaces as a condensed mass to serve as evidence of the archive's aggregating impulses. However, sediment also possesses a dissipative character as evidence of environmental phenomena like river currents, winds, and earthquakes. Contemporary scholarship in archival studies touches on the randomness of sedimentary dispersion by arguing that "the routes by which materials come to repose in archives are neither certain nor systematic."²⁹⁷ For example, the researcher may find that their subject's archival documents are housed across various collections, a condition that echoes the missing links or transitional spaces of the geological record. As frustrating as they may be, the dispersive qualities of archival sediment invite an expansive and speculative practice of reading across distinct archives. In what follows, I take up the

²⁹⁶ "Earthmen from Port Natal," *The Illustrated London News*, November 6 1852, 371.

²⁹⁷ Hill, *Archival Strategies and Techniques*.

available fragments of the “Earthmen’s” archival body to explore its seemingly random overlaps with other contemporaneous freak performers’ archival bodies. Reading for faint traces of “Earthmen” within the context of other freak performers’ archives rehearses both the depositional and dispersive qualities of sediment to suggest that Victorian prehistory could sustain models of peculiar evidence that would later be enfolded in modern archival theory.

Archeological antiquarianism laid foundation for Bartola and Maximo’s prehistory exhibition as the siblings became pawns in the transatlantic rivalries over ancient Mayan ruins. While not so central to their presentation, images of antiquities likewise helped to shape the popular imaginary of the “Earthmen” to separate them from earlier and later African performers who were discursively constructed primarily through primatological rhetoric. Flora and Martinus’ diminutive perfection renders them statuesque: “Their skin is of the brightest and most transparent bronze, and as smooth and polished as marble. In form the little creatures are perfect—their delicate limbs standing out in most graceful symmetry.”²⁹⁸ The article only makes passing mention of their faces “decidedly African in feature,” but what exactly this entails is up to reader to decide.²⁹⁹ Rather than occupying the lowest rungs of humanity, like earlier African human troglodytes, Flora and Martinus emerged as vivified examples of an honorific prehistoric archeological archive. While Bartola and Maximo’s likenesses to Mayan stelae were fully documented and exceedingly specific, Flora and Martinus’ resemblance to

²⁹⁸ “Earthmen,” *Friends’ Review: A Religious, Literary, and Miscellaneous Journal* 6 (1853): 823.

²⁹⁹ “The Earthmen of Orange River,” *Morning Chronicle*, May 10 1853.

archeological antiquities is more imaginative and vague. Through their mentions of bronze skin and symmetrical figures, news reports convert Flora and Martinus into rarified images of African antiquity heretofore unseen. Being figurative statues does not simply enter them into the historical record as evidence of Britain's ever-stretching imperial grasp; instead, their presence paradoxically emphasizes their comparative absence in the imperial archive, since no recognizable system of signs for the "Earthmen" exists outside of freak show materials. The language of sculptural symmetry and mention of marble likewise renders them recognizable as approximations of lauded Greco-Roman statuary prized by British Victorians, unlike Bartola and Maximo who were examples of indigenous Mayan sculpture. Relying on Hellenist sculptural principles, standards, and materials to make Flora and Martinus knowable emphasizes the relative unknowability and discursive absence of the "Earthmen" in the imperial archive.

Questions as to whether or not the "Aztec" could speak shadowed Bartola and Maximo's career. Unlike Bartola and Maximo who were virtually unteachable, save four words in as many years, Flora and Martinus were quick studies. The displays of linguistic skill that provided the basis for their live shows would situate them more securely into a British genealogy that hierarchized African populations relative to whiteness. Biological and by extension cultural development could be adduced through linguistic development: in *The Descent of Man* (1870), Darwin posits "through his powers of intellect, articulate language has been evolved; and on this his wonderful advancement has mainly

depended.”³⁰⁰ But, as Christine Ferguson argues, Darwin’s delineation of language as an index of biological evolution was not built on a reliable relationship of positive correlation; simply equating language, voice, and autonomy presents an ahistorical assumption that fails to consider the specific political and social contexts by which speech became linked with empowerment or not. Instead, as evidence of biological evolution, language was subject to a seeming randomness that could unsettle the cultural hierarchies put in place by evolutionary theory.³⁰¹ Evolutionary theory supported a scientific materialist framework that stressed adaptability and mutability of species and accordingly presented language as the outcome of a random process of natural selection. The expansion of empire enhanced the malleability of language, raising concerns that English spoken by “Others,” was subject to variation, degradation, or even extinction.³⁰² In order to quell this potential threat, exhibition culture discursively hierarchized linguistic abilities amongst performers, and found most of them to be lacking in skill as proper evidence of their “humanity.” The Africa shows did not render their performers mute, like Bartola and Maximo who had been “consecrated to perpetual silence” and “forgotten how to talk.”³⁰³ Instead, their language evidenced their shared traits with non-

³⁰⁰ Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex*. (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1882), 48.

³⁰¹ Christine Ferguson, “Elephant Talk: Language and Enfranchisement in the Merrick Case,” *Victorian Freaks: The Social Context of Freakery in Britain*, ed. Marlene Tromp (Columbus: Ohio University Press, 2008), 118.

³⁰² Christine Ferguson, *Language, Science, and Popular Fiction in the Victorian Fin-de-Siècle: The Brutal Tongue* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006), 138.

³⁰³ Conolly, *Ethnological Shows*, 165.

human creatures. Routinely couching the African voice in terms of non-human utterances both prefigures and coincides with the rise of evolutionary theories of descent from a common ancestor

In addition to the “Aztecs,” language also distinguished the “Earthmen” from their other South African cohorts. *The History of the Bosjemen* identifies language of the San Bosjemen key to understanding the comparatively primitive state, which toes the line between human and monkey: “little above the monkey tribe” in appearance, the Bosjemen were heard to be either “chattering or growling” or presenting themselves as “sullen, silent, and savage.”³⁰⁴ In 1853, Caldecott’s Zulus played to the popular imaginary of the bellicose Zulu consequent of an indigenous uprising in Swaziland, the Zulus were presented as fearsome “savages.” The *London Illustrated News* describes their ritual song and dance featuring “each performer about on his haunches, grunting and snorting all the while like a pair of asthmatic bellows.”³⁰⁵ Not to be outdone nearly thirty years later, impresario Professor Guillermo Antonio Farini reintroduced the Zulus and the Earthmen whose limited linguistic faculties remained the same, their conversations mimicking “the chatter of monkeys.”³⁰⁶ Conversely, Flora and Martinus’ status as decent

³⁰⁴ “Similitude Between Man and Brute: The “Bojesmans or Bush People.” *Fragments in Defence of Animals and Essays on Morals, Soul, and Future State from the Author’s Contributions to the Animals’ Friend Society’s Periodical*, ed. Lewis Gompertz (London: W. Horsell, 1852), 42.

³⁰⁵ “The Zulu Kaffirs at the St. George’s Gallery, Knightsbridge,” *Illustrated London News*, May 28 1853.

³⁰⁶ *The New York Clipper*, December 13 1884, 13.

approximations of Britishness derived mainly from their linguistic abilities. In contrast to their performing companions, the “Aztecs” who “could not speak a single word,” the *Morning Chronicle* adjudges the “Earthmen” to possess “an aptitude for learning and could [acquire] almost anything.”³⁰⁷

The aggrandized mode of freak presentation was designed to emphasize the freak performer’s upstanding social status or special talents such as singing or dancing, and was usually reserved for white performers. Some prehistoric exhibitions, however, combined the exotic and aggrandized modes, which combined spectacles of physical difference with those of Western acculturation. Debuting in the 1850s, Julia Pastrana, a Sinoloan woman born with hypertrichosis, performed under the “Bear Woman” moniker; instead of live-action nature specials, her shows were celebrations of erudite taste and artistry, as Pastrana indulged audiences with her celebrated Highland Fling and opera arias.³⁰⁸ To rebut rumors of physical degeneration, the “Aztecs” occasionally cut spirited capers earning them the clever nickname “the Gymn-Aztecs.”³⁰⁹ While theirs may have been brief forays from their usual, more sedentary and silent performances, the early “Earthmen” shows focused almost exclusively on song and dance. Rather than making a show of the process of Westernization, Flora and Martinus debuted as nearly complete

³⁰⁷ “Meeting of the British Association—Section E. Geography and Ethnology, *Morning Chronicle*, September 23 1854.

³⁰⁸ Rebecca Stern, “Our Bear Woman Ourselves: Affiliating with Julia Pastrana.” *Victorian Freaks: The Social Context of Freakery in Britain*, ed. Marlene Tromp, (Columbus: Ohio State University, 2008), 200-233.

³⁰⁹ “Multiple Essay Items,” *Punch*, July 23 1853, 38.

products of refinement through British education. But rather than delimiting one specific outcome, impresarios cashed in on the relative unknowability of the “Earthmen,” the result of their archival narrative centering on invisibility, to use Flora and Martinus as canvases that could entertain many potential outcomes. Brother and sister built up fluency in English by learning an eclectic repertoire of songs that spanned cultures and genres of performance to include “Buffalo Gals,” “Oh! Susanna,” “Annie Laurie,” and “Rule, Britannia.”³¹⁰ These song choices memorializing regional folkways of the U.S., England, and Scotland position Flora and Martinus at times as minstrel performers to emphasize their blackness (“Buffalo Gals” and “Oh! Susanna”) and as surprising facsimiles of Britishness (“Rule, Britannia.”) The repertoire’s eclecticism confirms the conversion narrative only in limited terms, since the song titles evoke different Western populations segments by race, class, and geography. As a result, Flora and Martinus become strange and inscrutable amalgams that exceed the archive’s ordering impulses.

Much like the “Aztec” shows, the participatory nature of the “Earthmen’s” live performances succeeded in undoing analytical distinctions between “pre” and “history” meted out through race and species extinction discourses. Rather than maintaining the “Earthmen’s” physical and cultural differences, Flora and Martinus’ musical revues invited spectator identification and affiliation. One impressed spectator adjudged that the pair spoke English “as good as the best waiter in town.”³¹¹ In a preview covering the

³¹⁰ Bernth Lindfors, “Hottentot, Bushmen, Kaffir: the Making of Racist Stereotypes in 19th-Century Britain,” *Encounter Images in the Meetings Between Africa and Europe*, ed. Mai Palmberg (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2001), 65.

³¹¹“Theatres,” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper*, May 15 1853.

“Whitsun Week of Amusements”, the *Lloyd’s Weekly*’s man-about-town reporter suggests that pleasure seekers not only witness but also actively participate in the “Earthman” show by “mak[ing] friends and sing[ing]” with Flora, since Martinus had taken ill.³¹² In order to curtail any agency a prehistoric freak performer could claim through language acquisition, news sources often attributed their newly developed abilities to imitative receptivity: the “Aztec” were routinely likened to Queen Anne spaniels and later in the 1880s, Krao Farini, the “Missing Link” was favorably compared to a “good parrot.”³¹³ Flora and Martinus differed in their capacity for improvisation, as their musical performances later evolved into what the *Sussex Advertiser* deemed to be elegant drawing room affairs in which the siblings entertained and impressed audience members by initiating witty conversation.³¹⁴ By 1858, the pair was so well acculturated that that their African origins were cast as a source of doubt.³¹⁵ These suspicions effectively began to efface even further the presence of the “Earthmen” in the imperial archive by rhetorically abolishing their origins in favor of other, more spurious, theories.

Soon Flora and Martinus found themselves enmeshed in British history that managed to reinforce their status as colonial subjects while defamiliarizing what constitutes Britishness. Consequently, the “Earthmen” were containable by and exceeded

³¹² “Whitsun Week of Amusements,” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper*, May 22 1853.

³¹³ *Derby Daily Telegraph*, January 2 1883.

³¹⁴ *Sussex Advertiser*, November 22 1853.

³¹⁵ *Cambridge Chronicle and Journal*, February 27 1858.

archival discernment. To signal its entry into an easily managed imperial archive, the term “Earthmen” became a generalized byword for primitivity, though short lived, that could be mapped onto British laboring classes. In an *Birmingham Daily Gazette* article in 1864, the “Earthmen” become the bearers of British history and social evolution, as the British agricultural labor was noted to have “lived in a state equally savage, hardly a stage above the beasts of the field, and much as the African “earthman” now lives.”³¹⁶ Flora and Martinus on may have been “perfect” examples of the “Earthman” but once they started speaking more fluently news sources allied their small sizes with a British literary and folkloric tradition, noting that they were facsimiles-come-to-life and potential descendants of Puck and Titania.³¹⁷ The *Morning Chronicle* eulogizes the eventual extinction of “Earthmen” in laudatory terms by speculating that they are a part of a “fading species, but one destined to mythologized as elves.”³¹⁸ While these statements successfully aggrandize Flora and Martinus, they also further obscure and foreclose meaningful efforts to document the “Earthmen” in the imperial archive by reinforcing how their living presence depends on their discursive absence.

The “Aztecs” performances specifically recalled early European historiographical projects that rehearsed Certeau’s “inaugural” moment of contact, making this initial moment of discovery the Mesoamerican indigene’s official entrance into the imperial archive. This isolable moment of discovery preserves the fiction of a

³¹⁶ *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, October 24 1864.

³¹⁷ *Portsmouth Times and Navel Gazette*, August 6 1853.

³¹⁸ “The Earthmen of the Orange River,” *Morning Chronicle*, May 10 1853.

decisive origin by which archival materials gain authority. While the “Earthmen” show is interested in points of contact, theirs complicates the model set out by the “Aztec” show as their archive partially illuminates different points of colonial contact. By the time British colonial interests in Southern Africa reflected themselves through the freak show trade, white settler communities of Boers had already been occupying the region. Whereas, Certeau’s “colonial encounter” centers on the *first* decisive moment of contact, an “inaugural scene,” Britain’s position relative to ongoing Southern African colonial activity writes an *in medias res* colonial encounter since Dutch settler interests had dispersed indigenous African populations to inhospitable geographies in a struggle for land and resources.³¹⁹ The colonial encounter as staged by the “Earthmen” exhibition features a population not newly discovered but already touched by and displaced by Dutch settler colonialism, their subterranean living habits a consequence of ongoing colonial activity and intracultural African rivalries. The “Earthmen” show makes visible a colonial history of Southern African marked by shifting power dynamics and rivalries among African, British, and Dutch populations that does not have a singular and verifiable origin but multiple points of contact.³²⁰ This obscuring of a decisive moment of contact in which discovery produces the other undermines the contemporaneous practices of archival arrangement through which documents gained authority: archivists used a

³¹⁹ J.J. Ade Ajayi, *Africa in the Nineteenth Century Until the 1880s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 13.

³²⁰ During the 1880s the “Earthmen” made a return as a part of Guillermo Antonio Farini’s (born William Leonard Hunt) “Desert at the Aquarium” act. However, the politics of discovery had changed: England became the primary civilizers of Africa, its lands untouched before Farini and his cavalcade of “freak hunters” arrived.

fonds-based mode of arrangement to pinpoint an origin for the records that went unquestioned. In current archival theory, Tom Nesmith urges that these practices need to be reassessed by recognizing the necessary interplay between knowledge and speculation that probes the nature and location of origins.³²¹

Although the British George family adopted the “Earthmen” and England became the prime site for educating the siblings, popular reception of Flora and Martinus did not follow such a simple narrative of British acculturation. Instead, frequent recourse to their potentially Dutch characteristics emerged as the two spent more time accustoming themselves to British society. The *Lincolnshire Chronicle* amusedly observes that Martinus, “a juvenile chief ... sits down during his audiences with a Dutch dignity” and possesses the “sublime stolidity of a German prince.”³²² Described thusly, Martinus is less of a facsimile of proper Britishness than an “amusing” and strange amalgamation of various European deportments and bearings. Reception of his demeanor in live performances unintentionally illuminates the complex web of competing colonial interests that characterize Southern Africa. While Flora’s intercultural qualities are not quite as explicit as Martinus’, she too offers a heretofore-unseen mode of public feminine representation as both a pert flirt and inveterate cigar smoker. Flora makes a show of shaking every gentleman’s hand with “a flattering squeeze,” to poise her as the inevitable but still charming outcome of successful British acculturating practices, her appealing

³²¹ Tom Nesmith, “Still Fuzzy, But More Accurate: Some Thoughts on the “Ghosts” of Archival Theory” *Archivaria* 47 (1999): 136-150.

³²² “The ‘Earthmen,’” *Lincolnshire Chronicle*, May 20 1853.

demeanor effectively obscuring the material violence of colonialism that lingered in the “Earthmen’s” earlier shows. However her affinity for smoking tobacco proves more disquieting. Not only does it suggest that she is still impervious to some imperatives of “high civilization,” but it also visualizes the economic and trade aspects of Dutch settler colonialism that displaced and rendered the “Earthmen” population subterranean.³²³ These live performances generate documents that operate according to a logic of precision, but rather fuzzy speculation in which only bits and pieces make themselves available for study, which is why after months of guessing the “Earthmen” are deemed “human puzzles whose histories are all at variance.”³²⁴ Unlike other “freak” performers who would live out their days touring, news sources insist that the siblings were going to return to Africa to aid in “the conversion of Earthmen in general.” Unlike Bartola and Maximo who were the last of their kind, a faraway subcurrent of still-living primitivity in the form of the “Earthmen” community, one only nominally visible through the imperial archive, supports Flora and Martinus’ European exhibition. Their archival body, the ways that they illuminate invisibilities and limited reaches in the imperial archive, has the potential to disrupt the missionary narrative into which British news sources interpolate them.

³²³ “The ‘Earthmen,’” *Lincolnshire Chronicle*, May 20 1853.

³²⁴ “Advertisements and Notices,” *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper*, December 24 1854.

Entr'acte: *The Couple in the Cage*

Glitch: to slip, to slide, to skid, a “spaceman’s word for irritating disturbances.”³²⁵

“Glitches also live and play in the world.”³²⁶

“Once we discover the glitch, like addicts, we want more.”³²⁷

The language of error silently paced the careers of Bartola and Maximo, the “Aztecs, and Flora and Martinus, “the Earthmen.” As ancient peoples, they were out of time and place with their bodies and their ways of moving, speaking, and being thought of as perplexing aberrations to what was considered “normal” development. But, prehistory as a set of written, visual, and performed practices supplied a ready template for aestheticizing these apparent “errors” by translating them into living evidence of the deep past.

Consequently, the prehistoric freak performer struck an ambivalent relationship with developing information management systems taking shape to make sense of the earth’s deep past. Found in early archival administration texts, discourses of prehistory circumscribed what could be considered officially “archival” while making possible uncontainable and dynamic forms of evidence. Coco Fusco and Guillermo Gómez-Peña follow in the “Aztec” and “Earthmen’s” footsteps by working within so as to subvert the trope of the undiscovered indigene that serves as the foundational narrative touchstone of

³²⁵ “Glitches—a spaceman’s word for irritating disturbances,” *Time Magazine*, July 23 1965.

³²⁶ Curt Cloninger, *One Per Year* (San Francisco: LINK Editions, Brescia, 2014).

³²⁷ Michael Betancourt, *Structuring Time: Notes on Making Movies Second Edition* (Rockville, MD: Wildside Press, 2009), 62.

the imperial archive. Fusco and Gómez-Peña's artistic dissimulation has perennially left critics wondering about the limits of activist art: is their Guatinau posturing truly transgressive or is it complicit in reaffirming the neo-colonialist, ethnocentric attitudes it intends to critique?

My discussion of *The Couple in the Cage* moves away from debates about the political ambivalence of their performances to focus on how the documentary reprises the Victorian imperial archive's involvement in documenting freak show histories, or more accurately, prehistories. To address prehistory's potentially productive continuity errors, I take up the "glitch" as a theoretical and rhetorical framework for a model of creative archival management that reveals how prehistoric evidence's dynamic, living qualities precipitate disruptions to otherwise-functional and smoothly running information systems. Glitches are usually associated with digital and computational informatics. This inter-chapter, however, pursues another tack by defining the glitch primarily as an artistic-social construction that Rosa Menkman broadly characterizes as "relaying the membrane of the normal to create a new protocol after shattering an earlier one."³²⁸ *The Couple in the Cage* is a study of Victorian prehistory as a glitch and the prehistory of glitch: the documentary's indigenous bodies and knowledge making practices work within to disrupt late-nineteenth-century imperial archival information systems that took shape through the freak show's performed and visual technologies. Glitches appear through two levels: the performing body and the documentary's formal attributes. Fusco

³²⁸ Rosa Menkman, "Glitch Studies Manifesto," *Video Vortex Reader II: moving images beyond youtube*, ed. Geert Lovink and Rachel Somers Miles (Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2011), 341.

and Gómez-Peña's "Guatinau" themselves appear as embodied glitches as their performances of prehistory's strange disruptive and interruptive qualities undo the fantasy of the imperial's archive comprehensive and coherent wholeness; they signal the inconsistencies that the imperial seeks to mask in the name of objective authorship to imagine the different authorial perspectives the imperial archive can contain or not. Moreover, rather than a straightforward presentation of past performances, *The Couple in the Cage* extends the Guatinau's "glitchiness," as the documentary becomes an avant-garde allegory of the promises and perils of creating archival art by combining discrete textual, photovisual, and performing documentary bodies.

Because the "glitch" requires, and potentially becomes domesticated by, the informatics systems it destabilizes, it supplies a ready template for interrogating *The Couple in the Cage*'s vexed relationships to the imperial archive by illuminating the limitations and possibilities of documenting the history of human exhibitions through institutional archival materials. On the one hand, the documentary reprises tactics of the prehistoric freak show by employing materials from nineteenth-century colonial and medical photographic archives that unintentionally reinforce colonialist histories of sexual domination, violence, and inequality. However the documentary manipulates, organizes, and presents these official materials according to a vernacular collecting economy common to the freak show that filters "official" forms of documentation through gossip and the emotional labor of performers, spectators, and researchers. These "glitches" between artistic-informatics systems serve as evidence of *The Couple in the*

Cage's attempt to imagine new ways of accessing the history of colonial encounters through the nineteenth-century freak show.

The Couple in the Cage condenses into a half hour the highlights and low points of Fusco and Gómez-Peña's yearlong performance project, *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit...* in which the artists exhibited themselves in a gold cage as the representatives of a fictional heretofore-undiscovered tribe of people from the Gulf of Mexico, the "Guatinau." Inside their cages, they would tell stories, listen to music, watch television, eat bananas, and dance for audiences across the U.S., Europe, and Australia. For a nominal fee, audience members could take pictures with or feed them; if someone felt like big spender at the moment, five dollars could get them a look at the male's genitals. While the project occupies a place in the *long durée* of human exhibition, it also fits into a broader body of art works Hal Foster cites as archival art, which taps into an "archival impulse," by producing and drawing on informal archives."³²⁹ Foster's critical intervention successfully interrogates the museum's relationship to aesthetics, representation, institutional integrity, and memory, but his case studies are limited in their primarily Eurocentric focus at the cost of artists of color, save a brief mention of Renee Green, an African-American artist working with histories of transatlantic slave trade. Not mentioned by Foster is an active body of archival art specifically dedicated plumbing dynamics of race, ethnicity, and the politics of museum display. This *oeuvre* includes art installations redressing through creative archival appropriations museum curatorial

³²⁹ Hal Foster, "An Archival Impulse," *October* 110 (Fall 2004): 5.

practices that perpetuate historical invisibilities (Fred Wilson *Mining the Museum*)³³⁰ or inaccuracies (James Luna *Artifact Piece*.)³³¹ Others have looked at how photographic archives specifically perpetuate spectatorial violence against non-white bodies (Ken Gonzales-Day *Hang Tree* and *Erased Lynchings*³³², Carrie Mae Weems *From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried*³³³.) Weems' piece in particular, by evoking the emotional experience ("I cried,") reveals the affective terrain of working in slavery archives.³³⁴ Also, artists wed together museum and vernacular display practices through site-specific installations that highlight cultural memory-making practices of Latino, Native American, and African American subjects (Amalia Mesa-Bains, Pepón Osorio, Renée Green.)³³⁵ Equal parts live performance, site-specific installation, and creative archive, Fusco and Gómez-Peña's project tackles simultaneously this broad range of subjects, as well as the history of colonialism, human display, museological standards and conventions, authenticity in art and science, and postmodern multiculturalism.

³³⁰ Jennifer A. González, *Subject to Display: Reframing Race in Contemporary Installation Art* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2008), 64-120.

³³¹ Paul Chaat Smith, *Everything You Know About Indians Is Wrong* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 88-102.

³³² Ken Gonzales-Day, *Lynching in the West 1850-1935* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

³³³ Carrie Mae Weems, *From Here I Saw What Happened and Cried*, accessed April 8 2016, <http://carriemaeweems.net/galleries/from-here.html>.

³³⁴ Jennifer Doyle, *Hold It Against Me: Difficulty and Emotion in Contemporary Art* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 112.

³³⁵ Jennifer A. González, *Subject to Display: Reframing Race in Contemporary Installation Art* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2008).

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblet maintains that *The Couple in the Cage* shifts its focus from the primitive body as a source of otherness to “the practices of othering.”³³⁶ I take up this concern specifically through the figure of the archive as both a fantasy of knowledge and a space- and time- specific set of practices to coax out of *The Couple in the Cage* its archival consciousness—or, the experiments in forms and content that the documentary undertakes to show how archives negotiate cultural belonging and otherness.

Foster touches on the process-oriented qualities of archival art, but fails to go into greater depth other than characterizing this body of art as preproduction and postproduction.³³⁷ The previous section looked for prehistory’s rhetorical continuities across the freak show and contemporaneous archival administration; through the “glitch,” this interlude aims for the opposite by identifying irruptive sources of discontinuity between *The Couple in the Cage* and current archival management models to suggest that Fusco and Gómez-Peña’s artistic practice builds ethical and responsive models of information management. Before the early-1990s, language of scientific determinism inherited from late-nineteenth-century archival administration texts supported dominant models of records keeping—the “organic whole” and the “living organism.”³³⁸ Under the aegis of archival authority, the history of “social organisms” was thought to adhere to

³³⁶ Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblet, “The Ethnographic Burlesque,” *TDR: A Journal of Performance Studies*. 42, no. 2 (Summer 1998): 175-180.

³³⁷ Foster, “An Archival Impulse,” 5.

³³⁸ Samuel Muller, Johan Adriaan Feith, and R. Fruin. *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2003), 19-20.

“natural laws.”³³⁹ This organismal figure proved so amenable to archival theory that mid-twentieth-century records keeping practices instituted a “life cycle model” built on language of temporal linearity wherein records moved through inevitable periods of “gestation,” “creation,” and “active life,” before their figurative death.³⁴⁰ As a response to this positivist and rather myopic understanding of records, the “records continuum” model developed by Frank Upward and Sue McKemmish favored in contemporary archival studies stresses multiple processes of recontextualization in which the documents are always in “a process of becoming”³⁴¹: “they are stretched into new shapes and structures during the filing and aggregating processes that form them ... Records can even have multiple lives in spacetime as the contexts that surrounded their use and control alter and open up new threads of action.”³⁴² The records continuum model reflects a widespread theoretical and methodological orientation in archival studies that resists notions of the fixed and objective nature of documents in favor of constructivist

³³⁹ Francis Blouin Jr. and William G. Rosenberg, *Processing the Past: Contesting Authority in Archival History and the Archives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 28.

³⁴⁰ Caroline Williams, *Managing Archives: Foundations, Principles, and Practice* (Oxford: Chandos Publishing, 2006), 12.

³⁴¹ Sue McKemmish, “Placing Records Continuum Practice and Theory,” *Archival Science* 2 (2001): 335.

³⁴² Sue McKemmish, “Are Records Ever Actual?” *The Records Continuum: Ian Mclean and Australian Archives First Fifty Years*, ed. Sue McKemmish and Michael Piggott (Clayton: ANscore Press, 1994), 200.

and interpretivist research models that embrace the contingent nature of records and their diverse contexts.³⁴³

The records continuum model should proffer a useful interpretative framework³⁴⁴ for *The Couple in the Cage* since it emphasizes the open-ended natures of records instead of rendering them record fixed and immutable—a quality that jibes well with the unpredictable nature of live performance. However, its theoretical and methodological armature relies on an implicit rhetorical construction of time’s relationship to archives that is ill-equipped for exploring how the “Guatinau” reuse and re-enact Victorian archival materials. While newly integrative and dynamic, the records continuum nonetheless privileges “the whole extent of a record’s existence” by mapping out a “consistent and coherent regime of management processes” that lack any “distinct breaks or phases.”³⁴⁵ With flows come expectations, as flows are evidence of functionally running systems. Prehistory, as articulated in the previous section, refuses to conform to smoothly running continuums of time, instead materializing as moments when and where time and bodies do not work as anticipated, whether this takes form through the logic of

³⁴³ Sue McKemmish and Anne Gilliland, “Archival and Recordkeeping Research: Past, Present, and Future,” *Research Methods: Information, Systems, and Contexts*, ed. K. Williamson and G. Johanson (Victoria: Tilde Publishing, 2013), 90.

³⁴⁴ This discussion of the records continuum model is one of those moments in which weaving between two disciplines might yield some factual inaccuracies, but strategic ones initiated to advance new models of reading. Records keeping models arose out of physical labor in archives, work that needed specific sets of guidelines and practices to ensure cross-archival consistency. Its decidedly loose interpretation of archives notwithstanding, the act of referring to *The Couple in the Cage* “archival art” aligns it with an array of potential theoretical and disciplinary interlocutors, and the rich imaginative possibilities outweigh commitments to facticity.

³⁴⁵ Caroline Williams, *Managing Archives*, 12.

fossil or sedimentation. Glitch and prehistory at first would be unlikely, if not downright contradictory, bedfellows, considering glitch's terrain is that of digital informatics; but, both share a profound investment in developing disruptive evidentiary models intended to remind spectators that technology and information systems are not neutral but rather entangled in what we consider to be cultural norms. Just as prehistory now informs radical archival interventions found across queer, film, and new media studies, glitch too has been claimed as an artistic tool of resistance vital to disability/crip studies and most recently Chicana performance art.³⁴⁶ Whether creating digital glitches or using their own bodies to glitch, these artists make visible racist, sexist, and ableist orders of knowledge that structure systems of information management.

In addition to employing glitch as a responsive formula for exploring how prehistoric re-enactment still contours contemporary archival theory, *The Couple in the Cage* serves as a case study in the theoretical prehistory of the digital glitch. The "Guatinau," as re-enactors of Victorian prehistory, glitch the continuum by breaking their archive's drive to wholeness and continuity. Sound designer Kim Cascone frames glitch as a "rupture in the continuum of an idealized artifact," suggesting that its presence invites a subversive imperfection to the usually "smooth and technically perfect" surface of an information management system.³⁴⁷ Taking on the embodied, social, and technological dimensions of glitch, these blips register through performance, the

³⁴⁶ Kevin Gotkin, "Crip/Glitch," <http://kevingotkin.com/portfolio/crip-glitch/>; Gómez-Peña, Guillermo. Interview with Maria Hinojosa, *Latino USA*, NPR, April 26th, 2016.

³⁴⁷ "Interview with Kim Cascone," *Glitch: Designing Imperfection*, ed. Iman Moradi, Ant Scott, Joe Gilmore, Christopher Murphy (New York: Matt Batty Publisher, 2007), 17.

documentary's formal attributes, and my own unexpected intersubjective experiences.

The Couple in the Cage moves beyond expected 8-bit, pixelated, snowy glitch aesthetics as it comes to refer to general interruptions and slips in imperial archival systems on which the performances and documentary rely. However, while the figure of the rupture or the disruption accurately identifies the form of eccentric time that the "Guatinau" inhabit, the glitch also depends on an archival economy of preservation and order: it requires "overall structure or rhythm on a larger scale" and is both a document of an accident and of information systems following orders in a "logical, orderly way."³⁴⁸

Glitch does not work outside of the system, but as Chicago-based media artist Nick Briz notes, it is "an unexpected moment in a system that calls attention to that system, and perhaps even leads us to notice aspects of that system that might otherwise go unnoticed."³⁴⁹ *The Couple in the Cage* may not work on the same informatics level or share the same recognizable aesthetic as glitch art, but it nonetheless works in the same rich theoretical tradition committed to for exposing how carefully managed systems of information usually pass as common sense.

The Guatinau show superficially mimics the life cycle process by seeking to trace and authenticate itself through a specific archival origin, only to undermine this model by then speculating on what life looks like after death. Since the performances were conceived specifically as a counterquintenary project, *The Couple in the Cage* ascribes

³⁴⁸ "Interview with Ant Scott," *Glitch: Designing Imperfection*, ed. Iman Moradi, Ant Scott, Joe Gilmore, Christopher Murphy (New York: Matt Batty Publisher, 2007), 17.

³⁴⁹ Miles Klee, "The Long, Twisted History of Glitch Art," *The Early Internet. The Kernel*, accessed March 22 2016, <http://kernelmag.dailydot.com/issue-sections/features-issue-sections/12265/glitch-art-history/>

paternal authority to one particularly infamous individual: “This display is part of a 500 year tradition of exhibiting indigenous peoples, a tradition first started by Christopher Columbus.” Images of Columbus himself are notably absent in the documentary, but he is re-embodied through various surrogates in the form of anthropologists and impresarios, demonstrating how scientific and entertainment cultures continuously relied on the colonial contact scenario as a the basis of knowledge making. Bleeding through to inform current processes of reception, Columbus’ presence also ghosts places in the documentary where the Guatinau set up of their exhibits, like Barcelona’s Plaza de Colón, a public square commemorating Columbus. If prehistoric freak shows at least partially reaffirmed the authority of Western or Eurocentric modes of knowledge and mnemonic transmission, the invocation of Christopher Columbus exerts a similar function. Fusco and Gómez-Peña also potentially become his unlikely re-embodiments as co-creators of this project, yet they more accurately represent a passed-down, embodied experience of colonialism that casts them as the residual traces of the violence that gave rise to the Western imaginary of the exotic Other. The critical focus on Columbus’ position in relation to the archive, while inarguably justified given the nature of the project, forecloses some of the more transgressive possibilities the documentary poses pertaining to archiving and indigeneity.

To work against the aggregative impulses of the imperial archive, the documentary raises and dispels myths of recognizable romantic-melancholic solitary archivist to replace her or him with competing voices that disrupt the continuity of the archival system. Archival studies has now discarded the solipsistic work of the archivist

in favor of collaborative archiving and research models. As Margaret Hedstrom explains, records can potentially be the products of “one person ... created for her eyes only,” or of “many hands and minds thinking and acting together in an elaborately choreographed social organization.”³⁵⁰ This trend toward pluralism intends to redress Western models of archival practice, research, and scholarship that valorize figure of the isolated and politically neutral archivist or researcher, which potentially silence the voices and activities of “others.”³⁵¹ Like “glitches,” Fusco and Gómez-Peña’s artistic project requires a functional system—in this case, an available system of libraries, archives and museums (LAM) resources that allow access to archival materials. While they have academic and professional artistic affiliations, Fusco, Heredia, and Gómez-Peña work largely outside of conventional museological-institutional designations, and *Two Undiscovered Amerindians...* and *The Couple in the Cage* reclaim museum spaces through archival art, which adheres to “quasi-archival arrangements and architectures” to introduce an artistic form of collaborative archiving that accommodates for indigenous ways of knowing.³⁵² The performances’ and video’s reliance on officially-sanctioned archives is clarified during the credits of *The Couple in the Cage*, which features a long list of repositories that lent their materials to the project. Incorporating documents from

³⁵⁰ Margaret Hedstrom, “Archives, Memory, and Interfaces,” *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 25.

³⁵¹ Archival Education and Research Institute and Pluralizing the Archival Curriculum Group, “Educating for the Archival Multiverse,” *The American Archivist* 74 (Spring 2011): 69-101.

³⁵² Hal Foster, “An Archival Impulse,” 5.

University of Southern Carolina Library, National Archives, Library of Congress Musee de l'Homme, Paris, and the Royal Anthropological Institute, London, the video makes clear that the history of exhibited others is the history of the US and European self. These credits, however, overlay footage of the Guatinau rewriting history on their own terms by posing an embodied shock to the credits' display of textual systems of information. The "Guatinau" led their guards and curators out of the performance space by leashes, emphasizing by physically countermanding the material, embodied, and archival violences on which their performances are structured. Because of the ways that the materials are contextualized and recontextualized through the credits footage, the documentary espouses a model of archives not as unchanging reserves of information but as an open-ended and pluralistic process open to continuous negotiations.

In its tacit dramatizations of information management systems, the video primarily remediates colonial histories through a specifically nineteenth-century technology of archiving and memory: photography. The rise in photography as an art and technical skill coincided with the systematization of modern archival administration. Joan Schwartz characterizes 1839-1841 as a moment of brief but intense technological and intellectual ferment.³⁵³ In 1839, France's Minister of the Interior proposed a bill that would grant Louis Daguerre an annuity for releasing the details of his photographic process to the French Government. In the same year, the Ministry also issued the first in a set of circulars that would culminate in the 1841 decree that archives be arranged

³⁵³ Joan Schwartz, "'Records of Simple Truth and Precision': Photography, Archives, and the Illusion of Control," *Archivaria*. 50 (2002): 4.

through *respect des fonds*—the definable advent of archiving’s modern history.³⁵⁴ The coinciding histories of photography and modern archiving practices shared discursive origins: each was viewed as a technology of memory capable of making permanent and preserving the past. Photographs like records were presumed to be accurate, reliable, authentic, objective, neutral, unmediated, so much so that the French ministry put forth the decree that every archives should have a photographic atelier to document the records. This both grew out of and helped to perpetuate the nineteenth-century collecting practices that equated the accumulation of texts, objects, and images with the possession of knowledge.

Lest we submit too enthusiastically to this correlative reading of photography and archiving, counterdiscourses of photography as a tool of incomplete representation also circulated, concerns which would re-emerge nearly one hundred years later when archivists started compiling standards for photovisual archives.³⁵⁵ Joan Schwartz would later sum up the potential difficulties in her provocation that we no longer think of photograph as a noun but as a verb: “They *do* things ... And when they are preserved, digitized, published, or in other ways repurposed and recirculated, we must ask how their material nature has been altered, in the process, how the relationships embodied in them

³⁵⁴ Nancy Bartlett, “*Respect des Fonds*: The Origins of the Modern Archival Principle of Provenance,” *Bibliographical Foundations of French Historical Studies*, ed. Lawrence J. McCrank (New York: 1991), 107-15.

³⁵⁵ Tim Schlak, “Framing Photographs, Denying Archives: the Difficulty of Focusing on Archival Photographs,” *Archival Science* 10 (2010): 85-101.

have changed, why, and to what end.”³⁵⁶ This resonates with Roland Barthes’ writings on the photograph’s punctum, which is “the accident” or “rare detail” that attracts an individual to a photograph, either enhancing or disturbing the rest of the composition. In framing the punctum as a “prick,” Barthes anticipates the somatic-affective language of recognizing a glitch, which registers as a “shock” equally “disturbing, provoking, and horrifying.”³⁵⁷ Taken together, these comments touch on the material, social, and private biographies of the photograph, which allow for processes of continuous recontextualization and spectator intervention to strip away photography’s supposed scientific objectivity.

The *Couple in the Cage* uses montage, collage, and bricolage to replicate creatively the nineteenth-century photography’s ambivalence to the archival project. Such techniques have roots in early-twentieth-century avant-garde art scenes, like Dada, which Nick Briz cites as glitch’s primordial ancestors. Like Dada’s use of collage and the found object, glitch can be either “instigated complexities” or “stumbled-upon accidents,” both of which presage changes to technological, social, and political systems.³⁵⁸ Noting the contingency and seriality of photography, Benjamin Buchloh argues that early-twentieth-century avant-garde art helped in redefining historiography by displacing the individual

³⁵⁶ Joan Schwartz, “The Archival Garden: Photographic Plantings, Interpretative Choices, and Alternative Narratives,” *Controlling the Past: Documenting Society and Institutions: Essays in Honor of Helen Willa Samuels*, ed. Terry Cook (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2011), 69-110.

³⁵⁷ Menkman, “Glitch Studies Manifesto,” 341.

³⁵⁸ Nick Briz, “Glitch Art Historie[s]: contextualizing glitch art—a perpetual beta,” accessed June 15 2017, <http://www.nickbriz.com/glitchresearch/GlitchArtHistories2011.pdf>.

with “separate but contingent social frameworks.”³⁵⁹ While an intriguing contribution to conversations of history and time, this avant-garde approach when applied to histories of colonialism potentially effaces the embodied experience of the subject, and the historically specific conditions *The Couple in the Cage* addresses. The documentary is composed of not only of photographs, but also moving images, news blurbs, jazand zy background music that literally mobilizes the typical nineteenth-century photographic archive composed of still images. These now-mobile materials interlaced with morsels of the performances themselves effectively shake the myth that materials in the archive “resist change, corruptibility, and political manipulation.”³⁶⁰ In *Staging the Archive*, Ernst van Alphen characterizes photographic archival art as an “anomic archive” that uses montage and collage to uproot and obliterate the referential nature of the photographs and the difference preserving categories of the “rational archive.” But, I am suspicious of the potentially utopian collectivity posited by the anomic archive, as well as the firm distinctions made between the anomic and rational archive. What I would like to argue is the different montages in the documentary call attention to the politicized and colonialist systems of knowledge that the archive tries to mask as neutral.

Montage and collage allow the *The Couple in the Cage* to recycle institutional photographic archival materials through different media registers, so as to render the photographs intermediated objects capable of transmitting cinematic, sonic, and

³⁵⁹ Benjamin Buchloh, “Gerhard Richter’s *Atlas*: The Anomic Archive,” *October* 88 (Spring 1999): 129.

³⁶⁰ Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 19.

performing histories. As such, the photograph then serves as an idiom for one of the documentary's main tensions: who gets to have an archived history and who does not. Gesturing to this line of thinking, Gómez-Peña characterizes audience response to the "Gautinau" by lightly alluding to Victorian popular images of the prehistoric human thought to be outside of time: "The bottom line is they don't want us to be part of the same present or the same time. They want us to operate outside of history."³⁶¹ The audience members reprise the nineteenth-century logic of the imperial archive that equate the insuperable authority of British empire with its ability to generate and manage information, while the "Guatinau" are reduced to space holders of an anterior time. Other than the general criticism of ethnography's denial of the coeval, the documentary and the official artist responses do not necessarily express an extended investment in prehistory, but familiar images do emerge to suggest that prehistory occupies such a naturalized position in colonialist image- and discourse-making that it presents itself as not in need of examination. A black-and-white photograph of an African man in profile, anonymous except for the caption "Missing Link #1," appears in the documentary's slideshow of "freak" photographs, showing prehistory to a ready interpretative framework for explaining the behaviors, appetites, and desires of non-white peoples still recognizable to contemporary populations.³⁶² Following this, a brief film montage in the documentary interlaces modern footage of audience members feeding the "Guatinau" bananas with

³⁶¹ Fusco, Coco and Gómez-Peña, Guillermo. Interview with Anna Johnson. *BOMB* 42 (Winter 1993).

³⁶² Martha McCaughey, *The Caveman Mystique: Pop-Darwinism and the Debates Over Sex, Violence, and Science* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

early-cinematic footage of a stereotypical caveman complete with frizzled hair and animal loins behind bars who looks like the 1940s, B-movie version of the GEICO cavemen. The intermittent presence of popular prehistory images and sound bites solidifies the iconographic-ideological labor of prehistoric human, who in service of naturalizing the authority of the modern Western self during the nineteenth-century, became a ready metonym for exploring and presenting contemporaneous non-white populations.³⁶³ Dominant cultural understandings of prehistory as a “narrative space” preceding modern archiving and historiography are marshaled to initiate a decisive break between nature and modern society, with the consequence of freezing supposedly atavistic human populations outside of time and Western-authorized memory making practices.³⁶⁴ However, their choices to splice together popular cultural materials, such as film and news reels, show this supposedly “natural” divide to be an insidious and carefully crafted trick of culture. What we are seeing is not just a condensed montage of the popular prehistoric imaginary, but rather a disclosure of how systems of information are built.

Now that he has hung up his “Guatinau” costume for good, Guillermo Gómez-Peña currently performs glitch poetry.” These are spoken word acts comprised of a series of fitful vocal pops intended to dramatize mechanical errors in speech production as he

³⁶³ John Reader, *Missing Links: In Search of Human Origins*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 77.

³⁶⁴ Andrew Shryock and Daniel Lord Smail, “Introduction.” *Deep Time: The Architecture of the Past and Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 3-21.

becomes a human-machine hybrid. While glitch poetry speaks to the inventiveness of language, much like his faux-patois of the Guatinau, its merging of the technological and biological also commemorates colonial histories in which indigenous peoples of the Americas were dehumanized and subject to technoscientific exploitation.³⁶⁵ *The Couple in the Cage* offers a visual prehistory of Gómez-Peña's glitch poetry bioinformatics by pulling from and re-arranging source materials from nineteenth-century colonial and medical photographic archives into a loose archive of freakery. The photochemical traces of humans and places subject to colonialist interventions are not just passive constituents of depoliticized archives, as Okwui Enwezor cites photography as complicit in engineering the nineteenth-century romance of a comprehensive imperial archive that could synchronize and unify all the information in the known world:

Although it was an empire of vast territories, patrolled by mighty naval fleets and army regiments, imperial Britain was above all founded on the production of paper, assorted documents, and images, all of which spawned other documents, along the systems organizing them and the rules for distributing their content.³⁶⁶

In one of the most explicit recalls to nineteenth-century photographic archival imperialism, a segment of the documentary features a montage of illustrations and photographs of naked “specimens,” including Saartje Baartman and an Australia

³⁶⁵ This dovetails with Afrofuturism, which is specifically concerned with the impact technology has had and has on African-American peoples, and uses images of prosthetic enhancement to memorialize and reimagine African-American histories and futures. Isaiah Lavender, “Critical Race Theory,” *Routledge Companion to Science Fiction*, ed. Mark Bould, Andrew M. Butler, Adam Roberts, and Sherryl Vint (New York: Routledge, 2009), 189.

76. Okwui Enwezor, *Archive Fever: Photography Between History and Monument* (New York: International Center of Photography, 2008), 15.

Aboriginal Woman who were exhibited as freak performers. Their unadorned bodies shot in profile and frontally with little to no background, these freak photographs cleverly masquerade as colonial and medical photographic images by replicating visual conventions that would strip the subjects of any major contextual cues in the name of scientific objectivity. Next in the montage comes a photograph of Fusco that recycles the same codes of the previous photographs —frontal and profile views of her as a partial nude—but adds to this, textual cues—a set of accompanying measurements—to make clear the photographic medical project. Juxtaposing Fusco with Saartje Baartman and the Aboriginal Woman integrates the Guatinau woman into more expansive system of visual representation that used medico-colonial photography in order to posit the inherent lasciviousness and primitivity of the colonial female through her anatomy. The accompanying voiceover explains that anthropologists “are trying to determine her brain size through her skull” and they “intend to compare [their] findings with information [they] have about other ethnic groups.” Weaving together photographs of indigenous females, footage of Fusco, statistical charts establishing normative development, and voiceovers on craniology, the documentary conjures an intermediated set of emergent Victorian bioinformatic practices that render Fusco a subject of technoscientific experimentation. Fusco is interpolated into and interpellated through a nineteenth-century colonial archival system that used photographic data to transform the world’s populations into easily ordered types or specimens.

As prehistory shows, all-inclusive attempts to chronicle the Earth’s and humanity’s deep pasts end up undoing the order the intend to create. With its aleatory

slideshow of primitive freak show images over the last two hundred years, the montage replicates in ways both visual and kinetic prehistory's chaotic ordering systems to call attention to the workings, and failures, of the imperial archival system that usually go unnoticed. In its presentation of specimens, the documentary includes a far-ranging suite of photographs, one of which includes: Ishi, the the Last Yahi, Saartje Baartman, Ota Benga, the Australia Aboriginal Woman, Ringling's Ubangi Women, Sitting Bull and Buffalo Bill, Zip and Pip the Pinheads. On the one hand, this montage encapsulates the generalizing narrative impulses at work in the freak show's exhibitions of "Others." But, unlike the imperial archive that seeks to present itself as comprehensive, these montages are necessarily fragmentary, incomplete, and at times contrapuntal, meaning that they visualize or verbalize multiple potentially contradictory narratives without trying to totalize them.³⁶⁷ The decision to include moving bodies of photographs not unified by geographic or temporal boundaries results in a creative, incomplete transcontinental photographic collection that slices across and unmakes colonial territorializations historically taken for granted, allowing for lateral and contingent connections to be formed and broken to undo the myth of the continuous imperial whole. *The Couple in the Cage* illustrates that the imperial archive is a site of continuous negotiations and renegotiations of cultural power by recontextualizing these archival materials through performance, effectively revising the histories of colonial conquest present in each piece of evidence. Footage of the "Guatinau" offsets these short montages, and these spliced-in

³⁶⁷ Sergei Eisenstein, "Laocoon," *Sergei Eisenstein: Selected Works Volume II: Towards a Theory of Montage*, ed. Michael Glenny and Richard Taylor, trans. Michael Glenny (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2010), 186.

performances emphasize the archive's fiction-effects, its imperatives to forge narratives of cultural inclusion and exclusion depending on its subjects. By placing photography next to performance, *The Couple in the Cage* re-enacts so as to make visible the processes historically supported by photography in instituting archival systems designed to transform people of color into objects of science and technology.

As part of a creative process, glitch is the hinge of human-machine interplay that aestheticizes unexpected conflicts between technological systems and human subjects.³⁶⁸ While currently the computer and sonic-electronic art are the glitch's domains, *The Couple in the Cage* posits a prehistory of the glitch in which the performing "Guatitau" disrupt longstanding visual practices and technologies that fixed racial categories in the Americas. While the documentary tackles an expansive history of "othering" through performance, the fact remains that Fusco and Gómez-Peña perform specifically as peoples from the Gulf of Mexico, they themselves Cuban-American and Chicano; as a result, *The Couple in the Cage* also recalls the specific embodied experiences of contemporary performance artists responding directly to different colonial histories throughout the Americas. Fusco and Gómez-Peña's performances re-enact the systems of racial knowledge built on a rich repository of visual cultural artifacts, ranging from seventeenth-century *castas* paintings to nineteenth-century photography, which I have discussed at length. As noted in my earlier discussion of the "Aztecs," these forms of visual technology are bundled together through the discovery scenario, a portable, multimedia framework that marks the "newly-discovered" brown body as "other."

³⁶⁸ Motherboard, "Glitch," Glitch Festival and Symposium, January 2002, <http://www.liveart.org/motherboard/glitch/>

Because it is capable of tracing and modulating traditions, performance potentially becomes the “glitch” in the discovery scenario’s system.

Bringing the spectator or user into the creative process, sound artist Kim Cascone identifies the glitch in terms of aesthetic reception “a glitch is cognitively reacted to as a rupture in the continuum of an idealized artifact.”³⁶⁹ *The Couple in the Cage* creatively models the “user errors” that the “Guatinau” live performances inspired by including live segments in which spectators could take a picture with the “Guatinau” in updated versions of the colonial contact scenario. Through performance, this sequence pivots on tempering the dominant medico-colonial photographic archival materials with vernacular ones, like souvenirs and family snapshots that memorialize the freak show’s home life as collectible objects often kept in photo albums. Continuing with a montage technique that cuts across time and space, the documentary includes stacks of Polaroids alternatively featuring freak performers and members posing with the Guatinai piling up courtesy on unseen hands and increasingly filling up the screen. Wide eyes, toothy grins, and the occasional camera bag punctuate pictures of tourist-audience members who pose against the backdrop of Fusco and Gómez-Peña in their gilt cage. Ethnographic display has become a portable commodity. These remediations recall the freak souvenirs meant for nineteenth-century family album, or at least private domestic spaces. Like freak show *cartes-de-visite*, they work in a more sentimental register as tokens of a private memories for the museumgoers or tourists. But rather than posing the freak against a decidedly and banally domestic background, these images stage an inversion of such. The photographs

³⁶⁹ “Interview with Kim Cascone,” *Glitch: Designing Imperfection*, ed. Iman Moradi, Ant Scott, Joe Gilmore, Christopher Murphy (New York: Matt Batty Publisher, 2007), 17.

draw audience members into freak histories and reproduce them as freak subjects. Moreover these snapshots are designed to bear affective traces, to “catalyze forms of emotion, sentiment, meaning, and value as objects of feeling and relation.”³⁷⁰ However, glitches inevitably occur in an otherwise smoothly running machine of enfreakment when audience members do not quite react as planned. Some commentators are more critical viewers and understand the complex emotional and intellectual entanglements of witnessing re-enactments of colonial violence. In a particularly poignant moment, a Native American audience member integrates himself and his family into a political and affective genealogy of human displays, mapping his kin onto the Guatinuai: “through the economics and through some of the philosophies of life I could see my own grandchildren in that cage.” As astute as this response is, other more facile interpretations outnumber it, as a slew of onsite interviews with spectators who express disgust and embarrassment with the performances punctuate these photographic montages. These unwitting participants have mistaken ethnographic burlesque for the “real thing.

The glitchiness of human-technology hybrids further plays out in the documentary’s treatment of Gold-era Hollywood films that succeed in implicating the at-home researcher within the various spectatorial economies of the “Guatinai” performances. Borrowing from nineteenth-century freak exhibition representational tactics, the film clips range from campy performances of Pacific Island music; to tragic Ota Benga, the Congolese pygmy whose tenure at the Bronx Zoo ended in suicide; to

81. Tina Campt, *Image Matters: Archive, Photography, and the African Diaspora in Europe* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 16.

news reel clips of audiences clamoring for side show exhibits. These clips are recurrently framed through a nested series of television watching tableaux that lure the at-home spectator into becoming an active participant in the documentary's archival labor, enmeshing them with the technological apparatuses they are supposed to be holding at a critical distance. During their Chicago performance, the camera pans out from a full-screen clip of dancing natives to show Gómez-Peña watching the same clip of dancing 1930s "natives" on his T.V. (a gift from Mayor Daly). This scene layers multiple forms of freak documentation atop one another starting from Gómez-Peña's body as a real-time embodied and performing archive of freakery, then the diagetical world of the Guatínu performances featuring the Hollywood film, and then finally extra-diagetical space of the home viewer who watches *The Couple in the Cage* documentary. The television motif ushers the at-home viewers through diagetical and extra-diagetical spaces, successfully drawing the freak show out of the past and into both the recent, early-1990s past of the documentary and the present of the video spectator and researcher. In this extra-diagetical realm, things get messy. The documentary nominally forces the researcher to watch through a specific set of eyes, those of the camera lens, essentially replaying the ethnographic gaze.³⁷¹ But, what the camera cannot do is totally mediate or predict processes of identification or reception. It can only guide certain interpretations, but even then, once the documentary is released into public circulation the artists cannot account for how different viewers interpret it or identify with it.

³⁷¹ Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 75.

What constitutes a glitch changes depending on who views the documentary and from what subject positions. So, from the perspective of the “freak studies” scholar, errors to representational systems that I note in *The Couple in the Cage* center on their clever recycling of performance tropes common to Victorian freak exhibition. The performing body is capable of entering into the archival record previously forgotten and neglected histories through a type of performance that David Román calls “archival drag.”³⁷² In invoking previous performance traditions, the archival dragger takes up embodied practices of memory making in order to imagine a different relationship to archives based on their marginalized or subcultural status.³⁷³ The Guatinau pull from an existing archives of freak exhibition with the goal of proposing a counterfactual genealogy of Latinx colonialism and cultural belonging; and, in the process of doing so, expose supposedly natural breaks between history/prehistory, white/nonwhite to be part of a freak representational system. One of the freak show’s four interlocking narrative forms, the oral spiels of the impresarios, is perhaps the most straightforward expression of white, able-bodied hegemony, which asserts the total alterity of the freak body in service of naturalizing its authority. Incorporating this narrative form in the Guatinau performances signals the persistence of the ethnographic point of view that makes contemporary Latino performance artists vulnerable.³⁷⁴ As the master of ceremonies, the

³⁷² David Román, *Performance in America: Contemporary U.S. Culture and the Performing Arts* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 137.

³⁷³ Román, *Performance in America*, 38-40.

³⁷⁴ Román, *Performance in America*, 114.

freak show impresario is responsible for setting up the interpretative framework of the live performances and assuming control over the regime of representation. Their impresario's speech imprints on the freak show the oft-rehearsed and reduplicated discovery scenario: "They decided to embark on their world tour, so as to finally be officially discovered by Western society." Their story may sound familiar, but unlike the spiels of prior years, the Guatinau do not suffer the usual rhetorical consequences in which the spiel transforms the performers into ethnographic objects. The subtle shifts in the spiel's syntax allow the Guatinau to bypass the usual narrative of being discovered by the conqueror or explorer on their "native" soil. Since they decided to "be discovered *by* Western society," Fusco and Gómez-Peña head straight to the traditional sites of exhibition for indigenous people, and their performance marshals the energies typically reserved for the white discoverers in previous contact scenarios and re-enliven the once-stolid freak specimens. We are unsure of Victorian performers' agency or desire to participate in the freak show, and in the case of the "Earthmen," their first years of performing might be miserable. On the other hand, Fusco and Gómez-Peña initially wield the directorial autonomy of their performance: in a reversal of freak show conventions, the performers ventriloquize their impresarios.

The strategically imprecise recycling of the oral spiel acts as a figurative "skid" of "slip" in the record to recall glitch's Yiddish roots "glitshen." The impresarios nominally and syntactically cede control to the "Guatinau" before the performance reverts to the familiar script. After all, their "choice" to be discovered by Western populations leads to their continued exploitation and objectification. These are built-in consequences, or even

components, of the performance art piece, but play out in ways unimagined by Fusco and Gómez-Peña, both of whom are startled by the brash physical and sexual violence of spectator reactions. While the details of each are unexpected, these instances of spectator violence are made possible and legitimized through imperial archival systems committed to naturalizing Western ethnocentrism and misogyny in the name of history making. The “Guatinau” spiel then has verifiable origins in the Victorian freak show partially fixing it in terms of time, content, space, and reception. But, the documentary as a different creative archival body carries the spiel forward by recontextualizing it and delivering it to people across different times and spaces.

In addition to the oral spiels, Fusco and Guillermo Gómez-Peña’s performance imperfectly reprise staged components more specific to the Victorian prehistoric freak show. Although they are caged for their performances, the Guatinaui “specimens” are surprisingly active. In an example of John McAloon’s “genre error,” their show spectacularizes the “Guatinau’s” daily business of watching television, working on a word processor, listening to a boombox, and sewing what appears to be a doll. Like the “Earthmen,” every once in awhile they will stop and perform directly for the audience by telling stories and performing dances, their taste for an eclectic mix of contemporary pop music echoes the song and dance routines of the “Earthmen.” Also, some rather touching moments that they share with their audience members carry with them embodied resonances of the “Aztec” freak show. Built into every performance is a sequence wherein the audience volunteers may step forward to pose with the Guatinau in front of their cage for a photograph. Their arms snaking out of the cage, Fusco and Gómez-Peña,

to the delight and chagrin of the volunteers, raise the stakes of this moment of contact by stroking their faces and mussing their hair. Some audience members even felt compelled to return the gesture by looping their arms into the cage. Rather than a prohibition on space sharing, the cage invites permeability, pushing the video watcher to reconsider who the actually freak performer is. These moments satirically re-enact the initial “colonial encounter” that dominates histories of conquest in order to expose the theatricality of such scenarios, but are also subtle reversal of Bartola and Maximo’s performances wherein they received kisses and handshakes. These moments are charged with seen and unseen energies of past and present narratives and scenarios so as to suggest that the past is never complete, but always cast into the future for open to further acts of reinterpretation. These performing bodies undergo continuous processes of recontextualization through various interactions with audience members, and these re-workings of the past ensure that as records of exhibition culture’s colonialist foundations, these bodies will never die or be consigned to a non-circulating deep archive.

If their infamous wedding, now only visible through a few periodical and photographic traces, succeeded in transforming Bartola and Maximo’s eccentric sexualities into a catalyst for building non-normative kinships, Fusco and Gómez-Peña’s souvenir photography functions similarly. For a dollar, audience members may have their pictures taken with the Guatinuai and, as their impresario pitches, “for 5.00 dollars you can see the male specimen’s genitalia.” She attributes such willingness to the fact that: “They tend to be a demonstrative people. If not shall we say, highly erotic? Public exposure does not bother them one bit.” This NC-17 portion of the Guatinau show

surprisingly too has its roots in Victorian freak conventions. Freak shows became notorious for the “blow-off”: if you still were not satisfied after seeing ten freaks for the price of one, you could pay some extra money for another super secret attraction located behind the red curtains. These were designed to attract adult male audience members, since they usually promised a saucy surprise. But, the poor unsuspecting yokels that forked over the cash were sorely disappointed when the scandalous delights were little more than empty boxes or a person in a pig mask. While Gómez-Peña does deliver on the promised sex, the surprise is more of what *isn't* there than what is. Rather than confirming the mythologies of non-white hypersexuality, Gómez-Peña’s big moment reveals quite the opposite: a conspicuously absent penis

Only thicket of pubic hair offset by his leopard print loin cloth and gold breast plate remains, as he has carefully tucked away his genitalia. Gómez-Peña’s is a self-conscious and satirical gesture—one that sets its roots in freak show conventions only to deliver an “error” to the racist systems of knowledge of the imperial archive. In order to denaturalize legacies that may still persist pertaining to the hypersexuality of non-white males, Gómez-Peña’s full-frontal pose is intentionally provisional, especially when juxtaposed with the impresario’s assertion that the Guatinuai are “highly erotic.” However, when integrated into the broader context of the prehistoric freak show’s representational strategies, this move re-enacts a counter-narrative to the narratives of sexual impotency and docility that plagued individuals deemed to be racial hybrids. Gómez-Peña’s incomplete pose transforms what now only exist as rumors of the sexual immaturity of the “Aztec Children” into a material, corporeal spectacle. Such moments

expose interstitial archival connections between Maximo and Gómez-Peña's Guatinaui, which contingently function to construct a cross-temporal network of queer male kinship. Though supposedly infertile, Maximo has managed to reproduce his likeness in Gómez-Peña's Guatinau man, and without the foundational penis, Guatinau culture is centered on a form of non-reproductive sexuality.

As a researcher, my engagement with *The Couple in the Cage* is based on perceived errors that I not only note as a freak show research but also fall victim as a spectator of neo-freak show. I will never forget first time I did not see Guillermo Gomez-Pena's penis: the tension of wondering if he would actually going to whip it out at the Whitney followed by the wonder of realizing that I had been had when he exposed himself tucked. As I have watched the documentary, and in particular this scene, over and over, my focus on the shaft shifts: I begin to speculate on what the live spectators are thinking and to look for subtleties throughout the performances that would serve as clues for the big non-reveal. Similarly, some of the most alluring "Aztec" and "Earthmen" documents were the reviews and descriptions of their live performances that rehearse various forms of unanticipated intimacy, though more chaste than the Guantinau. From the limited vantage point the news scraps that are still available, performance seemed like the potentially transgressive answer to countless ethnographic, anthropological, or medical texts that flattened these people into specimens. Admittedly, I was beguiled by the prospect of the "Aztecs" proffering handshakes and kisses to female visitors and the "Earthmen" holding conversations that transformed spectators into "one of their society," indications that behind these elaborate performance personas were pretty regular people.

Suzanne Keen writes of the “romance of the archives” in contemporary British novels in which researchers, usually novices, embark on archival quests for a fascinating past made approachable through archival materials.³⁷⁵ For the intrepid researcher-protagonist, the search abides by a template: archives resolve mysteries, then disclose truths, and then they benefit the researcher in some way. Freak show archival work violates the archive’s sacrosanct pledge to truth, instead working between the interstices of authenticity and deception. A tone of frank delight dominates the articles of the “Aztec” and “Earthmen” performances to spin some freak show trickery. The textual accounts nearly obscure the sly tones and crafty lines of the freak show impresarios who have no doubt influenced some of the glowing write-ups. Without the contextual cues of the impresario’s oral spiel or candid wink, I too am susceptible to the spell of freak show through archival work. If Keen’s researcher were the “action hero,” I was the rube.

In addition to whatever visual or sonic traces it leaves, evidence of glitch is also perceived through emotional responses, feelings of awe, disturbance, and confusion. These feelings are the personal-political experiences of humans realizing that they are enmeshed and implicated in the systems that give rise to the glitch.³⁷⁶ The first time I watched *The Couple in the Cage* I was haunted by an uneasy familiarity that I summarily brushed off in the name of impassive research. I was quite sure I had never seen the “Guantanamo” before, since it is nearly impossible to forget their wild looks and theatrics.

³⁷⁵ Suzanne Keen, *Romances of the Archive in Contemporary British Fiction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001)

³⁷⁶ Curt Cloninger, *One Per Year* (Brescia: LINK Editions, 2014).

But as I compulsively watched the documentary, something else kept nagging. Then through glitch's characteristic "flash of lightening,"³⁷⁷ I realized it: the kids. At some point, the documentary captures footage of what looks like a field trip encountering the Guatitau at Chicago Art Museum, the camera panning across a group of grade-schoolers. Wide-eyed and in winter coats, they surround the gilt cage like they are visiting the zoo lightly taunting and sheepishly giggling at the exhibit. About the same age as the children in the documentary, I saw the ghost of my elementary school self mapped onto them, bad turtleneck, big bangs, and all— an unexpected psychological proximity both off-putting and alluring. I still wonder wonder: if this were my field trip, how would I have acted?. Paced by the uncanny children, my status as the unbiased research is shadowed by a feeling of complicity, effectively upsetting standards imperturbable academic rigor. I am the glitch in the system.

Apart from this unsettling connection to the past, I generally approach *The Couple in the Cage*'s performances from the comfortable vantage points of a researcher on the couch or at the computer who can start, stop, and scroll through the documentary as I please. I am not witnessing traditional archiving in real-time (probably not a terribly interesting activity), but acts of archiving carefully mediated through video. Margaret Hedstrom fleshes out the "archival interface" as a physical and conceptual site where "power is negotiated and exercised": it refers both to the archivist's role as the intermediary between documents and researchers, and the tools and structures that

³⁷⁷ Rosa Menkman, "Glitch Studies Manifesto," 341.

provide an interpretative framework for archival documents.³⁷⁸ In *The Couple in the Cage*, the video provides the structuring interface for interpreting the documents, and Fusco and Heredia the figurative interface for shaping the video watcher's perceptions of the materials. The video medium succeeds in delimiting the scopic terrain of the performance, cutting out the extra-medial qualities that influence reception and memory-making processes of any given site-specific live performance, such as surrounding sounds and smells, peripheral objects, or weather. Instead, the video translates these milieus into set pieces, *in situ* dioramas of live performance, that extract what is important and presents it to the video watcher. Through these curated and carefully arranged tableaux of live performances, the videographic archival interface mediates by constraining research access to these archives, since the artist-archivists have already decided what to admit and exclude. This limits access to a rehearsal of the same reactions, same images, same affects made consistent through videography. When conducting archival work with this video not only as the primary artifact itself, but also as a potential repository of freak materials, the researcher may find that the video interface also diminishes the contingent, sometimes serendipitous, qualities of on-site archival research. If the video erects metaphorical boundaries for how the researcher accesses materials, it likewise builds a literal one, since the television or computer screen does not permit physically touching or sifting through the documents. From this prohibitory vantage point, the video would seem to confirm my failure as an audience member as I am forced to observe without intervening in the performances at hand.

³⁷⁸ Hedstrom, "Archives, Memory, and Interfaces with the Past," 21-43.

Glitches are social beings. As Curt Cloninger, notes political glitch art congregates around shared human concerns as “they live and play in the world” bringing into dynamic relation bodies, machines, objects, and feelings.³⁷⁹ The glitch’s materiality is not just bound to technology, but its social interactions with text, politics, and aesthetics. Video technology carries with it affective and political potentials through its mechanics—ones that begin to coax the researcher into active engagements with the archival materials and archivists. When I watch *The Couple in the Cage*, I do not just pop a tape into the VCR. I am much more twenty-first century than that. Instead, I watch a digitized copy, uploaded by Heredia on Vimeo, which is an open-access video-sharing website that caters to indie and amateur filmmakers. Since its 2004 inception, Vimeo has grown a devoted and active community of users, the “Vimeans,” who actively engage with the films and other users by creating profiles, posting their own artistic contributions, commenting on videos, or just giving “thumbs up’s” to videos that they like. Users can also link videos to their profiles to create curated collections, becoming informal digital archivists in their own right. *The Couple in the Cage* has its own small “Vimean” following that has issued commentary on the film sounding familiar to the interpretations of the “Guatinau” audience members. The “Vimeans” tend to respond primarily to the video’s purported political messages, grappling with its performed conventions of ethnography or its intersections with Native American history. The tones of the comments range from clinically analytical to highly emotional. Archival and social sciences have demonstrated increased interest not just in video as an archiving tool

³⁷⁹ Cloninger, *One Per Year*, Ch. 25.

itself, but also in the processes undertake to digitize it. For researchers and hobbyists alike, digitization initiatives harbor potentially democratizing implications, since the discourse of the digital centers on increased access and collaborative relationships between users and archivists, especially through web 2.0 platforms.³⁸⁰ This is not to say that the digital archival space is a utopia of free-and-equal access and public scholarship, since dominant ideologies of class, race, gender, sexuality, and ability still mediate internet infrastructural and algorithmic building and use. The digital becomes an archival interface that further mediates the videographic and performance archival materials, as well as offers its unique born-digital features through user commentary. The participatory quality of Vimeo orients the video watcher's engagement with *The Couple in the Cage* beyond the artist-archivist's intentions, honing in on the video's potential to act as a renegotiable site of multiple intellectual and emotional collaborations depending of the tenor of the commentary and the watcher's reception of it.

The participatory possibilities embedded in the digital archival interface define the digitized video as a form of "dynamic documentation," which the Society of American Archivists describes as a document, "usually a web page, that changes content through periodic transactions between the client and the server."³⁸¹ But beyond the digital interface, video itself plays a crucial role in the both the affective and intellectual

³⁸⁰ Ronald M. Baecker and David Fono, "Toward a Video Collaboratory," *Video Research in the Learning Science*, ed. Ricki Goldman, Roy Pea, Brigid Barron and Sharon J. Derry (New York: Routledge, 2014), 461-478.

³⁸¹ "Dynamic Document," *Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology*. Society of American Archivists, accessed January 15 2016, <http://www2.archivists.org/glossary/terms/d/dynamic-document>.

dimensions of cultural memory making. Video as a technology of memory may be more or less precise, in that it can replay over and over the same images and sounds. But, it also produces cultural amnesia as an incomplete document, or secondary memories as the formal qualities of mnemonic transmission (“I watched it on TV”) replace the original memories themselves.³⁸² Alison Landsberg posits the transgressive potentials of film and video as technologies of memory: she designates the watching of film or video as a “moment of contact” in which the view sutures himself or herself to a broader history, taking on the deeply felt memories of an event she or he did not actually live. For Landsberg, these affective connections motivated by filmic technology construct, the “prosthetic memories,” serve as the foundation for alliances across differences.³⁸³ *The Couple in the Cage*, in drawing from and aestheticizing informal or vernacular collecting practices, introduces to the video archival interface a radical permeability that promotes rather than forecloses affective engagements with the materials.

Glitch is tricky. Its anarchic, seemingly random, and destabilizing qualities incite romances of total technological freedom and democracy. However, this is the trick of glitch, since it is always enmeshed in socially and politically situated systems of production and reception. The twenty-first century has been hailed as the “age of open video” with online platforms and video sharing making content ubiquitous and nearly-universally accessible. This openness dangerously designates the web as a freely flowing

³⁸² Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 37.

³⁸³ Alison Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

wellspring of information that obscures the precarious position of indigenous media relative to an open access discourse that implicitly favors Western models of knowledge making.³⁸⁴ Protocols of cultural exchange and knowledge production in indigenous cultures markedly differ from the Western forms that typically spearhead digital archiving and sharing initiatives. Ethical documentary and archiving practices require increased collaboration with indigenous communities in dictating presentation and access to culturally sensitive materials so that these populations become active participants not just archived objects. In response, indigenous uses of new media are in a state of flux, characterized by warring impulses: the romantic image of people as “somehow in modernity but not of it” and that of people as “technologically savvy and politically astute” representatives of a progressive, global modernity.³⁸⁵ Indigenous new media functions as a political-social form of glitch by exposing the Western-centric infrastructure of digital-visual archiving tools.

Rather than ironing out the contradictions inherent in indigenous new media, I reframe them as glitches made visible by the performances in and digital presence of *The Couple in the Cage*. The “Guatinau” pose a satirical account of what happens when Western practices of display collide with indigenous knowledge making practices, as ownership of their cultural customs, language, and art shifts from the “Gautinau” to

³⁸⁴ Teague Schneider, “Ethical Presentation of Indigenous Media in the Age of Open Video: Cultivating Collaboration, Sovereignty, and Sustainability,” *Video Vortex Reader II: moving images beyond youtube*, ed. Geert Lovink and Rachel Somers Miles (Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2011), 148.

³⁸⁵ Kimberly Christen, “Gone Digital: Aboriginal Remix and the Cultural Commons,” *International Journal of Cultural Property* 12 (2005): 315-345.

museums, white audience members, and whomever may come across the documentary on Vimeo. With the caged performances combining indigenous song and dance with their love of contemporary Western television and music, Fusco and Gómez-Peña embody the dual imaginary of indigenous people both as romantic throwbacks and current global citizens. On the one hand, their performances cleverly skewer neo-imperial and neoliberal mindsets informing early-1990's multiculturalism that promoted these stereotypes. However, they are their own authors, routinely claiming their ownership over the Guatana's media creations: the performance, the documentary, and the documentary's eventual digitization, which Heredia herself uploaded as a part of her official Vimeo page. Their cultural production emphasizes the dynamic and inventive techno-cultural landscape of indigenous new media—one that, like glitch, relies on the systemic norm to create from with new ways of seeing, accessing, and knowing.

Part Two: "Archives"

Chapter Two: India Artisans and “Double-Bodied Hindoos”

The official program for the 1886 Colonial and Indian Exhibition at South Kensington Museum boasted extensive Art Courts “with their bewildering display of Indian splendor and cunning handicraft.”³⁸⁶ The crafty handicrafts radiate auras of enchantment and wile, a nod to the subtle machinations of exhibition culture that injected everyday objects with a sense of wonder, even if the exhibition’s aims were scientific or economic. Beyond display, the vaguely magical qualities of India handicrafts memorialize manufacturing process dependent on ages-old “knowledge of many branches of art” potentially threatened by modern British tastes.³⁸⁷ The hereditary male artisan of India takes on the qualities of a conjurer through his handcrafting skill equally transparent and baffling, as Indologist George Birdwood writes: “the mere touch of their fingers, trained for 3000 years to the same manipulations, is sufficient to transform whatever foreign work is placed for imitation into their hands, ‘into something rich and strange’ and characteristically Indian.”³⁸⁸

One of the promises of the Indian Court at South Kensington was a genuine, unmediated glimpse of preindustrial craftsmanship through actual Indian artisans at work.

³⁸⁶ Thomas Wardle, “Empire of India: Introduction,” *Official Catalogue of Colonial and Indian Exhibition, 1886* (London: William Clowers & Sons, Ltd., 1886), 14.

³⁸⁷ Wardle, *Official Catalogue of Colonial and Indian Exhibition, 1886*, 9.

³⁸⁸ George C. M. Birdwood, *The Industrial Arts of India: Part One* (London: Chapman and Hall, Limited, 1884), 130.

Gold brocade, tapestry, and carpets were not the only fabrications, since these presentations of “real” Indian work were carefully staged performances of labor.³⁸⁹ If we are to continue with Birdwood’s conjuring metaphor, these artisans were less like the fabled Indian fakirs whose magic was supposedly authentic, and more like practitioners of stage magic whose magic was a clever, sly reproduction of the real thing. Within the parameters of the exhibition, the artisans were easy enough to manage as they convincingly played the part of regional laborers. But, this genuine Indianness was not quite the faithful replication of India’s comparatively ancient spiritual and social climates it claimed to be, since the native artisans were actually a group of prisoners and vagrants paid to perform. The prisoners’ performances may have inscribed them as containable artifacts, but the attempt to pull wool over the public’s eyes ended up causing small headaches for the municipal and India Office authorities who could not quite manage these subjects.³⁹⁰

If the prisoner-artisans proved mildly worrisome, a greater source of colonial trouble was also abreast in England at about the same time. Lalloo Ramparsand and his parasitic conjoined twin attached at the sternum, “Lala,” performed as the “Double-

³⁸⁹ Aviva Briefel, “On the 1886 Colonial and Indian Exhibition.” *BRANCH: Britain, Representation and Nineteenth-Century History*, ed. Dino Franco Felluga. Extension of *Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net*.

³⁹⁰ Saloni Mathur, *India By Design: Colonial History and Cultural Display* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 78. Mathur relates the intriguing case of Tulsi Ram, an Indian immigrant in London looking to meet the queen so she could pardon him for what he believed to be an incorrect ruling against him and his property in India. His persistence made him a notorious figure about town. Taken in for vagrancy on multiple occasions, Ram finally became one of the laborers in the 1886 Exhibition.

Bodied Hindoo.” Hailing from India’s Oudh province, the pair arrived in London and made their rounds on the freak circuit from approximately 1887-1891; they then emigrated to the U.S before returning to England with Barnum and Bailey’s Congress of Freaks for the 1898-99 season. Lalloo regularly sported luxe clothes, both Indian and British styles, with sewn-in accommodations for Lala. Not only did his famous outfits connect him to a current British imaginary of India shaped by textiles and design, but they also gave spectators a sensational view his sometimes-female, sometimes-male twin depending on how much clothing the pair decided to wear that day. Whether spruced up or dressed down, Lalloo’s ability to cover and uncover Lala at will made him adept at a sartorial sleight-of-hand that informed his public reception as a cosmopolite swell. But rather than supporting empire-building as a desirable colonial commodity, Lalloo and Lala’s “physiological commonwealth” constituted an “indecent exhibition” that resulted in a police-mandated desistance, and the pair was pre-emptively banned from any and all Indian Exhibitions, leaving them to the freak show.³⁹¹

During the latter-half of the nineteenth century, archival administration in India translated, annotated, and catalogued India’s various caste systems in order to cover up fissures in the colonial framework. This task was especially urgent after the Indian Rebellion of 1857, which was framed as the British Empire’s inability understand native customs and religions and led to the creation of various ethnographic archival forms.³⁹²

³⁹¹ “The Case of the Parasitic Foetus,” *British Medical Journal* (February 1888): 456-57.

³⁹² Gloria Godwin Raheja, “Caste, Colonialism, and the Speech of the Colonized: Entextualization and Disciplinary Control in India,” *American Ethnologist*. 23, no. 3 (1996): 494-513.

Including government monographs, census reports, provincial gazetteers, and photographic ethnographies, colonial archival projects initiated far ranging attempts to entextualize the speech, actions, and customs of India's populations, and in doing so, actively participated in processes of transforming India into a set of fixed cultural texts. One effort to contain India through archiving pivoted on an aesthetic discourse of premodernity that cast the typically male hereditary artisan and his designs as naturally arising extensions of India's comparatively ancient spiritual and social structures, since the artisans comprised a caste of their own. When it came to exhibition, the artisan's combination of demonstrable skill, aesthetic desirability, and cultural otherness made him excellent theater for Western spectators. And since, the hereditary artisan has assumed a prominent position in cultural studies accounts of mid- to late-nineteenth-century British exhibition culture, retroactively demarking him a synecdoche of late-century popular-imperial images of India. But when we posit this figure to be either the locus or major thread of colonial knowledge making, we assign to colonial India archives a coherent and implicit narrative framework of male-centered heteronormativity that passes as sexual neutrality. To propose alternatives to this unquestioned sexual politics, "Archives," features two case studies of performers whose exhibitions incorporate Indian design in some capacity, as I move from 1886 Exhibition and its artisanal laborers to the late-nineteenth-century freak show and its well-heeled dandy cosmopolite, Lalloo the "Double-Bodied Hindoo."

Even though official colonial archival enterprises promoted a fiction of a unified India body, living displays of India more often than not staged incongruities among text,

visual, and performance to lay bare the modern archival machinery that produced this mythic, preindustrial India vital to its colonial management. Exhibitions of artisanal India provoked a variety of responses from British and Indian subjects alike, and often these efforts either reincorporated or at least nominally mentioned colonial administrative archival records. The creative re-uses of archival materials generate what archival studies scholars call “archival imaginaries” in which usually subaltern or marginalized “communities creatively and collectively re-envision the future through archival interventions in representations of the shared past.”³⁹³ The colonial cultural productions in “Archives” imagine multi-voiced archival counter-narratives to the hereditary artisan laborer and India’s past by bringing to life a cast of double-bodied colonial subjects who dismantle the orders of gender, sexuality, and ethnicity established by the archives and articulate an emergent form of queerness that exceeds total archival ordering. This focus on material inscriptions of design in these exhibitions allegorizes the staged contrivances and historically specific strategies that author unexamined fictions of colonial archival sexuality. Far from spaces of “pure history,” archives prove themselves to be designing indeed.

In addition to fabricating their own mythologies of sexuality, archives have also subtly shaped the rhetorical and methodological conditions of historicist approaches in Victorian studies. “The Archive” reinvigorates the familiar figure of the imperial archive by tracing rhetorical patterns of prehistory across freak show and foundational archival

³⁹³ Michelle Caswell, “Inventing New Archival Imaginaries: Theoretical Foundations for Identity-Based Community Archives,” *Identity Palimpsests: Ethnic Archiving in the U.S. and Canada* (Sacramento: Litwin Books, 2014), 34-55.

administration documents to locate embedded moments of resistance capable of undermining aggregating imperatives guiding archives-based research that valorize models of whole, normative bodies. "Archives" narrows its focus to colonial administrative India archives as a still expansive but more tightly unified set of practices dedicated to creating and preserving records of colonial administrative activity so as to think more carefully about the status of colonial administrative archives within literary historicism. Existing narratives and methods for conducting such archival work are grounded in spatial-epistemological logics founded on wholes and hierarchies, often with definable centers, so even if scholars recognize that their texts exist within more complex networks these bodies are often subsumed by a containable whole. And even if we are suspicious of a discernible "center," the conventions of academic writing require at least a nominal one so that we can stage a coherent argument. While well intentioned, such efforts to resuscitate obscured histories tend to replicate ways of producing official bodies of colonial knowledge that they critique by reaffirming the vernacular status of pop cultural materials relative to other, perhaps more venerable, archives.

Double-bodied performers are comprised of at once distinct and entangled parts that revise dominant Victorian understandings of ideal, self-enclosed embodiment. I offer as an alternative the figure of the "double-bodied" archives as a component of my "freak" archival research practices and explore what forms of our research might take if we think more carefully about how archives map out standards of how bodies should occupy spaces. As the performances of double-bodied performers rely on to exceed their doubleness, showing the binary to be an imperfect rhetorical device, the double-bodied

archives similarly invokes only to dismantle easy distinctions between popular/official, marginal/central, noncanonical/canonical, and nonliterary/literary that structure literary historicist approaches to colonial India archival research. The strategically imperfect “double-bodied” archives reveals how current scholarly discourses on method are indebted to unexamined late-Victorian colonial inheritances to reframe archival research as a dynamic process that works both within and against recognizable forms that shape narratives of culture and archives. I start within the dominant formal logic ascribed to my subjects through contemporary scholarship to explore to what extent their archival materials dissolve this discernible form before I find myself returned to and enmeshed within it again. But as I shall show, a return to form does not equate to a return to origins, singularity, or sameness but rather reveals a double body that defamiliarizes the form from which it initially gains legibility. The goal of navigating the “double-bodied” archives thusly is to reframe archives as a living double body— one that is enclosed and separable and open-ended and resistant—so as to reveal the limitations and possibilities of conducting queer, decolonial scholarship through colonial archival structures.

i. A Methodological Commonwealth: The Archives-Archive Divide

One of the most challenging aspects of “Archives” is squaring the incommensurabilities between archival studies and humanities, which are at their most radically different when working with definitions of “archives.” Though their interests intersect, archival studies and humanities tend to use the word “archives” so

unresponsively to one another that interdisciplinary scholarship between the two requires some background into how each field deploys the term. Doubleness is not always as messy as “Archives” will make it out to be, and in fact, the language of doubleness sometimes helpfully and pithily concretize key differences by giving solid form to the two bodies in question. For archival studies and humanities this is the “s”-no “s” distinction, or “archive” vs. “archives.” Within archival studies, archives refers to collections of records, their physical locations and the institutions that care for them, and the practices that make them archival. Along with the intellectual history of archives and archiving came the need for professional training, so archival studies actively addresses both the theory and practices of archivists and archival researchers. Defined thusly, the archives that archival scholarly work with are “actually existing archives,” separable and aggregated bodies of records that occupy a specific physical or digital space. Because the development of archival studies has been entwined with that of history, historians more often than not view archives in largely empirical and institutional terms as necessary benchmarks for producing professional and ethical scholarship. For example, historians influenced by critical approaches to archives choose as their subjects discrete, and often times official, bodies of administrative records, as in Ann Laura Stoler's work with Dutch East Indies archives or Nicholas Dirks' and British India archives at the India Office Library in London.³⁹⁴ Abiding by this understanding of archives is invaluable for

³⁹⁴ See: Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009.); Nicholas Dirks, “Annals of the Archive: Ethnographic Notes on the Sources of History,” *From the Margins: Historical Anthropology and Its Futures*, ed. Brian Keith Axel (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 47-66.

revealing how nineteenth-century archiving practices were committed to devising the story of the British Empire's birth and growth. So as to reinforce this lineage, I use the term “archives” strategically in order to call attention to the contextually bound machinations of late-nineteenth-century British colonial information management systems that were open-ended and sprawling networks but passed themselves as closed systems in the name of the empire. Moreover, recognizing that some of the materials I work with come from archives, not an archive, makes the case for alternative embedded archival imaginaries more compelling.

But, I need to acknowledge my other “body” as it were, as also I put my own humanities spin on “archives” by approaching them with the eye and reading practices of the literary scholar by paying attention to narrative conventions, intertextual networks, and rhetorical frameworks. Social science and humanities appropriations of archives have since outpaced archival studies' stipulation that archives are discrete bodies that accessioned and processed by stewarding institutions, even though as a field we have not seriously adopted some of the same sets of merited questions as archival studies. Even a historian like Dirks who situates his body of works through the physical and intellectual experiences of onsite archival researcher still designates his subject “the archive” instead of “archives,” which subtly indicates fissures across archival studies, and social sciences and humanities. In its quest for careful contextualization, New Historicist literary approaches of the 1980s deposited archives into the literary scholar's tool kit.³⁹⁵ In doing

³⁹⁵ Carrie Hyde and Joseph Rezek, “Introduction: The Aesthetics of Archival Evidence,” *J19: The Journal of Nineteenth-Century Americanists*. 2, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 156.

so, debates arose around what counts as an archive, consequently loosening archives from their familiar information science moorings by capaciously defining as bodies of like materials unbound by institutional parameters, or as concepts for exploring knowledge and memory. This move to claim loosely thematic artifacts as an "archive" has broadened the suite of materials available to the researcher of nineteenth-century colonial India. Mia Carter and Barbara Harlow adopt a more traditional information science approach to colonial archives by defining them as discrete collections of "original documents and primary source materials relating to the varied processes and procedures of the colonial project."³⁹⁶ Through this perspective, colonial India archives typically include records created by the India Office and its various provincial arms that include government charters, gazetteers, commissions, census reports, and occasionally a special edition of a photographic archives, like John Forbes Watson, John William Kaye, and Meadows Taylor's *The People of India: A Series of Photographic Illustrations*.³⁹⁷ However, literary scholars have begun to claim popular materials as extensions of colonial archives, focusing their attentions on how prose, poetry, oral histories, travelogues, satirical cartoons, missionary tracts, and fine arts respond to colonial administrative documents.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁶ Mia Carter and Barbara Harlow, "General Introduction: Readings in Imperialism and Orientalism," *Archives of Empire Volume 1: From the East India Company to the Suez Canal*, ed. Barbara Harlow and Mia Carter (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 1.

³⁹⁷ Sudhir Mahadevan, "Archives and Origins: The Material and Vernacular Cultures of Photography in India," *Archives* 4, no. 1 (Fall 2013).

³⁹⁸ See, Ann Laura Stoler and Karen Strassler, "Castings for the Colonial: Memory Work in New Order Java," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42, no. 1 (2000), 4-48.; Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart, *Photographs, Objects, Histories: On the Materiality*

Recognizing that vernacular materials are equally active in colonial cultural production harbored exciting possibilities for doing radical history "from below" as well as decentering the canonical literary text to situate it within a larger field of production. Anjali Arondekar's *For the Record* charts expanded understandings of colonial India archives through its subject matter that combines official records (legal case records) and vernacular materials (Kipling's *Kim* and mid- to late-century pornography) to explore the colonial archival narratology of queer sexuality.

While the archival turn's injunction to "always historicize," has garnered excitement about archives, its dictum is also so firmly ingrained that it has unintentionally led to a troublesome dulling of archives in their theoretical and practical specificities. "Archive" and "archives" have since become interchangeable metonyms for a model of historicist scholarship that privileges a hermeneutic of recovery, or the uncovering of obscured and unknown texts from within archives, that ostensibly shifted focus away from reading practices. Or as Carrie Hyde and Joseph Rezek put it, the archive "has lost its edge."³⁹⁹ If historicism and cultural studies are conditions of the archive,⁴⁰⁰ then conversely the subtle disappearance of archives is a condition of historicism and cultural studies. For literary scholars, historicist method has provoked

of Images (New York: Routledge, 2004).; Elizabeth Edwards, Chris Gosden, Ruth Phillips *Sensible Objects: Colonialism, Museums, and Material Culture* (New York: Berg, 2006).

³⁹⁹ Hyde and Rezek, "Introduction," 154.

⁴⁰⁰ Wolfgang Ernst, *Stirrings in the Archives: Order from Disorder*, trans. Adam Siegel (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015).

rigorous debates that have generated new and different models of reading in response to an over-reliance on historicism's familiar companions, context and ideological critique: for instance, Marcus and Best's "surface reading", Moretti's "distant reading," and Sedgwick's "reparative reading" have been marshaled as methodological bywords for articulating the promises and failures of available reading models. Though current conversations about historicism have been far reaching in disciplinary, methodological, and theoretical scope, curiously absent is one of its more familiar tools—archives. A potential root of this oversight is the self-effacing rhetoric of archives themselves. Despite recent turns acknowledging the deeply politicized nature of archives, the language of neutrality and transparency has so consistently shaped their intellectual history that archivists and archives are reduced to invisible actors or ever-present props in the scholarly *mise-en-scene* accepted as-is. Another is a symptom of nineteenth-century archives-based history in which the enthusiasm for archival documents that could "speak for themselves" obscured how the historical imagination worked. Critical reflections on archives have since sought to uncover how archives influence historiography, but still tend to be researcher-centered, how one's subject position primarily negotiates experiences with archives. However, this model potentially reprises Victorian liberalism's privileging of the intellectual energies of individual subject, which can be remedied by a more integrative critical approach.

More than just tools, archives and their formative theoretical texts have implicitly shaped the conditions of historicist method, which relies on different spatial arrangements to explain how different texts integrate or fail to integrate into broader cultural schema.

Situating chosen texts or topics within broader socio-cultural contexts requires some rhetorical movement that maps out an imagined geography of a cultural moment's ideological systems. Historicist approaches have been committed to interrogating cultural categories through hierarchies both vertical (high and low culture) and horizontal (central and marginal,) as well as through more complex networks, like Gallagher and Greenblatt who track the "social energies that circulate very broadly through culture, flowing back and forth between margins and center."⁴⁰¹ But even as Gallagher and Greenblatt attempt to complicate too simplistic bilateral relationships between centers and margins, they still find themselves conforming to the same available lexicon, since flows must go somewhere. Through their text a tension emerges wherein the existing language for conceptualizing how we conduct historicist scholarship solidifies the very paths and possibilities for research that we recognize we must interrogate. Recent calls to renew critical attention to familiar forms⁴⁰² or models of archival evidence⁴⁰³ are productively challenging familiar historicist approaches, or at least demonstrating that formalism and historicism are not nearly as separable as they have been narrated. No one yet, however, has attended to how these spatial analogies in question are inheritances of late-nineteenth-century archival administration by historicizing the forms that archives could and still do

⁴⁰¹ Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt, *Practicing New Historicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 13.

⁴⁰² Caroline Levine, *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Networks* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015).

⁴⁰³ Allen Dunn and Thomas F. Haddox, eds. *The Limits of Literary Historicism* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2011).

take. This approach allows us to weigh current interpretations of how archives function with late-Victorian interpretations of such to make us more attuned to where, when, and how our scholarly inheritances have taken shape.

In their late-nineteenth-century form, archives worked in the same hierarchies, networks, and wholes that still shadow late-twentieth-century and current historicist scholarship. After the 1857 Rebellion, the British administration in India became increasingly vocal about the public responsibilities of archives. In his introduction to the photographic compendium *The People of India* (1868), John Forbes Watson notes that research for his study began after the “great convulsion of 1857-8” when “the pacification of Indian had been accomplished” and “officers of the Indian Services” well-versed in photographic arts went forth and “traversed the land in search of interesting subjects.”⁴⁰⁴ Alluding to the events of 1857, Forbes frames this project as a testament to British colonial might established through information management—the need to collect, collate, and cohere disparate knowledges into unified texts—which effaces the brute violence against the Indian body in favor a more insidiously beneficent form of conservatorship. In an 1872 dispatch, Viceroy, Lord Northbrook stressed the importance of transparency: “the publication of old records is a matter of political importance and would do much to prevent the misconstruction of the policy and motives of Indian

⁴⁰⁴ John Forbes Watson and John William Kaye, *The People of India: A Series of Photographic Illustrations with Descriptive Letterpress of the Races and Tribes of Hindustan* (London: India Museum, 1868), 23.

governments.”⁴⁰⁵ To ensure the smoothest and most easily accessible paths to these records, from 1878-1883, Charles Danvers, the head of the India Office’s Registry and Record Department, spearheaded the creation of a Central Registry to systematize records acquisition and processing.⁴⁰⁶ The project’s aim to construct a coordinating brain for records making and keeping encountered many snags, but its guiding aspirations of centralization and access nonetheless aligned with contemporaneous archival standards dedicated to making available in one repository “whole bodies of documentation.”⁴⁰⁷

This figure of the whole bodies was not new to nineteenth-century archival administration, since as I have charted in my introduction, the birth of the self-contained modern archival body coincided with the development of the ideal normal body throughout the 1840s. But within the context of late-century India colonialism, the need to centralize archival bodies to formulate a material distillation of the imperial British whole took on newfound urgency, since proper management of information safeguarded against the insurgent forms of indigenous knowledge like rumor, gossip, and hearsay that plagued the empire. Without locatable provenance, these types of documents disrupt or contaminate the development of the official “archival collection [as] an organic whole, ...

⁴⁰⁵ Indian Historical Records Commission, *Proceedings of Meetings Volume Two: Second Meeting Held at Lahore* (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 1920).

⁴⁰⁶ Patrick Joyce, *The State of Freedom: A Social History of the British State Since 1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 176.

⁴⁰⁷ S. Muller, J.A. Feith, M. Fruin, *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives* (New York: H.W. Wilson Company, 1940), 13.

which grows takes shape, and undergoes changes in accordance with fixed rules.”⁴⁰⁸ Moreover, these whole and self-enclosed “living organisms” stand in stiff contrast to private collections of curiosities or ephemeral forms of knowledge that were “gathered together in the strangest manner” and lacked “the organic bond of the archival collection.”⁴⁰⁹ Efforts to distinguish the two betray awareness that even as they were designed to enclose and manage information, archives potentially materialized an unboundedness and openendedness that contradicts their normative impulses.

Proceeding from this vantage point, I advance a peculiar form that colonial India archives can take through the double-body to both recognize and innovate on the historical presences of colonial archives. As a starting place, I choose Thomas Macaulay, not because he is necessarily the decisive origin, but because his “Minute Upon Indian Education” vividly articulates the “doubleness” of the Indian colonial subject. In support of the 1835 English Education Act that would reallocate spending in education and literature in India, Macaulay famously argued that an English language-based education would result in a desirable “class of persons, Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect.”⁴¹⁰ Undeniably ethnocentric, Macaulay’s piece fleshes out contemporaneous British attitudes toward its duty to pull its Indian

⁴⁰⁸ Muller, Feith, Fruin, *Manual*, 19.

⁴⁰⁹ Muller, Feith, Fruin, *Manual*, 20.

⁴¹⁰ Thomas Babington Macaulay, “Minute Upon Indian Education” (1835) *Project South Asia*, accessed September 2 2015, <http://www.mssu.edu/projectsouthasia/history/primarydocs/education/Macaulay001.htm>.

subjects out “the lowest depths of slavery and superstition.”⁴¹¹ But rather than a simple assertion of Anglicization through education, the doubleness in Macaulay’s words pre-empt a loss of the colonial subject’s definable discursive center and coherent wholeness in physical, cultural, and epistemological terms. Macaulay’s new class of persons are fissured down lines of racial markers (“Indian in color”) and habits (“English in taste, in opinions...”) with this conjoining of the two coming providing the defining feature of the desirable Indian colonial subject. Though designed to stress the ameliorative, Anglicizing motives of educational imperialism, Macaulay unintentionally taps into how prolonged intercultural contact produces subjects who exceed such straightforward narratives of British acculturation. Even though “Archives” tackles how the double-bodied Indian surfaces in exhibitions of living peoples, they are not just half-man/half-woman freak performers who in no uncertain terms replicate binary logic, and anyway this type of performer did not make their mark until the early-twentieth century. Instead, the performers introduced embody a subtler form of double-bodiedness that may not even manifest through the physical body itself until to Lalloo and Lala. More often than not, this doubleness is discursive in that they condense to disaggregate the racial, gender, sexual, and class typologies generated through colonial India archives.

Double-bodies include shared space of tissues, organs, bones, and pedicles, an often-overlooked interstice where the form of each body begins to both dissolve and take shape. Because freak bodies are both material and materials, “Archives” looks to how the exhibitions of the double-bodied performers leave behind double-bodied archives that

⁴¹¹ Macaulay, “Minute Upon Indian Education.”

bring together official colonial administrative and vernacular documents. The archives' literal and figurative presences in exhibition cultural helps to nullify strict distinctions between official/vernacular, literary/extra-literary, canonical/noncanonical, as I look instead to how these weave together even as their individual skeins remain identifiable, much like the shared space of the double body. Moreover, within exhibition culture, there is no outside to, no imaginary realm innocent of these forms of knowledge making, only snags that interrupt archival narrative coherence, which become materialized through the double-bodied Indian. The question remains then: what steps can we take to conduct research that betrays our awareness of both the limits and possibilities of the double-body? I posit that we do not completely disregard any of the longstanding discursive forms that circumscribe historicist methods, but rather recognize them precisely as such so as to strip them of their naturalized authority. We acknowledge the center to decenter it, the hierarchy to subvert it, the whole to dissemble it, and the network to allow ourselves to get lost temporarily in its mazes. In my readings of responses to Indian exhibition and design, I use these cherished forms as reliable position points to start from in order to explore how far we can push ourselves to dissolve them and dwell within the interstices, before we are drawn back into them. This process, however, is not perfectly circular, a return to the origin, but rather brings into view the double-bodiedness of the performers and archives in question in order to defamiliarize the forms on which it relies.

ii. India's Preindustrial Designs on Display

Preceding the live exhibits of 1886, the 1854 re-opening of the Crystal Palace at Sydenham included a Natural History and Ethnological Collection that tracked the roots of human antiquity through a series of *in situ* dioramas loosely organized by continent and ethnic group. Complete with accompanying props, environs, and staged activities, the displays under the direction of Arthur Layard provided semi-immersive viewing experiences in which spectators felt safe in knowing that they could peer into, but leave untouched by their brushes with, cultural differences. Intended to be instructive, Layard's nevertheless diorama tended toward the sensational and sometimes grotesque, as freak show performers like the "Aztecs" and the "Earthmen" provided the living precedents for the waxen figures on display. The Central America and Africa exhibits operated primarily within aggressively imperialist registers that made little to no qualms about the British Empire's active political and militaristic interventions in the respective regions. On the other hand, the India display replaced the overtly interventionist aims of its cohorts with a more insidious aesthetic imperialism that effaced British colonial presence to cast India outside of modern politics. India did not need to be colonized because of its potentially brutish indigenous populations, but rather it *could* be colonized because of its docile populations who knew how work with the region's natural resources.

The visual tone of Layard's 1854 India display was part of a longer visual tradition of India displays reaching back to the Great Exhibition of 1851, which was the first and one of the most sustained presentations of Indian art-wares in Europe. To pump people up for the exhibition, the *Illustrated London News* (1851) ran a series of engravings of Berhampoor's ivory cutters filled with live elephants, carven animals, and

semi-nude and muscular artisans, casting the region as a dreamy and exotic place of transport that carried associations with ancient Assyria, which was an empire that served as a convenient stand-in for all things ancient in the Victorian mind.⁴¹² Intruding on each illustration, however, is the nattily dressed colonial agent surveying the carvings or chatting up the locals. These popular appeals visualize not only the comparatively primitive yet edenic life of the Bengali ivory cutter, but also successful colonial records keeping practices, as the colonial agent becomes pictorial evidence that colonial administrative apparatuses are running smoothly and transparently. Rather than exhibition being a proxy to official colonial records keeping practices, these illustrations suggest that it is rather an archival fulcrum that sustains different archiving economies so as to nullify superficial distinctions between the official and vernacular. As a condensed version of the Exhibition, illustrations of the British agent and Bengali laborer also preview the Exhibition's spatial arrangements in which the Indian court was pitted against British "machinery courts." British reception of India at the 1851 Exhibition both depended on and promoted the mythology of the colony's preindustrial, pre-modern state of labor. *The Crystal Palace and Its Contents* attributed the sublimity of Indian design to a naturally arising wellspring of creative energies, "the minute and patient industry of the

⁴¹² Billie Melmen, "The Bull of Nineveh: Antiquity and Modernity in Nineteenth-Century Britain" *Popular History Now and Then: International Perspectives*, ed. Barbara Korte and Sylvia Paletschek (Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Publishers, Rutgers University, 2012), 46.

native” who “performs his work in a field.”⁴¹³ But unlike the illustrations that show art making in progress, such embodied performances of laborer were nearly absent at the 1851 Exhibition, instead replaced by clay figures representing various Indian castes and trades while the “rich shawls, carpets, matting, and mixed fabrics” took center stage.⁴¹⁴ So, even if the laborer were present, at least as an aestheticized statue, the products assumed the most importance.

The 1854 Sydenham Natural History collection extended and accentuated this conceit of pre-industrial artisanship by fabricating a pastoral tableau dominated by leopards, lions, elephants, and tigers skulking among banana and mango trees, emphasizing in no uncertain terms the supposed primitivity of India that informed the Crystal Palace displays. The exhibit’s strategy of colonial containment is primarily reflected in the decision to stage modern India’s reversion to its fictional edenic, pre-colonial state. The only nods to India’s colonial status were coded through opaque references to India’s extractable resources, “the cotton plant and other indigenous products of the country” and the “peaceful Hindoo” reposing underneath the foliage.⁴¹⁵ Sydenham’s ethnological displays displace the object, the handicrafts themselves, to render raw materials and the humans as the primary objects for viewing that would justify British economic interventionism. Because Indian artisan castes could provide

⁴¹³ *The Crystal Palace, and its Contents: being an Illustrated Cyclopaedia of the Great Exhibition of the Industry of all Nations, 1851: Embellished with Upwards of Five Hundred Engravings, with Copious Analytical Index* (London: W.M Clark, 1852), 139.

⁴¹⁴ *The Crystal Palace*, 140.

⁴¹⁵ *Routledge*, 173.

something desirable to British audiences and buyers, the still-life exhibit of India evokes an invisible and comparatively bland imperial paternalism that avoids the overtly racist or pathologizing tones of the Central America or Africa displays.

In its staging of indigenous people in natural environs, the diorama activates a convention of colonial visual coding called the picturesque aesthetic, which represented idealized images of untouched landscapes. But rather than telling the story of India's environmental history to serve India itself, the picturesque was a masquerade for promoting the wonders of a specific type of British modernity that sought to repair the aesthetic wrongs produced by cheap manufacturing. While Indian goods were imported well before 1851, the Great Exhibition, and later Sydenham, provided the first large-scale presentations of Indian textiles and design, and critics saw in them potential to change the current state of design. Mid-century design reform responded to contemporaneous decorative arts that epitomized bland bourgeois comfort and conspicuous consumption like heavy brocades, fussy floral, and excessively stifling coverings.⁴¹⁶ A series of printed lectures on the Great Exhibition concluded that while Indian painting and sculpture did not surpass European fine arts, the Indian patterns, especially those in woven and embroidered works, were superior.⁴¹⁷ In 1853, design reformer Owen Jones singled out the "harmonious and effective" patterns on shawls and carpets that European

⁴¹⁶Francesca Galloway, *Arts & Crafts Textiles in Britain* (London: FAS, 1999).

⁴¹⁷Royal Society of Arts, "Lectures on the Results of the Great Exhibition of 1851 Delivered before the Society of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce" (London: G. Barclay, 1851).

imitations tried to reproduce without luck.⁴¹⁸ Rallying against cheaply manufactured reproductions, Jones championed Indian, and what he deemed “other savage,” ornament positing that proper execution of arts would be a successful way of retrieving a romantic, preindustrial past. In his “Observations,” Jones goes as far as to argue that “if we would return to a more healthy condition . . . we must get rid of the acquired and artificial, and return to and develop [sic] the natural instincts.”⁴¹⁹ Layard’s India exhibit represents the apotheosis of Jones’ injunction. Its carefully crafted exoticism materializes a paean to India’s edenic past and a proleptic vision of Britain’s utopian future, each justifying colonial expansion.

As Jones located the root of national health within the production techniques of primitive cultures, the inspiration still sprang from an exhibitionary complex that served as homage to technology and industry. Tony Bennett’s influential theorizing of the “exhibitionary complex” focuses on exhibition’s disciplinary function: it assumed the power to “command and arrange things and bodies for public to display” through the panoptic eye of the self-regulating spectator.⁴²⁰ Jones’ rhapsodizing of “non-civilized” people and their exhibited micro-worlds helped to parse distinctions between the nation’s body and bodies of others, making both legible through each nation’s collections of objects, crafts, and artworks. However, exhibition did not just provide for unilateral

⁴¹⁸ Owen Jones, “Observations by Owen Jones, Esq.,” *First Report of the Department of Practical Art* (London: George Eyre and William Spottiswoode, 1853), 231.

⁴¹⁹ Owen Jones, *The Grammar of Ornament: Illustrated by Various Examples from Various Styles of Ornament*, (London: Day and Son, 1856), 17.

⁴²⁰ Tony Bennett, “The Exhibitionary Complex,” *New Formations* 4 (Spring 1988): 76.

assertions of British national and cultural superiority. While India's cultural status as a token of the preindustrial past helped to naturalize British modernity, it also became a counter-discourse for criticizing the cult of industry as it tacitly undermines the phenomenon it was marshaled to support. As living archives of a traditional artistic knowledge, the Indian artisans were viewed as embodied reparatives to the decline of arts and crafts at the hands of modern industry, even though exhibition culture—the apotheosis of modern industry—helped make them celebrities.

On visiting the Great Exhibition of 1851, a moody seventeen year-old William Morris bemoaned the decline of traditional crafts and designated the exhibition as “all that was bad in an industrial age.”⁴²¹ Distaste of industry may not have stopped Morris from touring the exhibition, though he makes it clear that the task was not an enjoyable one, like any petulant teenager would do. But, even Morris was not impervious to the India craftsman's spell. As a social activist and textile maker, Morris looked to India to resuscitate older practices of production that preserved India's perpetually preindustrial state. Morris replicated traditional Indian manufacturing techniques, patterns, and colors by using handloom jacquard weaving, vegetable dyes, and handblocked prints.⁴²² Morris' writing discloses cautious optimism about British attempts to reproduce Indian designs: “It takes a man of considerable originality, to deal with the old examples, and to get what is good out of them, without making a design which lays itself open distinctly to be the

⁴²¹ Jonathan Meyer, *Great Exhibitions: London, New York, Paris, Philadelphia, 1851-1900* (New York: Antique Collector's Club, 2006), 18.

⁴²² Christine Bayles Kortsch, *Dress Culture in Late Victorian Women's Fiction: Literacy, Textiles, and Activism* (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2009), 83.

charge of plagiarism.”⁴²³ As an “old example” and a “modern design,” Morris’ characterization of Indian design, however, employs the same dialectic of contemporary industry and preindustrial craftsmanship on which the Indian exhibitions pivoted. Still scornful of the exhibitionary enterprise, Morris’ own hand-blocked and hand-woven silks using recognizably Indian color schemes such as “Marigold” and “Larkspur,” were exhibited in the British Indian section of the 1878 Paris Exhibition.⁴²⁴ Even though Morris sought to elevate Indian design as a panacea to the ills of British modernity, his displacing of the Indian laborer still immerses him in the same insidious aesthetic imperialism that he would rigorously deny.

The textile makers in this section have offered fascinating cases in the flickering visibility of the laborer, and where this may intersect with questions of race and ethnicity. While critics, such as Jeffrey Auerbach, have argued that the Great Exhibition of 1851 effaced all signs of labor, the bodies of the colonial laborers are present in the exhibition’s clay figures. Surrounded and diminutized by colorful silks and woven tapestries, they are aestheticized to the point where they too become primarily art or ethnological objects, rather than producers in their own right, as their agency is curtailed in the service of producing an orderly micro-world against which British spectators can secure their sense of cultural and national self. On the other hand, Morris reasserts the visibility of the specifically British laborer through his textile-making practices, as he and

⁴²³ William Morris, “Old Examples and Modern Design” *The British Architect* 23 (27 February 1885): 103.

⁴²⁴ Brenda M. King, *Silk and Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 151.

industrial and silk dyer Thomas Wardle developed proprietary textile making processes. However, the body of the preternaturally patient and peaceful colonial laborer is completely replaced by the British artisan and manufacturing innovator. While different in their relationship to imperial and national rhetoric, both the Crystal Palace Exhibitions and Morris make visible the human body only to displace it by a series of “object lessons” that render the colonial body superfluous, similar to the ways in which late-nineteenth-century colonial India administrative archives would replace living bodies with narrative ones built of paper and print. If the *Illustrated London News*’ ivory cutter engravings made visible colonial archival networks through the body, the 1851 Exhibition’s and Morris’ displacing of the bodies efface the dynamic colonial archival infrastructure that shaped British-Indian relations. Without the figure of the archives, exhibition becomes a more simplistically unilateral assertion of British authority, rather than a prolonged and productive site of intercultural contact fueled by archiving activities, official or otherwise. But, as the case comes to be the 1886 Colonial and Indian Exhibition at South Kensington, the laboring bodies found themselves reinserted into the exhibition complex as synecdoches for different forms of colonial administrative records. In reasserting the embodied nature of the archives, the 1886 Exhibition starts to form a “doubled-bodied” archival imaginary peopled by performers who recontour the workings of colonial India archives.

iii. Body One: The 1886 Indian Exhibition

John Forbes Watson's reputation in museum history is usually colored by embarrassment. Watson was appointed to the India Office in 1859 and put in charge of its India museum, a position he held until 1879 when the collections were dispersed to South Kensington, the British Museum, and the Kew.⁴²⁵ Rather than shrouding the museum's imperialist sensibilities within the rhetoric of curiosity or scientific achievement, an official memorandum stated that India Museum was designed specifically and explicitly to "develop the resources of India and promot[e] trade between Eastern and Western empress of Her Majesty."⁴²⁶ In a move of either unguarded economic opportunism or misguided enthusiasm, Forbes Watson literally took scissors to the East India Company's textiles to make gigantic sample books for different textile manufacturing centers. Forbes Watson conceived of these books as easily replicable "portable museums" that contained "several thousand specimens, arranged in such a manner that the whole collection may be exhibited in a moderate sized room."⁴²⁷ Driver and Ashmore characterize Forbes Watson's activities as combining the taxonomic acuity of the ethnographer, the "instrumental approach" of the colonial administrator, and the practical economic imperatives of the manufacturer.⁴²⁸

⁴²⁵Felix Driver and Sonia Ashmore, "The Mobile Museum: Collecting and Circulating of Indian Textiles in Victorian Britain," *Victorian Studies* 52, no. 3 (Spring 2010): 361.

⁴²⁶ M. E. Grant Duff, "Memorandum for the Duke of Argyll," 13 Feb. 1869. iOr L/Sur/6/3. Asia, Pacific, and Africa Collections, British Library, London.

⁴²⁷ John Forbes Watson, "The India Museum Question" *Journal of the Society of Arts* 23 (1875): 504–14.

⁴²⁸ Driver and Ashmore, "The Mobile Museum," 363.

Forbes Watson would later be criticized for his relatively unsystematic approach by successive directors of the India Museum and curators of South Kensington, but his brief moment in the museological limelight distills the complex interactions among ethnographic presentation, colonial governance, and archiving that would pave the way for the 1886 Colonial and Indian Exhibition. If the 1851 Exhibition was an homage to exhibits and exhibiting, the 1886 Exhibition was a testament to archives and archiving with displays of administrative colonial records that were translated into performing artisanal bodies, and then retranslated into exposition-related literature and ephemera. This section conducts research with the attention to spatial dynamics of the “network” in order to explore how my formulation of the “double-bodied” archives mobilizes new ways of ordering ethnicity, gender, and sexuality. The suite of materials for this section most accurately resides within the interstices of the “official” and “vernacular” archival bodies of the 1886 Exhibition, choosing neither as an authoritative center. Instead, informed by the network’s contingent connective tissues, this section uses the centripetal figure of the hereditary artisan for centrifugal purposes: to materialize the various permutations of the artisan that arise when administrative and vernacular documentary weave together so tightly so as to abolish easy distinctions as such. The “double-bodied” archives in this section works toward materializing the aggregative and dispersive impulses that typically go unnoticed through the spatial configuration of the network to yield an archival imaginary of the hereditary artisan that accommodates for competing forms of colonial archival authorship.

Current scholarship defines the 1886 Exhibition at South Kensington as nested networks: flows of goods between England and India, as well as supply chains of local manufacturers, entrepreneurs, and agents between London and peripheral cities.⁴²⁹ While forming the exhibition as such helps to reframe India's goods and humans on display as diasporic objects and subjects, the figure of the whole still shadows and contours these intersecting threads, lending a false sense of cohesion to the Exhibition more generally. In an early study on colonialism and material culture, Tim Barringer refers to South Kensington as a three-dimensional archive, following Thomas Richards' expansive definition of the imperial archive. In doing so, he maps out a process of acquiring antiquities that follow a procession "from periphery to center" that contributed to the cultural fantasy that London was the heart of the empire, instating the familiar geographies of power that structure even historicist methods championing the supposedly freeing form of the network.⁴³⁰ Barringer's reading of South Kensington successfully irons out any potential wrinkles that might arise through the counter-history of instability and heterogeneous collecting practices associated South Kensington to accord, though implicitly so, authority to official colonial documentation practices. Instead of smooth directional flows, Bruce Robertson likens South Kensington more to "a bazaar or

⁴²⁹ Sonia Ashmore, "Caspar Purdon Clarke and the South Kensington Museum: Textile Networks between Britain and India 1850-1890," *Networks of Design: Proceedings for the 2008 International Conference of the Design History Society*, ed. Jonathan Glynne, Fiona Hackney, Viv Minton (Boca Raton: Universal-Publishers, 2009), 140-146.

⁴³⁰ Tim Barringer, "The South Kensington Museum and the Colonial Project." *Colonialism and the Object: Material Culture and the Museum*, ed. Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn (New York: Routledge, 1998), 11.

emporium, with new products arriving and departing all the time” without a reliable rhythm.⁴³¹ Relatively unstable collecting practices notwithstanding, characterizing South Kensington as a physical proxy of the imperial archive still subsumes the tangled networks of exhibition into the whole in strikingly literal terms: throughout the nineteenth century, archives gained cache as physical spaces capable of enacting national imaginings and substantiating the history of great nations.⁴³² Not simply figurative archives, museums like South Kensington had and remain to have traceable presences in colonial India records. I emphasize this in order to stress that these material remnants disintegrate the unified discursive edifice of the museum as a totalizing form as its documents disperse into clusters of smaller archival bodies within different institutional spaces.

While museums and exhibitions operated by their own logic of display, they were and are primarily accessed through colonial archival practices. Involvements between arts and colonial administrative practices materialized through the state-sanctioned economic and educational departments that supervised the production, dissemination, and acquisition of Indian arts and crafts in India and England. As a department of the British state, South Kensington was home to not only the museum, but also an art school and the offices of the Department of Science and Art, a government-run network of arts

⁴³¹ Bruce Robertson, “The South Kensington Museum in Context: An Alternative history.” *Museum and Society* 2, no. 1 (2004): 9.

⁴³² Carolyn Steedman, “‘Something She Called a Fever’: Michelet, Derrida, and Dust (Or, in the Archives with Michelet and Derrida),” *Archives, Documentation, and Institutions of Social Memory: Essays from the Sawyer Seminar*, ed. Francis X. Blouin and William G. Rosenberg (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 11.

education that sent its teacher-emissaries to colonial outposts. As official cultural emissaries, their work mirrored those of colonial administrative authorities, which in turn supported the British state's attempts to promote India's role as a primary and readily available market for imperial manufacturing. British-run Arts and Crafts centers in India became the Empire's convenient access points to India's natural and artistic resources, which had become increasingly difficult to manage throughout the nineteenth century.⁴³³ The East India Company Museum's Indian Collection eventually changed proprietorship to South Kensington, which was happy to comply because of its expansionist sensibilities, after the Government of India wanted to devolve its care and avoid costs. With the India Office finessing and recording the process, the museums were at the center of and subject to colonial administrative practices and procedures. The subsequent acquisition history of the museum's records reflects South Kensington's administrative involvements, as the records have been since processed into the archives of the East India Company, the Board of Control or Board of Commissioners for the Affairs of India, and the India Office, now held at the British Library.

Not only an object of colonial administration itself, South Kensington also relied on British governmental agencies installed in India's different regions to furnish exhibitions. Specifically, the information that supplied the lectures, commissions, and collections for the museum was gathered through different colonial archival records

⁴³³ Deborah Swallow, "Colonial Architecture, International Exhibitions and Official Patronage of the Indian Artisan: The Case of a Gate from Gwalior in the Victoria and Albert Museum," *Colonialism and the Object*, ed. Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn (London: Routledge, 1998).

keeping practices that assembled government monographs and regional gazetteers.

Producing these records in India depended on a multi-tiered infrastructure comprised of regional and various local committees who were in charge of not only obtaining the objects but also generating knowledge about them according to standardized description practices, including where they were made and who were the best manufacturers.⁴³⁴

These practices supplied materials for display, as well as verifiable paper trails of India's administrative workings that increased knowledge of its regional and local specialties.

What marks this process of archival documentation, retrieval, and display as exceptional is that the records themselves do not assume primary importance, but the forms of embodied and ephemeral knowledges they produce through displays of colonial objects and subjects.

The most freeing or frustrating aspects about conducting archival research inside the exhibition network is choosing from a variety of points of departure. Because this section traces imbrications of archival administrative records, exhibition, and museum culture I start with the man at the center of it all, Anglo-Indian curator, surgeon, and naturalist George Birdwood who responsible for popularizing the image of magical Indian artisan. Birdwood served as a Special Assistant for the India Office Revenue and Statistical Department from 1871-1902 and later as the director of the Kensington. On leaving his post at the India Office, Birdwood also left his personal effects with his former employers, which were subsequently acquired by the India Office Records and

⁴³⁴ Abigail McGowan, *Crafting the Nation in Colonial India* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 37.

released to the public in 1902. Among the Birdwood Papers are his correspondences with Thomas Wardle, the textile maker and silk dyer who collaborated with Morris and exhibited his items at the 1889 Paris Exposition; Sir Phillip Cunliffe-Owen, the organizer of the 1886 South Kensington Exhibition; the Victoria and Albert Museum; and, Chicago's 1893 Columbian Exhibition. In his government monograph, *The Industrial Arts of India* (1884), Birdwood attributed the sublime state of Indian decorative arts to ancient Hindu spiritual texts and poetry out of which sprang India's village-based social system, mirroring and building on the image of preindustrial India made widely recognizable during the 1851 Exhibition. Prefiguring the rhetoric of authenticity structuring the 1886 Exhibition, Birdwood freezes India in an eternally preindustrial, distant past by asserting that the lauded "life and arts of India ... are still the life and arts of antiquity."⁴³⁵ Birdwood's image of India, which seems to reside in a black hole of time, is fabricated through distinctly modern administrative archival practices that betray the complex networks of provincial and national information management in India made artificially whole through Birdwood's monograph. In the preface, Birdwood mentions that *The Industrial Arts of India* includes "copious notes from the annual *Administration Reports* of the local governments of India" and "the provincial *Gazetteers*."⁴³⁶ Through its transparent research process, Birdwood's compendium becomes a record of the British Empire's successfully archival management of Indian territories that is then extended to

⁴³⁵ George Christopher Molesworth Birdwood, *The Industrial Arts of India* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1880), 128.

⁴³⁶ Birdwood, *The Industrial Arts of India*, vi.

the empire's museological culture, since as a "fairly trustworthy index of every district and town in India," the monograph rectifies inconsistencies or gaps in the Indian Museum collections.⁴³⁷

In 1871, the Government of India commissioned decennial censuses and imperial gazetteers, which were ethnographic digests of the Indian empire, its resources, inhabitants, and administration. Prior to this, records were generated on a district-level, with these two major projects being the first systematized instances in which records treated the whole of India as a unified imperial whole.⁴³⁸ Dryly but efficiently narrated, the gazetteers were conscientiously scientific in their ordering and describing of information, and ideal for an administration beleaguered by paperwork. They were equally expansive and microscopic in scope, and this careful balance produced an erroneously harmonious model of Indian culture in which the country's various demographic networks could be neatly contained as a whole. The gazetteers' method of "systematic inquiry" designed to consolidate the "whole of the materials" into "one work," formally patterns India's "vast interior mass" into a series of complex but still manageable networks by meting it out into distinct but identical entries that often cross-referenced one another. As nineteenth-century Orientalist Henry Maine contended, the settlement reports, censuses, and gazetteers were the sources of "the real India" and "ancient society," effectively endowing these bureaucratic documents with diachronic

⁴³⁷ Birdwood, *The Industrial Arts of India*, vii.

⁴³⁸ David Arnold, *Science, Technology, and Medicine in Colonial India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 130.

significance. Because crafts were a central node of colonial commerce, these chapters included scrupulous details on manufacturing processes, tools, artisan's communities, and technologies, which were then relayed into texts such as Birdwood's.⁴³⁹ Within its breakdown of the artisan caste, the imperial gazetteer submits to a progress-driven organization by moving through subdivisions "with reference to the supposed priority of the evolution of their crafts," with the basket makers and weavers falling within the more primitive group preceding metallurgy.⁴⁴⁰

Birdwood's invocation of the gazetteers in his prefatory material reveals the fluidity that marks supposedly firm distinctions between official and vernacular colonial documentation. Birdwood qualifies his efforts in *Industrial Arts of India* by claiming that his is "popular handbook" albeit one so "well received" that it merited expansion and republication.⁴⁴¹ While this would seem to settle firmly his text in the realm of vernacular production, his delineations of his source materials undercut his pretenses to humility. In mentioning the "as yet published" gazetteers, Birdwood condenses what was once official—the gazetteer—into a footnote or brief mention in the preface. In emphasizing the citational efficiencies of the gazetteer, Birdwood strips the administrative colonial record of its material presence and his text replaces it as the primary transmitter of recent history. Consequently, Birdwood's vernacular production of India's handicrafts takes on a retroactively canonical status as a touchstone text in

⁴³⁹ McGowan, *Crafting the Nation*, 49.

⁴⁴⁰ "Ethnology and Caste," *Imperial Gazetteer of India Volume 1: The Indian Empire Descriptive* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), 339.

⁴⁴¹ Birdwood, *The Industrial Arts of India*, vi.

historicist accounts of Anglo-Indian colonial relations. In popularizing the records that tacitly informed the live exhibition of the Indian laborers, Birdwood's monograph helped to transform South Kensington from a figurative to a literal and material archival presence. The book's rhetorical wanderings through administrative and exhibition territories suggest that it most accurately serves a token materializing the inextricable imbrications of official and vernacular colonial documentation practices than it does meting distinctions between the two.

Not just a part of the vast imperial archive, the legacy of Kensington also remains an archives, a physical set of administrative correspondences and government monographs, since one of their primary access points for the researcher is through lingering colonial India archival structures memorialized when British Library accessioned the India Office Records. Not only did colonial records properly contextualize the "Art-Wares" courts at the 1886 Exhibition, but they were also on display themselves. *The Colonial and Indian Exhibition Official Catalogue* lists as the third space allotted to the Government of India the "Administrative Courts." Here visitors could "make themselves acquainted with the details of the internal administration of India to ascertain the sources from which the best most complete information is obtainable."⁴⁴² Even if the exhibits offered "little attraction to the eye," the promoters deemed them to be important because they gave "practical notion of the vast machinery required for the administration of the Indian Empire."⁴⁴³ The display of administrative colonial records

⁴⁴² *The Colonial and Indian Exhibition Official Catalogue*, 12.

⁴⁴³ *The Colonial and Indian Exhibition Official Catalogue*, 12.

materializes, very literally, the usually obscured flows of information that produce mass spectacles of empire like exhibitions. The spirit of this display harkened back to the post-French Revolutionary beginnings of modern archival administration that equated free and direct access of knowledge with functional democracy and continued to inform nineteenth-century conceptualizations of archival records as direct evidence of bureaucratic activity. This “direct” access, however, was crafted through a carefully mediated display of the records that in turn provided interpretative frameworks for the objects, humans, and more generally, country on display. No longer only source materials that provide evidence of bureaucratic action, the administrative records take on spectacular qualities themselves, their goal not to disclose necessarily but to legitimize and add to the Indian Court’s “bewildering display of Indian splendor.”⁴⁴⁴ The interactive quality of the display promoted by the catalogue opens the archives to a series of undetermined and unique user experiences. The recent history of the Indian empire’s administration may be accessed from different vantage points and reoriented according to different user inventions. Display then recasts colonial archives as a site of experimentation and potential epistemological and ideological contest depending on the user. In likening the archives to “vast machinery,” the catalogue description upsets the usually coherent conceit of preindustrial India to claim the empire as a modern force of its own. Reading the industrial language of the archives alongside the image of the patient, comparatively primitive artisan lays bare the insidious efforts to contain and qualify the agency of colonial Indian subjects through the archives and display. No

⁴⁴⁴ *The Colonial and Indian Exhibition Official Catalogue*, 14

longer outside of time, the colonial artisans on display are immersed in and, more importantly, produced from modern forms of display and information management.

By inextricably linking craft production to its people and processes, the gazetteers supplied textual models that were readily translated into living artisan exhibits, which in turn generated their own popular archival materials that borrow from colonial archival textual forms. If the Administrative Courts were self-conscious that their objects were not necessarily eye-catching it was probably because their neighbors were the Arts Courts that displayed living Indian workers as life-sized, *in situ* dioramas replicating India's natural and built environments complete with "native huts" and various portable artifacts. Unlike Sydenham's 1854 Ethnological Courts in which displayed humans were understood to be specimens of natural history, the living laborers of the 1886 Exhibition represented idealized Anglo-Indian relations as subjects united and containable through smoothly operating colonial records administration. Through the twin ordering imperatives of colonial records keeping and exhibition, the Indian prisoners transformed into compliant and active laborers on an international scale, even if they rejected such industriousness in India.⁴⁴⁵ Vernacular archival materials that used colonial administrative forms and genres helped along this project of Indian domestication. In his *Reminiscences of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition*, Frank Cundall explains that the Exhibition motivated the creation of its own bodies of documentation, including "the official catalogue published by the Royal Commission, "special handbooks and

⁴⁴⁵ Sadiyah Qureshi, *Peoples on Parade: Exhibitions, Empire, Anthropology in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 245.

catalogues, and “special reports on the chief products of the colonies ... prepared by gentlemen of scientific experience, at the instigation of the Royal Commission.”⁴⁴⁶ Since these have already been done, Cundall clarifies that his text is instead a Who’s Who of the Exhibition only focusing on the most “attractive features.”⁴⁴⁷ And while Cundall is enamored of the raw materials and products from the Mediterranean, India, Ceylon, Australasia, Canada, the West Indies, and Africa, he finds the most compelling to be the live laborers of India.

Once on display at South Kensington, the living performers were retranslated back into text through exhibition catalogues like Cundall’s that displayed them according to race, region, and job. Like the authors and exhibits preceding him, Cundall participates in and perpetuates the now-recognizable rhetoric of authenticity when he writes of the artisans who “were all daily to be seen at work as they would be in India.”⁴⁴⁸ Though Cundall disavows a truly systematic approach to his subject matter, his entries on the laborers mimic the conventions found in the provincial gazetteers from India to suggest that vernacular archival materials of the Exhibition are informed by and still accessed through colonial India archival narrative structures, echoing the same network-whole relationship made harmonious through archiving. Cundall’s text actively complies with the colonial project of explicating individual colonial subjects and populations into

⁴⁴⁶ Frank Cundall, *Reminiscences of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition* (London: William Clowes & Sons, 1886), vii-iii.

⁴⁴⁷ Cundall, *Reminiscences*, viii.

⁴⁴⁸ Cundall, *Reminiscences*, 28.

archived statistics and descriptions; the wily prisoners are reduced to simplistic illustrations of human busts with short captions limited to job and region, such as “Silversmith from Delhi” and “Carpet-Weaver from Mathura.”⁴⁴⁹ Cundall’s entextualization of the performers highlights the recursive paths of mediation and remediation that bring the exhibited body more directly under everyday, material operations of the colonial government. Archival documentation then functioned as a necessary intermediary that could define craft vis-à-vis the colonial body in such a way that rendered laboring bodies inanimate objects of analysis rather than active practitioners, even as these flesh-and-blood bodies took center stage. Moreover, these documents not only furnish us insights into British attitudes toward colonial artisan populations, but also the inner-workings of colonial governance through information management. As Deepali Dewan describes it, textual documentation of craft production and processes made the living artisan’s “actual presence superfluous,” even as their living bodies were at the center of the spectacle.⁴⁵⁰ Dewan’s point zeroes in on the problematic displacement of colonial bodies in information management practices, but it runs the risk of submitting presence and “permanent record” to a falsely exclusionary dichotomy.⁴⁵¹ Following this line of thought too virtuously limits how we define colonial archives and

⁴⁴⁹ Cundall, *Reminiscences*, 29.

⁴⁵⁰ Deepali Dewan, “The Body at Work: Art Education and the Figure of the Native Craftsman,” *Confronting the Body: The Politics of Physicality in Colonial and Postcolonial India*, ed. James H Mills and Satardru Sen (London: Anthem South Asian Studies, 2003), 127.

⁴⁵¹ Dewan, “The Body at Work,” 127.

preserves the mythology of an “archival memory” that remains unchanged over time and space.

Instead, the case of the native artisans at the Exhibition of 1886 highlights the necessary interplay between unchanging forms of memory—Diana Taylor’s “archive”—and ephemeral forms of memory—Taylor’s “repertoire.” Despite the impulses to oppose written archives as hegemonic authorities and the performed repertoire as their anti-hegemonic rebuttals, Taylor insists that the two do not exist in a binary formation.⁴⁵² The brutal power exercised by the state over the colonial body disabuses us any overly optimistic understandings of the repertoire’s potentially radical power. Similarly, Salomi Mathur carefully qualifies the agency of the 1886 artisans by noting that they were silent bodies on display, letting accompanying texts, like Cundall’s, speak for them. Instead of resuscitating the “lost” voices of the subjects on display, “Archives” maps out the competing narrative registers of the exhibits snaking through the archival network. In a memo to the Earl of Dufferin that echoes Cundall’s sentiments, the exhibition’s executive commission Sir Frances Phillip Cunliffe-Owen ventures that the “body of native artizans was undoubtedly the most attractive feature of the whole Exhibition.”⁴⁵³ Part of a memo to the viceroy and governor-general of Bombay, this mention of the “artizans” reinserts the performing Indian body back into official colonial administrative records. But in

⁴⁵²Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

⁴⁵³ Quoted in Peter H. Hoffenberg, *An Empire on Display: English, Indian, and Australian Exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 186.

doing so, Cunliffe-Owen unintentionally supports performance as a trusty medium of knowledge and memory transmission capable of faithfully replaying confirmed colonial archival narratives of preindustrial, authentic craftsmanship. However, any potentially radical consequences of broadening the palate of archival evidence are foreclosed since his official status of his correspondence places the laborer again under a strict purview of colonial surveillance through information management practices to uphold the work of both archives and exhibitions of ordering and displaying objects as an extended expression of colonial power.

If Cunliffe-Owen's memo further solidifies distinctions between British spectator and "native" performer, Bengali civil servant T.N. Mukharji's rendering of the 1886 exhibit in his 1889 travelogue of a nine-month stay in London avoids drawing out clean and separable differences between colonizer and colonized. Instead, Mukharji renders the colonial imaginary as a multilateral process of collecting and organizing knowledge open to various interventions, rather than a static set of pre-established boundaries between self and other. Mukharji was an exhibition official and collector for Indian Courts dispatched to the 1886 Exhibition by the Government of India, and he did not intend to write an account of his visit until encouraged by friends on his return. To legitimize *A Visit to Europe* as an authoritative interpretation of the government's activities, N.N. Ghose, who penned the preface, takes time to detail Mukharji's research methods. Ghose's remarks likened Mukharji's travelogue to a collection of official and vernacular colonial documents, as they explain how Mukharji pieced his book together from "his memory, a few cards of invitation, catalogues and guide-books," to form a far-ranging "register of

observations and a repository of ideas.”⁴⁵⁴ As a collector himself, Mukharji could not resist the impulse to catalogue, as demonstrated through his recollection of Thomas Wardle’s lecture on Bengal silk. Unlike Cundall whose earnestly compliant tone renders his work a popular textual squawk box of colonial India records administration, Mukharji text approaches the Exhibition with faintly amused skepticism, exposing archival neutrality to be a manipulation of archival authorial voice. Mukharji lists his first stops in the Exhibition to be the Indian Court “glittering with the richest workmanship of our skilful artisans,” and the “Indian Palace” where the Indian artisans” were waiting to receive the Queen.⁴⁵⁵

His cultural affiliations notwithstanding, Mukharji’s description of the Exhibition’s events reflect the general fascination with the artisans that made them such visible figures at South Kensington, but his goal is not simply to confirm popular opinion. Instead, he uses the artisans as starting point for tackling the politics of human exhibition more generally, effectively diminishing any mythologies that these shows of the artisanal laborers were anything much more than attempts to capitalize off of the popularity of living displays of humans. Responding to the enthusiasm that the living laborers generated, Mukharji wryly observes that this fascination is not reducible to their specifically Indian qualities, but is rather indicative of a more generalized interest in human exhibition: “We were very interesting beings no doubt, so were the Zulus before us, and is the Sioux chief at the present time (1887).” His mention of the Zulus most

⁴⁵⁴ T.N. Mukharji, *A Visit to Europe* (Calcutta: W. Newman & Co., 1889), viii.

⁴⁵⁵ Mukharji, *A Visit to Europe*, 67

likely refers to Professor Farini's 1879 "Friendly Zulus" who were neither friendly nor authentic in any way, but rather another of Farini's ultra wild acts at London's Aquarium, which was a hotbed of oddities and prostitutes. His smart recourse to this more sensational history of human exhibition betrays the simultaneously specific and generalizing impulses at work in the display of living humans. Even as these displays at least nominally relied on carefully detailed scientific research to order the world's population, often the displays created interchangeable embodiments of otherness against which the cultural self could securely define itself. Mukharji's diction, his decision to employ "we" and "us" in this description, also replicates, though artificially so, the broad self-other dynamics of human exhibition. His prose nominally inserts him within the group of exhibited Indians to serve as rejoining colonial voice, but the "we" identification is more of a smart rhetorical flourish that stresses the fluidity of the colonial imaginary than it is an allegiance with the prisoners, since Mukharji was after all a civil servant and exhibition official.

Mukharji continues to capture the dynamic push-and-pull of avowal and disavowal unique to the colonial commentator of British exhibition practices, and at times, goes as far as to mimic, for potentially subversive means, the sound bites of human exhibition. Watching people watching him at one of the Exhibition's restaurants, Mukharji cleverly chalks up a British group's bold interest in him to "no symptom being visible in my external appearance of the cannibalistic tendencies of my heart, or owing probably to the notion that I must have by that time got over my partiality for human

flesh.”⁴⁵⁶ In referring to himself as a reformed cannibal, Mukharji again works in both generalities and specifics by tapping into a *longue durée* of human exhibition that makes continuous use of the cannibal figure and possibly a more recent history that witnessed the 1883-4 London appearances of the popular North Queensland Cannibals. Even if Mukharji himself was unaware of the North Queensland Cannibals, British readers of his narrative could certainly make the connections. Not to dwell on himself for too long, Mukharji then reorients youthful feminine Britishness as the source of wonder in the scene by referring to “the beauty of the party, a pretty girl of about seventeen” as “the little Curiosity.” A moment later, he recasts himself as the generalized Other on display when he assumes he will become fodder for bragging rights after the girl has “actually seen and talked to a genuine ‘Blackie.’”⁴⁵⁷ Parlaying the visual cues for reading living human displays from the exhibition space proper to its adjuncts, Mukharji’s reminiscences show the show-space to be more fluid and unstable than usually attributed, as he and the young woman trade positions of spectatorial self throughout their interaction. Instead of staying “within a precisely circumscribed part of the exhibition space” that solidifies boundaries between “wildness and civility, nature and culture,” Mukharji’s recasts exhibition as a flexible space of intercultural contact that continuously

⁴⁵⁶ Mukharji, *A Visit to Europe*, 104

⁴⁵⁷ Mukharji, *A Visit to Europe*, 105.

reorients the colonial subject's position relative to the cultural self and center of empire.⁴⁵⁸

Mukharji's travelogue as a form of colonial authorship shores up the difficulty of working with colonial archives for potentially decolonial purposes. This type of scholarship is guided by the desire to find articulations of the subaltern, but offset by the understanding that accessing these perspectives is nearly impossible through texts so enmeshed in colonial archival structures. While not outside of the workings of the colonial state, Mukharji still embodies a snag in the archival fabric as his rendering of the Exhibition fleshes out his figurative double-bodiedness. On the one hand, he cannily manipulates his position as a cultural other to levy a satirical account of the practices that make exhibition so appealing and the archetypes of otherness it generates so functional in order to question the discursive and visual machinery of exhibition. But, Mukharji is not completely innocent of the social and political attitudes he mocks, and at moments, seems wholly uncritical of links between liberalism and empire-building that inform exhibition's rhetoric of scientific, artistic, and economic achievement, as he concurs that "intelligence, education, power of organization, enterprise, and perseverance can do anything" and "a nation's best recommendation is its own works."⁴⁵⁹ If Cundall's and Cunliffe-Owens' texts were wholesale endorsements of the 1886 Exhibition that did not venture beyond the supposed authenticity of the India laborers, Mukharji's poses an

⁴⁵⁸Raymond Corbey, "Ethnographic Showcases, 1870-1930" *Cultural Anthropology* 8, no. 3 (August 1993): 344.

⁴⁵⁹Mukharji, *A Visit to Europe*, 15.

alternative: authored from a decisively unique perspective of the cosmopolitan colonial traveler, his travelogue calls into question exhibition's ability to contain the performable fictions of Indianness it produces. What his text offers is an aesthetic of indeterminacy akin to the freak show, which is capable of unleashing transgressive forms of knowledge by reorienting the authorial perspective of vernacular colonial archivist from the British spectator to the cosmopolite Bengali traveler. As a result, Mukharji presents a body both enmeshed within yet distinct within the colonial enterprise.

Discussions of production and labor at the 1886 Colonial and Indian Exhibition have been thoroughly covered by critics, but rarely has sustained attention turned to the gendered or sexual dynamics at play in these presentations. We may attribute this to the fact that the image of male artisan that dominates the 1886 Exhibition is a straightforward extension of an androcentric narrative of Indian labor already produced through official colonial records. Abigail McGowan notes that the colonial archival documents offered visual evidence of production primarily through the male artisanal body, since government monographs, studies, and censuses did not view Indian women as economic agents.⁴⁶⁰ Colonial observers were most enamored of the hereditary craftsman thought to be an embodied archive of artisanal technique passed down from father to son. Whereas the language of heredity is usually analyzed as an indicator of economic backwardness, it also instantiates a male-centered heteronormative fiction of colonial archives that poses as sexual neutrality. Cundall's catalogue carries over this archival narrative convention in his guidebook, since all of the performers exhibit a nearly interchangeable form of

⁴⁶⁰ McGowan, *Crafting the Nation*, 59.

masculinity apart from their ornamental regional styling. Illustrations of the artisans' busts outfitted in different dhosi and turbans accompany Cundall's textual descriptions of their artistic abilities and regional roots. Mimicking the figure of the artisan found in colonial gazetteers and photographic collections, Cundall's text solidifies the figure of idealized of the craftsman who, as Salomi Mathur puts it, was "homogenous, male, and aesthetically pure."⁴⁶¹

In designating the hereditary artisan as a central narrative thread in the Exhibition's colonial Indian archives, questions of gender begin to pull us toward an imperial center of the exhibition not yet mentioned: Queen Victoria. The queen's visibility signals to the general shift from the Great Exhibition of 1851 to the 1886 Colonial Indian Exhibition: whereas the former was a testament to industry and technological innovation, the latter was a naked expression empire, a paean to Britain with Queen Victoria standing in as its metonym.⁴⁶² In 1877, British prime minister Benjamin Disraeli proclaimed Queen Victoria to be the empress of India. The honorific cemented the privileged relationship between England and India, and compelled Victoria to write to the viceroy of India, Viscount Canning proclaiming her affection for India, "so bright a jewel of her crown."⁴⁶³ The figurative relationship between the crown and the

⁴⁶¹ Mathur, *India By Design*, 50.

⁴⁶² Peter H. Hoffenberg, *An Empire of Display: English, Indian, and Australian Exhibitions from the Crystal Palace to the Great War*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

⁴⁶³ Helen Rappaport, *Queen Victoria: A Biographical Companion*. (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2003), 106.

jewels cleverly encapsulates the intersection between aesthetics and imperialism that characterized Anglo-Indian relations. However much of the intercultural contact between England and the Indian male artisanal body in exhibition materials complied with a rhetorical framework based on the image of the family through which the sexual politics of colonial archives could surface. Attending the opening of the 1886 Exhibition, Mukharji observes that Queen Victoria's attitude toward the Indian artisans confirmed that the "Empress-mother takes a deep personal interest in the welfare of her Indian children."⁴⁶⁴ Mukharji's description illuminates the ways in which display both contained and made palatable marginalized colonial subjects with the title of "Empress-mother" laying bare the sexual politics of colonialism that lie on compulsory heterosexuality.

In addition to the nonfictional accounts, Queen Victoria's presence at the 1886 Exhibition inspired literary texts, the most famous being Alfred Tennyson's commemorative poem. Posthumous reception of Tennyson's poem incites interest primarily as a performed literary account of the exhibition's imperialist spirit with the material circumstances of its performance eclipsing sustained close readings of the text itself. The poem was set to music by Sir Arthur Sullivan and performed at the May 4th 1886 opening, and was printed in *The Times* the following day. It has since been part of an extended colonial archives that enter the historical record from a primarily Anglo-centric perspective, but Tennyson's imbrications of family, industrial, and imperialism hint at exhibition culture's counter-aims of inciting prolonged instances of intercultural

⁴⁶⁴ Mukharji, *A Visit to Europe*, 64.

contact that could potentially upset either unilateral or bilateral assertions of political, social, or economic might. The affective wellspring of the poem's plaintive refrain, "Britons, hold your own!" arises out of both national anxiety and pride that Tennyson explores through the conceit of the family. In recognizing the U.S.'s increasing strength, Tennyson's poem betrays an undercurrent of imperial instability in which the parental vigor is shadowed by the threat that her children may outgrow her, as "Britain fought her sons of yore—/ Britain failed."⁴⁶⁵ To quell this source of anxiety, Tennyson characterizes the ideal relationship between England and her India colonies as "the mother featured in the son," a sentiment that Mukharji's mention of the "empress-mother" and her "Indian children" in his travelogue reprises.⁴⁶⁶ This maternal moment succeeds in infantilizing the colonial male by interpolating the artisans and Queen Victoria into a relationship that faintly recalls the linear spectacle Family of Man. Even though the language of parent-child relationships was employed to support an imperialist rhetoric of acculturation and cultivation, it had the unintended consequence of destabilizing the artisans' straightforward presentations of masculinity.

The Exhibition of 1886 was caught between contradictory impulses to preserve the eclectic and dazzling array of what the empire has to offer and to create through display a relatively homogenous image of British empire.⁴⁶⁷ Tennyson begins this

⁴⁶⁵ Alfred Tennyson, "Opening of the Indian and Colonial Exhibition by the Queen, 1886," *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After, etc* (London: MacMillan & Co, 1886), 43.

⁴⁶⁶ Alfred Tennyson, "Opening of the Indian and Colonial Exhibition," 43.

⁴⁶⁷ The *Daily Programme* for the exhibition promotes a bizarre eclecticism. The illustration centers on a Roman gladiator holding laurels flanked by an Egyptian figure, a

Anglicizing process by cataloguing the British Empire's various imports, "produce of your field and flood, / Mount, and mind, and primal wood," only coalesce them into a generalized homage to Britishness: "Gifts from every British zone!" His final stanza links these far-reaching Westernizing imperatives to the family: "Britain's myriad voices call / Sons, be welded each and all / Into one imperial whole, / One with Britain, heart and soul!"⁴⁶⁸ The "myriad voices" cohering into "one life, one flag, one fleet, one Throne," maps out through poetic inscription the aggregative impulses of archives, the process of consignation that creates an "illusion of unity, or being a coordinated and ordered corpus."⁴⁶⁹ Because the rhetoric of family stands in for discourses of acculturation at the exhibition, the goal of cultivating the "Indian-children" is not to reproduce more Indian hereditary craftsmen but to reproduce reasonable facsimiles of Britishness. And in enjoining the empire's "Sons, be welded, each and all" Tennyson frames these archival impulses guiding the 1886 Exhibition through twin discourses combining of family and industry, specifically a type of industry not typically associated with the Indian artisan. Having the male laborers molded into the image of the British mother-figure rewrites the gendered dynamics of the Family of Man designed to chart evolutionary and social progress from degenerate black motherhood to civilized white fatherhood. If the Family

clay pot, guitar, lion, and kangaroo. While it is difficult to find material analogues within the actual exhibition that correspond to the figures pictured, the illustration still functions on a figurative level as an enunciation of Western empire.

⁴⁶⁸Tennyson, "Opening of the Indian and Colonial Exhibition," 43

⁴⁶⁹ Brent Harris, "The Archive, Public History, and the Essential Truth: The TRC Reading the Past." *Refiguring the Archive*, ed. Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris, Jane Taylor, Michele Pickover, Graeme Reid, and Razia Saleh (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2020), 163.

of Man spectacularizes a figurative living archive of human development, the 1886 Exhibition and its archival materials overthrow the white father as the organizational locus of colonial archival narrativity and replaces him with the white matriarch. Though his poem works within the imperialist tenor of the exhibition, it also unintentionally characterizes the exhibitions and is double-bodied archives as spaces of possibility that could discursively conjoin the male Indian artisan and British matriarch. While the exhibition was a strident expression of imperialism, Tennyson's poem also discloses how the opening proceedings were awash in sentimentalized affect, joined as they were in "heart and soul." Tennyson's lines replace the lost hereditary ties of the colonial India archives with an additive, filial network tenuously cohered through a proximal resemblance to the British female self. Inserted within the exhibition, the artisan no longer maintains his foundational presence as the archival base-text around which India's bodies of knowledge were made legible, catalogued, and ordered. Instead, he shares this position of archival narrative authority with the British matriarch with whom he enters into an extended kinship network that exceeds the hereditary bonds structuring official colonial records.

Conducting archival work with the Exhibition uncovers two overlapping archiving activities that might otherwise remain distinct, that of the colonial administrative records and the colonial vernacular archives; much like its performers, the Exhibition itself creates a double-bodied archived that highlights rather than obscures the incommensurabilities at work in the performable fictions of Indianess. Colonial bodies insert themselves into and do the work of broadening the colonial archive through literary

production — texts which have since been formalized as official collections of British colonial history in current institutional archives. A peculiar doubleness marks the bodies of the Indian subjects on display that cuts across lines of gender, sex, and race, often exceeding the archival or exhibited archetypes that give them legibility in the first place. The circulation of archival materials from colonial administrative records, to live exhibition, to vernacular colonial materials does not uphold simple bilateral arrangements of performable identity. Instead, the double-bodied quality of the colonial subject participates in discourses of dualism only to surface their potential shortcomings. Their archives, too, take on a double-bodied quality in which mutually supportive official and vernacular forms of documentation become sources of epistemological contest and experimentation. In a move that explores how various vernacular materials intersect with official records, the network of exhibition exceeds totalization, or strategically embodies it, to highlight the dynamism of expansive yet containable archival bodies.

iv. Body Two: Lalloo and Lala, the “Doubled Bodied Hindoo”

In 1880, Edward Carpenter received a gift from Liberal MP and fellow communal living proponent, Harold Cox: it was a pair of leather sandals Cox had become enamored of while working as a mathematics instructor in India. Carpenter fell under the spell of the Kashmiri sandals and soon euphemized them as cures to all of civilization’s ills—a

“gospel of salvation by sandals and sunbaths!”⁴⁷⁰ Carpenter surely recognized the radical discursive potential of the sartorial, writing of the revolutionary potentiality of the sandal⁴⁷¹: “As for the feet which have been condemned to their leathern coffins ... there is still surely a resurrection possible for them.”⁴⁷² Not simply restricted to the page, sandals soon became Carpenter’s footwear of choice alongside loose caftans and shorts typical of Indian fashion; his ascetic outfits became trademarks of “faddist sages” who embraced a wide array of life reform practices borrowed from Indian cultures, including dress reform, vegetarianism, and yoga.⁴⁷³ His very material involvements in dress reform mark him as a cross-cultural performer and dresser, a strange hybrid body of middle-class Britishness and Indian mysticism. Fellow Fabian and longtime “frenemy,” George Bernard Shaw, must have caught on to the contradictory visual cues Carpenter’s ensembles were generating when he waspishly referred to Carpenter as “that ultra-civilized imposter, the ex-Clergyman of Millthorpe” and “the ‘Noble Savage’” in a letter

⁴⁷⁰ Edward Carpenter, *Civilisation, Its Cause and Cure: And Other Essays* (London: Sonnenschein & Co, 1908).

⁴⁷¹ Carpenter also adopted sandals as a permanent wardrobe choice to protest the British Museum Reading Room’s elitist policies that barred sandal-wearers from entry. He writes: “I shall certainly take an early opportunity of visiting the Reading Room in my largest and most conspicuous sandals, and I hope other friends will do likewise.” Qtd. in Chushichi Tsuzuki, *Edward Carpenter 1844-1929: A Prophet of Human Fellowship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 115.

⁴⁷² Edward Carpenter, “Simplification of Life,” *England’s Ideal and Other Papers on Social Subjects* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, Lowrey & Co., 1887), 94.

⁴⁷³ Although Carpenter may have been a revolutionary in terms of the political purchase of clothing, he nonetheless required some help in the style department, since he insisted on wearing his sandals with thick woolen socks.

to fellow social reformer Henry Salt.⁴⁷⁴ Shaw was no doubt being snippy, but the congenial and lively group of friends all took to calling Carpenter the “Noble Savage” in honor of his love of sandals, and Carpenter did not object. Shaw’s indictments highlight how bodies and clothes come together to establish familiar gender, class, and racial codes only to dismantle them through subtle changes.

This second major portion of “Archives” complements the first by looking at some of the freak show’s most dapper intercultural performers, Lalloo and Lala who made sartorial consumption a part of their act. If the subjects of the 1886 Exhibition gestured toward double-bodiedness in more abstract ways, Lalloo and Lala become concrete examples of such as a young man and his parasitic twin. Their strange and sometimes-excessive sexuality and gender garners a lot of critical attention, but more often than not, these discussions tend to focus primarily on the body itself, subjecting Lalloo and Lala to the same colonial or medical gaze intended to be critiqued. This treatment lends a troubling inflexibility to the body on display by submitting to what Jane Desmond terms “physical foundationalism,” or the intractable notion that the body is the ultimate repository of truth.⁴⁷⁵ More broadly, previous scholarly treatments of Lalloo and Lala reveal the spatial epistemologies of the hierarchy that dictate theoretical approaches to freakery. Discussions of Victorian freakery tend to privilege medical or scientific readings of the body with a focus on anatomical or physiological abnormalities, while

⁴⁷⁴ George Bernard Shaw, *Collected Letters: 1898-1910*, ed. Dan H. Laurence (London: Max Reinhardt, 1972), 348.

⁴⁷⁵ Jane Desmond, *Staging Tourism: Bodies on Display from Waikiki to Sea World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

usually subordinating questions of freak self-styling. While such methods of reading do well to illuminate the particular popular imperial-scientific forms of knowledge that shaped late-nineteenth-century Victorian mass entertainment cultures, they also tacitly reinforce the ornamental status of aesthetics or design.

So as to move away from the physical foundationalism that inevitably accompanies discussions of freakery, I explore how Lalloo and Lala's double-bodied presentation coils together medical discourse and contemporaneous fashion fads and reforms by looking at how these discourses emerge as entwined threads across their archives. Catherine Spooner delineates two scrutinizing late-nineteenth-century ways of looking: the medical gaze that put bodies on display and fashion gaze that reflect the desire to put oneself on display.⁴⁷⁶ Rather than viewing these two as complementary, Lalloo and Lala's archives reveal them to be mutually supportive, as these ways of looking, when combined, dissolve easily parsed distinctions between official and vernacular archival documents and forms. Lalloo and Lala reveal the designing qualities of the sartorial, as they come to embody and disorder orders of gender and sexuality instated by colonial India archives. Integrating Lalloo and Lala into a broader diasporic network of sartorial design innovates on the bilateral treatment of Anglo-Indian relations that take form when focusing on the pair's anatomical conditions. To work through how these discourses come to form Lalloo and Lala's archives, I continuously work through and against the hierarchical form embodied by Lalloo, the full-grown man, and Lala, the

⁴⁷⁶ Catherine Spooner, *Fashioning Gothic Bodies*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

parasitic twin, recognizing its centrality in their performances so as to make visible the moments that undo the seeming intransigence of its logic. Operating through and against the bilateralism of the hierarchy reveals that their gendered and sexual indeterminacy arises out of medicine and fashion's peculiar archival imbrications.

Certain understated hierarchies prevail in critical freak studies in which discourses of science, medicine, anthropology, and ethnology dominate readings of freak bodies⁴⁷⁷; and for good reason, since many of these fields began to take shape as the freak show peaked in popularity, and like freakery, fueled the expansion of the British empire. For Lalloo specifically, interpretative frameworks for his presentations combined racial otherness and physical difference, which his nickname "Lalloo the Double-Bodied Hindoo" clarifies. By the late-nineteenth century, British audiences would have been aware of Southeast Asia's different religious communities, so "Hindoo" reflects Lalloo's status as a generalized ethnic other and colonial subject rather than any specific religious affiliation.⁴⁷⁸ Implicitly instating a hierarchal relationship between Lalloo and Lala and the British empire and India, Marlene Tromp reads Lalloo as a primarily an Indian

⁴⁷⁷ See Rikke Andreassen, *Human Exhibitions: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in Ethnic Displays*. (London: Routledge, 2015). ; Nadja Durbach, *Spectacle of Deformity: Freak Shows and Modern British Culture* (Berkeley: University of California, 2009).; Jane Goodall, *Performance and Evolution in the Age of Darwin: Out of the Natural Order* (New York: Routledge, 2002).; Jack Hunter, *Freak Babylon: An Illustrated History of Teratology and Freak Shows* (San Francisco: Glitter Books, 2006).; Bernard V. Lightman and Bennett Zon, eds., *Evolution and Victorian Culture*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).; Joe Kember, John Plunkett, and Jill A. Sullivan, eds., *Popular Exhibitions, Science and Showmanship, 1840-1910* (London: Routledge, 2012); Sadiah Qureshi *Peoples of Parade: Exhibition, Empire, and Anthropology in Nineteenth-Century Britain*.(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

⁴⁷⁸Some news sources claim that Lalloo was actually Muslim

exhibit, the relationship between Lalloo and his parasitic twin serving as a allegory for the colony's dependence on the metropole.⁴⁷⁹ Nadja Durbach emphasizes the medico-anatomical aspects of Lalloo's enfreakment by situating him and Lala popular within Victorian discourses of intersex and conjoined bodies. Her theoretical formulations single out different sexual associations of their act, including masturbation, incest, and child marriage. Durbach's work acknowledges the role that clothing plays in the construction of the twins' intersex presentation, but still privileges an anatomical reading of the body over other material features at work in their presentation.⁴⁸⁰ So as not to completely ignore, but rather work within to dismantle, the formal structuring of scholarship on Lalloo and Lala, I seek subvert the anatomy-costuming hierarchy to demonstrate how such an approach fashioning a different body of colonial medical archival records.

In addition to administrative archives and government-backed travelogues that made colonial bodies subjects of knowledge through different forms of labor, medical archives too became part of India's vast administrative engine that staged encounters among indigenous populations, Western medicine, and colonial imperatives. The introductory material to Hunter's 1871 imperial gazetteers included an extensive section on Public Health and Vital Statistics that borrowed its source materials from studies published in the *Indian Medical Gazette*. The goal of describing the native environmental dangers of India and later advances in sanitation was to justify British stewardship by

⁴⁷⁹ Marlene Tromp, "Empire and the Indian Freak," *Victorian Freaks: The Social Context of Freakery in Britain*, ed. Marlene Tromp (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2015).

⁴⁸⁰ Nadja Durbach, *Spectacle of Deformity*, 58.

allying their presence with improvements in health conditions of colonial body. As James Mills argues in his work on Lucknow's asylum archives, medical observations, treated as objective evidence, could diagnose, reform, and mold Indian bodies into passable British proxies, justifying colonial presences and playing into colonial fantasies of Westernization. Specifically, medical case notes prioritized information pertaining to the physical condition of patients and, in doing so, attributed undesirable psychological traits directly to physical debility.⁴⁸¹ Qualifying Mills' assertions, Poonam Bala is careful to note that Indian medical knowledges and practices were not simply extensions of British hegemony, but rather sites of contestation that elicited indigenous or subaltern responses to and subversions of colonial policies.⁴⁸² Lalloo's early life story spectacularizes these contradictory impulses by displaying official archival materials that signal both successes and failures of colonial archival productions of disciplined bodies.

Similar to archival fictions that frame queer sexuality in terms of absence, loss, or disappearance, the story of Lalloo's origins is one of displacement between subject and archives. Lalloo may have emigrated to London, but his colonial medical archives remain in India. His British impresario, M.D. Fracis, describes how he found Lalloo in an interview with the *Blackburn Standard* (1888): "I read in a Bombay paper of his being exhibited in his native country, and agreed with those in whose charge he then was to

⁴⁸¹ James Mills, "The Mad and the Past: Retrospective Diagnosis, Post-Coloniality, and Discourse Analysis," *Journal of Medical Humanities*. 21, no. 3 (December 2000): 140-158.

⁴⁸² Poonam Bala, "Introduction," *Contesting Colonial Authority: Medicine and Indigenous Responses in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century India* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2012), xvii.

take him off their hands.”⁴⁸³ The Bombay paper, which Fracis never furnishes or expands on, refers to an irretrievable primary source material now replaced by Lalloo’s performing body. This move to center embodied or performed knowledge within archives effectively undermines the privilege typically according to material forms of evidence, like textual accounts or photographs. Giving readers momentary insight into the discursive production of Lalloo, his freak show makes a spectacle of archiving by emphasizing the performing qualities of textual accounts. When asked about Lalloo’s medical examinations, Fracis replies: “Here are proofs of what I say (showing the vouchers for the examinations), and I have numerous cuttings from papers all over the country regarding the really wonderful malformation which is presented in Lalloo.” Fracis’ words suggest that the content of the textual accounts claims less importance than the act offering them to the interviewer for perusal; they are a part of the freak show’s staging as both props and gesture. Including the papers into the performance as material objects evinces awareness that medical archival discourse carried its own authority in making the colonial subject, so much so that the actual content of the papers did not really matter. The article further teases out connections between colonial archives and medical knowledge by differentiating Lalloo from earlier conjoined twin freak show acts. The interviewer incorporates Dr. T.W. Gregson’s expert testimonial declaring that he “found Lalloo nothing less than a marvel, compared to which the Two-headed Nightingale and the Siamese Twins were as nothing” along with a detailed description of

⁴⁸³ “A Relict of the fair: The Two-Headed Nightingale and the Siamese Twins “Not In It,” *Blackburn Standard*, April 14 1888.

how Lala is attached to Lalloo. Emphasizing his relatively unique status among other freaks and referring to Lalloo as a “marvel,” Gregson’s conclusions signal the failure of medical archives to contain fully their subjects through observation, even as they attempt to do so. As a result, Lalloo and Lala take on a figurative double-bodiedness that posits them to be both medical specimen and an indecipherable wonder who more accurately belongs in a *wunderkammer* rather than colonial archives.

Lalloo’s physical anomaly, the presence of his “parasitic foetus,” should not be up for debate, considering the interview not only takes care to highlight the existence of medical documentation but also interpolates direct quotations from expert medical authorities; however, Lalloo’s personal anecdotes counterpoise the medical appeals to make this body a source of indeterminacy. In these moments, physiological analyses of the conjoined body give way to and accommodate for a more flexible treatment of the body courtesy of the sartorial. When asked about his time off from performing, Lalloo speaks of his preferred activities, which include a change of clothes: “Lalloo informed us that when not on exhibition, he regularly ‘takes his walks abroad’ and is able to disguise his double personality by wearing a rather heavily draped Inverness coat.” A full-length overcoat with a loose cape and sleeves, the Inverness would have been the practical choice for Lalloo seeking to hide Lala. More than function, this garment was also a matter of fashion. The Inverness coat, both in formal and informal wear, enjoyed popularity during the 1870s and 1880s, becoming associated with fashionable “swells”

and partially responsible for “the coinage of the word ‘dude.’”⁴⁸⁴ *The Clothier and Furnisher* in its “Trends of Fashion” column later judged the Inverness coat to be a classic that could withstand the test of time⁴⁸⁵: it offered a “spruce and distinguished” look that imparted its wearers with British sensibility both modest and practical by “affording real protection.”⁴⁸⁶ The fascination Lalloo that generates through this anecdote comes courtesy of his reasonable approximation of current British sartorial elegance. Lalloo’s habit “walking abroad” in an Inverness coat covering Lala becomes an informal extension of his performances, but one that derails his formal show’s spectacularization of medical archival practices and visual-empirical models of interpreting evidence.

In this article, the source of his otherness is linked primarily to the figure he cuts as an intercultural dandy, as he defamiliarizes and renders wondrous material signs of normative Englishness. With Lala as a semi-containable outburst of limbs and fluids, Lalloo’s physical excess bodies forth the sub-currents of gendered or sexual ambiguity that followed the dandy.⁴⁸⁷ His closeness to Englishness recalls and subverts the British

⁴⁸⁴ “The Inverness Cape” *The Clothier and Furnisher* (New York: Geo. N. Lowrey, 1888), 32.

⁴⁸⁵ An 1897 gossip column in *Today* would beg to differ, complaining that the “Inverness always looked very cosy, but, as a matter of fact, was too loose a garment to be really warm. After all, there are generally very good reasons why some clothes go out of fashion quickly and some remain.” Of course, for Lalloo, the forgiving cut was precisely the key to its success. (“Club Chatter,” *The Major*, December 11 1897).

⁴⁸⁶ “The Trend of Fashion” *The Clothier and Furnisher* (New York: Geo. N. Lowrey Company, 1916), 46.

⁴⁸⁷ Seth Koven, *Slumming: Sexual and Social Politics in Victorian London* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

colonial archival function of producing desirable Indian subjects through Anglicization; instead, for Lalloo his performances of English manners and customs would emphasize his status as a “Hindoo,” an honorific in popular news reports. His bent for strolls in snappy outfits followed him to the U.S. Completely disregarding Lala, *The Daily Picayune* asks readers if they've seen "a handsome Hindoo boy walking along the street with overcoat over his left arm and carrying an elaborate cane? If you have, then you have seen the wonderful Laloo [sic], who has been rustivating in New Orleans for the past eight weeks."⁴⁸⁸ Western attire takes part in constructing a semiotics of his body pivoting on a reasonable facsimile of Britishness to produce a relatively new model of Indian masculinity. Lala, on the other hand, is reduced to a speculative residue of his formal performances, an easily hidden but still central part of his freak presentation, since the article still calls him the “wonderful” Lalloo. Lalloo’s conscious self-fashioning as a man-about-town crops up again in an 1898 article covering a dinner with Barnum and Bailey’s freak performers in which Lalloo sparkles as a raconteur despite Lala’s presence, show how medical and fashion discourse both undermine and support one another: “His malformation is too repulsive for description, but when it is hidden he appears as a handsome, ready-witted fellow.”⁴⁸⁹ In this brief description, Lalloo is a monster and the ideal gent with the source of interdeterminacy arising from his styling efforts. The attention to his clothing both as an article of subterfuge and display imparts indecipherability to what would otherwise be proof positive of physical anomaly.

⁴⁸⁸ “Truly Wonderful,” *The Daily Picayune*, February 6 1895, 3.

⁴⁸⁹ “Dining With the Freaks,” *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, April 25 1898.

Looking closely at Lalloo's participation in styling illuminates how the politics of Lalloo's freak presentation depend on fluctuations in his visual presentation that distances him from physical foundationalism.

While the image of the cosmopolitan Lalloo would dominate public reception of him in his later career, his origins were more straightforwardly exotic. Five months before the May opening of the 1886 Exhibition, a competing private venture, "India in London," debuted at Langham place. "India in London" endeavored to capitalize off of continuous interest in and existing knowledge about India, but was not terribly successful in execution since *The Era* suggested that "the interest of this spectacle and its instructive value would have been increased by a running explanatory commentary in English being made during its progress."⁴⁹⁰ *The Era's* review endeavors to make the alien qualities of the exhibition more palatable by comparing them familiar British customs, but unintentionally characterizes the exhibition space as one of uncanny intercultural confusion. For example, the reviewer likens the dance of the three Nautch girls to a "here we go round the mulberry bush" style of infantile gambols" and mentions that expected juggler would be absent because of "'the evil eye' from some European illusionist." Though short-lived and plagued with legal difficulties, "India in London" represents a much-elided intersection of exhibition and freak show cultures, which were often thought to be separate endeavors. The usual standbys such as jugglers, snake charmers, aerialists, and Nautch Dancers most likely failed to pique audience curiosity, as Lalloo, "a Phenomenon Without Parallel in the World's History," soon took top billing,

⁴⁹⁰ "India in London," *The Era*, January 16 1886.

becoming so popular that the classified ran ads looking for a personal bouncer for Lalloo's show. Unlike the rest of the performing troupe whose talents are readily discernible by their titles, advertisements for "India in London" offer little to no information about the nature of Lalloo's wondrous qualities, directing readers elsewhere: "full particulars of this wonderful Exhibition and Medical Treatise on same can be obtained" elsewhere.⁴⁹¹ Offering for perusal both an exhibition catalogue and a medical treatise, the managers of the "India in London" exhibition position Lalloo as both a part of India's fantastical landscape crafted specifically for the pleasure of British audiences and a "freak of nature" whose anomaly exceeds cultural or ethical allegiances. Like Fracis' waving of Lalloo's medical records in the abovementioned interview, "India in London's" mention of the medical treatise illuminates how the freak show nominally involved itself in medical cultural production in order to legitimize itself as an educational endeavor.

Little is known of Lalloo's work with "India in London," but one of the earliest photographs circulated of Lalloo and Lala suggest that the his show heavily borrowed from colonialist modes of visual representation. Details in Lalloo's photograph communicate the same generalizing tendencies at work in the term "Hindoo" through visual markers that attest to complex Anglo-Indian relations. In his earliest photograph, young Lalloo poses nude except for a pair of crisp white shorts that offset his skin tone to emphasize his otherness. His bare feet serve as a sign of vexed colonial relations: in 1854, and confirmed again in 1868, an order of the Governor-General in Council

⁴⁹¹ "Advertisement," *The Era*, April 24 1886.

prohibited native populations from wearing shoes in public places, such as government offices or courts. “The Great Shoe Question” transformed a once-honorable cultural practice specific to a sub-sect of the indigenous population into an exercise of colonial authority that effaced regional and cultural specificities.⁴⁹² Lalloo casually drapes his arm on a brocade chair, a prop reminiscent of drawing room respectability typical of colonial photography. This visual tableau, which exaggerates Lalloo’s status as a displaced colonial subject, directly echoes an 1888 interview with Lalloo’s impresario in which he remarks that in India “Lalloo was treated more like a savage than anything else. Since he has been with us, however, we have endeavored to improve him to the best of our ability.”⁴⁹³ Anne Hollander argues that the formal qualities of clothes—the shapes, lines, and textures—possess corresponding symbolic meaning that may change over time, as fashions inevitably do.⁴⁹⁴ This malleability destabilizes photography’s univocality by endowing the pictured clothing with potentially conflicting connotations or associations. Consequently, even though clothing might exert a disciplinary function that reduces Lalloo to an ethnographic object to reaffirm British hegemony, it also documents the translations that occur when artists, conventions, and subjects move across boundaries of East and West.

⁴⁹² K.N. Panikkar, “The ‘Great’ Shoe Question: Tradition, Legitimacy, and Power in Colonial India” *Studies in History* 14, no. 1 (April 1998): 23.

⁴⁹³ “A Relict of the fair: The Two-Headed Nightingale and the Siamese Twins “Not In It.” *Blackburn Standard*, April 14 1888.

⁴⁹⁴ Anne Hollander, *Seeing Through Clothes* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 312.

For Lalloo and Lala, the photograph's intercultural investments emerge through the styling of the parasitic twin, which unintentionally recalls Owen Jones' discourses of India art from the Great Exhibition of 1851. The only feature amiss in Lalloo's otherwise banal colonial photographs of his early is Lala whose presence defamiliarizes naturalized conventions of colonial visibility. Because of the attention to style and pose, Lala may be read as ornamentation, encapsulating the aesthetically pleasing and potentially grotesque qualities of the subject. In an early image of the pair, branching out from Lalloo's chest are a pair of arms circling upward around Lalloo's neck and a pair of legs circling downward. For their portraits, Lala's body is subject to careful styling, as Lalloo must physically guide and hold Lala's arms in place around his neck. The angle of Lala's knee mirrors the angle of the crooked elbow to impart a sense of controlled symmetry to what would normally be an unruly tangle of limbs. Trying to elicit a round softness in presentation, Lala's body lightly alludes to Jones' characterization of serpentine lines and curves in Indian ornamental art as "flowing" and "elegant," which seek to replicate contours of flower buds.⁴⁹⁵ Lala's toes serve as an extension of the baubled edging on Lalloo's shorts, both drawing the eye to the twin as well as casting her or him as an extension of Lalloo's clothing as well as the body. Lala's body styled thusly becomes an example of ornamental art "harmonious and effective" that derives from fostering "natural instincts."⁴⁹⁶ Denuded and discernibly sexless, in this image Lala functions more as an aestheticized or artistic representation of the colonial body that recalls earlier

⁴⁹⁵ Owen Jones, *The Grammar of Ornament*, 78.

⁴⁹⁶ Owen Jones, *The Grammar of Ornament*, 17.

attempts to exonerate India rather than empirical evidence of epigastric parasitism that would pathologize the colony. More broadly, the photograph represents efforts to control and stylize the gestures of the subject, a usually obscured process exposed through Lala's careful pose, which in turn lays bare the conventionality of colonial photography.

In addition to considering Lala ornamentation, Lalloo's fashion as a young man operates according to a register of radical design reform espoused by the likes of Edward Carpenter that interlocks aesthetic perfection, colonialism, and health reform popular during the late-1880s. If mentions of medical discourse so far have concentrated on the far away medical records of colonial India archives, this photograph clarifies Lalloo's intersection with bodies of alternative medical knowledges more in line with Edward Carpenter's sandal-wearing, vegetable-eating, yoga-practicing New Lifers. Lalloo in his Inverness coat could be placed within cultural conversations surrounding the politics of the well-dressed man, ones made possible by British manufacturing culture. Edward Carpenter disparages fashionable tailored coats because of their unsymmetrical internal composition comprised of "frettings and freyings of the cloth collected in little dirt-heaps ... the odd lots of miscellaneous stuff ... bits of buckram inserted here and there to make the coat 'sit' well." Carpenter goes on to claim that modern dress both "looks unwholesome and suggestive of disease."⁴⁹⁷ On the other hand, as a young teenager Lalloo's image would have resonated with contemporaneous radical dress reformers who adopted the comparatively eroticized and spare styles of India that Carpenter fetishized as nothing "beyond a narrow band between the thighs" as salubrious alternatives to mass-

⁴⁹⁷ Edward Carpenter, "The Simplification of Life, 92.

produced British clothing.⁴⁹⁸ For Carpenter, taking off clothes rather than layering them on was the key to igniting broader social, political, and economic reform, asking in 1886: “Who could be inspired under all this weight of tailordom?”⁴⁹⁹ A way to rectify these clothing, and extension social restrictions, was for men to strip to the waist, don shorts or knickerbockers, and go barefoot—much like Lalloo.⁵⁰⁰ No longer a univocal sign of colonial humiliation and domination, Lalloo’s bare feet, released from what their “leathern coffins,” become the source of radical life reform movements. Dress reform as practiced by Carpenter and his acolytes promoted physical mobility, breathability, and generally better hygiene.⁵⁰¹ Lalloo’s presentation intersects with these discourses as he was regularly labeled as a “handsome, healthy, happy Hindoo” that in the photograph is distilled through the well-formed and symmetrical pairs of legs and their matching shorts, which we can assume were pretty breathable. This bohemian style of dress also carried associations of radical sexuality and alternative configurations of gender. Carpenter viewed dress reform as both a buffet against compulsory heterosexuality and gender

⁴⁹⁸ Edward Carpenter, *From Adams Peak to Elephanta: Sketches in Ceylon and India* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co, 1892), 17.

⁴⁹⁹ Edward Carpenter, “The Simplification of Life,” 93.

⁵⁰⁰ Elizabeth Wilson, *Adorned in Dreams: Fashion in Modernity* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 216.

⁵⁰¹ Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Managing the Body: Beauty, Health, and Fitness in Britain 1880-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 224.

equality and nearly inseparable from the development of his “normal” Uranians.⁵⁰² When examined against a broader context of radical dress reform, Lallo and Lala’s photograph possibly allude to formations of gender and sexuality that exceed institutionalized heterosexuality, though their photograph offers no truly conclusive evidence of such.

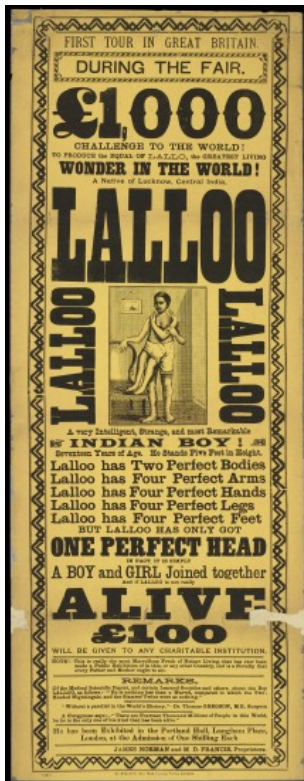
This original photograph devoid of any anchoring textual accounts may provoke but leaves questions of Lala’s sex or gender unanswered. This indeterminacy, however, proves generative since the subsequent venues in which it appeared as a photograph and illustrated reproduction may manipulate it to correspond to the accompanying textual accounts. A February 1888 article in *The British Medical Journal* reviews the case of Lalloo and includes two “woodcuts from a photograph taken two years ago”: one is the woodcut reproduction of the early photograph and the other a speculative redrawing of the source material in which Lala’s legs and hands are in repose.⁵⁰³ The report is somewhat dense and saddled with medical jargon pertaining to Lallo’s condition billed as “thoracopagus parasiticus.” However, like the interview with Fracis, the impresario, the article gestures to extant colonial medical archives at the author’s disposal that serve as a displaced interpretative framework: they comprise of a set of “notes taken from a previous report made abroad.” Mostly a dry read, the article proffers a few lurid

⁵⁰² David Goodway, *Anarchist Seeds Beneath the Snow: Left-Libertarian Thought and British Writers from William Morris to Colin Ward* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), 45.

⁵⁰³ “The Case of the Parasitic Foetus,” *The British Medical Journal*, February 25 1888, 456.

moments that disclose the author's fascination with colonial sexuality. As in the original photograph, Lala is naked and, when contextualized by the article, becomes the most explicit locus of sexuality in the image: "The anterior part of the parasite's body lies towards the autosite, and bears a well-formed penis (shown in the woodcut) surrounded by pubic hair but no testicles." *The Lancet* would corroborate these claims by adding that "the penis was capable of feeble independent erection, " allying Lala with a functional but debilitated form of masculinity.⁵⁰⁴ The comprehensive description of the twin's genitalia would suggest that Lala, in this case, is male, regardless of whether or not he conforms to biological norms of sexual development. The text may provide a straightforward description of Lala's primary and secondary sex characteristics, but the visual does not quite align with the text's promise of a glimpse of the "well-formed penis," since it is notably absent in the woodcuts. In fact, the legs seem placed with the intention of obscuring access to any unimpeachable visual signifiers of Lala's sex. The text unequivocally adjudicates Lala to be male, while woodcut remains comparatively indecipherable; the disjunction between text and visual produce an aesthetic of indeterminacy that destabilizes the freak show's strategies of narrative containment.

⁵⁰⁴ "Parasitic Foetus," *The Lancet*, February 25 1888, 371.



Wellcome Images

Fig. 5 “Laloo,” promotional poster by James Norman and M.D. Francis, 1887. L0063554 Courtesy of Wellcome Library, London

When read in relation to a handbill (fig. 5) featuring the same woodcut of Laloo and Lala’s presentation of gender and sexuality becomes even more contested. As in the interview with his impresario, the handbill includes the same excerpt from conjoined twin expert, Dr. Thomas Gregson, positing the twins to be a marvel surpassing any other known same-sex twins. While recognizable, a few small details of the image have changed. This time the background is more carefully fleshed out and includes a maritime painting on the wall, which figures as a subtle nod to the shipping routes run by private mercantile institutions and colonial administrations that made the task of collecting and distributing commodities possible. Also, Lala now wears a pair of bunched, white shorts

identical to Lalloo's that look like they have been made especially for a little parasitic twin. Perhaps an attempt to waylay the complaints of uptight viewers? The same sense of carefully constructed symmetry of the earlier photograph dominates the handbill, beginning with Lala's arms, which are crooked at perfectly equal angles to wreath Lalloo's chest. Bordering the photograph is the text "LALLOO" in block letters traversing vertically and horizontally, with the names mirroring one another. Even the chiaroscuro background in which a diagonal shadow carefully bisects the image and complies with the overall visual and textual equanimity. The symmetrical qualities of the illustration and its paratext map onto Lalloo's body, which as the text claims comprises of "Two Perfect Bodies...Four Perfect Arms ... Four Perfect Hands ... Four Perfect Legs." The only upsetting source in the handbill is the outrageous conclusion that Lalloo and Lala are a "boy and girl joined together." The move to bill Lalloo and Lala as boy and girl was no doubt an attempt to titillate, as the intersex body aroused anxieties by breaching the sacrosanct male/female binary.

The compulsion to emphasize Lalloo's and Lala's perfectly formed bodies springs from a potential anxiety that their twin-dom differed considerably from other popular conjoined twin acts. Conjoined twins were sources of both curiosity and repulsion, since they motivated people to question what constitutes the subject: are two identities, or just one? The twin act was pretty familiar on the freak show circuit and general similarities exist across different performances, each linking physical anomaly with racial and cultural otherness. Joined at the sternum, Chang and Eng (1811-1874) were the first of the modern freak show conjoined twin acts, debuting in England in 1829 as "The

Siamese Twins,” a now-recognizable term that began with them. Through their time in England and the U.S. Chang and Eng sought to prove that though they were “grown together” they truly “have improved in body and mind” and they were no different than any other men.⁵⁰⁵ They moved to North Carolina, married (different) woman, fathered their own children, ran their own plantations, and became naturalized citizens.⁵⁰⁶ Their visual presentation stages their Westernization as they debuted wearing silks and brocades meant to evoke the Orient and later cast those aside for more conservative serge three-piece suits. Millie-Christine McKoy, conjoined twins born to enslaved parents in 1851, took another route as the hyphen in their name suggests: facing away from each other and merging at the coccyx, Millie-Christine touted their “one perfect body.” Daphne Brooks persuasively argues that the twins’s status as “freaks of nature” mirrors the “curiosity” of “Blackness” wherein recently emancipated African Americans hovered between “personhood and ‘thingdom.’”⁵⁰⁷ Overlapping with Lalloo and Lala were the “Hindoo” twin sisters, Radica and Doodica Orissa, whose anomaly was popularly thought to be the result of a run-in with “the Evil One” at conception.⁵⁰⁸ Continuously described as being “in all respects like the famous Siamese Twins” and Millie-Christine,

⁵⁰⁵ “The Fashionable World,” *Freeman’s Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, May 10 1831.

⁵⁰⁶ Joseph Andrew Orser, *The Lives of Chang and Eng: Siam’s Twins in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press Chapel Hill, 2014), 9.

⁵⁰⁷ Daphne Brooks, “Fraudulent Bodies/Fraught Methodologies” *Legacy* 24, no. 2 (2007): 306-314.

⁵⁰⁸ “The Orissa Twins” *Leeds Times*, May 27 1893.

Radica and Doodica's most enduring legacy was the 1902 operation that severed the twins.⁵⁰⁹

Compared to Radica and Doodica, Lalloo and Lala are more modern since their presentation frames them as a medical anomaly instead of the product of a curse. But both show how British cultural reception of India centered on the notion that it was a backward space capable of producing malformations of the ideal, self-enclosed British subject. This belief was a fiction systematized and reproduced through colonial administrative records, such as the imperial gazetteers; in the "Public Health and Vital Statistics" portion, the authors note that "the almost universal custom of marriage at puberty implies that practically all the immature adolescents of every generation have an equal opportunity of propagating their kind" leading to "deterioration of physique, lessened resistance to disease, and possibly, some relative impairment of fertility."⁵¹⁰ Lalloo and Lala's archival materials echo this sentiment by emphasizing that their mother was barely a teenager when she gave birth. The interconnectedness of the colonial conjoined twins mirrors the language used by Hunter's biographer, an H.M. Indian civil servant, that anthropomorphized England and India through the imperial gazetteer: "The gazetteer showed how promising a field was India for British capital and the two Empires, shoulder to shoulder might defy the growing competition of Europe and

⁵⁰⁹ "By the Way," *Lincolnshire Echo*, February 1893.

⁵¹⁰ William Hunter, *Imperial Gazetteer of India. The Indian Empire Volume One: Descriptive* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), 500.

American in early every field of human industry.”⁵¹¹ Lalloo and Lala, a parasitic twin, modulate this “shoulder-to-shoulder” grammar by undoing the archival myth of British-Indian equanimity by exposing how colonial archival practices and records actually seek to render the Indian subject dependent on the colonial state.

Even as Lalloo and Lala’s anatomy does confirm a potential relationship of dependency between England and India, recurring attention to Lala’s style calls this into question by introducing a degree of discursive flexibility to her body that likewise renders her uncontainable through the documentary practices intended to contain her. Lala was a truly outrageous dresser who often traversed boundaries of gender and humanity, unlike her big brother who preferred trendier but safer fashions. Because Lalloo and Lala’s early materials steadily relied on the trope of the medical treatise, they piqued the curiosity of British medical experts and were often featured in trade journals, as the earlier discussion of *The Lancet* materials demonstrates. These medical journals were not impervious to the call of fashion and would occasionally note what Lalloo and Lala wore for their displays and hand down judgments on their fashion choices. As he spent more time in England and the U.S., Lalloo’s costumes became more ornate, which *The Lancet* distastefully deems to be “showy” and a far cry from the well-tailored white shorts of his youth. *The Lancet* also mentions that for an 1898 engagement, Lala appeared “covered with a wrapper,” or a loose fitting gown typically worn by women. Notably, this brief on the twins contains no mention of Lala’s genitalia, covered as it is

⁵¹¹ Francis Henry Skrine and William Wilson Hunter, *Life of Sir William Wilson Hunter, K.C.S.I, M.A., L.L.D, a Vice President of the Royal Asiatic Society* (London: Longman’s, Green, and Co., 1901), 303.

by the wrapper; the only allusion of the potential presence of male genitalia would be the opening sentence's request that readers consult an 1888 *Lancet* article that gives more anatomical details about the twin's body. Even if not explicitly stated, when the articles are read alongside one another, Lala's presentation instates a gendered fluidity that undoes the surety that frank discussion of genitalia attempts to provide.

In addition to playing the part of fashion police, medical texts would actually include descriptions and copies of freak show photographs, originally taken as souvenirs, to support their entries. An undated Charles Eisenmann photograph depicts Lalloo and Lala in outfits suitably matching for twins. Resembling Lalloo's fringed, velvet, brocaded, two-piece shorts suit, Lala's arms are cloaked in velvet and the bottoms in satin and lace whose billowy tailoring emphasize the twin's surprisingly curvaceous posterior. While Lala had been known to perform in women's clothing, this ensemble strikes neither a feminine or masculine chord, considering her brother is just as lavish, leaving gendered visual cues for the twin ambiguous. Responding to a similar style, *The Lancet* judges that Lala's outfit affects the appearance of "what might pass for a small football beneath [Lalloo's] showy costume," with the addition of some natty kid boots.⁵¹² Beyond gendered indeterminacy, in this description, Lala breaches boundaries between human and object as strange living football to defuse any strict hierarchal imaginaries that privilege humanity over animate or inanimate objects.

George M. Gould and Walter Pyle's *Anomalies and Curiosities of Medicine* (1896) includes a variation of this Eisenmann photograph, the only difference being that

⁵¹² "Parasitic Foetus," *The Lancet*, March 1898.

now Lalloo sports a floppy tie and looks a little older. This time Lala's outfit is more carefully tailored and matched to Lalloo's: the tightly fitting sleeves of her costume are done in the same dark velvet as Lalloo's pants and her pants are done in the same satin as the embellishments on Lalloo's sleeves. The complementarity of material and color affected by Lalloo and Lala's pose lend controlled sartorial cohesion to the photograph. Under its imperatives to offer sound medical observation, the tome explicitly characterizes Lala as possessing a "well-developed penis" and a "luxuriant growth of hair on the pubes."⁵¹³ If this description helped to contextualize Lala's sartorial presentation as specifically masculine, the following lines dispel such by nodding to the twins' careers as freak performers: "To pander to the morbid curiosity of the curious, the "Dime Museum" managers at once time shrewdly clothed the parasite in female attire, calling the two brother and sister."⁵¹⁴ Reproducing a freak show photograph for the journal signals a collapse in two usually discrete archives, medical archives and vernacular freak collections. Lalloo and Lala's entry occupies and materializes an interstice between the two that locates their presentation primarily within the freak show's aesthetic of indeterminacy. Their textual and visual accounts shore up narrative inconsistencies that reframe medical discourse as source of speculation and wonder rather than epistemological certainty. Eisenmann's photograph would show itself to have remarkable staying power, making an unexpected return nearly a century later in a 1992 issue of the

⁵¹³ George Milbry Gould and Walter L. Pyle, *Anomalies and Curiosities of Medicine*. (Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders, 1900), 193.

⁵¹⁴ Gould and Pyle, *Anomalies and Curiosities of Medicine*, 193.

phenomenally trashy tabloid *The Weekly World News* as a pitch for mail-order copy of Gould and Pyle's reissued compendium. Between the issue's coverage of Ginger the talking Border Collie and Ross Perot's meeting with space aliens, it is no small feat that Lalloo and Lala manage to command attention and that Gould and Pyle have become a touchstone of wonder rather than a serious medical text.

When in the US, medical documentation no longer becomes the primary register for making sense of Lalloo and Lala's presentation of gender, as the emphases on the sartorial begin to invert this hierarchy. British reception of the twins hinged on language of monstrosity or repulsion, which paired well with the conception that Lalloo was property of the medical domain. Like many hip, well-heeled twenty-somethings, Lalloo ended up in New York City, becoming a fixture in the city's infamous Bowery district. By the time Lalloo and Lala arrived in the U.S., medical discourse had not been completely abandoned but monstrosity was rephrased more gently as curiosity. A reason for this shift in tone is that the young U.S. did not have the same imperial relationship with India as the British Empire did, and vital to the nineteenth-century U.S.'s self-understanding was a feeling of American exceptionalism that disavowed any imperial involvements.⁵¹⁵

As Lalloo toured the U.S., he continued to sport his trademark shorts even though he ditched the ascetic aesthetic that would have readily allied him with late-1880s

⁵¹⁵ Donald E. Pease, *The New American Exceptionalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 20. This sentiment of course was a fallacy since the U.S. was embroiled in its fair share of imperial pursuits, but as a component of the cultural imaginary it explains why freakery in the U.S. tends more to the absurd or banal regionalism than in England.

socialist male dress reform. His affinity for finery reached its height in the late 1890s when, it is reported, he had been raking in nearly one thousand dollars a week for his performances. In his more restrained moments, Lalloo's suit of choice was a dapper three-piece tuxedo that gave him a more refined and restrained look than his earlier fringed numbers. Lala also trades in puffy and stuffy textiles for a more streamlined, denuded look. Lalloo's tailored suit, slicked hair, and well-groomed mustache may have emanate dan air of appealing and understated elegance but he was still a fan of glitizing himself up with accessories when the occasion called. A photograph for Barnum and Bailey's souvenir tour book for the 1898 season depicts Lalloo in his ubiquitous velvet suit: looking every inch the Indian dandy in shiny fringe and brocade, tall starched collar, impressively large cuffs and cufflinks, and glittering diamond rings, Lalloo spared no detail or expense. Lala is perfectly accessorized in a matching billowy cloud of textile that renders the arms nearly indistinguishable from legs, save for the flash of boot heels. Lalloo's looks of 1898 strike a balance between recognizable Western elegance and exoticized Indian elegance to earn him the reputation of being a fashionable urbanite with a taste for luxury, indulgence, and witty banter. Taken with his languid air and long walks in velvet suits, U.S. reception of Lalloo pegged him as a romanticized icon of the fin-de-siècle, the affluent slummer who was part of a well-to-do, usually white, pleasure seeking class traversing socio-economic and geographic boundaries in pursuit of pleasure. The 1898 Barnum and Bailey's tour book sums up his prepossessing but curiosity-inducing charms in terms of personality and appearance: "Whether it is his ready tongue, his

shining black eyes, or his famous collection of fine diamonds that dazzles his feminine admirers, Lalloo's friends have not determined."⁵¹⁶

Fond of his New Orleans ramblings, Lalloo embodies the potential for intercultural contact that comes to produce the cosmopolite slummer, moments charged both with promise and anxiety. Chad Heap characterizes slumming as a heterosocial activity in which crossing cultural and social boundaries produced new sexual and racial identities.⁵¹⁷ The young male urbanite in nineteenth-century America garnered both fascination and derision. Much like Lalloo's coat and cane mentioned in the article on his Louisiana vacationing the slummer became noticeable through his trademark "evening jacket, walking stick ... and top hat." Moreover, the slummer-swell made a show of his fashion and consumption choice by proudly displaying a particular fondness for food, drink, and smoke. While he was a likeable figure, this behavior also aroused suspicion because it countered revered traits such as "patriotic duty and oral purity," which were at a premium in post-bellum U.S.⁵¹⁸ Similarly, public reception of Lalloo's habits painted him as teetering on excess and intemperance, the carefully crafted control of earlier presentations conspicuously absent. The tangle of limbs, boots, and sateen that is Lala in the 1898 photograph visually attests to a lack of discipline on Lalloo's behalf: he

⁵¹⁶ "Lalloo, the Double Bodied Hindoo Boy," *The Wonder Book of Freaks and Animals in the Barnum & Bailey Greatest Show on Earth*. (Walter Hill & Co.: London, 1898), 7.

⁵¹⁷ Chad Heap, *Slumming: Sexual and Racial Encounters in American Nightlife, 1885-1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 2.

⁵¹⁸ J. Matthew Gallman, *Defining Duty in the Civil War: Personal Choice, Popular Culture, and the Union Home Front* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press Chapel Hill, 2015), 35.

no longer poses the twin carefully, but leaves her or him flailing off of his chest, as evidenced by the blurriness of the little boots. Suitably scandalized, the *Los Angeles Times* (1891) describes on Lalloo's profligate ways by allying him with overindulgence: "He walks about, reclines, and *smokes cigarettes inveterately*; and so great a contempt does familiarity breed that Lalloo rolls his numerous cigarettes on his sister's back."⁵¹⁹ True or not, such mistreatment of poor Lala shows Lalloo to be lacking in strong moral fiber, and judging by his predilection for lollygagging and chain smoking, he is no longer the "Healthy, Happy Hindoo."

As certain freak performers transgressed sex and gender norms, more often than not, the simple existence of human prodigies who managed to lead fulfilled erotic and sexual lives made normative gender and sexual identities seem more risqué.⁵²⁰ Even when Lala was occasionally billed as Lalloo's sister, signaling a breach in the male/female dichotomy, Lalloo was still perceived as dominantly heterosexual. Although, conjectures of his excessive fondness, a perhaps uncontainable desire, shadow reports of his love life, positioning him as a source of juicy gossip: "Lalloo seems to possess a great attraction for the fair sex."⁵²¹ While Lalloo was not explicitly linked to queer sexuality, other than his literal attachment to Lala, his image circulated during a

⁵¹⁹ *Los Angeles Times*, October 14 1891

⁵²⁰ Francesca Canade Sautman, "'Fair Is Not Fair': Queer Possibility and Fairground Performers in Western Europe and the United States, 1870-1935," *Comparatively Queer: Interrogating Identities Across Time and Cultures*, ed. William J Spurlin, Jarrod Hayes, and Margaret R. Higonnet (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 91–121.

⁵²¹ "Lalloo, the Double Bodied Hindoo Boy" *The Wonder Book of Freaks and Animals in the Barnum & Bailey Greatest Show on Earth* (Walter Hill & Co.: London, 1898), 7.

specific cultural moment in which photography and the camera were actively defining visual typologies of sexuality. Daniel Novak argues that during the 1890s Oscar Wilde's photographs functioned similarly to Galton's eugenic composites: his images formed an abstracted and "spectral queer body," as well as a "precise image" of homosexual acts. That is, queerness was made decipherable through a specific image, yet one that was eminently reproducible. The composite nature of photographic sexuality will be picked up greater length in the next chapter on strongman Eugen Sandow's copyrighted photographs based on Greco-Roman sculpture. Wilde and Lalloo never crossed paths, but both were similarly identified with aesthetic discourses through dress and fashion. Through his American tour, Wilde became visually synonymous with a dandified look and mannerisms that boasted long wavy hair, velvet suits, and languid, melodic speech patterns,⁵²² and these attributes took on connotations of abstracted queer sexuality as his image continued to circulate. In 1891, the *Morning Oregonian* reports that Lalloo attended dinner with his fellow freak performers wearing both a "velvet suit and languid air."⁵²³ The brief description imparts Lalloo with an effete fashion sensibility and world-weary attitude that would have resonated with readers and spectators as the Wildean dandy. Consequently, Lalloo enters into and participates in a set of image-making practices allied to queer sexuality, whether explicitly or implicitly. In the process of

⁵²² Pierpaolo Martino, "The Wilde Legacy: Performing Wilde's Paradigm in the Twenty-First Century," *Wilde's Wiles: Studies of the Influence on Oscar Wilde and his Enduring Influences in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Annette M. Magid. (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing), 143.

⁵²³ "A Circus Cook-Tent," *Morning Oregonian*, July 21 1895.

doing so, Lalloo defamiliarizes and renders as fabrications the naturalized, usually white, racial dimensions of the dandy body.

Lalloo may have loved the ladies, but the ways that his body constructed and performed this desire were not always heteronormative, thanks to Lala. Nadja Durbach claims that the conjoined-twin-intersex-body act shored up anxieties pertaining to incest. Her analysis of Lalloo and Lala's photographed bodies locates their sexual undercurrents, interpreting Lala's arms as an "amorous embrace, a gesture that would have excited consternation"⁵²⁴ During the 1880s and 1890s, incest and pedophilia were increasingly identified as social and health problems that focused specifically on the victimized female child, as evidence by the formation of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (1884) and W.T. Stead's 1885 exposé on prostitution, "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon." An 1891 "Wit and Wisdom" column includes the bon mot "'Sticks closer than a brother,' Lalloo's sister."⁵²⁵ While this little tidbit directly satirizes a well-known biblical proverb extolling the benefits of well-chosen friends, it also accurately zeroes in on how their physical closeness inspires speculation about the depth of their affiliation. Intentionally or not, the witticism implies that Lalloo and Lala, through their physical proximity, overstep boundaries of respectable sibling affiliation and enter into a strangely intimate relationship that exceeds discursive discernment. That they are from India would heighten the possibility of sexual excess since their body could be interpreted according to colonialist discourses of perverse sexuality that held currency

⁵²⁴ Durbach, *Spectacle of Deformity*, 85.

⁵²⁵ "Wit and Wisdom," *Daily Evening Bulletin*, October 10 1891.

during the late-century.⁵²⁶ The imperial gazetteers routinely mention that Indian subjects participate in endogamous marriages; while this relates to perpetuating the caste system, Lalloo and Lala, especially as an under-developed body, become grotesque versions of this custom foreign to British and U.S. audiences.

Lest “closer than a brother” communicate too troubling of a physical connection between the siblings, the *Los Angeles Times* (1900) rectifies any potential trespasses in the name of love and marriage that return us to the medical document. In what reads simultaneously as an engagement announcement and an obituary, the *Times* reports that Lalloo will undergo a procedure to remove surgically Lala so that he can marry the daughter of wealthy Philadelphian lawyer.⁵²⁷ In early photographs, the posing of Lala betrays enough aesthetic craftsmanship that her lines and curves corresponded closely to Owen Jones’ writings on ornament. The *Times* likewise positions her as ornament, but in such a way that diminishes her subjectivity as an integral part of the “Double-Bodied Hindoo” act. James Trilling defines ornament as a feature “separable from the functional shape of the object,” which “remains structurally intact, and recognizable,” even if the ornament is imagined away.⁵²⁸ Lalloo’s sources of wonder, at least in his young paramour’s eyes, were his “unusual accomplishments,” “handsome countenance and cultured

⁵²⁶ Durbach, *Spectacle of Deformity*, 88.

⁵²⁷ This was either a cheap ploy to drum up interest in Lalloo or memento of a failed courtship, since he never went through with the surgery and died in 1905 in Aguadulces, Mexico

⁵²⁸ James Trilling, *Ornament: A Modern Perspective* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 1.

manners of the East Indian,” still rooted in his status as a colonial subject but through an honorific lens. On the other hand, Lala is reduced to ornament, a removable feature, or “deformity,” of Lalloo’s overall physical appearance, “if his sister may be so styled.”⁵²⁹ The brief addendum to the Lala’s diagnosis as a “deformity” muses on the process of linguistic styling to illuminate that the medical operates primarily as a mode of discourse. Little sister’s presence intimates that there is something excessively queer about Lalloo, even though he is “smitten” with his bride-to-be; considered an “obstacle which blocks his path to connubial bliss,” Lala bars Lalloo from participating fully in socio-cultural benchmarks of heteronormativity like marriage. Lala’s absence may not affect Lalloo’s charm and manners, and even his Indianness, since he will possess all of these qualities whether or not she is attached to him. But in this last moment, just before Lalloo is to be married and just as Lalloo and Lala should solidify into hierarchy that suborns her to the fully developed male body, Lala briefly upsets this arrangement. The protean little twin, the ornament, is necessary part of the double body and their freak presentation.

“Archives” has explored the peculiar form of the double body, in performance, archives, and research methods. In each major section, archiving has destabilized, if not abolished, distinctions between forms of supposedly enduring and unchanging archival memory, and ephemeral and unsteady repertoires of embodied knowledge. Beginning with the 1886 Exhibition, questions of gender and sexuality have loomed large, if silently so, as the hereditary artisan both highlights and defamiliarizes the politics of compulsory heterosexuality underwriting colonial India archives. Lalloo and Lala are the most

⁵²⁹ “To Be Made Normal: Lalloo, The Freak, Will Be Operated On,” *The Los Angeles Times*, February 27 1900, 114.

specific and literal case of a queer archival promise made visible through enfreakment. The challenge then is to move discussions of them beyond on the body as a repository of truth while still remaining attentive to the material conditions of their performance. In addition to allegorizing the relationship between the metropole and the colonies or embodying anxieties related to sexual transgression, Lalloo and Lala also sensationalize methodologies of archival work that privilege the persistence of “official” historical narratives or archival materials over ephemera. But is it precisely the ephemeral, the incidental and marginalized forms of evidence, of Lalloo and Lala’s freak show that visualize the presence of the queer colonial subject within archives. Lala may be an additive creature, but her presence makes known what Michael Warner calls a “blueprint” for a queer revolt against normalcy ground within a historically specific political and social moment. Lala makes clear the ways that sexuality is intimately connected with consumption and desire, family and reproduction, national and racial fantasies, and intimate lives and public display.⁵³⁰ Certainly, Lalloo and Lala’s queer experience is rooted in the body, but more importantly, it is mediated by the social. Turning an eye to design in terms of production and consumption, which may be one of the strongest articulations of the ephemeral, allows us to envision more nuanced and enhanced queer possibilities, while providing for an intersectional approach to sexuality, race, and ethnicity. Taken together, these case studies attest to the multiple, changing, and sometimes conflicting, queer possibilities of colonial archives made visible through the freak show.

⁵³⁰ Michael Warner, *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1993), xiii.

Entr'acte: The Cockettes' Handcrafted Archives



Fig. 6 photo spread for *Paris Match* article “Californie C’est La Folie.” 1971. Box 3 Folder 3. Kreemah Ritz Papers. GLC 79. James C. Hormel Gay and Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library.

In December 1969 the Cockettes debuted at the Nocturnal Dream Shows, twice-weekly midnight movie screenings at North Beach’s Palace Theater in San Francisco, California. With the help of some acid hits, the Cockettes conjured never-before-seen visions in their opulent third-hand drag that signaled a form of excess linked to thrift rather than wealth (fig. 6), as the “dirty dozen” stomped out a can-can to the Rolling Stones’ “Honky Tonk Woman” in vintage 1930’s dresses refurbished with extra feathers, glitter, sequins, fur, velvet, and tulle.⁵³¹ Instead of sophisticated performances of femininity, the Cockettes’ drag obliterated gender binaries by coordinating their outrageous attire with tinsel beards and glittered cocks. The troupe was the brainchild

⁵³¹Julia Bryan-Wilson, “Handmade Genders: Queer Costuming in San Francisco Circa 1970,” *West of Center: Art and the Counterculture Experiment in America, 1965-1977*, ed. Adam Lerner and Elissa Arthur (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2011), 77-91.

of Hibiscus (George Harris), a member of the ascetic Kaliflower commune committed to distributing free food and art, who soon ditched the “plaid shirts” of Kaliflower for the “sequins” of the Cockettes.⁵³² Coming into being as the psychedelia of 1960’s San Francisco merged with increasingly militant gay liberation movements of the 1970’s, the Cockettes theatricalized anticapitalist and anti-heteropatriarchal politics on and offstage. In attempting to define the Cockettes’ sexual politics, Scrumbly (Richard Koldewyn) concedes, “We were freaks. No one thought much of gender. Gender? Gender confusion!”⁵³³

Queer historiography employs sensory tropes to index absences in institutional archives: we write of queerness’s invisibilities or silences to indicate our awareness that the histories we work with are incomplete. This reliance on the sensorium arises out of empiricist research methods founded on the visual immediacy of whole, self-evident bodies of documentation. The Cockettes earn repeated mentions in critical histories of queer performance and American counterculture but with the caution that gaps and inaccuracies punctuate their story. Public institutions have recently begun to acquire Cockettes materials, but the process of their institutional recognition is still ongoing. As late as 2003, the *New York Times* remarks that “Hibiscus is high-kicking and belting his

⁵³² Sauer, Ralph, Interview with David Weissman Weber and Bill Weber, *The Cockettes*, 2002.

⁵³³ Koldewyn, Richard (“Scrumbly,”) Interview with David Weissman and Bill Weber, *The Cockettes*, 2002.

way out of the margins of gay ephemera.”⁵³⁴ The status of the Cockettes’ archival body relative to institutional archives then is one of almost absence or silence symptomatic of the precarity of the Cockettes’ cultural moment when HIV/AIDS and drug overdoses would silence gender and sexual experimentation and expression. The work of the institutional archivist in processing documents typically signals the birth of a formal collection, but as the previous section “Archives” demonstrates, the “doubled-bodied” archive resists hard-and-fast creation narratives, as expansive yet and material stores of knowledge that sustain prolonged interplay between institutional and vernacular archives. This critical interlude before my dissertation’s final section on “Archiving” pushes further on the dynamism implicit in the figure of the “double-bodied” archive by examining potentially collaborative archival practices between the San Francisco Public Library’s team of archivists and the artist-archivists of the Cockettes that linger in Cockettes’ “intimate” archives, which are “collections of private and, in some cases, highly personal papers that have found their way into public collections.”⁵³⁵

However, these traces of collaborative archival practice are not so easily located by the eye. As a result, such processes of radical recovery require the researcher to reassess the relationship between the archival body and the sensorium, and sound studies provides an underused but vital theoretical framework for accessing queer performance

⁵³⁴Horatio Silva, “Guilty Pleasures,” *Fashions of the Times*. *New York Times* (Fall 2003), Box 1 Folder 53. Kreemah Ritz Papers. (GLC 79) Gay and Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library.

⁵³⁵Maryanne Dever, Ann Vickery, and Sally Newman, *The Intimate Archive: Journeys through Private Papers* (Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2009), 3.

archives. To examine the possibilities and limitations ingrained in acts of queer archival recovery conducted within institutional settings, I analyze what I call the sonic materiality of two intimate archives: the Peter Mintun Cockettes Collection and the Kreemah Ritz Papers at San Francisco Public Library. Sonic materiality addresses how close reading the material condition of documents heightens the researcher's receptivity to embedded traces of past sounds, rendering the documents capable of transmitting queer histories otherwise lost through archival research methods centering on visual empiricism. This practice works at the borders of sound, visual, performance, and material studies with two aims: to demonstrate how sound studies enhances the materiality of print media, and to activate an integrative, multisensory approach to archival research in which cultural memory is passed on through speculative, multilayered forms of materiality. Resisting dominant narratives of the whole, synced archival body and the silencing imperatives of institutional accessioning, reading the sonic materiality of these collections alongside one another reveals archival remixes wherein persisting traces of the informal artist-archivists cut up and through the meanings that the documents and their archives generate. Sonic materiality reveals unexpected collaborations among artists, archivists, and researchers to make possible new models of documentation and archiving that more fully account for the presence of queer histories within institutional spaces.

During the Cockettes' 1969-1972 heyday, various subcultures, unsatisfied with mass cultural complacency, struggled to articulate their positions relative to mainstream culture. Now-recognizable counterculture bywords such as "Hippie," "Freak," or

“Glam,” had not necessarily been codified into archetypes that carried unassailable behavioral or visual associations. This unsteadiness betrays itself in attempts to distill the Cockettes’ *esprit*, which has resulted in delightfully strange lexical morasses such as a “hippie-glitter-drag-genderfuck performance troupe,”⁵³⁶ “equal parts Aubrey Beardsley drawings and Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis*,”⁵³⁷ and “transvestite-glitter-fairie-theatric masques.”⁵³⁸ Their love of freewheeling love, Eastern mysticism, and hallucinogens paired well with the period’s Flower Child archetypes. But by the early 1970s, Haight-Ashbury started sweeping up the Summer of Love’s straggling leftovers and the city’s younger, more politically astute and well-educated populations began to disidentify with these hippies. Though drag was a source of contention, seen as radical and regressive within San Francisco’s gay activist movement, the Cockettes’ binary-stymieing genderfucking nonetheless articulated surrealistic queer camp sensibilities. Through their guerrilla avant-gardism, they found forebears in Dada, the Situationists, and New York’s the Living Theatre. And through their queer theatricality they struck loose affiliations with John Vaccaro and Charles Ludlum’s Theater of the Ridiculous, whose re-workings of pop cultural narratives eschewed specific political agendas in favor of carving out a “queer space” capable of imagining a future better than the present.⁵³⁹ Beyond

536 Joshua Gamson. “Sylvester,” *Camera Obscura* 65. 22, no. 2 (2007): 140.

537 Julia Bryan-Wilson, “Handmade Genders,” 82.

538 Tim Lawrence, *Hold On to Your Dreams: Arthur Russell and the Downtown Music Scene, 1973-1992* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 39.

539 Kelly Aliano, “A Ridiculous Space: Considering the Historiography of the Theatre of the Ridiculous,” *Theatre/Performance Historiography: Time, Space, Matter*, ed. Rosemarie K. Bank and Michal Kobialka (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 51.

experimental theater, the Cockettes and their junk glamour style linked them to the “Freak Scene” peopled by Alice Cooper, the Stooges and Captain Beefheart⁵⁴⁰ who dragged in aggressive opposition to Hippies and other unhip individuals, resonances of which carried into glam rock and punk.⁵⁴¹ Efforts to define the Cockettes’ style inspires a lot of baroque description, as they slip through different recognizable aesthetic and artistic categories without quite fitting into any of them. Early on, even through their performances, the Cockettes and their unique queer sensibility vexed the broad strokes ordering and taxonomizing impulses of archives.

Beyond their commitments to free theater, the Cockettes did not necessarily consider their performances to be political even though countercultural news outlets singled them out as radical firebrands. Bemoaning the apathetic disintegration of the Gay Liberation in the face of police violence, the *Gay Sunshine* printed as its January 25th 1971 cover photograph, Cockette/Angel of Light Tahara, hair bedecked with flowers and face painted with music notes, handcuffed by one of the police officers who aggressively stopped an impromptu performance at Grace Cathedral. The acid-freak drag theatrics at midnight mass were deemed such “a complete mind fuck” (in a good way) that the

540 Some Freak Scene gossip circulates around an ill-fated encounter between Captain Beefheart and the Cockettes in which the two were supposed to co-headline a show at the Berkeley Community Theatre. Staging a mock orgy to welcome Beefheart proved to be a misguided idea, since the Captain promptly ditched the group at the either first sign of some steamy theatrics or Cockette Daniel Ware’s invitation to join the fun. (see Pam Tent, *Midnight at the Palace*, 100).

541 Benjamin Shepard, “Play as World-making: From the Cockettes to the Germs, Gay Liberation to DIY Community Building,” *The Hidden 1970’s: Histories of Radicalism*, ed. Dan Berger (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 177-195.

Cockettes' queer aesthetic became a series of informal and inchoate political acts designed to threaten normative orders of gender, sexuality, and kinship.⁵⁴² The archival bodies left behind by the Cockettes carry on their unintentionally radical political work by motivating researchers who work with their collections to reconceptualize the communicative capacities of documentation to locate evidence of the looks and sounds of queer archival performances.

The Cockettes performed during a cultural moment when civil rights, anti-Vietnam, and Black Power movements participated in highly visible political and social protests, and this unrest seeped into the academy with the events of the late-1960's prompting alternative historiographies. Focus on history "from below" in areas of gender, race, and ethnicity demanded sources not found in the holdings of traditional university special collections, decisively splitting open the incipient divide between researchers and archivists in terms of perceived needs and shared languages to address marginalized historical experiences.⁵⁴³ No longer neutral repositories, archives were ground zero for registering changes to social, political, and cultural orders. As discussed already, since their nineteenth-century inception, traditional archival arrangement practices have carried implicitly heteronormative foundations in need of critical examination. The core principle of archival arrangement, *respect des fonds*, dedicates itself to build self-contained and separable bodies of documents seen as organic

542 Sister Cocaine, "Vatican Rags at Grace Cathedral," *Gay Sunshine* 5, January 25 1971.

543 Francis X. Blouin Jr. and William G. Rosenberg, *Processing the Past: Contesting Authority in History and the Archives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 76-8.

extensions of their individual or family of creators, which even now are viewed as conceptually whole and fixed.⁵⁴⁴ Carried by the language of the “family” or the “creator” as the standardizing authority meant to counteract idiosyncratic subject-based arrangement practices, *fonds*-based arrangements privilege the “singular creator of records,” rather than co-creators, when authenticating archival bodies. This perpetuates a generational model of archival production at odds with queer archiving, which often relies on agglomerative bottom-up practices.⁵⁴⁵ This organismal-family trope proved so amenable to archival theory that mid-twentieth-century records keeping practices instituted the “life cycle model” built on language of procreative sexuality wherein records moved through inevitable periods of “gestation,” “creation,” and “active life,” before their figurative death.⁵⁴⁶ Current queer archival perspectives rebut suppositions of whole archive bodies and their linear shelf lives by stressing archives’ incomplete qualities and tracking sexuality through tropes of recursivity, deterioration, detritus, seriality, and randomness.⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴⁴ Terry Cook, “The Concept of Archival Fonds and the Post-Custodial Era: Theory, Problems and Solutions,” *Archivaria* 35 (Spring 1993): 24–37.

⁵⁴⁵ The Archival Education and Research Institute (AERI), Pluralizing the Archival Curriculum Group (PACG), “Educating for the Archival Multiverse,” *The American Archivist* 74 (Spring 2011): 85.

⁵⁴⁶ Caroline Williams, *Managing Archives: Foundations, Principles, and Practice* (Oxford: Chandos Publishing, 2006), 12.

⁵⁴⁷ See Anjali Arondekar, *For the Record: On Sexuality and the Colonial Archiv.* (Durham: Duke University Press 2009.); Lisa Darms, “The Archival Object: A Memoir of Disintegration.” *Archivaria* 67 (Spring 2009).; Robb Hernández, “Drawn from the Scraps” *Radical History Review*. 2015, no. 122 (2015): 70-88; J Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (New York: New York

The interest in the narrative techniques of archives extends into both archival studies and humanities responses to traditional forms of documentation. Working with archival documents of performance requires rethinking notions of agency, content, and structure as they pertain to the traditional document, usually defined in terms of wholeness and fixity. Traditionally conceived, documents as “any written or printed work” possess unchanging content, context, and structure, although the dynamism attributed to electronic or digital documents represent shifts in these expectations.⁵⁴⁸ David Levy implicitly questions the fixity of the traditional document in asking: “What are documents? They are, quite simply, talking things. They are bits of the material world – clay, stone, animal skin, plant fiber, sand – that we've imbued with the ability to speak.”⁵⁴⁹ Gesturing to the expanded sensory promises of documents, Levy’s image of the talking scrap is helpful for locating Cockettes’ signature sound through archival materials. Echoing their drag’s psychedelic twist on faded Hollywood glamour, their vocal sendups of movie musicals were at once recognizable and alien, musical and noisy. Their inimitable sound was key to the Cockettes’ drag aesthetic that *Rolling Stone* columnist Ed McCormack described as “shrieking, laughing, and carry on like crazy in a grand camp goon-up,” though discussions of such are often sidelined by repeated focus

University Press, 2005); José Muñoz, “Ephemera as Evidence: Introductory Notes to Queer Acts,” *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory*. 8, no. 2 (2009): 5-16.

⁵⁴⁸ Richard Pearce Moss, “Document,” *Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005), 126.

⁵⁴⁹ David Levy, *Scrolling Forward: Making Sense of Documents in the Digital Age* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2001).

on the visual.⁵⁵⁰ Stressing a radical sense of fluidity, Jones, Abbott, and Ross reframe the archival document of performance as “as a score or formula to be reinterpreted,” since we can never exactly replicate the atmosphere or experience of the live performance.⁵⁵¹

Taking seriously the figure of the document as a mutable “score,” I look to sound studies for a theoretical framework to demonstrate how queer historiography works at the boundaries at of sound and vision, ephemerality and materiality within institutional archival repositories.

For the Cockettes, drag was a foundational and multilayered medium, as Cockette Fayette explains: “We communicate through drag.”⁵⁵² While reminiscences of heavy drug use primarily prompted Fayette’s comments, her statement also addresses how in the absence of language or vocal utterance sound potentially takes on material dimensions, or at least, how sound and materiality enhance one another. The relationship between sound and materiality has long occupied sound studies, as scholars have recurrently demonstrated how architecture, acoustics, and the materiality of objects shaped sonic vibrations or textures.⁵⁵³ Currently cultural studies has begun to emphasize

⁵⁵⁰ Ed McCormack, “No No Cockettes!” *Changes* (15 December 1971). Box 3 Folder 2. Coll GLC 79 Kreemah Ritz Papers, James C. Hormel Gay & Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library

⁵⁵¹ Sarah Jones, Daisy Abbott, Seamus Ross, “Redefining the Performing Arts Archive.” *Archival Science* 9 (2009): 165-171.

⁵⁵² Hauser, Fayette. Interview with David Weissman and Bill Weber, *The Cockettes*, 2002.

⁵⁵³ see Barry Blesser and Linda-Ruth Salter, *Spaces Speak, Are You Listening? Experiencing Aural Architecture*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007.); Emily Ann Thompson,

the aural dimension of history, seeking to redress critical gaps produced by an over-reliance on visual paradigms and arguing that sound has influenced visual and textual production and contributed to establishing social and cultural orders.⁵⁵⁴ Building on Fred Moten’s writings on the visible musics of the photograph in which looking “opens onto an unheard sound,”⁵⁵⁵ Tina Campt uses sound studies in her discussion of Anglo-Caribbean diasporic archives by reading photographic images as music to emphasize the affective uniqueness and generic conventions of vernacular photographic archives.⁵⁵⁶

As Christoph Cox contends that we should study sound’s place within the material world through the “powers, forces, intensities, and becomings of which it is composed,” I locate this suturing of dynamic sound and the material within archives to increase the specificity of its implications pertaining to the goals and methods of archival

The Soundscape of Modernity: Architectural Acoustics and the Culture of Listening in America, 1900-1933 (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2004).

⁵⁵⁴ see Aimée Boutin, *City of Noise: Sound and Nineteenth-Century Paris* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015).; John Picker, *Victorian Soundscapes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).; Douglas Kahn *Noise, Water, Meat: A History of Sound in the Arts* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1999).; Richard Cullen Rath, *How Early America Sounded* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).; Brandon Labelle, *Acoustic Territories. Sound Culture and Everyday Life* (London: Continuum, 2010).; Mark Michael Smith. *Listening to Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

⁵⁵⁵ Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 198.

⁵⁵⁶ Tina Campt, *Image Matters: Archive, Photography, and African Diaspora in Europe* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012).

research, which are inarguably under-theorized.⁵⁵⁷ If archival repositories do buzz with stories “waiting for us to “hear them,”⁵⁵⁸ a process of critical archival research takes shape when the researcher attends to how these stories emerge through sonic materiality’s invited interplay of sounds, images, and materials. Instead of treating these as separable components, I posit the documents take on intermediated qualities in which sound, image, text, and materiality braid together and riff off of one another. This allows us to traverse boundaries of sound, visual, and material studies to expand on the sensory capacities of documents while remaining aware of how institutional and vernacular archiving practices negotiate our understandings of them. Sonic materiality offers a way of working within the narrative-making imperatives of institutional archival arrangement and description— the practices that give “a shape, a pattern, a closure” to archives— without losing the “uniqueness” and “chaotic open-endedness” of the Cockettes’ documents and vernacular archiving practices, to lend to the documents an improvisatory character.⁵⁵⁹

Entertaining what *could* be in a document through sonic materiality potentially subverts hierarchies of evidence that privilege what is directly observable over the more flexible and subjective experiences of how or what the researcher feels, which are often disregarded but nonetheless vital to archival research. Even during the nineteenth-

557Christoph Cox, “Beyond Representation and Signification: Toward a Sonic Materialism.” *Journal of Visual Culture* 10, no. 2 (2011): 155.

558Richard J. Co, *Personal Archives and a New Archival Calling: Readings, Reflections, and Ruminations* (Duluth: Litwin Books, 2008), 54.

559Duff and Harris, “Stories and Names,” 276.

century advent of modern archives-based historiography that modeled itself on scientific materialist intellectual frameworks, feelings still guided research protocol. Nineteenth-century German historian Leopold von Ranke viewed archival research as a mode of passionate and ecstatic transport where one could absorb "everything close to [their] heart" into "[their] being." This affective incorporation of others into oneself mediated through the material document makes for a pretty heady experience in the archives that resonates strongly with the Cockettes' inclusive approach to sex. Yet even as we as researchers are seduced into archives, we are nonetheless held at a distance and only able to take in these documents as "far as our power will enable us." Equally forthcoming and withholding, sonic materiality especially exemplifies this push-and-pull between intimate archives and researcher in which we are drawn to their promised revelations and "particular inwardness"⁵⁶⁰ but with the distinct awareness that we are still missing or losing something. Insisting on unformed potentialities reverberating through the verifiable material condition of documents, sonic materiality addresses possibilities and limitations of recovering queer performance through archival research.

i. The Peter Mintun Cockettes Collection: San Francisco Public Library

Standing out among Cockettes legends is Hibiscus's performance of Irving Berlin's "Heat Wave" from Golden Gate Park's treetops—one that roused Sweet Pam out of her afternoon nap and beckoned her to join the Cockettes. Live Cockettes shows were

⁵⁶⁰Hermione Lee, *Virginia Wolfe's Nose: Notes on Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 2.

devilish burlesques of Golden Age musicals, infamous for their anything-goes antics. Offering some structure to these chaotic affairs was piano wunderkind, Peter Mintun, who acts as the Cockettes' accompanist for many of their early 1970's performances. Cockette John Rothermel recruited Mintun, who had distinguished himself as a society pianist for his 1920's-1930's repertoire. Mintun accompanied the Cockettes until October 1972 when he played his last show with the troupe at the Vice Palace. A back-alley photograph of Mintun, debonair in suit and Rothermel, shimmering in flapper dresses, captures the intoxicatingly queer sensibilities of the Cockettes' take on this interwar musical culture. An avid collector with an archivist's bent for preserving past, Mintun kept orderly and carefully detailed Cockettes-related photographs and ephemera. And as a pianist with a performer's bent for re-enlivening the past, Mintun himself was a living archive of retro culture transplanted to 1960's San Francisco through his "Club Mandarin" project, which recreated a 1930's jazz club at the Upper Market Street Gallery. Mintun donated his Cockettes collection to the James C. Hormel Gay & Lesbian Center at the San Francisco Public Library on September 1st 2012, and it was processed the same year. The collection contains photographs, flyers, show sequence sheets, and published articles on the Cockettes, as well as ephemera from his 1920's commune. Reflecting his professional and personal relationships, the Cockettes-related materials especially focus on Rothermel and Sylvester.

The sonic materiality of Mintun's collection provides the foundational soundscape of Cockettes' archival body with his documents reprising the sounds of the Cockettes' treasured interwar American standards. Traces of Mintun's role as artist-

archivist endure through his archiving of the Cockettes' interwar musical influences to grant the researcher access both to the professional and intimate communal networks of the Cockettes' vernacular archives. Like the rational and systematic nature of music, Mintun's documenting of the Cockettes' live performances is methodical and orderly, but his practices do not offer an exhaustive or complete archival score. Rather, the documents in Mintun's Cockettes Collection function like the musical standards beloved by Mintun and the Cockettes, as compositions meant to be re-performed and open to further recontextualizations by artists, archivists, and researchers. The improvisational and collaborative features of Mintun's musical archiving practices emanating from these documents help to establish a queer ethics of community archiving fueled not only by professional but also personal ties. With its informal archival practices still legible within institutional archives, Mintun's collection commemorates a model of archiving working from the "ground-up"⁵⁶¹ that still persists even though institutional accessioning.

Mintun's collection of visual ephemera opens with a pentptych by artist Todd Trexler who was commissioned to design posters for the Nocturnal Dream Shows and Cockettes performances. Inspired by the line drawings of Aubrey Beardsley and 1930's Art Deco style, Trexler's illustrations visually encapsulate the retro musicality of Mintun's collection through pointillist drawings featuring identical copies of Mintun, longhaired and tuxedoed, fading into a series of piano keys. The presence of the piano imparts a ghostly sonic texture to the illustration to emphasize how Mintun's engagement

⁵⁶¹Alana Kumbier, *Ephemeral Material: Queering the Archive* (Sacramento: Litwin Books, 2014), 125.

with American interwar culture is mediated primarily through music, specifically the sound of his preferred Steinway pianos. Each panel includes a photograph of a vintage curio, presumably from Mintun's personal collection: a watch, car, camera, refrigerator, and piano. The last panel showcases a cut-up photograph of hands playing a piano pasted onto an advertisement for the midnight movie *Fatty's Seaside Lovers: Fatty Arbuckle in Drag*, creating a small collage. The material and spatial manipulations of text and photographic image enacts a 1970's San Francisco sonic remixing of Mintun's 1920's sound in which the sounds of jazz piano, queer sex, and underground art promiscuously mingle.

Music is intimately connected to the body as both a receiver and producer of sound,⁵⁶² but this does not automatically equate music with immovable immediacy since it is also past time that is "produced, heard and exchanged."⁵⁶³ Recognizing how music continuously registers through the body the relationship between sound and hearing expands on the communicable sensory capacities of Mintun's documents. Hip countercultural communalism flourished throughout the 1960s with the Bay Area claiming nearly three hundred distinct communes, and Mintun lived in a 1920's-style communal cottage in Menlo Park dedicated to re-creating the culture of the early-twentieth century, which included driving classic cars, decorating the house with period furniture, and wearing vintage clothes. For Mintun, the commune's sense of collectivity

⁵⁶² Richard Leppert, "Reading the Sonoric Landscape," *The Sound Studies Reader*, ed. Jonathan Sterne (New York: Routledge, 2012), 410.

⁵⁶³ Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, trans. Brian Massumi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), 9.

developed primarily through a shared love of interwar music that bred its own informal and participatory archival practices, as he recalls: “we all collected records and sheet music.”⁵⁶⁴ More than collector’s items, sheet music became one of Mintun’s archiving tools. His collection contains a series of photographic slides depicting the commune’s parlor, backyard, and various visitors, including visiting Cockettes Sylvester and Miss Bobby in svelte dresses. These documents retain Mintun’s records keeping activities that consisted of carefully trimming strips of musical manuscript paper for labels and affixing them to the back of the slides.⁵⁶⁵ The reuse of musical manuscript paper materially infuses the photographs with performed and sonic substances that served as the basis for commune’s social network and collecting practices, provoking us to not just envision but also listen to the documents. Through Mintun’s archival description practices, the photographs take as their precedents both live and recorded musical performances, and become active participants in the commune’s extended re-enactments of 1920’s culture. These traces of musicality blur usually sacrosanct boundaries between the archive, the privileged site of historical knowledge making, and performance, an ephemeral and anarchic force. Beyond their status as repositories of past sounds, the documents possess a radical performativity that broadens our understandings of how documents are supposed to perform acts of historical transmission by beckoning us to employ visual, tactile, and aural research methods.

⁵⁶⁴ Mintun, Peter, Interview with David Weissman and Bill Weber, *The Cockettes*, 2002.

⁵⁶⁵ Contact proof sheets, “Peter’s Mountain View, Leaving for N.Y.C.” Box 4 Folder 3. Peter Mintun Cockettes Collection (GLC 78), Gay and Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library.

Music possesses a social life through its inscription, performance, and reception that when applied to archiving practices reconfigures dominant cultural understandings that privilege the singular records creator. Ann Cvetkovich argues that queer archival perspectives need to consider how relationships matter to archiving, the responsibilities of records keeping assumed by members of within the community. Still traceable in the Mintun Collection's documents, Mintun's archival description practices accommodate for and commemorate the Cockettes' participatory archival networks, allowing the researcher provisional access to the intimacies that fueled the Cockettes' memory-making cultures.⁵⁶⁶ The honored role of sheet music in building an informal and performance-based archival community continues to assert itself in the Mintun collection with a series of documents attesting to Mintun's status as the Cockette's musical archivist. His predilection for trading and collecting scores extended outside of his commune and helped to establish ties with several of the Cockettes, with whom he established professional and personal relationships. Throughout the collection are pieces of sheet music labeled with handwritten Cockette names, such as Erik Satie's "Gymnopedie # 3" for Scumbly⁵⁶⁷, "The Girl's in Love with You" for Sylvester,⁵⁶⁸ and a faded yellow envelope labeled "John Rothermel's Mother's music from her radio days" that includes

⁵⁶⁶ Matt Sakakeeny, "Music," *Keywords in Sound*, ed. [Matt Sakakeeny](#) (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015).

⁵⁶⁷ Pink sheet music for Eric Satie's "Gymnopedie #3" with "Scumbly" written in blue ink. Box 1 Folder 12. Peter Mintun Cockettes Collection (GLC 78), Gay and Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library

⁵⁶⁸ Sheet music with "Sylvester," Box 1 Folder 12. Peter Mintun Cockettes Collection (GLC 78), Gay and Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library

the standards “Sing Baby Sing” and “Bye Bye Baby.”⁵⁶⁹ Notes such as these make evident and sustain within the institutional archival repository the Cockettes’ vernacular archiving culture that takes on both material and sonic dimensions as these documents preserve not only past networks of exchange but also musical performances.

Comprised largely of sheet music for musical standards, Mintun’s collection by extension becomes an archival standard full of materials open to being reused and remixed by the Cockettes performers, each piece of sheet music featuring the name of a Cockette to personalize the songs and recall moments of collaborative performance with Mintun. Since Mintun’s archival description practices are partly based in live performances, the performers listed on the documents become co-creators of the Cockettes’ archival body rather than subjects to stress the importance of coalitional and community-based practices in articulating and preserving forms of queer identity. Designated for fellow pianists (Scrubly) and Mintun’s particular favorites (Sylvester and Rothermel,) the sheet music selection recalls the heady mix of business and pleasure that structured the Cockettes’ archival culture..⁵⁷⁰ Not simply material stands-ins for a professional network, these documents are the residues of Mintun’s close friendships, infused with the shared feelings and experiences foundational in building queer cultural collectives. Still visible within institutional archives, Mintun’s collaborative collection of

⁵⁶⁹ Envelope with sheet music, Box 1 Folder 18. Peter Mintun Cockettes Collection (GLC 78), Gay and Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library

⁵⁷⁰ Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

sheet music commemorates a model of archiving working from the “ground-up”⁵⁷¹ that rectifies the exclusion and under-documentation of queer communities.

Within sound studies, music is theorized as a “rational language”⁵⁷² that organizes noise into the “audible waveband” of the signs that constitute society.⁵⁷³ In thinking about what sound studies offers to archival studies, we can extend the ordering and standardizing imperatives implicit in this definition of music to the informal but orderly acts of archival arrangement and description still visible in Mintun’s collection. The Mintun *fonds* is arranged primarily by the shows for which he accompanied the Cockettes, common across all Cockettes collections, and each folder contains Mintun’s handwritten set lists that lent some structure to the notoriously chaotic shows.

Mintun often sketched out the show sequence lists on his ubiquitous musical manuscript paper, interspersing standard song titles with penciled-in musical scores for the shows’ original songs. As evidence of this activity, the “Pearls Over Shanghai” folder in the Mintun collection contains a near-empty Huntzinger musical manuscript book, a remnant of his enthusiastic work generating records of Cockettes performances that have since been scattered throughout the collection and potentially into other

⁵⁷¹ Kumbier. *Ephemeral Material*, 125.

⁵⁷² Shannon Mattern and Barry Salmon, “Sound Studies: Framing Noise” *Music, Sound, and the Moving Image*. 2, no. 2 (Autumn 2008): 139.

⁵⁷³ Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, 4.

hands.⁵⁷⁴ Encapsulated through each set list, Mintun’s archival description practices are grounded in a combination of musical and alphabetic notation to produce an intermediated document of sound, image, and text. His graceful eighth note runs and Unicode characters denoting flat tones offset his arabesque handwriting on a set list of the Halloween show “Les Ghouls.” These different notation systems work together to replicate through visual and textual markings the sonically precise musicianship he brought to the Cockettes. With Mintun’s hand literally imprinting the music onto the paper, his role as Cockettes musical archivist orients the foundational sonic qualities ghosting this collection through his vintage musicality, which helped define and systematize the Cockettes’ sonic aesthetic. While music, and especially the interwar pop trope treasured by the Cockettes, has been lambasted as a schematic commodity and evidence of mass culture industry, it also becomes a potential agent of cultural disruption. For the performances, Mintun’s music would be the “standard” onto which the Cockettes would overlay their far-out sounds, like Scumbly’s moog synthesizer noise for “Les Ghouls.” Mintun’s set list gives us a sense of the continual sonic interplay between interwar musical heritage and the Cockettes’ irreverently queer art sex by combining a list of American standards with composer name and date and original Cockettes contributions such as the “Butt Dance” (fig 6). What we both see and hear through Mintun’s archiving is evidence of how music conceivably dismissed as mass cultural,

⁵⁷⁴ nearly empty Huntzinger Manuscript Book with Mintun’s name and address. Box 1 Folder 16. Peter Mintun Cockettes Collection (GLC 78), Gay and Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library.

when performed, becomes a formidable agent of subversion capable of reimagining orders of gender and sexuality.

The SFPL's archivist has processed the Mintun Collection using standard archival-grade materials that include the manila folders and acid-free boxes familiar to nearly anyone who has spent some time in archives. But also preserved are the original folders Mintun used to store his Cockettes-related materials, which he too organized according to either show or performer. Holding the show's proprietary sheet music and set lists, a folder reads "Cockettes de Paris," but when flipped inside out it bears traces of a prior archiving project: Mintun's collections of popular sheet music with markings to specify that this folder is dedicated to "1920 Popular" and "MCMXX." The hidden interior of the folders communicates through the metonym of the song the Cockettes' musical foundations based on American standards, which also served as the communal binds for Mintun and his fellow 1920's-30's devotees. However, the notes and doodles on the outside of the "Tinsel Tarts in a Hot Coma" folder shows these standards to be receptive to remixes, as the "Great American Songbook" numbers that made for the bulk of this 1930's, Busby Berkeley-inspired show are interspersed with mentions of psychedelic Cockettes originals, like the "Martian Song." In keeping these original folders as part of the formalized collection, the SFPL's archivist strikes up a retroactive collaboration with Mintun, as their respective arrangement practices mirror and enhance one another to preserve rather than efface Mintun's archiving practices. Mintun is not only the creator of the records themselves, but also the creator of the records keeping practices that would inform the work of the library's archivist. The folders then

memorialize queer vernacular archiving practices that do not disappear but bleed into institutional settings to reframe the typically privileged “sole creator” of the archival body as an ongoing collaborative relationship.

ii. The Kreemah Ritz Papers: San Francisco Public Library

Kreemah Ritz (“Big Darryl,” “Darlena Dares”) was one of the original Cockettes and had donated his extensive collection of Cockettes-related materials to the San Francisco Public Library’s James C. Hormel Gay and Lesbian Center shortly before his death in 2004. Noticing I had been working with the Peter Mintun Cockettes collection, one of the archivists let me in on a secret. Ritz’s collection was currently being processed, and, though it was not yet finished, I could work with some of the materials that had preliminarily made it into folders. As we chatted about the Cockettes, I noticed a spray of photographs near the circulation desk among which I caught glimpses of torn dresses, tinsel beards, and cardboard Martini glasses—unmistakable Cockettes calling cards. The secret was definitely *out*.

The juxtaposition of Mintun’s collection neatly contained and organized in its acid-free boxes and Kreemah Ritz’s tornado of materials taking over the library desk would come to inform my reading of the sonic materiality of Ritz’s collection. Rather than seeing Ritz’s *fonds* as a distinct body with exclusive sonic dynamics, his collection remixes Mintun’s by treating similar materials with a different artistic-archival approach. If Mintun’s collection memorialized a fairly systematic method of vernacular archiving,

the Ritz Papers offer evidence of the idiosyncratic approach of the queer collector whose domestic collecting blurs boundaries between archive and display. Ritz's collection without and with the finding aid, which forms a "voice" in its own right, hinges on sonic materiality akin to noise. Whereas as sound integrates into the social structure, noise is riskier, garnering descriptors such as gratuitous, undesirable, and music yet to be organized.⁵⁷⁵ Ritz's comparatively unkempt collection transmits the noise that the Cockettes performances did not seek to diminish, but rather emphasized to create their signature sound. As Mintun's collection gives us the scores to the Cockette's beloved 1920's-30's jazz standards, Ritz's materials cut up and through Mintun's familiar sounds to materialize the queer falsettos, howls, yowls, and cackles of the Cockettes' performance history. Reading Mintun and Ritz's collections alongside one another reveals a polyphonic and dissonant Cockettes archival body that transmits through its material condition their signature sound potentially obscured through traditional research methods.

The first photograph I encountered was a black and white image of Ritz, arms aloft in a caftan, practicing his usual show-opening routine as the Columbia Pictures logo in which he would sing "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean." Ritz's was not a straight performance, and at times, veered toward irreverence. Once he ended his rendition of the song for the Cockettes' disastrous New York run by gracing the audience with a single, outstretched middle finger. Now one of the numerous Cockettes legends, this song-and-gesture routine encapsulates the Cockettes aesthetic that glides between music and noise,

⁵⁷⁵ Smith, *Listening to Nineteenth-Century America*, 97.

as Ritz's performance interjects patriotic Americana with some raunchy chaos. We may not get a peek at Ritz's "bird" in the San Francisco Art Institute image, but his outstretched arms are blurry as if the photograph caught him in motion of striking his pose. This lends the photograph a dual sense of incompleteness and movement that calls attention to photography's status as a living still, a re-enactment inseparable from technologies of live, such as *tableaux vivants*.⁵⁷⁶ Ritz's movements coupled with his makeshift costume and full-face makeup re-enact through photography the primary technique of exhibition that structured Cockettes performances—the "incomplete pose," a deliberate "provisional and half-accomplished" masquerade of feminine Hollywood glamour.⁵⁷⁷ The SF Art Institute's photographs accurately memorialize the intangible spirit of the Cockettes that saw the potential for performance everywhere, irrespective of public and private boundaries. This is precisely what Ritz's collection offers us: a view of private or domestic collecting practices that act as extended, impromptu, and imperfect performances of archiving that seep into institutional spaces. Ritz's is a noisy form of archiving not totally alien but markedly different from our expectations, especially when encountered within an institutional repository.

Although they are often cast in opposition to one another, noise and music share a mutually informative relationship, as David Novak remarks "noise is inherent in all

⁵⁷⁶ Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in the Time of Theatrical Re-enactment* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 140.

⁵⁷⁷ Mike Kelley, "Cross Gender/Cross Genre." *Foul Perfection: Essays and Criticism*, ed. John C. Welchman (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2003), 104.

music sounds and their mediated reproduction.”⁵⁷⁸ Even though the sonic materiality of Ritz’s papers markedly differs from Mintun’s, Ritz’s personal effects find the same historical inspirations in early-twentieth-century culture. In fact, the two even share documents, and when these collections are read comparatively, they retroactively replay the informal networks of material exchange that gave the Cockettes a sense of professional and personal cohesion.

Both collections include different versions of Mintun’s hand drawn stationery labeled “The Twentieth Century Talking Machine Co,” which nods to early recording culture of the Columbia Photograph Co. and its cylinders (fig. 8). Like Mintun’s sheet music, the “Talking Machine Co.” stationery works simultaneously through sonic and material economies of mechanical reproduction. When approached through an exclusively visual framework, the documents do not quite fully materialize the radical queer possibilities implicit in the Cockettes’ performances, which pushes researchers to look the speculative sonic architectures of the documents. Rather than processes of technological reproduction generating identical documents, they memorialize different possible sonic textures to demonstrate how the Cockettes’ performances of mass cultural music were inchoate political acts capable of upsetting orders of gender and sexuality and articulating an emergent queer consciousness. Mintun’s document includes the musical set list for the *Little Rascals* sendup, “Smacky & Our Gang” while Ritz’s lists the lyrics to “Columbia, The Gem of the Ocean,” his usual song, complete with illustrated

⁵⁷⁸ David Novak, “Noise” *Keywords in Sound*, ed. Matt Sakakeeny (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015).

photograph and an elegant, harp-playing angel floating out of the phonograph's belled speaker. The dulcet tones of angelic strumming pictured in Ritz's document would seem to clash with the Cockettes' characteristic sound that journalist Barbara Falconer likened to noise, "hoots and squawks," but it is the precarious balance of the two that strike the most accurate sonic chord.⁵⁷⁹ Tailored for Ritz's performance, his version of the document has embedded in it a sonic history of the song performed both as a standard and as Ritz's signature genderfucking falsetto, a type of vocal performance that populates a queer sound archive as the "sonic merge of male authority and feminine ambiguity,"⁵⁸⁰ to reveal the tenuous cohesions of music and noise that structure sonic landscapes.

Though many of Ritz's items recall Mintun's 1920's ephemera, they preserve their own archival practices that remix Mintun's more systematic archiving standards. If typewritten labels, musical manuscripts, and manila folders lent a material cohesiveness to Mintun's collection, Ritz traffics in cardboard, construction paper, and magic markers. Ritz's objects shake up archiving conventions through the traces of their former display lives that serve as enduring components of his autotopography, which refers to private "arrangements of physical signs that form a spatial representation of identity" and "physical map of memory, history, and belief," examples being home altars or simply

⁵⁷⁹ Magazine article by Barbara Falconer for *Earth* magazine. Box 2, Folder 2, Coll GLC 78 Peter Mintun Cockettes Collection, James C. Hormel Gay & Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library

⁵⁸⁰ Sheila Whitely, "Which Freddie? Constructions of Masculinity in Freddie Mercury and Justin Hawkins," *Oh Boy! Masculinities and Popular Music*, ed. Freya Jarman-Ivens (New York: Routledge, 2007), 32.

collections of objects on the fireplace mantle.⁵⁸¹ Though informal, atypical, and eccentric, the activities of the private individual collector are nonetheless central to the reconstructing queer material cultures and forms of desire that historically operated within the realm of the private or domestic so as to escape censure.⁵⁸² With its resemblances to crafting, Ritz's archiving aesthetic recalls the "native funk and flash" of California's Bay Area during the 1970's, which celebrated handcrafted folk art that was not afraid to be colorful, psychedelic, and even a little bit glittery.⁵⁸³ For Alexandra Jacopetti Hart whose 1974 photographic compilation, *Native Funk & Flash* includes Scumbly (wearing pants made of doilies) and Pristine Condition, the handcrafting activities of the Cockettes was all about the "fantastic ability to achieve an effect," a phrase that suggests that their crafting was a form of performance in its own right.⁵⁸⁴ She would later expand on this statement by maintaining that the Cockettes' homemade couture was motivated by "political agendas" rather than the desire for fine craftsmanship. Ritz proffers a distinctly queer spin on "funk and flash" through his self-labeling activities that bounce between "Property of Daryl" and "Kreemah Ritz," upsetting a heteronormative logic of naming that underwrites archival arrangement and

⁵⁸¹ Jennifer A. González, "Autotopographies," *Prosthetic Territories: Politics and Hypertechnologies*, ed. Gabriel Brahm Jr. and Marc Driscoll (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 134.

⁵⁸² Thomas Waugh, *Hard to Imagine: Gay Male Eroticism in Photography and Film from their Beginnings to Stonewall* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 39.

⁵⁸³ Alexandra Jacopetti, *Native Funk and Flash; A Emerging Folk Art* (San Francisco: Scrimshaw Press, 1974).

⁵⁸⁴ Jacopetti, *Native Funk and Flash*, 46.

generating a queer alternative that makes use of his multiple performance names. Likewise, the archivist's decision to title the collection after Kreemah Ritz, a drag-performance name, similarly promotes a queer archival ethics that resists the naturalized primacy accorded to the singular creator that naming the collection after the birth name (Darryl Simmonds) might perpetuate.

Not meant as exhaustive inventories, autotopographies are curated assemblages of heirlooms and mementos serving as material traces for intangible social relations, feelings, and desires⁵⁸⁵ that are more in line with the eclectic gathering practices common to domestic collections that aroused suspicion in the late-nineteenth century. And even now, only recent trends in archival studies have begun to push toward more pluralist definitions of archives and records to include personal manuscripts and community memory forms. Once processed, Ritz's collection does not transform into the typical whole body of institutional archive, but still conforms to the autotopography's logic of the trace: his materials provisionally preserve sound bites that commemorate the Cockettes' networks of desire and sociality present in but not fully reducible to tangible objects. A fan of early-twentieth-century glamour culture, Ritz kept a vintage maroon leather guest register he labeled "The Ritz Honeymoon Hotel" in Day-Glo blue marker to keep track of his many visitors. If Mintun's collected photographs and musical ephemera hinted at his commune's shared collecting and archiving practices that extended into his relationships with Cockettes, Ritz's guestbook signatures emphasize an informal polyphonic and collaborative approach to archiving that heightens our responsiveness to

⁵⁸⁵. González, "Autotopographies," 134.

the domestic noises, the vocal intonations and fluctuations, of the Cockettes communes. Full of transcribed greetings, the signatures in Ritz's guestbook are bold, brash, and fabulous, as they replay the playful patter of gossip with half-disclosed intimacies, nicknames, and inside jokes that draw in only keep the researcher at a distance. The entries range from friends' extravagant salutations, like RoxyHot's drawling "Daaaahlings!"; supposed celebrities' chipper exclamations, like "Ta! From Mick Jagger"; and fellow Cockettes' fondest wishes, like "Pristine Condition (former star resident)", and "Best Always w/ Love, John Rothermel."⁵⁸⁶ Fancying himself as the "former star resident," Prissy's autograph illuminates how performance was a integral component of everyday communal living with Cockettes' lush, glittery, and lace-draped interiors being the sets for their impromptu operettas and dance routines. The generally faithful transcriptions of vocal tones in the guestbook delineate in limited terms the sonic architecture of Ritz's collection but fail to furnish the complete history, leaving ghosts of sounds only tenuously economized through archival processing. However, maintaining openness to the potential of embedded sounds within documents makes possible alternate modes of historical transmission without becoming completely fossilized through visually based research methods or completely codified through institutional archival practices.

Noise proves disquieting as historically it has been synonymous with marginalized peoples whose speech and sound exceeded boundaries of representation.

⁵⁸⁶ Honeymoon at the Ritz Hotel leather guest book. Box 1 Folder 23. Coll GLC 79 Kreemah Ritz Papers, James C. Hormel Gay & Lesbian Center, San Francisco Public Library

But as Douglas Kahn and others have noted, the marginal status of noise has fueled avant-garde music and sound projects that upset existing social and political orders, and extended definitions of what is considered art.⁵⁸⁷ Still, avant-garde reclamations of noise teeter between registering and muting the noise of the other, as artists maintain a critical vigilance to the existing socio-cultural orders that define a sound as noise while nonetheless working within them. Attention to the material conditions of Ritz's documents provokes retroactive engagements with the peripheral but ever-present sounds of vernacular archiving and displaying that commemorate the efforts of the private collector. As the noise of Cockettes' performance artistically intervenes in gendered and sexual soundscapes, the sounds of archiving likewise artistically revise traditional archival practices; retaining traces of Ritz's touch as an informal collector-archivist, Ritz's documents are evidence of practices not only linked to acts of historical preservation but also a queer archival ethics of affect and community care. Showing not only signs of age but also artistic manipulations, many of Ritz's photographs are discolored, scarred with sticky tape residue, or punctured with bulletin board pinholes to suggest that they were once components of a display for an informal, private museum of the Cockettes and Ritz. One photograph depicts Ritz dragging as Marlene Dietrich for Alice Cooper's twenty-first birthday at Shakey's Pizza nestled in a handcrafted, cardboard frame (figs. 10 and 11). Ritz as Dietrich is a straightforward interpretation of the film star with coolly perched cigarette, platinum pin curls, and arched eyebrows.

⁵⁸⁷ Douglas Kahn, "Noises of the Avant-Garde," *The Sound Studies Reader*, ed. Jonathan Sterne (New York: Routledge, 2012), 427-449.

But the back of the photograph tells a different story with its glue splotches and discolored tape that show signs of once being attached to blue construction paper, feathery remnants of which still remain. The material condition of these objects layer performing sounds of Ritz as Dietrich with the noises of Ritz's handcrafted archiving and displaying—the snipping of scissors, tearing of papers, crunching of staplers, and dull scratching of wide-tipped felt tip pens. During the late-1970's, Miriam Schapiro and Melissa Meyer developed the practice of “femme,” or feminist collage, which borrowed from domestic feminine arts and crafts to build artistic bodies of evidence that could account for women's history in ways other art practices or archives could not.⁵⁸⁸ The sometimes-sloppy but resourceful crafting of Ritz similarly posits a form of queer archival care by elevating vernacular domestic arts and crafts into tools of emotionally invested and enduring archiving. Like Schapiro and Meyer, Ritz does not use and save materials because of their uniqueness or pristine condition, since many of the documents are duplicated across different Cockettes collections, but because of the feelings, nostalgia, and personal memories attached to them. Generally, everyday noise tends to elicit negative affect, “the excessive and unwanted flows that invade ‘my’ world,”⁵⁸⁹ but within the archival space, domestic or institutional, these noises engender a more desirable and connective affective flow in which archiving becomes an experimental and

⁵⁸⁸Miriam Schapiro and Melissa Meyer, “Waste Not Want Not: An Inquiry into What Women Saved and Assembled—FEMMAGE (1977-78),” *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings*, ed. Kristine Stiles, Peter Howard Selz (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996,, 151-54

⁵⁸⁹Marie Thompson, “Music for Cyborgs: the Affect and Ethics of Noise Music,” *Reverberations: The Philosophy, Aesthetics, and Politics of Noise*, ed. Michael Goddard, Benjamin Halligan, and Paul Hegarty (London: Continuum, 2012), 209.

collaborative process. These noises then are not just incidentals, but key components in relaying the affective dimensions of archiving capable of establishing bonds between the vernacular and institutional archivists across time, space, and context.

Noise's ambivalent participation in both marshaling and muting the voice of the cultural other expresses itself through the discernible engagements between Ritz as an informal archivist and the SFPL's archivist. In a noisy collection like Ritz's the finding aid and paratextual notes of the institutional archivist would potentially serve the disciplinary function of corralling Ritz's unruly and boisterous documents to ensure they conform to a univocal narrative. However, a more integrative relationship develops between informal and institutional archivists that does not cede authority one way or the other, instead forming an ongoing archival conversation akin to Spinoza's formulation of affect in which the encounter of multiple bodies continuously initiates changes in the constitutions of each. The finding aid for the Ritz Paper mentions that Ritz's materials for Cockettes manager Sebastian had been culled "from Sebastian's archives collected November 1996, 1970-1974" to position Sebastian as a co-creator. Like arrangement, best description practices work to aggregate documents into singular bodies by drawing on accretive language, requiring that a "document or set of documents" be "treated as an entity [with a] single description."⁵⁹⁰ Although it does not resist the aggregative impulses at work in description, the language of the finding aid provides a queer

⁵⁹⁰International Council on Archives Descriptive Standards qtd. in Chris Hurley, "Parallel Provenance (If these are your records, where are your stories?)" *Archives and Manuscripts* : Part 1 (What, If Anything, Is Archival Description?) 33, no. 1 (May 2005). *Archives and Manuscripts*: Part 2 (When Something is *Not* Related to Everything Else) 33 no. ,2 (November 2005).

alternative to descriptive practices through its commitment to making transparent informal chains of archival acquisition, which discursively splinters Ritz's archival body to pay tribute to a community-oriented model of archiving. Many of the notations on the photographs similarly visualize a mutually informative exchange in which the institutional archivist completes conversations started by Ritz. For instance, the notations for a photograph of a Miss Bobbi dressed as a geisha for "Pearls Over Shanghai" map out a collective process wherein institutional archivist finishes Ritz's notations to clarify for the researcher that "Sonoma" is actually "Sonoma State." Other instances of this participatory archiving, however, do not impart surety as incommensurabilities highlight the idiosyncratic, sometimes unsystematic, nature of queer vernacular archiving. Names are often spelled inconsistently or scratched out and replaced with new ones, resulting in the archival description practices that do not provide an authoritative voice but one of contingency and uncertainty that emphasizes archiving as a dynamic process open to continuous revision. Rather than shortcomings on behalf of either archivist, the inconsistencies in notation practices make room for and sustain an archival polyphony usually lost to institutional dictates of categorization and preservation. Creeping toward but resisting musicality's too rational and too orderly codes, Ritz's collection demonstrates how noise can be summarily economized through enduring queer archival practices.

At some point with each collection, the sounds stop. Peter's glissandos and Kreemah's falsetto fall silent. The usual chatter of the archives continues, a beleaguered researcher requesting another box or a landlord shuffling through Pacific Gas & Electric

records, but these recede when the certain phrases jump from the pages of documents. The gentle euphemisms in the Cockettes' obituaries are surprisingly caustic: "Kaposi's sarcoma," "pneumocystis carinii pneumonia," "gay cancer," "GRID," "collapse of [the] body's immune system." If the discourse of archival arrangement produces the fiction of the whole body, AIDS-related deaths wrench these bodies apart, as biological families, institutional archives, or time passed unremarked overrule, dissolve, and erode queer archival kinships.⁵⁹¹ With the Cockettes' archival body, the deaths of many of the troupe's members emphasize the impenetrable silences of queer archives. Silence becomes a scar, as the finding aids form imperfect cicatrices for these archival bodies. But silence is also the condition for radically empathetic listening and action.⁵⁹² Buoyed by a half-sensed affective hum, I listen to the stories, acknowledge the silences, and wait for the sounds to return. When they do, some are shocked: hearing the news of Cockette Martin Worman's death, Teddy "Toots" Kern mused, "He was truly my soul sister and I never in a million years thought he wouldn't tell me if there was something that serious."⁵⁹³ Some are choking and afraid: when shown photographs of the Cockettes,

⁵⁹¹ Horacio Roque Ramírez, "Gay Latino Histories/Dying to be Remembered: AIDS Obituaries, Public Memory, and the Queer Latino Archive," *Beyond El Barrio: Everyday Life in Latina/o America*, ed. Gina M. Pérez, Frank Guridy, Adrian Burgos Jr (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 103-129.

⁵⁹² Roger Hallas, *Reframing Bodies: AIDS, Bearing Witness, and the Queer Moving Image* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).

⁵⁹³ Qtd. from Tent, *Midnight at the Palace*, 259.

Beaver Bauer confessed that she is “reminded up tremendous loss and death.”⁵⁹⁴ And some are defiant in their resilience: when visiting a paralytic Hibiscus in the hospital, Martin Worman insisted, “The spirit was still there.”⁵⁹⁵

And Worman is right: the spirit is still there. As I work through the boxes, the sounds may modulate, petering in and out depending on the materials, but the exuberant voices of the Cockettes are neither fully lost to silence nor muffled by institutionalization and historical loss. Their irreverent and glittering archival soundscapes cut into and remix the silences into a fugue of remembering and forgetting that recognize and memorialize, but refuse to surrender pasts nearly lost. Performance, visual, sound, or material studies may not be the perfect tenors through which to conduct archival research, each incomplete in its own way. But, their possibilities lie in their unique abilities to heighten and restore sensory sharpness to queerness’s visual, sonic, and material histories dulled by invisibilities, silences, and disappearances.

⁵⁹⁴ Bauer, Beaver, Interview with Julia Bryan-Wilson, “Handmade Genders: Queer Costuming in San Francisco Circa 1970,” *West of Center*, 90

⁵⁹⁵ Qtd. from Tent, *Midnight at the Palace*, 254.

Part Three: “Archiving”

Chapter Three: Eugen Sandow, the Digitized Strongman



Fig. 7 *The Iron Man*. 1947. Author's Private Collection

i. Sandow at In Retrospect: Queer Sex at the Antique Store

Volume 7 Number 3 of *The Iron Man* (1947), “The Quality Magazine for All Bodybuilders” features an image of the nineteenth-century father of modern bodybuilding himself, Eugen Sandow (fig. 7.) Sporting no more than a fig leaf and a handlebar mustache, Sandow stands atop a leopard skin pelt with a bone of prehistoric proportions poised *just so* to emphasize his stunning musculature. The contours produced by the chiaroscuro lighting make his body look artificial, even statuesque. In this image, Sandow seems more like *ersatz* Victoriana combining Greco-Roman perfection and colonial savagery, rather than mid-twentieth-century modernity. Next to the photograph reads a caption beguiling in its simplicity: “Eugen Sandow, from Famous Nisivoccia

Collection.” We finally learn who exactly Nisivoccia is and why his collection is so famous at the back of the magazine through a full-page advertisement enticing readers to purchase “Rare Sandow Books” from informal historian and “Possessor of the World’s Rarest Physical Strength Library,” Gerard Nisivoccia. What *The Iron Man* fails to note is that Nisivoccia is a major player in Newark, New Jersey’s pre-Stonewall LGBT subculture.

Unlocking Sandow’s sexual legacy through his archival materials was a result of energetic trawling and serendipity on my part. I was hoping but not expecting to find some memorabilia of the Victorian strongman when I came across this issue of *The Iron Man* in an unorganized bin labeled “Physical Culture Magazines” at In Retrospect, a local antique store specializing in mid-twentieth-century furniture, clothes, and knick-knacks. Without much context given in *The Iron Man*, Sandow symbolizes the approachable type of commercial, heteronormative masculinity that made him so popular in the late-nineteenth century. But when found next to a locked glass cabinet displaying retro “Erotica and Pornography,” the innocuous little mag takes on some racier connotations; among its “pornographic” sundries, the case boasted some pristine issues of *Physique Pictorial*, a mid-twentieth-century muscle magazine retroactively singled out for its honorific treatment of the homoerotic Greco-Roman male. As I combed through piles of torn and ragged Physical Culture magazines featuring an army of unclothed male bodies in the shadow of the display case, the central question that guides my work with Sandow came to me: what, or who, gets to have a queer history? And why do some slip through

the cracks of the historical record—from the glass display case into the dusty wooden box?

Once home, I soon figured out that the history of the “world famous” Nisivoccia is nearly as elusive as his strongman inspiration. Digitized census reports in Newark, New Jersey for “Gerard Nisivoccia” showed the name to be surprisingly common, as well as intergenerational, offering little information to shed light on the life of the archivist. Through Outhistory.org, a digital, multiuser queer history project, I finally came across the most conclusive evidence of Nisivoccia’s involvement in pre-Stonewall queer Newark: corresponding regularly with Alfred Kinsey, Nisivoccia obtained a vast collection of Physical Culture artifacts that were then compiled, re-printed, and sold with help of friend and neighbor, Angelo Iuspa. To memorialize the centennial of the Sandow’s birth, Nisivoccia gathered and arranged his entire Sandow collection into his magnum opus, *Sandow the Mighty Monarch of Muscles*, a chapbook of uncaptioned Sandow photographs with a bright cover that recalls a fin-de-siècle yellow-back. Whether or not Nisivoccia intended for these materials to circulate specifically within pre-Stonewall queer subcultures, is an unsolved mystery; and, like Sandow, finding out either way is not necessarily the goal of my investigations. What interested me about the Nisivoccia’s text most was how its inconclusive relationship to sexuality reprised Victorian ways of engaging with various homoerotic textures of strongman media collections.

Stringing these finds into a coherent narrative illuminates the relationship between archives and anachronism, an umbrella term that covers a range of anomalous times,

including backwardness, prematurity, retrogression, anticipation, and revolution.⁵⁹⁶ The Victorian photograph on the cover of the mid-twentieth-century magazine, the “Physical Culture” shrine in the second-hand store, digitized images of Nisivoccia’s *Monarch of Muscles* on Outhistory.org: taken together, these objects comprise a loosely knit vernacular archive of the Victorian strongman that melds pasts, presents, and futures, leaving behind residues of past queer collecting practices (the mid-twentieth century collection) and beckoning to its futures (emergent digital collections.) Through the material-digital networks my archival research generated, Sandow becomes simultaneously retro and futuristic: his archival body simultaneously preserves fin-de-siècle and mid-twentieth-century queer subcultural collecting practices, while gesturing to relatively new digitizing efforts. Rather than looking smooth over these wrinkles in time, this final section of my dissertation explores the queer archival possibilities embedded in anachronistic reading and research methods inspired by Sandow’s archival remediations.

As the final section of this dissertation, “Archiving” looks to the future of archival practice by drawing on the past, teasing out the rhetorical and epistemological connections between contemporary digital archiving and fin-de-siècle subcultural collecting practices. Mining their shared idioms across time and contexts generates anachronistic archival spaces capable of revealing queer sexuality’s tenuous relationship to archives-based literary scholarship. In the previous section, conducting research with the “Double Bodied Hindoo” revised our understandings of space and archives to

⁵⁹⁶ Valerie Rohy, *Anachronism and Its Others: Sexuality, Race, Temporality* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006), xiv.

produce a “double-bodied” archives that weds vernacular and institutional archival documentation to uncover usually obscured queer knowledge making practices in colonial India archives. These “Double-Bodied” performers like Lalloo and Lala were public figures whose queer ways of living involved surprisingly little public censure. However, Sandow’s relationship to sexuality is not so straightforward. While he may have been married and ostensibly led an uxorious life, Sandow’s perfect physique incited admiration from same-sex desiring male fans, attention Sandow possibly reciprocated. In examining Sandow’s freak show materials, I do not aim to recover his “lost voice” or to provide incontrovertible proof of Sandow’s sexuality. The comparatively loose structure for conceptualizing and archiving sexuality during the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth centuries makes such acts of unmediated historical recovery nearly impossible. Instead, I use digital archival research as a springboard for unpacking and rebuilding the intersecting and competing acts of social and cultural management that produced a sexual legacy of Sandow marked by a profound ambivalence: his archival materials register both the presence of queer lives and their historical repression only recently reopened through digital curation projects. The two case studies in “Archiving” trace Sandow’s transatlantic career by focusing on two different libraries, archives, and manuscripts (LAM) digital initiatives: Henry Van Der Weyde’s Sandow photograph at the National Portrait Gallery London and Napoleon Sarony’s Sandow photograph at the Harvard University’s Houghton Library.

The concerns of these case studies are two-fold: they explore how Sandow’s body is both archival and archived. Though undoubtedly visible prior to his emergence, Eugen

Sandow popularized the figure of the Hellenist male nude in unprecedented ways. Easily traversing boundaries of high, middle, and lowbrow cultures, Sandow as a Grecian nude appeared across a broad spectrum of media, including photography, portraiture, lithography, and the *pose plastiques* of his live performances. While I focus on photochemical media primarily, potentially embedded in a single photograph is a palimpsest of textual, performing, even sculptural bodies. These intermediated Hellenist images do not just index a British, middle-class, heteronormative masculine ideal. Sandow's contributions in making Greek studies palatable for a mass audience, poise him as seminal figure in the mediatization of homoeroticism in the late-nineteenth century, though unintentionally so. In negotiating how Sandow's archival materials visualize late-nineteenth-century queerness, "Archiving" contextualizes Sandow's re-enactments of ancient Greek visual culture through the emergence of anachronism as a fin-de-siècle intellectual posture that tapped into historical homoerotic visual and textual tropes in order to produce comparatively new and varied forms of queer sexuality. Charged with homoerotic possibilities, reproductions of Sandow's male nude magnify iconographies of sexuality, empire, and gender, not to lock in place, but blur the visual evidence of power differentials in the images. The strongman's becomes a body in flux, inhabiting polysemous, ambiguous, and unpredictable cultural positions depending on how the images were exchanged, received, and collected. Whereas the earlier sections of this dissertation focused on intermediation simply at the level of the individual document or the body of documents, "Archiving" broadens its scope to explore also the intermediary possibilities that occur at the level of the digital archival infrastructure, suggesting that

the affordances of the digital make possible expanded definitions of materiality for tracking the ephemeral histories of queer sexuality.

As this dissertation has shown, archives, both in their historical and contemporary forms, have subtly shaped the rhetorical and methodological conditions of historicist approaches in Victorian studies. While the first two sections, “The Archive” and “Archives” have focused on the question of archives-based research in its theoretical and material dimensions, “Archiving” takes up the subject of digital archival practices in order to think more carefully the relationship between historical archival research methods and contemporary queer theory that crystallize through narratives of time. Historicism is absorbed with “timely” methods of reading and interpretation once at odds with one another but now understood to be necessary complements, the synchronic and diachronic. However, “freak” archival bodies exceed these familiar temporal configurations. An icon of modernity and antiquity, Sandow’s is a body out of time, a phenomenon then echoed through the state of his digital archival materials presently. To reflect this untimeliness, “Archiving” employs anachronism as model of fluid interpretation at once historically situated and promiscuously out of place, so as to avoid reified temporal schemas inimical to queer perspectives. Reading Sandow’s materials through their fin-de-siècle relationship to anachronism makes visible the ways that the mass cultural freak show catalyzed queer, subcultural collecting communities. In addition to supplying a discourse for interpreting Sandow’s late-nineteenth-century exhibition strategies, anachronism also acts as a flexible inter-temporal interpretative framework capable of highlighting overlooked intersections of queer fin-de-siècle collecting

practices and contemporary digital archiving practices to that explore the unusual ways that evidence of queer gender and sexuality materialize in the historical record.

ii. Archiving Sandow

A short video from *Class and Classics*⁵⁹⁷ titled “Searching for Sandow,” pictures Anthony Ellis of University of Edinburgh crouched in front of Eugen Sandow’s impressive gravesite, as he speculates on the strongman’s untimely demise and rumors of his philandering ways. Filmed as a wide shot that includes in its periphery a compact digital camera on a tripod pointed at Ellis who is perched in front of the Sandow monument, this moment in the video visualizes through its staging how multiple layers of mediation may coalesce to construct a person’s performance persona. In this spirit, I conduct archival work with Sandow’s original source materials by acknowledging that what remains of him are carefully mediated scraps of his life. Taking seriously Ellis’ ponderings, “Archiving” focuses on how photochemical media, once interpolated into digital collections, radiates the odd or bizarre footnotes of Sandow’s career that often only receive passing mention but are still worthy of speculation. One of the most slippery of these passing citations would be Sandow’s connection to freakery. Sandow is usually viewed as an offshoot of the freak show; while he asserts the centrality of the freak show in the burgeoning field of bodybuilding, Niall Richards still refers to Sandow

⁵⁹⁷ *Class and Classics (1789-1939)* is an AHRC-funded project based at King’s College dedicated to recovering lost traces of working class British subjects who engaged with ancient Greek and Roman culture throughout the period.

as a “variation/development”⁵⁹⁸ of the freak performer. Within “freak studies,” surprisingly little is written on the strongman; between the highly-esteemed “born freaks” and the spectacles of abjection that were the “geeks,” the strongman occupied a category of “self-made” freaks who “do something to themselves unusual enough for exhibit” who tend to get eclipsed by other, more colorful, performers.⁵⁹⁹ The adage that strength comes in numbers does not hold up for the freak show strongman, since the sheer bulk of these performers seems to have lessened their appeal. If freakish strength is discussed at any length, it is usually in connection with a performer’s born-physical anomaly, such as gigantism.⁶⁰⁰ Likewise, cultural histories of bodybuilding briefly nod to the strongman

⁵⁹⁸Niall Richardson, *Transgressive Bodies: Representations in Film and Popular Culture* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2010), 26.

⁵⁹⁹ Cf. Robert Bogdan, *Freak Show: Presenting Human Oddities for Amusement and Profit* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 8. In *Freak Show* Bogdan sketches out a hierarchy of freakery that amusement culture abided by. “Born freaks,” or “people who with real physical anomalies who came by their condition naturally,” enjoyed the dubious honor of being the highest ranking freak performers; following were “self-made” freaks, like the strongman or tattooed performer; then, “gaffed freaks,” “the fakes, the phonies—the armless wonder whose arms are tucked under a tight fitting shirt”; and at the bottom of the barrel, the “geeks,” “down-and-out alcoholics who performed in exchange for booze and a place to stay” (Bogdan 8; 262).

⁶⁰⁰ “Giant” performers usually did double duty as strongmen, and Sandow even pays homage to this in *Sandow on Physical Training*, abjuring us not to “forget the Scottish Highlander who, not long ago, used to uproot young oaks from the earth, cast Highland steers, and harnessing himself with horse-breeching raise a ton weight” (16). Likewise, in the U.S., P.T. Barnum similarly marketed his “giants” as strongman akin to the Highlander. Marc Hatzmann, *American Sideshow: An Encyclopedia of History’s Most Wondrous and Curiously Strange Performers* (New York: Penguin 2006. : “In addition to being tall, Goshen was strong. He could move a 1,700 pound cannon it was said, and he once crushed the head of a grizzly bear with a rock. That these claims were unsubstantiated certainly didn’t stop Barnum from adding the Strongman title to

tradition as an integral part of the fairground, circus, and amusement arcade circuits. If the strongman were in fact a permanent and recognizable fixture of sideshow culture, this lack of in-depth scholarship that explicitly places him in conversation with freakery seems strange and surprising. In its acknowledgement of amusement culture's tendency to hierarchize freaks, freak studies also seems to replicate this behavior, as critical work on "born freaks" dominates the field.

Sandow typically earns distinctions of being the father of modern bodybuilding and Physical Culture, advertising, and in the closest nod to his career as a performer, as Florenz Ziegfeld's star protégée.⁶⁰¹ While all of these titles are certainly accurate, none of them quite fully account for the freak show's active role in shaping the aesthetics and visual conventions that dominate the remaining body of Sandow's archival materials. Sandow became an emblem of photochemical innovation, from starring in Henry Van der Weyde's photographs experimenting with new lighting techniques to peacocking in one of Thomas Edison's first moving film shorts. What remains of Sandow is less a factual biography than it is a testament to the sustained production of the myth of "Sandow, the Magnificent." Precisely because the freak show pivots on exaggeration and fabrication,

Goshen's billing" (42). More often than not, giants often posed as military figures and performed with "miniatures" to exaggerate differences in size.

⁶⁰¹Caroline Daley, *Leisure and Pleasures: Reshaping and Revealing the New Zealand Body 1900-1960* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2003); Dominic Morais, "Branding Iron: Eugen Sandow's Modern Marketing Strategies, 1887- 1925," *Journal of Sport History* 40, no. 2 (Summer 2013): 193-214; Ethan Mordden, *Ziegfeld: The Man Who Invented Show Business* (New York: MacMillan), 2008. For more general biographies of Sandow see: David Chapman, *Sandow the Magnificent* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1994) and David Waller, *The Perfect Man: The Life and Muscular Times of Eugen Sandow* (Brighton: Victorian Secrets Limited, 2011).

focusing on how freakery interpellates Sandow effectively waylays beleaguering questions of authenticity and fabrication that would otherwise dominate attempts at biographical reconstruction. While we learn of Sandow's personal life to an extent from his autobiographies and biographies, it remains peripheral to his adventures and trials as a renowned performer of strength.⁶⁰²

Sandow's presentations were textbook freak show in every narrative form, from text to performance. Though not completely fleshed out in "Searching for Sandow" his performances relied on and revised Hellenist allusions, democratizing the classics for mass audiences. The accompanying oral spiels routinely relied on exaggerated claims of Sandow's strength, and general perfection, as Dr. Dudley A. Sargeant of Harvard University would introduce private exhibitions of the strongman by earnestly proclaiming that Sandow "combined characteristics of Apollo, Hercules, and the ideal athlete."⁶⁰³ In terms of staging, some of his most popular performances relied on the freak show chestnut of placing unlike bodies next to each to produce an optical illusion of exaggerated difference. His most popular run of shows in New York City, the operetta *Adonis* at the Casino Theatre, ended with svelte-figured, heartthrob Henry Dixey, in the titular role, striking a *pose plastique* as a statue. When the curtain raised for the encore, Sandow, all "knots and bunches and layers of muscles" and the color of terra cotta, took

⁶⁰² For this chapter, I draw primarily from two full length biographies, both ostensibly written by Sandow: *Strength and How to Obtain It* (London: Gale & Polden, 1897); *Sandow on Physical Training*, ed. Adam G. Mercer (New York: J. Selwin Tait & Sons, 1894.)

⁶⁰³ Sandow, *Sandow on Physical Training*, 15.

Dixey's place and launched into an acrobats act, effectively introducing a new Adonis.⁶⁰⁴ As extensions of his shows, *cartes-de-visite* routinely featured Sandow as reproductions of Greco-Roman sculpture, as he reprised his roles as the Fighting Gladiator and Hercules for the camera. Though citing art historical figures, Sandow's imperfect renditions of such more closely align with Blyn's aesthetic of indeterminacy⁶⁰⁵, as alternately wearing fig leaves and animal print loin clothes, Sandow's photography dually evoked the aggrandized and exoticized modes of presentation. And lastly, accompanying his show were outlandish biographies, what the freak show terms "true life pamphlets," detailing Sandow's early years and performances, as well as featuring endorsements by medical figures. If we take Sandow's word for it, late-nineteenth-century London was filled with imitation biblical and mythological characters come to life, including Cyclops, Samson, Goliath, and some Titans. In each show, Sandow casts himself as the everyday man of strength, instead of the monstrous villain: the Ulysses who takes down the Cyclops, or David who bests his indolent Goliath.⁶⁰⁶

As Robert Bogdan notes, true-life pamphlets are filled with exaggeration and blatant lies, and Sandow's is no exception. If Sandow had his way, all mention of childhood would be expunged from his biographies. Later evident only through his marriage certificate to Blanche Brookes, Sandow's preferred origin tale was that his

⁶⁰⁴*New York Herald*, June 18th 1893.

⁶⁰⁵Robin Blyn, *The Freak-Garde: Extraordinary Bodies and Revolutionary Art in America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 2013.

⁶⁰⁶ See CH. 2 "How I Came to London and Defeated Samson" and CH3 "I Meet Goliath" from *Strength and How to Obtain It* for detailed accounts for these stage shows.

father was a well-to-do Prussian jeweler.⁶⁰⁷ In reality, the narrative is more humble and obscure: christened Friedrich Wilhelm Müller, he was born in Königsberg, Prussia to a German father who was a greengrocer and a mother possibly of Russian descent.⁶⁰⁸ The incorrigible Sandow had a tense relationship with his parents and would often run off to perform with local circuses. Adam G. Mercer, the editor of *Sandow on Physical Training* (1894) dramatizes the wayward lure of the circus that had so transfixed Sandow in terms deliciously profane: “The circus was, however, unhallowed ground with his good and honest parents, and, seeing their son drawn with uncovenanted bonds to the glittering arena, they put him under interdict.”⁶⁰⁹ As a potential reparative to Mercer’s dishy tale, Sandow’s autobiographical *Strength and How to Obtain It* (1897) bypasses biographical convention, beginning *in medias res* at a Florentine art gallery with an adolescent Sandow gazing admiringly at Greco-Roman sculpture of athletes, a trip taken at his father’s behest where the strongman comes of age. The only hint of his early days is a brief mention of being born “exceedingly delicate,” but such tidbits are overshadowed by images of Sandow as young man of “strength in bronze.”⁶¹⁰ While most the public or

⁶⁰⁷ The brief inclusion of his father’s occupation on his marriage certificate is one of the few details pertaining to Sandow’s family life. Blanche was the daughter of successful and well-connected Manchester photographer Warwick Brookes who shot a set of photographs for Sandow. Having no relatives and haven fallen out with his mentor Professor Attila Sandow latched on to Brookes as a mentor and father figure, making the his lies about his family all the more treacherous when they surfaced.

⁶⁰⁸ Chapman, *Sandow the Magnificent*, 5.

⁶⁰⁹ Sandow, *Sandow on Physical Training*, 23.

⁶¹⁰ Sandow, *Strength and How to Obtain It*, 89.

performances lives of many freak performers dominate original source materials, what makes this phenomenon so fraught with Sandow is that he claimed comparatively more agency to manage himself, his economic, and his personal endeavors than the typical “freak,” as the biographies imply. That Sandow preferred to live as a myth of his own fashioning produced palpable discord with his wife and children, the apocryphal information on the marriage license being a particularly thorny point of contention. Upon his untimely death,⁶¹¹ relations had become so strained with the family that his survivors auctioned off and destroyed Sandow’s personal effects. Blanche even refused to erect a gravestone for Sandow, banishing him to the unmarked site in Putney Vale that serves as the filming location for “Searching for Sandow.”⁶¹² In 2009, Sandow’s great grandson commissioned grave marker, a pink sandstone monolith modeled on a Greek stele labeled “SANDOW.”⁶¹³ Materializing a life lived as a Greek myth, these remains are quite literally evidence only of Sandow the Strongman, not Friedrich Wilhelm Müller. In what follows, I unpack the complex archival histories embedded in his primary source

⁶¹¹ The “official” cause of death is that Sandow suffered a heart attack trying to extract a car out of a ditch. However, rumors circulated that the actual cause of death was a venereal disease as a well-known cause of an aortic aneurism is syphilis, though this remains open to speculation. Cf. David Chapman, *The Magnificent Sandow*: “Less than one month after his death, Blanche put the Dhunjibhoy House, their furniture, all works of art, and Sandow’s beloved automobiles up for auction. She was certainly not destitute ... so this unseemly haste was not motivated by poverty” (188).

⁶¹² Jonathan Black, *Making the American Body: The Remarkable Saga of the Men and Women Whose Feats, Feuds, and Passions Shaped Fitness History* (Omaha: University of Nebraska, 2013), 15.

⁶¹³ Christian Anderson, “Eugen Sandow (1867-1925),” *Find a Grave Memorial*, last accessed April 25 2015.

materials not to uncover the truth about Sandow, but to explore how each layer of mediation has its own story that shapes our current understandings of Victorian queer sexuality.

iii. Queering Sandow

That the ladies loved Sandow was no secret. Yet, sometimes their professed adoration carried subtexts of alternative formulations of desire not so easily disclosed. Upon Sandow's rebuff of her sexual advances and her fancy champagne, the highly sexed dancer and courtesan Caroline "La Belle" Otéro cattily reported to *The Journal of Sport History* that "He must have had a bad hour or two with me before I sent him back to the young man he was living with."⁶¹⁴ David Chapman offers this anecdote in *The Magnificent Sandow* only to disqualify it as proper "proof" of Sandow's queerness, claiming that the male-male relationship in question was no more homoerotic than Sherlock Holmes' and Dr. John Watson's. Howsoever inconclusive, Otéro's statement accurately distills the fin-de-siècle psychosexual experience as one marked by tensions between expression and repression. While "Archiving" uses the digital landscape to flesh out the sexual *zeitgeist* of the late-nineteenth century some prefatory remarks are in order

⁶¹⁴ Chapman, *The Magnificent Sandow*, 405. The man in question refers to Sandow's intimate companion and housemate, Martinus Sieveking. In a profile on Sandow, a reporter from the *New York World* paints their living arrangements as domestic bliss *par excellence*: "It is pleasant to see them together ... [Sievking] practices [piano] in very hot weather stripped to the waist. While he plays, Sandow sits beside him on a chair listening to music and working his muscles. He is fond of the music and Sievking likes to see Sandow's muscles work. Both enjoy themselves and neither loses time."

to establish the broad parameters that structure my discussion of how Sandow navigates this territory, and how his materials have retroactively shaped it.

Otéro's very public remarks posit Sandow's queer possibilities through their sublimation. If her gustatory remarks carry with them expectations of heterosexual masculine virility, then Sandow's distaste for her champagne is damning. According to Otéro, being impervious to a demimondaine's charms is a recognizable benchmark of normative sexual development that Sandow fails to meet as she speculates that he prefers the company of friend and flat-mate Martinus Sievking.⁶¹⁵ We need not dig deep to find the key to Sandow's sexuality by pursuing whether or not he had a male lover. Rather, Otéro's remarks clearly call into question Sandow's libido. Whether or not she was above a white lie or two withstanding (she wasn't), her words carried enough cultural currency as a rumor to carve out a space of indeterminacy in Sandow's presentation of heterosexual masculinity. In relating her attempts at seduction, Otéro zeroes in on how Sandow embodies an ideal Greco-Roman masculinity, citing his status as a "truly Original Hercules" and physique as the sources of her pleasure. Her simultaneously adulatory and accusatory words illuminate how Victorian Hellenism made available a vocabulary for articulating multiple and conflicting models of masculinity, even as they

⁶¹⁵ In addition to her company, Sandow also denied her champagne, instead requesting milk, a preference she later found to be particularly telling. Of what, we are unsure, as she simply rued: "Faugh! But hindsight is so superior to foresight." This is not to say that Sandow was a teetotaler. While moderation in food and drink were features of the Sandow system, he was an self-admitted lover of Manhattans, facetiously complaining upon his arrival to New York: "They like to give you a bath of cocktails and if a bath should not suffice, they would think nothing of making a river for you" (Sandow *My Reminiscences* 169).

may share the same embodied features. In fact, the seemingly chaste, yet intellectually and spiritually satisfying, relationship shared between the equally beautiful Sievking and Sandow speaks to Socratic ethos' privileging of "erotic 'chivalry' and martial 'comrade' love"; wiling away sweltering afternoons playing classical music and flexing muscles, Sievking and Sandow read like a populist version of the procreant and regenerative erotic body so prized by Oxford Hellenism.⁶¹⁶ Moreover, her choice of venue, *The History of Sporting Journal*, demonstrates how sporting culture unintentionally bred alternate forms of masculinity that contravened or at least complicated the salubrious, disciplined—heterosexual—athlete. If his interactions with Otéro are any indication, current traces of Sandow's private life, and in particular his sexuality, largely exist as gossip or rumor. Though her relative silence on Sandow's sexual proclivities may efface the presence of queer lives, their open-endedness likewise acknowledges the presence of alternate social-sexual formations that exceeds available conceptual preservative frameworks.

This tension between avowal and disavowal characterizes the sexual climate in which Sandow performed and lived. Though Otéro painted him as a wet blanket, more persistent and unverifiable rumors of Sandow's rather fiery loins gave him the air of an inveterate philanderer who casted an amorous eye at both men and women. Not just left to rumor, we can also locate an impulse to desire and to represent this desire through a range of material practices, like Sandow's souvenirs. My goal is not to illustrate conclusively that Sandow's materials appealed to same-sex desiring audiences, but rather

⁶¹⁶ Linda Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 79-80.

to explore their homoerotic potential by bring to the surface “layers of meaning never dreamed of by the photographer or first customer.”⁶¹⁷ George Chauncey characterizes the late-century as time organized by a sharp polarization of gender and sex roles; however, the footholds for defining femininity and masculinity were constantly tested through “changes and challenges to the Victorian sex/gender system, such as women’s movement, growing visibility of homosexual subculture, and changing gender structure of the economy.”⁶¹⁸

Sandow’s original source materials attest to simultaneous rigidity and permeability of gender and sex roles. His visual and textual encoding intersects specifically with discourses of Hellenism that operated as “homosexual code.” Originating with leading English university reformers like Benjamin Jowett, Hellenism, the systematic study of Greek history, literature, and philosophy, became a metaphysical alternative to Christianity. Poets and cultural critics now allied to Victorian aestheticism, like Walter Pater and John Addington Symonds, developed out of this same Hellenism a counterdiscourse that legitimized male same-sex desire and love as an ennobling “spiritual procreancy.” Touting the ideal of pure intellectual commerce among men that “brings forth the arts, philosophy, and wisdom itself,”⁶¹⁹ Hellenism was cast as the root

⁶¹⁷ Thomas Waugh, *Hard to Imagine: Gay Male Eroticism in Photography and Film from Their Beginnings to Stonewall* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 8.

⁶¹⁸ George Chauncey, “From Sexual Inversion to Homosexuality: Medicine and the Changing Conceptualization of Female Deviance,” *Salmagundi* 58, no. 59 (Fall 1982-Winter 1983): 116.

⁶¹⁹ Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality*, xv.

of cultural transformation in a modern period obsessed by anxieties over commercialization, intellectual complacency, and corruption and effeminacy associated with male love. By no means was Sandow an intellectual powerhouse; in fact novelist Walter Raleigh once enlisted Sandow to give his literary rival George Meredith a biting backhanded compliment: “I suppose Meredith is the cleverest novelist that has ever written – and no more like a great novelist than I am like Sandow.”⁶²⁰ However, through his freak show, he becomes a living, breathing embodiment of Symonds’ prized “Greek lovers with their erotic ‘chivalry’ and martial ‘comrade-love.’⁶²¹ Compounded by the rise of modern mass media in the form of newspapers, postcards, and photography, Sandow’s Hellenist image took on distinctly homoerotic possibilities wherein “subtextual and subcultural operations intersect with the mainstream.”⁶²²

Even though it has been earmarked by the increased mediatization of homoerotic body, this was not a period of total freedom of sexual expression. In England, Sandow’s late-century cultural moment overlapped with Oscar Wilde’s trials.⁶²³ While in the U.S., Sandow’s performances took place under the watchful legal eye of the Comstock Laws,

⁶²⁰Walter Raleigh, *The Letters of Sir Walter Raleigh (1879-1922)* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1926), 233.

⁶²¹Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality*, 79.

⁶²² Waugh, *Hard to Imagine*, 162.

⁶²³ Though Sandow and Wilde were, in their own ways, emblems of male same-sex desire, their paths never actually crossed. They toured North America at the same time, and were even both shot by premier show business photography, Napoleon Sarony. However different, the photography of each registers a broader commercial and subcultural interest in what Michael Anton Budd calls “a combined modern/ancient aesthetic of bodily freedom” (“Every Man a Hero” 1998 45).

otherwise known as the Act for the Suppression of Trade in and Circulation of Obscene Literature and Articles of Immoral Use, which made it a crime to possess, sell, or give away “pornographic” or “obscene” materials. Casting a wide net, Anthony Comstock’s definition of obscene materials would have shaped, if not Sandow’s own choice in his public presentations of sexuality, at least the public’s reception of it. Sandow traverses a period of incipient transformation in which “the gradual emergence into visibility of a new system of values and attitudes” produced an inchoate discourse of “homosexuality” to a time of in which the incitement to speech spoke of “homosexuality” in controversial, lurid, and criminal terms.⁶²⁴ A once-tireless apologist for same-sex desire, even Symonds became exhausted by an apparent paradox of Hellenism at Oxford: “its willful denial of the paiserastia so crucial to the Greek culture it otherwise held up to emulation and praise.”⁶²⁵ As a consequence, a central tension arises out Sandow’s performances and materials that Michael Anton Budd frames as not so much a question of “how same-sex relations between men became criminalized in the period but how other male pleasures like those encouraged in physical culture were at the same time asserted legitimate.”⁶²⁶ Though the male form is arguably central to Victorian Hellenist revivals, the rhetorical figures marshaled for constructing this body, as well as the degree of their explicit erotic charge, continually shifts. As “Archiving” unfolds, Sandow and the peripheral characters

⁶²⁴ Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality*, 132.

⁶²⁵ Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality*, 88.

⁶²⁶ Michael Anton Budd, “Every Man a Hero: Sculpting the Homoerotic in Physical Culture Photography,” in *The Passionate Camera: Photography and Bodies of Desire*, ed. Deborah Bright (New York: Routledge, 1998), 48.

that he comes into contact with, give us insight into the discursive flexibility of the Greco-Roman male form, specifically that of “He-Man” who was one of the most popular body types in the Victorian homoerotic repertory.⁶²⁷

iii. Queering Digital Histories

Warring conceits help narrate Sandow’s archival legacy. On the one hand, persistent rumors of his surviving family liquidating his personal effects, his unmarked grave in Putney Vale, and his super-close relationship with Marcus Sievking have become evidence of Sandow’s sexual transgressions. In investigating how archives preserve and fail to preserve histories of sexuality, scholars have explored the meanings of silence⁶²⁸ and burning documents,⁶²⁹ equating Sandow’s queer sexuality to archival dearth with traces of his queer past only appearing grassroots digital archiving projects like Queer Newark. While Sandow’s private life may have been symptomatic of queer sexuality’s archival disappearance acts, he is still highly visible in other archives:

⁶²⁷ Thomas Waugh, “The Third Body: Patterns in the Construction of the Subject in Gay Male Narrative Film,” in *Queer Looks: Perspectives on Gay and Lesbian Film and Video*, ed. Martha Gever, Pratibha Parmar, John Greyson (New York: Routledge, 1993), 141.

⁶²⁸ John Wrathall, “Provenance as Text: Reading the Silences around Sexuality in Manuscript Collections,” *The Journal of American History* 79, no. 1 (June 1992): 165-178.

⁶²⁹ Estelle Freedman, “The Prison Lesbian: Race, Class, and the Construction of the Aggressive Female Homosexual, 1915-1965,” in *Feminism, Sexuality, and Politics: Essays by Estelle B. Freedman* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 141-159.

photographs, news clippings, early Edison film footage, magazines, and even texts by Sandow himself abound across archives of sports history, American history, British history and fine arts, and popular performance—many of them available digitally. Sandow’s extended digital archival body materializes a recurring tension in this study between the historical invisibility of the queer subject and the hypervisibility of the freak subject. To address this phenomenon, I choose to work with digital initiatives with no discernible queer affiliations, rather than grassroots archival efforts specifically aimed at preserving queer histories. I do so strategically so as to explore how queer knowledge making and collecting practices are woven into what we now consider to be dominant digital archiving practices that maintain pretenses to sexual neutrality. These sites, which inadvertently develop anachronistic networks among digital, material, and ephemeral artifacts, most accurately capture sexuality’s tenuous relationship to historical recording projects, ones in which traces of fin-de-siècle queerness arises because of and in spite of their archival systems in place.

To make historical study of an unstable identity category like fin-de-siècle queer sexuality requires reflecting on our own research practices. In outlining new archives-based research practices, this dissertation also confronts the theoretical justifications and scholarly narratives of literary historicism that make possible its methods. Through the simultaneously material and speculative evidentiary models of prehistory, “The Archive” challenged the rhetoric of embodiment and its totalizing drives ingrained in reading practices. Through the “double-body,” “Archives” took up and defamiliarized the spatial logics circumscribing historicist methods by highlighting how freak archives chronicled

otherwise-invisible queer histories of empire. “Archiving” will now turn an eye to the rhetorical figures of time that emerge from and delimit cross-temporal historicist studies, especially those that take a queer approach to connecting nineteenth-century primary sources and contemporary queer theory. Typically, applying historicist approaches to fin-de-siècle queer sexuality shores up a gap between method and theory, as Susan McCabe explains: “the language of historicism (with its emphasis on legal and medical discourse) is often at odds with queer theory in tracking and articulating the existence of nonnormative sexuality.”⁶³⁰ Bruce R. Smith argues that by subscribing to Foucauldian theoretical formulations that treat sexuality as discourse, scholars render the vexed relationship between practice and theory to be a matter of time: “In texts written before the 1880s, perhaps before the 1920s, perhaps even before the 1980s, sexuality, in our psychopolitical understanding of it, is something that is not there.”⁶³¹ Beyond calling attention to specific decades or periods, historicist accounts of queer sexuality also co-opt the language of time to confront the difficult work of the historian of sexuality, which Katherine Binhammer sums up as “the challenges of anachronism.”⁶³²

⁶³⁰ Susan McCabe, “To Be and to Have: The Rise of Queer Historicism,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 11, no. 1 (December 28, 2004): 119.

⁶³¹ Quoted in Susan McCabe, “To Be and to Have: The Rise of Queer Historicism,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 11, no. 1 (December 28, 2004): 119.

⁶³² Katherine Binhammer, “The ‘Singular Propensity’ of Sensibility’s Extremities: Female Same-Sex Desire and the Eroticization of Pain in Late-Eighteenth-Century British Culture,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 9, no. 4 (October 1, 2003): 471.

Anachronism is historicisms's bugbear, often registered as a researcher's interpretative error. Especially in terms of sexuality studies, it raises hackles as the "appalling" and "relentless" companion of ahistorical universalism that interprets the past through the terms of the present. However, conflating the anachronistic and ahistorical glosses anachronism's potential usefulness for queer criticism. Anachronism could lend a hand to queer studies by imagining hermeneutic models that do not quite jibe with linear temporalities. Marjorie Garber pushes for anachronism as a literary practice that evades the "determinism" of historical correctness" that historicism affirms, supporting a more rigorous consideration of aesthetics or form. However, this tactic risks segmenting the aesthetic-formal from the political-historical by erecting artificial, even insidious, boundaries between formalist and historicist practices. Like Garber, Pugh and Weisl suggest that instead of reading for historical accuracy, we focus on how anachronism achieves "aesthetic, narrative, and pleasurable effects."⁶³³ More carefully merging historical and formal perspectives, Thomas Greene delimits a series of different anachronism at work in period films. For the purposes of "Archiving," Greene's definition of creative anachronisms, which employs the past to comment on and interpret the contemporary historical moment of the artwork at hand, best coaxes out its expanded historiographical possibilities.⁶³⁴ Similarly, Joseph Luzzi characterizes anachronism through its capacity to divulge "intertemporal insights" that counteract the concern over

⁶³³ Tison Pugh and Angela Jane Weisl, *Medievalisms: Making the Past into the Present* (Abingdon: Routledge Ltd, 2013), 84.

⁶³⁴ Thomas Greene, "History and Anachronism," *The Vulnerable Text: Essays on Renaissance Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 221.

historical inaccuracies.⁶³⁵ While these are helpful frameworks for revisiting anachronism, they tend to link anachronism to conscious modes of creative production—films, books, and performances that intentionally develop untimeliness— without pondering where we might find anachronism within the frameworks of historical scholarship.

The primary impulse guiding historical work on sexuality would be to avoid or come to terms with anachronism. Yet, realizing that the “history of sexuality is, in some sense, always already anachronistic” is also key to its hermeneutics if the goal is to produce reflexive histories.⁶³⁶ After all, as Lorraine Daston notes, archival practices “deliberately cultivate anachronism” through their merging of pasts, presents, and futures.⁶³⁷ As sites of temporal convergence, archives lend themselves as space open to a mode of queer critique that emphasizes temporal “sameness, similarity, proximity, and anachronism” that Goldberg and Menon cites as an alternative to a brand of historicism that parses definable similarities between the past and present.⁶³⁸ Like the previous sections, the goal of “Archiving” is not to discard completely these existing historicist formulas, since as Valerie Rohy contends, anachronism is not an other to but embedded

⁶³⁵ Joseph Luzzi, “The Rhetoric of Anachronism,” *Comparative Literature* 61, no. 1 (2009): 70.

⁶³⁶ Peter Maxwell Cryle and Christopher E. Forth, “Introduction: The Makings of a Central Problem,” in *Sexuality at the Fin de Siècle: The Makings of a “Central Problem,”* ed. Peter Maxwell Cryle and Christopher E. Forth (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008), 13.

⁶³⁷ Lorraine Daston, *Science in the Archives: Pasts, Presents, Futures* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 322.

⁶³⁸ Jonathan Goldberg and Madhavi Menon, “Queering History,” *PMLA* 120, no. 5 (2005): 1609.

within normative time.⁶³⁹ Anachronism, as I deploy it, is not a reparative, an inherently subversive or “queer” alternative to historicist chronologies. In fact, this suturing of non-heteronormativity and archaism risks tacitly endorsing late-nineteenth-century sexological theories that presented homosexuality as evidence of regression in both an individual’s development and in human history. Instead, I use anachronism strategically to reorient historicist scholarly aims of getting history right in order to ponder the ethical and imaginative consequences of untimeliness. For this work, “Archiving” taps anachronism not only for its queer interpretative potential, but also ironically, its congruities with the content and historical context of Sandow’s late-century performances of masculinity. Firstly, Sandow himself is an anachronism: he is a late-Victorian performer who poses as reproductions of Greco-Roman sculpture—an intentionally misplaced piece of history in service of defining the British modern self that works according to anachronism’s simultaneous logic of regression and anticipation. Moreover, as sexuality started taking on its modern form during “historically-conscious time” of the fin-de-siècle so did anachronism as a modern intellectual posture and theoretical framework called on by Victorian aesthetics theorists like John Addington Symonds, John Ruskin, and Walter Pater.⁶⁴⁰ In my readings of fin-de-siècle Sandow, anachronism acts as both an interpretative framework and a contextually dependent critical tool to unite the apparent divide between historicist method and queer theory. “Archiving” writes an anachronistic history of queer knowledge making by limning Sandow’s archival

⁶³⁹ Rohy, *Anachronism and Its Others*, xv.

⁶⁴⁰ Cryle and Forth, “Introduction,” 13.

body through intersections of late-nineteenth-century collecting practices and contemporary digital archiving practices.

This is not the first partial long-term history of information management that indulges in strategic anachronism to connect nineteenth-century and contemporary digital systems, queer or otherwise. However, preceding cases articulate different configurations of queer time, through their specific narrative approaches to archives-based research. One method posits that nineteenth-century texts offer precedents or interpretative frameworks for reading contemporary works through new lenses. On the one hand, this attention to the past disentangles digitality from presentism to elongate the time line for the development of digital information systems. However, it also risks submitting to a fetish for the origin, the identifiable “precedent,” that tacitly privileges the historical text as an universally illuminating bearer of knowledge or tacitly suborns the historical text as a stolid tool in service of the contemporary. Given and McTavish’s study of British and North American natural history museums highlights precedence’s ambivalent relationship to queer history. They cite nineteenth-century overlaps among libraries, archives, and museums in terms of physical space and political as historical precedents for the same overlaps made possible by digitization. Even though their study is not queer in subject matter, it still brushes up against queer formulations of time. The authors conclude that the current state of the digital makes visible a “reconvergence [of a historical phenomenon] rather than an exclusively new phenomenon”, potentially resonating well with queer historiography’s investment in the recursive, such as the revolutionary

qualities of Freeman’s temporal drag discussed in “The Archive.”⁶⁴¹ However, Given and McTavish are primarily devoted to proving this synchronicity and patterning that their work consequently effaces the unique, disjunctive, and intransigent specificities of both of the nineteenth-century and contemporary digital texts that, I would argue, a queer method would require.

Another critical approach for cross-historical scholarship is the genealogy. However, its allegiances to continuous lines of descent make it a suspicious narrative mode for queer historiography. To present “A Queer History of Computing” that avoids the heteronormative ties of the traditional genealogy, Jacob Gaboury stitches together overlapping and divulging life narratives of five queer figures, connecting each to Alan Turing, through a series of born-digital writings.⁶⁴² Similar to Heather Love’s disparate “image repertoires of queer melancholia,”⁶⁴³ Gaboury moves back, forward, and sideways through time, establishing connections both strong and tenuous among his figures to erect a narrative frame that sustains fluid temporal movements that make us of progression, recursion, and oscillation. Still, his history submits to the patterning imperatives of the serial format—ones both repetitive and forward moving through the hyperlinked digital format that invites us to read each subsequent entry in a time-stamped

⁶⁴¹ Lisa M. Given and Lianne McTavish, “What’s Old Is New Again: The Reconvergence of Libraries, Archives, and Museums in the Digital Age,” *The Library Quarterly* 80, no. 1 (January 1, 2010): 7–32.

⁶⁴² Jacob Gaboury, “A Queer History of Computing,” *Rhizome* (February 2013), accessed April 16, 2017, <http://rhizome.org/editorial/2013/feb/19/queer-computing-1/>.

⁶⁴³ Heather Love, *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 5.

order. His “A Queer History of Computing” demonstrates how digital affordances enable a dialectic between instability and stability capable of envisioning an otherwise-paradoxical narrative form of the “queer genealogy.” While Gaboury’s serial is commendable in its aims to present a counter-history of computing, it does not quite tap into queerness’s ambivalent relationship to the fin-de-siècle historical production, one that logs both the historical existence and repression of queer lives, since his study gathers around an iconic figure like Turing who has been retroactively received as queer without debate.

While the digital has become a privileged terrain of queer archiving activity, these efforts are largely fixated on preserving contemporary cultures, ones agreed upon as queer. Contemporary queer digital archiving projects push for computational design and architectures to better accommodate the ephemeral and unusual evidence of queer affects and cultures. Queer digital archival interventions typically rely on open source, user-generated platforms, which align with the grassroots, “bottom-up,” community-based practices central to queer archiving more broadly.⁶⁴⁴ In turn, the growing body of scholarly literature on queer digital affective traces similarly concentrates user-based applications and platforms, like Instagram, Historypin, and YouTube. Moreover, being more amenable to participatory, or “pro-am,” archiving practices that span professional and personal communities, queer digital archiving projects have initiated changes to archival description practices, especially on the level of subject headings. For instance the

⁶⁴⁴ Dayna McLeod, “Speculative Praxis Towards a Queer Feminist Digital Archive: A Collaborative Research-Creation Project,” *Ada: A Journal of Gender, New Media, and Technology*, July 7, 2014, <http://adanewmedia.org/2014/07/issue5-cowanetal/>.

Queer Zine Archive Project (QZAP) and the University of Victoria's Transgender Archives each participate in crowd-sourced archival description practices to reflect more accurately the genderqueer and trans* communities whose legacies they preserve. Lest we submit too readily to the naïve promise of the "cyberutopian," in terms of scholarly research, women and queer individual still occupy minoritarian and under-examined positions relative to digital information management practices, especially in terms of historical presences of these populations.⁶⁴⁵ While digital scholarship has begun to chronicle queer communities in the present, questions of where and how the historical researcher might locate traces of queerness persist. To think more about how digital archiving negotiates histories of sexuality, I investigate how digital archiving practices group around older models of collecting that make them feel historical in ways that resonate with scholars of queer histories.

iv. Mediating Queer Digital Histories

The goal of using anachronism as an interpretative framework in "Archiving" is to expand definitions of documentary materiality in order to chart fin-de-siècle queerness' ambivalent relationship to the *longue durée* history of modern archiving. In the previous sections, "The Archive" and "Archives," archival intermediation occurred on the level of the singular document or within a singular archival space: reading for intermediation then functioned primarily as a method of addressing the expanded

⁶⁴⁵ Abigail De Kosnik, *Rogue Archives: Digital Cultural Memory and Media Fandom* (MIT Press, 2016), 15.

narrative content of objects or archives by speculating on their written, visual, auditory, and performed features. In particular, in the previous inter-chapter on the Cockettes, the intermediated potentials of their archival bodies initiated revisions to familiar tropes of archival invisibilities and silences in queer theory by unlocking persistent specters of orality and performance. This part of the “freak” archival research method will remain the same in “Archiving” as I unpacking the expansive histories encased in primarily photochemical media. However, in moving from physical or traditional archives to digital ones, “Archiving” additionally locates these intermediary possibilities not only in the content of the documents and archives but also in the affordances and informatics of digital collections. Contemporary archival studies scholarship relies on writing-, oral-, and performance-based theories of narration to explicate the practices of digital curation, transcription, and preservation that culminate in digital archives. Instead of summoning the intermediary possibilities of these materials and archives in spite of themselves, the digital terrain actually provides for intermediation’s expanded definitions of materiality.

Digital archival infrastructures aim to preserve the contexts of its artifacts. Often, in order to capture rhetorically the dynamic transcriptional and preservative possibilities of these potential affordances, archival studies scholars apply extra-textual models of communication to explicating written computational or digital code. In 1985, Hugh Taylor proposed that computer technologies would require information management systems conceptually structured on oral patterns of transmission, meaning that archivists would need to emphasize the “context of a document and the action that gave rise to it,”

rather than the document itself.⁶⁴⁶ Taylor's recourse to the oral functions primarily as conceptual model, an analogy to push archivists of the time to think in terms of context and relationality, rather than concrete origins and originals. Still, his analogy provokes some potential theoretical gymnastics that bend traditional understandings of the archival document to fit into an interpretative framework of orality. Taylor's remarks serve as precedent for the language of intermediation that comes to characterize the digital archival infrastructure contemporarily. For instance, Karin Wagner expands on Taylor's early words to compare the narrative affordances of digital open photographic archives, which host both archival institutions and the general public, to those of the family album. Inviting deictic cues and associative and emotional language, the metadata categories for these digital archives re-enact an intermediated narrative mode of records keeping in line with the family album's "secondary orality," in which visual artifacts "belong to an oral tradition in which stories are told, not written."⁶⁴⁷ Initially, Wagner reprises the type of intermediation at the level of the document that this study has focused on by more explicitly integrating the visual, the photographic, into already-intertwined digital narrative systems of writing and orality. But, more importantly for "Archiving," her comparison goes on to illuminate the intermediary possibilities embedded in acts of digital archiving: specifically, the narrative intermediation underwriting digital archive

⁶⁴⁶ Terry Cook, "Hugh Taylor: Imagining Archives," in *Imagining Archives: Essays and Reflections by Hugh A. Taylor*, ed. Terry Cook and Gordon Dodds (Lanham: Society of American Archivists and Association of Canadian Archivists with Scarecrow Press, 2002), 23.

⁶⁴⁷ Karin Wagner, "The Personal versus the Institutional Voice in an Open Photographic Archive," *Archival Science* (2017): 1–20.

results from the relationships established between various amateur user-archivists and the metadata categories instituted by the archive.

Beyond the oral and visual, contemporary digital archiving theory also enlists language common to performance studies that touches on the expanded critical and creative promises of anachronism. Resisting the authority of original creators and their material archival collection, Paul Conway argues that we also consider their digital surrogates as organic collections worthy of their own unique management and maintenance in order to track traces of fluid archival lifecycles. This marks a step away from traditional archival practices that reject surrogate collections as properly archival, since they represent a removal from the original source and are thus questionably authentic and reliable. Giving agency to the surrogate collection engenders “lively and interactive communication between the evidence of our past and our present human condition, as well as our hopes and aspirations for the future.”⁶⁴⁸ Conway’s theory of the archival surrogate suggestively echoes Joseph Roach’s theory of surrogation in which performance becomes an imperfect substitute that fills in cavities created by perceived losses, deaths, or other modes of social departure. As the substitute that either exceeds or fails to fulfill the expectations of the original, performance as surrogation does not simply reproduce traditions but rather overturns them or invents new ones.⁶⁴⁹ Reading for the performative dimensions of digital surrogation reorients discussions of archival value and

⁶⁴⁸ Paul Conway, “Digital Transformations and the Archival Nature of Surrogates,” *Archival Science* 15, no. 1 (2015): 51–69.

⁶⁴⁹ Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

authenticity to the interactive acts of archiving themselves, the performances of archiving inherent in digital archival rhetoric and infrastructures. As surrogates, these collections are not just imperfect proxies of material origins but potential stand-ins for expanded histories of archival accessioning, transcribing, preserving, and curating that give these digital surrogates affective and intellectual architectures.

Because of its focus on the personal contextualizing experiences of different archivists, the types of participatory archiving that Wagner and Conway describe enfold into the digital's narrative matrix the epiphenomenal affects, feelings, or intimacies that arise from chains of archival acquisition. Not exceptions to the rule, these case studies on the relationality of digital archiving find footing within the Dublin Core Metadata Initiative (DCMI), which is the primary forum for developing online metadata standards and practices for archiving developed at the 1995 Metadata Workshop hosted jointly by Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) and the National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA.) Central to Dublin Core is concept of "linkage" or the "expression of relationships between the thing described and other things or sets of things" with the "number of potentially relevant relationships" being "limitless."⁶⁵⁰ Rather than establishing unbroken chains ownership that privilege the sole, originating creator over all else, Dublin Core metadata terms privilege the document's relational potential by reconstructing a fluid and expansive context that includes elements such as title, creator, subject, description, publisher, date, format, and source. Interpreting and developing

⁶⁵⁰ Priscilla Caplan, *Metadata Fundamentals for All Librarians* (Chicago: American Library Association, 2003), 4.

metadata tags is the individual archivist's task. Reflecting current trends in archival studies, Dublin Core's flexibility stresses that archival description, far from neutral, is an act of representation in which the archivist becomes a storyteller "intertwining facts with narratives, observation with interpretation."⁶⁵¹

Of course, the DCMI presents itself as a sexually neutral set of practices; however, with its focus on relationality, flexible or fluid bodies of information, and intertemporal contextuality, it also resonates with nineteenth-century queer collecting practices. "Archiving" works with the surrogates of Sandow's original source materials to reconstruct through digital collections the historical contexts that shaped his presentations of masculinity. The anachronistic reading of DCMI practices alongside queer collecting practices invites pairing the material-digital artifacts with more mutable nonce taxonomies that speak to "the inventiveness of desire in finding form and singularity not just in attachment to normative sexual objects but anywhere it can,"⁶⁵² so as to acknowledge the desiring bodies of previous, unseen spectators holding or sharing these photographs. Sandow's media is charged with affective murmurings and hums that chart "cultural contexts that may otherwise remain ephemeral because they haven't solidified into a visible public culture."⁶⁵³ These nonce taxonomies emerge through the expanded materiality of the Sandow objects made possible by digital interfaces and

⁶⁵¹Wendy Duff and Verne Harris, "Stories and Names: Archival Description as Narrating Records and Constructing Meanings," *Archival Science*, 2, no. 3 (September 2002): 276.

⁶⁵²Lauren Berlant, "Eve Sedgwick, Once More," *Critical Inquiry* 35 (Summer 2009): 1089.

⁶⁵³Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 36.

infrastructures: the photographs give way to circulating currents of gossip, rumor, unreliable news, and embodied knowledge such as performance that may elude total containment by traditional archival practices, but still manage to materialize through digital archival affordances.

v. Sandow at the National Portrait Gallery: Queer Sex in the Digital Museum

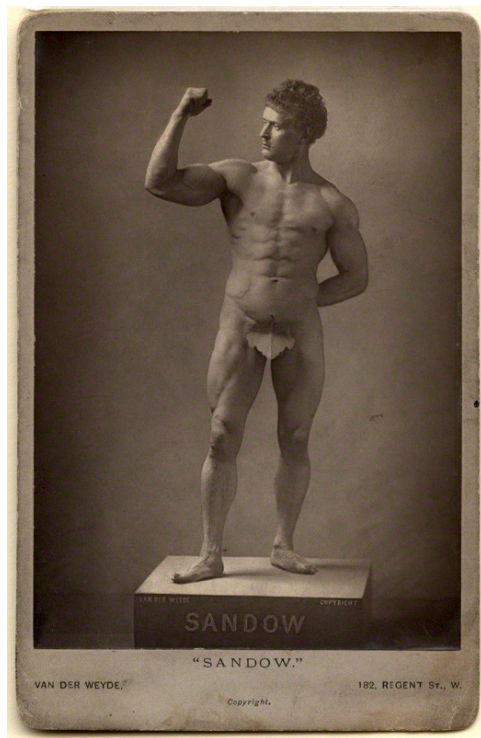


Fig. 8 “Sandow” Henry Van Der Weyde carbon print. 1889. NPG x25921

© National Portrait Gallery, London

To start, some gossip:

The *Pall Mall Gazette*'s coverage of Robert Browning's funeral in 1889 spared no emotional detail, relishing in the "yellow fog wrapping everything in its melancholy folds" and the mellifluously plaintive tones of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's "The Sleep" set to music. In what seems like the most befitting instance of pathetic fallacy ever recorded, the conclusion of Browning's burial was literally his poetry come to life: "a ray of sunlight met each mourner in the face; for the sun, having pierced its way at last through the fog, glinted in upon the Abbey. It was a literal realization of the lines in *Paracelsus*. The poet had, as it were, "pressed God's lamp Close to his breast; its splendour, soon or late, Will pierce the gloom: I shall emerge on day."⁶⁵⁴ In the crowd of nearly six hundred mourners, however, there may have been one distinguished guest for whom the sun failed to greet head on. After the fog and funeral cortege had dispersed, poet Edmund Gosse alleged to his intimates that he had spirited in a *carte-de-visite* to occupy his time: an 1889 nude of strongman Eugen Sandow. Photographed by Henry Van Der Weyde to promote Sandow's live performances of strength, the image features Sandow clad only in a fig leaf perched atop a box labeled "Sandow," looking every inch the ideal Hellenist sculpture. Browning's public burial became the stage for Gosse's private pleasures.

The urban legend of Gosse's surreptitious peeks at Sandow's *carte* initially could not be any different than its current viewing venue. A copy of the infamous photo now resides at the National Portrait Gallery London, and is available through the museum's

⁶⁵⁴ "Robert Browning," *Pall Mall Gazette*, December 31 1889.

Digital Space, an initiative designed to offer access to the museum's deep storage holdings to the general public. If part of the freak photographic phenomenon included how images circulated in both public (at the show) and private (the parlor and family album), recent efforts to digitize photographic collections have revived these Victorian circuits of photographic exchange and relocated them to the online museum space. Our desktops, laptops, tablets, and smart phones simultaneously become electronic museums, archives, or photo albums. Rather than just acting as spectators, we retroactively access and participate in the chains of public and personal exchange that characterize the shelf life of the freak photograph. Focusing on Van der Weyde photograph, this case study teases out the rhetorical and epistemological connections between late-century bric-à-brac collecting practices and contemporary digital archiving practices through the idiom of relationality in order to access a queer archive that might otherwise pass unrecognized as such. The rhetorical backbone of digital archival practices promises expansive connectivity, which is then actualized through archival affordances. Sandow's photograph performs this networked quality of digital archives only to emphasize the gaps punctuating his archival afterlife, where the networks fail to materialize in ways expected for museum display and storage. Rather than dead-ends, these lacunae give rise to or dissipate into speculative energies that inoculate Sandow's photograph with an unseen architecture that pays homage to the intimate and transporative nature of fin-de-siècle queer collecting practices typically absent from the museum. As digitization comes to memorialize not only the material objects themselves but also the personal investments at the heart of collecting, the current archival state of Sandow's photograph

initiates affective encounters with the past that posit anachronism's simultaneously retrogressive and anticipatory logic as an earnest way of emotionally tapping into the past in order to produce new forms of queer cultural memory production.

Throughout the mid- to late-nineteenth century, museums pursued the venerable aims of elevating, and educating British and American citizens.⁶⁵⁵ The Museums Act of 1845 established precedent for constructing museums in England's boroughs out of public rates. Reminiscent of Greco-Roman statuary, Sandow's photograph condenses the pedagogy of the museum as signifying an ideal-yet-obtainable cultural touchstone through which contemporary Victorian viewers could trace back their lineage. With this auspicious history, his eventual inclusion in the National Portrait Gallery supports the museum's initial mission statement. In proposing the foundation of the Gallery to the House of Lords in 1856, Philip Henry Stanhope pitched the National Portrait Gallery as a "gallery of original portraits, such portraiture to consist as far as possible of those persons who are most honourably commemorated in British history."⁶⁵⁶ During Stanhope's cultural moment, the politics of museum display produced hierarchized systems of race, class, gender, and sexuality.⁶⁵⁷ As Eugenio Donato argues, the goal of the nineteenth-

⁶⁵⁵ Given and McTavish, "What's Old Is New Again," 9.

⁶⁵⁶ "Gallery History," The National Portrait Gallery, last accessed May 1 2015, <http://www.npg.org.uk/about-us-landing.php>

⁶⁵⁷ Kylie Message and Ewan Johnston, "The World within the City: The Great Exhibition, Race, Class, and Social Reform," in *Britain, the Empire, and the World at the Great Exhibition of 1851*, ed. Jeffrey A. Auerbach and Peter H. Hoffenberg. (London: Ashgate, 2008), 27-46.

century museum was to proffer “by the orderly display of selected artefacts a total representation of human reality and history,” which materialized through series of chronologically ordered and labeled displays.⁶⁵⁸ Archives and museums may have been considered separate entities, but during this period, elite patrons regularly grouped these institutions, citing their civilizing influences. The discourse of uplift may have currently vanished, but as Web 2.0 technologies reshape users’ experiences of these cultural institutions, archives and museums are beginning to converge again, highlighting similarities in nineteenth-century and digital information management goals.⁶⁵⁹ But rather than just replaying the same rhetoric of edification undergirding Victorian information organization practices, the digital through its anachronistic re-enactments of subcultural collecting practices within museum spaces rather reveals the limited reach of nineteenth-century museological attempts to represent history through conventional practices. Instead the National Portrait Gallery’s digital space gives an alternative history of collecting that expands the materiality of its archival artifacts to account more fully for fin-de-siècle queer cultural memory making practices.

In efforts to validate themselves as cultural institutions by emphasizing what they were *not*, museums and archives both grabbed ahold of the bric-à-brac collection. Bric-à-brac collections were comprised of domestic “bits and pieces,” such as “curiosities,

⁶⁵⁸ Eugenio Donato, “The Museum’s Furnace: Notes Towards a Contextual Reading of Bouvard and Pecuchet,” in *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*, ed. Josue V. Harari (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979), 214.

⁶⁵⁹ Given and McTavish, “What’s Old Is New Again,” 7.

object d'art, artifacts, things, objects, specimens.”⁶⁶⁰ The lack of standardized arrangement practices for these collections engendered startling historical juxtapositions that even museums, which strove to present themselves as superior to bric-à-brac, were susceptible to; late-nineteenth-century museum curators assiduously avoided claims of historical inaccuracy that may have been leveled against their “curiosity cabinets” or “artistic jumbles” by conforming to chronologically-based display tactics intended to portray a whole and homogenous view of history.⁶⁶¹ Perhaps the most infamous condemnation of bric-à-brac comes courtesy of late-century museum reformer George Brown Good who urged that “the museum of the past be set aside, reconstructed, transformed from a cemetery of bric-à-brac into a nursery of living thoughts.”⁶⁶² In addition to museums, late-nineteenth-century archival administration also refused to consider domestic collections, or “family archives,” as official archival collections. While not specifically identifying bric-à-brac as its target, the 1898 Dutch *Manual* nonetheless distinguishes between an official archival collection that “grows, takes shape, and undergoes changes in accordance with fixed rules” and a vernacular collection that “has been gathered together in the strangest manner and lacks the organic bond of the

⁶⁶⁰ Victoria Mills, “Bricabracomania! Collecting, Corporeality and the Problem of Things in Victorian Fiction,” in *Literary Bric-à-Brac and the Victorians: From Commodities to Oddities*, ed. Jonathon Shears and Jen Harrison (London: Routledge, 2016), 35.

⁶⁶¹ Didier Maleuvre, *Museum Memories: History, Technology, Art* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 60.

⁶⁶² George Brown Goode, *The Museums of the Future* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1891), 427.

archival collection.”⁶⁶³ Through shared concerns for legible authenticity in the face of curious or surrogate collections, nineteenth-century and more traditional contemporary archival theories reprise similar anxieties pertaining to new technologies and archival practices that, I argue, are in part driven by discourses of sexuality.

Especially important for this study, the repeated condemnation of the vernacular collection harbors sexual undertones. Besides the apparently worthless status of baubles and bibelots, one of the main reasons that bric-à-brac was viewed with such suspicion was because of the emotionality that drove its practice. Throughout the fin-de-siècle “Golden Age” of archiving, best practices dictated the archivist be calm and collected. For Sir Hilary Jenkinson, the “impartiality” was a “gift “ aiding in the moral and physical defense of archives brought under the archivist’s dispassionate care.⁶⁶⁴ On the other hand, the collector was anything but collected, primarily motivated by what the great bric-à-brac hunter, Major Herbert Byng-Hall, rhapsodized as “passionate devot[ion] to works of art.”⁶⁶⁵ In his discussion of Honoré de Balzac’s *Le Cousin Pons*, a novel featuring a bric-à-braceur as its titular character, Byng-Hall likens the collecting fever to insatiable lust by noting that “Monsieur Pons was jealous of his art-treasures as an ardent lover of his mistress, and scarcely desired that any eyes save his own should behold

⁶⁶³ Muller, Feith, Fruin, *Management for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, 10.

⁶⁶⁴ Sir Hilary Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archive Administration Including the Problems of War Archives and Archive Making* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922).

⁶⁶⁵ Major H. Byng Hall, *The Adventures of A Bric-a-Brac Hunter* (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1868), 1.

them.”⁶⁶⁶ Byng-Hall frames Pons’ all consuming collecting through semi-illicit heterosexual desire, but by the end of the nineteenth century, bric-à-brac collections, once the purview of women and eccentrics (like Mr. Venus in Dickens’ *Our Mutual Friend*), became associated with queer dandy-aesthetes, like Oscar Wilde’s eponymous Dorian Gray or Joris-Karl Huysmans’ Des Esseintes in *À Rebours*.⁶⁶⁷ In a damning denouncement most likely incited by writings of Wilde and Huysmans, Max Nordau opined that “the present rage for collecting, the piling up, in dwellings, of aimless bric-à-brac” is so peculiar that must be “an irresistible desire among the degenerate.”⁶⁶⁸ Nordau’s words may not be explicitly sexual in content, but by subtly equating degeneration with non-productivity, as Nordau does throughout *Degeneration*, his statement on bric-à-brac possesses anti-queer connotations.

Echoing the language of Byng-Hall, contemporary queer archival perspectives view nineteenth-century collecting as a sex-act. Desire drives impulses to catalogue and preserve inspiring art curators David Frantz and Mia Locks to coin the phrase “cruising the archive” to refer to acts of queer archiving and archives-based research.⁶⁶⁹ Similarly, Thomas Waugh characterizes the fin-de-siècle queer collector in terms of erotic consumption: the collector is “persistently libidinous,” an “inveterate voyeur,” and an

⁶⁶⁶ Byng Hall, *The Adventures of a Bric-a-Brac Hunter*, 2.

⁶⁶⁷ Victoria Mills, “Bricabracomania!,” 42-3.

⁶⁶⁸ Max Simon Nordau, *Degeneration* (London: D. Appleton, 1895), 27.

⁶⁶⁹ David Frantz and Mia Locke, *Cruising the Archive: Queer Art and Culture in Los Angeles, 1945-1980*, last accessed April 27 2017, <https://cruisingthearchive.org/exhibition/>

“insatiable consumer.”⁶⁷⁰ Drawing on a similar panoply of non-normative sexual behaviors that Nordau classified as degenerate, Waugh’s language enacts a look backward to a queer history of information management and organization marked simultaneously by resilience and shame. Beyond retroactively classifying the habits of the fin-de-siècle queer collector, playwright Neill Bartlett performs them as a emotionally-invested model of queer research for *Who Was That Man: A Present for Mr. Oscar Wilde*, a monograph about what fin-de-siècle and late-twentieth queer experiences “feel like” in London.⁶⁷¹ To recount his research process, Bartlett fleshes out the relationship between nineteenth-century collecting and twentieth-century cruising that helps to construct a creatively anachronistic portrait of London. Bartlett initially took cues from the serendipitous intimacies that grow out of cruising culture, noting that “knowledge of the cities is shaped by the way ex-lovers introduce you to their friends, by the way you hear someone’s story because he happened to be in the same place as you at the same time. And eventually you build up a network of places and people.”⁶⁷² Efforts to “redraw [a] map of the city” through cruising led Bartlett to collecting: “I moved from clue to clue, from name to name and from book to book. I started collecting pictures and anecdotes. I bought four big scrapbooks and filled them with whatever texts or images I

⁶⁷⁰ Thomas Waugh, *Hard to Imagine*, 33.

⁶⁷¹ Neil Bartlett, *Who Was That Man?: A Present for Mr. Oscar Wilde* (London: Profile Books, 1988), xix.

⁶⁷² Bartlett, *Who Was That Man?*, xxi

could find of London of a hundred years ago.”⁶⁷³ By developing a queer poetics of archiving and archival research that reach back to the lingering affects and passionate modes of attachment of fin-de-siècle collecting, contemporary queer critics reprise a model of knowledge production and organization pivoting on anachronism’s simultaneously regressive and anticipatory logic that initially took form through Victorian aesthetic writings on collecting.

For aesthetic critics like Walter Pater and John Addington Symonds, inhabiting and developing an intimate attachment to a Hellenist past through creating, consuming, and collecting its materials allowed for cultural regeneration and new articulations of desire. In “Denys L’Auxerrois,” Walter Pater writes of the seductive and transportive experience that bric-à-brac as a historical jumble engenders: “To beguile one such afternoon when the rain set in early and walking was impossible, I found my way to the shop of an older dealer in *bric-à-brac*” with relics “of the last century” juxtaposed with “many a gem of earlier times.”⁶⁷⁴ Like his beguiling bric-à-brac browsing, going Greek, for Pater, was occasion for a visionary re-interpretation of history, as creative processes could transform the modern poet into “an antiquarian” who “animates his subject by always keeping it close to himself.”⁶⁷⁵ Symonds likewise privileged creatively reinterpreting the Greeks over accurately reproducing them as he encouraged people to

⁶⁷³ Bartlett, *Who Was That Man?*, xxi

⁶⁷⁴ Walter Pater, “Denys L’Auxerrois,” in *Selections from Walter Pater*, ed. Edward Everett Hale (New York: H. Holt, 1906), 100.

⁶⁷⁵ Walter Pater, “Appreciations,” in *Selected Writings of Walter Pater*, ed. Harold Bloom. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974), 195.

“approximat[e] to their free and fearless attitude of mind.” Symonds was a self-proclaimed connoisseur of Greek sculpture, framing his enthusiasm in terms of lustful consumption of his father’s collection in his biography: “I devoured Greek literature and fed upon the reproductions of Greek plastic art, with which my father’s library was stored.”⁶⁷⁶ Within the confines of the private library, Symond’s earliest recollections of the viewing experience are charged with an eroticism that would only assert itself more forcibly as he matured. Symonds later conceptualized the ennobling spirit of Victorian Hellenism through the ideal of the manly Greek lovers and their “comrade-love”: “Like a young man newly come from the wrestling-ground, anointed, chapleted, and very calm, the Genius of the Greeks appears before us.”⁶⁷⁷ Dwelling primarily in a narrative register of the poet or collector’s relationship to the past, Pater and Symond’s articulate new forms of desire that materialize through objects and artifacts of the past.

The language of relationality at the heart of fin-de-siècle queer collecting subcultures arises again through contemporary digital archiving principles. DCMI privileges “linkage,” the “expression of relationships between the thing described and other things or sets of things,” which should be supported through the digital archive’s metadata infrastructure. Because DCMI recognizes the circuits of surrogation that contribute to a collection at any give time, linkages allows for a potentially limitless

⁶⁷⁶John Addington Symonds, *John Addington Symonds: A Biography Compiled from his Papers and Correspondence*, ed. Horatio Brown (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1903), 65.

⁶⁷⁷ John Addington Symonds, *Studies of the Greek Poets* (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1877), 417.

“number relevant relationships.”⁶⁷⁸ DCMI augments the document’s relational potential by reconstructing a fluid and expansive context that includes elements such as title, creator, subject, description, publisher, date, format, and source. Each element is optional and should be responsive to the particular context of a digital artifact of collection. While discerning metadata elements typically falls to the archivist, these forms representation are also open to user intervention. Collecting is an intimate process by which objects are constantly produced, reconfigured, and redefined through the desiring collector. Johanna Drucker similarly characterizes the digital interface not as a static text, but “as site of provocation for reading, and ... a space for interpretation involve[ing] an individual *subject*, not a generic user”⁶⁷⁹ The multiple points available for entering into the history of an object through digital archiving produces a collaborative environment where individual users can participate in expansive acts of historical re-imagination while still remaining vigilant to the object’s materiality. The document is relational and open to change through each user’s intellectual and emotional interventions. However, this promise of relationality is not necessarily infinite, because as Sandow’s materials will show, digital archival paths can break or result in dead-ends, effectively destabilizing the relational discourse on which the network relies. But rather than viewing this a shortcoming, this question of stability and instability echoes modes of

⁶⁷⁸ Priscilla Caplan, *Metadata Fundamentals for All Librarians* (Chicago: American Library Association, 2003), 4.

⁶⁷⁹ Johanna Drucker, “Speculative Computing: Aesthetic Provocations in Humanities Computing,” in *A Companion to Digital Humanities*, ed. Susan Schreibman, Ray Siemens, John Unsworth (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004.)

queer archival research that endeavor to bring the two into a dialectical relationship. Such methods require recognizing how bodies of documentation accumulate to stabilize an archive while respecting their “destabilizing power,” much like the bric-a-brac collections that participated in compulsive cataloguing practices only to undo them.⁶⁸⁰ In what follows, I trace out the limited networks of the National Portrait Gallery’s digital space to character Sandow’s digital collection as an anachronistic space capable of documenting queer memory making practices.

Sandow’s photograph is part of a larger museum-wide initiative to offer visitors and researchers increased access to the National Portrait Gallery’s holdings. His digital entry assures us that Sandow is now a verifiable member of the National Portrait Gallery’s photographic collection as entry number NPGx25921, fully accounted for and contained by museum descriptive practices. As Van der Weyde’s photograph visualizes, Sandow himself was a carefully conceived anachronism. Hellenist imagery and discourse made photographic Sandow simultaneously classical and modern, as throughout his career, the strongman took careful pains to transform himself from a man susceptible to aging into a timeless sculpture. Victorian art and cultural critics revered the figure of the Greek athlete as the embodiment of a rational and measured spirit.⁶⁸¹ In particular, Sandow’s hypermasculine muscularity made him a living and breathing embodiment of

⁶⁸⁰ Jen Jack Giesecking, “Useful In/stability: The Dialectical Production of the Social and Spatial Lesbian Herstory Archives,” *Radial History Review*, 122 (May 2015): 35.

⁶⁸¹ Alison Smith, *The Victorian Nude: Sexuality, Morality, and Art* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 173.

Symonds' prized figure of Hellenist civic and cultural regeneration, the manly warrior bound by duty through erotic camaraderie. Though photography was not considered suitable for inclusion at the museum's opening, Sandow's photograph re-affirms the honorific function of photography that memorializes the traces of "the visible bodies of heroes, leaders, moral exemplars, celebrities."⁶⁸² However, this only tells half the story. Photographing cultural exemplars also makes visible their refractions, "the poor, the diseased, the insane, the criminal, the nonwhite, the female, and all other embodiments of the unworthy"—in short, the freaks. Rather than upholding and systematizing, Sandow's photography collapses the distinctions and position points that give the generalized archive its shape and false sense of immutability. More specifically, Sandow's co-opting of Hellenist visual codes generate photographic indeterminacy, as his body becomes the source of polysemous sexuality that then actualizes through the digital collection's affordances.

A series of hyperlinks enters Sandow into a network of cross-references according to sitter, artists, and subjects & themes, which when navigated attest to how the National Portrait Gallery builds a queer body of evidence, despite its claims to sexual neutrality. One of Sandow's Subject/Themes is "Nudes/Naked Figures" and a click of the hyperlink ensconces Sandow within a rich art historical lineage that celebrates the nude, mostly male, form. The images are eclectic: for instance, Sandow is flanked by the delicate sublimity of HB Doyle's "Laocoon" series and the excretive abjection of Gilbert &

⁶⁸² Allan Sekula, "The Body and the Archive" *The Contest of Meaning : Critical Histories of Photography*, ed. Richard Bolton (Amherst: MIT Press, 1989), 347.

George's "Gilbert & George ("IN THE PISS.>"). These differences in visual tone ask us to consider what economies of viewing might we activate looking at Sandow's body. Though not explicitly stated, desire becomes one of these viewing modes because of the historical context in which this photograph circulated that made the "Herculean" strongman a recognizable icon of same-sex desire and anachronistic pleasure through Hellenist revivalism. Possessing a modicum of self-possession and restraint with his single fig leaf, Sandow's *carte* reads as nearly conservative in a collection populated by James Gillray's humorous and vaguely pornographic caricatures and Mario Testino's edgy, *haute couture* semi-nudes. Sandow, however, is a Classic. His photograph draws directly from Greek and Roman sculpture traditions, but re-imagines this past through a photographic lens. Van der Weyde's patent electric light emphasizes Sandow's alabaster skin and musculature dusted with powder to make it look as though it were cut from marble. His posture, a classic *contrapposto*, with a flexed bicep that is the source of his "ancient-Greek" admiration," is hypermasculine. He departs from more overtly queer Hellenist photographic idioms, which tended to employ the s-curve to emphasize serpentine lines of the male body. If some of his later photographs betray the fleshiness that inevitably accompanies age, this one is all sinew, what an amazed journalist once likened to "the gnarled roots of old trees" under "clear white skin" (*The Daily Telegraph* 1889) Correspondents covering the 1889 performances routinely described in Sandow in boyish terms, with a young face and curling hair more typical of the queer "ephebe" though he obviously has the body of pictorial "He-Man." Through the anachronistic combination of sculpture and photograph, Sandow's image anticipates a potentially new

embodiment of queer masculinity by breaking down the overstated oppositions of the ephebe and the mature muscle man that structured the visual poetics of late-nineteenth-century homoeroticism. More than preserving the actual photographic object, the NPG's digital collection through its "Nudes/Naked Figures" memorializes a form of queer desire novel during the late-nineteenth-century that could only gain traction during this period of technological and aesthetic ferment.

Photography is typically considered to be a still medium that records events firmly seated in the past. However, in *Performing Remains*, Rebecca Schneider relocates photography's origins in movement, in particular *tableaux vivants*.⁶⁸³ Sandow's "sitter information" tag makes the photograph's living precedents more explicit, as he is cross-referenced as a "Wrestler and Strongman." Understanding that performance does not disappear but remains present within network of objects, bodies, memories, and documents, broadens our arsenal of evidence to include performance as a tool for tracing traditions, inoculating the image with an unseen living history. Not simply a "Nude," Sandow is likewise cross-referenced as a "Wrestler and Strongman." This attribution, however, is not *quite* correct since Sandow never actually wrestled, unless the urban legend of his bout with a "particularly ferocious" lion in San Francisco is to be believed. This potentially apocryphal stunt allied Sandow the closest ever to freakery, as a gossip columnist from the *Daily Picayune* referred to the strongman as "the latest freak ... in the

⁶⁸³ Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 30.

athletic world.”⁶⁸⁴ This slight imprecision reflects how the freak show’s characteristic exaggeration and fabrication make for creative, if not totally artificial, historical connections through archival processing—a re-imagined past how Sandow thought it should have been.

In his shows, Sandow was hardly interested in historical or artistic accuracy, rather looking to play up, and sexualize, the Victorian masculine warrior ideal. As Rebecca Schneider notes, re-enactment is marked by imprecisions and imperfections as “an event in time, refusing to be fully or finally “over” or “gone” or “complete,”” and “puls[ing] with a kind of living afterlife in an ecstasy of variables.”⁶⁸⁵ Through “Wrestler and Strongman” hyperlink network, the NPG’s digital infrastructure and affordances enact an intermediated reading of Sandow’s photograph that pivots on his anachronistic performances of Greek culture. Haunted by his *ersatz* performances, the photograph undercuts the earnestness of the other “Wrestlers and Strongmen” re-forming the museum’s art historical archival body according to a camp aesthetic. Though not forthrightly sexual in content, Sandow’s show did feature a cadre of nearly nude men posing together in such a way that does not completely foreclose homoerotic desire. In their ultra-stylized kitschy qualities, Sandow’s London performances traded on camp’s ultra-nuanced stylization: “Camp sees everything in quotation marks ... To perceive

⁶⁸⁴ “Bantam’s Budget,” *The Daily Picayune*, May 20 1894.

⁶⁸⁵ Schneider, *Performing Remains*, 29.

Camp in objects and persons is to understand Being-as-Playing-a-Role.”⁶⁸⁶ Through live performances Sandow became “Sandow”: a self-consciously theatrical performer who engages in stylized performances of masculinity charged with homoerotic possibilities.

A key player in shaping Sandow’s archival body was the photographer himself, Henry Van der Weyde, and the hyperlink to his photographic atelier resituates Sandow within a web of the artist’s peculiar avant-garde and commercial photographic alliances. A click on the “artist” link takes the user to the Van der Weyde *fonds* at the National Portrait Gallery; his entry emphasizes his involvement with a coterie of modernist photographers, The Brotherhood of the Linked Ring, which sought to elevate photography from a science to an art. Responding to the photography’s prominent role in constructing colonial, medical, and police archives, a vocal proponent of the Brotherhood, Henry Peach Robinson, looked to reframe photography as a source of artistic enjoyment: “there is still hope for pictorial photography, and a few users of photographic material are becoming emancipated from the thralldom of science.”⁶⁸⁷ In their pursuit of the “Good, True, and Beautiful,” the Brotherhood of the Linked combined the discourses of relationality, artistic anachronism, and queer intimacy that guide this reading of Sandow at the National Portrait Gallery. Although they were not impervious to infighting, as siblings do, the Brotherhood promoted their fraternal ties through their titular gimmal (“linked”) rings, which were two-hooped pieces of jewelry

⁶⁸⁶ Susan Sontag, “Notes on Camp,” in *A Susan Sontag Reader* (New York: MacMillan, 2014), 109.

⁶⁸⁷ Henry Peach Robinson, *Pictorial Effect in Photography: Being Hints on Composition and Chiaroscuro for Photographers* (London: Piper and Calter, 1893), 157.

that could connect its wearers. Beyond jewelry, the Brotherhood shared an artistic vision that resisted the works of modern photographic salons by employing unconventional photographic equipment to produce images that intentionally aimed to look like they were captured without the help of modern technologies. Their output concentrated on soft-focus landscapes that aligned more with Impressionist paintings than they did with photography.⁶⁸⁸ The quest for pristine beauty led some of the Brotherhood's photographers, like Fred Holland Day, to young male nudes, who Day shot in a style that braided together the coterie's signature soft-focus and atmospheric sensualism and Aubrey Beardsley's undulating lines and delicate curves. Day's nudes for the Brotherhood were typically young, spritely men who struck Classical serpentine poses, to engender a misty, erotic photographic body peopled with living sculptures who had been teleported to sylvan settings.⁶⁸⁹

Although he was a "link" (the preferred nickname for a brother), Van der Weyde was also an iconoclast. However much the erstwhile painter Van der Weyde fashioned himself as an aesthete, his bread and butter was still studio portraiture featuring some of the late-century's brightest show business luminaries, including Sandow.⁶⁹⁰ Van der

⁶⁸⁸ "Brotherhood of the Linked Ring," in *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography*, ed. John Hannavy (New York: Routledge, 2008), 220.

⁶⁸⁹ Emmanuel Cooper, *The Sexual Perspective: Homosexuality in Art in the Last 100 Years in the West* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2005), 67.

⁶⁹⁰ The photograph that put Van der Weyde on the map was one of actor Richard Mansfield's portrayal of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, a double exposure shot overlaying the "personalities." Mansfield was apparently so convincing in his role that the Scotland Yard questioned him in connection to the Jack the Ripper murders. Could Van der Weyde's photograph have been a part of a police blotter?

Weyde's links to commerciality, as memorialized through the NPG's decision to include the Sandow photograph, lend instability to the otherwise stable archival body of the Brotherhood of the Linked Ring that the National Portrait Gallery's Digital Space builds. Copies of the photograph were visible and made available at Van der Weyde's studio: perhaps this is where Gosse first set desiring eyes on the strongman? The photograph's sparse *mise-en-scene* includes a pedestal labeled "Sandow" flanked by the words "Copyright" and "Van der Weyde." Though reminiscent of Greek statuary, Sandow's pose transforms into a Van der Weyde "original," a work of fiction that could be artificially created and mass produced for circulation. Daniel Novak notes aestheticism's and photography's shared rhetoric of the body: "If aestheticism theorized and celebrated a fictional body, put together from fragments, photography ... seemed to offer the perfect technology for the composition and reproduction of alternative identities and sexualities."⁶⁹¹ As a copyrighted Van der Weyde "Sandow," the photograph visualizes for a mass cultural audience a Hellenist homoerotic ideal of the manly warrior, erasing any visual signs of prurience by dusting the body with cosmetics and powder then enhanced by Van der Weyde's trademark electric light. Being one of Van Der Weyde's premier posers may publically position Sandow's body as a source of disinterested aesthetic pleasure, but it also produces a sexual type. As a copyrighted Van der Weyde "Sandow," the photography cements the visual coding for the Hellenist homoerotic ideal of the manly warrior, strangely enough palatable for mass audience since it doubled as "a

⁶⁹¹ Daniel Novak, *Realism, Photography, and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 121.

verified... superhuman status of the accomplished bodybuilder.”⁶⁹² Rather than providing univocal evidence, the photograph becomes a source of vexing and pleasurable uncertainty, as the potency of homoerotic convention fluctuates depending on the invisible desiring bodies holding, viewing, and exchanging his photographs. Moreover, within the Brotherhood’s photographic *oeuvre*, the sharply-focused, chiseled body modernity of the Sandow photograph stands as a glaring anachronism relative to the other dreamy landscapes and soft male nudes.

In addition to the photographic medium, the interface and affordances of Sandow’s digital display simultaneously reinforce his status as an icon of mass culture that then gesture to his status as desirable piece of queer Victorian ephemera. Victorian display technologies used glass cases to freeze and entrap artifacts within exhibition spaces: artifacts would be placed in glass boxes and arranged according to logic of contingency and non-access, emphasizing and “frustrating the view,” as well as “thwarting contact.”⁶⁹³ Carefully labeled as “Eugen Sandow” and frozen in time, the digital user interface aligns with glass display technologies to reprise public economies of spectatorship: we can look, but we can not touch. In this case, the display case technology is palimpsestic: the photograph with its border hedges in Sandow, which is then enclosed by the computer screen. Conversely, I can “read” the digital photograph with private

⁶⁹² Bryan Burns, “Classicizing Bodies in the Male Photographic Tradition,” in *Companion to Classical Receptions*, ed. Lorna Hardwick and Christopher Stray (Malden: Wiley Blackwell, 2007), 442.

⁶⁹³ Judith Roof, “Display Cases,” in *Victorian Afterlife: Postmodern Culture Rewrites the Nineteenth Century*, ed. John Kucich and Dianne F. Sadoff (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 106.

collecting practices in mind through its material condition. This question of private circulation would initially appear to be outside of the digital archive's purview, as we do not actually have tactile access to it. In *Image Matters*, Tina Campt writes of family photographs, citing they were meant to be touched and passed along members of a shared community. She argues that the digital medium preserves traces of these haptic encounters through vision.⁶⁹⁴ In addition to the hyperlinks, the entry offers the option of enlarging the photograph to nearly twice the size of the original *carte-de-visite*. When enlarged, the photograph presents a series of imperfections and details less discernible in the smaller image, as the now-visible discolorations, creases, and edges dulled by age assume equal prominence as Sandow himself. Moreover, the enlarged version of the photograph emphasizes Sandow's humanity that the diminutive *carte* successfully suppresses, as his wispy curls have more texture and the hint of a downy moustache dusts his face. If "archival memory" is a type of unchanging memory that "works across distance, over time and space ... to sustain power,"⁶⁹⁵ the enlargement function promises a malleable alternative. Viewing the different sizes either accentuates or reduces the perceptible signs of aging, thereby offering potentially different meanings for the photograph depending on who looks at the photograph and how. Archivist Eric Ketelaar hones in on this interactive quality of digital archival collections, noting that every act of "interaction, intervention, interrogation, and interpretation by creator, user, and archivist"

⁶⁹⁴ Tina Campt, *Image Matters: Archive, Photography, and the African Diaspora in Europe* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012).

⁶⁹⁵ Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. (Durham: Duke University, 2003), 19.

leaves “fingerprints that are attributes to the archive’s infinite meaning.”⁶⁹⁶ Rather than curtailing interaction, the glass display of the digitized photograph allows and encourages a fluidity of engagement where the user can manipulate the form of the original document, creating a collaborative environment that makes possible several historical orientations

The Digital Space initiative that has brought us digital Sandow pivots of language of magnified visibility and increased public access. But, subscribing too wholeheartedly to the promises of the visual muffles the photograph’s private life that fleshes out its sexual architecture. José Muñoz wittily coined the term “rigor-mortis” to identify the privileging of traditionalist scholarly archives and methodologies over the experimental, playful, and performative.⁶⁹⁷ So as not to ossify Sandow, I return to where I started, to Edmund Gosse and my gossipy aside. If taking it to funerals was not a sure enough sign of Gosse’s approval of Sandow, he sent the photograph to one of his intimates and a discriminating viewer of Hellenist sculpture: John Addington Symonds, a great lover of all things Greek and of Sandow’s photograph. After a breakdown in health and a social scandal, an exhausted Symonds fled to Switzerland, disenchanted by British Hellenist revivalism’s paradoxical avowal and disavowal of same-sex desire. Upon receiving Sandow’s photograph in the mail, Symonds response to Gosse echoes his earlier viewing experience as he expresses a desire to own all “copies of all the nude studies which have

⁶⁹⁶ Eric Ketelaar, “Tacit Narratives: The Meanings of Archives” *Archival Science* 1, no. 2 (2001):131.

⁶⁹⁷ José Esteban Muñoz, “Ephemera as Evidence: Introductory Notes to Queer Acts,” *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 8, no. 2 (1996): 7;10.

been taken of this hero”; moreover, he explicitly couches Sandow’s photograph as a source of eroticism by mentioning that “these photographs cannot fail to be seductive.”⁶⁹⁸ Finding Sandow both arousing and salubrious, Symonds hung his pictures at the gymnasium he was sponsoring, suggestively prefiguring Sandow’s involvement in Physical Culture. Much like his performances or the Van der Weyde studio, the gymnasium becomes a space that increases the visibility of male homoeroticism, though it does not directly acknowledge it as such. Through the gymnasium space, Symonds marshals the rhetoric of science and health for legitimizing homosexuality, a path he would pursue with more vigor when collaborating with Havelock Ellis.

Even though Sandow’s image circulated publically, Gosse and Symond’s private exchanges as well as Sandow’s compulsive collecting bear witness to the informal practices that shape queer archival historiography. Waugh characterizes the “new homosexual collector” as “resourcefully duplicitous by virtue of official moral conformity, an inveterate voyeur by the accident of technology whose first mission was the visual simulacrum of the human body, and an accumulative consumer by virtue of the context of expanding commodity capitalism.”⁶⁹⁹ This statement accurately aggregates an assemblage of social identities that affirm the mass and subcultural appeals and dangers of homoerotic photochemical media. The ways that the collector and his materials weave in and out of the historical record retroactively produce the paradoxical dynamic of

⁶⁹⁸ Quoted in Bryan Burns, “Classicizing Bodies in the Male Photographic Tradition” in *Blackwell Companion to Classical Reception*, ed. L. Hardwick and C. Stray (West Sussex: Blackwell 2007), 443.

⁶⁹⁹ Waugh, *Hard to Imagine*, 33.

avowal and disavowal that characterized the late-nineteenth-century psychosexual experience. Much like Symonds', very few, if any, of these collections exist, reduced shreds of gossip, like Symonds' and Gosse's correspondence. An ever-fluctuating and intimate form of communication, gossip eludes complete archival containment, slipping in and out of the historical record. But this slipperiness is precisely what makes it a central tool of queer-freak archival scholarship: gossip as "trace and evidence" queers "*the very ways we might think of the evidential*" as it harbors the potential to "make evident that which could not be seen."⁷⁰⁰ The Gosse-Symonds anecdote as gossip makes visible through Sandow's photograph what can not be seen and what can not be fully disclosed, even in the National Portrait Gallery's onsite collection: a homoerotic appeal and a queer history. The tenuous hyperlinks that gesture to the homoerotic possibility of the photograph coalesce around gossip, bringing together disparate and unusual forms of evidence that push us to reassess at every step how we conduct archival research and where we may find theoretical frameworks for such endeavors.

The photograph's digital-visual representation of its materiality emphasizes traces of aging, reminding us of, but not giving us complete access to, the private networks of exchange that characterized the shelf life of the freak photograph. Each corner is slightly bent and frayed, testifying to years of handling whether by the archivist, scholar, or the Victorian owner of the photograph. Rather than curtailing or prohibiting interaction, the glass display of the digitized photograph allows and even encourages a fluidity of engagement where the user can manipulate and change the form of the original

⁷⁰⁰ Butt, *Between You and Me*, 7.

document, creating a collaborative environment where individual users reorient how they access history. The question of the image's private life that the photograph's material visualizes is echoed in what seems to be the relatively incomplete provenance. This specific Sandow artifact most likely came from a personal or domestic collection. The only insight we get into its past life is that Terence Pepper, the National Portrait Gallery's Senior Special Advisor on Photography, donated it to the museum in 1986; not specified as queer, nonetheless this note in the metadata preserves the unseen collecting cultures that have propelled this particular photograph to the National Portrait Gallery. The whereabouts of this particular *carte* prior to 1986, we will never know, yet gossip persists of private exchanges of Sandow's Van der Weyde photography persist.

Pursuing the paths of Sandow's public and private circulation that coalesce through digital technologies to recontour the museum's relationship to display, collecting, and archiving. The *carte-de-visite* testifies to how the digital platform produces its own display logic by anachronistically integrating Victorian and contemporary technologies with public and private modes of sensory engagement to register how queer evidence moves through the historical record. Sandow's photograph is positioned within a liminal space between institutional and vernacular collections, or as Shawn Michelle Smith phrases it "the archive and the album," as we must equally take into consideration how freak show photography moved throughout different spaces.⁷⁰¹ Not quite functioning within economies of the archive or the album, the photograph carves out a space of indeterminacy made possible only through a digital collection. My method of pursuing

⁷⁰¹ Shawn Michelle Smith, *Photography on the Color Line: W.E.B. DuBois, Race, and Visual Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 227.

Sandow's links only to look for their inevitable cracks pushes us imagine how queerness snakes in and out of the historical record. No longer based on assembling coherent bodies of knowledge, this reading of Sandow is an exercise in provisionality committed to imagining more inclusive research practices. And about that gossip I told you about Gosse earlier? Keep that between us—that's how rumors get started...

vi. Sandow at Harvard: Queer Sex in Digital Library



Fig. 9 “Sandow” Napoleon Sarony.
c. 1893. Albumen print.
Theatrical Cabinet Photographs of Men,
circa 1866-1929 (TCS 1).
Harvard Theatre Collection,
Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Some more gossip:

While relaxing on a trip to Venice, American expat and painter Aubrey Hunt first met Eugen Sandow. The Strongman was also convalescing in Italy after a wrestling match with a man named Müller had left him with a close victory and internal bleeding. In a scene that unfolded like a Victorian episode *Bay Watch* in its ham-fisted sexiness, Hunt scoped out the strongman strutting his stuff on the beach and requested Sandow serve as a model for him, an interaction that possessed such an electric homoerotic charge that it has been retroactively designated as cruising.⁷⁰² In “My Reminiscences” for *Strand Magazine* (1910), nearly thirty years later, Sandow takes pleasure in remembering Hunt’s total admiration of him: “As I apologized in passing him, he stopped to compliment me upon what he was pleased to term my ‘perfect physique and beauty of form.’”⁷⁰³ The painting features Sandow as a primitive gladiator posing against what appears to be an imperfect reconstruction of a coliseum. His arm and chest muscles bulge out of a draped, leopard print loincloth, just fuzzy enough around the edges to give it the texture of supple fur. Compared to his thighs, Sandow’s biceps and triceps are carefully shaded so as to emphasize their strength. Though Hunt admired Sandow’s “beauty of form,” it does not quite translate to the painting as Sandow looks rather top-heavy and his legs lack any of the definition typically found in photographic renditions of his body. The content of the painting itself would take a backseat to its affective architecture, as Sandow later muses:

⁷⁰²Jim Elledge, “Eugen Sandow’s Gift to Gay Men,” *Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide* 18, no. 4 (August 2011): 14-17.

⁷⁰³Eugen Sandow, “My Reminiscences,” *Strand Magazine* 39 (January 1910): 147.

“and my eyes never rest upon that picture ... but it recalls the many happy days we spent together.”⁷⁰⁴ Labeled as the abstracted “Roman Gladiator,” this is the first known gladiatorial image of Sandow swaddled in animal loins, a visual convention that came to inform many later photographs of Sandow.

To explore further how digital archiving replays imbricated discourses of queer desire, collecting, and visual anachronism, this section looks at a much more studied reinterpretation of Sandow as the primitive gladiator: photographer Napoleon Sarony’s famous image of Eugen Sandow re-enacting the classical sculpture *The Farnese Hercules*. One of the original images can be found as a cabinet card in the Houghton Library special collections at Harvard University. In addition to being a part of the “Theatrical Cabinets Photographs of Men” digital collection, Sandow also garners an entry as a featured artifact on the Houghton Library’s tumblr, a microblogging and social networking website based on curating multimedia collections. Spanning institutional and vernacular collections, the Sarony photograph exemplifies the future of digital archival practice that weds professional and amateur efforts. Archival arrangement practices (e.g. the “fonds”) and descriptive practices (e.g. the finding aid) orient archives relative to the researcher by fixing the archival body in time and space. Arrangement practices contextualize the conditions that led to the creation of these materials while the descriptive practices draft a narrative of those materials for the researcher to render the collection navigable. Victorian collecting prefigures these formal archival practices through classifying and ordering groups of like objects. However, the relationships

⁷⁰⁴ Sandow, “My Reminiscences,” 147.

between spaces, bodies, and objects materialized through fin-de-siècle queer collections fail to orient, as these eclectic assortments of objects with heady emotive properties transcend normative boundaries of time and attributions of use-value to materialize the disorienting and anachronistic affects that serve as evidence of collecting as a form of sexual desire. Experiences with these anachronistic collections elicited embodied reactions, as the irregular, and sometimes “incorrect” temporal-spatial arrangements between bodies and objects made subjects feel “giddy” “queasy,” “strange,” and “frenzied.” This section resists the evolution of the disorienting domestic collection to the oriented archival collection by exploring how both the singular photograph and the Houghton’s digital library condenses these two otherwise-contradictory discursive frameworks of information management. Through the odd collection depicted in its *mise-en-scene*, Sarony’s photograph pictures an anachronistic body that challenges the racial and sexual logics of muscular embodiment to produce a novel form of queer desire capable of releasing the unruly affects generated through Sandow’s live performances. Rather than straightening Sandow, the networked infrastructural knowledge system of the Houghton Library’s digital site nominally performs the orientated work of the archive only to posit anachronism’s dizzyingly disorienting affects as a form of queer cultural memory production both evaporative and resilient over space, time, and context.

Like museums, libraries too traded on rhetoric of cultural uplift promoted by access to their holdings, especially as popular lending libraries catering to working

classes became late-nineteenth-century fixtures.⁷⁰⁵ As a research library, Houghton Library at Harvard University was another story. Before 1908, the Houghton was known as the Treasure of Gore Hall, a “safe depository for [the] rarest and most valuable books” with limited seating—or, the university’s first Special Collections reading room.⁷⁰⁶ Predating the inauguration of the Houghton by nearly a decade, Harvard University’s Theatre Collection came into being in 1901, coincidentally around the same time Sandow launched his successful North American tour. Started by Professor George Pierce Baker, the collection was one of the first of its kind in the United States and currently one of the largest in the world. It is far ranging, with materials from more highbrow entertainments like opera, ballet, and Shakespeare theatricals, as well as populist attractions like magic and conjuring, circuses and menageries, and fairgrounds. While the collection describes itself as “varied and eclectic,” it has nonetheless designated certain materials outside its scope, like film prints, recordings, sports-related ephemera, and damaged or incomplete materials requiring “extensive conservation.”⁷⁰⁷ Reflecting the collection’s strengths in visual materials of performers, Eugen Sandow is part of photographic collection titled “Theatrical Cabinet Photographs of Men, Circa 1866-1929,” which features some the period’s dramatic and minstrel show luminaries. As a part of the Collections Digitization

⁷⁰⁵ Martyn Lyons, *Readers and Society in Nineteenth-Century France: Workers, Women, Peasants* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 34.

⁷⁰⁶ William Coolidge Lane, *Seventh Report 1904* (Cambridge: Harvard University Library, 1904), 9.

⁷⁰⁷ “Harvard Theatre Collection - Houghton Library - Harvard College Library,” accessed April 28, 2017, <http://hcl.harvard.edu/libraries/houghton/collections/htc/>.

Program dedicated to “building digital collections of enduring value” with historical photographs claiming priority, Sarony’s image is available to the general public through Harvard Library’s centrally managed online catalogues.

Just as it was the Age of Museums, the late-nineteenth century also witnessed a surge in public libraries, which inspired James P. Boyd to include a specific chapter on “Great Growths in Libraries” in his 1899 retrospective, *Triumphs and Wonders of the Nineteenth-Century*. Nineteenth-century antecedents for the modern public library included university libraries, parochial libraries, gentlemen’s subscription libraries, mechanics’ institute libraries, and the occasional itinerant library.⁷⁰⁸ While mechanics institute libraries were geared toward working class and the general populace, other library formations, like the subscription library, still catered to either the well-known literati or more learned. Motivated by the success of the 1845 Museums Act, the Library Act of 1850 proposed public use of university libraries, improved access to the British Library, and allowed boroughs to build their own branches. Supporters praised public libraries as a form of social control, bastions of self-improvement and conducive to a more civil and better-informed public; detractors of the 1850 Act denigrated them as sites of social agitation, potentially dangerous spaces of populist learning that would lead to a more rebellious public. An advocate for public libraries, Boyd praises the nineteenth-century public libraries for both their “triumphant and wonderful” accumulations of books and their “multiplicity of agencies by means of which library information is

⁷⁰⁸ David McMenemy, *The Public Library* (London: Facet Publishing, 2009), 22-23.

arranged and disseminated.”⁷⁰⁹ Information management, not simply information, was the sure sign of cultural progress.

As another example of the Victorian fascination with classifying, libraries erected knowledge infrastructures through arrangement and description practices designed to guide researchers through labyrinthine collections. The functions of modern bibliographic control include identifying information resources, aggregating these information resources into collections, generating library catalogues for these information resources, developing searchable and consistent access points for these resources (e.g. subject, title, name), and providing the means to locate these resources (e.g. call number.)⁷¹⁰ The most comprehensive U.S.-based system of bibliographic control is the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH), which is used across different discrete libraries to help researchers locate materials. Intended to be objective, LCSH nonetheless has garnered criticisms from librarians and scholars that it does not accurately catalogue materials about groups or identities lacking political and social purchase, especially in the case of queer sexuality, which aims to dismantle fixable and normative forms of identification.⁷¹¹ Like museums, underwriting the library’s metadata scripts is the rhetoric of naturalized heterosexuality. Not only are these used to standardize information management practices

⁷⁰⁹ James P. Boyd, *Triumphs and Wonders of the Nineteenth Century: The True Mirror of a Phenomenal Era* (Philadelphia: A.J. Holman and Company, 1899), 167.

⁷¹⁰ Ronald Hagler, *The Bibliographic Record and Information Technology*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: American Library Association, 1991), 193.

⁷¹¹ Emily Drabinski, “Queering the Catalog: Queer Theory and the Politics of Correction,” *The Library Quarterly* 83, no. 2 (April 1 2013): 94–111.

across distinct repositories, but also they contour research practices by normalizing and reproducing certain vocabularies through networks of libraries. In short, library infrastructures orient us as researchers. By subscribing to the orienting language deployed by the Library of Congress, the academy, as Roderick Ferguson argues, administratively manages and regulates queerness so as to make it legible within a neoliberal institutional framework.⁷¹² Moving from the library's electronic framework to the shelves themselves, these subject headings structure the collocation systems that group topically similar books with one another. As Melissa Adler argues in *Cruising the Library*, official subject heads for collocating texts containing queer content tend to rely on "psychiatric or social scientific classifications" that cast sexuality in terms of deviance.⁷¹³ With its emphasis on spatial arrangements, sex in the stacks too becomes a matter of orientation, as the library separates certain books from each other to affirm dominant discourses of sexual perversion and tacitly reinforce heteronormative orders of knowledge.

These sexual dynamics organizing library spaces are grounded in physical libraries themselves, as scholarship on sex and the library has not yet moved into the digital domain. Applying these critical models to digital library spaces forces us to confront a symptom of contemporary information management systems in which physical libraries have become discursively framed as anachronisms. Overzealous proponents of

⁷¹² Roderick Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things: The University and its Pedagogies of Minority Difference* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2012), 221.

⁷¹³ Melissa Adler, *Cruising the Library: Perversities in the Organization of Knowledge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), xvi.

digital archiving forecast the death of the print publishing industry by designating “chemicals absorbed onto sliced processed dead trees” to be a “quaint anachronism.”⁷¹⁴ While other critics are not so bleak in their prognostications, they nonetheless identify certain facets of library organization as anachronistic with the move toward digital. One such area is the disciplinary function of spatial placement within the library with Michael A. Keller predicting that “the library traditions of highly controlled information spaces” will become “an anachronism.”⁷¹⁵ If the digital inaugurates changes to the ways that libraries spatially exert control over knowledge production, this harbors potentially radical consequences for how traces of queerness may or may not exist within institutional library structures. This is not to say that the comparatively more fluid infrastructures of digital libraries are utopian spaces of queer knowledge making. In fact, quite the opposite: as Sandow’s case shall show, the Houghton Library’s collections still employ some arrangement and description practices that tacitly rehearse the traditional library’s naturalized heteronormative orders of knowledge. However, tucked within these systems are queer potentials coaxed out through paying attention to anachronism. Resisting the inevitable progress-driven narrative that move from paper to digital libraries supports, the Houghton Library also approximates late-nineteenth-century domestic collections that generated unpredictable encounters with texts and objects that framed

⁷¹⁴ Ian H. Whitten, David Bainbridge, and David M. Nichols, *How to Build a Digital Library*. (Burlington, MA: Elsevier, 2003), 4.

⁷¹⁵ Michael A. Keller, “Gold at the End of the Digital Library Rainbow: Forecasting the Consequences of Truly Effective Digital Libraries,” in *Digital Libraries: International Collaboration and Cross-Fertilization: 7th International Conference on Asian Digital Libraries* ed. Zhaoneng Chen, Hsinchun Chen, Qihao Miao, Yuxi Fu, Edward Fox, Ee-peng Lim (Heidelberg, Germany: Springer, 2004), 89.

collecting as an expression of queer desire. Making visible these infrastructural anachronisms, Sandow in the Houghton memorializes both the disappearance and persistence of queer sexuality within the library record.

As discussed with Sandow at the National Portrait Gallery, anachronism registers primarily as a temporal concept. It can refer to objects, people, or phenomena out of time or to resistances to punctual chronologies,⁷¹⁶ but less studied are the acts of spatial re-arrangement that help to visualize anachronism's untimeliness. Northrop Frye designates "spatial anachronism" as an artistic practice of superimposing unlike geographic spaces atop one another,⁷¹⁷ which has provoked subsequent scholars to limn the timed qualities of these geographic remixes. Adam Barrows maps out anachronism's interplay of space and time in literature through interwoven moments of "psychic interiority" and "the cadences of the non-human world," which conceptualize space as constituted by dissonant temporality.⁷¹⁸ In other words, time and space produce each other.⁷¹⁹ Though concentrated on twentieth-century modernist literature, Barrows develops an interpretative framework amenable to fin-de-siècle collecting with his interior-exterior patterning. The ways that fin-de-siècle figures collected and lived with their objects

⁷¹⁶ Jeremy Tambling, *On Anachronism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1.

⁷¹⁷ Northrop Frye, "A Natural Perspective: The Development of Shakespearean Comedy and Romance," in *Northrop Frye's Writings on Shakespeare and the Renaissance*, ed. Troni Grande and Garry Sherbert (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 167.

⁷¹⁸ Adam Barrows, *Time, Literature, and Cartography After the Spatial Turn: The Chronometric Imaginary* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 87.

⁷¹⁹ Kate Hill, "Souvenirs: Narrating Overseas Violence in Late Nineteenth Century," In *Britain and the Narration of Travel in the Nineteenth Century: Texts, Images, Objects*, ed. Kate Hill (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 175.

generated alternative meanings for these objects beyond their ascribed use-value, instead emphasizing the aesthetic and affective values of their collections. Throughout the literary subgenre of collector's memoirs, objects provided avenues for indexing the embodied pleasures and perils that come along with their acts of aesthetic preservation. As touched on in the previous section, queer collecting was an emotionally immersive activity that relocated the collector within a desirable past to posit anachronism as a queer knowledge and memory making practice. This section stays with the emotions at the heart of collecting, but adjusts its scope to explore how its material-spatial arrangements—the placements of books, other objects, and bodies—provides a gateway for accessing the disorienting affects of queer collecting that tend to dissipate through official archival arrangement, description, and collocation efforts.

As laudatory and sweeping as Boyd's anthology claims to be, his discussion of the era's great libraries nonetheless tends to focus on either public institutions or longstanding university libraries that he views as touchstones of a nation's moral and intellectual health. But, in addition to the public librarian and benevolent donors idolized by Boyd, the private book collector feverishly tracking down dusty volumes for this personal collection was another visible fixture of Victorian bibliophile culture. John Ferriar coined the term "bibliomania" in his 1809 poem dedicated to his friend and collector, Richard Heber. The poem immediately begins by speculating on the frenetic, even pathological, desires of the collector by asking "What wild desires, what restless torments seize / The hapless man, who feels the book-disease." The diagraphs of the repeated "what"s and "who" in the opening lines approximate through poetic inscription

the breathless compulsion of the person afflicted with the “book-disease,” threatening the otherwise-regular meter of the poem with uncontrollable urgency when spoken aloud. The relationship between the poem’s meter and diction mirrors that of the collection and the queer collector who nominally participates in ordering efforts only to cause disorder. Even though the opening stanza characterizes domestic collecting as a primarily emotionally motivated endeavor, this does not mean that the principles guiding “bibliomania” are strict foils to those of public library accessioning. Domestic collections, especially ones now legible as queer, drew from institutional cataloguing practices to lampoon and destabilize them.⁷²⁰ While not necessarily intentional, the rest of Ferriar’s twelve-page poem apes and subverts the Bodleian cataloguing code, which above all sought to classify books based on authorship. Reading like a catalogue, the poem introduces the readers to the books in the collection through a series of apostrophes calling to well-known authors like Horace and Homer, typographers like Giambattista Bodoni, and specific editions of books like Joaquin Ibarra’s *Don Quixote*, touching on the bibliomaniac’s consuming desire for the materiality of the book itself along with the thematic content. Comprised completely of brief allusions, the list is cryptic, leaving the intellectual passions, the “wild desires” and “restless” torments” driving the book collector largely unarticulated by transforming them into quick mentions of physical books. If nineteenth-century public library administration instated systems for managing vast holdings, the private collection bucks these trends, as weaving throughout different

⁷²⁰ Mills, “Bricabracomania!,” 45.

temporal, geographic, and thematic categories, the poem transforms book browsing into an experience disorienting in its randomness.

The sexual connotations of domestic collections became increasingly noticeable when bibliomania was re-named bibliophilia, effectively initiating a subtle but important toggling between compulsion and desire. The titles of literary memoirs flooding the market, such as Eugene Field's *The Love Affairs of a Bibliomaniac* and William Hazlitt's *The Confessions of a Collector* attested to a popular imaginary of the collector as a gallant lover and a borderline obsessive. Sara Ahmed defines "sexual orientation" as something we "tend toward": being straight not only means we follow compulsory lines towards objects of heterosexual culture but also turn away from "objects that take us off this line." These objects are not random, but become available to us if we move along certain lines, such as "birth, childhood, adolescence, marriage, reproduction, death."⁷²¹ Queer subjects deviate from these orientations and, in the process, become socially legible as deviant. With its emphasis on the corporeal and emotional aspects of the hunt and capture, fin-de-siècle book collecting was an erotic pursuit and provided a lexicon for articulating both non-normative forms sexuality, as well as male same-sex desire.⁷²² In *The Love Affairs of a Bibliomaniac*, Field posits book love in frankly erotic terms as an form of objectophilia, the sexual attraction to inanimate things, to be strong enough to

⁷²¹ Sara Ahmed, "Orientations: Toward a Queer Phenomenology," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 12, no. 4 (2006): 554.

⁷²² Victoria Mills, "'Books in My Hands—Books in My Heart—Books in My Brain': Bibliomania, the Male Body, and Sensory Erotics in Late-Victorian Literature," in *Bodies and Things in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture*, ed. Katharina Boehm (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 132.

dismantle the cult of monogamous heterosexuality: “Here again we behold another advantage which the lover of books has over the lover of women. If he be a genuine lover he can and should love any number of books, and this polybibliophily is not to the disparagement of any one of that number.”⁷²³ Later on in the narrative, Field frames his polybibliophily in tantalizing but elusive terms when he devotes an entire chapter to “The Luxury of Reading in Bed” in which he claims “no book can be appreciated until it has been slept with and dreamed over.”⁷²⁴ This episode’s cozy moment is not explicitly sexual, but it nonetheless recounts a tale of sexual formation that deviates from a line of straight-becoming to register as queer: in Field’s preferred nocturnal encounters the usual object signifying a heterosexual orientation—a woman—is replaced by an object strange—a book—that is out place out in an object of sexual reproduction—a bed.

Discussions of queer collecting tend to center on queerness as a condition of human-based reception; that is, humans understanding something as queer as opposed to objects themselves taking on queer orientations. However, the disorientating qualities of fin-de-siècle domestic collections also made objects, books or otherwise, intelligible as queer through their idiosyncratic spatial-temporal arrangements. In arguing that Charles Dickens occupies a central place in queer literary history, Holly Furneaux gives as an example a "queer" library found in early-twentieth-century novelist Edward Prime-Stevens' short story, "Out of the Sun": this collection is a "special group of volumes," populated by Dickens' *David Copperfield*, Tennyson's *In Memoriam* and Walt Whitman's

⁷²³ Eugene Field, *The Love Affairs of a Bibliomaniac* (New York: C. Scribner’s sons, 1896), 18.

⁷²⁴ Eugene Field, *The Love Affairs of a Bibliomaniac*, 31.

poetry. The close-quartered spatial arrangement of these books inspires Furneaux's re-examination of Dickens within a queer context, suggesting that queer possibilities arise out of the ways that objects occupy space relative to other objects and bodies. Moving beyond books, Victoria Mills' reading of Des Esseintes' and Dorian Gray's jewel collecting posits that gems, not strictly homoerotic objects, nonetheless proffer queer ways of seeing through their diaphanous and refractive qualities to pervert the scientific optics of collecting based on orderly classification. For both collectors, the "strange beauty" of these light shows inspired fits of desire and enchantment, as well as more ambivalent reactions, like when Des Esseintes' pairs real and artificial jewels to adorn his tortoise that produce "rebellious harmonies."⁷²⁵

The bejeweled tortoise episode of *À Rebours* is key in defining a queer economy of collecting because it taps into the rhetorical, syntactical, and structure elements of library and museological cataloguing. The chapter features an intensive catalogue of the unusual jewels Des Esseintes chooses for his project, but rather than earnestly participating in the classifying schemes of the collector his list perform those conventions only to subvert them. Each entry for the prized objects comprises of a lapidary sentence beginning with proper names of the "snap-dragon," "cymophane," "blue chalcedony."⁷²⁶ But instead of empirically derived descriptions, the "metadata" for Des Esseintes' collection descends into lyrical evocations of each jewels' treacherously sensual aesthetic qualities. The snap-dragon's protean "greenish grey... veins," the cymophane's "azure

⁷²⁵ Joris-Karl Huysmans, *Against Nature (À Rebours)* (New York: Albert & Charles Boni, 1922), 317.

⁷²⁶ Huysmans, *Against Nature*, 79.

waves” and “milky tint,” and the chalcedony’s “blush phosphorescent fires” transform the usually-orderly collection into an undulating and unctuous mass of colors and textures that undoes any of the order that the catalog as a genre seeks to secure.⁷²⁷ In an attempt to assert control over the contents of the collection, the original 1884 edition of *Á Rebours* lists each gem as its own paragraph or its own “entry” so that the spatial arrangement of the text mimics the types of entries found in retrieval or finding aids. However, the incandescent descriptions that rely on lights bouncing off of or absorbed into various surfaces lend instability to the otherwise orderly economies of collection to generate a queer collecting practice that uses the ephemera and subjective sensual and emotional engagements that objects inspire as a documentary tool.

The sumptuous domestic environs of fabled collectors like Des Esseintes were not necessarily fictions, as photographer to the stars Napoleon Sarony was quite the collector and eccentric himself, and his studios and pictorial-artistic approach to the photographic craft reflected his cosmopolite-bohemian style. Honing his skill as a lithographer, he emigrated to Paris in 1858 to study painting and drawing under the famous masters. From there, he briefly resided in England and ran a shop out of Birmingham, during which time he applied for patents to innovate on the “treatment of photographic portraits.”⁷²⁸ But the lure of New York was too strong for the globe-trekking Sarony and he returned to Manhattan to set up a “fashionable” photography practice.⁷²⁹ When he returned, he

⁷²⁷ Huysmans, *Against Nature*, 79.

⁷²⁸ George Shaw, “New Patents,” *Birmingham Daily Post*, December 10 1864.

⁷²⁹ “Life in America,” *The Belfast News-letter* (Belfast, Ireland), November 10 1896.

brought a continental artistic sensibility with him, as the *Daily Inter-Ocean*'s obituary for Sarony eulogizes: "There it was that he began the application of the artistic methods of the ateliers to the process of photography—a combination in which he led the world."⁷³⁰ Reflecting his flair for the dramatic, Sarony's studios evoked the richly stocked quarters of fictional queer collectors that generated dizzying responses through their closely packed anachronistic arrays of objects. Sarony was lover of all things antiquated with his stuffed crocodile, "Hindoo idol," and a "most handsomely carved Japanese deity" that he purchased primarily for "aesthetic principles and artistic purposes"⁷³¹; not only do these objects fail to materialize synchronicity or the linear march of time through their arrangements, but also the juxtaposition of the antiques and the modern camera equipment further emphasizes the untimely quality of his studio. This anachronism bled in Sarony's photographic aesthetic, as the curios and *objets d'art* that littered his studio made their way into his images. Sarony was responsible for developing a series of trademark Sandow poses that featured inventive uses of animal skins and clubs, which would become a recognizable transatlantic visual motif for Sandow layered on top of the recognizable Grecian aesthetics.

In seeking to create sublime embodiments through visual technologies, Sarony relied on a creative process of arranging discrete specific body parts from different art historical periods that bred anachronistic composites. A journalist for the *Bangor Daily*

⁷³⁰"Napoleon Sarony," *The Daily Inter Ocean*, November 15 1896.

⁷³¹ "A Corner in Gods," *Daily Sentinel* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin), November 9 1878.

Whig recounts an anecdote in which Sarony invites him to have his vignette done, asking him if he prefers a “Grecian or Roman nose,” a process that results in a photographic body that collapses distinct periods of time by fusing a Grecian nose onto nineteenth-century face. For Sandow’s image, Sarony indulged in the same type of anachronistic spatial configurations as he sought to reproduce through Sandow the famous *Farnese Hercules* sculpture. The titular Farnese refers to the goods of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, an enthusiastic collector, who quickly co-opted the rediscovered statue for his own in 1590. The sculpture’s title testifies to the primacy of the individual, family, or organization in ordering and arranging archives, records, and even more informal collections, as this sculpture derives its legibility, credibility, and authenticity by being a part of the Farnese body of objects. Much like Van der Weyde, Napoleon Sarony took careful measures to copyright his photographic work in order to control the image’s circulation as much as possible, again rendering his image of Hellenist antiquity a distinctly modern phenomenon. Through the case study of Sarony’s copyright infringement court battle, Daniel Novak argues that Sarony effectively constructs an original fiction of male sexuality through the photograph,⁷³² as evidenced through the Sandow cabinet card that reads “Copyright 1897.” This preference given to artist ownership inflects subsequent library cataloguing practices of Sandow, as the body of Sandow images at the Library of Congress are grouped together within the Sarony fonds. Through this cabinet card, Sandow becomes both a Sarony original and a semi-faithful Farnese reproduction, but one whose legibility relies on shared cultural knowledge of an

⁷³² Novak, *Realism, Photography, and Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 120.

extractable Herculean essence. The Sarony photograph illuminates how the freak show consciously drew from a Hellenist art historical tradition to inflect it with its own sensibility. Not simply the living, embodied essence of the Greek spirit, Sandow's Hercules embodies the promises and anxieties of fin-de-siècle modernity reflected in trends recognizable to distinct American or British audiences.

Sandow is part of a study crew in the Houghton Library Collection. The strongman is one of twelve men in a "Theatrical Cabinet Photographs of Men, circa 1866-1929" series (TSC 1) that includes Irish actor Thomas Kerrigan, minstrel show comedian Billy Kersands, burlesque manager William Mitchell, operatic baritone Augustino Montegriffo, "Father of Vaudeville" Tony Pastor, vaudeville comedian George Spear, and operatic bass Myron W. Whitney. The catalog entry for this small collection is traditional and with straightforward LCSH metadata, such as "Theater – 19th Century" and "Theater – 20th Century" for subjects and "Cabinet photographs" for genre. As much as the metadata orients Sandow through temporal and geographic specificity, one piece of cryptic data persists by name of "[Clement, Clay, -- 1863-1910. -- Photographs.](#)" An attending note contributed by a library user in July 2014 mentions that "all photographs of Clay Clement are of Clay Clement Sr (1863-1910), a piece of evidence of a line of research undertaken by a past researcher. However, no traces of Clay Clement actually exist in this digital collection, though this may not be the case for the physical collection. Clement is an entry without an item whose hyperlink loops back to the main catalogue entry for collection from which he is missing, effectively undoing a potentially linear path of knowledge accumulation that would orient the objects and

bodies at work in this scenario. So instead of providing a clarifying view of this collection's contents, the recursive and looping qualities of the Clement metadata become a sources of disorientation that undermine the spatial and categorical sureties that LCSH promises to provide.

Sandow is carefully accounted for in this collection: his personal entry includes the photographer (Napoleon Sarony), title (*Farnese Hercules*), data (1893) and place (New York), unlike the other cabinet cards only including the name of the actor—a condition perhaps nodding to the careful control Sarony sought to exercise over his artistic output. However, when the collection is viewed synoptically, Sandow exudes a starkly disorienting presence because of his visual presentation. The other actors in the collection are shot in a style more typical of nineteenth-century honorific portraiture in that they are all similarly posed as busts slightly tilted to the left or right so as to avoid the camera's direct gaze; mimicking the conventions of portraiture, their lower bodies subtly fade into the background, leaving us to focus on the face. Except for the image of Myron W. Whitney in his *HMS Pinafore* naval costume the men sport understated suits and carefully trimmed facial hair. Then there's Eugen Sandow—unapologetically nude from head-to-tie with each contour of his muscle crystal clear against his white skin, reposing against a contraption dropped in thick leopard furs. The arrangement scheme of the collection based on the last name of the photographed subject is intended to lend order and establish a coherent narrative of theater as a modern Antebellum institution, but in occupying a space between relatively modern-looking actors, Sandow's body disturbs

the collection's visual coherency by appearing as an anachronism relative to the other images who initiates contact between the past primitive and the future perfect.

Encompassing opera to vaudeville through the searchable subject of Theater – 19th Century,” the TSC 1 collection's metadata memorializes the cultural work of nineteenth-century theater as an institution that realigns hierarchies of cultural production by blurring boundaries between elite and populist cultures. Invested as this study is in the intermediated capacities of archival objects and archives, I would like to suggest then that the knowledge infrastructure of this digital collection, while traditional, nonetheless condenses the more expansive embodied attributes of theatrical production within the cabinet cards and collection themselves, grouped as they are not according to photographer but to an occupation that generated embodied forms of knowledge making. That is, once oriented as theatrical, the collection's metadata makes possible the potential presence of an unseen performing architecture that maps onto the visual-material attributes of the objects. We can “hear” Whitney's *basso profundo*, Thomas Kerrigan's Irish brogue, George Spear's famous imitation of the Yankee accent, while we retroactively make contact with the appreciative sighs and laughter of the past audiences. When perused with the context of TSC 1, Sandow's photograph gives us a visual jolt—a momentary feeling of surprise or perhaps pleasure depending on who looks and from what perspective, and maybe even the raise of an eyebrow. Far from presently situated, the emotional and embodied reactions that the photograph elicits inducts us into a trans-temporal network of affective responses that Sandow, his photography, and his live shows facilitated.

Preceding Sandow's arrival to the US, antebellum America witnessed renewed interest in the athletic male nude. Similar to British Hellenist revivalism, in the US, sculpture legitimized the public male nude and "Hercules" became a byword for "muscular majesty" that could only be seen "to its fullest advantage in [his] nude body."⁷³³ Muscle building, as Amy Kaplan argues, perpetuates the logic of empire building, as imperial expansion energized nationalist and masculine regeneration, which was encapsulated through terms like "national muscle-flexing."⁷³⁴ Through fads such as Indian clubs⁷³⁵, which Sarony photographed Sandow wielding, bodybuilding and the strongman sideshow staged privileged encounters with "primitive" cultures intended to promote and preserve the health of individual and nation. However, these delineations between self and other were not quite so steadfast. Abolitionist authors and artists mapped Herculean features onto their slave protagonists to confer upon them a greater, more ennobling, sense humanity; however this also perpetuated mythologies of hyper-muscular black masculinity that framed the body as an intense source of political, social, and sexual anxieties. For instance, Thomas Ball's 1876 sculpture, *Emancipation Group*, features a willowy Abraham Lincoln standing above a crouched, muscular slave, nearly nude except for loincloth. Ball's source material for the sculpture, as Kirk Savage speculates, is Bandinelli's *Hercules and Cacus*; rather than depicting two athletic figures,

⁷³³"Some Suggestions as to Greek Art," *The Daily Picayune*, February 10 1889.

⁷³⁴ Amy Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 95.

⁷³⁵ These were essentially enormous, bowling pin shaped clubs that people would swing over their heads to develop upper body strength.

Ball concentrates all of the muscularity within the crouching body of the slave.⁷³⁶ The work reroutes all of the original source's Herculean muscularity through black masculinity, complicating Hercules' signposting of race in the U.S. Sculpture supported the cultural understandings that masculinity, ethnicity, and racial inferiority were inseparable from the body; attention to Classical conventions secured the inviolability and coherency of narratives of the male nude. However, race and ethnicity fracture such projects by "drawing attention to racial division as fundamental to representations of the body."⁷³⁷ Rather than producing a coherent narrative of race and male embodiment, the sculptural muscularity of "Hercules" becomes a source of indeterminacy that vexes the body's relationships to nationalism, citizenship, and humanity.

While this signification directly addresses the social, economic, and political structures of nineteenth-century United States, this fluidity of the Herculean figure points to a broader epistemological framework wherein Hellenist self-definition relied its barbarian other.⁷³⁸ Sarony's "Hercules" photograph renders this dialectic through spectacularized and easily digestible synecdoches. the metallic fig leaf and sumptuous leopard pelt produce jarring visual and tactile juxtapositions between the Hellenist self and his savage other. As Hercules, Sandow stares down contemplatively at his only piece

⁷³⁶Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 1997.

⁷³⁷ Michael Hatt, "'Making a Man of Him': Masculinity and the Black Body in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America Sculpture," in *Race-ing Art History: Critical Readings in Race and Art History*, ed. Kymberly N. Pinder (New York: Routledge, 2002), 201.

⁷³⁸Edith Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition Through Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 201.

of clothing—the now-ubiquitous fig leaf. His arm cradles a draped leopard skin pelt designed both to emphasize his muscularity and to affect world-weariness, catching the mythic hero in a rare moment of repose. While the pose is the generally the same, Sarony's small additions, the pelt and the fig leaf, deviate from the source material, in which neither is present. Sarony would most likely balk at referring to Sandow as a "freak," preferring instead the more status-conferring term "celebrity" and leaving the freakery to photographer-contemporary Charles Eisenmann. Sandow's perfectly poised, blindingly white body dominates the photograph. As with the Van der Weyde photograph, the quality of Sandow's skin elicited comparisons to calcium, as he again bridges boundaries between flesh and stone (*The New York World* 1893). The furls and swaddles of the fabric offer a sensuous, serpentine counterpoint to the structural sterility of the Hellenist body. Unintentionally so, Sarony's styling of Sandow incompletely reproduces a visual economy of exoticized freak presentation in which the animal skin became an oft-used metonym for the "primitive" or culturally strange. James Trilling designates as a hallmark of ornament in Western art a recombination of visual figures that defy nature.⁷³⁹ Not simply the historically inaccurate whim of an inveterate collector, these imprecise iconographies visualize in condensed terms how "Hercules" challenged rather than reconsolidates white masculinity in antebellum America

Just as the Hercules figured carried ambiguous racial and gender connotations more broadly within late-nineteenth-century American visual culture, Sandow's onstage

⁷³⁹ James Trilling, *Ornament: A Modern Perspective* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 154.

performances of Hercules were equally vexing in their decidedly loose interpretations of primary source materials. Sandow was not Hercules, but “Modern Hercules,” a clever title that acknowledges the strongman’s anachronistic status. As Graeme Adam Mercer clarifies, Sandow is neither a perfect nor a complete reproduction of Hercules, since the resemblance only extends so far to a body part: “His head is shaped exactly like the heads on the old statues of Hercules.”⁷⁴⁰ Sandow’s live shows share similarities in presentation and content as Sarony’s photograph, as they featured Classical poses in a glass case atop a leopard skin pelt and set to a polychromatic light display—a colorful rendering of *Farnese Hercules* that when read alongside the Sarony photograph lends the image a sense of livingness. Although this portion of the show was faithful to the Hercules’ art historical precedent, Sandow’s other interpretations of Hercules were decidedly more creative. A Philadelphia newspaper issued a rave review of Sandow’s 1894 New York engagement under the direction of show business *wunderkind*, Florenz Ziegfeld, specifically marveling at the “deafening applause” when Sandow assumed the “Tomb of Hercules” position. To execute the “Tomb of Hercules” Sandow would bend himself into an arch, chest upraised with hands and feet on the floor like a yogi; he would then affix a platform over his chest to sustain the weight of two horses and a pony.⁷⁴¹ Not a Sandow original, the “Tomb of Hercules” was a casual nod to earlier strongman, Charles “Batta” Étienne, who popularized the move. While Batta, “Le Damoclès Fin de Siècle,” gained

⁷⁴⁰ Graeme Adam Mercer, *Sandow on Physical Training*, 109.

⁷⁴¹ Chapman, *Sandow the Magnificent*, 35.

more adulation” for performing feats of strength with sharp knives,⁷⁴² Sandow and Florenz Ziegfeld capitalized on Sandow’s reputation as the “Living Hercules” to reinvigorate this strongman chestnut. The “Tomb of Hercules” notably does not have any direct Hellenist architectural or sculptural antecedents, but rather emblemizes Ziegfeld’s use of appealing but historically inaccurate rhetoric of antiquity to posit what the future of perfected masculinity might look like.

The way that the photograph emphasizes texture retroactively signals to the embodied encounters and affective encounters that Sandow’s image inspired, which came to serve as evidence of imbrications between collecting and sexual orientation. As a performing remain, Sandow’s photograph oozes soporific sexuality that moves beyond the visual to register through his post-performance performances. After Sandow’s stage theatrics, a select group of folks would be selected to come backstage for a cozier and more interactive performance in which the lucky invitees could grab ahold of the strongman’s physique. A one-on-one with Sandow was a status symbol, as Marjorie Farnsworth rhapsodizes in a confessional tone in her memoir *The Ziegfeld Follies*, “you were no one, really no one my dear, unless you had felt Sandow’s muscles.”⁷⁴³ These events took place in Sandow’s lush corridors draped “walls and ceiling, with purple and black materials” and illuminated with “incandescent electric lights” Urban legends abound about these touching encounters, as Sandow’s flex appeal famously made his

⁷⁴² Edmund Desbonnets, *Les Rois de la Force: histoire de tous les hommes forts depuis les temps anciens jusqu’à nos jours* (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1911), 249.

⁷⁴³ Marjorie Farnsworth, *The Ziegfeld Follies* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1956), 16.

admirers sick, love sick. The semi-public experience of running their hands over Sandow's corrugated abdomen proved too much for women who would faint as a result of these participatory displays of sex, so much so that smelling salts were kept on hand.⁷⁴⁴ One particular heady encounter features a woman who, upon running her gloved hand across Sandow's expansive chest, gasped, "It's unbelievable!" before promptly passing out. These sexually-charted moments were not just reserved for women, but also incited a number of male-male touching episodes that are framed in erotic terms as "caress[ing] ... with astonishment and admiration."⁷⁴⁵ Radiating the woozy, erotic groping of those hot summer nights when Sandow's fame skyrocketed, the photograph commemorates the disorienting affects that serve as evidence of desire, both heteronormative and same-sex.

These interactive private performances also transformed the Sandow, the man of flesh, into a bizarre collection of objects. Descriptions abound in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly* of Sandow's shoulders becoming "great gnarled oak" and his biceps a "mass of granite."⁷⁴⁶ The discursive alchemy through which Sandow converts into a variety of different organic materials acts an ultra-masculine version of the mineral and gemstone collections of Dorian Gray and Des Esseintes. Reception of Sandow as modern reproduction of Hellenist figures pivoted on both narrative and materiality, which

⁷⁴⁴ Black, *Making the American Body*, 13.

⁷⁴⁵ Elliott J. Gorn and Warren Jay Goldstein, *A Brief History of American Sports* (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 118.

⁷⁴⁶ H.P.M., "The Latest Society Fad: Fashion Pays Court to Sandow, the Strong Man, at His Private Levees," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly*, March 29 1894.

reprised the dynamics of bibliomania articulated in Dr. Ferriar's poem. In the laundry list of items in the poetic epistle, Ferrier first frames book-desire as loving a literary narrative, like Homer and Horace, only to give way to the desirable materiality of the treasured objects, the "faultless types" of Ibarra's Quixote. For Sandow, the well-known mythologies performed on the public stage similarly slip into tactile moments for engaging with the pleasures his physical body potentially affords. Moreover, when put into close physical proximity, Sandow and his entourage rehearse the sexually charged encounters of objectophilia found in collector's memoirs. As a compilation of strange materials prized primarily for their aesthetic value, Sandow's body is not figured as an accurate art historical replication of the *Farnese Hercules* but rather serves to embody the desires and affects that help to render collecting intelligible as a sexual orientation.

Sandow's leaf specifically generates an anachronism between the primitive body on display and the more modern machinery needed to keep the hope of the future perfect alive. Trying to communicate a moment of reflection, Sandow's expression seems bemused by his body. Pelvis forward and head down, Sandow's posture drags our eyes down his grooves of his abdominal muscles to rest on a single gravity-defying leaf. The leaf has been singled out as an anachronistic detail added only to concede to fin-de-siècle social conventions that would disapprove of a full-frontal male nude.⁷⁴⁷ But rather than diminishing the sexuality of this photograph, the metallic leaf renounces only to emphasize Sandow's phallic potency, just doing so in terms cannily palatable for a mass

⁷⁴⁷ Maria Wyke, "Herculean Muscle!: The Classicizing Rhetoric of Bodybuilding," in *Constructions of the Classical Body*, ed. James I. Porter (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 358.

audience. This addition may have been compulsory, but it was also a clever instance of soft-core pornography since its flatteringly large size hinted at the size of what lurked underneath the sheath.⁷⁴⁸ Even to this day, Sandow's leaf prompts wild speculation, as Josh Buck ponders whether it was glued or tied onto to Sandow.⁷⁴⁹ However Sandow managed to keep the leaf in place, the remains that his nude still manages to engender public debate surrounding masculinity, sexual potency, and desire. Through photographs and performances, Ziegfeld transformed Sandow into a symbol of sexual potency, one capable of fathering a generation of hearty and hale young acolytes. As Detroit impresario observed with a wink, Sandow was definitely "a hit with the womenfolk."⁷⁵⁰ But, this advertising tactic came with unintended consequences. While Ziegfeld sought to stress Sandow's amorous ways with woman, it was during this period that Otéro's remarks went public, calling into question Sandow's sexuality. Moreover, Ziegfeld fabricated romances between Sandow and popular female actresses partially to diminish rumors of Gosse's and Symonds' fondness for the strongman that had made it across the Atlantic.⁷⁵¹

⁷⁴⁸ Michael Squire, *The Art of the Body: Antiquity and its Legacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 18.

⁷⁴⁹ Chapman, *The Perfect Man*, 73.

⁷⁵⁰ LeRoy Ashby, *With Amusement for All: A History of American Popular Culture Since 1830* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2006), 128.

⁷⁵¹ Graeme Kent, *The Strongest Men on Earth: When the Muscle Men Ruled Show Business* (London: Biteback Publishing, 2012).

These questions of ambiguous sexual reception are not necessarily visible through the traditional catalogue entry where we find Sandow in Houghton's special collections. However, the Houghton's digital program offers another potential avenue for exploring how Sandow's live performance engendered sexually charged domestic collecting practices of their own. In addition to his usual place in the library, Sandow is a featured item on the Houghton's more informal tumblr account designed to showcase the "digital collections of Harvard's Houghton Library, including illustrations, photographs, bookbindings, and more."⁷⁵² The eclectic curatorial aesthetic of the tumblr reprises the more idiosyncratic and personalized arrays of objects found in domestic collections or libraries. One of tumblr's options is a viewable "Archive" page that allows us to see thumbnails of the tumblr's contents. Each object occupying a little box arranged according to date added to the tumblr, the "Archive" page reprises the anachronistic arrangement practices of queer fin-de-siècle collections. For example, Sandow is yanked from his nineteenth-century theatrical cohorts and now nestles among an eighteenth-century image depicting the military campaigns of Emperor Qianlong titled *Ping ding Guo'erke zhan tu*, hand-shaped watermarks from two sixteenth-century incunabula, and a deck of Austria tarot cards from 1852. These objects chosen are primarily valued for their aesthetic contributions that then become privileged forms of collaborative digital memory-making through user-based initiatives like "#watermarkwednesday." When we view the "Archive" page in its entirety, tumblr's affordances require that we scroll down

⁷⁵² "Sarony, Napoleon, 1821-1896, Photographer," *Houghton Library*, accessed May 5 2017, <http://houghtonlib.tumblr.com/post/128260984050/sarony-napoleon-1821-1896-photographer>.

through a massive thumbnail gallery that whirs by in blurred shapes and colors. This continuous and tactile motion lends a dizzying randomness to the Houghton Library's holdings that are otherwise usually secured through time period-, thematically-, or geography-based subject categories elsewhere in the collections.

Tumblr bills itself as a “microblogging and social networking” website in which curated multimedia collections stand in as digital-material proxies for individual users. The social networking aspect of the tumblr takes form through a “notes” section: this includes an inventory of who has “liked” the item and who has “reblogged” the particular item from and to different tumblr collections. This function serves as an informal chain of provenance that reflects how this object is digitally passed around from one collection to the next. So, not only does the interface of tumblr depict individual user collections but also the personal paths of the act of collecting itself, giving us insights into the personal tastes and desires of the users. For instance, underneath Sandow's enlarged cabinet card is a 282-item index of various likes and reblogs. Linking Sandow to histories of sexuality and desire, Sandow is most often reblogged from and to collections of historical erotica, such as “antique-erotic,” “vintagehandsomemen,” “oldtimetrash,” “so hot ... hard bod”; the only non-erotica collection listed is “marcusblack1844.” Rather than the linear, unbroken lines of ownership that traditional provenance models, the “notes” section is at more aleatory, as individual user “likes” break up the moves from collection to collection to re-orient continuously the object. Unlike the Houghton, which keeps mum on Sandow's sexuality, Tumblr's affordances are capable of memorializing the otherwise-ephemeral traces of desire that motivate collecting.

Contextualized within this more informal economy of collecting, Sandow's photograph emanates the more ambiguous sexual receptions of his photograph that traditional library bibliographic control quashes. Sandow's photograph was meant for both public and private consumption, marking it as a source of homoerotic possibility both in terms of the unseen desiring viewer and Sandow himself. Popularized through easily reproducible formats like the cabinet card and the postcard, Sandow's images were responsible for jumpstarting the collecting practices that would manifest as one of the most resonant tokens of pre-Stonewall queer subcultures. In addition to being collected, Sandow himself was a collector. Recognizing a market when he saw one, Sandow began publishing his own magazine full of fitness tutorials, short stories, tons of photos of himself, and the invitation for hopefuls to submit their own photographs to be chosen as the strongman's star pupils. This has since built a speculative shadow archive composed of anonymous, amateur devotees modeling themselves after Sandow, highlighting the collaborative and participatory culture subcultural private collecting. Lacking any enduring material presence, these Sandow domestic collections are now queer historiographical legend. In addition to the shadowy material history of these photo objects, Sandow's anachronistic presentation of the primitive and future perfect also serves as evidence of the photographic homoeroticism. Thomas Waugh characterizes the presence of the homoerotic other in late-nineteenth-century photography as a product of "appropriated ethno-images" and generalized Orientalist visuality dependent on brutal colonialist voyeurism. With the lazy leopard skin and quiet resonances of Herculean barbarity, the Sandow *Farnese Hercules* solidifies intersections between homoeroticism

and visual Orientalism that should effectively silence the erotic Other. However, engrained in the photograph is an expansive history colored by moments where Sandow blurs and ruptures the embodied logics of race, ethnicity, masculinity, and sexuality. What results is an intermixing of figurative and literal bodies that recontour the visual iconographies of male sexuality.

Sandow's photograph tended to elicit generally positive affects, like appreciative fainting, but his reproduction of the *Farnese Hercules* also ignited the more undesirable affects associated with anachronism. If his connection to Hellenist art history made his nudity more admissible, not all American critics were convinced, some citing him as prurient and lacking dignity. A Stanford University professor put the debate to rest by conceding that Sandow was bodily perfection if "one preferred the Farnese Hercules to the Apollo Belvedere."⁷⁵³ Though legible in the US to an extent, the anxieties produced through the *Farnese Hercules* were further exacerbated for British audiences. Alison Smith delineates two models that coincide with the two available iconographies that structured the homoerotic visual dialectic: "the heroic nude, which demanded a sound understanding of anatomy; and what critics termed the "effeminate" male, set at rest or motion but whose body was not anatomically correct."⁷⁵⁴ The muscular nude, which Sandow would come to embody in his performances, gained traction through the contemporaneous doctrine of athleticism that dictated that physical fitness nurtured a

⁷⁵³ Chapman, *Sandow the Magnificent*, 79.

⁷⁵⁴ Alison Smith, *The Victorian Nude: Sexuality, Morality, and Art* (Manchester: Manchester University Press 1996), 173.

strong sense of social duty and an imperturbable mental constitution. While I cite Sandow as a source of populist appeal, cast collections and studies such as Walter Copland Perry's 1882 *Greek and Roman Sculpture: A Popular Introduction to the History of Greek and Roman Sculpture* aimed to elicit the interest of a general audience. Proceeding from eighteenth-century theorist Winckelmann, critics viewed the athletic body as the essence of a measured and contained spirit. However, for Perry in particular, *The Farnese Hercules* did not fair so well, as he deemed it unwieldy and with massive muscles "exaggerated almost to deformity."⁷⁵⁵ Hercules' histrionic and excessive corporeality complicated the cultural work of muscularity; once a signifier physical, social, and moral regeneration, *The Farnese Hercules* also became a harbinger of degeneration.

While these critics issued these claims prior to Sandow's emergence on the side show circuit, "degeneration" would take on particularly negative connotations pertaining to culture and sexuality with Max Nordau's *Degeneration*, written during Sandow's height of popularity. According to Nordau's high estimation of muscular movement and its salubrious effects, Sandow should have been a pillar of cultural rebirth. However, like Perry before him, Nordau associates the Herculean figure and excessive muscularity with a dangerously excessive sexuality. He characterizes the decadent age of the French Romanticists through their penchant to "love like Hercules," a phenomenon that played out popularly through the Sandow's erotic groping sessions. Cultural degeneration

⁷⁵⁵ Walter Copland Perry, *Greek and Roman Sculpture: A Popular Introduction to Greek and Roman Sculpture* (London: Longman's Green 1882), 592.

centered on the figure of the gladiator: “ their whole life is one of riot of fighting, wantoning, wine, perfume, and pageantry—a sort of magnificent illusion, with performances of gladiators, ... a crazy prodigality of inexhaustible treasures of bodily strength, gaiety, and gold.”⁷⁵⁶ Moreover, if critics during the 1870s attempted to publically position the male nude within a Hellenist context so as to allay claims of indecency, Nordau is not convinced as he identifies the sensuality in sculpture as potentially “pornographic,” and “repulsively immoral,” regardless of execution.⁷⁵⁷ Even if Nordau privileges athletic movement more broadly, he roots the strength of Hercules and the gladiator in an nearly-uncontrollable aesthetic experience of the world that leads to cultural dissolution, effectively rewriting the earlier narrative of the athletic male nude. Nordau’s remarks do not provide conclusive evidence that Sandow in a tradition strictly legible as lascivious. Instead, his commentary highlights Sandow’s historical moment when the figure of Hercules was an ambivalent figure who critics and artists alike marshaled in order to repress and generate alternative forms of sexuality through their different approaches to Hellenist ideas. Sandow’s muscularity destabilizes visual taxonomies of race and sexuality when we trace the series of imperfect source material and precedents that form his Herculean body.

When Flo Ziegfeld promoted Sandow as “Hercules,” he was most likely tapping into a recognizable, abstracted embodiment of perfection, instead of consciously inserting Sandow into an already deeply overdetermined cultural lineage. As Sandow’s career

⁷⁵⁶ Nordau. *Degeneration*, 75.

⁷⁵⁷ Nordau, *Degeneration*, 329.

makes clear, far from straightforward, the Herculean body is comprised of conflicting and imprecise reconstructions of the divine hero. The Hercules figure undoes stable iconographies of race and sexuality that lend comprehensibility to the muscular body, a phenomenon we retroactively access through the particular infrastructures that give the Houghton Library's digital site its form. Although they operate from discrete publishing platforms, the Houghton Library's official collections and tumblr collections are not totally separate entities. For each digitized artifact, tumblr includes a hyperlink that returns us to the origin, or the digitized collection where we can locate the artifact within the Houghton's cataloguing system. When viewed expansively, the various digital initiatives helmed by the Houghton condense through their technological and knowledge infrastructures what would initially appear to be two incompatible economies of collecting: the queer fin-de-siècle domestic collection and the contemporary institutional digital collection. By building a digital platform anachronistic in its information management systems, the Houghton discards the linear progression that validate artifacts through normative lines of orientation by moving them from the realm of the home to the institutional repository. Instead, the Houghton offers us the possibility of disorientation as an inclusive mode of memory transmission that works within these normative structures to destabilize them. Sandow's "Herculean" body has an intermediated quality, wedding together the photographic, performing, painted, and sculptural bodies. Moreover, these various "Herculean" bodies carry within them more ephemeral and immaterial affective and emotional currents: the post-show groping sessions or Aubrey Hunt meeting bathe his original source materials in residues of same-sex intimacies that

do not have necessarily have physical records of their own in traditional library systems to memorialize Sandow's sexual history as it pertains to collecting. But, as the Houghton's digital initiatives gesture to, embedded in the discursive and infrastructural systems of cataloguing, collecting, or archiving are opportunities to speculate, imaginatively and wildly, and to entertain the possibility of alternative modes of archival embodiment.

vii. Sandow at Eugene Britt's House: Queer Sex in the Olympics

The conclusion to tracking Sandow's queer collecting legacy found me once again in a space of strange anachronisms that combined Olympic Hellenism, Los Angeles modernity, and eighteenth-century Americana. One of the remaining imprints of *Sandow, The Mighty Monarch of Muscle* is housed at the LA84 Foundation. Endowed by the surplus funds from the 1984 Olympics, LA84 is dedicated to funding youth sports programs and its library, the Paul Zifren Sports Resource Center, is committed to "the advancement of sports knowledge and scholarship."⁷⁵⁸ Getting to the library necessitates checking in at the foundation's front desk located in a historical landmark, the Eugene W. Britt House. Built in 1910, the house is in a Colonial Revival style that borrowed from Neoclassical and Georgian architectural elements. The insides were furnished in dark mahogany wood with occasional antique sports item. A walk out to the patio yielded a view of the library: a circular build largely enclosed glass windows, the library felt like a

⁷⁵⁸ "About," *LA84 Foundation*, accessed May 20 2015, <http://www.la84.org/about/>

larger-than-life display case exalting the athletic body, as life-size photographs and sports accouterment punctuated the walls. With the Olympic flame burning in a lush courtyard outside of the library, I searched for evidence of Sandow's queer archival legacy within Nisivoccia's small booklet with a mustard-yellow cover. Once bound by staples, yet no more, this copy of *The Mighty Monarch* attests to a robust life of circulation. A stamp on the inside cover states that it had once been a part of the Citizen's Savings Athletic Foundation; upon the foundation's dissolving the Zifren Center absorbed its documents. Where Nisivoccia's text was before that is unknown.

In the sublime atmosphere of this shrine to sport, I replicated clandestine queer reading and arranging practices that see the erotic potentiality of Sandow's body. Carefully combing through each photograph, I try to map out a poetics of homoerotic desire through the body. While centering on the usual fig-leaves, loincloths, and contrapposto poses, my notes also include mentions a teasing smile, wisps of fair hair, and a fleshiness of the body captured by lighting that reminds we are looking at a living human body, not just a statue. These observations unlock the erotic potential of the photograph that distance the image from explicit mimicry of art historical conventions to delight in the fleshly masculinity of the subject. Nisivoccia's text makes such inspections of the male body pretty easy, if not fatiguing by the end. Nisivoccia frames perusing Sandow's photographs as a privilege mostly reserved for the "lover of the physique beautiful," trumping the disinterested eye of the anatomist or the artist. To mention specifically "the loves of the physique beautiful" permits the text to operate within a spectatorial economy of sex and desire. Comprised of fifty-five photographs, *The Mighty*

Monarch is a kaleidoscopic paean to Sandow's superlative physique. The text is less about Sandow the man, and more about the strongman's body beautiful. Though the photographs are decontextualized and uncaptioned, a savvy viewer can spot the work of Sarony and Van der Weyde. The images I discuss in earlier sections of this chapter appear in Nisivoccia's booklet, bringing their rich, unseen histories to bear on the text otherwise spare in its presentation. And Nisivoccia's prefatory remarks betray his awareness of the intermediated quality of Sandow's photochemical media, as he notes Sandow's various appearances before "artists, sculptors, anatomists, photographers, lithographers, etc." Focusing on the period between 1886-1904, Nisivoccia chooses images where Sandow is at his "pictorial best," his heyday as a performer, quietly asserting the centrality of Sandow's performance career in making the desirable man.

A surprisingly inscrutable figure for someone who secured such solid brand recognition, what remains of Sandow currently is his ideal body and the mark it made on the developments of nineteenth-century Physical Culture, aesthetics, photography, and freakery. Simultaneously acknowledged and ignored, Sandow's performances of perfection center on his sexuality wherein the muscular male body becomes a source of homoerotic pleasure, as it is a signifier of reproductive heteronormativity. These ambiguities are engrained into the artifacts themselves through their intermediated qualities that bring together sculptural, photographic, and performing bodies. More so, the way they have become or failed to become archival just as actively shape Sandow's relationship to queer sexuality. I pull the items that giving "Archiving" its shape from disparate sources: the British National Portrait Gallery, Harvard's Theatre Collection, the

Zifren Center, and the occasional antique store. While none explicitly touch on Sandow's active part in shaping current fin-de-siècle queer legacies, but these questions of sexuality always lurk at the perimeter willing disclosure either staying with us or slipping through our fingers depending on how we look at, listen to, or touch the objects.

Coda: Gooble Gobble, Gabba Gabba Hey!

At the end of my introduction, Tod Browning's *Freaks* extended their loving cup, and with a "gooble gobble" invited you to become "one of us." Now at the beginning of this coda, the freaks turn punk, and with a "gabba gabba hey," they assure you that "we accept you, one of us!" Freak folksonomies like "Gooble Gobble" and "Gabba Gabba" articulate a coming-to freak consciousness that may not really make sense to the unhip ears of the "norms." Since you have managed to stay this long at the sideshow without recoiling in horror at the oddities presented to you, you well know that the line between freakery and normalcy is tenuous at best, and that the freak show's "nonsense" is a form of meaning-making in its own right. What kinds of minor threats to our knowledge making practices, welcome or otherwise, might we incur when we accept freaks as one of us through the archive, that material site of otherness that masquerades as the self. To work through this question, I wrap up by prolonging your visit to the freak show with another strange, patchwork of texts, images, and performances of perhaps the most exploited of freak show performers who since has become an unlikely source of freak self-preservation and expressions: the "Pinhead."

i. Can the "Aztec" Speak?

Bartola and Maximo were billed as the "Last of the Living Ancient Aztecs," but actually they were not. In fact, Bartola and Maximo were the first of the last, "The Original Aztec

Children,” who inspired a longstanding freak show convention based on the prehistoric charms of Mexico, and Central and South Americas. In the 1880s, while Bartola and Maximo were experiencing the joys and tribulations of married life, a pair of “Estics,” Hutty and Tain, came on the scene sporting South American serapes. On the heels of the “Estics” followed in quick succession “Rosi the Wild Girl of the Yucatan” and “the Mexican Wild Boy.” The early-twentieth century witnessed the return of more “Aztecs”: “Tik Tak,” Aurora and Natali, and pack of children called “The Original Aztec Indian Midgets from Old Mexico.” Other than their faux Aztec roots, these performers all had something else in common: they had microcephaly. Mentioned briefly in my study of the Bartola and Maximo, microcephaly is a neurodevelopmental condition in which a person’s (usually an infant’s) head is significantly smaller than those of others’ their age. Accompanying microcephaly are other symptoms such as seizures, hearing loss, vision loss, and developmental delay of motor skills. Other than claiming obscure Mexican or Central American origins, microcephalic freak performers popularized the term “pinhead.” The famous of these performers was “Zip the Pinhead,” who was not an “Aztec” but still presented as a holdover from an ancient tribe of missing links found in “the deepest reaches of Africa”⁷⁵⁹ Now part of our common lexicon for someone slow witted, “pinhead” initially referred directly to the shapes of these performers’ heads, as well as their perceived debilities in intellect and motor skills. Whether or not this casual use of “pinhead” now is a direct product of the modern freak show is another unsolved freak mystery. But, with its first recorded use in the *Oxford English Dictionary* in 1896

⁷⁵⁹ Jeff Berglund, *Cannibal Fictions: American Explorations of Colonialism, Race, Gender, and Sexuality* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), 30.

as a colloquial, derogatory term for someone who both has a small head and is “stupid or foolish,” we may speculate that our modern use of “pinhead” was at least popularized through the freak show, poising it as a site of nonce taxonomic production. “Pinhead” as a pop-medical term was not just relegated to vernacular usage, but also found in early-twentieth-century medical research journals. The 1922 issue of the *Journal of Heredity* featured an article with a click-bait title that rivaled any modern freak show: “Microcephalic People Sometimes Called ‘Pin Heads,’” which showcased different subjects euphemized as “Pin Families.”⁷⁶⁰

This phenomenon of freak show nomenclature infiltrating professional medical and scientific taxonomies illuminates that the freak show did not just reflect but also generated popular knowledge. The problem with this particular example is that it rehearses the archive’s directives to transform individual bodies into abstracted specimens through discourse founded on ideologies of normativity. Although my dissertation has moved beyond our understandings of archives as such, historical facts do remain that during mid- to late-nineteenth century archives in their photographic and textual forms were complicit in promoting imperialist hierarchies of the world’s populations. Moreover, because of their cognitive and intellectual disabilities, microcephalic performers bring into sharp focus the freak show’s exploitative nature, since their agency in helping to construct their own spectacles is at best ambiguous and at worst non-existent. After all, the “pinheads” are not naming themselves as much as they

⁷⁶⁰ Charles Bernstein, “Microcephalic People Sometimes Called ‘Pinheads,’” *Journal of Heredity* 13, no. 1 (1922): 30-38.

are being named. And their namers, the wily impresarios like P.T. Barnum, were not above deploying sexist, racist, or ableist images and language to promote their shows' wonders. Howsoever dark episodes such as these were, out of them arose nascent forms of freak expression that have been memorialized through the 1898 "Indignation Meetings," which now serve as some of the strongest verifiable instances in which freak performers commandeered the terms of their exhibition.

Nineteenth-century liberalism accounts for the various philosophical, political, and material practices that elevated the individual and his self-governance. As James Vernon sums up, liberalism was a "way of being in the world."⁷⁶¹ With its incitements to lively speculation and debate, the freak show was a popular instantiation of a zeitgeist that elevated the liberty of free exchange of thought, opinion, and discussion. But this cultural purchase only extended so far, pretty much to the able-bodied, white, male British self. As exhilarating as the freak show was for its impresarios, audiences, and medical-scientific authorities, the performers themselves began to feel keenly excluded from liberalism's promises. In a sensational act of protest, the performers for Barnum's 1898-9 season called to order a series of "Indignation Meetings" in London in order to assert their rights of self-determination and self-expression. A supremely eloquent and impassioned speaker, "Bearded Lady" Annie Jones took the floor as the chief convenor with Charles Tripp the "Armless Wonder" as her acting secretary. The attendees rounding out the meeting were some of sideshow's biggest names who have already

⁷⁶¹ James Vernon, "What Was Liberalism, and Who Was Its Subject?; Or, Will the Real Liberal Subject Please Stand Up?," *Victorian Studies* 53, no. 2 (2011): 304.

made appearances throughout this dissertation: Jo-Jo the Dog-Faced Boy, James Morris the “Elastic Man,” J.M. Coffey the “Skeleton Dude,” and Lalloo and Lala, the “Double-Bodied Hindoo.” The demand was simple. They wanted a new name. The performers based the question of their exploitation on both word choice and who got to do the choosing. They felt as though the term “freak” was dumped on them, and it really rankled them because it denied them the right to self-represent as they saw fit. In a poetic interlude within the meeting, their disgruntled voices swelled in unison: ““The name has naught to do with us / They brought it 'right along' with them.”⁷⁶² To rectify the problem, they proposed a more democratic solution by inviting submissions for alternative names. Barnum’s press agent, Tody Hamilton who “Jingled Words like Bells” suggested by letter that “freaks” rename themselves “whams,” a “word not found in any languages.”⁷⁶³ The performers’ response: “We might as well be called snakes.”⁷⁶⁴ After weighing in on nearly twenty proposed names, they chose “prodigies,” submitted by Canon of Westminster Abbey Albert Basil Wilberforce. The performers approached their debate from an intelligent angle by presenting their case as a matter of taxonomic agency. Their request to self-name resonates with contemporary bottom archival practices that seek community involvement in generating the archive’s descriptive language of those whose lived and embodied experiences the archive attempts to document. Staged as live performances, these moments of taxonomic self-determination locate the labor of knowledge making primarily within the living body, which then extend to the body’s

⁷⁶² “From a Freak Country,” *Buckingham Advertiser and Free Press*, January 21st 1899.

⁷⁶³ *Sporting Times*, August 7th 1915.

⁷⁶⁴ “The Revolt of the Freaks,” *Cheshire Observer*, January 21 1899.

imperfect material adjuncts that come in the form of newspaper articles or *cartes-de-visite*. With the freaks performers' well-reasoned and well-articulated arguments, the "Indignation Meetings" of 1898 mark a watershed moment in freak history by decisively answering "yes," the freak can speak. But, if this is the case, the question remains: what do the freaks say?

ii. "Gooble Gabble"

Tod Browning's *Freaks* is a cinematic legend. Looking to make a movie that incited more scares than *Frankenstein*, MGM brought Tod Browning on after his success with *Dracula*. Filmed in 1931-32, this Pre-Hays Code horror film generated controversy onscreen for featuring frightening but sympathetic portrayals of actual sideshow performers, like Johnny Eck the "Legless Man," Prince Randian the "Human Torso," conjoined twins Violet and Daisy Hilton, and Koo-Koo the Bird Girl. The episodic plot follows the everyday exploits of a travelling carnival, and the main tension of the film crops up around strained relationships between the freak and the norms. The scares were perhaps a little too effective, as *Freaks* was a total box office failure and even banned in some countries. In a moment of maternal impression utterly Victorian in character, one female viewer claimed that she suffered a miscarriage after watching the film in the theater. Browning's career never recovered. And what transpired off-screen has also been a source of gossip, much like many of the freak show documents I've examined throughout this study. During production, a story was passed around the studio about a

disgusted F. Scott Fitzgerald, under contract with MGM at the time, needing to leave the room to vomit upon seeing the eponymous freaks having lunch.⁷⁶⁵ Concerning the film itself, rumors persist of a now non-existent original version of *Freaks* that was so graphic and so horrifying that it was destroyed. Despite the fact that *Freaks* was a commercial failure, it has since become a cult treasure, inspiring filmmakers such as Robert Altman and Federico Fellini.

One of the most enduring scenes in *Freaks* is the “Wedding Feast” featuring the now-familiar “Gooble Gobble”. The famous “Gooble Gobble” scene of *Freaks* opens with a close-up of Schlitze, a microcephalic sideshow performer most likely born Simon Metz who briefly toured as “Maggie, last of the Aztec Children” on the freak circuit. For Tod Browning’s *Freaks*, Schlitze dropped the “Aztec” act and appeared as himself dragging as a little girl.⁷⁶⁶ In the film, Hans, a dwarf in the tradition of Tom Thumb, has just married Cleopatra, one of the film’s few “norms” and a treacherous tightrope artist in cahoots with the strongman looking to bilk Hans out of his hefty inheritance. The festive guffaws and giggles of the surrounding freaks cloud around Schlitze seated at the expansive table where everyone is feasting in celebration of the auspicious nuptials. As the camera focuses on Schlitze smiling, his giggle cuts through the background noise, sheepish and girlish, until the emcee, Angeleno the Dwarf, picks up the legendary chalice, “the Loving Cup.” Starting the scene with the close up shot of Schlitze laughing

⁷⁶⁵ Don Summer, “Freaks,” *Horror Movie Freaks* (Iola, WI: Krause Publications, 2010), 184.

⁷⁶⁶ David J. Skal, *Dark Carnival: The Secret World of Tod Browning—Hollywood’s Master of the Macabre* (New York: Anchor Books, 1995), 170.

draws us closer to his interiority, not all the way in but close enough for dangerous identification; when the scene cuts to Angeleno, we follow with Schlitze eyes, as the subtle camera work briefly maps our gaze onto Schlitze's. Then the theatrics commence. Angelo intones: "We'll make her one of us. A loving cup." followed by the freaks rapping their silverware in unison each chiming in "We accept her, One of Us, Gooble Gobble, Gobble." The camera pans across the table briefly freezing at each freak performer occupying the bulk of the frame in a kinetic replaying of the nineteenth-century ten-in-one presentation model.

An iconic scene in a cult movie, *Freaks*' wedding feast gives us a glimpse into a freak fraternal order guided by its own code of ethics, customs, and lexicon. Dustin Kidd writes of Browning's freaks in language that resonates with community-based archival projects, as he argues that the freaks employ their own language in order to maintain the "social boundaries of their community ... as an act of self-preservation."⁷⁶⁷ Nonsensical to the ears of norms, "gooble gobble" has elicited negative reactions from critics who cite that the illegible "babbling quality of the chant" renders the freaks "inscrutable and alien."⁷⁶⁸ Expecting unimpeded access into "freak" meaning-making practices, this complaint registers the imperiousness of the normate, that invisible cultural self who stands in shadowy relief against the highly defined contours of the cultural other. Rather than revealing an empirically derived definition, the primary cultural work that "gooble

⁷⁶⁷ Dustin Kidd, *Pop Culture Freaks: Identity, Mass Media, and Society* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2014), 221.

⁷⁶⁸ "*Freaks* (1932)," *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Films*, eds. Sabine Haenni, Sarah Barrow, John White (New York: Routledge, 2015), 239.

gobble” performs is its incitement to speculation—a hallmark of freak show documentation, as this dissertation has shown—that I would like to link to Schlitze.

During the nineteenth-century, *Household Words* asked “Can the Aztec Speak?,” a question likely derived from the fact that a potential symptom of microcephaly is speech impairment. Bartola and Maximo were rendered human-nonhuman hybrids as sources noted that they twittered like birds, even though they eventually learned a small handful of English words and phrases. In *Freaks*, Schlitze has a big scene earlier in the film in which he debuts his new dress for Wallace Ford’s character, Phroso the Clown. Schlitze’s dialogue is unintelligible, but through vocal tone the viewer can easily speculate on the emotional tenor of the exchange, which gives meaningful insight into Schlitze’s psychological landscape. With the “Wedding Feast” scene initially filtered through Schlitze’s consciousness, its “gooble gobbles” serve as an approximation of Schlitze’s “freak” language to ascribe authorial agency to the sideshow microcephalic who, during the nineteenth century, was ventriloquized through impresarios. Like Schlitze’s earlier scene, “gooble gobble” operates within a primarily emotional register, as it maps out three distinct reactive categories circulating within the scene: the mirth and joy of the freak performers, the fright and repugnance of Cleopatra, and the delight and surprise of the viewer. The “gooble gobbles” avoid easy cognitive discernment by dwelling in the more risky and uncertain terrain of affect. Like a meta-data tag for an archive, “gooble gobble” is a specific nonce taxonomy that indexes the freak community’s way of being, devised by freaks and for freaks. Regarded as “nonsense” or alien, “gooble gobble” avoids becoming evidence of the traditional archival directives

designed to demystify and normalizes its bodies of information. Instead the freaks' language maintains a speculative inscrutability that serves as an ethical model of archival reading that does not presuppose unimpeded access to and interpretation of its materials. The studio heads at MGM and Browning himself intended the wedding feast scene to be the climactic and most fear-inducing moment of *Freaks*; as such, they had not expected that future generations of viewers would glom onto this scene as a moment of celebratory self-assertion with "Gooble Gobble" becoming its rallying cry. By continuing to funnel archival meaning through the performing body of the freak performers, the "Gooble Gobble" scene opens itself up to future recontourings by other performing bodies. Now that we know what the "freaks" say, who becomes the more contemporary mouthpiece, and how might meanings change depending on the speaker?

iii. Gabba Gabba Hey!

There's a difference between being a very tall person and being a giant. As Robert Bogdan clarifies, being very tall is simply a question of physiology, whereas "being a giant involves something more," specifically the freak show's practices of presenting peoples.⁷⁶⁹ Similarly, there is a difference between being something with microcephaly and being a "pinhead." If this distinction has not been clear enough with the Victorian and the U.S. Depression-era examples sketched out so far, as we move into the 1970's, the figure of the "pinhead" is explicitly tied to sideshow culture. However, at this point

⁷⁶⁹ Bogdan, *Freak Show*, 3.

the “pinheads” abandoned the midways, state fairs, and dime museums and started populating punk clubs like New York’s CBGB or underground newspapers like Berkeley California’s *Berkeley Barb*.

As mentioned briefly in my inter-chapter on San Francisco’s The Cockettes, the early-1970s witnessed the growth of a “freak” subculture. Part-hippie, part-punk, part-New Left, part-left behind, part-middle class ennui, the countercultural “freak” was an imprecise mish-mash of identities, one who is separate but indistinguishable from the era’s other rebels. Following in the footsteps of the Victorian freakery’s tenuous relationship with the empirical mindsets that guide archival practices, this new “freak” carved out a distinct identity category while articulating the limitations of such endeavors, as the term overlapped with but splintered away from “hippies,” “heads,” “stoners,” “pacifists,” and “radicals” that fleshed out the U.S. countercultural landscape. The militant, radical left-wing Weather Underground poised the freak as a political revolutionary in their first communiqué by commencing with the lapidary assertion that “Freaks are revolutionaries and revolutionaries are freaks.”⁷⁷⁰ In case this cryptic equation made little sense to the unhip, they followed it up with clarification that “if you want to find us, this is where we are. In every tribe, commune, dormitory, farmhouse, barracks, and townhouse where kids are making love, smoking dope and loading guns—fugitives from Amerikan justice are free to go.” Moving into the 1960s and 1970s, “freak” became a folksonomy proudly adopted by the “freaks” themselves, as

⁷⁷⁰ The Weather Underground, “Communiqué #1,” *The Verso Book of Dissent: From Spartacus to the Shoe-Thrower of Baghdad*, ed. Andrew Hsiao, Audrea Lim (Brooklyn, NY: Verso 2016), “1970.”

The Hippie Dictionary explicates: “Early on, the hippie counterculture was characterized as “a freak of society” by the straight culture, so, in defiance, hippies adopt the word freak and used it themselves.” In a move that reverberates with the terminological debates of the 1898 Indignation Meetings, the *Dictionary* clarifies that “most hippies did not refer to themselves as hippies; we often called ourselves freaks.” In defining the term freak, both the Weathermen communiqué and *The Hippie Dictionary* slip from the third-person, “themselves,” to the second-person “us” and “we,” their grammars belying the notion that the “freak” had become an insouciant yet honorific form of identification.

While Victorian freakery looked to the sciences as its imprimatur, the subcultural freak turned to the underground performing arts of the 1960s and 1970s. The reappropriated “freak’s” etymological roots are foggy, but the “freak scene” may have started during the mid-1960s in the Laurel Canyon area of Los Angeles. Dancer Vito Paulekas, his wife Szou, and their mutual friend Carl “Captain Fuck” Franzoni translated their ballroom marathons to freeform dancing and sex marathons known as “freaking out.”⁷⁷¹ Entranced by their theatrics, musician Frank Zappa described what he witnessed at Vito and Szou’s as “dancing in a way nobody had seen before, screaming and yelling on the floor and doing all kinds of weird things. They were dressed in a way that nobody could believe, and they gave life to everything that was going on.”⁷⁷² Zappa himself would soon metamorphose from an inexperienced acolyte to the Freak Daddy himself

⁷⁷¹ Rachel Lee Rubin, *Well Met: Renaissance Faires and the American Counterculture* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 48.

⁷⁷² Quoted from Barney Hoskins, *Waiting for the Sun: A Rock ‘n’ Roll History of Los Angeles* (New York: Backbeat Books, 2003), 111.

with his 1966 debut album *Freak Out!* in which he became a scraggly Virgil responsible for guiding Suzy Creamcheese through the unfamiliar freak scene underbelly. Zappa explains to the uninitiated that, “freaking out is a process whereby an individual casts off outmoded and restricted standards of thinking, dress and social etiquette in order to express CREATIVELY his relationship to his environment and the social structure as a whole.”⁷⁷³ The creative contribution of *Freak Out!* results in a concept album dominated by a jangly, lo-fi garage rock sound overlaid with satirical doo-wops, kazoos, and xylophone flourishes. Zappa’s drone spans the album interrupted only by shaggy, crescendo’ing intonations of “freaks, daddy.”

Initially the “Freak Scene” would seem to have little to do with the actual freak show, but as “freaks” started proffering up their own creative contributions, they went in search of source materials. With its outlaw status in Western film culture and its disregard for social decorum, Tod Browning’s *Freaks* was the natural choice. For the liner notes for his *Tinseltown Rebellion* album, Zappa incorporated stills from *Freaks* to make a collage that paired sideshow iconography with lyrics focusing on sexuality, pop culture, and satirical takes on punk rock. But, it was not until the Ramones’ 1977 *Leave Home* that Browning’s film would be re-enlivened according to the classic interlocking textual, visual, sonic, and performed narratives of the Victorian freak show. The song “Pinhead” was a child of coincidental circumstances. When their gig in Ohio was canceled, the Ramones took in a grindhouse screening of Tod Browning’s *Freaks*; like

⁷⁷³ David McBride, “Death City Radicals: The Counterculture in Los Angeles,” *The New Left Revisited*, ed. John Campbell McMillian and Paul Buhle (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003), 123.

many other contemporary viewers they were enamored of the “Wedding Feast,” especially the “Gooble Gobbles.”⁷⁷⁴ While the “midget groom” first caught their eye, it was Schlitze the “Pinhead” who would become their mascot in defiant rebuff of mainstream media sources, as Tommy Ramone explains: “all the freaks were welcome to join the Ramones. It was our way of goofing on the media, for saying we were not too bright.”⁷⁷⁵ The Ramones put their distinct spin on Schlitze’s “gooble gobble” chant. With a throbbing drumbeat reminiscent of the freaks’ silverware percussion, “Pinhead” fires off with an anthemic homage to the film, proclaiming “Gabba gabba we accept you, one of us!” The Ramones’ recycling of the freak archive was not just limited to song, as the “Gabba Gabbas” soon got their own contemporary “pinhead” performer at concerts. The Ramones’ roadie, Mitch Keller, would don a Schlitze mask and polka dotted dress, and carry a sign proclaiming “Gabba Gabba Hey!” across the stage; this performance has also had quite the busy afterlife, as invited celebrities have put on the Schlitze mask for concerts. The “pinhead” who was once the symbol of freak show exploitation had achieved a privileged countercultural position.

Like in Browning’s *Freaks*, the “Pinhead” becomes the source for freak knowledge making, as the “Gabba Gabbas” have become an enthusiastic calling card of countercultural, Ramones-style punk identification that resists a fully comprehensible signification. Up through the Ramones’ “Pinhead” permutation, the Schlitze-like

⁷⁷⁴ Brian J. Bowe, *The Ramones: American Punk Rock Band* (New York, NY: Enslow Publishing 2011), 45.

⁷⁷⁵ Everett True, *Hey Ho Let’s Go: The Story of the Ramones* (New York, NY: Omnibus Press, 2002), CH. 7.

character communicated solely through terms unintelligible. However, Bill Griffith's early-1970s underground comic strip, *Zippy the Pinhead*, would pose an alternative to the voiced and cognitive stereotypes of the "pinhead." In *Freaks*, Leslie Fiedler designates countercultural literary production of the underground comix scene as a breeding place for a "freak" *esprit*.⁷⁷⁶ Although this is the first mention of comics as a type of "freak" archival document, the material history of comics publishing illuminates how comics, both in terms of their form and their superhero characters, have elicited the same fascination and repulsion as "freaks." Prior to the cultural revolution of the latter-twentieth century, comics were both a source of aspirational American self-making as well as a threat to the national order. Dominated publishing magnates Detective Comics (D.C.'s progenitor) and All-American Comics, The Golden Age of Comics (late-1930s-1950) gave us our most enduring American superhero archetypes, like Superman, Wonder Woman, Batman, and Captain America, the Flash, and the Green Lantern, who during World War II became emblems of patriotism.⁷⁷⁷ But, in 1956, Fredric Werthem's *Seduction of the Innocent* argued that the graphic violence of comics was the leading cause of juvenile delinquency, effectively leading to a Congressional Inquiry into comics publishing practices. To waylay any more harm to their industry, the major comics publishers instituted their own internal watchdog body, The Comics Code Authority,

⁷⁷⁶ Leslie Fiedler, *Freaks: Myths and Images of the Secret Self* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1978).

⁷⁷⁷ Ron Goulart, *Comic Book Culture: An Illustrated History* (Portland, OR: Collectors Press, 2000), 43.

which persisted until the early-twenty-first century.⁷⁷⁸ In response to the censorious mainstream comics industry, an underground comics scene started taking shape, featuring sex-, drug-, and violence-heavy content explicitly banned by the Authority. One of the first underground comix showcased as its main characters the Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers: Phineas Phreak, Franklin Freek, and Fat Freddy Freekowski (and his cat), who would later become the namesake of New Zealand dub-jazz-reggae band Fat Freddy's Drop. Gilbert Shelton's trio of freewheeling stoners exploited their "freak" position to not only destabilize the otherwise-sanitized comics industry from within, but also use their connections with mass culture to skewer countercultural earnestness. However, these "freaks" had little to do with their Victorian precedents, instead reflecting the contemporaneous countercultural usage of the world.

But, just like the Ramones, Bill Griffith found inspiration in Tod Browning's *Freaks*, which he first saw at a Pratt Institute screening. And for Griffith, the mellifluous garbling the "pinheads" proved so entrancing that he asked the projectionist to rewind and slow down the film, so that he could listen again to "the poetic, random dialogue."⁷⁷⁹ Later in 1970 San Francisco, Zippy the "Pinhead" was born when *Real Pulp Comics* requested Griffith contribute a love story "but with really weird characters." Dressed up in a yellow and red polka dotted muumuu and a dainty red bow, Zippy inserts easily into the cross-dressing sartorial tradition of the "Pinhead." Instead of replicating the guttural

⁷⁷⁸ David Hajdu, *The Ten-Cent Plague: The Great Comic-Book Scare and How It Changed America* (New York: Picador, 2008), 307.

⁷⁷⁹ David Kamp and Lawrence Levi, *The Film Snob's Dictionary: An Essential Lexicon of Filmological Knowledge* (New York: Broadway Books, 2006), 38.

language of the “Pinhead” initiated by Browning and carried on by the Ramones, Griffith pursued another tack. His “Zippy” still delighted in linguistic play that vexed semantic conventions, but this time through philosophical and literary non-sequiturs, and cryptic spins on familiar adages aimed at lampooning mainstream consumer culture. Some his gems include: “All life is a blur of Republicans and meat,” “Reality distorts my sense of television,” “Consciousness is vastly overrated”; and “Glazed donuts are the building blocks of the universe.”⁷⁸⁰ An instructional comic strip on how to read Zippy characterizes his wordplay not as “gibberish” but as “logic in illogic,” only if we “allow it in.” Or, to put it another way, maybe Zippy’s language makes sense if the invitation to be “one us is” is accepted. But this access is not free and unimpeded, since his language, while carrying intellectual meaning, also dwells in the realm of the embodied and emotional, a potent combination that produces an affective response: it is a source “sensual pleasure” just as it is “lyrical coloration” that only later can be comprehended as “scathing cultural critique.”⁷⁸¹ No longer an outcast, Zippy the “Pinhead” is a revered symbol of “freak scene” literary production who has garnered his own animated cartoon series as well as a stage production, leaving his future open to several different possible embodiments.

So what then might these “Pinheads” tell us about freaks, archives, and the mindsets that construct systems of knowledge production and preservation? The dark history of the

⁷⁸⁰ “Zippisms,” accessed July 1 2017, zippythepinhead.com.

⁷⁸¹ “Understanding Zippy in 6 Easy Lessons,” accessed July 1 2017, zippythepinhead.com.

“Pinhead’ within the context of freak exhibitions shores up most forcefully the ethical implications of freak scholarship. Tracing the “Pinheads”’ insuperable language, cognition, and emotions initiates ethical encounters with archival materials that do not presuppose that we have unimpeded access into their world. Rather we work responsively with these materials to formulate new way of reading, listening, and feeling with that posit a more equanimous relationship between researcher and archives, one in which we realize that archives act on us as much as we act on their materials. The goal of this dissertation was not to offer a wildly novel reading of Victorian freakery and its contemporary progeny; after all, the language of liminality, and the push and pull of identification and repulsion that already guides critical responses to freakery delimits an far-ranging and hospitable field of intellectual inquiry. Rather, I work with the freak to co-write a series of parables that push us to think about how we gather and tell the stories of others. And, particularly, how much of the responsibilities as and conditions of possibility that make us storytellers are structured by the strange bodies right under our noses that often go unexamined.

The “archive” within literary studies is a curiosity. It is both an indispensable companion to and suspicious other of our prized and familiar literary texts. Characterized alternately as a fetish and a romance, the literary critic’s relationship with the archive rests on an allure rooted within the archive’s ability to facilitate encounters with material others that become safely managed by the systems of the archives themselves, as well as the practices of the researcher. That is, these alien materials become tokens of us through the arguments that we make. But, freakery also forces us as to reconsider our relation to

archives and agency. What does it mean to work with “goobles” and “gabbas”, to unpack their mysteries as well as preserve their wonder? Squirreling out “freak” forms of documentation does not mean exerting control by inviting in the outsider, the outlier—the “freak” –and subjecting them to the archive’s normalizing arrangement or description practices. Rather what I’d like to leave with is that the study of freakery catalyzes responsive interpretative strategies that pull us into the realm of the freaks. “Freaking” the archive is not an additive practice, mapping new methods onto normative bodies to make new, strange ones. In fact, quite the opposite: “freaking” the archive is a stripping down process, locating methods embedded in materials to get a better picture of the archive’s singular, wondrous bodies often hidden under layers of normalizing discourse. At their core, archives *are* freaks. Reduced to discourse, the archive risks becoming a normalizing agent. But recognizing the archive’s varied epistemological, material, and embodied forms generates more questions about normative categories of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and embodiment than it does answers. In true freak show fashion, I leave these questions partially unanswered, with the language of the “Pinheads” echoing in our ears, prolonging through this coda same speculative energies that makes a “freak” a “freak.”

Thank you for taking this loving cup: we accept you.

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