TURNING ARCHIVAL

THE LIFE OF THE HISTORICAL IN QUEER STUDIES

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EDITORS

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A book in the series
Radical Perspectives:
A Radical History Review book series

Series editors:

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Duke University Press *Durham and London* 2022

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The Life of the Historical in Queer Studies

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Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper ∞
Designed by Courtney Leigh Baker
Typeset in Garamond Premier Pro and Din
by Westchester Publishing Services

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Marshall, Daniel, [date] editor. | Tortorici, Zeb, [date] editor.
Title: Turning archival : the life of the historical in queer studies / [edited by] Daniel Marshall and Zeb Tortorici.
Other titles: Radical perspectives.
Description: Durham : Duke University Press, 2022. | Series: Radical perspectives | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2021059689 (print) | LCCN 2021059690 (ebook)
ISBN 9781478015345 (hardcover)
ISBN 9781478017974 (paperback)
ISBN 9781478022589 (ebook)
Subjects: LCSH: Gay and lesbian studies—Archival resources. | Gays—History—Sources. | Gays—Research. | Queer theory. | BISAC: SOCIAL SCIENCE / LGBTQ Studies / Gay Studies | HISTORY / World
Classification: LCC HQ75.15 .T837 2022 (print) | LCC HQ75.15 (ebook) | DDC 306.76/6—dc23/eng/20220404
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2021059689
LC ebook record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2021059690

Cover art: Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley, *H1 (haunting Ebun Sodipo)* and *H2 (haunting Tobi Adebajo)*, 2021. Video hologram diptych. Installation dimensions variable. Edition of 4, with 2 AP. Courtesy of the artist.

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Acknowledgments

Turning Archival has been a long time in the making, and we are grateful to those who—over the years—made this project possible. The idea for the book came about after we, with Kevin P. Murphy, coedited two special issues of *Radical History Review* (no. 120 from 2014 and no. 122 from 2015) on the topic of "Queering Archives," and we wish to thank Kevin for his unflagging support for that project and for contributing thoughts and ideas to this book. We also would like to thank Tom Harbison and the editorial board of *RHR* for their help and support along the way toward publishing those two issues. We thank Duke University Press for permission to republish revised versions of the articles of María Elena Martínez, Martin F. Manalansan IV, and Joan Nestle here. Special thanks go to Sarah Gualtieri, who offered the support, consultation, and close readings that enabled us to publish an expanded version of Martínez's article in *Turning Archival*. We are grateful, too, to Joan Nestle, who provided inspiration, ideas, and encouragement for this project. Special thanks are reserved for both Gisela Fosado and Alejandra Mejía, our editors at Duke University Press, who have stuck with us throughout this project, offering critical support, feedback, guidance, and patience along the way. As always, it has been a pleasure—personally and intellectually—to work with them toward the realization of this book. Our contributors too have been patient as we have brought this book into the world, and we thank them for all their work and for the vibrancy of their ideas which have been a powerful motor for this project. Anonymous readers of this manuscript, and the Duke University Press Editorial Advisory Board, provided generous and generative feedback and we gratefully acknowledge their input, which has made this a better book. We are thankful as well to several scholars, archivists, and activists who, in one way or another, left their mark on this project: Sara Ahmed, Tamara Chaplin, Jonathan Ned Katz, Oraison Larmon, Deborah Levine, Tavia Nyong'o, Susan Stryker, Marvin J. Taylor, and Jeffrey Weeks, among others. In Melbourne, the Australian Queer Archives and Deakin University's School of Communication and Creative Arts and its Gender and Sexuality Studies Research Network provided a nourishing intellectual environment supporting this work; and Daniel also thanks Valda Marshall, Roger Marshall, Gary Jaynes, Mary Lou Rasmussen, Anna

Hickey-Moody, Michal Morris, Don Hill, Dino Hodge, Geoffrey Robinson, Eliza Smith, Peter Aggleton, Rob Cover, Benjamin Hegarty, Timothy Jones, and Duane Duncan. In New York City, the Department of Spanish and Portuguese Languages and Literatures at New York University has been a supportive intellectual environment to carry out this work. Zeb wishes to acknowledge the help of the archivists at the Archivo General de Centro América, and especially Anna Carla Ericastilla for her unflagging support. Last, we are extremely grateful to the NYU Center of the Humanities, and especially to Ulrich Baer and Molly Rogers, for supporting this project with a book subvention grant, and to Jen Burton for assisting with the indexing of the book.

The book's cover artwork is based on art by Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley: *H1 (haunting Ebun Sodipo)* and *H2 (haunting Tobi Adebajo)*, 2021, video hologram diptych. These pieces are featured in the artist's exhibition *Get Home Safe* at David Kordansky Gallery. Situated throughout *Get Home Safe* are video portraits composed using motion capture data, which records the movement of objects and people. Here, Brathwaite-Shirley records data from Black trans people and converts the data into text, which, in turn, gives the human form in these works a new, readable body. The portraits speak to visitors of the exhibition and depict Black trans people from a range of source materials, both found by and given to the artist. Also included are images of people Brathwaite-Shirley meets; each participant receives compensation for their time and the personal stories they share. The portraits are both homages and testaments to the power of speaking about the fullest range of life experiences. Likewise, they document the process of assuming agency for the ways in which one is remembered and identified by the community at large.

Introduction

(Re)Turning to the Queer Archives

DANIEL MARSHALL AND ZEB TORTORICI

This anthology centers on the queer archival turn at the intersection of feminist and queer studies, literary and cultural studies, and history. The book is born from the relationship between ideas of archives and the cultural, political, and embodied work of *turning*.[1] We focus on how ideas about the archive have been shaped by rhetorics and practices of specific types of turns, and on the work of turning itself as part of epistemological, historiographical, and archival production. In this light, the book interrogates the cultural politics of *turning to* the archives—the roles and functions that archives and archival knowledges are pressed into to serve a multitude of shifting demands. It also analyzes multiple turns among and away from archives. Our contributors trace overlapping and at times contradictory sequences of turns, where diverse physical objects deposited into (or excluded from) the archives get turned into forms of knowledge, which are then deployed and put to work by a wide range of investigative turns to "the archive" as a site for the imagining and writing of history about sex, gender, and sexuality. Archives are places where material gets *turned into* something else: evidence or loss, history or an inspiration to do history differently. We are interested, then, in the transformative histories echoing inside the term "to turn," and in how "the archival" gets turned into a distinct form of archival endeavor when the records being archived focus explicitly on sex, gender, and sexuality. Indeed, insofar as the queer archival turn might be inseparable from people's experiences of being *turned on*, intellectually or erotically, by what one discovers in the past, it is also inseparable from developments which have seen this emphasis change understandings of what an archive is (or what it *can be*).

The so-called archival turn in the humanities typically refers to the frenetic pace of interdisciplinary interest in notions of "the archive" following the 1995 publication of Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*.[2] Yet as Ann Laura Stoler writes, "the archival turn has a wider arc and a longer durée. *Archive Fever* compellingly captured that impulse by giving it theoretical stature, but Jacques Derrida's intervention came only after the 'archival turn' was already being made."[3] The "archival turn" might best be seen, then, as a part of the broader reimagination of the archive in the humanities and the social sciences in the final decades of the twentieth century.[4] As Ruth Rosengarten notes, "The trope of 'the turn' has coloured the history of the humanities for over half a century: we've had quantitative, linguistic, cultural and spatial turns in the academy. The figure of a corporeal change of position and orientation is used, then, to make intelligible a structure of reflexivity, and importantly, with it, a shift in aesthetic and cognitive direction, if not paradigm."[5] The figuration of this "turn" to the archives has, of course, been shaped by disciplinary perspectives by those whose fields have not traditionally involved archives in the first place. Part of the controversial nature of this so-called turn is the always immanent risk of erasing the work in core disciplinary fields like library and information studies (or archivistics) and history, where archival theory and praxis have been most fully developed. Contentiously, as other disciplines turned on to the archive, what they often brought with them was at least an implicit critique that archives had up until then circulated within their natural disciplinary homes as largely uninterrogated "depositories of documents."[6] The "archival turn" has often been framed in general terms not only as an engagement with archival knowledges and methods from fresh disciplinary perspectives, but also as an aggressive project of theorization that problematically often imagined archives as "virgin territories" ripe for fresh theoretical cultivation. It is precisely the performative elements of this work that interest us here—unpacking how the archival turn has generated particularly queer ways of knowing archives and the bodies and desires they house. Some of the many operations through which people and things "turn archival" become evident in the ways that the chapters of *Turning Archival* trace the life of the historical in the field of queer studies.

What *queer* means, of course, is not straightforward. Since the arrival of the term into a range of disciplines in the 1990s, queer has been contested, especially within LGBTQ history.[7] Part of the controversy of queer as it emerged in some early formations was its centering of a narrow set of privileged perspectives and presumptions under the sign of a purportedly radical deconstruction. As many historians and scholars persuasively argued, early deconstructionist work in queer theory routinely decontextualized the study of sex, gender, and sexuality,

ahistoricizing scholarship and privileging a mode of critique that problematically often reproduced uneven power relations that gender and sexuality studies had historically sought to trouble (the privileging of white perspectives or the marginalization of critical engagements with class in some early queer studies are examples of this). In much of the earlier scholarship in gay and lesbian studies and queer studies—and indeed, much scholarship today—*queer* has often been taken as an unstated default, a presumption of a white, able-bodied, cisnormative, middle-class subject of Eurocentric modernity, whose "queerness" nonetheless falls outside certain norms. In these deployments of queer, its reputation for subversion came to rest, problematically, on an effacement of a raft of dominant power relations that much queer scholarship has since sought to bring into focus. The conceptual union between turning and queer is a generative one, then, because it indexes movement within queer studies to turn the focus of critique to neglected perspectives and marginalized knowledges. Part of this turn within queer studies over the last quarter-century has been a refreshed engagement with materialism and materialist critique, and a reappraisal of the significance of lived experience. This (re)turn to the materiality of the body and how it intersects with sex, sexuality, and gender has brought renewed attention to the practices and politics of embodiment that have been so crucial in the cultural politics and histories of gender and sexuality studies.

The problematic functioning of queer as reinstating a set of unstated default presumptions turned into, especially in the 1990s and early 2000s, an impetus to reshape the boundaries, subjects, and methods of queer studies from within. Work in a range of disciplinary fields—and especially born out of feminist studies and queer of color critique in its early years—*turned to* the archives precisely as a way of documenting the presence of difference to challenge queer's false normativities and to help foster the development of the material conditions to support the staging of critiques that broadened the scope of queer. Work in the exponentially growing field of trans studies, for example, illustrates this approach through efforts to develop approaches in community LGBTQ archiving and in the simultaneous development of both public and scholarly archival knowledges (Susan Stryker's work is a powerful example of how queer studies has been reshaped by moves within trans studies to turn to the archives).[8] Part of what is so radical about the intersection of trans studies and queer of color critique in relation to the archive is that it has excavated what the archive means and how archival knowledge gets produced. Our reading of the performativity of the queer archival turn draws on how scholars like C. Riley Snorton have theorized archival knowledges as active sites of meaning-making, where trans and blackness achieve significance to each other in part through

their apprehensions in the archives. For Snorton, "'black on both sides' refers to the temporal, spatial, and semantic concerns that are multiplicatively redoubled—between, beside, within, and across themselves—in transitive and transversal relation."[9] For the contributors to *Turning Archival*, then, the queer archival turn is a meaning-making maneuver that provides new ways of theorizing the idiom of the archive and new forms of embodiment in relation to it.

Similarly, the field of critical disability or crip studies has also reshaped the archive through notions of embodiment, questions of access, and notions of crip time. This notion of crip time challenges understandings of the archival through critical reflections on embodied experiences of how differently abled bodies move through archival space and time in particular ways: "*Crip time is time travel.* Disability and illness have the power to extract us from linear, progressive time with its normative life stages and cast us into a wormhole of backward and forward acceleration, jerky stops and starts, tedious intervals and abrupt endings."[10] Through the insights of crip studies and its elaboration of diverse practices of embodiment, notions of the archival have been reshaped by reappropriated engagements with historical notions of archival (dis)order, exposing the poverty of an unreconstructed archive studies which relies on the fictive presumptions of an unchallenged ableism. Records creation and archival description, as Gracen Brilmyer has shown, have long played a role in documenting and surveilling "disabled" and other non-normative bodies and minds.[11] Yet through crip interventions in the archive, the once-regulatory archive gets turned into something larger, something more capacious, to accommodate the diverse embodied histories it contains. These very same archives become places to find and connect with the "knowledge learned through one's own disabled insights as well as those of crip kin and ancestors."[12] And as Ryan Lee Cartwright shows, crip time in the archives breaks and reassembles order in the archives in line with the embodied experience of turning to the archive: "The disabled researcher's shaking, seizing, stimming and drooling have been deemed 'impediments' to the important work of the archive and its orderliness."[13] Through varied modes of living and experiencing crip time—outside of the archives, and within—it is not only that the archive expands to house unruly disorder but that all of this diverse embodiment reshapes the archive itself, exposing the limitations of ableist archival imaginaries. Centering and prizing such diverse archival "impediments," we are engaging with queer, then, in the same way that we are engaging with the archival: as ideas in motion, they function as terms of a critical destabilization which has been manifest in queer studies through the growing diversity of embodied experience that now characterizes the field. And while the referents of the queer archival turn may necessarily be

"unfixed," what centers the queer archival turn is this figure of the body and how critiques, rejections, friendly amendments, and cautions regarding queer at some level revolve around questions of embodiment—the racially minoritized, gendered, classed, cripped, transed bodies—that push back on queer's unstated body-norms.[14] Turning to the queer archive, then involves turning away from it—we want to turn away from queer's unstated body-norms to bring into focus other bodies, other archived desires, other histories, and our work here is informed by critiques that help us expand how we understand links between archives and embodiment. *Turning Archival* turns to the life of the historical in queer studies in the spirit of how these disciplines have turned the archive back on itself to invent new archival studies for the future, and revised understandings of the archival through reflections on the generative labor and preservation of embodiment itself.

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To think about the "archival turn" in queer terms is to understand how the idea of the archives turns on this notion of turning—it is to put the very notion of the *turn* itself front and center. The idea of *turning* resists easy immobilization; instead it encompasses multidirectionality, and movements and frictions that traverse space and time. The wide semantic range just lurking under the definitional veneer of the "turn" illustrates its twisting analytical potential. As a verb of motion, "to turn" might signify—as it did in the late Old English *turnian* and the Middle English *tournen*, *tornen*, and *turnen*, which absorbed their meanings from earlier Old English terms that separated out their meanings (and directions) of motion—either "the motion of turning back to the direction of the place from which the subject came" or "to go (on in the same direction)."[15] The very idea of the turn, in its late Old English etymological roots, thus already represents the proliferation of directionalities, the fecund capacity of multidirectionality, that we associate with the term. *Turn* is partly derived from the Latin *tornare*, which signified "to turn in a lathe" and is related to the Latin word for a "turner's wheel," that is, a machine for shaping wood or metal by means of rotation.[16] In modern English, the word *turn* turns up a complex assemblage of connotations, ranging from the (literal and figurative) "turning point," a place or time at which a decisive change takes place; a turn (of a river) as a "place of bending"; to "take a turn" as in a sudden alteration in the state or ability of the body or mind; and to "turn up," as deployed early in this sentence, to convey an arrival or appearance. Key instantiations of *to turn* denote change and transformation through some form of rotation, as the Proto-Indo-European root of the word—*tere-*, meaning to rub, drill, pierce, and twist—suggests.[17] *Turning Archival* capaciously plays with these many

meanings, investigating how turning *to* the archives can be understood in terms of friction, pleasure, and desire, always caught up in unsteady—and relentlessly generative—processes of transformation.

The work of turning is similarly yoked to regimes of power that produce transformations, in different scales and with different implications. This is one reason there is something inherently queer about turning: its obsessive orientation toward transformation means that the work of turning often involves taking simplified options—usually binary options—and knitting or kneading them together, turning so many figurative threads into a shawl or a few ingredients into a dough. Like queerness, practices of turning constitute the lability of whatever constituent elements are at hand. Turning often involves taking disparate elements and producing something different from their almost alchemical combination; turning is often described in magical terms (as the magician turns, say, a handkerchief in a hat into a rabbit, so too are discoveries in the archives often described as turning into something of a different order than what the archival thing is in and of itself). Turning invokes ideas about transformation in other registers, too. For example, the phrase "to turn oneself in" (or to be "turned in") references an individual's subjection to particular types of authorities, a process that typically sets in motion an archivable documentary trail that transforms the juridical subject (e.g., from free citizen to prisoner), providing a clear illustration of links between ideas of turning and bureaucratic regimes of power. From juridical judgment to esoteric magic, and from knitted blankets to baked breads, the cultural history of turning is replete with so many different routines for alterations in signification that the changes produced by turning in—donating, giving up, selling, losing, or bequeathing—an object to the archive, and then turning to it for one use or another, might appear to be just one other illustration of the work of transformation in the long cultural history of turns and turning. Yet there is something specific about turning *queerly*. The deep attachments inspired by the specifically *queer* archival turn—evidenced by its successful career both inside the academy and outside of it—invite more direct exploration of the constitution and resonance of its particular significance. For us, the notion of *turning archival* frames an investment in exploring how, through a kind of mutual reliance, certain things turn into something that can be named both "queer" and "archival." In other words, the notion of *turning archival* calls up or designates practices of reflection through which we might come to more closely track the diverse ways notions of queerness and the archive are iteratively produced through our turns to them. A key project of the queer archival turn becomes the work of turning to reflect on itself and the myriad ways in which the cultural politics of archives, archival

practices, preserved material things, classificatory structures, their epistemological limits, and diverse rationales driving users to turn to the archives all get stitched together in discrete, often fleeting, and always mobile moments of signification and meaning-making. In *turning archival*, the queer archival turn turns toward a wall of mirrors or, perhaps, a mirage.

The proliferation of what an archive might be is a defining characteristic of the popularization of archives over the past half-century. As Kate Eichhorn notes, "Since the archival turn in the early 1990s, researchers have reconfigured everything from collections of graffiti under highway overpasses to the human genome as types of archives. The plasticity of the concept has opened up new avenues through which to question the authority of the archive while simultaneously legitimizing non-institutional collections as important sites of research and inquiry."[18] It has thus become commonplace, as Geert-Jan Van Bussel and Marlene Manoff respectively discuss, to hear of configurations including the "social archive," the "raw archive," the "postcolonial archive," the "popular archive," the "ethnographic archive," the "geographical archive," and the "liberal archive."[19] To this list we might add the "intimate archive," the "affective archive," the "porn archive," the "ethnopornographic archive," the "medical archive," the "torture archive," the "poetic archive," the "performative archive," the "rebel archive," and so on.[20] Indeed, the term's ubiquity threatens to empty it of a precise significance. Unsurprisingly then, the "queer archive" more often than not serves as a black box, an ambiguous signifier into which the deployer of the term pours their hopes, fantasies, and anxieties. Valentines are written to the queer archive, and it is set out as a familiar site for cultural lamentation. Almost half a century after the establishment of community LGBTQ archives, the notion of the queer archive is seen by some as an idea that has lost useful specificity. But like the zombies in *The Return of the Living Dead*, queer archives refuse to die as the knowledges they signify get reanimated, over and over. We return to the archives queerly, then, to explore how the fragments of the past—all that ephemeral dust, desire, and documentary incompletion—get turned, again and again, into material to feast on in the present.

The possibilities—of the *X* archive—are, no doubt, interminable. And rather than grieve this excess and try to grasp toward some kind of arbitration regarding what an archive is or is not, we share a view with Eric Ketelaar, who in his "Archival Turns and Returns: Studies of the Archive" emphatically proclaims: "Let anything be 'as archive' and let everyone be an archivist. The important question is not 'what is an archive' but how does this particular individual or group perceive and understand an archive?"[21] Ketelaar discusses the archival turn as characterized by acknowledging archives as subjects of study: How is

it that we might come to know archives as "things"? How archives have come to be known as queer things is a key question for the authors whose chapters we include here. Ketelaar considers a range of archival turns—linguistic, social, performative, representational, and so on—and his discussion of the archival turn as having produced archives as "things" with "agency" brings up the conditions under which archival agency itself is produced and made legible. Explicitly tied to broader regimes of power governing the context within which any archival endeavor emerges, "archival agency" is necessarily shaped by the cultural politics pertinent to an archive's collection and situation, suggesting how queer archival agency is freighted with specific historical contests in relation to authority, gender, and sexuality more generally. Similarly, Ketelaar's observation that the archival turn has been characterized by a turn to the body—such as in his discussion of reenactments and embodiment—invites further reflection on the particular significance of this development from a queer perspective.[22] Queer bodies have, of course, been subjected to unique and complex histories of erasure, regulation, modification, and amplification in the archives. Indeed, an enduring imperative of queer archival work has been to challenge and reconfigure the terms under which bodies and their desires have archival existences. The importance of the body and practices of archival embodiment that Ketelaar observes as being central to the archival turn have added significance when that turn goes queer.

Turning Archival emerges out of a series of long-running conversations with people working in and outside of queer archive studies, which is reflected partly in our prior coediting of two special issues of *Radical History Review* on "Queering Archives" (see articles by archivists including Rebecka Taves Sheffield, Peter Edelberg, and others). Archival science and library studies scholars have been at the forefront of exploring the implications of the increased preservation and conservation of LGBTQ materials, and some of the most important interdisciplinary queer studies work on archives is directly indebted to library and information studies. See, for instance, recent scholarship by those whose earlier work appeared in our *Radical History Review* issues, including Robb Hernández's *Archiving an Epidemic: Art, AIDS, and the Queer Chicanx Avant-Garde*; Cait McKinney's *Information Activism: A Queer History of Lesbian Media Technologies*; and Rebecka Taves Sheffield's *Documenting Rebellions: A Study of Four Lesbian and Gay Archives in Queer Times*, among others.[23] *Turning Archival* has strategically assembled a group of humanities scholars at the intersection of queer studies and disciplinary boundaries, working on a range of temporal and geopolitical contexts. In their own ways the chapters trace the career of the queer archival turn in humanities scholarship (especially queer

studies and gender/sexuality studies) and serve as a companion piece to the expanding field of queer archives scholarship in library and information studies.[24] In *Turning Archival* we are foregrounding these turns between, among, and toward the multiple disciplines constituting queer archive studies not only as performative turns through which the subjects of our analysis are produced, but as hopeful turns toward further transdisciplinary collaboration.

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Histories of LGBTQ archiving are enmeshed in overlapping histories of activism, research, and theoretical work that has sought to examine experiences of difference, especially in terms of class, race, and citizenship status as they intersect with gender and sexuality. Queer archive studies—and archive studies in general—is indebted to much longer histories of scholarship examining racism, slavery, colonialism, class injustice, and migration. As McKemmish and Gilliland observe, the archive-oriented critical theory that has emerged over the past half-century has developed techniques "for theorizing about both the role of the Archive in social conditions and forces such as colonialism, oppression, marginalization and abuse of human rights, and the part that it might play in postcolonial, post-trauma and post-conflict societies."[25] It is in this critical tradition of paying attention to questions of history and power, and institutions and their subjects, that *turning archival* is framed as a critical posture that invites us to more carefully attend to the ways in which archives are not only situated within the context of the cultural politics of gender and sexuality, but also how knowledges generated through turning to the archive play active roles in these political struggles.

Born first from liberation-era struggles to turn away from histories of omission, queer archiving gained its footing by making a stand on the grounds of evidence—that gender and sexual difference had left historical traces and the renegade preservation of the dissident historical knowledge such traces informed could be the basis for new ways to recognize the past and set the terms for a desirable future. Despite these early affirmations of the political power of documented proof of historical sexual and gender difference, the question of evidence has, of course, always been controversial in histories and cultural politics of gender and sexual difference. This is largely because the idea of evidence has so often been used so powerfully against women and queers, especially Indigenous people and people of color, working-class communities, and those with disabilities. These troubling histories mean that appealing in any straightforward way to the merits of evidence risks incorporation within those historical and often juridical structures of power that have policed and regulated queer life in both the past and the present. Queer critique thus must stay

alert to the diverse and often nefarious ways in which evidence has been mobilized against queers, and this speaks to the political importance of examining the performative work of *turning* sexual and gender difference into archival evidence that this book explores. Such analyses can ultimately help expose, in the words of Marisa J. Fuentes, both "the machinations of archival power" and the ways that the archive always "conceals, distorts, and silences as much as it reveals."[26]

Put simply, queer archive studies is a struggle against reading evidence straight, not least because the very idioms and institutions for the production of archival knowledge continue to be so deeply enmeshed in colonial matrices of value, authority, access, and power. As Ann Cvetkovich oberves, so many "foundational texts for the archival turn predate queer theory" and many of these texts—from Gayatri Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?" to Michel-Rolph Trouillot's *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*—are grounded in the epistemological and political concerns of postcolonial critique (and the lingering aftereffects of empire).[27] More than a diffuse desire to turn extant understandings of archives into something else by replacing them with a more or less benign, banal kind of poststructuralist proliferation, decolonizing queer critiques of the archive and archival practice seek to alter the idiom through which the subjects of the archive are constructed as part of broader anticolonial political struggles. As Anjali Arondekar observes in this volume, concerns with reading queer pasts "are especially pressing for the lives of sexual minorities as the legal and economic right to be here and now is often authorized by the evidence of histories past." The legacies of the complicity of colonial archives in turning diverse subjects around the world into racialized, sexualized, and gendered others endure in marked and umarked ways today. As LGBTQ archiving achieves increased state sponsorship in different national contexts, more and more questions are being asked about the implications of turning state histories into LGBTQ histories and vice versa. The tracing of the diverse functions and effects of these "turns"—as both rhetorical expressions and epistemological practices—helps to illustrate some of the ways that the queer archival turn has given shape to contemporary racialized understandings of sex, gender, sexuality, and archives while also generating a site for turning the queer archival turn to reflect on its own histories and complicities and examine the colonial contours of its own desires and discoveries.

By turning to reflect on the queer archival turn itself, this collection reflects on the terms and practices through which sex, gender, and sexuality are understood as having *turned archival*. This critical reflection can guide us away, we hope, from an earnest and straightforward celebration of the "queer archive"

and toward a more expansive consideration of the productivity of the queer archival turn itself. As the queer archival turn considers its mirrors—and its mirages—what comes into focus is how the queer archival turn produces its varied forms of knowledge, and, enticingly, we also catch glimpses of assemblies of queerness and the archival that diverge from the disciplinary motions, temporalities, and spatialities that have been enforced through normative practices of turns and turning. In these ways, the works presented here seek to diversify relationships between archives, gender, and sexuality while also critically reflecting on how time and again, the cultural politics of gender and sexuality have turned to archives to harness their knowledge-producing power within often tightly confined knowledge pursuits. The explorations in this book, then, might be thought of as experiments or explorations in mapping out what we might call a *postarchival* tendency in queer and feminist studies—explorations in the life of the historical in feminist and queer studies in the wake of the archival turn—and one that contributes to other scholarly efforts to reflect on the productive work of the historical, methodological, political, and personal injunction to turn to the queer archive.[28] The chapters here take turns at working through the turn to the archival in queer and feminist studies as means to explore diverse ways of engaging historical knowledge and experience in contemporary cultural politics of gender and sexuality. And the turns engaged and performed by each chapter give body to, and flesh out, different visions of what *turning archival* looks like.

Seeking to press against the disciplined expectation to turn to the archive in normative ways, the feminist and queer scholarship in this book digs deeper into links between ideas of feeling and motion, which often mobilize relations between the archival and gender and sexuality. The turn to the archive in queer studies has often been examined as so many practices of emotion and affect, and what interests us here is the importance of ideas about motion and movement to affective engagements with the archive—a relationship that a critical reflection on archival turns helps bring into focus. Anecdotally, it is common to remark on how one is "moved" by a turn to the archive—moved by experiences of witnessing historical lives and events that invoke a diverse array of feelings from horror to admiration and pleasure to fear. The messiness of emotional movements denoted by the queer archival turn means that any analysis of the productivity of turning to the archive cannot be bound to any conclusive, straightforward feeling—every moment of archival pride is shadowed by archival shame. This proliferation of archival feelings is symptomatic of the performativity of turning archival. By exploring multiple ways in which the turn to the archive is generative, producing multiple coexisting forms of knowledge

that rub up against each other, we can recall Sedgwick's theorization of the performativity of "thinking beside" (as opposed to "thinking beyond") in *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*.[29] Here, Sedgwick extends her theorization of performativity in *Epistemology of the Closet*, which she presented as a theoretical alternative to critical accounts that believed in the conclusive turn represented by the idea of a "great paradigm shift" (as illustrated, for example, by apparently contrasting critical discussions about "homosexuality today").[30] In other words, our focus here is not the destination, or final significance, of any given turn, but rather a reflection on the pluralizing epistemologies and embodiments that are generated by frictive archival turns when understood as performative motions of change and transformation.

As the historical deployment of a language of "movement" reminds us, from the women's movement to the Black Lives Matter movement and beyond, histories of sexual and gender difference have often made explicit how emotion is constituted, in part, by motion itself. And if we examine the motions contained within the emotion of the archival turn, we can reflect on how the union between the archival and gender and sexual difference has been sharply shaped by ideas about turning as a regulated form of motion. By exploring how the motion of turning disciplines the way that the archival is thought about and practiced from the perspective of gender and sexuality studies and politics, we might better be able to understand the enduring power of thinking about engagements with the archive through a rhetoric of turns, and thus sponsor less regulated forms of engagement between archives, gender and sexuality, and subsequent knowledge production. *Turning Archival* seeks to denaturalize the relationship between feminist and queer studies and the archives by turning to explore some of the implications of this turning work itself. How do objects get materially and discursively altered once they are turned into a given archive? How have different meanings and authorities been produced for feminist/LGBTQ research, politics, and researchers by the turn to the archive? Relatedly, how has the archival turn helped us move away from problematic notions of the historical as authentic and authorizing in particularly self-legitimizing ways?

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Turning Archival focuses on the significance of the very *act of turning*, rather than the idea of the queer archival turn as some kind of discrete historical period or event. Sara Ahmed asks us to reflect on what "we could call 'the politics of turning' (and turning around), and how in facing this way or that the surfaces of bodies and worlds take their shape."[31] Certainly, how some historical subjects do (or do not) become "archival" is itself a reflection of how bodies and desires take shape in relation to archival technologies of conservation, reproduction,

and dissemination. Turning thus partly constitutes, and partly unfixes, each and every archival subject, as the following chapters demonstrate. Every turn to the archive is a witnessing of the archive turning into something else, and that something else can often be nothing at all, with the degradation of archival materials reminding us of how the turn to immateriality is the immanent ghost of the material archive. While the archive, in the words of Francis X. Blouin Jr. and William G. Rosenberg, is "a place of imagined and unexpected possibilities," it is also a place where the inevitable destruction of material records is slowed down (through processes of conservation).[32]

This emphasis on archival loss in the queer archival turn means that the historical project imagined within its terms has often fixated on the limits of historical knowledge, generating influential insights into historical erasure as well as the problematic reproduction of methodological and political assumptions about historical invisibility. More generatively, the emphasis on the ephemerality of queerness has meant that queer archive studies has drawn attention to the elusiveness of many queer historical knowledges, identifying how such knowledge has often been historically expressed through knowledge systems that have not been decipherable to all (e.g., work in queer Indigenous studies and decolonizing approaches emphasize these observations more forcefully; also, other work by people like Samuel Steward illustrate the historical development of approaches to the preservation of queer knowledge which often included specific barriers to access).[33] Thus the queer turn in archival studies, building on Muñoz and others, has emphasized the ephemerality of gendered and sexual life, demonstrating how contemporary understandings of histories of sexual and gender difference as histories comprised of fragments have been shaped by the patterning motion of the archive as a place one turns to for piecing together something that is presumed from the outset to be broken and retrievable, at least in part, but only piece by piece. What it also emphasizes is the way in which archives in general are queer because ephemerality has been queered (that is, structured by knowledges of queerness) through the emphasis on queerness as signifying an epistemological gap or pregnant absence. Queer as a critical approach has helped to give sense to the ephemerality of archives, and as all archives are systems spanning different expressions of lack, all archives become sites of queer potential. In short, the queer archival turn has helped to bring archives studies within a register of desire.

Since the advent of the archival turn in queer studies, the intense relationship between queer studies and archive studies has turned on this notion of turning. Taking Ahmed's method of confronting an idea's persistence by following it around, the queer archival turn invites similar reflection on the work

that the idea of turning is performing, not least because the recession of that moment into the recent past means that addressing it requires a different type of turn in attention.[34] Turning to the queer archival turn as an object of curiosity, a historical moment, a critical and methodological tendency within a nested set of intersecting fields of intellectual inquiry, yields a variety of generative propositions. Why, for instance, does the idea of turning bridge understandings of the queer and the archival? Certainly, the emphasis on historical scholarship in North American gay and lesbian studies of the 1970s and 1980s is one explanation for this powerful association, reflecting as it does how studies of homosexuality turned to historical methods and knowledges to consolidate and grow themselves. Indeed, the profound influence of disagreements between essentialist and social constructionist positions throughout the 1980s underlines how studies of sexuality have been shaped by an apparently inexhaustible project of returning, again and again, to some earlier historical point or figure so that it might be interrogated for the sexual and gendered evidence it could manifest.

This repetitive return to the historical as constitutive of foundational gay and lesbian studies is, of course, only one of the ways that can help us think about the success of "turning" as a way of framing the relationship between "queer" and "archive." While returning to this or that moment of history points to the ways in which the importance of history to queer studies has been largely understood in terms of history's *exteriority*, that is, queer studies' relationship to history as a set of external happenings, what the idea of "returns" also speaks to is the way in which the relationship between "queer" and "archives" has been characterized by understandings of the archive as a space where historical knowledges return something in an *interior* or internalized way—such as an affirmation of identity—to the queer subject in the archive. This diversity of turns reminds us of the variety of meanings suggested by the term discussed earlier in this introduction. Turning is a powerful idea because the action of pivoting that underpins it suggests change across a variety of scales and registers: a change in how we understand the past, a change in how we understand the self, changes within and without. It is little wonder then that the queer and the archival have been yoked together by a concept so centrally concentrated on reinvention and the plurality of meaning given the fashioning of both queer cultural politics and archival endeavors as projects focusing on the production of new knowledge and experience.

This abiding queerness of archives is observable in the ways in which archival materials are deployed to illustrate queer historical presence. Powerfully, queer archive studies asks questions of how gender and sexual difference manifest in

the historical archive. We are asked to look at the precise ways in which both queerness and the archival are put to work to illustrate each other. How, in the mechanics of archival apprehension and analysis, are illustrations of gender and sexual difference composed? A study of this question of the illustrative turn—the illustration of queer presence in the archives—reveals how understandings of queerness and the archive are stitched together. As Cvetkovich writes, "Ephemeral objects have that power—gesturing to affective meanings that are attached to objects but not fully present in them, while also making immaterial ephemeralities material."[35] In this way archival objects are deeply generative, helping to materialize "immaterial ephemeralities"—it is through the queer archive that certain expressions of queer life find an expression or realization that would otherwise remain elusive. In other words, it is only by turning archival that certain forms of queer life become knowable and possible. The critical impulse encourages us to tug on those tight stitches marked by the hyphenation of the "queer-archival": by picking at those stitches we learn more about the production of queerness itself which is so often stitched up by turning to the archive.

By turning to the ways in which the archival turn is queered through its expression across feminist and queer archives, we can explore how queerness gets constituted through processes of "turning archival" while simultaneously queering what such turns mean. As feminist and queer historians have demonstrated, queer and feminist history has historically been structured by the absent presence of sexual and gendered difference. What turns up in the archive, then, is also a queer question because it raises questions beyond the mere appearance of something in the archive, asking us to think about histories of acquisition, power, loss, and production behind such appearance. If the queer archive is often understood through its emphasis on the contingency, instability, and ephemeral nature of archival material, it is also understood as a place in which meanings and histories are often made concrete, stable, and real. The rationale for many feminist and gay and lesbian archives emerging from the 1970s was to create a historical repository that would bear witness to the reality of people's lives: *we are here* (to take the title of a 2018 exhibition drawing on the collection of the Australian Queer [then Lesbian and Gay] Archives).[36] That the queer archive is often characterized by such deeply held affective and political attachments dramatizes the queer archival turn in unique ways—the queer archival turn is often about queer people turning to the archive, seeking out in the archive others who are themselves. *It is thus a turning outward as a way of turning in*. The queer archival turn has often been a turn to the past as future-building practice. That many people have a lot at stake in the queer archival

project freights the work of turning with a great deal of political and personal significance and is a key reason why the archival turn has had such a prominent career in the rise of contemporary queer studies over the past four decades.

That the queer archival turn might be said to have multiple different starting points, or what we might call hinge moments, is only fitting in the context of queer studies where the ideas of teleological development and universal paradigm shifts have been problematized by scholars pointing to the performative interplay of multiple simultaneous epistemological formations: *turns beside turns*, to recall our discussion of Sedgwick earlier. *Besides*, then, straight histories of the queer archival turn that might posit the turn as happening at some static historical point in time, this collection meditates on the evasive allure of turns, and how different accounts of them function generatively. It encourages us to critically reflect on the work of turning, and what might make it attractive in the first place. Like turning over a new page, the idea of the archival turn has often carried with it the allure of the new, suggesting that a turn toward the archives signals a turn away from an older, deficient approach. The pleasures produced by this rhetorical formulation are illustrative of some of the seductive power of turning archival. A postarchival approach to these questions brings these archiving pleasures within our critical view for analysis and exploration.

This turn to archiving pleasures was, after all, in many ways a key starting point for this book, growing as it did out of earlier work Daniel Marshall conducted with Joan Nestle, the author of the coda for this collection, and explored as it was in previously mentioned special issues of *Radical History Review* on "Queering Archives" that we coedited with Kevin P. Murphy. In this earlier work we sought to think through some of the reasons relationships between queers and archives can often be so sticky and the emotions of turning so messy. This guided us to reflect more deeply on how desire and pleasure get produced through turning archival, and this in turn turned us to think more about turning itself, recalling our etymological gloss from earlier: *to go this way or that, to come and to go, to be turned and worked on as if in a carpenter's hand, to rotate with friction, to be as a "place of bending," to rub, drill, pierce, and twist*. With Sedgwick in mind, her theorization of performativity as diverse models of knowledge rubbing as they coexist "beside" each other offers a useful way to entertain all this "heat" produced by the interactions of so many diverse knowledge formations. Maybe turning archival turns people on through so much shared performative burn, like flesh heated up when a fabric twists against it just quickly enough. Wanting to place frictive engagements with the queer archival turn side by side, this collection has assembled a promiscuous movement between disciplines, theorists, and periods, collecting

together diverse pieces to rub against each other, to turn against each other, and to produce that friction burn of queer significance and queer desire, helping us to rethink how gender, sexuality, and the archive are shaped, felt, and lived by the constant urge to turn.

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The fecundity of the "turn" as a productive set of motions within queer studies is illustrated in *Turning Archival* by the diverse ways in which the historical has been put to work in queer studies across a range of contexts in North America, Latin America, South Asia, Africa, and Europe. Invoking the mercurial character of turning archival, this collection opens with a meditation on the theme of lost-and-found in two paired chapters, respectively by María Elena Martínez ("Archives, Bodies, and Imagination") and Zeb Tortorici ("Decolonial Archival Imaginaries"), which illustrate one archival turn in particular: the loss and subsequent turning up of Juana Aguilar in the Archivo General de Centro América. Martínez's chapter—written in 2013, shortly before her death—is coupled with a recent chapter by Tortorici that offers a particular type of return to Guatemala's colonial archives. Martínez offers a reflection on how disciplinary and classificatory regimes within historical and archival scholarship routinely suppress queer archival knowledge, focusing on one archival document in particular: the 1803 medical report published by the male surgeon who probed the body parts of Aguilar, a suspected "hermaphrodite" (in the language of early nineteenth-century criminal courts and medical reports) who was tried by the Royal Court in colonial Guatemala. Responding to the (then) archival absence of the original criminal trial transcripts, Martínez uses performance studies to move beyond traditional historical methodologies and reimagine lost archival knowledges. Yet as Tortorici asks, what happens when the long-lost records unexpectedly turn up in the archives?

Sometime in 2012, Sylvia Sellers-García, historian of colonial Guatemala, came across a card catalog descriptor of Aguilar's trial transcripts in the Guatemalan national archives—a fact that was unbeknownst to Martínez, Tortorici, and other historians who had previously looked for them, to no avail. Tortorici's chapter reflects on this peculiar, though not uncommon, archival twist, focusing his analysis on what happens when much desired missing archival documents—and the historical subject within—are suddenly uncovered, found again, and then filtered through the public sphere. Tortorici shows, despite having finally "found" Aguilar in the archives, the narratives we spin about them can still be just as imaginary as those written and performed prior to when the transcripts surfaced. If these documents do bring us any closer to Aguilar, they do so partly (and paradoxically) through negation—that is, through Juana's

own embodied evasions of the medical and colonial bureaucratic incursions into their body and life. Yet the new details we learn about their life allow, at the same time, for a more nuanced microhistorical image of a fascinating historical figure, about whom we may one day yet know more.

Scholars of colonialism, slavery, and sexuality have long been attentive to archival economies of loss, paucity, and devaluation, turning the "archival trace" into the preferred value form through which sexuality's pasts accrue meaning. In "Telling Tales," Anjali Arondekar calls for scholars working on the history of sexuality to be attentive to how "archival consumption and dissemination" unfold in relation to minoritized historiographies, including how they privilege rhetorics of loss and recovery. Arondekar expands on the problematic significance of loss, rarity, or absence for queer archive studies by illustrating some of the implications when the lost object in the queer archive gets found, and when the lure of absence which has enticed queer archive studies for so long is overwhelmed by plenitude. Arondekar asks what makes something an archival event/situation as opposed to a mere gestural instance or example, and why does the history of sexuality take on particular narrative forms? The task here is to treat the archival trace as other than something that might allow for historical recuperation or stabilization. In Arondekar's chapter we glimpse such a turn to the hermeneutical, through the archival trace of the "evil ladies of Girgaum," in early twentieth-century South Bombay, where local Indian taxpayers complain to the colonial Commissioner of Police about the growing presence of "common prostitutes" in nearby buildings and rented rooms. Both sides argue about the in/visibilty of the problem, leading Arondekar to show how the archival trace becomes "laden with the challenges and possibilities of historical visibility," and always imbued with fantasies of value/capital that come to be implicit in the very form of the archival trace itself. This archival turn toward capital, value, and worth is one that we find both within archival documents themselves and in their materiality (leading us to think, for example, about which archives purchase which collections, and through what means). The "evil ladies" of Girgaum are, as Arondekar shows, representationally and archivally tied to "their corruption of the family form as value," and herein lies part of their queer nature, always caught between the real and apparent—caught within archival representations, among the traces, in other words.

Carrying these reflections on the affordances and constraints of institutionalized archiving in a different direction, Ann Cvetkovich—whose book *An Archive of Feelings* was influential in setting in motion the archival turn in queer studies—turns again to the archives, this time to the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives, now housed at the special collections library at the University

of California, Los Angeles.[37] In "Ordinary Lesbians and Special Collections," Cvetkovich explores what happens when grassroots lesbian feminist archives are brought into major university research libraries, turning both things into something different along the way. Recounting her intimate, archivally mediated contact with the once private epistolary exchanges between June Mazer and her lover Bunny MacCulloch, Cvetkovich describes breathing in "a queer form of archival dust," gesturing toward Carolyn Steedman's *Dust: The Archive and Cultural History*, in which the author meditates in part on historians and archivists breathing in "the dust of the dead."[38] When the lesbian archive enters the institution, or the dusty archival glitter gets breathed in by the archive visitor, what do they turn into? Throughout this chapter, Cvetkovich reflects on how turning to or being turned into the archive has transformative effects. For example, when archival materials literally refuse to "fit into a box," Cvetkovich gestures toward the ways in which this experience of *not fitting in*—a common queer turn if there ever was one—alters the significance of both institutional archival space as well as the status of the archived thing. (And remember, the original etymological roots of "turn" gesture toward rotation, trying to get objects to fit with each other.) Similar to a proposal to donate water from a gay sauna that was closing down to the Australian Queer Archives (AQuA), materials evidencing queer historical lives can be misfits, as in Cvetkovich's illustration, or leaky, to use the AQuA example, risking not only escape from proper archival collection but threatening its very order and preservation. And it is the productivity of this immanent threat to normative archival order posed by queer historical life that is foregrounded in Cvetkovich's chapter. Cvetkovich conjures up an image of "animated" archival materials jostling against their archival ordering, recalling the state-altering sense of the term turn discussed at the start of this chapter: queer archives so often invite us to think of them as archives "taking a turn"; convulsing, as if having a fit, the objects agitate. What could make more sense for archives built, as they so often are, on the preservation of histories of malady and pathology, and rage and protest? Indeed, yet undead, queer archives are animate, alive, bearing "traces of the flesh and blood pulse of both the people in the archives and the cataloguers."

Following Cvetkovich's chapter, Javier Fernández-Galeano ("Performing Queer Archives") extends this meditation on visiting queer archives through a reflection on his own experiences as a researcher in police archives—specifically, the Instituto de Clasificación, now housed in Argentina's Penitentiary Museum Antonio Ballvé—researching so-called deviant sexual activities. There, given that no photographs of written transcriptions were permitted, the author had to record himself reading archival documents out loud in order to make a copy

of them. Reflecting on his experiences of reading out prisoners' responses to psychological tests, in front of the archival authorities, Fernández-Galeano theorizes the performance of archival sources as a generative archival method arguing that "the performance of dissonant voices" enables us to "better appreciate ambivalence in the face of surveillance." As becomes clear, ambivalence—the resistance to easy scrutiny—forms a key part of queer (archival) survival:

> The best thing . . . I never say;
>
> What hurts me . . . I don't show;
>
> In secret . . . nothing.
>
> Lo mejor . . . nunca lo digo
>
> Lo que me duele . . . No lo demuestro
>
> En secreto . . . nada.

Taking turns as both researcher and as the archival subject under scrutiny, Fernández-Galeano identifies how queer archival work is often propelled by ambiguous, pulsing turns flicking from guilt to desire and back again: between "the guilt that I feel for using sources that are the direct result of state violence" and "my desire to access the stories that they contain" lies a complicated archiving pleasure linked to what Emmett Harsin Drager describes as the "fugitivity" of the queer past.

In "Looking After Mrs. G," Harsin Drager extends this cultivation of a counterpathologizing, anti-authoritarian turn to the archive by focusing on the medical gaze at university-based clinics of the 1960s and 1970s through a study of the Robert J. Stoller Papers (also housed at the UCLA special collections library). This chapter advances *Turning Archival*'s reflections on the complex way in which the queer archival turn has been shaped by simultaneous attempts to turn outward to the archive as part of a technology of the self, a way to turn more into one's self: "We look in order to be found." Troubling this kind of straightforward turn to the archive, Harsin Drager second-guesses the merits of seeking out the transsexual traces in archival clinical cases as a political methodology for inverting historical logics of transsexual pathologizing because what this approach actually requires is a renewal of the historical injury of subjecting gender diverse subjects to archival scrutiny. The chapter turns the critical gaze on Stoller, the archived clinician himself, embracing this kind of queer archival inversion. The power of the clinician is thus wrapped up with both therapeutic and archival authority. Gesturing toward "a queer ethics of looking

after rather than looking *for*," Harsin Drager turns toward an ethics of turning away, of accepting that queer life may sometimes require not archival preservation of its traces, but archival loss.

Building on such discussion of archives as urgent sites of reckoning with unfreedom in the present, Elliot James, in "Naming Afrika's Archive 'Queer Pan-Africanism,'" relates their earliest experiences of archival research—and of uncovering deep-seated histories of anti-black racial violence in their college town—at the Northfield Historical Society in the Midwest of the United States. Building on and contributing to other queer Africa-based scholars' conceptualizations of Afrika—with a "k"—as a politicized cultural space that cuts across rigid geopolitical (often ex-colonial) borders, James fashions the queer archival turn as a movement for cultivating the decolonization of sex, gender, and sexuality. The decolonizing archive then becomes more a set of shared social relations and experiences than a "depository of documents,"[39] to recall an earlier formulation, and one founded on the political and pedagogical power of recognizing Afrikan transnational solidarities across continents and oceans, partly mediated by the specter of slavery. Through a retrospective narration of a series of live events, James begins to map out what an archive of queer Pan-Africanism might look like, and how such an archive might be assembled within a cultural politics of resistance that links the contemporary moment to the historical efforts of activist "ancestors." Through this activist deployment of the notion of ancestry, James reflects on how the queer archival turn might be regarded as a movement, then, not only because of what and whom it moves, but because of those relations that move through it, back and forth across time, calling up future ghosts of queer, decolonized hope.

As time-spaces in which histories get handed on and as places where the ethics of how such histories get handled can come sharply into focus, archives are often places that get understood through a language of hands. That each archive requires the work of many hands reminds us that turning archival entails a cultural politics of handling and handing around, in more or less sophisticated ways. Daniel Marshall, in "Secondhand Cultures, Ephemeral Erotics, and Queer Reproduction," picks up this rhetoric of hands—firsthand, secondhand—to think through some of the implications of the circulation of objects among a diversity of handlers. Following Ahmed's methodological encouragement to follow "turning" around, we come across so many different hands; it seems "handy" to think about the archival turn in terms of hands not only because turning seems often to rely on hands but because turning to the language of hands tends to help us handle the subject of the archive. Eichhorn illustrates this in her invocation of a popular conception of the archive as a

space "in which to locate myself in histories I never experienced firsthand." Theorizing archives through an epistemological framework of firsthand, secondhand, and the installation or restitution of significance in ephemeral objects through processes of object circulation, Marshall reflects on secondhand record collecting to think about how historical queerness becomes understood through people's relationships to objects. Taking the movement of secondhand David Bowie records from user to user, the traveling Bowie archive and the circulation of public feelings in the wake of Bowie's death as illustrative moments, Marshall develops discussions about what queer chains of inheritance might look like through theorizations of the secondhand and, relatedly, how these things might help us deepen understandings of relationships between archival materials and the enacted cultural life of queer legacies. Examining how objects get turned into different things through the various ways they are handled over time, Marshall offers a reading of queer archival engagements in terms of queer reproduction, where turning archival and all its sordid relations between first and second hands function as movements to proliferate queerness.

Providing an elaboration of secondhand cultures and diverse modes of cultural and economic (re)production and circulation, Iván A. Ramos turns to the archival implications of punk, in its political and artistic manifestations, in late twentieth-century Mexico City, by linking piracy, imaginatively illicit reproduction, and questions of access to remixed forms of cultural production. In "Pirates and Punks," bootlegging (for many of the artists discussed) is an inherently archival practice—one that resonates with DIY forms of feminist cultural production discussed by both Eichhorn and Cvetkovich here as well—because it "attempts to leave its own traces scattered as unfaithful remnants of what once was." For Ramos this longing for the imagined purity of an archival "once was" (made necessarily irretrievable by conflicting experiences and expressions of historical and contemporary desire and representation) shapes the archival turn as a recognition of "not having been there." That queer engagements with the archive foreground the failure to ever really arrive in a firsthand sense to "once was" moments renders queerness as something which is always partly out of reach, and Ramos links this to a propulsion toward queer futures based on the elusiveness of queerness, as we see in the work of José Esteban Muñoz in *Cruising Utopia*. Of course, such valorizations of queerness as incomplete and ephemeral find their natural expression through archival materials and practices because incompletion and elusion flood archives and queerness alike. Finding signs of queer life in the imperfect record, Ramos's exploration of the bootleg archive returns to concerns raised earlier in the collection about what

happens when LGBTQ materials get turned into institutional collections, a theme that is shared throughout many of the chapters in *Turning Archival*.

In "Unfixed," Kate Clark and David Serlin critically situate these discussions about object circulation and queer significance within the urgent context of queer crip archive studies. "Unfixing" archival objects from their lodgment within histories built around desires for normative models of bodies and desires, Clark and Serlin work through the roles that these "queer" objects have had in coproducing forms of disabled subjectivity, while excavating promise from the painful histories of what they describe as a "disappeared aesthetics." Recalling the counterpathologizing maneuvers that characterize the queer archival turn for Fernández-Galeano and Harsin Drager, Clark and Serlin turn back to objects lodged in therapeutic histories in order to extract them through the force of their own theoretical reframing. One example of this is the work they perform recontextualizing historical wartime bandages that had been "used and destroyed" before they could be preserved as artifacts in a "disappeared" queer crip archive. Recalling Marshall's reflections on secondhand object circulation, Clark and Serlin invoke the image of "the material circulation of the bandage on the battlefield as it moves between the hands of soldiers trained for warfare but not for welfare" to bring it within the purview of the queer crip archival, arguing that it indexes not "sexual practices" but "new forms of same-sex intimacy and socialization" forged "on the battlefield in the intimate skills of triage." The work of "unfixing" advocated by the authors—the work of decontextualizing archival objects from normative archival lodgment and recontextualizing them within an analytical framework that intersects queer and crip investments in the historical—involves a kind of archival labor which the authors allegorize through reference to the figure of the nursing soldier in triage. Archival unfixing emerges, then, in a queer turn and allegorized in the care work of triage, as a way to try to fix archival injury, to tend archival wounds and work for historical healing.

Opening this introduction, we reflected on the etymology of the turn, and read in its promise of rubbing and grinding, drilling and twisting, a kind of Sedgwickean performativity, where Clark and Serlin's renegade appropriations of objects into a queer crip archive generate new, suggestive archival knowledges that rub up beside those fostered by the normative historical knowledges within which such objects have previously been "disappeared." With the "intimacy and industriousness" of the soldier's triage work both as an object of their analysis (insofar as such care work is residualized in the archival bandage) and as an analogy for their method, Clark and Serlin's queer archival

turn inverts the norm-work of historical therapeutics, displacing it with the critical care work of a contemporary politics of archival un/fixing. The queer archival turn is thus rendered in urgent terms, with the friction produced by proliferating knowledges manifesting in every sense a struggle, a struggle for non-normative life made material at the site of the archive itself, and a struggle that sponsors the question: How might we all best nurse the archives we inherit? How might we tend to a world so that it might be fit to care for the queer histories it inherits?

As is clear in Clark and Serlin's discussion of the queer archive as an archive of "the thrown away" and "the cast off," and in Arondekar and Marshall, the queerness of archives links tightly to the ways in which these archival practices challenge normative understandings of archival value. In "An Archival Life," Martin F. Manalansan provides a different kind of reflection on what Clark and Serlin describe as the "queerness of detritus" in his reflection on archives as lived phenomena, explored through extended ethnographic research with members of queer undocumented immigrants' households in New York City. Through thick description, Manalansan offers analytical reflections of his fieldwork conducted between 2003 and 2012 as "a queer take on 'dwelling in the archives' as the quotidian becomes the fuel for animating capacious engagements with queer undocumented immigrants as 'impossible subjects' of history." For Manalansan, queer experience can be indexed in part through what he terms "archival life," where people's lives are saturated with everyday things that mark their contemporary situation and their historical traces as racialized subjects living under racist governance structures. Detached from institutions and enacted in the personal space of the home, these queer archives turn normative understandings of archives inside out as they refuse routine distinctions between public and private, institutional and personal, and exterior and interior. Focusing on the "stuff" that makes up the "archival life" of queer migrants, Manalansan traces a shifting set of practices of collecting and caring, placement and displacement, acquisition and loss. These documented accounts perform their own archiving work, collecting and preserving entangled and messy intimacies between space, time, objects, and people as a record of archival life amid a crisis in citizenship—crises that have only been exacerbated by the recent growth of alt-right and fascist ideologies around the globe (and the ongoing elections of right-wing populist leaders that do their best to curtail the rights of immigrants and turn nativist sentiments against them, often regardless of immigrants' own legal status). Through turning to this mode of dwelling in history, Manalansan offers a meditation on archival ecologies of affective

events, atmospheres, and object uses that are "awash in the fluid and ambivalent forces of modernity," nationalism, normativity, morality, legality, and pleasure.

As set out at the start of this introduction, one set of critical interests that gave rise to this book was the desire to reflect on the career of the archival turn within queer studies. In "Reassessing 'The Archive' in Queer Theory," Kate Eichhorn turns us back to those questions through an examination of the rise of the archive as a critical trope within largely North American queer theory and cultural theory. Situating her own work within this historical deployment while also calling attention to its implications, Eichhorn investigates some of the ways that queer studies can revise its engagement with the archive by paying more attention to the specificities of archival labor. Under these terms, Eichhorn revisits queer people's involvement in the "recirculation" of archival materials that promise proximity to histories that can't be "experienced firsthand," asking how queers thus build an understanding of the archive through such uses. Queers may be "at home in archives," as per Eichhorn's contention, but on what foundations are these homes built and occupied? Or, put another way, under what labor terms have queers been turned into historical evidence and archives turned into queer resources? Queer studies can revitalize its engagement with archives and archival knowledge, Eichhorn argues, by focusing on the work of turning—all those hands—and mapping out renewed recognitions of the ways in which "archives are deeply embedded in power structures" and thus "engaged in the production of subjects, the conditions of language, and the possibility of alternative histories and countergenealogies."

As several chapters demonstrate, the political usefulness of a deconstructed understanding of the queer archive has rested in large measure on a common queer experience of queer subjects, users, and knowledges being excluded from archival collections, and queer archives have often been shaped as responses to these exclusions. However, as greater attention has been given to the queerness that has been preserved within archives, the archival turn has been experienced in more diffuse and often ambivalent ways, as expectations of triumphalist historical discovery have given way to exposure to more diversity and ambiguity. Indeed, the archival turn in queer studies can be understood as a process of turning toward and away from a clear sense of what queerness in the archive is, and what archives themselves are. Like a chimera, established ideas about queerness are often undone by the turn to the archives (just as it is in reverse). Looking there, the imagined vision of historical queerness often vaporizes—emerging as a much less stable proposition than beforehand. In "Crocker Land," Carolyn Dinshaw and Marget Long take up the notion of turning archival by exploring it as

a logic of motion driving queer studies, which they explore through a discussion of the archival pursuit of a mirage, which functions much like an archive: "It refracts, duplicates, shifts, distorts, expands our vision." The mirage itself—not unlike the desires that come to be simultaneously represented within and obscured by archives and their systems of classification—"shimmers but cannot be corralled, contained, saved, or stored," which prompts a rethinking of archival practice "as an ongoing, perpetual revelation." This invocation recalls the transformative magic inhering in the turn to the archives that we foregrounded at the start of this introduction, where the indeterminacy and lability of queer material in the archives is a specified way to understand the more generalized performativity of sex, gender, and sexuality. The authors conjure up "our old friend the mirage" as they reflect on the vagaries of archival sleuthing, and it is the tenderness of the expression that is moving, for so often, for so many of us, we have turned to the archives in search of some kind of connection. That this connection might, as it turns out, be fostered less by what is found when we turn to the archive and more by involvement in a shared practice of turning, of searching, of hoping and then troubling what is found, endures as what might still make archival turns queer.

Starting with the problem of sameness and the desire for something we recognize, the queerness of archives presents us with difference, ultimately requiring us to recalibrate the terms of our initial turn or quest in the first place. Turning to the archive, we are turned into something else ourselves and invited into the world of the past not because of what we have in common with it but because of a shared sense of how different we are from it. That our engagements with archives, as with mirages, might routinely be characterized by elusion and evasion is, as Dinshaw and Long demonstrate, a key part of their value and what compels us to turn to them, again and again. Perhaps, they suggest, gender and sexual difference may need to remain at least in some respects unreachable (lost in the archive) if desire is to be preserved. Does securing gender and sexual difference in the archive vanish or dilute the desire that animates it? If desire is understood as a longing, then can desire be preserved—archived—when that act of preservation necessarily "fixes" the object in place (to recall Clark and Serlin), effectively diminishing desire through the consummation of archival "discovery"? In short, does the queer archive freeze the desires it saves in the act of making them archivable and available? Do the material limits of the archived thing reduce queerness to the limits of evidence? If queerness is to be preserved as that which, to use Dinshaw and Long's words, "beckons, but . . . can't ever be reached," then a key challenge for queer archive studies is to consider

how we might turn to archives without arresting their desire, without making it necessary to "drain the liveness."

To bring historical materials within a queer frame of perception, Dinshaw and Long talk about looking "askew": discussing one particular image they describe literally inverting it—and inversion is such a fitting queer turn because in its punning way it turns us to look back on the histories we inherit. This reminds us that humor, after all, endures as a necessary archival (e)motion and one that often carries us through histories marked so often by pain and penalty, triaging archival injury. Even though each archive is a record of its own losses, humor might be a fix when queer archive studies has so often been caught up in its hauntings—a different (e)motion to move us when we get stuck. In finding the humor in the hurt, in looking askew at the archive, in hunting the ever-receding mirage, we might turn to the queer archive not to repair its losses but, as Dinshaw and Long argue, to "value the *unsaveable*." Such work involves a turning away from an "expansionist" or incorporative approach that has too often sought to assimilate the archival into preexisting knowledges, categories, and desires and to reject the fantasies of empire and conquest that such incorporations too easily risk sliding into. Instead, at journey's end, surrounded by so many maps to mirages, we might chart a course for the enduring promise of defamiliarization and difference which the archival encounter fosters, finding at last, like Dinshaw and Long, that "'we were strange to ourselves and strange to others.'"

In the coda to this collection, "Who Were We to Do Such a Thing?," Joan Nestle draws a different kind of map of archival hope and defamiliarization, recalling her work with the Lesbian Herstory Archives and how her lived history now reframes that work: "Queer archives of the future perhaps will give evidence that it is harder to live with a history than without one." Rubbing beside those foundational hopes for historical reparation through archival accumulation are "new questions, new uncertainties," which redraw a hope in a set archival destination with a desire for the queer archival to always unsettle itself, to keep turning, to keep the friction burning: "The queer archives must be a border crossing in all directions."

The archival turn is thus so many turnings understood anew: a turning back to take up those things that resource new futures, and a turning away from certain turns taken. Nestle emphasizes how the queer archival project has pivoted on these friction points of liberation and dissent, of exclusion and incorporation, and she turns these histories into archival histories themselves, as she herself "is now the archived." As the contemporary moment folds into the

past, under what terms might we ourselves concede to turn archival, to become distilled into some kind of trace fragment or broken out as a kind of signal for some kind of queer future? Under what terms should the contemporary queer moment yield to its own archival processing? Turning back to any given archive, we are reminded, of course, that seldom does the archived subject have the opportunity to determine the terms of their own preservation. And it is amid these ambiguities, turning between the archived and the archivist, the lost and the found, that we see again and again how historical traces of the queer past get turned into new knowledges and experiences which, in turn, sponsor hope that the past and the future will turn into different things, time and time again.

Notes

1 This anthology is also born out of our extended conversations with Kevin P. Murphy, with whom we coedited two earlier issues of *Radical History Review* on the topic of "Queering Archives" and to whom we are grateful for suggesting the title *Turning Archival* for this anthology. We sincerely thank Gisela Fosado and Alejandra Mejía at Duke University Press for her vision and support, and the anonymous readers who improved the book as a whole.

2 Derrida, *Archive Fever*.

3 Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*, 44.

4 McDonald, *The Historic Turn in the Human Sciences*, 1.

5 Rosengarten, *Between Memory and Document*, 11.

6 Arondekar et al., "Queering Archives: A Roundtable Discussion," 214.

7 For more on this discussion, see Weeks, "Queer(y)ing the 'Modern Homosexual.'"

8 See, for instance, the documentary *Screaming Queens: The Riot at Compton's Cafeteria*, directed by Susan Stryker and Victor Silverman, and Stryker's *Transgender History*. Fieldmaking publications by Stryker and others—such as *The Transgender Studies Reader*, *The Transgender Studies Reader 2,* and the founding of the journal *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* in 2014—have also centered engagements with the archives as key to the development of trans studies. See Stryker and Whittle, *The Transgender Studies Reader*; Stryker and Aizura, *The Transgender Studies Reader 2*; and *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly*.

9 Snorton, *Black on Both Sides*, 11.

10 Samuels, "Six Ways of Looking at Crip Time."

11 Brilmyer, "Archival Assemblages."

12 Cartwright, "Out of Sorts," 64.

13 Cartwright, "Out of Sorts," 67.

14 For more on the (queer) archival body, see Lee, "Be/longing in the Archival Body."

15 Ogura, *Verbs of Motion in Medieval English*, 22.

16 Skeat, *The Concise Dictionary of English Etymology*, 528.

17 Partridge, *Origins*, 717.

18 Eichhorn, "Archival Genres," 3.
19 Van Bussel, "Theoretical Framework," 24, and Manoff, "Theories of the Archive," 11.
20 See, for instance, Dean, Ruszczycky, and Squires, *Porn Archives*; Sigal, Tortorici, and Whitehead, *Ethnopornography*; Palladini and Pustianaz, *Lexicon for an Affective Archive*; and Dever, Vickery, and Newman, *The Intimate Archive*. On the "rebel archive," see Hernández, *City of Inmates*.
21 Ketelaar, "Archival Turns and Returns," 239.
22 Ketelaar, "Archival Turns and Returns," 241.
23 Hernández, *Archiving an Epidemic*; McKinney, *Information Activism*; and Sheffield, *Documenting Rebellions*.
24 See, for instance, Cifor, "Stains and Remains."
25 McKemmish and Gilliland, "Archival and Recordkeeping Research," 92.
26 Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives*, 1 and 48.
27 Arondekar et al., "Queering Archives: A Roundtable Discussion," 219.
28 For a different discussion of the "postarchival," please see Cooper, "Imagining Something Else Entirely."
29 Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling*.
30 Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*.
31 Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 201.
32 Blouin and Rosenberg, *Processing the Past*, 3.
33 See, for instance, Driskill, Finley, Gilley, and Morgensen, *Queer Indigenous Studies*. On Samuel Steward, see Spring, *Secret Historian*.
34 Ahmed, *Willful Subjects*.
35 Cvetkovich, "Ephemera," 183. For more on queer ephemera, see Muñoz, "Ephemera as Evidence."
36 "We Are Here: Contemporary Artists Explore Their Queer Heritage," State Library of Victoria, accessed March 3, 2022, https://www.slv.vic.gov.au/whats-on/we-are-here-contemporary-artists-explore-their-queer-cultural-heritage.
37 Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings*. See here for the June L. Mazer Archives: http://digital2.library.ucla.edu/mazer/, accessed March 3, 2022.
38 Steedman, *Dust*, 38.
39 Arondekar et al., "Queering Archives: A Roundtable Discussion," 214.

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