

“I Am 64 and Paul McCartney Doesn’t Care”

The Haunting of the Transgender Archive and the Challenges of Queer History

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“My mailbox is a lot emptier now that self-described ‘notorious transsexual,’ rock musician, lottery-winner, lottery squanderer and prolific letter writer Angela Douglas has died.”¹ So commences *Tallahassee Democrat* reporter Mark Hinson’s obituary of Angela Keyes Douglas, who succumbed to heart disease in August 2007. The obituary is an unusual specimen for its genre: the playful tenor of the opening line, the centering of the journalist and displacing of the deceased, the sensationalistic foregrounding of outlandish details of Douglas’s life—all of these narrative maneuvers permeate the article. Perhaps intended to convey affection for the departed, Hinson’s jocular tone succeeds equally in evoking his unself-conscious pleasure at producing Douglas, who apparently harassed him by phone and mail for years, as dysfunctional and absurd. Peppered with glib parentheses about “transnies” and references to Douglas as “nutty” and “a kook,” and absent any mention of friends or next of kin, the piece seems to confirm—counter, perhaps, Judith Butler’s reflections on the obituary—the impossibility of mourning a life like Douglas’s.² And yet, relegated to one passing sentence, a note about her former status as an “outspoken writer/journalist for the transgender community,” the obituary hints at another archive that memorializes Douglas quite differently. In the years following Stonewall, Douglas was nearly ubiquitous in the transsexual and transvestite activist circles emerging alongside the gay liberation movement, and she quickly became

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one of the most visible leaders in a national push for “transsexual liberation.” In 1970 Douglas founded the first chapter of the Transsexual Action Organization (TAO) in Los Angeles, which she moved to Miami Beach in 1972. TAO became a multiracial, feminist collective that historian Susan Stryker has since hailed as the “first truly international grassroots transgender community organization.”³ Stryker’s remarks exemplify a growing body of activist and academic efforts to create a transgender history that counters the pathologizing tenor of accounts like the *Tallahassee Democrat*’s. Collectively, these works have built and elaborated a counterdiscourse that reconstructs Douglas not as a socially disposable indigent with a colorful past but as a key forerunner to a global social justice movement.

However, it is precisely because of its elision of her activist history that I believe this obituary offers a useful window into the difficulties of accounting for a life like Douglas’s. The piece offers a portrait in which Douglas’s political life is crosscut and ultimately overshadowed by eccentricity, delusion, and paranoia and by her seemingly self-inflicted destitution and decline. It also evokes Douglas’s own sense of failed commemoration, even in spite of her prolific efforts to entextualize herself in letters. As Hinson notes, shortly before she died he received a missive apprising him simply, “I am 64 and Paul McCartney doesn’t care.” As a piece of archival production itself, and notwithstanding its transphobic and ableist undercurrents, the obituary captures a certain strange and unwieldy quality of the Angela Douglas archive—a quality that is indeed reflected in the broader set of texts attesting to her life and work. Replete with apparent psychosis, unverifiable and esoteric truths, supernatural and nonhuman agents, and myriad other bizarre experiences, it is an archive that would only reluctantly submit to the triumphalist impulse to recuperate Douglas as a transparently rational, politicized, and agential historical subject.

This essay centers a host of similarly peculiar elements in a larger archive of post-Stonewall transgender activism of which, I argue, Douglas’s life is exemplary rather than exceptional. I contend not only that this archive seems distinguished by an array of intractable materials that progressive historiographies have rendered incidental but that these materials also present the opportunity for reflection on larger problematics of queer history. Put differently, the transgender archive’s eccentric and recalcitrant qualities are not only an important element of what makes it “queer,” but this very queer intractability carries ramifications for how we understand queer archives and their relationship to historical knowledge. Recent years have seen proliferating debate about the status and promise of “the archive” broadly, part of a larger movement within the humanities in which queer studies has been an avid participant. Today the archive’s standing as a privileged object of interest can be credited at least in part to the influence of Michel Foucault, whose genealogical method posits the archive as a primary site of both hegemonic

erasure and alternative historical possibility. Here I invoke the material imprints of transgender pasts to consider the uses and disadvantages of the Foucauldian archive as a central problematic of queer historical theorizing. I ask how queer archival investments have shaped historical epistemologies and hermeneutics and whether the archive's apotheosis risks eliding considerations about the politics and possibilities of history that cannot be resolved via a theory of the archive alone. Does a critique of the archive equip us to take up, for instance, questions about the constitutively bounded character of historical knowledge and the transparency of historical writing and experience? In what follows, I first revisit a few trends in the so-called archival turn of queer studies. By foregrounding its ties to genealogy, I hope to make manifest certain investments and operations of recent critique and to more clearly pose this work against scholarship that is in tension with Foucauldian accounts. In this, I am indebted to intellectual traditions that have more extensively theorized history beyond the archive: strands in postcolonial and psychoanalytic theory, which, counter Foucault, emphasize history's opacity and finitude. In part 2, I return to the transgender archive as a case study in queer pasts that frustrate familiar queer archival strategies. I thus make the somewhat counterintuitive move of centering an archive in order to advocate *displacing* the archive as commonly theorized within queer studies. Part of what is queer about the transgender archive, I argue, is its encapsulation of pasts that obstinately refuse the secular, rational, and empiricist epistemes to which even postpositivist historiographies remain inexorably beholden—it is, in other words, an archive whose contents arguably exceed historical explanation. Invoking my own experience with this archive's startling yet indeterminate affective force, I eventually submit that this extrahistorical remainder has instilled the archive with an intangibly haunted character. By becoming sensitized not just to the archive's absences but also to its pervasive and difficult excesses, we may find that the transgender archive moves us toward an understanding of queer pasts as frustrating not (just) archivization but historicization altogether.

The Archive That Promises: Queer Studies and the Will to History

Why does sexuality (still) seek its truth in the historical archive?

—Anjali Arondekar, *For the Record: On Sexuality and the Colonial Archive in India*

As an intellectual formation that takes great pride in its interdisciplinarity, queer studies is not widely hailed as a uniquely historically minded field. And yet the pervasive sense that *queer* marks a fundamental and injurious disinheritance from history betokens the high stakes accorded to historical discourse within queer scholarship. Especially in work associated with the affective turn, scholars have not only maintained but also actively investigated the political and psychic costs of historical

loss, which continues to be rendered a primary site of queer injury and impetus for reparative historical production. Scholarship has reflected on queer as “left out” or “hidden” from historical texts and invoked the “systematic denial of historicity” and “pain of historical isolation” as central to queer experience.⁴ Linking what she calls a “queer historical impulse” to contemporary projects of “self and community building” Carolyn Dinshaw, for instance, is but one of a number of critics who capture the strongly felt sense that queer politics today must include a politics of history that will countervail the damages of historical erasure.⁵

Especially in recent years, this problem of historical loss has been engaged increasingly as a problem of archivization.⁶ The archive emerges recurrently as an original cause of historical deprivation and the ultimate mechanism by which queer history may be secured or extinguished. Ann Cvetkovich’s influential work, for instance, speaks profusely to the “emotional need” for and “vital role” of archives, of queer as “hard to archive” and “resisting documentation.” Quoting Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner’s remark that queer is “difficult to entextualize as culture,” Cvetkovich establishes the critique of the archive as foundational to queer theory.⁷ Heather Love has also invoked the perceived grievousness of historical loss and its basis in the archive, noting, “The longing for community across time is a crucial feature of queer historical experience, one produced by the historical isolation of individual queers as well as by the damaged quality of the historical archive.”⁸ Though more vocal in their citations of the archive, such reflections are not wholly novel but elaborate on a longer historiographical tradition that renders the barriers to queer knowledge production in terms of evidentiary challenges. Perhaps since the field’s inception, historians of sexuality have presented themselves as grappling with an object distinguished by its textual evasions, elisions, and ephemerality, as tasked with speaking something ontologically marked by silence.⁹ Queer, in such accounts, has been barred from history because it resists written and even spoken expression—because, by striking queer from dominant records and inducing queer subjects to silence, power systematically discourages its artifactualization.

Certainly, this turn to the archive responds to a felt sense of isolation that is unquestionably quite real and, indeed, often painful. Without contesting the fact of this experience, however, I want to draw further attention to how these accounts consolidate, as Anjali Arondekar insightfully puts it, a “privileged lexicon of erasures [and] silences” in queer engagements with history and archive alike.¹⁰ Though Foucault’s insights into the productive capacity of power have always been influential to queer critique, scholarship still overwhelmingly figures queer’s relation to the historical archive as one of suppression or exclusion. In fact, historiographical claims about queer absence would seem to have begotten an ontology of the archive that recapitulates a kind of repressive hypothesis: this logic posits the queer archive as always impoverished and fractured, distinguished by power’s erasures and disavowals.¹¹ Thus, even as scholarship has moved away from older activist efforts at

“claiming” essentialized gay subjects across time and culture, critiques continue to prescribe reparative historical production as the antidote to repressive heteronormativity. Importantly, the possibility of creating new queer histories is widely understood to hinge upon successful negotiations with an unyielding archive. The dominant hermeneutic imperative of queer history might be described, to borrow John Howard’s words, as the difficult yet hopeful work of “read[ing] the silence.”¹²

What I want to suggest is not that accounts of the archive’s absences are misguided per se but rather that we consider the extent to which theories of the damaged or incomplete archive are animated by a tacit injunction to historical recovery. Operative within this language of lack is, I think, what Arondekar has called queer history’s “seduction of access” and the concomitant privileging of recuperative reading practices. Even as queer critiques of the archive proliferate, and the turn to alternative archives becomes increasingly common, there remains a conviction that whatever it is that we hope to find can, in fact, be known—that it can do something for our narrative and political possibilities if only we can develop more capacious and oppositional ways to look.¹³ The critique of sexuality’s incitement to discourse has not, in the end, deterred formidable efforts to make a supposedly taciturn archive speak, and scholars (within and beyond historical studies) have continually labored at reading and creating the queer archive anew.¹⁴ As in Derrida’s account, the archive stands as a primary site of queer historical loss but also, importantly, of possibility. As such, the array of discourses that self-describe as critiques of the archive collectively emerges as a return to and reaffirmation of the archive’s ultimate promise. These discussions evince an apparent faith that if only the archive can be found or created, can be deciphered or coaxed into revealing our mystified pasts, then we will be able to claim our own history that restores.

I would argue that this attachment to the archive’s restorative promise is less a departure from Foucault (insofar as it reinstates a repressive hypothesis) than it is in fact one of the field’s inheritances of Foucauldian archival strategies.¹⁵ Turning to the influential essay “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” for instance, we see that the elevation of the archive is crucial to genealogical inquiry. The disintegration of unity and continuity that distinguishes genealogy is achieved through meticulous attention to archival detail and, Foucault writes, “vast accumulation of source material.”¹⁶ For Foucault, genealogy is nothing if not a prescription for archival dedication and retrieval: it is “gray, meticulous, and patiently documentary . . . it must record the singularity of events . . . it must seek them in the most unpromising places, in what we tend to feel is without history—in sentiments, love, conscience, instincts.”¹⁷ In particular, it is by always suspecting and militating against anachronism that genealogy achieves critical purchase. Foucault advocates this as a strategy to denaturalize, or make worldly, that which is deemed ahistorical or beyond reproach. Through the archive, genealogy installs history where power would not allow it to be. Ultimately, even as it provincializes the objects of history, genealogy expands history

itself into an increasingly totalizing discourse. A genealogy, Foucault writes, will “never neglect as inaccessible all the episodes of history.”¹⁸

Thus for Foucault, as in queer studies, power primarily represses historical knowledge, but its mystification of the past can be countered through critical archival engagement. Through expanded archival critique, Foucault proffers an expanded historical consciousness that articulates against a metaphysics that would naturalize dominant power structures—he takes care to pose genealogy against the search for origins precisely because the origin narrative, with its presupposition of underlying forms, is metaphysical and thus hegemonic. However, other intellectual traditions have shown that the alternative to historical insight is not, inevitably, the tyranny of metaphysics. We may think, for instance, of psychoanalytically inflected fields like trauma studies that emphasize, counter to genealogy, an inaccessibility of the past conferred by the instability of language and boundaries of cognition.¹⁹ Critics in Lacanian schools of thought have posed the notion of foreclosure specifically as a counterpoint to the incorporative historicism of Foucault.²⁰ Although articulated as a critique of new historicism (a movement indebted but not reducible to Foucault’s own work), I would highlight in particular a passage by Joan Copjec that I think speaks equally to genealogy’s disallowance of an irrecoverable past. She writes:

Although it may at first appear that this deference to discontinuity betokens new historicism’s commitment to a disparagement of our belief in the complete survival of the past—after all, we note, its constant refrain is that history is not retrieved, nor even retrievable, but constructed—its unwavering adherence to the tenet that there is nothing outside history, nothing that is not historicizable, countermands our preliminary impression by installing elsewhere a notion of the impossibility of irrecoverable loss. Its stolid denial of any . . . notion that there is a beyond *internal* to historical reality, or that there is something that will forever remain inarticulable in any historical text, is what leads new historicism to isolate each historical moment from the one preceding and following it, and to reduce it to its contemporaneity with itself. . . . Its absolute abhorrence of anachronism . . . is, rather, a symptom of the aversion of the new historicism to the notion of a loss that can never be made good.²¹

Notably, Copjec’s diagnosis of historicism (which she recurrently associates with Foucault and genealogy) is quite different from debates among queer critics who have variously claimed and indicted historicism as an altericist methodology—rather, in Copjec’s reading, even the alleged altericists of queer history would appear as proponents of access and recuperation.²²

Albeit in a very different vein, critics in postcolonial studies have also treated history as far more opaque and fraught than we find in Foucault. History, of course, is not just the reverse discourse operationalized by genealogy but is the dominant discourse of the Enlightenment—as Nicholas Dirks puts it, a “sign of the modern.”²³

Underscoring the persistent resonances between dominant and revisionist histories, postcolonialists have insisted that all historical knowledge is “founded on the silencing and sublation of other ways of knowing.”²⁴ Perhaps most famously Spivak’s “Can the Subaltern Speak?”—which specifically targets the presumptions of transparency and access in Foucault—offers a forceful rebuttal to the assumption that incorporating subjects into history’s purview constitutes a self-evident good.²⁵ Building on Max Weber, Dipesh Chakrabarty and Stuart McLean have specifically highlighted the secularism of even alternative historiographies. As Chakrabarty writes: “In employing modern historical consciousness (whether in academic writing or outside of it), we think of a world that . . . is already disenchanted. Gods, spirits, and other ‘supernatural’ forces can claim no agency in our narratives.”²⁶ In a striking departure from queer and Foucauldian assertions of the “need for history,” Chakrabarty also points out that the historical impulse is hardly a universal given. “Why,” he asks, “is history a compulsory part of education of the modern person in all countries today, including those that did quite comfortably without it until as late as the eighteenth century? Why should children all over the world today have to come to terms with a subject called ‘history’ when we know that this compulsion is neither natural nor ancient?”²⁷ In such a reading, the queer’s “felt need for history” would seem to index not an exclusion from modernity but the success with which queer has been incorporated into the affective life of the modern subject.

These critics have argued not for a more meticulous history, not for more creative and rigorous engagements with the archive, but for a critique that asks “how this seemingly imperious, all-pervasive code might be deployed or thought so that we have at least a glimpse of its own finitude, a vision of what might constitute an outside to it.”²⁸ Such critiques draw attention not just to the obvious Enlightenment master narratives but also to the latent secular rationality of Foucault, to genealogy’s points of complicity with the modernist regimes it otherwise opposes. “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” for instance, counterposes historical method not just against the knowledges of metaphysicians and demagogues—Foucault’s more familiar straw men—but also against memory and religious knowledge.²⁹ Sounding even a bit like Hegel, Foucault casts religion as a relic of a more primitive past, proper only to a prehistoric time before the Fall. As he writes, the analytically archaic quest for origins “comes before the body, before the world and time; it is associated with gods, and its story is always sung as a theology.”³⁰

What I have attempted to suggest, in sum, is that much recent queer historical production seems to have inherited tenets from Foucauldian genealogy that construct and position the archive in a particular way: genealogy tells us that critical histories are the antidote to hegemonic erasure and that the archive is the means to undoing power’s historical mystifications. Impelled by genealogical injunctions to access and retrieval, queer scholarship becomes predisposed to unconditionally valorize historical production and encounter barriers to historicization as eviden-

tiary problems, particularly problems of archival repression.³¹ The queer archive is thus practically fated to be an archive of absence. But these analytics of history and archive are not universal, and they find counterpoints in other bodies of thought. My concern is that queer archival investments risk exonerating “history” as too transparent a sign and neglecting questions about the explanatory capacity of historical discourse. In particular, such critiques threaten to reiterate genealogy’s resistance to the possibility that even counterhegemonic historiographies must affirm certain exclusions and foreclosures. Might even the most critical queer histories have the capacity not just to recuperate but also to sublimate and disavow our pasts—and not just when they fail but also when they succeed? Genealogy does not encourage us to question whether the queer historical impulse is indeed inevitably reparative.

But what, specifically, might it look like to encounter the queer archive differently? Rather than revive the rubrics of erasure and retrieval, I now turn to my own encounters with the material imprints of post-Stonewall transvestite and transsexual activism—what I have called the “transgender archive”—in an effort to concretize a problematic of queer history that hinges not on the archive itself but on interpellating the archive’s contents into the form of knowledge we call history. While I focus on materials pertaining to 1970s activism (partly because this has been such an important historical moment for contemporary transgender critique), I use the designation “transgender archive” in accordance with Foucault’s broad formulation. This positions me to then evaluate how the archive, so framed, does and does not ultimately accede to practices of archival scrutiny and recuperation. By reading this archive alongside critics who underscore the inaccessibility of the past and limits of historical explanation, I hope to shift inquiry toward a conception of “queer” not simply as excluded from existing archives and histories but as rubbing up against the boundaries of historical understanding—toward a conception of queer, in other words, as something that exceeds historicization.

Traversing Transgender Pasts: On the Ghosts in the Transgender Archive

I may be crazy but that don’t make me wrong.

—Marsha P. Johnson, *Pay It No Mind: The Life and Times of Marsha P. Johnson*

With the growth of transgender studies and politics since the 1990s, “transgender” has emerged as a distinctive object of the queer historical impulse. Though they enjoy varying degrees of renown, there is a perceptible emergent roster of recurring subjects in the expanding historiography of transgender politics during the post-Stonewall period. These include not only Douglas of TAO but also transsexual philanthropist Reed Erickson, who founded the Erickson Educational Foundation (EEF); Lee Brewster of the New York Queens Liberation Front; and, perhaps most renowned of all, Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson, founders of Street Transves-

tite Action Revolutionaries (STAR) in New York City.³² Reacting against the perceived neoliberalization of “mainstream” LGBT politics, Rivera and Johnson have become especially important in progressive queer cultures as symbols of a radical, intersectional inheritance that usefully antithesizes a homonormative present. In recent years, activist organizations, service providers, academic awards, and even indie music groups have adopted the names of Rivera and Johnson in their posthumous honor.³³

I would propose that the broad archive these histories have mined both does and does not present as an archetypical queer archive. By all appearances, the archive of early transgender activism is in fact damaged, broken even, but it is hardly erased or silenced—it is, at least in my own experience, an extremely noisy archive indeed. As I have suggested, Douglas’s obituary captures a glimpse of something intangibly “off,” uncommented upon, yet insistent in this archive and its resultant historiography. Upon closer inspection, the central personalities therein emerge as unusual at best and, at worst, seemingly psychotic—their lives are marked as much by political struggle as by any number of less intelligible phenomena. Individually inconsequential, perhaps, but striking in their sheer pervasiveness, such details range from amusing to simply confusing to macabre—from benign to downright fatal.

Erickson’s biographer Aaron Devor, for instance, repeatedly concedes to Erickson’s “eccentric” personality.³⁴ Erickson owned a pet leopard named Henry, to which he was deeply attached. He took up residence in an “opulent” mansion in Mexico, which he named “the Love Joy Palace,” prompting Deborah Rudacille to later assess his lifestyle as “hedonistic.”³⁵ In addition to funding Harry Benjamin’s research on gender identity, Erickson was a longtime donor to New Age healing initiatives, dream and psychedelic drug research, and John Lily’s efforts to communicate with dolphins.³⁶ Toward the end of his life, Erickson struggled with drug abuse and was reportedly prone to increasing bouts of paranoia. Devor and Nicholas Matte write: “He was frequently difficult to deal with and was often highly distrustful and suspicious of others, particularly those closest to him. He had become uncharacteristically inattentive to his business interests, forgetful, and increasingly unreliable.”³⁷

These thematics are reprised in the documentation of Erickson’s contemporaries. As was not uncommon for gender-nonconforming people then and now, Rivera, Johnson, and Douglas were subject to routine police abuse and arrest; they also lived in varying degrees of homelessness, poverty, and drug addiction, frequently relying on sex work and other criminalized economies to survive. The record of their lives, however, does not permit a clear demarcation between, on the one hand, the obviously “political,” externally inflicted hardships wrought by the systems of racism, capitalism, and transphobia in which they were caught and, on the other, the more nebulous matter of their nonnormative personalities. Today even Rivera’s staunchest defenders often cite her “volatile” and “confrontational” disposition, coding her as

affectively nonnormative. Her drug and alcohol use have been widely documented and linked to her departures from standards of interpersonal propriety, as well as to her indigence and poor physical health.³⁸ Rivera herself avowed her struggles with mental illness and reportedly attempted suicide on at least two occasions.³⁹ Her STAR cofounder, Johnson, is similarly referenced as maintaining only a tenuous grasp on lucidity, especially as her life progressed, and allusions to her eccentricity and mental instability permeate scholarly and popular accounts of her life. Sounding much like the writer of Douglas's obituary, former *Village Voice* reporter Michael Musto reflects that it wasn't until he set about researching Johnson's life that he learned that she "wasn't just a kook."⁴⁰ The extent to which transgender personalities seem to stubbornly overpower their political work, even in activist histories, is also evoked in Stephan Cohen's history of gay youth organizing, which refers to Rivera and Johnson predominantly by their first names—declining stylistic conventions for referencing historical subjects, Cohen opts for a standard applied to fictional characters.⁴¹ Along with her more laudatory remarks on TAO, Stryker has assessed Douglas as "more of a gadfly and provocateur than a movement builder" and noted that she was prone to "psychotic breaks" and "paranoid ravings."⁴² Joanne Meyerowitz, who is overall quite positive in her portrayal, offers the following:

Douglas lambasted the people who disagreed with her and made increasingly strange accusations that put off virtually everyone else. She suspected the Central Intelligence Agency of setting up the program at Johns Hopkins and publicly associated the EEF with the alleged government plot. And she linked Donald Laub, a founding surgeon of Stanford's Gender Identity Clinic, with a bizarre plot among doctors to transplant the brains of transsexuals. She saw conspiracies everywhere and believed that others were trying to steal her name and her ideas. She soon won a reputation as a disruptive figure who fostered dissension within the radical wing of the movement. Suzan Cooke, the San Francisco activist . . . thought that Douglas 'was nuts.'⁴³

Meyerowitz also echoes Devor and Matte's narration of Erickson's "tragic decline" into drug addiction and "growing mental instability."⁴⁴ As she notes, "By the end of the 1980s he was paranoid and delusional."⁴⁵

And yet, on the whole, academic literatures actually seem to downplay the unorthodoxies of these activists' lives, citing them parenthetically, for instance, before returning to the weightier concern of their political work. Possibly in an effort to resist popular notions of transgender people as at once insane, tragic, and absurd, this literature has seemed, if anything, to promote histories of agential and politicized communities—of subjects with sensible, self-interested aspirations.⁴⁶ Perhaps unsurprisingly, then, much of the transgender archive is even more perplexing than existing secondary accounts suggest. Erickson's interests in psychedelia and parapsychology were not, as they have appeared in the historiography, mere footnotes to

his work on transsexualism—these pursuits permeate the EEF’s publications and suggest a perceived connection to his more recognized work. The *EEF Newsletter* meticulously details developments in, for example, the psychology of religious, mystical, and psychedelic experience, devices for inducing altered states of consciousness, hypnosis, telepathy, and psychokinesis. Erickson also apparently commissioned Lily to procure a series of paintings produced under the influence of a “hitherto unknown . . . powerful hallucinogen” discovered in south-central Mexico.⁴⁷

Historical accounts have likewise offered scant commentary on the fact that under Douglas’s leadership, TAO appealed to and cited existing support from extraterrestrials, used supernatural powers as social change tools, and explored political fantasies apparently adapted from science fiction. The peculiar posthumanism of Erickson’s dolphin communication and his leopard life partner finds a counterpart not just in TAO’s extraterrestrial coalition work but also in Suzun David’s newsletter artwork, which depicts trans women as robots, in space suits (possibly as aliens themselves), and with nonhuman animals.⁴⁸ TAO, whose president Collette Goudie was a “practicing Satanist,” especially drew from members’ occult expertise to “effect political change and for the defense of its members.”⁴⁹ In 1973 the group made national press when it rallied its Santera membership to publicly hex Robin Morgan after a spate of transphobic remarks at the West Coast Lesbian Conference.⁵⁰ Douglas’s own writings not only detail her activism but also embed this history in her experiences with aliens and ESP, excursions into psychedelic music scenes, and multiple (and, I will admit, often seemingly apocryphal) ties to famous celebrities. Extraterrestrials figure prominently in the evolution of her sexual life and politics. As Douglas wryly notes of her adolescence: “Sex and UFOs came into my life about the same time. My feelings about sex were ones of shock and disbelief.”⁵¹ She was deeply affected by her discovery that a close friend was a nonhuman being, seemingly alien but possibly Satan, with “grey reptilian, leathery skin, hairless, with coal black eyes,” that had come to earth to help transsexuals.⁵² As Douglas’s life progressed, later writings retain less discernable coherence, emphasize theories of conspiracy, and center feelings of anger, bitterness, and melancholy. Douglas’s second autobiographical work, *Hollywood’s Obsession*, is an indictment of her various impersonators and the numerous films, publications, and other texts that have plagiarized elements of her work and personal life.⁵³ In the late 1990s, she apparently rejected her identity as a woman, claiming to be a “mutilated, sexless man” who transitioned only in an effort to win back her lesbian ex-wife.⁵⁴ Despite winning a state lottery in 1991 (she spent the winnings on sports cars), Douglas spent most of her life in degrees of homelessness and poverty, and she appears to have lived out her final years bereft of significant friend, family, or community support.⁵⁵

Declension, addiction, paranoia, and delusion appear, in sum, endemic to the transgender archive, and yet even as they have forced their way into historical accounts, no account has endeavored to synthesize them, comment on their

recurrence, or name them a proper object of this history. Each of these varied and inexplicable damages remains atomized—individually recognized, even lamented, but ultimately epiphenomenal to the historiography’s intellectual and political end. And yet by the time I read the Internet postings authored by Douglas late in her life—extended, nonsensical treatises on conspiracies, her musical fame, hatred of African Americans, and other topics—it had become impossible for me not to see the whole of Douglas’s past seething behind the incomprehensible tirades of her final years.⁵⁶ Taken as a whole, and as an eerily recurrent pattern, these unincorporated materials evoke in me a sense of unease and unresolve that feels resonant with Avery Gordon’s theory of haunting. Here, as described by Gordon, the archive offers “a case of inarticulate experiences, . . . of spiraling affects, of more than one story at a time, of the traffic in domains of experience that are anything but transparent and referential. It is a case of modernity’s violence and wounds, and a case of the haunting reminder of the complex social relations in which we live.”⁵⁷ In this sense, the unsettling affective force of the transgender archive might be read (against the grain of the disciplinary historian) as a diagnostic of a “state in which a repressed or unresolved social violence is making itself known.”⁵⁸ The archive seems fraught with that for which we lack a critical vocabulary but which remains insistently there and demanding its due. And so more than one research trip has found me squandering hours of precious reading room time, helplessly transcribing the minutiae of alien abductions, without quite knowing why.

It would, of course, be hubristic to attempt a definitive etiology of the apparent madness that marked many of these lives, and yet this madness has imposed itself on me with such intensity that it has become nearly inconceivable as anything other than systemic, as somehow symptomatic of the destructive forces in which these infelicitous subjects were caught. Moreover, at times, it is even possible to conjure certain spectral genealogies: claims that have been hailed by some as “delusion” are by no means easily disentangled from accounts of living in a violently transphobic capitalist order. The writer of Douglas’s obituary, who ridiculed her belief in a conspiracy of doctors, did not know that Douglas’s own surgeon was notorious for performing budget sex reassignment procedures on anyone who could pay, sometimes in hotel rooms, in garages, and on kitchen tables. He lost his medical license the same year he operated on Douglas and was convicted of murder in 1998 following a botched illegal leg amputation on a man with body integrity identity disorder.⁵⁹ Faced with national political retrenchment and growing opposition from supposed allies in gay and women’s liberation, perhaps the fact that unresourced groups like TAO reached out to aliens and spirits as allies might be interpreted as a shrewd tactical maneuver—perhaps we might read their departures from the secular-rational common sense of politics not as groundless or simply quirky but as a response to shifting and hostile political terrains. Confronted with such barely perceptible traces, part of the appeal of listening to ghosts may be that it offers

explanatory frames that, while not traditionally historical, still help us annex some of the archive's unruly materials to the narrative and political aspirations that have characterized queer history all along.

Much of this archive's unwieldiness stems from its eschewals of the secular and rational epistemes of disciplinary history, but this haunting also elicits a more nebulous sense of the failures of empiricism. In fact, perhaps the most unnerving of the transgender archive's materials are its obituaries: the central figures therein evince a disturbing propensity to die. As I have recounted, Douglas's obituary attests to her deteriorating mental and physical health before her death at age sixty-four. In 1992 the body of Johnson, who was forty-seven, was found floating in the Hudson River. Despite protestations from friends and activists, the New York Police Department quickly ruled her death a suicide.⁶⁰ Rivera passed away at age fifty of liver cancer, likely incurred, some press insinuated, by her own drug and alcohol consumption.⁶¹ Brewster of the Queens Liberation Front also enters this roster of premature deaths: another casualty of cancer, he passed away on May 19, 2000, at fifty-seven.⁶² I was unable to locate an obituary for Erickson, who died possibly of an overdose in early 1992 in Mexico, where he had fled to avoid drug indictments in the United States.⁶³ Collectively, these deaths bring to mind Grace Kyungwon Hong's ruminations on a succession of "natural" deaths of black women scholars. Drawing from James Baldwin's injunction to "bring out your dead," Hong writes that it is "shocking to say and impossible to prove that these women suffered early deaths because the battles around race, gender, and sexuality were being waged so directly through and on their bodies. Yet the names bear witness to this unknowable truth."⁶⁴ Like their lives, the deaths of these activists bespeak an unintelligibility to the historical record, and perhaps it is because of this that they have retained such an acute capacity to haunt. More than anything else, I think, these unknowable imprints, the evidence of things not seen, comprise the ghostly matters of the transgender archive.

Following Gordon, the pressing question for scholars would be to consider how our work might become more willing to bear witness to these ghosts. What would it mean, we might ask, for a historiography to acknowledge a disorganized personality, self-inflicted death, or paranoid fantasy whose etiology is power? I would argue, however, that the interpretive dilemma of the transgender archive is even more fraught: What would it mean to suggest that the transgender archive does not just inevitably include but is in fact distinguished by materials that seem averse to historical synthesis? Arguably, these intractable materials are neither incidental nor simply another instance of modernity's disavowals but are an integral feature of the specific pasts for which the archive stands—in other words, part of what particularizes the archive as queer. In this reading, TAO's status as a group of mostly low-income transsexuals of color was precisely what foreclosed access to "mainstream" gay and feminist activism and thus what prompted their turn to praxes that the

historian cannot easily adjudicate. Insofar as disciplinary history remains a secular, rational, and empiricist inquiry, viewing the refusals of these epistemes as endemic to queer pasts demands considerable reflection about the costs, stakes, and requirements of historicizing those pasts. Importantly, these are questions that hinge not on the archive per se but on the insertion of the archive's contents into the knowledge form of history.

This dilemma that the transgender archive presents seems poised to benefit from Chakrabarty's distinction between what he calls "minority histories" and "subaltern pasts." The former, he writes, are distinguished by a "struggle for inclusion and representation" within established liberal frameworks of historical production; the latter, however, index knowledges and experiences that "cannot ever enter academic history as belonging to the historian's own position."⁶⁵ As he notes, even critical histories remain beholden to basic standards of reason and believability. In a pithy observation, Chakrabarty offers a central challenge of the transgender archive: "A madman's narrative is not history."⁶⁶ Certainly, *reason* has been a justly maligned term in queer critique, but Chakrabarty is forceful in his insistence that all truths and lifeworlds are not historically equivalent, even to the most radically postpositivist scholar. In particular, in the modern West to date, the pasts constructed by history are disenchanting and do not admit the interventions of extrasecular actors into human affairs. The historian can, of course, provide an account of nonsecular belief systems (and may even dignify such beliefs as "subjugated knowledges"), but the historian cannot take a definitive stance on the object of such beliefs—on the actual existence and interference of supernatural beings with human social orders. Engaging TAO's work with spirits from a position of nonjudgment, even attempting to read TAO's nonsecularity through its social context, is not equivalent to affirming the actions of those spirits in my own authorial voice—a matter on which, even in a hauntological reading, I can only remain agnostic.⁶⁷

As Chakrabarty argues, when confronted with the antihistorical (spirits or "delusions," in this case), history impels us to interpret. Previous negotiations with the transgender archive have carefully presented beliefs as such, incorporating otherwise inadmissible enunciations by marking authorial distance from them. Johnson, for instance, enters history as someone who threw offerings into the Hudson River because she *believed* that it would bring her good fortune—or possibly, as activist Randy Wicker suggests, as someone who died because she believed the spirit in the river had summoned her to it.⁶⁸ Certainly, as countless will attest, interpretation is foundational to all historical writing (particularly if we understand history as the work of narrativization) and hardly specific to the archives of gods and implausible claims.⁶⁹ However, Chakrabarty shows that we become uniquely entangled in history's limits when our archive's inhabitants behave in ways that are flagrantly incommensurate with our own disciplinary and epistemological position. For instance, I myself cannot plainly affirm both that Douglas briefly lived in Japan and that

Angela Davis, resentful of Douglas's fame, spent years impersonating her. While Douglas represented both statements as equivalent truths with equivalent evidentiary grounding, only one claim is easily supported by history's truth regime—as a historian, I can reproduce her literal authority only on the former claim and would need to develop other strategies for managing the latter.⁷⁰

To insist upon a haunting involves an especially dramatic act of interpretation. The value of this reading, in fact, lies precisely in its ability to interpret—it seeks to anchor a host of otherwise unsynthesizable materials on a broad and ineffable spectrum of power. But in doing so, it renders systemic materials that expressly do not present as such. To propose that the transgender archive is haunted is thus to harness not only an affective and transferential attachment to the archive but also a profound epistemic disjunction from it. Locating Erickson's paranoia or Douglas's conspiracies in the violent forces of power in which they were caught betrays a deeply felt need to refigure their realities against their own accounts of them, to somehow recuperate those elements of their lives as meaningful to the scope of familiar political and intellectual agendas.⁷¹ In this, a hauntological reading seems, to me, both indispensable and critically flawed—it is a hermeneutic I cannot ignore, and yet I can countenance it only with great ambivalence, for this reading demands that we tacitly confirm the subjects of the archive as compromised speakers, that we admit them to our accounts only through a crucial refashioning of their own testimonies. Under a hauntological reading, these activists in fact evince a familiar paradox of witnessing: subjected to and subjectivized by an unknowable power, they are eventually silenced by the foreclosure of their narrative authority.⁷²

To be clear, what I am attempting to offer is, in fact, two interlocking arguments. First, to argue, as I have, that the transgender archive demands a hauntological reading in order to reckon with its contents is to name the archive as opaque to historicization insofar as a haunting is a diagnostic of knowledges and experiences that are disavowed within rationalist, positivist, and disciplinary epistemes—the founding epistemes of history.⁷³ And yet even as it marks a historical opacity, the eventual end of this reading is to provide an account that is, if not “history” in the traditional sense, then at least more historically palatable. In this sense a haunting provides, arguably, the grounds for a new kind of historical recovery.⁷⁴ But what this reading does—and it must—is radically resignify the archive. This reading works because it allows us to agree, oddly, that in this instance, a truth about a visitation by aliens can be reconstructed as a truth about transphobia. Thus, my second, related claim: even in a hauntological reading, the subjects of the archive achieve new intelligibility only through the deauthorization of their lifeworlds, and it is this act of translation that most clearly marks the historical episteme as discontinuous with Angela Douglas's. Moreover, the translation establishes the primacy of the historian's position while sublating the other, an archetypical instance of epistemic violence.

This archive's recalcitrance is thus one that can be perhaps managed by alternative historical hermeneutics but not finally resolved. It is an archive that provides the historian an impossible choice between, on the one hand, affirming the disorganization of its contents, ignoring its ghosts, and surrendering its materials as inconsequential to our historiography, and, on the other, incorporating these materials by sacrificing the authority of the archive's subjects—a violence of historical erasure or a violence of historical recovery. Inexorably, the haunting of the transgender archive summons us to recuperate, to restore what history has made ghostly, but in so doing it shows us also recovery's futility. "I am 64 and Paul McCartney doesn't care" is one such trace, situated, from the historian's perspective, at the event horizon of the archive: an overdetermined enunciation that marks the impossibilities of queer history even after the archive. As a trace, it is opaque, and yet it conjures the spiraling affects and tangled backstories of transgender pasts, the futures that never materialized, and the truncated lives that cannot be recognized or cared or accounted for. In its distinctive and irreducible refusals of historical reconciliation, I would suggest that the ultimate significance of the transgender archive is that it illuminates for us a structural lacuna of queer history. This, a loss that can never be made good, proceeds not from the archive's absences, evidentiary repression, or queer's aversion to archivization but, rather, from the remnants of queer pasts that persist as historically unapprehendable.

Conclusion

And what do stories afford anyway?

—Sadiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts"

A question that has beleaguered previous incarnations of this piece has been, where, in the end, would an argument against history get us? To be clear, this essay does not call for the abolition of queer history or the invalidation of works hitherto produced under that aegis. To the contrary, my negotiations with the transgender archive have been conducted not out of an antagonistic stance toward historical inquiry but out of a deep sense of accountability to it, as an exercise in critiquing what we "cannot not want." I have thus attempted an archival reading that seeks not to finally proscribe history but to provincialize it, that in so doing, queer history may enhance its dexterity. To this end, I have suggested that rendering "the archive" the definitive challenge of queer history threatens to displace considerations of whether the archive will submit to our engagements in the first place. By insistently positing the queer archive as an archive of absence, we risk becoming poorly attuned to its peculiar and capricious presences. Upon closer inspection, the apparently empty archive may, in fact, be much more bountiful, and much queerer, than we expected.

And yet these presences may still return us to a space of absence, but this would be an importantly different absence than the absence of the repressed archive.

To think this absence differently would be to think of queer as denoting, in part, an unruliness that refutes the disciplining of the past. Such a framing directs us away from demystifying expositions of queer's social complexity and toward heightened receptivity to queer's strangeness—perhaps more fully toward, as Tim Dean proposes, an “intimate encounter with the other that does not attempt to eliminate otherness.”⁷⁵ Cultivating openness to irreducible alterity might even require strategically acceding to, rather than indiscriminately militating against, the idea that “queer” designates a people without a history.

To argue “against history” in this way, then, is to advocate expanding as well as restricting points of interface with queer pasts and presents alike. It would provide criteria for assessing the stakes of historical production by demanding attention to how history constitutes *and* decimates its objects—to how every knowledge form consolidates itself through mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion—and to resist the hermeneutics of access that would disavow history's others. Such a shift would decline the self-confidence of injunctions to “never neglect as inaccessible” the breadth of queer pasts and embrace an epistemic humility concerned more with making familiar certain inevitable limitations. Beyond historical inquiry, it may encourage queer scholarship to more fully internalize postcolonial critiques of history's modernizing project and facilitate new perspectives of the affective life of denied historicity. Insofar as this may bring queer critique into closer alignment with an array of feminist, antiracist, and anti-imperialist refusals of history, such a gesture may offer not just an intellectual exercise but also a meaningful political and ethical maneuver, one that heeds more intimately those traditions that, in Chakrabarty's words, “remember history itself as a violation.”⁷⁶

Notes

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1. Mark Hinson, “Angela's Ashes: Farewell to a Wild Pen Pal,” *Tallahassee Democrat*, August 24, 2007, posted to *TNUK Digest*, September 7, 2007, groups.yahoo.com/group/transgendernews/message/22566.
2. Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (New York: Verso, 2006), 34.
3. Susan Stryker, *Transgender History* (Berkeley, CA: Seal, 2008), 88.
4. Carolyn Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval: Sexualities and Communities, Pre- and Postmodern* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 1; Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey, eds., *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past* (New York: Penguin, 1990); Valerie Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 350; Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures* (Durham, NC:

- Duke University Press, 2003); Heather Love, *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 41. See also Christopher Nealon, *Foundlings: Lesbian and Gay Historical Emotion before Stonewall* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001).
5. Dinshaw, *Getting Medieval*, 1.
 6. Queer interest in the archive has not, of course, been restricted to the historical archive; nonetheless, the archival turn has especially influenced historical work and promoted heightened interest in history within other fields. See Anjali Arondekar, *For the Record: On Sexuality and the Colonial Archive in India* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 2.
 7. Cvetkovich, *Archive of Feelings*, 250, 241, 9, 244, 9.
 8. Love, *Feeling Backward*, 37.
 9. See, e.g., John D. Wrathall, "Provenance as Text: Reading the Silences around Sexuality in Manuscript Collections," *Journal of American History* 79, no. 1 (1992): 165–78; and John Howard, *Men Like That: A Southern Queer History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 28. Consider also the prominence of oral history methods in LGBT social histories, often approached as a strategy for mitigating sexuality's perceived elision by the written form. See the overview of texts in Nan Alamilla Boyd, "Who Is the Subject? Queer Theory Meets Oral History," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 17, no. 2 (2008): 177–89.
 10. Arondekar, *For the Record*, 7. Arondekar's account focuses on sexuality in the colonial archive but suggests that this dynamic is not restricted to colonialism, a suggestion I attempt to bear out in my discussion here.
 11. Here I borrow heavily from Roderick Ferguson's critique of the ontology of power in ethnic studies. See Ferguson, "The Repressive Hypothesis of the Ethnic Studies" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Studies Association, San Antonio, TX, November 2010).
 12. Howard, *Men Like That*, 28.
 13. Arondekar, *For the Record*, 6.
 14. A few works outside historical studies that align queer with archival critique (particularly the production and reading of alternative archives) include José Esteban Muñoz, "Ephemera as Evidence: Introductory Notes to Queer Acts," in "Queer Acts," special issue, *Women and Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 8, no. 2 (1996): 5–16; Lauren Berlant *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 12; and Judith Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 20.
 15. Certain notable queer readings of archives have been avowedly Foucauldian—for example, David Halperin's work and also Judith (Jack) Halberstam's treatment of the Brandon Teena archive. But here I try to underscore Foucault's influence on a larger breadth of projects that do not claim explicit fealty to his methods. David Halperin, *How to Do the History of Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Judith Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (New York: New York University Press, 2005).
 16. Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *Foucault: Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, ed. James D. Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley et al. (New York: New Press, 1998), 370.
 17. *Ibid.*, 369.
 18. *Ibid.*, 373.
 19. For Cathy Caruth, Ruth Leys, and others, the traumatic event is an "affront to understanding" that disables the subject's capacity to know it. Traumatic recall is thus a

- record of a past that cannot be cognitivized—it conveys “*the truth of an event, and the truth of its incomprehensibility.*” Cathy Caruth, “Recapturing the Past: Introduction,” in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 154, 153; Ruth Leys “The Pathos of the Literal: Trauma and the Crisis of Representation,” in *Trauma: A Genealogy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 298.
20. See Joan Copjec, *Read My Desire: Lacan against the Historicists* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996). See also Copjec, introduction to *Supposing the Subject*, ed. Copjec (New York: Verso, 1994), vii–xiii.
 21. Copjec, *Supposing the Subject*, viii–ix.
 22. See also Copjec, *Read My Desire*. While participants on both sides of the queer historicism debate have claimed genealogy, Copjec rejects genealogy as a failed effort to break from historicism. Cf. Jonathan Goldberg and Madhavi Menon, “Queering History,” *PMLA* 120, no. 5 (2005): 1608–17; Carla Freccero, “Queer Times,” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 106, no. 3 (2007): 486–87; Carolyn Dinshaw et al., “Theorizing Queer Temporalities: A Roundtable Discussion,” *GLQ* 13, nos. 2–3 (2007): 177–95; Valerie Traub, “The New Unhistoricism in Queer Studies,” *PMLA* 128, no. 1 (2013): 21–39.
 23. Nicholas Dirks, “History as a Sign of the Modern,” *Public Culture* 2, no. 2 (1990): 25–32.
 24. Stuart McLean, *The Event and Its Terrors: Ireland, Famine, Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 17.
 25. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271–313.
 26. Dipesh Chakrabarty, “The Time of History and the Times of Gods,” in *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital*, ed. Lisa Lowe and David Lloyd (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 36.
 27. Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 41.
 28. Chakrabarty, “Time of History,” 56.
 29. Foucault, “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History,” 384, 385.
 30. *Ibid.*, 372.
 31. I of course mean not that all *existing* historical scholarship has been indiscriminately valorized but that historiographical criticism tends to eventually culminate in prescriptions for “better” histories, thus affirming historical discourse per se. Consider, for example, historiographical commentary on the occlusions of identity categories, often critiqued as conferring stability and coherence onto subjects that resist consolidation. Such critiques typically produce, in response, calls for a more rigorous historiography with enhanced attentiveness to hitherto elided social complexity, that is, another (now revitalized) recuperative program. This interpretation of the elisions of queer history as excesses of social complexity is, I would argue, a paradigmatically Foucauldian (and historicist) reading. It yields an equally Foucauldian decree: scholarship must become attuned to specificity, contingency, discontinuity, and so forth. Here I try to consider the limits of this reading pattern by centering excesses not (just) of social complexity but of social alterity—excesses not mitigated by a more nuanced or refined historical program. Cf. David Halperin, “How to do the History of Male Homosexuality,” *GLQ* 6, no. 1 (2000): 87–124; Martha Umphrey, “The Trouble with Harry Thaw,” *Radical History Review*, no. 62 (1995): 9–23; Scott Bravmann, *Queer Fictions of the Past: History, Culture, and Difference* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

32. See Stryker, *Transgender History*; Joanne Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002); Jessi Gan, "Still at the Back of the Bus: Sylvia Rivera's Struggle," *Centro: Journal of the Center for Puerto Rican Studies* 19, no. 1 (2007): 124–39; Stephan Cohen, *The Gay Liberation Youth Movement in New York: "An Army of Lovers Cannot Fail"* (New York: Routledge, 2007); and Susana Peña, "Gender and Sexuality in Latina/o Miami: Documenting Latina Transsexual Activists," *Gender and History* 22, no. 3 (2010): 755–72.
33. Examples include the Sylvia Rivera Law Project in New York City, the Metropolitan Community Church's Sylvia Rivera Food Pantry, and City University of New York's Sylvia Rivera fellowship in transgender studies. Music group Antony and the Johnsons is named after Johnson. Activist and critic Reina Gossett's work on Rivera and Johnson on her blog *The Spirit Was* (thespiritwas.tumblr.com) exemplifies this popular will to memory around these activists, as does the recent documentary of Johnson, *Pay It No Mind: The Life and Times of Marsha P. Johnson*, directed by Michael Kasino (San Francisco: Frameline, 2012), DVD.
34. Aaron Devor and Nicholas Matte, "ONE Inc. and Reed Erickson: The Uneasy Collaboration of Gay and Trans Activism, 1964–2003," *GLQ* 10, no. 2 (2004): 188.
35. Deborah Rudacille, *The Riddle of Gender: Science, Activism, and Transgender Rights* (New York: Pantheon, 2005), 119.
36. Devor and Matte, "ONE Inc.," 187.
37. *Ibid.*, 196.
38. "Sylvia's angry and confrontational style, at times unleashed by alcohol and drugs, could intimidate." Cohen, *Gay Liberation Youth Movement*, 96. In Dudley Clendinen and Adam Nagourney's rendering, Rivera's political critiques are overshadowed by her nonnormative comportment: "The hair was matted and streaked with blond, which highlighted his [*sic*] bizarre presentation—and . . . no shoes. Rivera's gait seemed unsteady, his words were slurred, and his voice, sometimes effeminate and soft, was a screech today." Dudley Clendinen and Adam Nagourney, *Out for Good: The Struggle to Build a Gay Rights Movement in America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999), 171. Gossett has suggested that transgender activists enacted a confrontational style in response to increasing exclusion from the mainstream gay movement. Reina Gossett, "Y'all Better Quiet Down! From STAR to Gay Shame" (paper presented at the conference "Radically Gay: The Life and Visionary Legacy of Harry Hay," Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies [CLAGS], Graduate Center, City University of New York, New York, September 27–30, 2012).
39. Gan, "Back of the Bus," 129, 133.
40. Michael Musto, in Kasino, *Pay It No Mind*.
41. Cohen, *Gay Liberation Youth Movement*, 96.
42. Stryker, *Transgender History*, 88.
43. Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed*, 240.
44. Devor and Matte, "ONE Inc.," 197.
45. Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed*, 258.
46. Susana Peña's writing especially suggests this perspective. Peña, "Gender and Sexuality in Latina/o Miami," 759.
47. *EEF Newsletter*, vol. 1, no. 1 (1968): 1; vol. 2, no. 1 (1969): 1, 4; vol. 3, no. 1 (1970): 5; vol. 3, no. 2 (1970): 5; vol. 4, no. 3 (1971): 2; vol. 8, no. 1 (1975): 8.
48. "Transsexual Action Organization Publications, 1972–1975," 14, 16, 26, 66, 85, Angela Douglas File, Ephemera Collection, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender (GLBT) Historical Society, San Francisco, CA.

49. *Ibid.*, 22.
50. “Transsexuals Hex Robin Morgan,” *Advocate*, July 18, 1973, 21.
51. Angela Douglas, *Triple Jeopardy: The Autobiography of Angela Lynn Douglas* (n.p.: Angela Douglas, 1983), 3; copy on file with GLBT Historical Society.
52. *Ibid.*, 55, 72.
53. Angela Douglas, *Hollywood’s Obsession* (n.p.: Angela Douglas, 1992); copy on file with GLBT Historical Society.
54. E-mail from Douglas to Kay Brown, posted at Kay Brown, “Angela Keyes Douglas,” web.archive.org/web/20070822111743/http://www.transhistory.net/history/TH_Angela_Douglas.html (accessed May 23, 2013).
55. *Ibid.* See also “Yamato Grad Wins Florida Lottery” and “Thank You Florida Lottery,” in Angela Douglas File, GLBT Historical Society.
56. These commenter posts were on Amorous Propensities, “Transsexuals Allowed in Olympics,” www.amorouspropensities.com/archives/gender_outsiders_transgendered_others/transsexuals_allowed_in_o.php (accessed May 3, 2010); and Greenspun.com, “Answers,” dev.greenspun.com/board/q-and-a-fetch-msg.tcl?msg_id=00A946 (accessed May 3, 2010).
57. Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 25.
58. *Ibid.*, xvi.
59. Paul Ciotti, “Why Did He Cut Off That Man’s Leg? The Peculiar Practice of Dr. John Ronald Brown,” *Los Angeles Weekly*, December 15, 1999, www.laweekly.com/1999-12-23/news/why-did-he-cut-off-that-man-s-leg; Stranger than Fiction, “John Ronald Brown: World’s Worst Sex Change Surgeon,” www.mymultiplesclerosis.co.uk/stranger-than-fiction/sex-change-surgeon.html (accessed May 4, 2010). Rivera offers an eerily resonant account of discovering, after their effects prompted an emergency room trip, that she had been given “monkey hormones” by a New York City doctor. Martin Duberman interview with Sylvia Rivera, Cassette 02888, Martin Duberman Papers, New York Public Library, New York.
60. Stacy Shelton, “Cause for Protest: Gays Want Probe of Death,” *Newsday*, July 20, 1992, 6.
61. David W. Dunlap, “Sylvia Rivera, Fifty, Figure in the Birth of the Gay Liberation Movement,” *New York Times*, February 20, 2002; Riki Wilchins, “A Woman for Her Time: In Memory of Stonewall Warrior Sylvia Rivera,” *Village Voice*, February 26, 2002, www.villagevoice.com/2002-02-26/news/a-woman-for-her-time.
62. Bebe J. Scarpi, “A Revolutionary before Stonewall Passes on at Age Fifty-Seven,” *Crossdressers Monthly*, June 2000, 3, 6.
63. Devor and Matte, “ONE Inc.,” 198.
64. Grace Kyungwon Hong, “‘The Future of Our Worlds’: Black Feminism and the Politics of Knowledge Production in the University under Globalization,” *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism* 8, no. 2 (2008): 97.
65. Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 105.
66. *Ibid.*, 98.
67. In other words, even historical accounts that affirm or respect religious belief systems must constrain inquiry to the worldly arena of religious practice while bracketing positive commentary on the numinous referents of religious belief. As Chakrabarty writes, history treats gods and spirits as “social facts” and as posterior to the social—this is true for hauntology as well. *Provincializing Europe*, 16. Furthermore, it warrants noting that methodologies of haunting deal predominantly in *metaphorical* ghosts, and, as tropes, the

specters of hauntology involve a turning away from actual spirits. In this respect, hauntology may constitute a more secular hermeneutic than it initially appears. When discussions of haunting *have* contended with literal ghosts, they retain proper scholarly agnosticism about these objects. See, for instance, the treatment of nineteenth-century spiritualism in Molly McGarry, *Ghosts of Futures Past: Spiritualism and the Cultural Politics of Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

68. Randy Wicker, in *Kasino, Pay It No Mind*.
69. Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975).
70. Angela Douglas, *Moonshadow*, January 1996, 4. In his reflections on a fieldwork encounter with unknown luminous entities, Diego Escolar offers a parallel argument about the domestication of the supernatural in anthropological writing. Although the study of extraempirical phenomena has been foundational to the discipline, Escolar argues that anthropology incorporates accounts of the supernatural only through the “exclusion of [their] referent”—in other words, anthropology sustains a secular empiricist worldview by systematically displacing the ontological status of extraordinary events and reducing them to their phenomenological and/or representational effects. Diego Escolar, “Boundaries of Anthropology: Empirics and Ontological Relativism in a Field Experience with Anomalous Luminous Entities in Argentina,” *Anthropology and Humanism* 37, no. 1 (2012): 38.
71. As Derrida reminds us, the specter “is also what one imagines, what one thinks one sees and which one projects—on an imaginary screen where there is nothing to see.” Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 2012), 125.
72. See, e.g., the discussion of Primo Levi in Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive* (New York: Zone Books, 1999).
73. The question of whether a sufficiently postpositivist critique will someday be able to stretch historical discourse to the point that queer historiographies not only admit but also normalize the agency of gods (and whether such scholarship would still be called “history”) is immaterial. Of interest, rather, is that here the operative problematic proceeds from the epistemic exclusions of historical discourse rather than the evidentiary exclusions of the archive. It is nonetheless worth noting that insofar as a haunting offers a new historical perspective, its ability to historicize is paradoxically secured through negotiated refusals of history (e.g., through refusals of empiricism and linear historical time).
74. This is one reason Carla Freccero, drawing on Derrida, writes, “Spectrality is, in part, a mode of historicity.” I have admittedly slighted Freccero’s important essay “Queer Spectrality” in my writing, partly because her critiques and investments are sufficiently oblique to mine as to make her a complicated interlocutor. I elected to work through my own hauntological reading rather than build more fully on Freccero’s in part because my final disposition toward this methodology is more ambivalent, and I resist engaging haunting as a form of historicity. Carla Freccero, *Queer/Early/Modern* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 70.
75. Tim Dean, *Unlimited Intimacy: Reflections on the Subculture of Barebacking* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 180.
76. Dipesh Chakrabarty, “Marx after Marxism: A Subaltern Historian’s Perspective,” *Economic and Political Weekly* 28, no. 22 (1993): 1096.