

Be/longing in the archival body: eros and the “Endearing” value of material lives

Jamie A. Lee¹

Published online: 4 February 2016
© Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht 2016

Abstract This paper explores the nature of the archival body and the ways in which it is temporally situated and yet also always in motion. Applying transdisciplinary logics, it argues that the affective nature of archival productions follows the machinations of metamorphoses and *(un)becoming*. Using two queer/ed and transgender archives as sites of inquiry, the paper explores the erotic and affective nature of accessing the archival body in its multimodal forms. Although touching, smelling and stroking what remains of distinct material lives might elucidate arousal and certain other affective and haptic responses within the visitor to the archives, the records themselves hold and cradle their creators and their storytelling techniques along with their relationships to longing for and belonging in the archival body of knowledge. This approach suggests that understanding of the record and its affects can be enriched by temporal perspectives that acknowledge distinct and diverse temporalities and promote generative understandings of potentially meaningful progressions of time and everyday rhythms embodied within archival materials.

Keywords Queer · Embodiment · Affect · Belonging · Temporality · Archival body

History—like the future—is a medium for dreaming about the transformation of social life. Such dreams bear little resemblance to the predictions of a scientific Marxism: they are wild dreams, desires so powerful that they disrupt the linear temporality of progressive history.

—Heather Love (2007, p. 133)

✉ Jamie A. Lee
jalee2@email.arizona.edu

¹ University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ, USA

Understandings of archival records can be enriched by perspectives that acknowledge distinct and diverse temporalities that might stimulate generative understandings of even the normativized—what has become normal and normative through repetition and consent—progressions of time, everyday rhythms and those markers that the records might embody. This paper expands on my ongoing research, as both an academic and as director of the Arizona Queer Archives, exploring the *archival body* as temporally situated and yet also always in motion. Through individual collection development, whether it is through organizing personal saved items or by conducting oral history interviews to be donated to the archives, the force and function of the politics of respectability can be palpable. I am interested in both the production of and the resistance to the *politics of respectability*. Using two queer/ed and transgender archives as sites of inquiry, I argue that archives take shape and simultaneously reshape the creators of the records in the course of (re)assembling and (re)accessing meaningful material lived histories. Queer/ed¹ archives, therefore, embody the struggling, shifting and even further queering of subjects deemed “proper” or “improper.” Explorations and cultivations of LGBTQ holdings reveal that discursive self-regulation and other normalizing techniques can be affectively driven by the urgency to belong. However, these collections are also constituted by stories of non-normative sexual desire, experiences, and encounters that might elicit alternate affective movements toward belonging and longing within the archival body. Although touching, smelling and stroking what remains of distinct material lives might elucidate arousal and certain piqued, unnamed and unknown affective and haptic responses within the visitor to the archives, the records themselves embody, hold and cradle the records creators and their storytelling techniques along with their relationships to longing for and belonging in the archival bodies of knowledge. This research, therefore, explores the erotic and affective nature of the archival body in its multimodal forms, and of both creating and accessing that body.

Archivists, through queer/ed archival approaches that are attentive to the multiple lived experiences that constitute an archival collection, might recognize that archives contain “different histories of transition between old and new modes of representation” (Halberstam 2005, p. 104). In such transitions, questions emerge that can unsettle *and* settle the known and, importantly, that yet to be known. The paradigmatic move from a fixed position to one that is moving indicates, as queer theorist Elizabeth Freeman has put it, the revealing of “the ligaments binding the past and the present” (2010, p. 155). Consider the ligament as that flexible yet steadying part of the body. As the records—physical and digital—of our lives multiply within archival collections, people may come to think that we know ourselves in time, when in fact, according to Carolyn Steedman, “all we know is a sequence of fixations in the spaces of the being’s stability—a being who does not want to melt away, and who, even in the past, wants time to ‘suspend’ its flight” (2001, p. 80). The bodies and bodies of knowledge that constitute archival collections embody those moments of fixation and are tethered only fleetingly;

¹ I use the forward slash in *queer/ed* to highlight the movement between a present and past tense verb. Importantly, this word choice is a deliberate move toward the verb *to queer* as a way to subvert the normative. The slash ‘/’ for me also represents the taking apart and simultaneous coming together, much like (un)becoming metamorphoses, which implicates embodiment.

bodies are connected to archival bodies in distinct and meaningful ways that might, for example, transform understandings of evidential quality from “enduring” to also “endearing.” Indeed, records creators—producers and consumers of the archives (McKemmish et al. 2011)—can benefit from moving archives, specifically, those not tethered in perpetuity, as well as from the becoming and unbecoming records therein. The *moving* parts of the archival body are integral to research on archival practices and archival collections because those in-between spaces are revealed through recognition, as well as through the embodied understandings of the archives themselves.

The affective nature of archival productions embodies metamorphoses and, I suggest, *(un)becoming*—the simultaneous becoming and unbecoming—that is indicative of transdisciplinary logics that challenge universalizing archival standardizations in order to potentially reimagine archival approaches. In this research I have employed a phenomenological method to highlight embodied and affective experiences within the Arizona Queer Archives in order to focus on the evolving spaces of thinking about and “doing” archives as *moving* dynamic processes of (un)becoming. The Arizona Queer Archives is a collecting archive founded in 2011 through the Institute for LGBT Studies at the University of Arizona and is, importantly, being developed with members of the LGBT communities through a participatory ethos in order to interrogate the institution-community archival spectrum and to connect archival theory and practice with queer theory and queer/ed material lives. Through archival and queer theory, I connect the archival body to “in-between-ness” (Gregg and Seigworth 2010, p. 2), or “third space” (Licona 2012, p. 131), where affect is generated in its unsettled and disjointed state. I then draw on my research in the Transgender Archives, one of the world’s largest transgender-focused archives that is located at the University of Victoria in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, to analyze the material of distinct formal and everyday collections as well as discursive aspects that reside in the in-between. Because I consider my embodied engagement to be inextricably and reciprocally linked to working in and out of the archives with human and non-human material and ephemeral histories, this paper is intended to flow affectively through both phenomenological and theoretical archival thought. It is, therefore, situated in and out of the personal and the formal, the body and the head, the gut and the heart.

Part 1: The sensual

My pencil is finely sharpened and ready to labor on the acid-free creamy folders piled next to me at the Arizona Queer Archives. I can smell the pencil. Sharpening it dispersed wafts of wood, wafts of memories, about the room. I look at my archives companion, E, an 18-year-old student who is interning with me for the school year. His presence invokes my own memories. I see bits of myself at that age—odd, different, a bit queer. Even his brown corduroy backpack with a sewn-on patch that reads DORK elicits my own thinking about high school and college and my unbelonging in ways that highlight more visibly the structures of belonging. I had

never seen myself as someone who might fit into those structures. I still see myself as a non-fit.

E sits cross-legged on the floor with his hair falling into his eyes. With a quick flick of his head, the hair moves back into place to reveal the excitement on his face as he slowly moves through the old file folders. As a budding filmmaker, he is happily tackling the Wingspan LGBT Community Center's organizational collection and their Film Festival series. His task is to rehouse and create box descriptions of the heap of film festival documents from the 1990s. He slowly reads through the piles of film submissions and shares with me the generic cut-and-paste graphic designs and then the expensive slick productions. He calls out titles, and we laugh together about the sexual innuendos and make suggestions for plot twists. E bursts out laughing and holds up an 11" × 14" poster announcement on fluorescent green paper. "Look at this! Comic sans. It's the worst font ever. Who would have thought that it actually held an ounce of design credibility?" We laugh together.

On another one of our days together in the archives, E finds an 8" × 10" photograph nestled between the file folders in a distinct unbelonging fashion. I see his face moving through mixed responses. Intrigue and long staring are followed by discomfort and quick looks away and at me. "What is it?" I ask. He turns the photograph toward me and I see it's a black and white photograph of the back of a man's head in front of another man's torso in an obvious act of fellatio. His discomfort fills the small archives room as he awaits my response. The eyes want to look again. The body responds and curiosity is piqued. What moves the body into such distinctly opposing responses that pull the eyes to look again yet shame such a desirous gaze away from this second and third glance? The archival aphrodisiac tugs erotically at the body. The body remembers. The body holds its knowing of those times passed and moves quickly through its own inventory-taking of such non-conscious memories. Consider those bodily knowledges, for example, when she whispers into your ear in the quiet auditorium and her breath is hot on your neck. She is speaking while you're on fire. Consider the time when your body encounters another in a crowded elevator and what attracts you or pushes you away. Consider the second glances, the grazed fingertips, the body parts that move so quickly one cannot adequately grasp what just took place. What pushes the body between wanting and denying this desire? Is it what has historically and structurally been considered to be "taboo," "unnatural" or non-normative as it relates to LGBTQ identities and same-sex desires?

"Is it labeled?" I ask. "No. Nothing. I don't know where to put it. It might be a film still or maybe it's something else completely. I just don't know. It could have fallen out of another folder, but those right here have nothing to do with what we're looking at. I might be wrong." He stammers quickly. Thinking about archival principles of original order, I suggest that we leave it right where he found it in its unbelonging and surprising position. "Perhaps it will be another thrilling find for the next person." He smiles and carefully slides it back into its place. Those memorable moments—E's own memories mixed with those represented in the photograph—and those affective intensities, carefully placed and cradled between those named folders.

Human and non-human elements of the Wingspan collection are all intertwined and, in the form of archival productions, weave together many histories, experiences, passions, practices and movements. The archived records have both agency and affective power in that they can move those who engage with them and can be moved in return. A distinct and laughable font and its ability to return him to his own word processing experiences move E. The fellated photograph also moves E. Drawing from Sara Ahmed's work on queer phenomenology and the bodily process of orienting, I recognize that, because we are situated in the Arizona Queer Archives and digging through film festival records, E orients toward the sexually suggestive photograph, which is in his reach and in his bodily horizon (2006). Ahmed notes "we are not only directed towards objects, but those objects also take us in a certain direction" (p. 545). The archives and E are connected, momentarily intertwined and affectively moving one another. The archival hand clutches and holds onto E while shaping the encounter. Meanwhile, E moves through his own process of disorientation based on his unexpected erotic proximity to the image. He then returns to a more normative orientation, explicitly self-regulating not to take subsequent looks. The queer/ed archives, then, engages bodies in sexually transgressive ways. His self-regulating orientation—both internal and external—pulls E into momentary and distinct knowing of self and to his own knowing of history and queer lives. The past, as captured in this fellated photograph and then selected for archival preservation and access, becomes an orienting and bodily marker of the archives constituted by the corpus of records.

The Wingspan organizational collection was one of the first major collections received by the Arizona Queer Archives. I was interested in the personal stories and the ways in which the community came together. As an archives situated in a state-funded institution but with a community focus, I could connect through this hands-on archiving work to the greater community context. Leafing through pages of the board of directors' notes, handwritten ledgers and notes to selves from the desks of a number of executive directors, the records tell of the immediate needs and desires of individual community members in Tucson and throughout southern Arizona. They tell the stories of the many and distinct communities that make up the L, the G, the B, the T and the Q. With the hateful racist, homophobic and transphobic legislation that emanates from the Arizona state capitol and circulates throughout the state, the Wingspan papers instantiate the needs of the communities. Through grants written and received, programs initiated, and community meetings held around issues, the collection highlights and embodies the shifting concepts of the normative that pull some within the LGBTQ community into belonging while simultaneously pushing others to the margins and into unbelonging.

In October 2014, for example, the 9th District Court struck down Arizona's ban on same-sex marriage, which opened the floodgates for same-sex couples to get married. As an archivist, in this state of Arizona and state of frenzy, people emailed me about their ceremonies at the courthouse while others in the community documented this boom of nuptials. Meanwhile, there remain some people in the LGBTQ community who don't fit the qualifications to be married as same-sex as well as those who are not interested or who actively reject marriage and especially marriage as a sign of equality. The archives shifts and changes in how it holds these

bodies—bodies of evidence of multiple truths and multiple histories, bodies as fit/non-fit. Archival bodies...

Later still, E pulls out a folder and looks at me puzzled. “What’s wrong?” I ask. “This is a folder of film rejects. Do we want to keep the rejects?”

Part 2: The archives as body

I use the body as a framework to understand and reimagine the archives—the professionally managed repository—as a body (and multiple bodies) of knowledge that, like the human body, is multiply situated with regard to identities, technologies, representations and timescapes. To explore the archives or the *archival body* (i.e., collections and the records they contain, as well as the practices and performances that produce them) as both temporally situated and yet also always in motion, I turn toward affect. Considering affect helps to understand better the *moving* parts of the archives, including those everyday, ordinary and fleeting affects that might go unnoticed. According to Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg, affect:

“is the name we give to those forces—visceral forces beneath, alongside, or generally *other* than conscious knowing, vital forces insisting beyond emotion—that can serve to drive us toward movement, toward thought and extension, that can likewise suspend us (as if in neutral) across a barely registering accretion of force-relations, or that can leave us overwhelmed by the world’s apparent intractability” (2010, p. 1).

The affective nature of archival productions follows the maneuvering and shifting temporalities of (un)becoming. Thinking about archives as affective bodies in turn moves me to focus on communicating across generations—the past, present and future. The archival body exists in the liminal and porous space and time between past and future. Mbembe (2001) describes the present as a liminal space: an experience of a time that is precisely the moment when different forms of absence become mixed together—the absence of those presences that are no longer so, and that one remembers—the past; and the absence of those others that are yet to come and are anticipated—the future. The present is the affective moment of waiting in a state of expectancy and not just waiting for the expected. Affect indicates “nonconscious and unnamed, but nevertheless registered, experiences of bodily energy and intensity that arise in response to stimuli impinging on the body” (Massumi 1987, 2002, 2003, and as quoted in Gould 2009, p. 19) and might, therefore, open the body to the multiplicities of responses to such stimuli. In these moments, the body is in flux and disjointed in both time and its tethering to prescribed and described emotion as named and known responses. The archives, archivists, records, records creators and archival visitors constitute some of the moving parts within the archival body.

I am drawn to queer/ed archival productions and queer/ed readings of the archives in order to open up emerging and shifting modes of understanding collections as passionate undertakings and as distinct collisions of timescapes,

emotions and histories in and from material lives. I use a queer theoretical perspective to better understand archives *as bodies*. Such a perspective necessitates an understanding of the breadth and, at times, the ambiguity of such a theoretical underpinning that must necessarily grapple with the tensions surrounding the naming of something queer, as well as with the fluidity, instability and perpetual becoming status of queer. This queering further necessitates anti-identitarian moves to unhinge taken-for-granted and reductive assumptions about identity. It also opens up the archives as an embodied space that both produces and resists containment. This approach is similar to Kath Browne and Catherine J. Nash's open-ended framing of definitional understandings that amplify the multiple possibilities that transdisciplinary queer work produces rather than foreclose possibility through concrete naming and, therefore, knowing (2010, p. 3). As a body, the archives has distinct physicality. To understand such a material and physical *thingness* of the archives requires also engaging considerations of bodily experience in and out of the archives as part of knowledge production (Sobchack 2004, p. 7; Ahmed 2006, p. 551). This queer/ed approach to archival productions unhinges the hierarchies of knowledge through the sensual, sensuous, sense-making body-ness of the archives in order to produce and activate imaginings that might function to create spaces of home and of simultaneous resistance for non-normative and underrepresented peoples and communities.

As both an archivist and a scholar, using such queer/ed and transgender archives as sites to explore the lived body as a form of simultaneously conscious, unconscious, and non-conscious knowing and being, as well as to explore the erotic and affective nature of accessing the archival body in its multimodal forms is potentially transformative. Heeding Ann Cvetkovich's call for an archives that "...must preserve and produce not just knowledge but feeling" (2003, p. 241), I too look to the everyday to reimagine ways to hold the tensions inherent in chronicling the dominant narratives that circulate as well as the experiences of everyday life that are contradictory, complex and do not, and perhaps cannot, cohere (Berlant 1997). It is in these tensions that I recognize hauntings, those lingering presences as distinct ways of knowing and feeling what has happened or is happening (Lee 2015a, b; Puar 2007; Gordon 1997). Hauntings hold the strain between chrononormativity—those temporal qualifications that regulate everyday lives through which one waits for the expected—and the reimagined temporalities through which we understand the messiness that can occur when past and future come together. Importantly for the living archival body, these tensions also open up generative spaces where the possibility for hope, resistance and change might reside.

Through my understandings of the archives as a living archival body, I am intrigued by how the archivists and records creators also live within that body rather than only examining such a body from the outside. Drawing from Vivian Sobchack's phenomenological inquiry that focuses on living "one's body" rather than simply looking at a body, I, too, incorporate phenomenology as a method to focus on the "phenomena of experience and their meaning as spatially and temporally embodied, lived, and valued by an objective subject—and, as such, always already qualified by the mutable specificities and constraints of history and culture" (Sobchack 2004, p. 2). Here I acknowledge that affect, phenomenology

(Husserl 1900, 1970 English translation) and psychoanalysis (Freud 1899) all overlap, intersect and diverge in the variegated layers of consciousness and embodiments; however, these conversations are beyond the scope of this paper. As phenomenology and psychoanalysis offer distinct terminologies and understandings of body and mind, these areas of study are interrelated and often debated through these related spaces; moreover, film and media scholars Laura U. Marks (2002) and Vivian Sobchack (2004) incorporate and differentiate both phenomenology and psychoanalysis as *both* connected *and* distinct. For the purpose of my work here, I consider affect also to be intricately connected to both in the spaces between mind and body and through the dynamic movements among conscious, unconscious and non-conscious. Furthermore, the phenomenological method begins with a distinct bodily and affective experience and transforms into a namable, describable structure and meaning that is both particular and also “potentially resonant and inhabitable for others” (Sobchack, p. 5). Through this method of experience as embodied existence “in the flesh,” the body as a framework for understanding archives as “living,” can, therefore, help to elucidate archival productions in terms of how they are affectively produced by and simultaneously and reciprocally productive of engaged subjects.

Inhale. Here is the space when and where breath is held. Exhale. It’s the waiting space, the anticipatory temporality, where and when the affect in the archives is poised to move. Affect is vital to a body’s (un)becoming. The force and forces of encounter are all a part of the “shuttling intensities: all the minuscule or molecular events of the unnoticed” (Gregg and Seigworth 2010, p. 2) that shift and scurry and nudge us in the moment. From a glance to a distinct fragrance to a touch of heated breath on our skin, our bodies respond.

Part 3: The archival body in motion

Archival bodies are in states of flux, what I consider, generative states of (un)becoming through which bodies respond, shift, change, engage and become again and again. Recent decades have witnessed an ongoing shifting and reimagining of archival practice—from static processes and locations toward evolving spaces that are being reimagined and reconstructed as open and dynamic in potent and productive ways. Archival theories and practices today are considered “a reflection of and often justification for the society that creates them” (Cook and Schwartz 2002, p. 12). To identify the shifting and multiply-situated layers of context—the intentionally situated as well as the accidentally accumulated—that constitute and haunt archival collections (physical and digital), many archivists are looking to transdisciplinary approaches that might complicate methodological practice.

Sue McKemmish and Anne Gilliland identify two prevalent methodologies in the archival world. The first is a set of ideas articulated about “Archive Science since the Enlightenment and influenced by modern, scientific thinking and positivism” that suggests that archives are “unconscious and therefore objective by-products of bureaucratic activity, that records follow a predictable lifecycle, and that custody is integral to archival management” (2013, p. 93). The second methodology is much more cognizant of its temporal implications and focuses on the Australian Records

Continuum approach (Upward 1996), which, influenced by postmodern thinking, views “recordkeeping as a continually interacting and evolving set of contingent activities with individual, institutional, and societal aspects” (McKemmish and Gilliland 2013, p. 93). In their article titled “Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory,” Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook similarly highlight the archival/historical trajectory in order to point out the role that power plays within the archives and the stories it tells:

Historians since the mid-nineteenth century, in pursuing the new scientific history, needed an archive that was a neutral repository of facts. Until very recently, archivists obliged by extolling their own professional myth of impartiality, neutrality, and objectivity. Yet archives are established by the powerful to protect or enhance their position in society. Through archives, the past is controlled. Certain stories are privileged and others marginalized. And archivists are an integral part of this story-telling. (2002, p. 1)

Schwartz and Cook emphasize the power that circulates and resides in the hands (and I would add the body) of the archivist to include and exclude, shape and control the past, and actively participate in the stories that the archives tells.

In addition to differing methodologies among archivists, thinking about the nature of archives has also evolved in recent years. Historically, archival education has been pragmatic in the instruction of archival practice. According to one instructional manual which circulates widely in many beginning archival studies classrooms, the archival mission has three elements: “1) to identify records of enduring value, 2) to preserve them, and 3) to make them available to patrons” (Hunter 2003, p. 3). Only recently has the term “enduring” replaced the term “permanent” because archivists know that most records will not last forever. Considering this paradigmatic shift from modern to postmodern, replacing the finite term, “permanent,” with a gerund, “enduring,” ending with “-ing” to denote movement, provides indication of evolving shifts in thinking about temporality and may present an opening up of an archival view of the record and its *recordness* within the greater archival body. Opening up the constraints of what makes a record a record, thus, opens up the possibilities for multiple histories based on traces of everyday lives that might further challenge the dominant narratives that have shaped archival bodies for centuries.

My ongoing research, thus, pushes at contemporary boundaries of archival theory and practice by focusing on archives in ways that simultaneously embrace turbulence and destabilize *chrononormativity*. This is what Freeman defines as the normative ways in which time is used to organize and structure human bodies in order to promote maximum productivity (2010, p. 3). Such a project to connect and perhaps collide with the archival body is provoked by an *anticipatory temporality*, which Jasbir Puar defines as “a modality that seeks to catch a small hold of many futures, to invite futurity even as it refuses to script it” (2007, p. xix). If the archival body’s ligament between past, present and future is loosely secure, the script might be somewhat visible, but it is the ligament’s flexibility and dynamism that can open the archives to the potential of many futures. Thus the archival body as a collection of *stories so far* might create spaces for possible futures to emerge, something that is key to queer world-making efforts and through which one might “imagine a remade

public sphere in which minoritarian subject's eyes are no longer marginal" (Muñoz 1999, p. 23). Transdisciplinary approaches, such as what I have termed the *queer/ed archival methodology* (2015), can burst through traditional academic and disciplinary boundaries in order to generate new and reimagined spaces and practices. The queer/ed archival methodology is a flexible framework to help "guide archivists along with their staff, communities, contributors and volunteers through the unsettling technological, societal, cultural and archival shifts in what might be considered 'normal' and standardized concepts and practices of archival productions" (2015, p. 183). As a way of thinking about knowledges and communities that can underpin archival scholarship, notions of archives and approaches to archival work, the queer/ed archival methodology, then, can provide a means for considering temporality in terms of the simultaneous becoming and unbecoming of archives, bodies, practices, records and stories within multiply-situated and multi-dimensional locations, identities and timescapes. Awareness of such dynamic temporalities can challenge the archival body to push the boundaries of how archivists and archival theorists understand the changing nature of the archives and how others (including themselves) are moved by the archival materials therein.

I next turn to my discursive and material engagements in the Transgender Archives to focus on the *in-between-ness* where affective potentials arise, push, pull and disappear.

Part 4: The discursive and material body

As I take up residence in the reading room of the University Archives and Special Collections at the University of Victoria in British Columbia, Canada, where the Transgender Archives is held, I scan the first seven Hollinger boxes retrieved and stacked on the rolling cart near my chair. Numerical order with clear handwriting in pencil. Browns and grays. Archival acid-free cradling and care. A color palette of reliable neutrality and static blandness. As I consider my mission to interrogate temporality and its influences on an archival body of knowledge that constitutes the world's largest and most internationally representative transgender archive, the boxes are daunting specimens of past, present and future. It is a quiet Monday morning. I watch as Nada the office administrator prepares the room in order to invite visitors. She is humming while she moves behind her desk and prepares the copy machine and other duplication and computer retrieval technologies for the day. Her hum blends with the technological hum of machine to create a soothing non/human white noise that resonates throughout the room. The sun filters in through the wall of windows and the students pass by the glass alone and silent with their white headphone cords diving down into their scarves and blouses.

The Rikki Swin Collection at the Transgender Archives in Victoria, British Columbia holds two boxes of Joseph De Maios' materials from the early 1960s (Fig. 1).

One sheet of paper with typewritten text gave me pause: "These are the times that try men's soulse" (Transgender Archives: Swin, Rikki 2008-006 1/24 007/01/025 1.1). A misspelling and no punctuation that I read as an ellipsis—DOT DOT DOT. The



Fig. 1 Photograph of Hollinger box from the Rikki Swin Collection holding Joseph De Maios' collection. Used with permission from the Transgender Archives, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia

first box I examine—specifically, Rikki Swin Collection *BOX 2008-006 1/24 007/01/025*—holds folders labeled *Joseph De Maios*. Rikki Swin was the collector who acquired the materials to establish this collection through her work developing the Rikki Swin Institute: Gender Education, Research, Library and Archives (RSI), which was dedicated to transgender research and education. Rikki donated her entire RSI archival collection to the Transgender Archives. In this particular account and set of archival material, Joseph is the central character. The folders are not organized chronologically, but rather thematically, looking perhaps to carry forward the collection's original order and provenance—"a promise of future relevance based on archivists' 'unique perspective'" (Bearman and Lytle 1985–86, p. 14). The first folder is filled with *Correspondence—general, newspaper clippings, photographs, 1966–1969* and holds Joseph De Maios' résumés for teaching math in Rome along with his Greek travel documents. He had dark wavy hair, dark eyes, smooth skin and a prominent and angular chin. He was a poet and a scientist. His portraits appeared on numerous government-issued nametags and documentation. He looked comfortable, pleasing and self-confident (Fig. 2).

The following questions flooded the mind: Who was Joseph? Why was he here in the Transgender Archives? What was his story?

The archival body is temporally situated in momentary snapshots that might be considered as archival *bodies-so-far* (Licona 2013). As simultaneously becomings and unbecomings through contexts of space and time, the archival body is (un)becoming. The *un* is contained and held captive, if only for a moment, by parentheses. That is the snapshot, much like the freeze-framed tethering and marking of the body as legible and intelligible. The material records that tell me Joseph's story are those markings, those captured nodes of knowing Joseph along with what's also unmarked and uncontained. In this instance. And for the time being. As captive, the archival body is marked in time and space; the body is held



Fig. 2 Photograph of Joseph De Maios. Used with permission from the Transgender Archives, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia

together and made legible—regulated—through temporalities such as rhythm, pace, cadence and duration. As archivist and researcher, I interpret the records and make meaning of them through my own lived contexts of space and time. Chrono-, hetero- and homo-normativity and biopolitical regulatory practices haunt archives, collections and the stories therein as the peoples who create and consume the records interact with normative strategies in their everyday, whether they fall in line with them, bump up against them, radically oppose and subvert them, or consent to them.

In the Transgender Archives, I handle Joseph's résumés for teaching mathematics in Rome along with his travel documents (Fig. 3).

Nom 1	1. DE MAIOS
Prénoms 2	2. JOSEPH
Lieu de naissance 3	3. BOSTON MASS. USA
Date de naissance 4	4. JAN. 19 1986
Domicile 5	5. 25 MARKBOROUGH ST. BOSTON MASS. USA

Le permis est valable:

Personnes d'infirme et automobiles à trois 400 kg (900 livres).	A	
Personnes et comportant, outre le maximum autorisé qui n'exède pas 3,500 cette catégorie peut être attelée une	B	
Marchandises et dont le poids maximum Aux automobiles de cette catégorie	C	
Personnes et comportant, outre le siège Aux automobiles de cette catégorie	D	
Pour lesquelles le conducteur est que légère.	E	

Signature du titulaire* *Joseph De Maios*

Fig. 3 Photograph of Joseph De Maios' travel document. Used with permission from the Transgender Archives, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia

His folders preserved a list of what basics one might pick up in order to start a residence in a new place—“mineral oil, magnesia, Pepto Bismol, Anacin, Aspirin, bandaids, Epsom salts, and also ANTIHISTAMINES” (Transgender Archives: Swin, Rikki 2008-006 1/24 007/01/025 1.13). There were also handwritten letters from Sandi, his soon-to-be ex-wife. In my reading of them, Sandi’s correspondences do not dilly-dally, but get straight to the point about their forthcoming divorce. To me, her letters *feel* laden in punctuation, namely the period, the full stop and the pause. Then the more intimately detailed letters from Tom. His lengthy typed letters along with handwritten margin notes stretch the pace of the everyday in ways that highlight the pleasures of quotidian life and juxtapose these with wild dreams and philosophical meanderings that question humanity. To me, his letters *feel* understanding and, in my reading of them, I linger. Anticipate. Expect. These distinctions cause me to consider that each of these letter writers might have been situated in slightly different relations to space and time, and especially relations to pace and rhythm—convergences and assemblages of space and time that are always contingent—within their lived experiences. This seemingly messy constellation of points of coming together and coming apart—Joseph’s ambiguous (un)becoming and his holding on to these memories in an apparent resistance toward closure (Sullivan 2003)—inspires me to inquire into why I am moved to question who Joseph was or who he identified as at various points in time. As an archivist, I recognize and know that the records hold a small portion of Joseph’s memories and I sense the silences and gaps of what is not a part of the records. As a researcher holding and touching these intimate materials, my curiosity is aroused. My own attention to detail has shifted into something a bit more desirous of those queer/ed moments of intimacies. Joseph’s record in the Transgender Archives tells me just a bit of his (un)becoming, but the records and their limited and limiting contextual storytelling about the processes of (un)becoming challenge me, as researcher, to look closely at my own need to fill in the blanks of the narrative with my assumptions of what a sequence of events might look like. Jack Halberstam suggests that “queer uses of time and space develop, at least in part, in opposition to the institutions of family, heterosexuality, and reproduction. They also develop according to other logics of location, movement, and identification” (2005, p. 1). From wife to lover, woman to man, USA to Greece, Joseph emerged in a number of stories and contexts that marked those temporal nodes, thereby tethering him to historical narratives that led me to inquire further into his relation to the Transgender Archives and, at times, to jump to certain conclusions.

On 13 April 1961, Tom writes

“... I was reading Huxley the other night—that book of essays I have, and came across this, which made me think of you: “He (man) is the inhabitant of a kind of psychological Woolworth Building; you never know—he never knows himself—which floor he’ll step out at tomorrow, nor even whether, a minute from now, he won’t take it into his head to jump into the elevator and shoot up a dozen or down perhaps twenty stories into a totally different mode of being.”

Tom expresses a spatialized understanding of temporal shifts that might correspond to transgenering as a dynamic experience that implies uncertainty and degrees of impermanence. His handwriting, storytelling, salutation and signature were seemingly comfortable in their familiarity and something about these communications was presumably important enough to Joseph that he held them for decades. So why were these letters archived and not discarded?

As records situated within this collection and this body of knowledge related to transgender histories, time and non-sequential forms of time and the daily banality—including poetry, phone numbers, sketches, ticket stubs, love letters, grocery lists and photographs with friends—found within Joseph’s archival folders can “also fold subjects into structures of belonging and duration that may be invisible to the historicist eye” (Freeman 2010, p. xi). The archival body structures and self-regulates through its archival standards and practices in ways that produce senses of belonging that are always simultaneously connected to senses of unbelonging. As Robb Hernández argues, “a queerness of paper scraps, fragments, and remnants allows for a complex understanding...by foregrounding its ‘failure’ and incompleteness” (2015, p. 71). The physical nature of archives, therefore, embodies the scraps and banalities that represent lives being lived as normative, non-normative, and queer—both belonging and unbelonging. Hence, the archival body is both an (un)becoming body and a body of knowledge.

A letter dated May 8, 1963, caught my attention because of its bilingual English/Spanish salutation: *Querido compadre*. The switch from English to Spanish in Tom’s letter initially stands out because my orientation within the Transgender Archives is to identify the transformative and transforming parts of the records and collections that make up the archival body. Since the collection’s travel documents, international addresses, and postage stamps indicate that both Joseph and Tom were world travelers, this bilingual switch did not surprise me. In its multi-dimensional timescapes, however, I questioned whether or not such an intimate salutation in Spanish might be suggestive of a certain connection to one another. Tom’s letter begins to suggest that Joseph is enjoying sexual exploits on his most recent ski trip—“Ski’n and She’n.” As only one side of a conversation is visible in the archival collection, Joseph’s earlier letter to Tom is a silent partner that haunts the reading of Tom’s letter. Tom’s letter is typewritten from a small town in Texas near the US-Mexico border where Tom describes having sexual encounters with numerous women including a married woman. Tom’s spelling and use of punctuation deliberately form rhyme and thus introduce a distinctive playfulness, perhaps teasing, about the possibilities of such exploits. Tom then equates Joseph’s “philosophers dream” of sex to Plato’s sexual practices with his male students. He writes, “even ol’ Plato knew sex was no symbol and took his regularly as tea but had a craving for his students...” I read this letter as a construction of erasures and silences juxtaposed with ellipses and crude humor, and mixed with suggestive innuendos. Such a reading makes visible the emerging intimacies of this friendship that are less evident through a focus simply on what is present in the text. Archives that embody the histories of non-normative individuals and communities are filled with gaps and silences that are produced by

and produce affective relationships, especially to trauma, shame, desire and notions of belonging and unbelonging.² What is not spoken and what is in juxtaposition to silence create a distinct tension that orients archives toward this coming together and coming apart as something and not nothing—a material and affective phenomenon with material consequences. Bastian argues that if archives are going to collect and preserve the “minor narratives, the untold stories, the traces, the whispers, and the expressions of marginalized identities...their success may depend on the availability of evidence...and also the ability of archivists to recognize and accept this evidence into the archives” (2009, p. 114). As authentic records, the letters from Sandi and Tom, with their handwritten dates and scribbles of certain intimate knowledges of and for Joseph, are evidences that tell of the overlapping affections and identities along with the stops and starts that everyday lived experiences hold.

The next day and after perusing an additional archival box labeled *Joseph De Maios*, I understood that Joseph De Maios, the “man,” shifted into the “woman,” Ariadne Kane (Ari Kane). The archival collection and related finding aids do not refer to Joseph’s/Ari’s transition or any timeframe of the transition; the boxes are numbered and labeled from 1—Joseph De Maios to 2—Joseph De Maios to 3—Ari Kane with folders labeled as Joseph from 1960 to 1966 and labeled as Ari from 1977 through the 1990s. Considering that the site of my inquiry was the Transgender Archives, I rather easily made the jump from Joseph to Ari and understood that a transition, a transforming, had occurred and, importantly for my research, *is occurring*. The boxes do not hold accounts of Joseph’s or Ari’s personal reflections of ongoing and (un)becoming transformation, but I questioned my own desire to return to the earlier boxes to see if I would feel and re-read the records differently and through a differently knowing lens than I had before I learned of Joseph’s transformation.³ I felt that my assumptions and my experiences with knowing LGBTQ-identified and trans-identified peoples might guide me through filling in the blanks before me.

I carefully retraced my steps each evening through my fieldnotes and photographs to inquire into my own affective and haptic responses to this shift from Joseph to Ari. As queer archivist, and thus as a kind of participating observer in my role as researcher, I reflexively monitored my own involvement in this work. Indeed, I recognized my role to animate (and at the same time be animated by) the records with contextual description and collocating relational markings. I affectively handled the archival materials and invited Freeman’s and Eve Sedgwick’s conceptual and *reparative criticism* as a mode of understanding that one cannot know in advance, but “only retrospectively if even then, what is queer and what is not, we gather and combine eclectically, dragging a bunch of cultural debris around us and stacking it in idiosyncratic piles *not necessarily like any*

² See Freedman (1998), Muñoz (2006) and Hernández (2015) for historical lived tracings of the emotional thresholds and self-regulation of LGBTQ peoples.

³ In a 2006 online interview, Ari states “I did not identify as bisexual until late in the ‘90s. However, I did label myself as androgyne-bigender. I defined the terms operationally, i.e. living comfortably in either conventional gender role for most social situations and taking what I consider the most positive aspects from each” (www.myhusbandbetty.com/2006/05/24/five-questions-with-ariadne-kane/).

preexisting whole,’ though composed of what preexists” (Freeman 2010, p. xiii, and quoting Sedgwick 1997 “Paranoid Reading” p. 8). The gaps that appear in collected records tell stories that can complement and contradict the stories that the records themselves tell of time and for the time being.

Another example from the Transgender Archives comes from the Reed Erickson Collection of personal papers, business records, legal files, and art works. In 1917, Reed Erickson was born in El Paso, Texas. He was a successful businessman, philanthropist, and “trans man” who underwent sex reassignment surgery in 1965. Through the Erickson Educational Foundation (EEF), a nonprofit philanthropic organization, Erickson helped to support nearly every project done in the 1960s and 1970s in the field of transsexualism in the USA. As researcher I move through his handwritten letters along with their formally typed versions, my haptic responses move me further to think about how their materiality holds the emotions of their creators, and elicits emotional responses in those who behold them in and beyond the archives. My hands hold Reed’s explanation of “trans-sexual-ism.” The handwritten draft encompasses a range of emotions. My fingers rub the impress of his deep pen strokes. I can *feel* his urgency as he moved through the note—scribbles, all caps, parenthetical descriptions, and then the extra P.S. and P.P.S. that highlighted for me the longing for and belonging to the prescribed normal. A desperation of sorts. These last things did not make it into the formal typewritten letter and would be lost if Reed had not kept his drafts.

The archives holds and embodies the stories of relational reconfigurations that are complex and complicated and at times considered outside of the norm. Jasbir Puar (2007) in *Terrorist Assemblages*, Wendy Brown (1995) in *States of Injury*, and Margot Canaday (2011) in *The Straight State* highlight for me the intricate push–pull movements that occur as rights are assigned to particular people based on distinct classificatory qualifications. People are pulled toward the center, into the mainstream, into belonging to society. Simultaneously those who do not exhibit these qualifications are pushed further away from the center, made more deviant, placed under critical surveillance and considered to be expendable. Obsolete bodies of knowledge. As expendable lives, there is that space where desire grows for the center, for acceptance and belonging. In this space, fear and hope reside to push us to be “normal” and “good.” The force and function of what Deborah Gould refers to as a politics of respectability leads to storytelling and interpretive techniques that work as discursive self-regulation and normalizing strategies and are affectively driven by urgency to belong (2009). As non-normative peoples move through rights-based understandings of their own identities and acceptance in society and are identified by the nation-state as “legitimate” or “illegitimate” citizens, the queer/ed archives embodies the struggling, shifting, and even further queering of those deemed “improper.” The queer/ed archives opens up spaces for the rejects. And it works to commemorate—or not—particular social formations.

Part 5: Epilogue

This paper explores the nature of the archival body and the ways in which it is temporally situated and yet also always in motion. Applying transdisciplinary logics instantiates the affective nature of archival productions through their ongoing processes of *(un)becoming*. This approach suggests that understandings of the record and its affects can be enriched by temporal perspectives that acknowledge distinct and diverse temporalities and promote generative understandings of potentially meaningful progressions of time and everyday rhythms embodied within archival materials. In the archival body, the materiality of lives being lived calls archivists to consider how one might navigate from margin to crease to center and back through the material and affective evidence of struggles and the longing to belong. Working within queer/ed and transgender archives has moved me to an awareness of my own embodied relationships to archival holdings. It has, therefore, offered me hands-on knowledge of the erotic, the intimate and the affective nature of both producing and accessing the archival body and bodies of knowledges in their multimodal forms; the records themselves hold and cradle their creators and their storytelling techniques. Records move archivists as well as those who visit archives based on lived and situated contexts and the assemblages of time, space and histories. Records tell deeper stories of records creators and their relationships to belonging and longing for acceptance into the archival body of knowledge. The archival body—as *(un)becoming* archives and body—constitutes and is constituted by the affective and endearing materiality of lives being lived.

References

- Ahmed S (2006) Orientations: toward a queer phenomenology. *GLQ J Lesbian Gay Stud* 12(4):543–574
- Bastian J (2009) ‘Play mas’: carnival in the archives and the archives in carnival: records and community identity in the US Virgin Islands. *Arch Sci* 9:113–125
- Bearman DA, Lytle RH (1985–86) The power of the principle of provenance. *Archivaria* 21(Winter):14–27
- Berlant L (1997) *The queen of America goes to Washington city: essays on sex and citizenship*. Duke University Press, Durham
- Brown W (1995) *States of injury*. Princeton University Press, Princeton
- Browne K, Nash CJ (2010) Queer methods and methodologies: an introduction. In: Browne K, Nash CJ (eds) *Queer methods and methodologies: intersecting queer theory and social science research*. Ashgate Publishing, Surrey, pp 1–23
- Canaday M (2011) *The straight state: sexuality and citizenship in twentieth-century America*. Princeton University Press, Princeton
- Cook T, Schwartz JM (2002) Archives, records, and power: from (postmodern) theory to (archival) performance. *Arch Sci* 2:1–19
- Cvetkovich A (2003) *An archive of feelings: trauma, sexuality, and lesbian public cultures*. Duke University Press, Durham
- engender: Helen Boyd’s J Gender & Trans Iss. <http://www.myhusbandbetty.com/2006/05/24/five-questions-with-ariadne-kane/>. Accessed 23 Oct 2015
- Freedman EB (1998) ‘The burning of letters continues’: elusive identities and the historical construction of sexuality. *Women Hist* 9(4):181–200
- Freeman E (2010) *Time binds: queer temporalities, queer histories*. Duke University Press, Durham

- Freud S (1899) *The interpretation of dreams*. Franz Deuticke, Leipzig
- Gordon AF (1997) *Ghostly matters: haunting and the sociological imagination*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis
- Gould DB (2009) *Moving politics: emotion and ACT UP's fight against AIDS*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago
- Gregg M, Seigworth GJ (2010) *The affect theory reader*. Duke University Press, Durham
- Halberstam J (2005) *In a queer time & place: transgender bodies, subcultural lives*. New York University Press, New York
- Hernández R (2015) Drawn from the scraps: the finding AIDS of Mundo Meza. *Rad Hist Rev* 122:70–88
- Hunter GS (2003) *Developing and maintaining practical archives*, 2nd edn. Neal-Schuman, New York
- Husserl E (1900) *Logical investigations*. Tr. JN Findlay (1970) Routledge, New York
- Lee JA (2015a) Beyond pillars of evidence: exploring the shaky ground of queer/ed archives and their methodologies. In: Gilliland AJ, McKemmish S, Lau A (eds) *Research in the archival multiverse*. Monash University Press, Melbourne
- Lee JA (2015b) *A Queer/ed Archival Methodology: theorizing practice through radical interrogations of the archival body*. Dissertation
- Licona AC (2012) *Zines in third space: radical cooperation and borderlands rhetoric*. SUNY Press, Albany
- Licona AC (2013) “Mi’ja, just say you’re a feminist like you used to...”: pa/trolling & performing queer rhetorics in the everyday. Keynote Address, *Queering Spaces/Queering Borders Queer Studies Conference* at University of North Carolina-Asheville
- Love H (2007) *Feeling backward: loss and the politics of queer history*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge
- Marks LU (2002) *touch: sensuous theory and multisensory media*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis
- Massumi B (1987) Notes on the translation and acknowledgments. In: *A thousand plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia*, by G Deleuze and F Guattari. Tr. B. Massumi. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis
- Massumi B (2002) Parables for the virtual: movement, affect, sensation. Duke University Press, Durham
- Massumi B (2003) Navigating movements: an interview with Brian Massumi. In: Zournazi M (ed) *Hope: new philosophies for change*. Routledge, New York, pp 210–242
- Mbembe A (2001) *On the postcolony*. University of California Press, Berkeley
- McKemmish S, Gilliland AJ (2013) Archival and recordkeeping research: past, present, and future. In: Williamson K, Johanson G (eds) *Research methods: information, systems and contexts*. Tilde Publishing, Prahran, pp 79–112
- McKemmish S, Iacovino L, Ketelaar E, Castan M, Russell L (2011) Resetting relationships: archives and Indigenous human rights in Australia. *Arch Manuscr* 39(1):107–144
- Muñoz JE (1999) *Disidentifications: queers of color and the performance of politics*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis
- Muñoz JE (2006) Feeling brown, feeling down: Latina affect, the performativity of race, and the depressive position. *Signs New Fem Theor Vis Cult* 31(3):675–688
- Puar JK (2007) *Terrorist assemblages: homonationalism in queer times*. Duke University Press, Durham
- Schwartz JM, Cook T (2002) Archives, records, and power: the making of modern memory. *Arch Sci* 2:1–19
- Sedgwick EK (1997) Paranoid reading and reparative reading; or, you’re so vain, you probably think this introduction is about you. In: Sedgwick EK (ed) *Novel gazing: queer readings in fiction*. Duke University Press, Durham, pp 1–37
- Sobchack V (2004) *Carnal thoughts: embodiment and moving image culture*. University of California Press, Berkeley
- Steedman C (2001) *Dust: the archive and cultural history*. Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick
- Sullivan N (2003) *A critical introduction to queer theory*. New York University Press, New York
- Transgender Archives, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. Figures used are photographs taken of 2008-006 Swin, Rikki Collection 2/24 007/01/025 during research visit in March 2014. Used with permission from Transgender Archives
- Transgender Archives, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. <http://transgenderarchives.uvic.ca/>. Accessed 23 Oct 2015

Upward F (1996) Structuring the records continuum—part one: postcustodial principles and properties. Arch Manuscr 24(2):268–285

Jamie A. Lee is Assistant Professor of Digital Culture, Information, and Society at the School of Information, University of Arizona. Lee’s research attends to archives/digital archives and uses the body as a framework to understand the *archiving archives* as related to performance and embodied practice. She explores archival theory and practice; community archives, the multimodal media that constitute archival records, and records creators in order to investigate the telling of stories and counter-stories of community, identity, and belonging; social justice media, new media, and media studies along with digital storytelling practices and productions; LGBTQ studies; Queer theory; and affect, embodiment, and temporality. Through this work, she has developed a queer/ed archival methodology, Q/M, for archivists to utilize in new and existing archival productions to offer a way of thinking critically about archival practices and productions as radically open, productive, ongoing, and generative spaces that many multiply-situated bodies might fit into, even complicatedly. She has worked in TV and film as a producer and director since 1991.