Introduction

Unnatural Bodies, Desires, and Devotions

Zeb Tortorici

In the 1595 edition of Alonso López de Hinojosos's *Summa y recopilación de cirugía, con un arte para sangrar, y examen de barberos*—one of the earliest medical treatises to be published in New Spain (the first edition was from 1578)—the author devotes a lengthy section to various gynecological and obstetrical issues having to do with the female body. The ninth book in the treatise, "On the Difficulty of Childbirth" *(De la dificultad del parto),* which is divided into thirteen chapters, focuses on such topics as why some women cannot conceive, the signs of pregnancy, the fragile formation of the fetus within the womb, and various remedies for uterine and menstrual problems. Notions of Nature and sexuality are, perhaps unsurprisingly, central to López de Hinojosos's explication of the proper and improper functioning of the human body in both sickness and health, all of which brings up a problem: to what extent can the human body, according to López de Hinojosos—or according to other medics, theologians, judges, and officials in the early modern and modern Iberian Atlantic world—deviate from Nature? How might the fetus stray from the "natural" course of intrauterine physiological development, and how might such alterations be brought on by Nature itself? How does López de Hinojosos invoke notions of Nature and the unnatural in ways that both confirm and challenge other manifestations of "Nature" and the "unnatural" that were espoused by the author's contemporaries in the realms of science, medicine, law, and religion?

Chapter four of the ninth book, "How the Seeds Are Fomented, and How the Child Is Nourished in Its Mother's Womb" *(Como se formentan las simientes, y se alimenta el niño en el vientre de su madre),* concerns the formation and development of the fetus and the deviations that can occur in this process. Beginning with

conception, López de Hinojosos informs his readers that after sex, the seeds of the man and the woman are united inside the womb, and that six days after "fomentation," the milky admixture covers the *télica*—a weblike tissue that, according to the author, "is the first membrane that nature *[naturaleza]* ordered for many things: the first so that these seeds do not become separated, because from every tiny bit of these seeds will raise a child, or a monster."[1] In this way, López de Hinojosos poses the question of what accounts for the differences between humanity and monstrosity, and in particular, what role Nature plays in the differentiation.

What the authors in *Sexuality and the Unnatural in Colonial Latin America* are generally concerned with is the matrix of assumptions and questions posed not just in the example I have chosen from López de Hinojosos, but by the entire intellectual and conceptual order of the early modern and modern Iberian Atlantic world: How does Nature come to order the body, and how does the body come to order (or disorder) the ontological boundaries of Nature? How were Nature and its range of possible counterparts—the "unnatural" and that which theologians and judges deemed "against nature" *(contra natura)*—inextricably interconnected and wrapped up in all of the complex and often contradictory significations of the other? What distinguished a "child" from a "monster," and what ways could one read the human body as evidence to articulate and enunciate such differentiations?

López de Hinojosos, to an extent, is also trying to answer these questions, and in so doing merges Nature, the body, sex, and gender in multiple ways. Shortly after introducing the categorical differences between the *niño* and the *monstruo*—the child and the monster—in the course of fetal development, he describes how, during the first weeks of pregnancy, organs of the fetus begin to take shape, develop, and interact with one another. He writes that customarily

> the liver sends veins and nutritive blood to the heart and to the brain, and the brain sends nerves to the liver and to the heart, and the heart sends spirited blood to the rest of the members, and in that way each one communicates its virtue to the other, and the child comes to be formed, and if after thirty days it has sufficient heat and the other necessary dispositions, God instills the soul, and it is a man; and if it lacks a degree of heat, a woman comes out and [she is] manly who speaks like a man *[muger y hombruda que abla como hombre],* and has the conditions of a man, and if there is a lack of heat, this passes at sixty days; and if at the time of animation [of the soul] a degree of heat rises, a man is made, and it is a womanly man, that speaks like a woman *[y es hombre amarionado, que habla como muger].*[2]

This passage demonstrates how, for the author, Nature can construe its Other—the ambiguous and "unnatural"—by a mere change of the settings of degrees of heat within the womb, and by failing to properly differentiate the cold and wet nature of women from the hot and dry nature of men. Here, López de Hinojosos employs the vocabulary of the theories of bodily humors espoused by Aristotle and Galen to

explain the *muger hombrudo* ("manly woman") or the *hombre amarionado* ("womanly man") in terms of lack or excess of heat inside the womb. Yet as Jonathan Goldberg has demonstrated, while such terms remain partly untranslatable between the medieval and early modern contexts and the Spanish lexicon of today, they are nonetheless inextricable from notions of deviant and unnatural sexuality.[3] The early modern Hispanic categories of cross-gendered behavior and illegible bodies that López de Hinojosos discusses here intimate sodomitical sexual desires, illicit gendered presentation, and, at the extreme, even hermaphroditism.

Here, we witness how López de Hinojosos's medical knowledge of the bodily humors and their possible mixtures, which allow for dry cold manly women and moist hot womanly men, purposefully affixes itself to notions of monstrosity and to unnatural sexes, bodies, and desires. Nature and the unnatural intimately commingle, in a process that strips these categories of their assumed oppositional values. As the passage above demonstrates, Nature can simultaneously order and disorder, create and pervert, reproduce and thwart reproduction. López de Hinojosos carries this paradox into his language at this point: the organs and physiologies of human reproduction, such as the umbilical cord that carries nutrients, the developmental interaction between the fetus and the mother, the moment of conception, and the subsequent development of the fetus all amount to an *artificio admirable,* or an "admirable artifice" of Nature itself. In López de Hinojosos's understanding of things, Nature is an *artifice*—cunning, clever, and occasionally insincere and deceptive, insofar as that which is natural gives rise to that which is unnatural, using Nature's materials and sustained by Nature's processes. In this way, Nature holds its authority but undermines its conceptual definition, showing itself to be both artful and deceitful. This logical paradox is not idiosyncratic with López de Hinojosos: for innumerable medieval and early modern theologians, jurists, and medical experts, Nature's deceit came to be grafted onto the ways that bodies were read, interpreted, and imagined in their varied states of lust and unbridled passion. López de Hinojosos's text is merely clearer than many others in showing us the elasticity of the concept of Nature, which nonetheless maintains its sovereignty, just as it did in the Iberian Atlantic legal and theological spheres.

Indeed, when studying the Spanish regulation of "unnatural" sexual practices, we are confronted by terms that are the work of a long institutionalized chain of reasoning that goes back to the early Church Fathers like Saint Augustine and medieval theologians like Thomas Aquinas. As early as the fifth century, Saint Augustine influentially deemed unnatural and sinful those sexual acts that did not take place in a "vessel fit for procreation."[4] Regarding sodomy, bestiality, masturbation, and unnatural sexual positions between men and women—all "vices against nature" included in the category of *luxuria* (lust)—Aquinas in his thirteenth-century *Summa Theologica* wrote: "Just as the order of right reason is from man, so the order of nature is from God himself. And so in sins against nature, in which the

very order of nature is violated, an injury is done to God himself, the orderer of nature."[5] Since, as Asunción Lavrin notes, voluntary pollution "contravened the Church's view that seminal emission must be carried into the female vagina *(intra vas naturale)* for the purpose of procreation," masturbation, sodomy, and bestiality, all forms of voluntary pollution, must be sins defined by the Church's view of what was and what wasn't in accordance with Nature and "natural" desire.[6]

Ultimately, Lavrin observes, "all sexual activity approved by the Church had one avowed and legitimate purpose: the perpetuation of the human species."[7] Nature, in this view, is an eminently teleological structure within which proper sexual desire was not the desire for the sexual act itself but, instead, the desire for the ideal result of that act: procreation. In this way the "sins against nature," which were delineated in social terms as contravening the institutions of marriage and the family, were then elaborated ontologically as the perversion of the true purpose of sexuality, procreation. Yet this casuistic reasoning involved inherent contradictions, as a close examination of López de Hinojosos's text shows. Nature can sometimes operate outside of the teleological structure that supposedly defines it, creating on its own the bodies and desires that, at least in the view of the Catholic Church, could impede the impetus to reproduce among humans and other animals.[8] Acts such as masturbation, sodomy, and bestiality, which did not have procreative aims, still used Nature's materials and processes. Thus the "unnatural" as a category was formed out of this inflection of Nature, allowing these things to be labeled and demonized by the Church and punished by ecclesiastical and secular authorities throughout the medieval and early modern European world.

In this way, in both medieval and early modern Europe at the onset of the sixteenth century, theologians and jurists could with good conscience obsessively invoke the notions of "Nature" and the "unnatural" to mark out difference on the bodies of others. The theologians, jurists, doctors, and natural philosophers of colonial Latin America, as the chapters in this volume attest, were no exceptions to this rule. For that reason, it is essential to examine the genealogy of the term *contra natura* ("against nature"), which was frequently employed in criminal and Inquisition cases from early modern Spain, Portugal, and their respective overseas colonies. The term *contra natura,* as several chapters in this anthology show, was alive and well in the legal lexicon up through the nineteenth century, leaving its mark on the legal codes of the new nations forged from the Spanish and Portuguese colonies' struggle for independence. The framers of these new laws often based their legal reasoning on colonial, early modern, and even medieval codes. As Lorraine Daston and Fernando Vidal note, "The derivatives of the Latin *natura* in modern European languages have notoriously long and rich definitions, and their common Latin root itself derives many of its connotations from the Greek *physis,* which has its own convoluted semantic history."[9] In tracing the polysemic nature of *natura* in the legal, religious, and popular spheres, we gain a better sense of those rich and convoluted definitions.

The mere fact that the Spanish word *natura* ("nature") in the medieval, early modern, and modern contexts had so many definitions attests to its complexity, which can be seen, specifically, in the way it applied simultaneously to the exteriority and interiority of the human body. In the sixteenth century, European priests and missionaries arrived in the Americas carrying a notion of Nature with a long genealogy, and with rich definitions stemming from a common Latin root, *natura*. Logically, this also entailed a priori understandings of the unnatural, in part stemming from "natural law," which had been defined by Aquinas as a set of fundamental principles *(prima praecepta)* granted by God and understood by all "rational creatures."[10] The Europeans sought to impose upon the indigenous inhabitants of what eventually came to be the Spanish and Portuguese viceroyalties, demarcated in theory by the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas, a code that, on the one hand, defined Nature as originating outside of the human being and, on the other, defined nature as that which was interior to the human self. Nature—both *natura* and *naturaleza*—was itself complex, imprecisely defined, and riddled with subtleties, as can be seen by the mere fact that it was something both exterior and interior to all living beings.

Natura was also fixed onto the body, as the frequent use of the term *vaso natural* ("natural vessel")—regularly used to denote the vagina in medical and theological treatises, criminal cases, and Inquisition documents of the early modern Iberian world—shows. Similarly, the anus, in this semantic system, is put in opposition to the *vaso natural.* The rectum of a man or a woman was referred to as the *vaso contra natura*—the "vessel contrary to nature." The phrase *pecado contra natura* ("sin against nature") is in the same family as these terms. The possibility of procreation is what determines the logic of *natura* and its derivatives in both anatomy and jurisprudence. Yet it is not only *natura* but also its derivatives that signify the body in both its normal state and its excesses—much like the bodies López de Hinojosos described in the sixteenth century. Such is the case with *naturaleza,* for instance. The 1726 version of the *Diccionario de la lengua castellana* defines *naturaleza* primarily as "the essence and natural being of any thing," and secondarily in relation to the geography and physical environment of a given place.[11] However, along with these abstractions, *naturaleza* also incorporates both animals and procreative sexuality within its definition. One of the latter definitions of *naturaleza,* for example, refers specifically to the "temperament of the qualities in the physical body of an animal: in this sense it is said that one is of a dry nature, a cold nature, etc."[12] The *Diccionario* also notes that *naturaleza* may be used in reference to genitals, especially those of women.

The coupling of nature and sexuality comes out in a variety of phrases. *Alterarse la naturaleza*—to alter one's nature—refers to the physiological changes that came about when a man felt sexually excited. In yet another twist of the term, the opposite of an *hijo legítimo*—a legitimate child—is an *hijo natural,* a child born out of

wedlock.[13] As these diverse meanings attest, within the family of uses of *naturaleza* and its cognates, we find not a central signifier, but rather a term that seems to bifurcate at every turn, and to lend itself both to the essence of things and to a moral order among things, creating an overlap that reaches deep into the colonial mindset. And so it comes about that Nature touches on all beings and objects, the physical environment, the temperament of animals, the genitals of males and of females, and procreative sexuality, without gathering these disparate ideas under one central conceptual category. One of the primary goals of this book, therefore, is to disentangle and unravel the convoluted definitions and connotations of Nature and the unnatural that traverse the European side of the discourses of colonial Latin America and the wider Iberian Atlantic world. Together, these essays recast Iberian Atlantic cultural history through the prism of "sins against nature," showing that the colonial perspective often relied on the unnatural as a fundamental category of difference.

As we have seen in my observations on López de Hinojosos's sixteenth-century discussion of procreative sexuality, with its attendant aspects of conception, pregnancy, and childbirth, the concepts of the natural and unnatural are bound together in a complex configuration that are not always defined in opposition to one another. Nature and the unnatural assume different relations to one another at different moments. While one might facilely assume that the category of the unnatural was simply derived from the negation of the natural, this is misleading. In an important study on sodomy in Reformation Germany and Switzerland, Helmut Puff writes that it would be difficult to "render precisely what magistrates and officials imagined as nature's 'other' when they employed *contra naturam* in its vernacular variants. As a phrase, the concept 'against nature' invoked the supreme authority of God in order to justify the harshest of responses to an act deemed criminal."[14] We might pose this same dilemma for the early modern Iberian Atlantic world, as *natura, naturaleza,* and their "others" were imbued with multiple, overlapping, and occasionally contradictory meanings by medics, scholars, jurists, judges, priests, and theologians.

What, then, was Nature's "other" in the context of colonial Latin America and the wider Iberian Atlantic world? Nature, in all of its convoluted definitions, is of central concern to the chapters of this book, but even more so is the *un*-natural potential inhering in the imbrication of bodies, desires, and devotions in the views of secular and ecclesiastical authorities. In their explorations of the "sins against nature," most historians of the early modern Iberian Atlantic world have tended to privilege same-sex sexual acts (with a primary focus on male-male intimacies or male "homosexuality"), thereby obscuring the multiplicity of desires found under this rubric and their ambiguities. This anthology therefore seeks to open up the category of the unnatural by exploring a wider variety of nonprocreative corporeal acts that approximated the unnatural, without necessarily being officially desig-

nated as such. The chapters of this anthology deal both with those acts that were technically considered to be unnatural heresies and crimes against nature—masturbation, sodomy, bestiality, and unnatural sexual positions—and with crimes that bordered on the unnatural, such as incest, solicitation in the confessional, sex with the Devil, abortion and infanticide, erotic desecration of holy images, and suicide.

The first chapter, "Archival Narratives of Clerical Sodomy and Suicide from Eighteenth-Century Cartagena" by Nicole von Germeten, interrogates the conceptual framework of the natural/unnatural very consciously in the tradition of Natalie Zemon Davis and other practitioners of microhistory. Focusing on the region of New Granada, von Germeten looks at the case of an eighteenth-century Mercedarian friar, Esteban Sobrino, whose eventual suicide in the prison of the Inquisition was closely tied to the circulation of rumors about his solicitation of sexual favors from women and men in the confessional. During the course of his trial, Sobrino confessed to having touched six young boys, bringing them to orgasm; yet he swore that his acts stemmed from affection and a "sincere and honest love" rather than from lust, impure thoughts, or malice. In analyzing the priest's confession, von Germeten shows how the priest's defense operated at numerous points along the natural-unnatural spectrum, for "with his words he tried to render these acts natural, innocent, and harmless for both himself and the boys." Through her analysis of the archival record, von Germeten shows how, following Sobrino's suicide in 1779, inquisitors and clergymen colluded to protect the local church's reputation partly by construing a rhetorical narrative that minimized the severity of Sobrino's "unnatural" desires and sexual acts, which spanned a broad panorama from lustful acts with women to sodomitical acts with men. This exploration of a case shows how often the natural and the unnatural, the orthodox and the heterodox, and the criminal and the heretical overlapped.

From von Germeten's sophisticated reading of inquisitorial archival narratives we move, in the chapters by Nora Jaffary and Jacqueline Holler, to the topic of eroticized religiosity and acts of desecration among nuns, *beatas,* and laywomen in colonial Mexico. Jaffary's chapter also engages microhistory, delving into the fascinating eighteenth-century Inquisition case of a poor young woman in Mexico City, María Getrudis Arévalo, to reveal how devotion, desecration, religious doubt, and unnatural desires converged. Arévalo, perhaps not unlike others in the Iberian Atlantic world, was riddled with doubt about the existence of God and the validity of miracles, and began to take vengeance on God, Jesus, the Virgin Mary, the saints, and the Church in a symbolically and corporeally charged fashion. Arévalo engaged in escalating acts of desecration, such as taking communion immediately after having sex, inserting the rosary or the Eucharist into her "suspicious part" *(parte sospechosa)* and her "filthy vessel" *(vaso inmundo),* and applying religious engravings to "the most indecent parts of her body." Interestingly, as

Jaffary shows, Mexican inquisitors appear *not* to have been overly concerned with such corporeal forms of sacramental desecration, a finding that has been echoed by recent scholars who work on the intersections of heresy and sexuality. Jaffary's focus on inquisitorial disinterest forces us to question whether the reading and interpretation of female sexuality in the colonial period through the lens of transgression is anachronistic. This chapter ultimately complicates our understandings of the Holy Office of the Mexican Inquisition, demonstrating that inquisitors did not view all that was "against nature"—in this instance, masturbation and eroticized religiosity—as threatening, disruptive, or subversive. Jaffary's contribution can also be seen as an extension of her scholarship on false mysticism *(alumbradismo),* medicalized sexuality, eroticized devotional practices, abortion and infanticide, and monstrous childbirths—all of which does much to advance our knowledge of the conceptual and practical boundaries of Nature and the unnatural in colonial Mexico.[15]

Holler, in turn, examines a fascinating corpus of Mexican Inquisition cases in which the Devil, through the phenomenon of the demonic pact *(pacto con demonio),* became an ideal "lover" for some women. Many of the cases culminate in explicit sexual interactions between the women and their diabolical consort. Holler demonstrates that both the women *and inquisitors* viewed sex with the Devil as commonplace, expressive of female desire (and other emotions such as melancholia), and governed by the gendered norms of colonial society. Here, the binary of Nature and the unnatural was employed in surprising and unexpected ways at both popular and learned levels of colonial society, framing a narrative in which the Devil figures as a handsome, young, and virile lover. Here we can see one of the unexpected twists of the ideology of the natural: demonic copulation was framed by many of the women who initiated demonic pacts as being potentially procreative, which would align it with Nature. At the same time, Holler shows that "unnatural demonic lust provided essential proof of the workings of the sacred and the demonic in everyday life." Demonic sex was therefore at the same time completely radical and entirely mundane. Affective and physical encounters with the Devil temporarily allowed these women—through an assimilation of the natural, the unnatural, and the supernatural—to enact heterosexual coupling more perfectly than they could have with their unsatisfactory lovers and husbands.

The final chapter in part 1, coauthored by Ronaldo Vainfas and me, moves us from colonial Spanish America to the early modern Lusophone world. "Female Homoeroticism, Heresy, and the Holy Office in Colonial Brazil" is based largely on previous archival research and writings by Vainfas, yet he and I worked closely together to reframe the chapter and consider the connections between female sodomy, perceptions of heresy, and the unnatural for this anthology. In doing so, we offer some brief yet revealing comparisons between the punishment of female sodomy in colonial Brazil and in colonial New Spain. As Chad Black's essay in this

volume (chapter 6) also attests, archival records on female sodomy in colonial Latin America are exceedingly rare. Yet our essay expounds on Vainfas's previous research on a fascinating corpus of documentation in which Heitor Furtado de Mendonça, the Portuguese inquisitorial visitor in northeastern Brazil between 1591 and 1595, recorded a total of twenty-nine female suspects of sodomy through denunciations and self-denunciations. Only a few of those denunciations turned into prosecutions, yet the details that they offer around female same-sex intimacies in early colonial Brazil are illuminating and provocative. This essay also highlights the semantic differences between "formal heresy" and "material heresy," conceding that from a strictly theological point of view, sodomy was *not* a form of heresy. But Vainfas assembles evidence for his assertion that, in practice, sodomy in Brazil was popularly associated with heresy by priests, inquisitors, and laypersons alike. Sodomites, in essence, were "treated *as if they were heretics*." While sodomy in itself was not evidence of sacrilege, there always existed the possibility that those who displayed the signs of sodomy would also, under questioning, reveal signs of sacrilege.

Like all scholarly texts, *Sexuality and the Unnatural in Colonial Latin America* is a product of a particular historical and political moment, especially with respect to the burgeoning historiography on gender and sexuality in colonial contexts and the rapidly growing interdisciplinary field of queer studies in conjunction with a decidedly politicized interest in generating scholarship that is linked to the broader arena of LGBTQ social movements in Latin America. This is of course not to say that the impetus for this anthology arose from the recent recognition of same-sex unions in Mexico City, Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay; rather, the support of LGBTQ rights in the present is, for many scholars, inextricable from the scholarship that they themselves produce on nonheteronormative practices and desires in Latin America's colonial past. This explicit linking of colonial history and queer politics is clearly (and admirably, if all too rarely) undertaken by some scholars of gender and sexuality in colonial Latin America. The scholar who has perhaps done this most successfully is the Brazilian anthropologist and activist Luiz Mott, author of several works on sodomy and "homosexuality" in early modern Portugal and colonial Brazil that have served as inspiration for myself and for many of the authors included in this anthology. Mott is a well-known anthropologist and historian of colonial Brazil and early modern Portugal at the Universidade Federal da Bahia in Salvador, Brazil, and founder (in 1980) of the Grupo Gay da Bahia (GGB), the oldest and largest organization for the defense of LGBT rights in Brazil.[16] Mott unabashedly and explicitly links scholarship and politics in ways that make more meaningful connections between past and present than does much of the historiography of sexuality in early modern and colonial contexts. As one walks through the main center of the GGB, for example, the past-present connection is unmistakably stated on a marble plaque that proclaims: INQUISIÇÃO NUNCA MAIS! 1593*GGB*1993 (fig. 1)—marking on the one hand the period when Father Heitor

FIGURE 1. Marble plaque in the headquarters of the Grupo Gay da Bahia in Salvador, Brazil. Photo courtesy of Luiz Mott.

Furtado de Mendonça oversaw the first Portuguese inquisitorial visitation to Brazil (1591–93 in Bahia and 1593–95 in Pernambuco) and, on the other, the quincentennial, in 1993, of the Inquisition's persecution of sodomites. Mott's unequivocal assertion of INQUISITION NEVER AGAIN! has become a motto and rallying cry for LGBT activism and the Grupo Gay da Bahia. This iconic slogan highlights the intimate ties between archival research on sexuality, historiography, social activism, and LGBT rights discourse. In speaking of "homoeroticism," "homosexuality," and "gay" and "lesbian" subjects in the colonial past, Mott (and several other scholars) are being consciously, and perhaps provocatively, anachronistic. In doing so, they invite us to think about the repressions of the past in terms of the present, and vice versa. In an effort to make more intimate the connection between scholarship and activism, I have decided to donate my portion of the royalties from this book to the Grupo Gay da Bahia and other LGBT rights organizations in Latin America.

As the reader will already have noted, this anthology is divided into two parts, focusing respectively on unnatural heresies and unnatural crimes. The two things were not, in fact, absolutely divided, especially given the implicit jurisdictional overlap and popular confusion between sexual sins, heresies, and crimes throughout the Iberian Atlantic world. The division does, however, have roots in everyday practice and law in the early modern Iberian world. The chapters in part 1 of the book—"Unnatural Heresies"—deal primarily, though not exclusively, with cases that ecclesiastical and inquisitorial courts tried in Spain, Portugal, colonial Brazil, and the viceroyalties of New Spain and New Granada. In contrast, the authors of the chapters in part 2—"Unnatural Crimes"—largely select their evidence from

secular court cases, from the viceroyalties of Rio de la Plata, Peru, New Granada, and New Spain. Here, the question of jurisdiction is crucial, even though it has occasionally been oversimplified by some scholars who, neglecting the archives of secular municipal courts, have been led astray by the assumption that sodomy cases were always the province of the Inquisition, independent of place. While it is true that the sodomy cases in early modern Portugal and its colonies were tried in ecclesiastical courts and by the Portuguese Inquisition, early modern Spain and its American colonies offer a more complex jurisdictional picture.

In New Spain, for example, the Holy Office by and large did *not* have jurisdiction over the *pecado nefando,* or "nefarious sin" of sodomy, or over the other "sins against nature." This limited jurisdiction contrasts with much of the early modern Iberian world, including the Spanish cities and municipalities of Valencia, Barcelona, Zaragoza, and Palma de Mallorca, as well as Portugal and its overseas colonies of Brazil and Goa, where both sodomy and bestiality technically fell under the jurisdiction of the Inquisition.[17] Between 1540 and 1700, the tribunals of the Inquisition in Spain prosecuted 380 cases of sodomy in Valencia, 791 in Zaragoza, and 433 in Barcelona.[18] Between 1587 and 1794, the Portuguese Inquisition tried some 400 individuals for sodomy, about 30 of whom were executed for their crimes.[19] In Castilian Spain, Ferdinand the Catholic placed sodomy under the jurisdiction of the Inquisition in 1505, but he subsequently revoked that decree and in 1509 placed it under the purview of the secular authorities.[20] As a consequence, in Castile, Granada, and Seville, secular rather than ecclesiastical authorities prosecuted sodomy. Secular courts in Madrid were responsible for the deaths of over one hundred sodomites from the 1580s to the 1650s. In Palermo, Sicily, which was then under Spanish dominion, between 1567 and 1640 at least eighty-three men were publicly executed for "homosexuality."[21] Due to the fact that the Indies had been incorporated into the Crown of Castile in the sixteenth century, the Castilian legal system and its administrative and judicial bureaucracies were transposed to those territories.

Despite recent assertions by one historian that "over the course of the colonial period, both secular and ecclesiastical authorities held jurisdiction over sodomy cases in the tribunals of New Spain," in reality, the law was clear: the Mexican Inquisition was allowed to prosecute cases of sodomy *only* when some overt heresy (like solicitation in the confessional), heretical propositions (like asserting that "sodomy is not a sin"), or a priest were involved.[22] The tribunal of the Inquisition in Mexico was even warned in 1580 that Rome, despite the Aragonese precedent, would never allow sodomy to be tried in Mexican ecclesiastical courts.[23] Priests were an exception to this rule: those accused of sodomy were tried in ecclesiastical courts even when they were careful not to commit any heresy. My own research shows that the Mexican Inquisition acknowledged that it did not have jurisdiction over unnatural sexual acts per se, but that such acts were sometimes (though not always) coupled with heretical statements.[24] This partially refutes Jorge

Bracamonte Allaín's claims that the colonial period was characterized by a prolonged jurisdictional dispute between the church and the state over the control of "deviant" practices like sodomy, bestiality, prostitution, and incest.[25]

The fact that sodomy fell under various jurisdictions in the whole of the Spanish empire did create some confusion in New Spain. It wasn't uncommon for laypersons and even ecclesiastical authorities, at times, to incorrectly treat the crime as a religious one to be denounced to and prosecuted by the Holy Office. Sometimes improper imprisonment by ecclesiastical authorities led to heated debates about the nature of the crime and the Inquisition's jurisdiction over it. A 1691 sodomy Inquisition case from Mérida, Mexico, against Juan Ramírez, a *mulato* man, and Andrés Chan, an indigenous man, for example, gave rise to an extended debate among ecclesiastical officials as to whether or not sodomy fell under the jurisdiction of the Church.[26] Some asserted that sodomy was in fact *mixti fori*—a crime that could be punished by either a secular or an ecclesiastical court, depending on which commenced action first. The inquisitor don Nicolás de Salazar finally decided that this case of sodomy did not meet the conditions that would make it fall under the Inquisition's jurisdiction in New Spain: it had neither occurred in the confessional nor been accompanied by heretical statements. Accordingly, he ordered the prisoners to be handed over to secular authorities for trial (though no records of this criminal case have been located in the archives).[27] In theory, priests and inquisitors in New Spain were to ignore complaints of sodomy inasmuch as they did not involve heresy, blasphemy, or another cleric. It was hard to eradicate the popular associations between sodomy and heresy, however, and though such connections were theologically erroneous, they were common among laypersons and priests alike.

The reasons behind dividing this book into two parts—"Unnatural Heresies" and "Unnatural Crimes"—reflect the competing jurisdictions where cases were tried according to a standard in which Nature figured centrally in determining the boundaries of heterodox bodies, desires, and devotions. Part 2 therefore focuses on the treatment of cases of sodomy, bestiality, incest, and autoerotic exploration by legal codes, local secular courts, and personal writings throughout colonial Latin America. While most of the authors in part 2 employ criminal cases as their data base, Martín Bowen Silva opens the section with an exceedingly rare historical document: the late-eighteenth-century unpublished writing of José Ignacio Eyzaguirre, *Confesión generalísima,* discovered in Chile's national archive. The author of the "General Confession" was a young member of the Chilean elite who between 1799 and 1804 assiduously recorded a list of his sins in order to make a complete general confession, thereby organizing and cataloguing his own experimentations with his body and with the bodies of others. Eyzaguirre's format was determined by the Catholic practice of confessing one's innermost sins and desires, which could simultaneously produce pleasure and shame; in this way he created a fascinating record of personal sins and deeds that built upon his own

knowledge of the body. In defiance of the natural/unnatural binary, for Eyzaguirre it appears to have been both "normal" and "natural" for teenage students to engage in corporeal experimentation such as masturbation, touching other boys, and inserting one's fingers into one's own anus. If we were to go by official theological and legal discourse, all these acts would be "against nature" and even criminal. Bowen Silva's essay therefore points to a productive tension between values and meanings in the popular understandings and categorizations of the body and official discourse on the body. By choosing to model this record on the confession, Eyzaguirre appropriates a discursive form in which "natural" and "unnatural" desires figure largely; but, he never articulates them as such, and his testimony actually calls both categories into question in subtle ways.

While the historiography of sodomy and "homosexuality" in the Iberian Atlantic world has grown considerably in recent decades, historians have tended to privilege male sexuality in their researches, in part due to the greater availability of archival documentation. Chad Black's fascinating essay on two late-eighteenth-century cases of female sodomy from colonial Quito expands our understanding of female intimacies in colonial Spanish America and adds to the growing historiography on female same-sex sexuality in the Iberian Atlantic world.[28] In contrast to the Portuguese empire, very few cases of female sodomy have turned up in the Spanish American historical archives; thus, Black's chapter provides an important corrective to the near-exclusive focus on sodomy as a crime among men. He shows how two different pairs of women in Bourbon Quito came to be embroiled in the colonial criminal justice system for the unnatural (and largely invisible) crime of female sodomy, despite the absence of definitive proof that penetration had taken place. As sodomy was technically (and phallocentrically) defined through the act of penetration—with either a penis or an instrument—officials were more inclined to investigate men than women. Black's elucidation of these two cases shows how the authorities, in rare instances, dealt with women based on circumstantial evidence they believed demonstrated moral depravity and inversions of "natural" gendered behavior. Black argues that the central tension in these unique cases is between judicial interpretations of certain behaviors as "unnatural" and the defendants' own interpretations of them as customary and normal, including such things as publicly drinking alcohol, gambling, or sharing a bed with a member of the same sex. Despite the fact that courts acquitted all four women of the specific charge of sodomy, the women were nonetheless punished for such "excesses" as upending acceptable gender norms and marital obligations.

Fernanda Molina's essay provides a deep reading of debates about sodomy, gender identity, and the "juridical subject" (to use Foucault's term) in colonial Peru, providing us with an interesting counterpoint to the cases discussed in the previous chapters. Molina is less interested in the penalties meted out to male sodomites in the viceroyalty of Peru than in the way the testimony of the men who

engaged in sex with other men shows how they construed their activity, always conscious of the dangers of being publicly exposed. Molina's analysis of the everyday lived realities of "sodomites" in colonial Peru deflates the notion that sodomy was understood in everyday life simply (or even primarily) as an act "against nature." Rather, the criminal and ecclesiastical cases she examines are enacted against a complex world of public male same-sex affection and occasional long-term cohabitation. Instead of framing sodomy as an act of immediate sexual satisfaction, Molina emphasizes the affective dynamic of many sodomitical relationships, finding ample evidence of public and private manifestations of "hugs, kisses, and amorous words" that were exchanged between men, which in many ways mimicked the courtship practices and sexual economies of women and men in colonial society. In the popular and legal spheres, these physical, verbal, and affective signs of sodomy deprivileged the moment of penetration as the defining characteristic of "sodomy." This essay ultimately challenges us to reconsider the affective and quotidian contexts through which sodomy was read and conceptualized at all levels of society.

The final two essays of this volume—on incest and bestiality, respectively—extend their analyses to topics that merit serious consideration because of the ways they rupture the natural/unnatural binary. The first of these topics, incest, has been discussed amply in the historiographical literature, but rarely with an eye toward the "unnatural" potential of the act. Bestiality, in contrast, has largely escaped the purview of historians of colonial Latin America, despite the fact that criminal, state, and municipal archives throughout Latin America hold hundreds (if not thousands) of archival documents attesting to the ubiquity of bestiality in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, especially in rural communities. In the book's penultimate chapter, Lee M. Penyak shows that despite the fact that incest is almost always excluded from the classification "sin against nature" in the juridico-theological discourse, this stance was far from universally accepted in late-colonial Mexico. The 1817 *Diccionario de la lengua castellana,* for example, makes clear that incest—"a carnal sin committed by relatives within prohibited degrees"—occasionally received the designation *"contra natura."* Penyak traces the varied approaches taken by the authorities faced with accusations or confessions of incest in a corpus of seventy-four criminal and ecclesiastical incest trials from central Mexico. Authorities typically considered incest to be unacceptable only when committed by close relatives or when extreme violence was involved. But they generally considered incest acceptable when cousins sought to marry their social equals. Thus, the crime of incest approximated the unnatural only in cases of father-daughter or brother-sister relations. Even there, however, it only rarely received the official designation, being treated with relative latitude. In essence, the unnaturalness of incest could be mitigated by a variety of social factors, including degree of consanguinity, social class, race, age, and the presence or lack of

coercion and violence, which made it distinct from such "sins against nature" as sodomy and bestiality. Penyak's scholarship here complements his previous and ongoing work on criminalized and "deviant" sexuality, homosexuality, and rape, showing that we must attempt to understand these crimes in conjunction with one another rather than in isolation.[29]

The volume concludes with an important essay on bestiality in late colonial and early national Mexico by Mexican historian Mílada Bazant. On the scale of the unnatural, theological discourse framed bestiality, perhaps even more so than sodomy or cannibalism, as the epitome of that which contravened "natural law." Yet surprisingly, there are few serious studies of the topic in the historiographical literature. In *Confronting Animal Abuse: Law, Criminology, and Human-Animal Relationships,* Piers Beirne opines that scholars often treat bestiality as a "disturbing form of sexual practice that invites hurried bewilderment rather than sustained intellectual inquiry."[30] This pattern is certainly seen in the historiography of colonial Latin America. That said, the crime itself was not uncommon, and as Bazant shows in her chapter, the largely adolescent male perpetrators of bestiality were multiethnic and came from all social backgrounds. Importantly, we see how lawyers, witnesses, and judges regularly employed colonial stereotypes and the tropes of indigenous "rusticity" and "simplicity" to make legal sense of the crime, in some cases going so far as to make excuses for the accused even when the suspect was not indigenous. Bazant's historical examination of bestiality ultimately expands our understanding of the religious, legal, and cultural implications of the "sins against nature," specifically in relation to the fluid human-animal boundary in the Iberian Atlantic world. This final chapter also serves as an important reminder to scholars and historians that even those sexual acts and desires that do not fit comfortably into contemporary political agendas (such as championing the history of homosexuality) are historically significant, especially when tracing the broader contours of the period's understanding of Nature.

In the late 1980s and '90s, scholars of colonial Latin America were greatly influenced by feminist theory, and some of the hallmark books from this time period focused on gender in everyday life and on policing female sexuality. Just slightly later, inspired by Foucault, queer theory, and the advent of gay and lesbian history in other regions of the world, historians of colonial Latin America began to research and write on such topics for early modern Spain and Portugal, New Spain, colonial Brazil, and eventually other regions of colonial Latin America. In order to reflect on their own contributions to the field, and on important shifts and developments since their earlier works were published, this anthology is bookended by a pair of incisive essays by two leading scholars in the field: a foreword by Asunción Lavrin and a coda by Pete Sigal. It has been nearly three decades since Lavrin published her fundamental anthology *Sexuality and Marriage in Colonial Latin America* in 1989, which brought scholars together (in English) for the first time to debate and

publish their findings on topics that included witchcraft, confession, marriage, divorce, adultery, concubinage, childbirth, and illegitimacy. Similarly, it has been nearly fifteen years since Sigal published his anthology *Infamous Desire: Male Homosexuality in Colonial Latin America,* which became a landmark in the growing field of historical inquiry into the realm of gender, (homo)sexuality, and colonialism. The brief reflective essays by Lavrin and Sigal help to situate the chapters in this edited volume within the theoretical, methodological, and historiographical shifts in colonial Latin American studies on gender and sexuality.

This anthology does not claim to be a definitive account of sexuality and the unnatural in colonial Latin America, but rather a starting point that may encourage other researchers to pose comparable questions, debate, and explore those bodies and sexualities that might otherwise be relegated to the margins of historical inquiry. Although the essays in this volume are thematically, geographically, and chronologically diverse, not all topics that approximate the unnatural could be covered. The topic of corporeal ambiguity and hermaphroditism in the early modern Iberian world, so skillfully treated by François Soyer in his *Ambiguous Gender in Early Modern Spain and Portugal* and by María Elena Martínez in her recent "Archives, Bodies, and Imagination," for example, is one such underrepresented topic.[31] Given that the majority of the chapters focus on same-sex sexuality, this book is perhaps unavoidably reflective of the dominant current of historiography on sodomy and "homosexuality" in the Iberian Atlantic world. Yet the goal is not merely to fill in the missing gaps of the historiography of sexuality, but rather to take seriously (and sometimes dispute) the salience of the "unnatural" within the everyday lives and realities, administration of justice, and gendered performances in colonial Latin America. The collection weaves together historiographical debates, microhistorical case studies, and macrohistorical analyses to trace the meanings of sex and gender, Nature and the unnatural, in the early modern Iberian Atlantic world.

Ultimately, this anthology explores the diverse legal and theological ends to which the concept of "Nature" has been put in early modern Spain, Portugal, and their respective colonies throughout Latin America, showing how some salient binary distinctions—male and female, human and animal, private and public, and the like—have been mapped onto the natural/unnatural trope. If, as proposed by the Church and colonial authorities, human sexuality ultimately exists for the purpose of procreation, then Nature's "other" could be *any* disordered desire or corporeal act that posed a threat to the putatively natural order of things, including the institutions of marriage and the family, gendered and racial hierarchies, and colonialism itself. Collectively, these chapters propose that Nature was conceptually complicit in the creation and proliferation of "unnatural" bodies, desires, and devotions in early Latin America. Nature, in other words, could not be cleanly closed off on itself as a coherent category as long as it represented both *physis* and

a putative moral order. As the chapters here show, the boundaries of the "natural" were contested by all segments of society. As Pete Sigal has aptly asserted, "One cannot understand the cultural, political, and social history of early Latin America without studying the ways in which sexual acts and desires were created, manipulated, and altered."[32] Indeed, this anthology does much to advance this project of historically tracing the contours of "Nature" and of "unnatural" sexual acts and desires. In so doing, it necessarily delineates the boundaries of those bodies, acts, and desires that theological discourse and legal treatises deemed "against nature." Such things as the sixteenth-century notion of the "manly woman" and the "womanly man," with their supposedly monstrous bodies and wayward gendered identities, were, according to Alonso López de Hinojosos, set in motion by Nature itself—and thus exemplified Nature's potential to devolve into its "other," but always in a way that simultaneously embodied both the natural and the unnatural. "Nature" *(naturaleza),* "nature" *(natura),* and the "unnatural" *(contra natura)* suffer a certain collapse under the weight of their own semantic internal contradictions, even as these categories continued to hold authority in the juridical and theological realms of colonial Latin America or the wider Iberian Atlantic world, from the past to the present.

NOTES

I am extremely grateful to Lee M. Penyak, Roger Gathman, Martin Nesvig, and anonymous readers for their valuable questions, comments, and suggestions. I am also thankful to Kate Marshall of the University of California Press for her support and enthusiasm for this project.

1. Alonso López de Hinojosos, *Summa y recopilación de cirugía, con un arte para sangrar, y examen de barberos* (Mexico City: 1595), 168v: "Es la primera tunica que ordeno naturaleza para muchas cosas: la vna para q[ue] no se apartasen estas simientes, por que de cada migajita destas simientes, se criaria vn niño, o vn monstruo." This edition of the treatise is housed at John Carter Brown Library, Brown University, Providence, R.I.; I am grateful to Yarí Pérez Marín for her help and generosity in bringing this reference to my attention.

2. Ibid., 169r: "El higado embia venas y sangre nutritiua al coraçon y al celebro, y el celebro embia neruios al higado y al coraçon, y el coraçon embia sangre spirituosa, a los de mas miembros, y asi cada vno comunica al otro su virtud, y se va formando el niño, y si a los treinta dias tiene calor bastante y las demas disposiciones necesarias, ynfunde Dios el anima, y es hombre; y si le falta vn grado de calor sale muger y hombruda que abla como hombre, y tiene condiciones de hombre, y si ay falta de calor, pasa a los sesenta dias; y si al tiempo del animar, sube vn grado de calor, se haze hombre, y es hombre amarionado, que habla como muger." Readers should note that the authors of this anthology have opted not to modernize Spanish orthography in order to preserve the original linguistic sense of the documents. Thus, in many cases when the Spanish appears to be in the first person (such as *solicito*), it is actually in the third person when read within the context of the archival document (modernized orthography would be *solicitó,* or "he solicited").

3. Jonathan Goldberg notes that *amarionado* is one of the complicated and largely untranslatable terms of the early modern Hispanic vocabulary: "The stumbling block is, of course, the word *amarionado,* the antecedent of modern Spanish *amaricado* and the related *marica* and *maricon,* slurs on homosexuality the equivalent of 'queer,' 'pansy,' and 'sissy.' The term does not mean a man who has

'become' a woman through castration or even necessarily through gender-crossing behavior." Jonathan Goldberg, *Sodometries: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 285.

4. Judith C. Brown, *Immodest Acts: The Life of a Lesbian Nun in Renaissance Italy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 15.

5. Quoted in Mark Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 146. See also Brown, *Immodest Acts,* 7.

6. Asunción Lavrin, "Sexuality in Colonial Mexico," in *Sexuality and Marriage in Colonial Latin America,* ed. Asunción Lavrin (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989), 51.

7. Ibid.

8. For more human and animal sexuality in medieval theological discourse, see Leah DeVun, "Animal Appetites," *GLQ: A Journal of Gay and Lesbian Studies* 20, no. 4 (2014): 461–90.

9. Lorraine Daston and Fernando Vidal, eds., *The Moral Authority of Nature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 4.

10. Quoted in Kenneth Mills and William B. Taylor, *Colonial Spanish America: A Documentary History* (Wilmington, Del.: SR Books, 1998), 55.

11. Real Academia, *Diccionario de la lengua castellana* (Madrid: Real Academia, 1726), 419.

12. Ibid.

13. Ann Twinam, *Public Lives, Private Secrets: Gender, Honor, Sexuality, and Illegitimacy in Colonial Spanish America* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

14. Helmut Puff, "Nature on Trial: Acts 'Against Nature' in the Law Courts of Early Modern Germany and Switzerland," in Daston and Vidal (eds.), *Moral Authority of Nature,* 239.

15. Nora E. Jaffary, *False Mystics: Deviant Orthodoxy in Colonial Mexico* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004); Nora E. Jaffary, "Reconceiving Motherhood: Infanticide and Abortion in Colonial Mexico," *Journal of Family History* 37, no. 1 (2012): 3–22; and Nora E. Jaffary, "Monstrous Births and Creole Patriotism in Late Colonial Mexico," *The Americas* 68, no. 2 (2011): 179–207.

16. www.ggb.org.br/ggb-ingles.html.

17. See, for example, the following works on Spain: Rafael Carrasco, *Inquisición y represión sexual en Valencia. Historia de los sodomitas (1565–1785)* (Barcelona: Laertes S.A. de Ediciones, 1985); William E. Monter, "Sodomy: The Fateful Accident," in *History of Homosexuality in Europe and America,* ed. Wayne R. Dynes and Stephen Donaldson (New York: Routledge, 1992); and Mary Elizabeth Perry, "The 'Nefarious Sin' in Early Modern Seville," in *The Pursuit of Sodomy: Male Homosexuality in Renaissance and Enlightenment Europe,* ed. Kent Gerard and Gert Hekma (New York: Harrington Park Press, 1989).

18. Federico Garza Carvajal, *Butterflies Will Burn: Prosecuting Sodomites in Early Modern Spain and Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), 71.

19. Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, *Christianity and Sexuality in the Early Modern World: Regulating Desire, Reforming Practice* (New York: Taylor & Francis, 1999), 126.

20. Carrasco, *Inquisición y represión sexual en Valencia,* 11.

21. Monter, "Sodomy: The Fateful Accident," 296.

22. Garza Carvajal, *Butterflies Will Burn,* 71.

23. Monter, "Sodomy: The Fateful Accident," 287.

24. See Zeb Tortorici, *Sins against Nature: Sex and Archives in Colonial New Spain, 1530–1821* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, forthcoming).

25. Jorge Bracamonte Allaín, "Los nefandos placeres de la carne: La iglesia y el estado frente a la sodomía en la Nueva España, 1721–1820," *Debate Feminista* 18 (1998): 393–415, on 393.

26. Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico [hereafter cited as AGN], Inquisición 498, exp. 16, fols. 160–85.

27. AGN, Inquisición 498, exp. 16, fol. 175.

28. For other work on female sodomy, see Ligia Bellini, *A coisa obscura. Mulher, sodomia e Inquisição no Brasil colonial* (Editora Brasiliense, 1989); Ursula Camba Ludlow, "Gregoria la Macho y su 'inclinación a las mujeres': Reflecciones en torno a la sexualidad marginal en Nueva España, 1796–1806," *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 12, no. 4 (2003): 479–97; Jacqueline Holler, "'More Sins than the Queen of England': Marina de San Miguel before the Mexican Inquisition," in *Women in the Inquisition: Spain and the New World,* ed. Mary E. Giles (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1999); Stephanie Kirk, *Convent Life in Colonial Mexico: A Tale of Two Communities* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2007); and Sherry Velasco, *Lesbians in Early Modern Spain* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2011).

29. See, for example, Lee M. Penyak, "Midwives and Legal Medicine in México, 1740–1846," *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education* 1 (2002): 251–66; Lee M. Penyak, "Obstetrics and the Emergence of Women in Mexico's Medical Establishment," *The Americas* 60 (2003): 59–85; and Lee M. Penyak, "Temporary Transgressions, Unspeakable Acts: Male Sodomy in Late-Colonial Mexico, 1744–1843," *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 17, no. 4 (2008): 329–59. For more on why sodomy and rape should be analyzed in conjunction with one another, see Zeb Tortorici, "Sexual Violence, Predatory Masculinity, and Medical Testimony in New Spain," *Osiris* 30, no. 1 (2015): 272–94.

30. Piers Beirne, *Confronting Animal Abuse: Law, Criminology, and Human-Animal Relationships* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), 113.

31. François Soyer, *Ambiguous Gender in Early Modern Spain and Portugal* (Leiden: Brill, 2012); and María Elena Martínez, "Archives, Bodies, and Imagination: The Case of Juana Aguilar and Queer Approaches to History, Sexuality, and Politics," *Radical History Review* 120 (2014): 159–82.

32. Pete Sigal, "(Homo)Sexual Desire and Masculine Power in Colonial Latin America: Notes toward an Integrated Analysis," in *Infamous Desire: Male Homosexuality in Colonial Latin America,* ed. Pete Sigal (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 3.