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VIR. Perceptions of Manliness in Andalucia and Mexico 1561-1699

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Epilogue: He Died of a Broken Heart

This study of SoS represents an attempt to demonstrate how perceptions-prosecutions of sodomites were intertwined with notions of early modern Spanish manliness, a historical phenomenon inextricably linked to cultural shifts --religious, political, economic-- in Spain-New Spain's evolving imperialist-colonialist formation. The first royal decree on sodomy of the colonial epoch issued in 1497 marked a rupture with the libertinism afforded sodomitical practices in the peninsula in previous decades. This decree and the subsequent royal edicts on sodomy complemented other historical occurrences such as the reconquest of the Spanish peninsula from the infidel Moors, the exile of Jews, and the discovery of *America Septentrionalis* in 1492-- all ruptures that signaled the emergence of Spain's new imperial politics.

For Todorov, 1492 marked the start of Europe's attempt to assimilate the 'other' --the other in one's self, the otherness of groups within the society in which we live to which we do not belong, the otherness of those who are external to us, the other in terms of language, customs-- in short, an attempt to deprive the other of its exteriority and alterity. Todorov sensed a correlation between the violent denial of the exterior other in *América* and the discovery of an inner other within European society and within the European individual. The discovery of *América* symbolized the most astonishing, most intense and most genocidal discovery in the history of human exploration.¹

But even before its discovery, observed Mason and Siegel, *América* already had a place in the European imaginary. The Europeans thought they knew *América* without having discovered all the territories outside Europe, Asia and Africa. The myth of the Golden Age, Atlantis, the travels of Marco Polo had all prepared the ground for an encounter with the New World for Europe had already familiarized itself with the *new*. The year 1492, wrote O'Gorman also represented the 'invention' of *América*, the descriptions of a continent and its inhabitants defined by Spanish customs and laws.²

Colombus initiated the fictionalisation of the *Indias* based on these earlier models of the exuberant and the unknown attributed to the other.

Mid-sixteenth century humanists like Campanella who championed a Spanish Universal Monarchy to defend Christendom or Vitoria who described the *Indios* as barbarians, provided Spain with many of its underpinnings in support of Empire described as 'just causes' for colonial domination. This dichotomy between invention and 'reality' manifested itself in the ideological debates over the *Indios* and their sense of reason, their sexual appetites, as illustrated in the subsequent writings of Spanish sycophants like, Ginés de Sepúlveda, Bartolomé de las Casas, López de Gómara or those self-fashioned moralists who associated themselves with the Second Scholastic.³

In the words of Siegel, the Spanish Scholastic "loathed the unknown and culturally different, which it sometimes described as savage, monstrous, even *contra natura*"; this spearheaded the peninsula's attempt to reconfigure its culture(s). Adorno has identified notions of cowardice and effeminacy as two other historical formations of that Scholastic vision given the 'submissiveness' or 'docility' of *Indios* and the relative ease with which the Spaniards conquered extensive territories in the *Indias*.⁴

The Spaniards' effeminisation of the colonial subject, of the sodomite, "displaced and idealised their subjection". This "enslavement or subjugation" of the *Indios*, of the sodomites, in effect, reduced their relationship with the centre to that of a tutor-pupil status. If, in the peninsula, the early modern moralists fully expected the *perfect woman* to be discrete, obedient, subjected to the will of her husband, the *Indio*, and the 'effeminate' sodomites --both considered as analogies to women-- should have assumed their positions of submission justified by their own spiritual and manly immaturities.⁵

Early modern moralists sexualised 'reason' as a manly attribute and relegated emotion or passion as womanly functions, a point brilliantly argued by the chivalrous Alonso Díaz as he tossed a Frenchman into the sea. Díaz, enroute to Rome to explain his 'new' gender role before the Pope, berated the mariner for having allowed his 'emotions' to overcome him in their discussion of *Hispano-Franco* politics. Any early modern notions of manliness, of *sodomie* or of *sodomitas* in Spain-New Spain had a solid Spanish-European point of reference.

This study has focused on the 'textual' construction of *sodomie* as a figure of discourse much as in the case of *América* or *Indios*. As part of its imperial politics, SoS reinforced perceptions of manliness, of *sodomie* and of 'effeminate' sodomites in the viceroyalty. The texts written by the early modern moralists in the peninsula and in the viceroyalty had both a practical and ideological end for in many ways they idealized a manly and an effeminate aesthetics. Their impetus formed a fragmentation, a re-

definition, an annihilation of other cultural identities or a yearning to actually define early modern Spain·New Spain and promulgate its ideology in relation to notions of manliness.⁶

If under the tutelage of Isabel and Fernando, Spanish society had endured times of sexual restraint, the power of the flesh had given sway under the reign of Felipe IV (1605-1665) when 'moral corruption' in early modern Spain reached its apogee or so thought the early modern moralists.⁷ Actually, Spain·New Spain's polarized subjects had contested and mediated colonial structures of power throughout the early modern period. Perceptions of *sodomie*, of *sodomitas* differed and changed in context both in the peninsula and in the viceroyalty during the early modern period.

In the cases prosecuted in the peninsula, magistrates and writers alike focused primarily on the sexual object of desire--another boy, another man or, on erotic style-- penetration of the arse or the wasteful spillage of semen in their efforts to codify sodomitical acts as a crime and a sin. These officials associated sodomitical practises as an inherent commodity of 'foreigners' something far removed from their chivalrous construct of *Vir* in the early modern period. Despite the violent descriptions of sodomites, the early modern archival manuscripts also revealed that often times, both in the peninsula and in the viceroyalty, men or boys of similar ages engaged each other in sodomitical play. There was no predetermined schema for the 'actor' or 'patient' as a function of age. The notion of power and other hierarchical formations in Spain·New Spain influenced same-sex relations between men or women. Young mariners on board ships traveling to and from the *Indias* often suffered abuse at the hands of their superiors, men who commonly engaged in sodomitical practices, a point poignantly elaborated by Caminha's *Bom-Crioulo*.⁸

By the mid-seventeenth century, writers in support of the Spanish Empire fabricated new perceptions of sodomy to reflect Spain's growing colonial ambitions. Early modern writers inextricably associated sodomy in *Hispania Nova* to notions of anthropophagy, human sacrifices and effeminacy. Although notions of sodomy and effeminacy lingered in the minds of some peninsular writers like De León, moralists and other writers in Spain, nonetheless, tended to associate sodomitical practices with the favoured 'manly' or 'virile' fellows rather than with 'effeminate' sodomite-- an object of colonial derision. The peninsular focus on 'effeminacy' to distinguish the Mexico City sodomite from the sexually 'virile' peninsular sodomite exposed the contradictions of a discourse that attempted to link sodomitical practices with a distinct homosocial personality defined in terms of "effeminacy and lack of manly virility".⁹

The presence of 'effeminate' sodomites in seventeenth century México also signaled a category crisis and caused colonial officials to experience cultural anxiety. '*Cotita and la Estanpa* as "symbols of overdetermination became mechanisms of displacement for they deconstructed the binary pole of male-female" and in the process put in doubt the national bipolar/power relations of early modern Spain in relation to New Spain.¹⁰

So-called self-identified 'effeminate' sodomites such as '*Cotita and la Estanpa* in the metropole of 1658 México might have represented an attempt at self reflection, a search for the self outside the prescribed social order. They and their group of comrades could have represented a 'transgression of hierarchy' between the colonial subject and the coloniser or what Siegel described as the colonial subjects' "ambiguity of cultural agency". '*Cotita* or the sodomites prosecuted in Andalucía constantly negotiated or re-articulated their cultural space. In the process of their articulation, they sometimes incorporated the discourse of the coloniser, appropriated it, imitated it, accepted it, and negated it, sometimes simultaneously.

The self-perception of effeminacy or this self-appropriated emasculation represented by '*Cotita and la Estanpa* facilitated a challenge, however limited and contradictory, to the dominance of Spain's colonial politics. On the other hand, to have perceive oneself from the Spanish perspective of effeminacy implied from the "inception a devaluation" of the periphery from the centre.¹¹ The anomalies in gender politics and the cross-dressed *Mestizas*' struggle for legitimacy in early modern México also revealed what Chatterjee has labeled the "paradox of the subalternity" or that the self-perception of effeminacy is itself an expression of "hegemonic aspiration" or "access to imperial and religious forms of power in early modern society".¹²

The 'perfect Spanish' *Vir* envisioned by the early modern moralists and the 'effeminate sodomite' drawn as impotent by many colonial manuscripts functioned in different, often contradictory historical contexts, but also as part of the same historical process--the changes of Spain-New Spain's "global political economy". Contextualizing historical formations such as early modern Spanish manliness or perceptions-prosecutions of sodomites within this more 'global' category of analysis has allowed one to go beyond, what Sinha has identified as more 'reductive choices' proposed in political critiques concerned with isolated aspects of social relations.¹³ Furthermore, the recasting of these political formations within a broader paradigm also refines the historiography on Spain-New Spain by shedding light on their own interaction in an age of imperialism.

As the early modern period aged, Spain-New Spain functioned as one colonial space and not as discrete entities, culturally independent of each other. Thus, I situated my discussion of sodomy prosecutions within the

imperial sphere and not solely within the categories of 'gender' or 'nation'. I sought not to *ghettoise* the historicity of early modern Spanish sodomy prosecutions, thereby pointing to the inadequacy of either 'feminist, gay or anti-colonial politics in isolation. Constructions of colonial manliness have disrupted any staid notions based on differentiation between gender identity and sex difference.

Imperialist-colonialist politics have demonstrated that perceptions of manliness had as much to do with racial, class, religious and national differences as with sex difference.¹⁴ In this sense, I have turned to Hennessy's materialist-feminist analysis as the basis for rethinking the nature of feminist critique as one that recognises the "imbrication of gender in a variety of different axes of power--to one that does not proceed from a priority given to gender and expanded to include other social relations".¹⁵

Recent feminist scholarship has ventured beyond an exclusive analysis of any given 'sex-gender system' to interrogate other issues and categories rather than simply focusing on the history of 'women and sexuality'. Scott has defined gender as a 'useful category' of historical analysis for it was an important axis along which colonial power was constructed, and that, at the same time, the category of gender itself was never distinct from national, class or ethnic categories.¹⁶ Sangari, Vaid, Bem have further argued that 'western' societies and cultures, throughout different modernizing epochs, have gendered all aspects of 'reality', thus gender should function as a 'useful' category of historical inquiry. However, since other categories of analysis-- class, ethnicity, or religion-- skewed the experience of gender, an exclusive focus on gender can never be adequate for a feminist historiography or for explaining the many ways in which (colonial) societies constructed and represented relations of power.¹⁷

The sodomy narratives discussed in the previous chapters devoted to perceptions of sodomy and its intersection with notions of ethnicity or xenophobia provided some examples of how these categories complicated the politics of imperialism and its intersection with notions of gender. Even so, I have attempted not to privilege gender or any one of the other categories of analysis over another in my attempt to interrogate Spain's nurtured constructs of *sodomie* or 'effeminate' sodomites. The different cases discussed above revealed the multiple 'mechanisms of control' adhered to by the Spanish State to disseminate its notion of 'manliness' in early modern Spain-New Spain. Whereas my discussion of Bartholomé-Juan Mule highlighted xenophobic politics as an important context for early modern notions of 'manliness', the Mexican narratives exposed gender identities or the role of class and ethnic identity as the important contexts for understanding notions of colonial 'manliness'.

A contextualized study of the interaction between a 'manly Spaniard', sodomy or 'effeminate' sodomites has demonstrated that metropolitan and colonial histories are both often constituted by the history of imperialism. Perceptions of 'manliness' and by extension prosecution of sodomites are best understood in relation to one another or as constitutive of each other and not from the framework of discrete 'national' cultures. My focus on notions of 'manliness' as the site for understanding the organisation of power in Spain·New Spain attempted a fuller understanding of the "multiplicities of political, economic and ideological domination and subordination in a colonial setting".¹⁸ By extending the "exclusive national frame of reference to recognise its location in a larger imperial social formation", this focus hopes to refine more traditional historical writings on gender in Latin America.

The recent gender historiography on Spain·New Spain has demonstrated a hesitancy to reconceptualize definitions of early modern 'manliness' within the context of Spain's imperial formation as evident in Molloy and Irwin's *Hispanisms and Homosexualities* or in Twinam's *Public Lives, Private Secrets*.¹⁹ This refusal to contextualize issues of gender within the broader category of imperialism·colonialism has limited the otherwise pioneering works of Gruzinski's "Las cenizas del deseo", Trexler's *Sex and Conquest* and Lavrin's study on sexuality in 'colonial Mexico' because of their predominately 'indigenous' or 'peninsular' frames of references, traditions which have dehistoricized differences of gender cultures in early modern Spain·New Spain.²⁰ Murry's totalising narrative, *Latin American Male Homosexualities* further distorted ethnocentric paradigms.²¹ Unlike these works, *Vir* encompassed a broader historical specificity of colonial 'manliness'—rather than making broad historical generalizations about the gendering of the Indias as 'female' or about the 'feminisation' of the 'colonised' based on inadequate reading of sources. Thus, *Vir* more adequately discussed the historical events that produced the 'effeminate' sodomite and rejected any line of continuity between *Popol Vuh* and early modern New Spain to help explain away gender formations.

The transformation of *sodomie* perceptions occurred as the Spanish State sought to institute a new society neatly categorized along imperialist, ethnic, and sexual boundaries. One commonly held assumption of colonial Latin American society is that post-Conquest institutions and values crystallized at the end of the sixteenth century and remained stable until the middle of the eighteenth century, a period often referred to as the "mature colonial period" or the "baroque era."²² The institutions of social control and cultural values of colonial Spanish society both altered significantly during the seventeenth century.

In an effort to interrogate the characteristics of *SoS*, its colonial cultural production—or what Adorno has described as the "de-literalisation" of these narratives—and an analysis of the discursive elements contained therein, I have incorporated texts from Spain and from New Spain to exemplify the various constructs of *sodomie* generated by the moralists and the necessity to erase categories of the nation or the peninsula.²³ The 'privileged protagonists' who spearheaded Spain's early modern cultural production sought to "reinvent their core at the expense of marginal others". Subaltern figures like Catalina de Erauso-Alonso Díaz might have used the "autobiographical genre to subvert the social order, to validate their way of life, and to configure collective identities with access to discursive power", they nonetheless subscribed to notions of the hegemonic in colonial society or access to imperial and religious forms of power.²⁴

After his departure from Spain in the mid-seventeenth century, Díaz again set sail for *Hispania Nova*. He returned to New Spain as a muleteer and assumed the new pseudonym Antonio de Erauso, a change granted with the permission of Pope Urbano VIII. In 1645, as Erauso meandered in and around Veracruz, with a "pack of mules and a couple of *negros* transporting textiles to different parts of México" Fray Nicolás de la Rentería spoke with *Don Antonio*. Antonio de Erauso "appeared to be about fifty years old with a good plight of a body, olive-skinned and with some little hairs in the form of a moustache". He "wore the apparel of men and carried a sword or type of dagger with silver trimming".²⁵

Antonio de Erauso eventually fell in love with a young lady he had transported between Veracruz and the metropole of México. The young lady's parents had entrusted Antonio with her care even though they understood that Erauso "dressed like a man". The passion Antonio fostered for the young girl caused him great distress and almost culminated in a duel with another gallant who eventually married the girl. In his challenge to the gallant, Erauso wrote,

"When persons of my fabric call upon others, their noble status assures them the correct treatment, my status has not exceeded the limits required of your lordship, it is inconceivable to prohibit me from calling upon your lordship in your home, furthermore, I am informed that if I walk upon your street you will have me killed. Although I am a woman, my valour impossible for you to conceive, I shall await you, alone, behind *San Diego* from one until six".²⁶

Fortunately for both gallants, a groups of influential men impeded the encounter.

In 1650, the muleteer from San Sebastián died a quiet death in Cuitlaxtala and in 1653 "the widow of Bernardo Calderon" commemorated

the heroics of Antonio de Erauso in a relation published in México. "If with just reason, the eternal memory and the perpetual recollection of the heroics and victories realized by illustrious men in the name of their King and their lord are worthy of remembrance", wrote the widow, one should "marvel at their victories assured by their noble blood and by their natural superiority, they merit distinctions and their fame soars". "But for a woman--by nature all so weak and with desperate dispositions--with the appearance of a man", concluded the widow, who had "laboured so long and so hard after performing many manly trades, dignant of the most valiant soldier, she not only merits recognition, but, more so admiration".²⁷

The subaltern like Antonio de Erauso or 'Cotita' might have contested SoS; but they nonetheless affirmed the state's discourse on early modern Spanish 'manliness'.

¹T. Todorov, *La conquista de América*.

²E. O'Gorman, *La invención de América*.

³P. Mason, *Deconstructing America*, p. 7. Siegel, "La autobiografía colonial", pp. 8-11.

⁴R. Adorno, "El sujeto colonial", pp. 55-68.

⁵R. Siegel, "La autobiografía colonial", p. 13.

⁶R. Siegel, "La autobiografía colonial", p. 15-18.

⁷J. Deleito y Pinuela, *La mala vida de la España de Felipe IV*.

⁸A. Caminha, *Bom-Crioulo*, pp. 48-49, 57.

⁹M. Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity*, p. 19.

¹⁰M. Garber, "The Occidental Tourist".

¹¹R. Siegel, "La autobiografía colonial", p. 8-14.

¹²P. Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments*. T. Sarkar, "The Hindu Wife". R. Siegel, "La autobiografía colonial", p. 13.

¹³M. Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity*, pp. 181-184.

¹⁴R. Hennessy, *Materialist Feminism*, p. 79. M. Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity*, pp. 183-84.

¹⁵R. Radhakrishnan, "Nationalism, Gender and Narrative", pp. 77-95.

¹⁶J. W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis".

¹⁷S. L. Bem, *The Lenses of Gender*.

¹⁸M. Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity*, p. 3.

¹⁹S. Molloy and R. M. Irwin, *Hispanisms and Homosexualities*. A. Twinam, *Public Lives, Private Secrets: Gender, Honor, Sexuality, and Illegitimacy in Colonial Spanish America*.

²⁰S. Gruzinski, "Las cenizas del deseo". R. Trexler, *Sex and Conquest*. A. Lavrin, "Sexuality in colonial Mexico".

²¹S. O. Murray, *Latin American Male Homosexualities*. The breadth of Murray's ability to transcend different cultures and historical junctures does raise many an eyebrow. See his, *Oceanic Homosexualities, Islamic Homosexualities*, and the much awaited and forthcoming *North American Homosexualities*.

²²P. Seed, *To Love, Honor, and Obey*.

²³R. Adorno, "El sujeto colonial", pp. 55-68.

²⁴Siegel, "La autobiografía colonial", vi-viii.

²⁵ BRAH. N° XXVIII A-70. 236vto.

²⁶ *Relación prodigiosa de las grandes hazañas y valerosos hechos, que vna muger hizo en quarenta años que sirvió a su Magestad en el Reyno de Chile, y en otros del Perú y Nueva España en ávito de soldado. Y los honrosos oficios militares que tubo, sin que fuesse conocida por muger, hasta que le fue fuerza el descubrirse.* México: Viuda de Bernardo Calderón, 1653 (BLAC, Colección Icazbalceta, N° JGI Varias relaciones: 1, 54a).

²⁷Tbid.