

# Aligning Bodies: Collecting, Arranging, and Describing Hatred for a Critical Queer Archives

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## Abstract

This conceptual paper frames *hatred* as an organizing principle— a central premise from which other materials by proximity derive classification, arrangement, and value— of LGBTQ archives and collections. Recognizing hatred as such points to the need to build queer and critical archives, and to develop archival practices that reflect the experiences and desires and meet the needs of LGBTQ individuals and communities. Examining the arrangement and description of hate mail and messages, archival collecting around hate crimes, and documenting and describing queer and trans self-hatred demonstrates that hatred is a useful lens for examining and deconstructing normative power and its affective circulations and structures. Naming hatred as an organizing principle is key to developing new queer and critical ways of thinking about how to be ethically and politically engaged on behalf of queer and other marginalized knowledge-formations and communities, and new ways of acting on those concepts in archival practice.

# Introduction

“So you are out there leading students, your sons and others to a lifestyle that leads to Hell. Does that make you feel good about yourself?”

“After viewing all of the publicity that has been given to you with regards to your *despicable* life style, I feel compelled to write this letter to you . . . why do you choose to disgrace and dishonor our proud uniform? *Have you no decency????????* . . . If you have chosen this *perfidious, malignant, vile* and *despicable* way of life, why do you feel that you must drag our uniform down to that/your level. Why don’t you and your kind just go back into the closet, and you can take Ms. Jewish, liberal (bagel eater) Streisand with y’all.”

“You are ‘*blood guilty*,’ for every person, especially for the vulnerable, young you influence by promoting lesbianism! . . . If you do not STOP—the consequences *will* absolutely come upon you, and your (so-called) partner. To some degree her life, her outcome is in your hands.”

“No wonder you served in silence, it goes along with the Bible-based reason for being ashamed, and shamed by Society. Good reason to be embarrassed. GOD OUR CREATOR wants you to be embarrassed. When you came to the point of NOT being ashamed and embarrassed, you breached THIS scenario.”

The excerpts above come from letters sent to Colonel Margarethe Cammermeyer following her very public coming out, subsequent challenge to her discharge from military service for being a lesbian, and the airing of the 1995 made-for-television movie of her memoir *Serving in Silence*. These letters, along with a promotional flier of Cammermeyer with her face crossed out in red pen and covered with the word “lesbo,” fill one small folder of her large collection at the June L. Mazer Lesbian Archives at UCLA.<sup>1</sup> In processing her papers, I made the decision to title the folder “Correspondence: Criticism. 1994–1998” while fully recognizing that the contents of the letters called for her to renounce and stop living life as a lesbian, for her to feel shame in her identity and choices, and for her to fear for her soul and the possibilities of a future of eternal damnation. This title reflects my decision not to expand the description to include more affectively charged language, such as “hate.” In trying to think in the ways I believed a professional archivist should, and by following the standards of dispassioned and distant archival description, I flattened and potentially hid forever

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<sup>1</sup> Letters to Margarethe Cammermeyer, 1994–1998, folder 3, box 47, Margarethe Cammermeyer Papers, Collection 2186, in UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library (hereafter MC Papers/UCLA).

deep in box 47 the powerful affects within the letters, as well as what they might have meant on an affective level to the records' creators and subjects, and their potential for users. Cammermeyer's decision to save and meticulously organize the letters sparked by hatred directed toward her and other queer persons into a separate specific folder and then to donate them to a lesbian community-based archives is significant. Her life, as well as her collection, is shaped by her alignment through affect (including negative ones) with other bodies, queer bodies. As my descriptive failure indicates, the stakes of acknowledging how hate mail and other manifestations of the affect of hatred emerge in small spurts and unexpected files in lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) archives and archival collections are high. Critiquing *hatred* as an organizing principle—a central premise from which other materials by proximity derive classification, arrangement, and value—of LGBT archives and collections opens the possibility of examining the extent to which institutions and collections have been shaped and reshaped by it. Naming *affect* is necessary to fully consider the content, focus, and implications of placing records of hate in conjunction with other artifacts in the file.

To develop the critical productivity of hatred, I draw on affect theory—the interdisciplinary corpus of literature developed since the 1990s through humanistic inquiries into affect, feeling, and emotion by scholars across the humanities and social sciences. There is no standard definition of *affect*; however, its theorists commonly agree that it is a force that creates a relationship (conscious or otherwise) between a body and the world (Gregg & Seigworth, 2010, p. 1). As I utilize it, affect is a category that both encompasses and reaches beyond feelings and emotions. *Emotion* is used to name that feeling that is given function and meaning and is closely tied to action. In contrast, affect is a less formed, structured, and fixed force that nonetheless shares many of the qualities of emotion (Ngai, 2005, p. 26–27). Affect is deeply implicated in how people form social relationships, differences, identities, and subjectivities (Zembylas, 2007, p. 180), as well as how people share or deny resources (knowledge, power, agency). Queer persons, communities, and politics are formed in significant part through affects and therefore demand their consideration to fully and complexly document queer lives and experiences.

In *An Archive of Feelings*, a work that bridges affect and queer studies, Cvetkovich (2003) calls for “a radical archive of emotion” to document “intimacy, love, and activism,” areas of human experience fundamental to LGBT lives, practices, and histories, “that are difficult to chronicle through the materials of the traditional archive” (p. 241). While grounding her work in a number of community-based queer archives, Cvetkovich, like other theorists who draw together queer archives and affect in their work (for example, Love [2007]), has a more expansive definition of archives beyond conceptions of them as actually existing spaces and records. Cvetkovich and others invested in LGBT archives have emphasized the need for documenting positive affects associated with LGBT lives. Although hatred may seem a surprising choice of organizing emotion to illustrate the need for queer archives and queer archival practices that contain and are shaped by affects, its intensity and common and considerable presence make it a

strong candidate. Queer people need to reflect on our histories with hatred in order to recognize the ways in which they complexly inform our identities and conditions (Love, 2007, p. 17). Looking for hatred draws attention to the need for queer archives and archiving practices that are open to complex, contradictory affects. Queer theory, an interdisciplinary body of theoretical literature that emerged from the study of women, gender, and sexuality in the early 1990s, offers the tools to examine how hatred aligns queer bodies. In turn, this alignment informs the construction, organization, and impact of LGBT and queer identity-based archives and collections. *Queer* is an umbrella term for describing individuals and communities with nonnormative sexualities and/or gender identities and expressions. *Queer*, as deployed here, is also an open theoretical position that interrogates normativity (Sheffield & Barriault, 2009, p. 120). Following queer theoretical discourse that has shown that LGBT archives cannot safely be assumed to be already queer, I make a distinction here between *LGBT* archives and collections and *queer* archives and archival practices (Cooper, 2015). The distinctions between *LGBT* and *queer* also highlight the importance of the situatedness of archives as emerging from and remaining within the LGBT community, as moved from the community into mainstream institutions, or as formed about the LGBT community from within mainstream institutions.<sup>2</sup> This paper focuses on the application of these theoretical works on archives and issues of archival concern.

Naming *hatred* and acknowledging it as an organizing principle of LGBT archives points to the need to build queer and critical archives, and to develop archival practices that reflect the experiences and desires and meet the needs of LGBTQ individuals and communities. First, by examining hatred as developed in affect and queer theories, I show how these theoretical concepts align queer bodies. Second, I ground this conceptual work in an examination of arrangement and descriptive practices around hate mail and messages in LGBT archives and archival collections. This work shows how queer and critical arrangement and descriptive practices of hate materials can act as forms of “counterpower” (Simpson, 2004, p. 34), disrupting dominant and damaging power structures. Third, I explore mainstream archival institutions’ collecting around hate crimes against LGBT individuals, illustrating how such a collecting focus often reifies dominant power disparities in what and who is recorded in LGBT archives and collections. I also point to where queer archival practices, including participatory archiving, can intervene to direct attention and activism toward creating a more just world for LGBT persons. Finally, attention to self-hatred that is instilled from the outside but arises from within LGBT persons and communities as expressed in archival materials is used to examine further the complexities and ambiguities of hatred. An examination of self-hatred points to the inadequacies of standard descrip-

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<sup>2</sup> Margot Canaday’s *The Straight State* (2011) and Wendy Brown’s *States of Injury* (1995) both highlight the state’s role in pathologizing nonnormative bodies and peoples. These authors are used by Jamie A. Lee in her forthcoming work to discuss the desire among queer people to belong, and the move of queer community-based collections into the more traditional archives as situated within these same off-putting naming practices.

tive practices in accounting for hatred and other affects. Together, this examination of hatred in the collection, arrangement, and description of LGBT archives and archival collections demonstrates that hatred is an organizing principle of LGBT archives and collections. Naming hatred as such is politically necessary to developing new queer and critical ways of thinking about how to be ethically and politically engaged on behalf of queer and other marginalized knowledge-formations and communities, and new ways of acting on those concepts in archival practice.

# Queer Theory and the Affect of Hatred

Hatred is, in the words of critical theorist of race, sexuality, and affect Sara Ahmed (2004), the passionate “negative attachment to another that one wishes to expel” from social, psychic, and material existence (p. 55). Reorienting discourse toward the ugly, unwanted, and oft-hidden “structures of feeling” (Williams, 1977, p. 132) that take shape around socially unsanctioned queer desire brings into view the larger ways in which emotions regulate the relations among bodies, people, and records. Showcasing and simultaneously deconstructing hatred and its manifestations has a key role to play in aiding the larger project of building queer archives that have the capacity to contend with and provide a record of the complex interactions of race, class, gender, and sexuality, among other factors. In this section, I frame how affect and queer theory have reoriented hatred from the realm of the private and the individual. Even if hatred is felt and experienced within particular bodies and psyches, it is generated through social, political, and cultural encounters that are defined by larger power structures. The pathologizing power of naming the nonnormative creates a marker through which queer individuals and communities define and understand ourselves in relation to the normative (J. A. Lee, personal communication, May 27, 2015). The conceptual work here lays the groundwork for later sections of this paper that examine these theories in relation to archival practices.

Hatred both connects and separates us from others; it is a key part of what aligns queer bodies with one another. Hatred “affects the way bodies take shape,” forcing the “bodies of those who become objects of hatred [to] embody a particular identity by and for” the person doing the hating (Ahmed, 2004, p. 55). In other words, hatred forms bodies through the particular alignment with and against certain other bodies; it is through this alignment that the collective takes its shape (p. 54). Hatred’s alignment works both ways: it aligns not only the individual performing the hating with a collective emotion and connection to particular other bodies, but also the individual who is the object of hatred with the hated group that they are made to represent. Individual queer bodies are thus formed as such and aligned with other queer bodies into a collective, in part by hatred against queers and its manifestations in literal and symbolic violence. In turn, the bodies of those who hate queers are aligned through this negative attachment. Queer bodies have often been and continue to be constructed as objects of hatred. Ahmed (2001, p. 360) writes that “hate is not simply a means by which the identity of the subject and community is established (alignment); hate also



works to unmake the world of the other through pain.” Hatred is thus a complex affect that “circulates” and “sticks” from within and outside of queer bodies. Affect does not just circulate among human bodies but is engendered through the encounter of bodies with objects (Ahmed, 2004, p. 4).

So-called negative affects, such as disgust, shame, pain, fear, and hatred, have been given deep consideration by theorists, especially those focused on queer topics in relation to affect. Sedgwick (2005, p. 63) notes that queer identity is “tuned most durably to the note of shame” due to the fact that so many queers habitually endure it, or at the very least have done so at formative stages in their self-development (Szabo, 2013, p. 446). Extending Sedgwick’s argument, it is not just shame that is habitually endured by queer persons and communities but also hatred. Hatred is part of the everyday experiences of those who are openly nonnormative in the public sphere. Such bodies collect “hateful and hurtful bits and pieces” that become “building blocks” of self-identity (J. A. Lee, personal communication, May 27, 2015). As Love (2007, pp. 20–21) writes, “Feelings of shame [and] self-hatred are still with us [post-gay liberation]. Rather than disavowing such feelings as the sign of some personal failing we need to understand them as indications of [the] material and structural continuities” between eras. The honoring of negative affects has had some traction within queer communities, notably in the gay shame movements of the late 1990s and early 2000s, which were formed out of a willful noncompliance with expectations of “pride” in one’s nonnormative sexuality, and against (homo)normative expectation that shame must preclude public exhibition (Szabo, 2013, p. 446). While the privileged position in terms of race, class, and gender that affords many in such movements the space to render affects like shame appealing and even empowering must be recognized, this argument similarly calls for recognition of the importance and value of negative affects for critical and practical productivity. Valuing the expressions of negative affects is both matter and method of survival for queers.

Affect and queer theories open up the possibilities for examining the extent to which archival institutions have been and are shaped by hatred and other affects. Explicitly naming hatred and its sisters (shame, fear, and loathing, among other affects) is a means of reorienting archival discourse and practice to be attuned to the ways in which affects regulate, constrain, and shape the relations among individual and collective queer bodies and other bodies and between people and objects. I apply the conceptualization of the alignment of queer people with one another and with archives through affect to enable critical examinations of how LGBT archives have been constructed and organized in significant ways by and through hatred. In this paper, I turn a critical eye to examples of institutionalized and personal forms of hatred against queer persons and communities in neat folders full of messages of hate, collecting around hate crimes, and in experiences of self-hatred in personal writing within LGBT archival contexts. Queer archives and collections can better document, critique, and contend with the impacts of the negative affects that align queer persons and communities through their circulation around and within us. I highlight *acquisition*, *arrangement*, and *description*

as archival functions with the political potential for “counterpower” (Simpson, 2004, p. 34) to be enacted through queer and critical archiving practices.

*Counterpower*, as defined by Castells (2007, p. 239), is the “capacity of [social actors to] resist and challenge power relations that are institutionalized.” In other words, counterpower is that which enables and is enacted when queers think and act in manners contrary to normative power structures.

# Hate Messages and “Spectacles of Counterpower”

Hatred is a form of intimacy and an affect seldom explored in archival literature; it is even more rarely associated with LGBT archives and collections. The collecting of material instantiations and representations of hatred in the form of “controversial materials” has received minor attention in mainstream archival studies discourse. This literature focuses on the public reactions and relations aspects of these collecting processes and acquisitions. For instance, this discourse includes a discussion on the purchase of Ku Klux Klan membership records at auction by the Clarke Historical Library at Central Michigan University (Boles, 1994). An article on the ethics of collecting Theodore Kaczynski’s papers by the Labadie Collection at the University of Michigan calls for archivists to not only focus on just the “pleasant, the democratic, the pleasing records” (Devlin, 2010, p. 126) in the service of collecting a more complete picture of American culture and history. The collecting of such materials is justified by the assertion that they would otherwise be “destroyed out of shame, embarrassment, fear or misunderstanding” (Herrada, 2004, p. 43). The frequent presence of Nazi materials in Holocaust collections raises similar concerns. In an article on the “archiving of hate” based on a study of lynching postcards, Simpson (2004) analyzes the mediating power of archives in reckoning with images of “obscene violence” and hatred. He calls for archives of atrocities that “honor” in their “critical debts” and place their “obscene materials in tension with spectacles of counterpower” (p. 34). Queer and critical archives and their practices can aid in the fight against institutionalized power relations that disempower queer individuals and communities, speaking against normativized hatred. Simpson also articulates the key question as “what affective and commemorative work might be able to occur through the dialectical encounter of [hatred and] terror with its resistances [in archives]?” (p. 34). The queer archives and archiving practices called for here respond to this question, placing hatred in a direct dialectical encounter with its resistances in a generative and complex configuration that leaves space for ambiguous and difficult feelings and relationships.

When considering hatred in the context of queer bodies and LGBTQ archives, the hatred that comes to mind first is likely the vehement institutionalized version practiced by organizations and religious groups against queer people and communities. A search in ArchiveGrid for the Westboro Baptist Church, Family Research Council, and the American Family Association—all classified as prominent “anti-LGBT hate groups” (Southern Poverty Law Center, n.d.)—reveals their presences in LGBT archives and

archival collections. Queer activist responses of counterpower to the hatred from these groups documented in the archives often include ephemera produced by hate groups and place queer responses side by side with materials spewing anti-queer hatred. In Cammermeyer's collection, her 2000 radio interview with antigay zealot Reverend Fred Phelps Jr. of Westboro is included.<sup>1</sup> Robert Figueroa's collection of photographs at the ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives documents Westboro's protest at gay activist Pedro Zamora's funeral in November 1994. Figueroa's bright-color images document protestors with signs reading "God hates fags," "Pedro in hell," and "Flee the wrath to come." These images are neatly contained in Mylar sleeves in a binder placed as to be visible simultaneously with his photos of celebrations at Long Beach Gay Pride and just before shots of the Los Angeles Gay Rodeo.<sup>2</sup> Archived within the Matthew Shepard Web Archive is the website of Westboro, whose members protested following Shepard's death as part of its larger condemnation of homosexuality. The site is classified simply within the first series on "Organizations," placing it in the same category as the websites of the Matthew Shepard Foundation, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, and Wyoming Equality. The innumerable subject files collected by LGBT individuals and organizations are filled with articles, clippings, manuscripts on homophobia, violence, and other manifestations of hatred filed alongside materials aimed at serving the LGBT community. The arrangement of these voices, images, websites, and snippets of hate in such close proximity to other affects and objects demonstrates, both literally and symbolically, the intimate place of hatred in queer lives, communities, and activism.

Hate messages are ubiquitous in the personal collections and organizational records of many in the LGBT community. AIDS serves as a focal point for much of this hate-based material. The ACT UP Los Angeles Records at the ONE includes hate mail sent to its office. In gay activist Morris Kight's collection, there are three envelopes with notes containing statements like "you creepy queer bastards are infecting the world. You are scum. You are rotten and immoral," sent with news clippings related to the spread of AIDS, its relation to homosexuality, and about sex crimes committed by gay men.<sup>3</sup> Many of the voice-mail messages saved by the Cobb Citizen's Coalition, an organization formed in response to a resolution condemning the "gay lifestyle" passed by Georgia's Cobb County, on its answering machine tape reflect fear and hatred of queers based on their supposed relation to AIDS. In one such viscerally forceful message, the caller says:

Listen you bunch of goddamn faggots, y'all stay the fuck in Atlanta or in LA. We don't want your gay asses running around here. It is true AIDS stands for another

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with and speaking engagements involving Fred Phelps Jr. of Westboro Baptist Church, September 2000, folder 6, box 49, in MC Papers/UCLA.

<sup>2</sup> Photographs by Robert Figueroa, 1994–1995, Coll2012-064, in ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles (hereafter ONE).

<sup>3</sup> Hate mail and anonymous mail, 1983–1985, Morris Kight Papers and Photographs, 1920–2003, Coll2010-008, folder 2, box 4, in ONE.

infected dick sucker. Y'all all come messing around here too much we'll get the boys on you. Y'all need to get your asses out of here. We don't want you around here. Y'all's kind don't belong here, so get the hell on. Bye faggot fairy bastards.<sup>4</sup>

In a similar message, the caller says, "You faggots don't deserve to live. You brought disease and pestilence to an otherwise straight and normal, heterosexual society."<sup>5</sup> The imagery of AIDS as a homosexual disease, and of queerness itself as an illness, is pervasive in these messages. The experience of hatred was deemed of archival value by many of these LGBT creators and by archivists in their appraisal, yet like so many human elements of records and archiving, hatred has not been a topic of archival discourse or a consideration in archival functions.

The stakes of describing affect are high for queer archives and persons. In sharp contrast to my flat description of the hate mail in Cammermeyer's collection, in some alternative queer archival practices of description, affect is already better accounted for and description serves as a key function of counterpower. At the Sexual Minorities Archives (SMA), which is a grassroots, queer community-based archive, a self-created system of subject classification is used that embraces affectively and politically charged language. It responds to hate, as found in those materials that negatively describe sexual minorities, by classifying it as "bullshit." The archivist uses the classification of "bullshit" in order to "carefully position those materials as counter to the politics of the collection as a whole," powerfully demonstrating the alignment of queer communities and collections as a direct response to systems and structures of hatred (Rawson, 2009, p. 132). In this practice, the archivist also speaks to the alignment of queers with archives through affect. Such a queer and critical descriptive practice requires archivists to engage affectively, raising important questions about our roles in shaping collective memories and our accountability to archival constituencies. Affectively laden descriptions, such as those of the SMA, break down the false distance created by traditional archival description that does a disservice to affects generated in, by, and through archival records, such as these that leave traces on all who encounter them.

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<sup>4</sup> Hate messages to Cobb Citizen's Coalition, March–April 1994, Olympics Out of Cobb County Records, 1990–1998, Coll2013-0053, AC1831, box 1, in ONE.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

# Collecting around Hate Crimes or Power, Value, and Violence

On the evening of October 6, 1998, Matthew Shepard, a 21-year-old white gay student at the University of Wyoming, was beaten severely, tied to a fence, and left to die by Aaron McKinney (then age 22) and Russell Henderson (21) near Laramie. Shepard was found the next day and died six days later as result of his injuries. The Matthew Shepard Collection and Web Archive at the University of Wyoming's American Heritage Center (AHC) has become perhaps the most notable archive formed out of a hate crime and documents perhaps the most famous case of a hate crime against an LGBT person. There is some recent work that disputes the status of Shepard's murder as a hate crime (Jimenez, 2013), but regardless of the hotly debated particulars of his murder, he remains widely recognized as a hate crime victim. The AHC's materials are emblematic of one form of hatred's manifestation in LGBT collections, especially those in mainstream institutions, insofar as the center focuses primarily on the phenomena of hate crimes. Along with collecting around Shepard's murder, the lack of collecting regarding the killing of Brandon Teena and instances of violence against other trans and gender-nonconforming persons demonstrates the acute need for developing queer and critical archival approaches to collecting that draw attention to and challenge the structural conditions of harm and disparity faced by queer and trans people.<sup>1</sup> Too often, archival practices serve to reproduce and reify damaging dominant power structures from within and outside the LGBT community (Dunbar, 2006, p. 112).

Hate crime laws are one of the most commonly articulated legal interventions for LGBT rights. The social and legal identification of *hate crimes*, a label for violence and intimidation directed at individuals due to their perceived membership in a particular "class" of people, came about through the work of social movements, including the civil rights movement, the women's movement, and the gay and lesbian rights movement (Petersen, 2006, p. 10). This approach, which is often pushed by LGBT advocacy organizations, relies upon a framework of individual rights. It emphasizes the harms that are caused to one individual by another individual. This frame of analysis, according to legal scholar Dean Spade (2011), crucially "misunderstands how power functions" and

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<sup>1</sup> While there are places in this paper where I use diverse nominalized forms, I use "trans" here in an effort to resist the impetus "to identify, consolidate, or stabilize a category . . . of people, things or phenomena that could be denominated as 'trans,'" in keeping with Stryker, Currah, and Moore's (2008, p. 11) assertion that "as if certain concrete somethings could be characterized as 'crossers,' while everything else could be characterized by boundedness and fixity."

can thus lead to taking approaches to reform that “actually expand the reach of violent and harmful systems” (p. 29). He analyzes how hate crime laws have been offered up as a solution to violence against trans people, and yet they do “nothing to prevent violence” (p. 30). Such laws do not have the deterrent effect promised and distract attention from harmful hegemonic structures (p. 82; J. A. Lee, personal communication, May 27, 2015). There is a deep desire to attribute hate crimes to disturbed individuals, and to identify the justice and criminal punishment systems as the remedy to violence. However, as Spade (2011) argues, trans people are the “frequent targets [of such] systems and face severe violence at the hands of police and in prisons everyday”; therefore, investing in such a system for the prevention of violence against queer and trans people actually stands to “increase harm and violence” (p. 30).

Within a day of the attack against Shepard, it became the subject of considerable public discourse, and for many a locus of national trauma (Petersen, 2006, pp. 65–66). Following his death, the national attention on the attack and Shepard’s family’s feelings manifested itself in messages, the media, and donations sent to the hospital that had cared for Shepard. Affective responses were also manifested in memorial services and vigils across the country. Not all reactions to the event were positive: the local LGBT center received hate mail praising the attack; in at least two cities, LGBT people were beaten following vigils; and at Shepard’s funeral, Reverend Phelps of Westboro led a group of picketers with signs suggesting that Shepard had been “damned” and appeared to be fighting the memorialization of the victim more generally (p. 67). The public practices of emotion following such an event of violence are telling of a larger political culture; what feelings and whose feelings we provide a platform for and how we do this reveal significant details about ethical and political connections that are valued. This is particularly clear in cases of grief and public grieving, where there is space made “for grieving and memorializing some losses and not others” (p. 72). In mourning Shepard’s death, there was a “public outpouring of grief, rage, and activism” that formed a public in which strangers were suddenly allied with one another “in solidarity and in antagonism, through a common relation to the texts that described Shepard” (p. 76). Responding to violent hatred in this context served as a powerful affect through which bodies, especially queer ones, were aligned and realigned. In the wake of Shepard’s murder, there was much mobilization in a neoliberal model of gay and lesbian rights advocacy to pursue hate crime legislation, and, in 2009, a federal law was named after Shepard that added gender identity and/or expression to federal hate crime law (Spade, 2011, p. 80).<sup>2</sup>

The Matthew Shepard Collection and Matthew Shepard Web Archive are both found under the American Heritage Center’s (AHC) collecting focus on “underdocu-

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<sup>2</sup> I employ *neoliberal* here to mean the ideology of social, political, and economic practices and processes that since the 1980s have become increasingly pervasive. Brown (2015) frames neoliberalism as a “governing rationality through which everything is ‘economized.’” I argue that some gay and lesbian activism becomes a vehicle for neoliberal practices and policies rather than for social change that would promote great equality and equity in contemporary society.

mented communities”—collecting that is intended to reflect “the multiculturalism of Wyoming” and beyond (AHC, 2008a, 2008b, n.d.).<sup>3</sup> The collection contains both public and private documents regarding Shepard’s murder. The materials come from various sources, including the news media; the president’s office of the University of Wyoming; and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Association. It includes correspondence from people across the country, news articles, fliers and posters, editorials, bulletins, and speeches. Also included is information on demonstrations that occurred, the debate about bias and hate crime laws in Wyoming, and memorials to Shepard. Even within an LGBT collection formed as a result of violence, there are folders of hate mail sent to both Shepard’s family and local LGBT organizations sharing boxes and server space with lesbian and gay literature, memorial websites, and anti-hate crime legislation petitions. The collection also documents productions of *The Laramie Project*—a play and film about Shepard. The web archive created in 2008 on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the murder examined the blogs of his family and friends and more than seventy websites for media about and based on Shepard’s murder, aiming to capture a broad and in-depth coverage of the murder, memorials, and related efforts to address gender- and sexuality-based inequalities. While “underdocumented communities,” including LGBT ones, are an articulated collecting focus and a reflection of what is considered of value for the AHC, the materials related to the Shepard’s murder represent by far its most extensive collecting in this area, demonstrating the central place of hatred as an organizing principle for LGBT collections, especially in more mainstream archives.

Even in documenting violent hate crimes, there are telling disparities about who and what events are recorded in archives. Looking through the lens of hate allows for a more critical understanding of structural disparities, archives’ roles in (re)producing them, and how we might address them through queer and critical archiving practices. The murder of Teena attracted national attention. After learning of his variant gender identity and expression, John Lotter (then age 22) and Marvin Thomas “Tom” Nissen (also 22) raped Teena and brutally murdered him and his friends Lisa Lambert and Phillip DeVine on December 31, 1993, in Humboldt, Nebraska (Halberstam, 2013, p. 474). Unlike Shepard’s archives, a search of ArchiveGrid and WorldCat reveals that there is no centralized archival collection on Teena; instead, he appears only in traces in the documentation generated by the popular film *Boys Don’t Cry* and the documentary *The Brandon Teena Story*, is represented in a script at the ONE,<sup>4</sup> and

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<sup>3</sup> The Inventory of the Matthew Shepard Collection, 1983–2008, the Inventory of the Matthew Shepard Web Archive, 1998–2008, and the “Underdocumented Communities Collections” are in the American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, Laramie (hereafter AHC).

<sup>4</sup> Brandon Teena, 1999, inventory of the Gay and Lesbian Drama Scripts Collection, folder 26, box 10, in ONE.



as a single file in subject collections on crime at Kent State University.<sup>5</sup> In spite of the widespread attention that Teena's murder generated, there is little documentation of such violence, or of trans experiences more broadly, in LGBT archives and collections. This lack is a reflection of dominant systems of power that have marginalized trans people. Thinking carefully about what is collected, why, and who is doing the collecting matters greatly here. Looking to hate offers one intervention toward a more queer and critical archival practice that is better equipped to address such disparities. Queer theorist Jack Halberstam (2013) writes about the aftermath of hate crimes and the struggle over the legacy of Teena and how it testifies to the "political complexities of activism sparked by murder and energized by the work of memorialization" (p. 473). Teena's story can and should tell a complicated one of hatred, and of white working-class, rural queers and the relations that mark "rural America as a site of horror and degradation in the urban imagination" (p. 478). Such an archive could also tell a more nuanced story about larger and intersectional cultures of hatred. For example, one of Teena's murderers, Nissen, was involved on and off throughout his early life in white supremacist groups (p. 480). The "real work of collecting the stories of a Brandon Teena . . . or a Matthew Shepard must be to create a [queer] archive capable of providing a record of the complex interactions of race, class, gender, and sexuality that result in murder, but whose origins lie in state-authorized formations of racism, homophobia, and poverty" (p. 498). Even while organizing around hatred and the ways in which it aligns queer bodies, it is essential to deconstruct, to unravel hatred in order to tell queerer stories that are contradictory, complex, and powerful, thereby opening the archives to what is possible for queers and their futures.

A collecting focus on hate crimes as a central subject demonstrates the intense power of hatred as an organizing principle in LGBT archives and collections, and how responses to it align, shape, and impact not only physical bodies, but also bodies of records. Hatred is an affect that may move us affectively as queers, but it is also an affect that "has settled in us and settled us" into compliance with normative social structures (J. A. Lee, personal communication, May 27, 2015). The focus on collecting related to hate crimes reflects the public and political attention in LGBT advocacy organizations to certain cases of antiLGBT murder, and has the tendency to make hatred against LGBT people visible only in extreme moments of physical violence (Spade, 2011). This selective visibility also often implies that individual, interpersonal violence is the site of homophobia and transphobia, thus obscuring the more pervasive and ordinary forms of hatred, prejudice, and discrimination, and particularly the role of the state and its laws in constructing and authorizing such hatred through discrimination and violence (Petersen, 2006, p. 9). There is great danger in reducing a social phenomenon like hatred to an individual psychologically bounded event (Zembylas,

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<sup>5</sup> Humboldt murders (rural Nebraska, 1993, murderers: Thomas Nissen and John Lotter, subject of feature film *Boys Don't Cry* and documentary *The Brandon Teena Story*), Borowitz Crime Subject Files, 1940–present, folder 3, box 5, Special Collections and Archives, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio.

2007, p. 179). The turn toward participatory archival practices in community-based archives offers the opportunity to have queer and trans communities develop collection priorities themselves, and for archival repositories to collect with greater complexity. Collecting around violence matters, but there is a need to move toward commemorating queer and trans lives that are being lived, and not just those that are brutally cut short. Creating more complex constellations of belonging in queer archives would allow for the navigation of systems of power that inform the dissonances and complexities within queer communities in respect to race, class, gender, and ability, among other categories.

Hatred offers a way in which to examine what is being collected, why it is being collected, and who is doing the collecting. The debates that rage on about the productiveness and potential of the focus on hate crimes by those both inside and out of LGBTQ communities are in part archival questions that deserve deeper consideration. While hate-based violence against LGBT people must be remembered in the archives, we should employ a queerer and more critical archival practice to contend with hatred in all its multiple forms and avoid reflecting and reifying problematic systems of power that operate to harm queer and trans people.

# Instilled from without, Arising from within: Queer and Trans Self Hatred

While in no way negating the vital importance of experiencing, documenting, and celebrating pride and other queer experiences of “positive” affects like happiness, intimacy, and love, queer political projects and their reflections and manifestations in queer archives often come with the implicit demand that queer individuals and communities only vocalize pride and anything but their unhappiness with other queers, their shared circumstances, or with themselves (Szabo, 2013, p. 451). Hatred and negative-affect siblings of shame, disgust, and anger directed by the self at the self are most often manifested within the context of queer persons as internalized homo- and transphobia. Such phobia is the hatred of the self, of the queer body, as an aligned member of the hated group. Self-hatred is a particular form of the larger category of hatred that is instilled from the outside, but arises from within; it is often intimately manifested in the despair at the impossibility of distancing oneself from oneself. The community acknowledges all this, but the subject remains insufficiently documented in LGBT and queer archives and collections. Queer Nation, an action-oriented movement formed in New York City in 1990 in response to a sharp increase in violence against LGBT people, sought to increase LGBT visibility and to fight back against hegemonic and mainstream structures of “oppression, homophobia, racism, misogyny, the bigotry of religious hypocrites and our own self-hatred.”<sup>1</sup> The movement’s framing of the fight against self-hatred as fundamental to the broader mission of ending hatred and violence against queers points to the significance of this to queer lives, communities, and politics.

Searching for self-hatred’s manifestations in LGBT archives is difficult due to its lack of acknowledgment in archival description. However, it surfaces in many personal writings, both in descriptions of current feelings and in the describing of experiences of overcoming bad feelings. In a letter to ONE’s magazine, “Donny” writes that “I took 10 sleeping pills. I fixed my room extra special. I put my smile on . . . soon sleep came like a sweet dream. . . . I wake up in the hospital. . . . I cried but no tears came. . . . The doctor asked me what was the matter? Did you try to kill yourself. I failed, but next time I won’t. . . . Hate and fury all came in me” (qtd. in Loftin, 2012, pp.

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<sup>1</sup> Tom Mertz Collection on Queer Nation, 1990–2000, Coll2014.025, in ONE.

194–195). He goes on to describe his self-hatred and loathing of other homosexuals, warning innocent boys to stay away lest they end up like him (p. 195). Hatred is a social, collective emotion that circulates, that sticks to particular bodies. Examining self-hatred clearly demonstrates how hatred is not an individual emotion but rather a collective affect that sticks to particular bodies, shaping them in conflicting, painful alignments against parts of themselves and their identities. Like all forms of hatred, self-hatred is complex.

The story of Robert Rosenkrantz, a gay teenager who in 1985 shot and killed his schoolmate who gay-bashed and outed him, is archived in a collection at the ONE.<sup>2</sup> The collection has letters written to Rosenkrantz during the first months of his prison term after an article about the case was published in *The Advocate*. Many of the letter writers identified with Rosenkrantz and shared their own intimate struggles with coming out, self-hatred, and other negative affects experienced by queers. Many empathize with the fear, anger, and self-loathing that in the article he described feeling. Another writer said how the bigotry and hatred of the wider world forced them (queers) to start “internalizing self-hatred and homophobia.”<sup>3</sup> Another described how Rosenkrantz’s words and experiences were sure to have “a deep effect on the understanding of many people about the legacy of intolerance and hate” that queers experience.<sup>4</sup> Another wrote that “homophobia is in the marrow of our parents’ bones, we are their offspring[,] it is in us too. Self-hatred is our legacy.”<sup>5</sup> Many of those who wrote offer Rosenkrantz hope, laying out their own experiences with conquering self-hate. This collection formed around violence makes unusually graphic such stories of negative affects. In the mainstream homonormative narratives of being out and proud, experiences of self-hatred, internalized homophobia, and other negative affects are silenced in the archives.

Self-hatred, like other affects, is complex and conflicted. There is a necessary distinction to be made between the perceptions of self-hatred by others and the feelings and perhaps articulations of that hatred by the person experiencing it. Of all queer bodies, it is arguably the trans body that has been constructed in the popular imaginary as the object of self-hatred. Trans difference is commonly reduced in popular narratives to the proscribed affective experience of “feeling bad”—of having a “dysphoric” body (Keegan, 2013, n.p.). In essence, *dysphoria* indicates a state of aversive or negative affects, unease, and dissatisfaction, and is the diagnosis for most trans people seeking medical care. The association of trans bodies, genders, and identities in much of the medical and popular materials is seen as rooted in bad feelings, be they “rage, sorrow, wishfulness, [or] denial,” about their bodies or genders. The trans body is also constructed as a body that needs to move from “negative affect to redemptive affect, from psychosis to mental health, from self-hatred to a celebration of liberal individuality” (n.p.). There is

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<sup>2</sup> Letter to Robert Rosenkrantz, 1986, Robert Rosenkrantz Letters Received, Coll2008-062, box 1, in ONE.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

no Library of Congress subject heading with which to classify and access “internalized transphobia” despite an equivalent subject heading for “internalized homophobia,” effectively hiding, along with other standard descriptive and classification practices, the presences of these stories of complex embodiments in LGBT and queer archives and collections.

Self-hatred is fundamental to the queer experience in a mainstream world that is often homo- and transphobic in deep and profound ways, which in turn act to instill self-hatred in queer subjects. While queer archives should make space for and recognize the productive roles of the affect of hatred from both the outside and as arising within, it is also the work of queer archives to simultaneously expose the contradictions and complications of hatred and its place in queer lives—past, present and future—in their arrangement and description of such materials. Archives can aid in the development of counterstories—those stories that marginalized and underrepresented communities use to “construct alternative realities to those constructed through social institutions of dominant culture” (Dunbar, 2006, p. 114). Documenting and describing self-hatred is a form of counterstory that allows for the acknowledgment of painful pasts as continuing to affect our identities and conditions in the present (Love, 2007). Such acknowledgment is necessary for reimagining queer presents and futures.

# Conclusion

I want to return briefly to the carefully collected hate messages excerpted at the beginning of this paper. Cammermeyer's decision to save and meticulously organize the letters sparked by hatred against her and other queers into a separate, specific folder, then to donate them to the Mazer Archives is significant. Her life, as well as her collection, is shaped by her alignment with other queer bodies. As articulated by affect and queer theorists, hatred is central to that alignment and to the formation of queer collective bodies and identities. Hatred significantly impacted Cammermeyer's life and identity and shaped peoples' responses to her. Hatred is not only present in the letters calling for her to renounce living life as a lesbian, and to feel shame in her identity and choices, but it is also reflected in the many letters of support from other queers who identified with her, in part by their shared experiences of being hated and responding to that hatred. Queer bodies are aligned with archives through hatred. Examining the arrangement and description of such hate messages, as well as the archival collecting around hate crimes, and documenting and describing queer and trans self-hatred demonstrate that hatred is an organizing principle of LGBT archives and collections. As an organizing principle, hatred is a central premise from which other archival materials, by proximity to it, derive classification, arrangement, and value. This argument should not be reduced to the fetishization of bad feelings or reduced to this affect merely by being understood as universally, uniformly, or directly empowering for archives, creators, or users; rather, the argument here has been a call to look to the presences and possibilities of structural and personal hatred in queer lives, archives, and archival practices. Hatred is a useful lens for examining and deconstructing normative power and its affective circulations and structures; it moves people toward all kinds of feelings, both good and bad, sometimes simultaneously. When we acknowledge that we are already implicated in hatred and make it visible, then we can begin to contend with it in the archives. Hatred opens up the imaginative space needed to envision new presents and futures. Such space is necessary to develop more queer and critical practices of appraisal, arrangement, and description that are ethically and politically engaged on behalf of queer knowledge-formations and communities. By becoming aware of how bodies and objects are put into relation by affect, and by bringing attention to (bad) affects, we can queer—"radically opening"—the archives to contradictory, contestable, and nonnormative histories and work toward a more just present and future for queer and trans people (Lee, 2015).

There is much work still to be done in conceptualizing how hatred and other concepts developed in queer and affect theories may lead us to reexamine archival schol-

arship and practice. Multiple case studies are needed to explore how the concepts discussed here from queer and affect theories as approached through appraisal, arrangement, and description can actually be enacted in real-world environments. In particular, work is needed to develop how descriptive practices and standards might account for affects, including hatred. Further exploration of the archives' production and reproduction of harmful systems that devalue queer and trans lives, including neoliberalism and the prison-industrial complex, is also needed. This paper is a step forward in what I hope will become a rich trajectory of research and practice for archival studies on queer archives and archival practices that are attuned to affect.

# Back Matter

## Acknowledgments

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A critique of his ideas & actions.



Marika Cifor

Aligning Bodies: Collecting, Arranging, and Describing Hatred for a Critical Queer Archives  
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