

## Reflection

### **(Engendering Binaries: The Transhistorical Experiences of Catalina de Erauso)**

I wrote the essay “Engendering Binaries: The Transhistorical Experiences of Catalina de Erauso” during the Fall 2022 semester for my final project. I worked very hard on the project thanks to the structured assignments and obtained feedback by going to office hours. Catalina de Erauso and my professor not only sparked my appreciation and interest in social history, gender, and sexuality theory but developed my knowledge on these topics. More than anything, the class, with the exposure to a research project, has solidified my dream to become a professional social historian specializing in colonial Latin America to research and teach as well as inspire students as my professors have done for me.

The "free" digital journal articles provided via the library were crucial, especially Matthew Goldmark’s comprehensive analysis of archival court proceedings relating to Erauso and theoretical frameworks/methodologies on gender performance. As a Spanish speaker it is important for me to note that I limited my study to scholarship in English to comprehend the readings effectively and write my essay efficiently. Since the research project for the class was to focus on a single case study relating to gender, I searched "Catalina de Erauso," filtering for secondary source journal articles on the library website to find articles from JSTOR and EBSCOhost. Accessibility was no doubt a component of the creation of this research.

I did not find the primary sources I utilized, two texts and one image, directly or serendipitously from a general search of the library materials. I first encountered one of the texts, *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554), in high school as an assignment in my AP Spanish Literature class. Lazarillo de Tormes became one of my favorite books and is the source of my academic passion for literature, specifically in Spanish. I had always wanted to do further research on the novel, be

it literary or historical, and as stated in my essay, the book provides a glimpse into the socio-cultural conventions at the time as the topic is a social history of gendered expectations, performances, and perceptions in the Spanish empire. The other text, *Lieutenant Nun: Memoir of a Basque Transvestite in the New World*, I did not come across by searching in the library. I learned about the book and Erauso from a colonial Latin American history professor at UCSD, who I met in May of 2022. While knowledge of these texts did not come by luck in searching on the library website, once I found out about Erauso's writing, I was pleased to get my access to a physical copy of *Lieutenant Nun* from the Kellogg library (I have my own copies and editions of Lazarillo de Tormes). I tracked down access to the 1626 portrait Catalina de Erauso, attributed to Juan van der Hamen and Francisco Pacheco, from a general internet search. I must admit that I debated using the image because I could not access the portrait directly from the Kutxa Fundazioa's website, where the physical portrait currently resides. After cross-referencing and corroborating the portrait with websites referencing a 2017 exhibition of the portrait in Madrid, for the source and documentation of the portrait belonging to the Kutxa Fundazioa, I thought it was prudent to utilize the image as I found it from the National Geographic website.

I had the fortune to present "Engendering Binaries" at the Phi Alpha Theta Southern California Regional Conference at California Lutheran University. Professors of early Modern Iberia and graduate students were encouraging and offered me constructive feedback regarding the context and different points for consideration regarding the Baroque style, virginity, and 19th century receptions of the memoir. Recently, another professor in the History department has provided me with further feedback and has contested points on my essay as his research focuses on Iberian *hidalguia* - insights regarding the fluctuating importance of *hidalgo* status during the 17th century which I am thankful for. My interpretation on Erauso's sexuality attempts to go

beyond the established scholarship of defining them by situating their private identity to be an issue of agency, as I note extensively in the essay. This paper reflects my interpretation of life, scholarship, history, and theory, which I am proud of, as all subjective research is synthetic and I hope that this essay can be built on collaboratively by others in an equally passionate way.