

During my time in the English Department at Columbia, I have taken classes and developed an interest in literature of the early modern period, especially its representations of women and their bodies. When I took *Witchcraft and Law*, I researched and wrote about the parallels between the treatment of witchcraft and the treatment of motherhood in women's bodies; how both were seen as deeply altering physical conditions, as well as the inherent danger of occupying both identities. I also took *Surveillance of Women in Renaissance Drama and Culture*, in which we read sixteenth and early-seventeenth century English drama, focusing on how the plays represented women onstage. This class taught me how to analyze theatre—to both look at a piece broadly and to analyze the impact of singular words.

I have also taken classes through the department of Latin American and Iberian Cultures, in which I have had the opportunity to read important Spanish-language works, and I am currently studying abroad in Madrid, Spain. In *Hispanic Cultures II*, I did a close reading of Nellie Campobello's collection of vignettes, *Cartucho*, as an account of the effects of the Mexican Revolution upon women and girls in the home. Here in Madrid, I am taking a class on Latin American short stories, novels, and theatre, as well as a class on Spain's auto-representation of nation through its literature and film of the past century.

Based on these classes and experiences, and what I've learned in relation to early modern culture and theatre thus far, I am interested in further researching the representation of women in Spanish-language theatre, particularly from New Spain during the colonial period. Much like other parts of Europe, Spain experienced an explosion of art and artistic methods during their Siglo de Oro. This included a boom in theatre, in which playwrights such as Félix Lope de Vega (*Fuenteovejuna*; *La Dama Boba*) experienced great success. During the Spanish's colonization of Latin America, they used these theatrical practices and works in order to impart “morals” and “lessons” upon indigenous people and promote Spanish over the use of their various first languages, such as Nahuatl.

However, Spanish theatrical practices did not necessarily take over; indigenous spectacle began to incorporate elements of Western theatre and respond directly to the Spanish presence and colonization of the area. By the 17th and 18th centuries, there were many playwrights in New Spain addressing the Spanish conquest. I'm primarily interested in playwrights who were active in what is now Mexico, and how women—and particularly their bodies—were represented in their theatrical works. For example, in the loa (short theatrical piece) *El Divino Narciso* by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, the character “América” is represented by a steadfast, indigenous woman, who is heavily and ornately physically adorned, while the character “Religión”, also a woman, is not provided the same physical indicators and is characterized as controlling and crazed. Other works from this time period, both in New Spain and in Spain, create novel representations of women that often center their bodily experiences (*Fuenteovejuna* depicts the imminent threat of bodily violation/rape), but, interestingly, don't seem to favor tragic endings involving multiple (often female) deaths as much as English Renaissance drama does.

I hope to analyze theatrical works of New Spain in comparison to English Renaissance drama, keeping Spain's middleman role in mind. I believe this research is valuable because, though indirect, there appears to be a line of communication through the three areas' forms of theatre. The Protestantism of England during their Renaissance and the Catholicism of Spain during their Siglo de Oro meant that, while they did not communicate their theatrical and cultural ideas freely, there was an exchange of ideas nonetheless via their stark opposition and reactions to the other's values. Spain then brought this theatre to Latin America, who continued the conversation by providing their own commentary and reinterpretations.

I have already identified five secondary sources and approximately ten plays, many of which are available publicly online or through Columbia and New York libraries, that I can reference as I undergo this research. However, writing on this topic and accessibility to the primary sources are limited, and

travel would open new doors for my research. I am especially interested in archives in Mexico City and the Benson Latin American Collection at the University of Texas at Austin. The latter has a few valuable resources only available in person: the Black Diaspora in New Spain Document Collection, the Joaquín García Icazbalceta Manuscript Collection, and the Inventory of Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora Collection. All of these would help to historically and socially contextualize the plays I would be researching. As for Mexico City, I would like to visit the Biblioteca Francisco Xavier Clavigero at the Universidad Iberoamericana (which has an impressive Catálogo de Manuscritos that provides a comprehensive vision of the colonial period of New Spain) and the Archivo General de la Nación (which holds materials on playwright Juan Ruiz de Alarcón as well as Colección 258, which contains both works of literature and more contextualizing information about the time period). There are other Mexico City archives I have in mind, but few have online catalogs and most have collections with vague titles. However, I have already been able to make contact with library staff, whose help and expertise will be essential to my research.

That being said, the main value in visiting these collections is that they are vast. It is difficult to find concrete and compiled information on New Spanish theatre, much less publicly accessible versions. Visiting in person with ample time for exploration and discussion with library staff allows for open and undirected discovery of materials that are not well-documented otherwise. Additionally, I am able to round out my research in Madrid and New York—before I leave this summer, I will have time to visit collections such as the Catálogo de Comedias Sueltas at the Centro de Documentación Teatral or theatre collections at the Biblioteca Municipal de Madrid, and next year in NY, I will be able to access such resources as the Hispanic Society of North America and Comedias Sueltas at the NYPL..

Finally, since I would be researching theatre, it would be valuable to see modern-day interpretations of these rarely performed plays. There are multiple theatre companies in Mexico City that put on Golden Age Spanish-language theatre productions, from both Spain and New Spain, such as the Compañía Nacional de Teatro, La Compañía Nacional de Teatro Clásico, or Foro Shakespeare.

The theatre produced in New Spain during its colonial period is fascinating, and worthy of further analysis on many fronts; however, it is difficult to access, even with a growing scholarly field, and the resources are spread far and wide. My research would greatly benefit from the support of the Williams Traveling Fellowship, and would allow me a much deeper look at this subject.

Expense	Cost
Flights (to AUS and MEX), flight fees, transport to home airport (SEA)	\$1700
Housing, Austin (7 nights); Mexico City (18 nights)	\$675; \$1,200
Food, Austin (7 nights); Mexico City (18 nights)	\$120; \$300
Transport (metro and taxi fares), Austin; Mexico City	\$30; \$60
Books	\$200
Tickets to performances	\$250
Others (SIM, archive fees, toiletries, etc.)	\$120
Total	\$4,655