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Textiles of Change: How Arpilleras can Expand Traditional Definitions of Records

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During the months of July and August 2015, I participated in an internship with the archives of the Tower Museum in Derry, Northern Ireland,¹ where I worked with a personal collection of arpilleras donated by lecturer, curator, and human rights activist, Roberta Bacic. Arpilleras are appliquéd and embroidered tapestries or quilts first created by women in Chile as a form of self-expression. The Tower Museum treats the arpilleras both as museum artifacts and as archival records due to the acknowledgement of their archival qualities. Both the arpilleras themselves, and how they are classified by the museum, challenge dominant conceptions of what records are and how expansion of those conceptions might begin to answer some of the silences currently present in many archives, among them, those surrounding the voices and experiences of women. They thus present an excellent case for exploring not only non-traditional record forms, but also the gendered nature of their production, materiality, content, and ultimately, reception and understanding.

This paper begins by providing a brief social and political history of arpilleras in order to provide readers with a sense of their gendered nature, as well as the multitude of stories that they are able to relate or expose. Next, the paper discusses the Tower Museum and the provenance of the specific collection with which I worked. This is followed by an explanation of the function of the arpilleras, both as museum artifacts and as archival records within the Tower Museum's collections. The last section of this paper argues that these arpilleras support how an expanded conception of archival records and their gendered nature can work to combat silences of and about women and their experiences within the archives.

Arpilleras: A History

As defined by Roberta Bacic, “arpilleras (pronounced ‘ar-pee-air-ahs’) are three-dimensional appliquéd tapestries of Latin America that originated in Chile” (Bacic, 2013, p.1). Arpilleras were conceived by women as a way for them to document their daily lives. They evolved into a medium through which arpilleras, the women who make arpilleras, were able to document, in particular, the “harsh reality of life” that many of them confronted during the Pinochet regime (1973-1988) (Bacic, 2013, p.2). Chilean arpilleras are embroidered and stitched onto burlap (from which their name is taken), which the women obtained from flour or potato sacks, resulting in the typical size of an arpillera being one fourth or one sixth of a sack (Bacic, 2013, p.1). On September 11, 1973, dictator Augusto Pinochet came to power through a military coup that

1 The name by which the city is known remains a subject of some sensitivity within local communities and official circles. For the purposes of this paper, I have chosen to refer to it as Derry rather than as Londonderry or Derry~Londonderry. This choice is one of convenience and it is not intended as any kind of political stance or statement.

overthrew Chile's socialist government and its President Salvador Allende. Pinochet's goal was to establish a free market within Chile. In order to attain that goal, he sought to silence anyone who he considered "'bad,' ... the young or poor, students, intellectuals, artists, and writers were imprisoned, tortured, and murdered, -- labelled 'disappeared'" (Agosín, 1987, p.vii). Arpilleras, using scraps of cloth, sometimes even from the clothing of the disappeared, were a way in which women, who might have few other opportunities, could apply their traditional skills and the materials available to them to document the atrocities they witnessed, and express their dissent and emotions regarding the disappearances of family members and friends, or the torture that they, or their loved ones faced (Bacic, 2015). As a result, Strauss (2015) has argued that the arpilleras "represent (and also document) the human rights movement in Chile"(p. 13).

As Chilean-born academic Marjorie Agosín (2008) describes, women have traditionally held the role of story tellers within societies, with mothers, grandmothers, sisters, and aunts recounting family memories and local history and traditions to their children in the forms of stories and oral traditions.ⁱ Beginning in the 1970s, arpilleras began to be utilized as another medium through which women could tell their stories, including those of a different nature. The daily scenes that arpilleras were stitching into their arpilleras increasingly reflected the violence of the dictatorship as "the miniature figures, that protest or scream or dance or beg, moved from their fingers to the cloth and took with them their stories and pain" (Bacic, 2015, p.395). Through their arpilleras, arpilleras told of "the unemployment, poverty, and repression that they endured; their work to make ends meet' and their varied forms of protest" (Adams, 2013, p.ix). The narratives depicted by the arpilleras became a form of protest and resistance, thus adding a new political element to the textiles.

Even though arpilleras documented many of the atrocities committed by the Pinochet regime and also expressed sentiments of protest, they were originally dismissed by Pinochet and his government as simple textiles created as a hobby by mere women. Since the regime did not recognize the power of the arpilleras or the stories they recorded, it allowed them to continue to be created and disseminated, not only within Chile, but also internationally (Bacic, 2015). Arpilleras were sold abroad by the Vicaria de la Solidaridad, to buyers who purchased them in order to lend financial support and solidarity to the women in Chile (Adams, 2013). In addition to stories that the arpilleras tell on their face, through their embroidered and appliquéd images, many also contain hidden pockets on their reverse in which the arpilleras would conceal notes describing the arpillera or themselves (Bacic, 2015). As the years went by, Pinochet's regime began to realize the influence of the arpilleras, both domestically as well as

internationally, and they adopted a stricter policy, policing both their creation and their dissemination (Bacic, 2015).

The methods and materials that were used to make arpilleras made it possible for Chilean women from all levels of society to create them, and to record the emotions and events that they were experiencing. As Bacic (2015) explains, “appliqué was more suitable than embroidery both because the level of skill required was easier to reach and production was speedier. Using whatever material was close to hand for the characters, buildings, and other elements of their *poblaciones* (neighbourhoods) made them colourful, intriguing and rather cheap to produce” (p.396). The small amount of technical skill required, together with the low price of production, allowed arpilleras to be made by large sections of the female population, not just the rich or skillful. Most creators were often poor or middle class, however, creating them in order to sell, and thereby generating a modest income to help support themselves and their families (Adams, 2013).

Many aspects of arpilleras have been infused with images that may be read as texts. Bacic (2015) describes how Chilean arpilleras often share common characteristics that help in this reading:

The Andes mountains defining the country, which stretches along the length of Chile from north to south becoming an element of identity; the sun in the centre, making the political statement that it shines for all. Another element presented in this *arpillera* is the use of the simple blanket stitch and crocheted red wool to resemble a frame, to let us know this is a picture to hang in a room, to live with (p.394).

Agosín (1987) also compares the arpilleras to writers when she likens the creation of an arpillera to how “a writer might put words together”(p.13).

As Chilean arpilleras spread across the globe, taking with them the messages and emotions of the women of Chile, the ideals and practices of the arpilleras also spread across “many contested societies around the world – in Africa and Europe as well as South America” (Bacic, 2015, p.400). Bacic herself has made an effort to introduce arpilleras to the citizens of her new home in Northern Ireland by teaching workshops, in concert with exhibitions of arpilleras, so that Irish women are able to learn how to make them. Exhibitions such as ‘Stitching and Unstitching the Troubles,’ which Bacic curated in Coleraine in 2012, as well as ‘Stitching and Unstitching the Troubles II,’ which she hosted in Ballymena in 2013, have been integral to the process of introducing and fostering

a culture of arpilleras in Northern Ireland, a community that also has its own recent history of conflict (Bacic, 2015, p.398).

The Tower Museum

During a summer 2015 internship at the Tower Museum in Derry, Northern Ireland, I was tasked with the standardization of archival collection descriptions. Such a task allowed me to interact with a majority of the archive's holdings in an in-depth manner. In addition to standardizing descriptions, I facilitated the visits of a number of researchers to the museum in order to utilize the research collections. My role as an intern provided me with access to the inner workings of the museum, and the opportunity to discuss at length the reasoning behind processing decisions that were made.²

The Tower Museum is a local museum that focuses on the history of Derry, from its' founding by St. Colmcille to the present day. The archives of Derry are administered through the museum services and contain both the records of the city government and private collections. This structuring is more similar to that of state or municipal historical societies found in the United States, rather than that of museums or government archives. The co-location within the Tower Museum of both the municipal records and collections of archival materials acquired from other sources, situates the museum as the central, publicly-run, memory institution of Derry. Due to the complex political and social histories at work within the city, including the legacies of sectarianism and the Troubles, one might question whether the Tower Museum's efforts to provide as unbiased a presentation of the past as possible might influence the collection development strategies of the archives. However, my interactions with the Tower Museum's archival collections revealed that the archive actively collected materials relating to sectarianism and the Troubles from both sides of the conflict.

After hosting multiple exhibitions and workshops of arpilleras in collaboration with Roberta Bacic, the Tower Museum acquired a portion of her collection of arpilleras to be held permanently in the Museum. Bacic, a lecturer originally from Chile, has devoted her career to the collection and exhibition of arpilleras internationally. Bacic relocated to Northern Ireland with her husband, a Northern Irish human rights activist, after the Troubles had come to an end, and she has made a strong effort to introduce the concept of arpilleras as a medium through which Northern Irish women might record their own experiences during the Troubles. After witnessing how both the medium and the message of the arpilleras resonated deeply with the women of Northern Ireland, Bacic decided that Northern Ireland was a place that could benefit greatly from a permanent collection and the continuous display of arpilleras.

Northern Ireland has a strong textile making tradition, particularly with regards to linens, tweed, knits, and quilts. Shirt factories provided the primary

² I am using "oral tradition" here in the same sense as does Shannon Faulkhead in "Connecting through records" (full citation in the references section): "the method used to transmit knowledge from one generation to the next."

employment for Derry women until the 1960s. The large female workforce employed in the Derry shirt factories, in conjunction with high male unemployment, has led to the population being labeled by some as a matriarchy (McLaughlin, 1989, p.35). From October 1968, until the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, Northern Ireland suffered a conflict often referred to as “the Troubles.” The Troubles were precipitated by a civil rights movement that challenged the inequality many believed was rooted in the sectarianism present in Northern Ireland. This was just one reason, among others, why Bacic chose to donate part of her collection of arpilleras to the Tower Museum. She has retained the rest of her private collection in order to continue to exhibit them internationally.

How Arpilleras Function at the Tower Museum

A number of arpilleras donated by Bacic, created both in Chile and Northern Ireland, are on permanent public display in the Museum, located next to displays that cover the history of the Troubles. Not all of the collection is on permanent display, but it is available for researchers to view upon request, which is often facilitated by the archivist. The contextual differences between the presentation of museum artifacts and archival records plays a key role in the importance of having the arpilleras being dually categorized. As a museum artifact, each arpillera is displayed and interpreted within its own individual context, whereas viewing an arpillera within the archival collection provides a more detailed contextual experience for both the individual arpillera, as well the arpillera as a record-keeping medium. Tower Museum Archivist Bernadette Walsh played a key role in acquiring the arpilleras, together with the Museum’s Education Director, Margaret Edwards. Walsh continues to maintain an active dialogue with Bacic on the use and display of the collection. The Museum also plays a role in assisting Bacic as she introduces the production of arpilleras as a way for women in Northern Ireland to record their own memories and to recount their own stories from the Troubles.

While at the Museum, I had the opportunity to facilitate a visit by an undergraduate at the University of Ulster who was interested in viewing and researching the arpilleras in relation to her undergraduate dissertation on conflict textiles. During my interactions with the researcher, she commented multiple times on how affective she felt the experience was, and how viewing the arpilleras in person, rather than simply viewing them through a photographic representation that she had seen in the past, gave her a new appreciation for their power and influence. In discussing the arpillera collection, we spoke of how the experience of tactilely interacting with the arpilleras, as one does when using archival collections, provides a more intimate experience than that which is gleaned from merely viewing an exhibit on a museum wall. The affect present within archives and archival records is an emerging area of concern within archival studies. Ann

Cvetkovich (2002) notes that a “useful archive” holds a “profoundly affective power,” as demonstrated by the researcher’s emotional response elicited through her interaction with the arpilleras, which she acknowledges is “difficult to chronicle through the materials of a traditional archive”(p.110). As Marika Cifor (2015) recognizes, archives “produce and reproduce (in)justice and (in)equality” (p.9) through the acts of appraisal, which attribute value to records according to traditional definitions and conceptions of archives and archival records. She addresses the power that the affect of records can hold, and argues that such “affective value can act as a corrective force to address power inequities in archives” (Cifor, 2015, p.9). Similarly, Alexandrina Buchanan and Michelle Bastian (2015) assert that affect present in archives can “relate to their value as activist tools” (p. 435). Recognizing such affective agency, therefore, has the potential to redress some of the injustices and inequality present in archives.

Another affective question raised with the inclusion of the arpilleras within the Tower Museum is how the local community has responded to seeing these textiles, some of which have no direct association with Northern Ireland, in a museum that is meant to specifically document the history of the city. Although the Chilean arpilleras have no obviously direct relationship with Derry and its history, their inclusion within the Museum’s collection speaks to a larger history of the people of Northern Ireland finding solidarity with other countries that they feel have experienced similar types of conflict. For example, the Bogside, a largely Catholic neighborhood in Derry located a five minute walk from the Tower Museum, is home to a number of now-iconic murals, painted on the sides of homes and other buildings, which document the history of the city. These murals not only depict important events and people from the Troubles, but also include images indicating solidarity with other historical and ongoing revolutionary struggles around the world, for example, in Argentina, Spain and Palestine. The inclusion of the Chilean arpilleras reflects a similar sentiment within the Tower Museum, especially since they are displayed alongside the arpilleras created by Northern Irish women recounting their experiences in the Troubles. Even the imagery of some of the arpilleras created by the women of Northern Ireland echoes the imagery present in some of the murals of the Bogside. Some may argue that, instead of displaying these Chilean textiles in Northern Ireland, there may be more value in displaying them in Chile. However, due to their context within the museum, the history of the arpilleras themselves as a means to elicit solidarity internationally, and the similar themes that the arpilleras represent, the arpilleras serve an important role in Derry specifically. The solidarity aspect of the creation of the arpilleras in particular highlights the importance of hanging textiles from different countries and conflicts together, so that the public can see that though the geographic location may be distinct, these

women have raised their voices and told their stories through the creation of the arpilleras, which are now exhibited in cultural heritage sites internationally.

These aspects point to the importance of having the arpilleras classified as both museum artifacts and archival records, because to categorize them as one or the other would remove a valuable opportunity for researchers to interact with them. For example, the inclusion of blanket stitched “framing” within the arpillera itself speaks to the original intent that an arpillera would be hung on a wall and displayed as craft, as well as relating a story (Bacic, 2015). However, arpilleras also serve as records of the past, created by women to document the experiences of women, which is a perspective that is often missing from the archive. While limiting the arpilleras to being in an archival collection and not allowing for their display would be to disregard one of their essential purposes, it is important to acknowledge their archival significance and at least to include them in the archival catalogue. The Tower Museum’s processing of the arpilleras as both museum and archival holdings allows for the different dimensions of arpilleras to be acknowledged and represented to the public.

In conjunction with the exhibition “The Art of Survival,” the Tower Museum organized a workshop in partnership with Bacic in which people had an opportunity to learn the art of making arpilleras, while including their own textile culture within the pieces. Since arpilleras are mainly composed of scrap materials, many arpilleras that are created in Northern Ireland include local tweed and other materials that link back to the traditional Northern Irish textile culture. Such workshops allow the participants to experience another aspect of why arpilleras were so important in Chile during the Pinochet regime. The creation of arpilleras is also meant to be a communal experience, one in which stories not only flow onto the textiles that the arpilleristas are creating, but also one in which groups of women are able to sit and talk together about the stories they are telling through stitching, thus creating a communal space to support one another (Agosín, 1987).

How Arpilleras Challenge Traditional Definitions of Records.

The Society of American Archivists’ definition of a record reads: “a written or printed work of legal or official nature that may be used as evidence or proof; a document.” (Society of American Archivists, n.d.) This definition stresses the importance of the medium in which the information is being captured, and the use of writing as a way to convey that information. Luciana Duranti (2009) discusses the evolution of the definition of a record in diplomatics and perpetuates the conception of a record as a textual document, as “the written evidence of a fact having a juridical nature, compiled in compliance with determined forms, which are meant to provide it with full faith and credit” (p. 1594). Duranti (2009) considers modern diplomatics to define records as “all documents that are created in the course of affairs of any kind” (p. 1594).

While the archival field has increasingly pushed back on such traditional or legal definition of a record, the literature still needs to devote more attention to the discussion of non-traditional forms, such as arpilleras, and also to the gendered nature of records (for example, the dominance of men in the creation of official records from positions of authority is rarely discussed.) Geoffrey Yeo proposes a more expanded definition of a record in his article “Concepts of a Record (1): Evidence, Information, and Persistent Representation.” He argues that a record is a “persistent representation of activities created by participants or observers of those activities, or by their authorized proxies” (Yeo, 2007, p. 337). Within this definition, Yeo allows for the inclusion of a plethora of media and multiple creators within the definition of a record. The only requirement for a medium is its “persistence,” which he describes as its ability to endure beyond the temporal constraints of the activity it is recording. Verne Harris (2012) offers another definition of a record, which requires that it be imprinted on a surface which has the “quality of exteriority,” and which is also deemed “worthy of protection” (p. 150). Harris’s definition stresses that in order for an object to be considered a record, there must be an acknowledgement of the object’s importance and its worthiness to be preserved. It is key to note, however, that neither Harris’s definition of a record, or Yeo’s, states who is responsible for the determination of worthiness, which calls into question who has the power to make those decisions.

To supplement Yeo’s and Harris’ definitions, which allow for the inclusion of a diverse range of media within the definition of a record, Shannon Faulkhead (2009) offers the notion that both oral and written records should be used in tandem because the information recorded in both media aids in “interacting, complementing, and completing narratives” (p.65). She recognizes that traditionally, Western biases have promoted the inclusion of textual records above others within the archives (Faulkhead 2009). She proposes that a continuum that captures indigenous narratives, which have a strong oral tradition, within archives encourages the creation of a memory space in which colonial (textual) records can interact with indigenous (oral) records (Faulkhead, 2009). Records continuum ideas developed in Australia emphasize “concepts of co- creation, parallel and multiple simultaneous provenance” (Evans, McKemmish, Daniels, & McCarthy, 2015, p.356) that highlight the need to expand the definition of records in multiple ways, one specifically being the inclusion of a myriad of media. Including arpilleras, and textiles more generally, within the context of this continuum will create a more inclusive memory space and strengthen its ability to include and interact with previously excluded narratives within the archive.

As Victoria Lemieux (2001) states, there is “no one true conceptualization of the record ... but many different conceptualizations ... arising from particular

social contexts” (p. 82). It is for this reason that archives and archivists must be willing to extend their definition of a record to encompass a diverse range of records which highlight the “hybridity, complexity, and intersectionality of cultures and communities” (PACG, 2011 p.72). Hilde Stern Hein’s (2007) concept of feminist theory in Museum Studies, which she states “rejects the sharp delineations and fixed systems of classification,” (p. 33) shares many parallels with the archival pluralism that is called for in the Pluralizing the Archival Curriculum Group’s (PACG) article (2011) “Educating for the Archival Multiverse.” PACG acknowledges that as archivists, we hold the power through a host of archival practices such as appraisal and description, amongst others, to determine which narratives are preserved within the archival record, and which are not, and it is our duty to strive to be inclusive in order to present a more complex window to the past for future users. Without expanding the definition of a record, the archival field will continue to exclude perspectives and narratives that are integral to understanding the past and the context in which it occurred.

The gaps currently present in the archival record are referred to as archival silences. Whether these silences occur as the result of limited definitions, the choice of communities to withhold their archival collections, the process of record creation, the intentional exclusion of particular narratives, the unintentional exclusion of perspectives, or a host of other reasons, these silences have an impact upon the materials available to future archival users and the evidence of the past that will be available to them. As Eric Ketelaar (2001) acknowledges, these silences create “tacit narratives of power and knowledge” (p.132). Such archival silences also, as Michelle Caswell (2014) argues, result in the symbolic annihilation of individuals and communities from the archival record. Caswell (2014), drawing upon feminist media scholars of the 1970s, defines symbolic annihilation as “what happens to members of marginalized groups when they are absent, grossly under-represented, maligned, or trivialized,” (p. 27) and places this definition within the context of the archives. The exclusion and symbolic annihilation of a variety of groups is to the detriment of society because it homogenizes an importantly complex history and flattens the archival record. Indeed Terry Cook (2011) argues, “if we can break the ‘cancer’ of silence... our professional identity will also be radically altered, to society’s significant benefit” (p. 185).

The inclusion of the Tower Museum’s arpillera collection in their archival collection, in addition to their museum collection, is a practical example of the freedom that is allowed when working from a definition of a record that is broadened in such a way as to account for materials that defy traditional constraints (i.e. non-textual/print materials). The inclusion of non-traditional records, such as textiles, within archival collections, allows archivists to begin to fill some of the silences within the archives that have been created by prior

narrow definitions of records. An important silence that arpilleras begin to address is the gendered silence of the archives. Due to the patriarchal organization of many governments and record creating systems, female voices have been largely excluded from the archive. As Anne Gilliland and Michelle Caswell (2015) acknowledge in their discussion of Anjali Arondekar's book, *For the Record*, "it was almost always ... the male who had the literacy, the power, and the privilege to leave behind lasting traces" (p. 15). The illiteracy of many women forced them to find alternate media through which to express their own narratives, such as textiles (Bounia, 2012). Although, traditionally, the non-written media in which women documented their experiences resulted in their exclusion from traditional memory institutions such as archives, arpilleras provide an example in which the gender of the creator of a record played an integral role in the preservation of the record. Due to the decimation of the male population in Chile through imprisonment, exile, and disappearances during the Pinochet regime, women were often the only individuals who had the ability to record daily life of the time (Agosín, 1987). The fact that arpilleras were created by women also allowed for their underestimation by the regime, as discussed earlier. Arpilleras served as "a way to document and denounce oppression when all other forms of documentation and denunciation are censored or banned" (Agosín, 1987, p. 38). Without the overtly gendered nature of arpilleras, they might not have been created or disseminated in such a way as to still be present today and to serve as an actual representative record of the past.

Through the cultural relationship that many women have with textiles, the medium provides a tremendous opportunity for female stories to be captured and preserved, especially when women are denied the occasion, ability, or tools to record their stories in any other way. The inclusion of textiles, such as arpilleras, as archival records, and their acceptance into the archives, may begin to broaden our ideas of what records, either explicitly gendered or created within non-traditional media, are currently held within archives, and what should be collected in the future. As Agosín (1987) describes, "the typically feminine crafts of sewing and embroidering have become a way of denouncing the oppressive government of Pinochet" (p.11). She stresses the importance of the medium, which is largely characterized as female, and of the women themselves who created the arpilleras. Arpilleras served as the only way in which Chilean women were able to document and tell their own histories autonomously (Agosín, 1987).

Arpilleras are explicitly gendered in their construction and form. As such, they provide a conspicuous voice and place for women within archival collections. Even within the Tower Museum's archival collections, Bacic's arpillera collection is one of only three collections ascribed to women. Of the other two collections, the Bridget Bond Collection comprises materials collected during her participation in the civil rights movement, with a small amount of the

material actually created by Bond herself. The other is a collection of writing and material from the famous female author, Kathleen Coyle. To put this into context, of the 27 private collections held by the Tower Museum archives, only three are credited to women explicitly. Only two contain materials largely created by women, and only one, the arpillera collection, was solely created by women to recount the stories of women.

The reality that the Tower Museum, an institution that should be applauded for moving towards the deconstruction of traditional notions of what comprises a record, and situated within a city that prides itself on its strong women and its history of female employment, still has such a low rate of female representation within its archival holdings serves as evidence of the largely male perspective of archival holdings. It may be inappropriate to extrapolate that, because the collections of this singular archive are largely dominated by records written by men and pertaining to male activities, the same must be true for all archives internationally. The realization of the lack of female voices present within the Tower Museum archives has caused me to question more critically how holdings at other institutions where I currently, or have formerly worked, represent women. Within the context of the Tower Museum, and Derry as a whole, the relatively new donation of Bacic's collection will hopefully reify Derry's acknowledgement of the importance of its women. It is my hope that the inclusion of arpilleras created by local women in tandem with those made by women from other parts of the world, will bring about a self-awareness of the importance of the female perspective, within both the community and the archival record, as well as strengthen women's commitment to narrating their own experiences autonomously.

Andrew Prescott addresses the need to include narratives that have previously been excluded and briefly mentions arpilleras in the chapter he wrote for Louise Craven's book *What are Archives*, entitled "Archives of Exile: Exile of Archives." In his reference to arpilleras, he concludes that "clearly, in developing an archive of exile, we move quickly beyond the purely textual and encompass material objects" (Prescott, 2008, p.140). He also asserts, "in order to invite the exile into the archive, we need to widen our concept of the archive" (Prescott, 2008, p.139). I agree with Prescott that as archivists strive to include a more diverse array of individuals, communities, and histories within their collections, the concept of an archive, and consequently our concept of a record, must widen. However, in my experience, limited though it may be, I have not encountered archives that "move quickly beyond the purely textual."

Until the profession is able to see value in a multitude of record formats, without them fitting into the current narrow definitions, it is important to acknowledge the many non-traditional records that do fit into certain aspects of current definitions of records. As Yeo (2007) details when questioning what

aspects contribute to determining whether an item is an archival record, many archivists focus on the item's evidentiary value. As Gilliland and Caswell (2015) state, "outside the realms of legal and bureaucratic evidence it can be demonstrated, time and time again, that whatever society, agency, community or individual acts upon or invests in as a record, indeed functions in that context as a record"(p. 4). Arpilleras have a history of being used as evidence and being invested in by society as a record, both in the court of public opinion as well as in actual courtrooms. As Bacic (2015) acknowledges, arpilleras have been accepted globally as "testimonies to the struggle within Chile. They contested the narrative of the state in the wider world which helped to indict the regime in the court of international public opinion" (p.396). Not only have arpilleras been embraced as evidence by the court of public opinion, but they have also been used in official legal settings as evidence. During the Peruvian Truth Commission, women from Ayacucho gave their testimony using an arpillera entitled "Yesterday and Today" (Bacic, 2015). The women created this arpillera because, though they felt compelled to give their testimony, they were intimidated by the prospect of providing it in such a formal venue and in Spanish, a language they did not speak well (Bacic, 2015). Creating an arpillera as their testimony to the court shows the power of arpilleras, not only as evidence, but also as forms of expression, which transcends language. In this example, arpilleras again transcended the language barrier, which may exist in traditional textual records. While an arpillera may contain a singular expression, the scene itself tells of the experiences of the women who created it, as well as conveying the emotions that they experienced.

Conclusion

This paper only begins to touch on the important subject of representation and inclusion within archives. In order to address such large concepts effectively, it was important to focus on one specific textile and only a few aspects of inclusion and representation that the arpilleras may facilitate in the archives. Future research is needed to consider the practical implications for the inclusion of textiles within the archives, especially on how they will be described and preserved. Furthermore, the issue of the gendered silences found within the archives warrants a more in depth analysis from a feminist perspective in order to discern the extent to which archives have been dominated by the perspectives of men.

Although it may not happen quickly, and the process likely will not be easy due to the various considerations that must be made as to how archivists appropriately collect, describe, and preserve a larger array of archival records (both textual and non-textual), a revolution must occur within the archives in order for them to capture more varied and inclusive archival collections. Archival collections should be diversified in order to capture an assortment of narratives;

for example, women's perspectives and histories. Archives have been spaces of gender discrimination, whether intentional or unintentional, that provide skewed accounts of history, due to their primarily male creatorship. By amending and expanding traditional notions of what a records is, archives may become more inclusive of the histories and memories of women and members of societies of all cultural backgrounds.

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