

Interdisciplinary Research in Gender

HISTORIES OF SENSIBILITIES

**VISIONS OF GENDER, RACE, AND EMOTIONS IN
THE GLOBAL ENLIGHTENMENT**

Edited by

Isabel Burdiel, Ester García Moscardó,
and Elena Serrano



Histories of Sensibilities

Histories of Sensibilities: Visions of Gender, Race, and Emotions in the Global Enlightenment explores the historical and plural character of sensibility in the Global Enlightenment.

From Tahiti to New Orleans to the Mariana Islands; to Lima, Geneva, London, Oviedo, or Venice, the book investigates how sensibility was brandished by different ethnic, political, and cultural groups to define their identities; how cross-cultural and cross-chronological encounters reconfigured ideas of gendered selves; how sexuality was used to empower or subjugate non-European ethnicities; and how the circulation of theories about the origin of emotions and taste reinforced or challenged hegemonic ideas of masculinity and femininity.

With a primary focus on Southern Europe and the Hispanic World, areas still not well-charted, this edited collection explores the varied forms in which notions of sensibilities circulated within Europe and between Europe, the Americas, and the Hispanic-Asian Pacific, questioning normative and diffusionist views.

Histories of Sensibilities is aimed at postgraduate students and scholars researching the histories of literature and science, cultural studies, the history of emotions, gender studies, and women's history; as well as scholars of Hispanic studies, Latin-America studies, and European studies.

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Section II

Crossing Contexts, Unsettling Sensibilities

7 Performing Sensibilities

Women's Voices in a Transnational and Transatlantic Correspondence of the Enlightenment*

Mónica Bolufer

Introduction

“The ink is mixed with my tears” – when a lady named María Teresa wrote these words in 1780 to Francisco de Miranda, then stationed in her native city of Cádiz, she was using an image of a physical response to emotion (that of staining the paper on which she was writing with tears) quite commonly found in letters of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, but she was also continuing the long tradition of letters as vehicles for the spontaneous expression of sentiment. Letters are a valuable source for the study of the history of emotions,¹ as well as being of particular interest for research into female agency, given that they were one of the forms of writing most accessible to women, sometimes on a daily basis.² The somewhat ingenuous days of interpreting the voices behind letters – or autobiographies, memoirs, or diaries – as impromptu and unmediated are behind us. Now, all first-person writings are analysed as the (always contingent) product of the way in which subjects appropriate the languages available in their time and milieu. Letters, moreover, are *active*: they help construct subjectivities, weave and nurture interpersonal relationships, and shape emotional communities across distance, as has been demonstrated by, for example, Dena Goodman with reference to the epistolary education of young French noblewomen; Konstantin Dierks and Sarah Knott, regarding the correspondence of ordinary men and women in colonial North America and the cultural elite of the early US republic, respectively; and numerous studies on letters sent to and from Spain and its empire.³

In this chapter, I shall explore a wide-ranging transatlantic and multilingual collection of letters to examine the extent to which, in the eighteenth century – a period of extensive circulation of people, ideas, and books, as well as intensive correspondence (among the elites, but also the middle classes and some sections of the popular classes) – the spread of letter-writing models shaped a broadly shared cosmopolitan and transoceanic culture, or helped create distinct epistolary (and so, to some degree, emotional) communities.

My aim is to contribute to discussions on the eighteenth-century culture of sensibility, which, though widely studied in the spheres of the British Atlantic, France, and the Hispanic world, has been less thoroughly researched from a comparative perspective.⁴ A further objective is to investigate the different ways in which men and women participated in what was, in certain respects, a shared culture, by looking beyond the clichéd idea that women's expressions of sentiment stemmed merely from the innate sensibility that set them apart from men and their emotional detachment. I shall examine gender differences, which are, inevitably, enmeshed with other social differences (class, age, education, cultural and political context) to analyse women's varied usage of eighteenth-century epistolary and emotional codes.

All of this is part of the wider efforts to reconstruct the material dimension of epistolary relationships (and written culture more generally) that have a strong tradition in French historiography and have made a more recent appearance in English-language scholarship. For letters are more than just texts. They are physical objects, created from the act of writing; they have survived transportation,⁵ and in some cases bear genuine traces of emotion: from the extreme gesture of writing in blood (not uncommon in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries),⁶ to the marks left by tears falling onto the paper.⁷ After reaching their recipients' hands, they can be read repeatedly, shared, stroked, and carried on the person, sometimes in direct contact with the skin.⁸ And they are often accompanied by gifts – tokens of love or friendship which, even after they have vanished, leave traces of the role they played in maintaining and nourishing relationships. Scholarship on the history of emotions can thus draw on studies on the social life of things that highlight the importance of objects and claim some sort of agency for them, since they convey and stir human emotions.⁹

Embodying Affects: The Women, the Man, and their Letters

One particularly substantial epistolary collection offers exceptional opportunities for analysis from all those perspectives, namely the hundreds of letters written by women that have been preserved in the archive of Francisco de Miranda (1750–1816). This cosmopolitan man of the Enlightenment, well-educated and well-travelled, was a general of the revolutionary armies in France, a long-time resident of Great Britain, and an instigator of Spanish American independence movements.¹⁰ A complex and controversial figure, he bequeathed to his native land (today's Venezuela) – whose emancipation he did not live to see – a huge documentary legacy.¹¹ He himself organized his thousands of papers into 63 volumes encompassing his extensive travel diaries, many hundreds of letters, numerous writings, and several engravings. Among the letters is a series entitled *Correspondance de femmes*, which includes just under 250 letters and notes, most testifying to close associations with women, whether amorous, flirtatious, or entirely platonic, together with an index in Miranda's own hand. There are also letters from women in other

sections of his archive: ten from his wife, six from his friend Lady Stanhope, a few from lovers (Catherine Hall; the widow of Count Miaczynski), as well as various social notes (invitations), and almost 20 letters from female petitioners contacting him in his capacity as a military commander and asking him to intercede for their sons or husbands. In total, the archive contains over 300 letters from women.¹² Those written *by* Miranda are rare – as in so many other such collections, only letters received have been preserved. The effect is a truncated dialogue, which in itself has a certain poetic justice: the most audible voices are female, while Miranda's, so clear and assertive in other documents in the archive, can only be reconstructed by being refracted through the words of his female correspondents.

These women's voices represent quite a varied range of backgrounds, languages, and personal and social circumstances. There are the wives or widows of French revolutionaries (Mme Pétion, Mme Custine) and Swedish or British diplomats (Mme de Staël, Catherine Hall); members of patrician New York families (Susan and Eliza Livingston) or the Cádiz bourgeoisie (Pepa Luque, María Teresa); and women from humbler backgrounds (Françoise Pellicier), as well as others of whom we know little more than their names. Those with whom Miranda was involved in amorous or flirtatious relationships were all women from the elites, able to communicate fluently, albeit with varying degrees of competence in calligraphy, spelling, grammar, and rhetoric. The letters cover different stages in the lives of both recipient and senders and touch on significant processes in the political development of Europe and America, from the construction of the US Republic to the French Revolution, events which are not only mentioned in but also influence the content of some of these writings.¹³

The missives were sent from many different locations: the Bay of Cádiz, the Captaincy-general of Caracas (Venezuela), Cap-Français (in Saint-Domingue, today's Haiti), New York, London, Paris, Gothenburg, and the enclaves of revolutionary exile in Switzerland and Germany (Baden Baden, Niedervillier). The correspondence crosses seas, oceans, and continents to reach Miranda during his military service in Cádiz and the Caribbean, on his travels through the United States, and while he was living in London and Paris, creating and maintaining connections through which words of affection, objects, news of friends and acquaintances, political information and stances, and opinions on books and reading could all be conveyed. It is – and this gives it added interest for my purposes – a multilingual collection. Two-thirds of the letters are in French, in some cases because the writers are French, in others because this was the language of education for the European elites. Most of the rest are in English, with barely 20 in Spanish. Some make strategic use of multilingualism for expressive or communicative reasons:¹⁴ as a nod to the recipient's polyglot abilities or to convey certain sentiments which, by the conventions of the age, sounded better in languages such as French or Italian.¹⁵ For example, Pepa Luque of Cádiz, who generally writes to Miranda in Spanish, sends a few letters in French, some in a

confidential vein (“my heart opens to you alone”¹⁶), and once signing off with a few English words (“Until I have the pleasure of seeing you, to God Mi Dear Friend”¹⁷). The widowed Countess Miaczynski, meanwhile, resorts to Italian, the language of love, only in her affectionate closing words: “farewell, dear friend, sweet treasure, you will be mine for life”; “my soul, come soon to comfort me.”¹⁸ In this respect, they are as transnational and multilingual – if not more so – as those received by Casanova, with whom Miranda has sometimes been compared and whose papers include numerous letters in female hands from France, Germany, and Italy.¹⁹ The fact that Miranda kept all these letters and (unlike Casanova) grouped many of them together, separately from other collections within his archive, suggests he was keen to cherish his memories of his relationships with women, which must have been important in the construction of himself as a subject and, possibly, in that of the image he wanted to leave to posterity.²⁰

More than 100 of the letters are still in the envelopes in which they were posted, underlining the care with which Miranda treated them and enabling us to appreciate certain significant material details: the use of paper, quality of handwriting, and the corrections and revisions made. Some correspondents apologize for their poor writing, at times blaming it on their haste to get the letter into the post or on their ink or pen (Mme Butler, for example, writes, “excuse this scribble, bad pen and ink, and the messenger is hurrying me”²¹). On other occasions, however, they themselves admit that any mistakes are due to their limited knowledge (“Forgive my scribbling. I have never learned to write French,” says Catherine Hall²²). Such apologies are common in letters written by women, who felt their mastery of even the most basic aspects of the art of writing had been hampered by an inadequate or less than systematic education. They justify their errors by emphasizing their desire to communicate with the recipient and the urgency with which they need to set their feelings down on paper: “I forget, you do not wish me to write to you, and my writing is illegible. Never mind: you will know that I was thinking of you and had need to write to you,” concludes Delphine Custine from Blamont.²³

Here we can touch on – so to say – another material dimension of the exchange of letters, that of the flow of objects frequently alluded to: items laden with symbolism, seeking to awaken feelings, cut off emotional ties, or keep memories alive. Gifts, as we know from the long tradition of love letters, but also from correspondence between friends, are charms intended to prove the sincerity of the sender’s feelings, stir or strengthen the recipient’s ones, and summon the image of the absent friend or lover.

A few of the presents sent to Miranda by his female correspondents have survived, despite their ephemeral nature: a miniature of Socrates sent with a letter whose envelope carries a warning about its fragile contents (“Open carefully so as not to break what is contained within”²⁴), and three little cupids bearing the inscription “Miranda tua” (“your Miranda”) and modelled in wax, all of which were created by Delphine Custine. The iconography

of love is obvious. But equally significant is the choice of the Greek philosopher, a man condemned to death after a trial in which he maintained his convictions and dignity to the end, and who was the subject of a famous painting by Jacques-Louis David (*The Death of Socrates*, 1787). Miranda identified with him, seeing himself as a victim of unjust persecution: tried and exonerated by the Revolutionary Tribunal for his part in the French defeat in the Battle of Neerwinden (18 March 1793) and imprisoned again between July 1793 and January 1795, in late 1797, he had to leave Paris and seek exile in London. Mme Custine offers her portrait of him to Miranda, reflecting and reinforcing his sense of identification with the philosopher by declaring that he is the only man of the age who deserves to be called wise.²⁵ The archive also contains two female silhouettes: one seems to be a portrait of Catherine Hall, the other is unidentified.²⁶ Small-scale portraits in various techniques, from silhouettes such as these – simple and inexpensive – to the most sophisticated pastel drawings or marble miniatures, were commonly exchanged not only by lovers but by husbands and wives and by friends of either gender: for example, within intimate but not necessarily erotic friendships between men and women in the early years of the new republic of the United States (along with locks of hair or other personal mementos)²⁷ (Figure 7.1).

Many other objects have left no more than a weightless trace in these letters: thanks for a gift received, notice of one sent, a request for a purchase. So, for example, Ana Montero acknowledges receipt of a casket and a length of cloth;²⁸ Catherine Hall thanks Miranda for “a handkerchief ring”;²⁹ Mme de Tor does the same for an Apollo (a figurine?);³⁰ while four jars of preserves sent from Havana to Haiti reach Geneviève, to whom Miranda also promises a puppy, a gift whose symbolic value as an emblem of faithful devotion does not escape her.³¹ Miranda himself receives (sometimes homemade) gifts from his female correspondents: a scapular – a Catholic devotional object – given to him by María Teresa, when she takes her leave of him (“may you never give the scapular I gave you to anyone else, nor remove it from your neck”³²); three cameos carved by Henriette in Paris in 1796, and copies of other (possibly antique) cameos that Miranda had lent her as models;³³ sweetmeats from Pepa Luque;³⁴ and “a large packet” from Susan Livingston and her family whose contents are not revealed.³⁵ He also receives requests for purchases: a fan (“the best available in that town”);³⁶ 200 grains of gold, to match a sample sent to him by Geneviève in November 1782;³⁷ and two dresses, two pairs of stockings, and a fichu for Françoise, as well as English burins for her engraver brother.³⁸

Some objects give inadvertent glimpses into the relationship, such as the tell-tale watch left at Pepa’s house, which she has to hide from her family in order to conceal Miranda’s visit,³⁹ or the cravat he leaves behind in Cádiz, which María Teresa ties around her neck to remind her of him.⁴⁰ A beloved’s personal items, especially those touched or carried on the person, allow memories to be cherished through the senses of sight, hearing, or touch: the remembrance of a beloved face, of words spoken and heard,



Figure 7.1 Cupids with the legend “Miranda tua.”

Source: Archivo General de la Nación, Caracas, series *Colombeia*, section “Revolución francesa,” XVI, 369b.

of a caress seemingly ingrained in and transmitted by the item in question. Thus, Delphine Custine, in a lovely letter written on 10 May 1798, literally underlines her recollection of one particular intimate gesture and gift: “remember: *she who tied back your hair the day you left Paris*, she to whom you gave a little casket *with a heart*, instead of poison: that is enough, I think, to refresh your memory”⁴¹ (an allusion to the poison that, in many love stories, sealed the tragic fate of lovers bound by an impossible passion).

Books deserve a special mention, given that they are such a consistent part of his correspondence: they are almost always lent by the bibliophile Miranda, but occasionally borrowed by him, giving rise to an exchange of opinions and reading experiences. Miranda's female correspondents, many of them inveterate readers but without libraries comparable to his, express warm gratitude for his consignments ("what a gift you have made me," exclaims Mme Tor,⁴² who will only accept the books as a loan), formulate their opinions, sometimes assertively, and describe the intellectual effort involved in understanding complex texts. They also describe their sensations, notably the emotion they experience on reading alone and sharing this intimate experience with him. The eighteenth century saw not only an increase in extensive reading (fast, multiple, varied, sometimes disbelieving), but also a new model of intensive, sentimental reading, which involved complete immersion in a book, an empathy-based identification with its characters, and a blurring of the boundaries between reality and fiction, which resulted in readers feeling that the written word was addressed directly to their heart.⁴³ Certain passages in the Miranda letters evoke a passion for reading and represent the books shared both as symbols of friendship and as precious physical objects that fill the void left by the absent party: "How kind you are, my noble friend, to have thought of my insignificant pleasures by sending me the books I have so longed to read," writes Mme Custine, for example.⁴⁴

The idea that a letter is a reflection of the soul, with the power to conjure its writer in the imagination and emotions of the recipient, dates back to classical times (it appears in Seneca and Cicero). It had been part of European epistolary culture since the Middle Ages and had grown since the Renaissance.⁴⁵ The eighteenth-century culture of sensibility expanded and intensified the demand for sentiments to be authentically expressed in letters, reflecting the supposedly spontaneous impulse of spilling them out on paper. This demand applied to all writers, but women in particular, as they were thought to have an innate gift for this type of private communication⁴⁶ and, more generally, to be naturally inclined to love and therefore bore the greater responsibility for keeping emotional connections alive, an unequal burden of which many women were painfully aware.⁴⁷

Today, we know that letters are not so much an expression of a pre-existing inner self as mechanisms through which that self and its emotions are shaped by intersubjective relationships. To quote Isabel Burdick,⁴⁸ "they are ways of representing oneself, for both the writer and the recipient he or she is attempting to imagine, capture and, in a way, shape to suit him/herself," and therefore, whatever the nature of the bond between the correspondents, "tend to be exercises in seduction." They are written in accordance with a shared epistolary culture and tradition, meaning that the correspondence of a particular age and social milieu is imbued with certain similarities in style and content. Words and physical actions or reactions (palpitations, sighs, blushes, tears) are cast in the cultural moulds used at specific times and by specific communities to give name, form, and texture to those sentiments:

people can only love (or think, or feel) within the cultural parameters (“sensibilities,” “emotional styles,” or “emotional regimes”) in which they have been intellectually and sentimentally educated. That does not, however, mean that they express their feelings in a purely rhetorical fashion, that their letters reiterate empty formulas rather than baring their souls. True, certain figures of speech are repeated from one text to another, but that simply makes any variations found in collective epistolary and sentimental models and the ways in which subjects approach and negotiate them all the more interesting.

The cultural reference points adapted by all correspondents to their own circumstances were, by the eighteenth century, largely transnational, thanks to the widespread circulation of products such as sentimental plays and novels, hugely popular across Europe and America in the late 1700s, many of them translated or adapted from French originals (some from Italian and, by the turn of the century, German).⁴⁹ They also, however, reflected the far more specific guidelines set out in letter-writing handbooks.⁵⁰ These were translated far less frequently than fiction, and the models they established therefore remained more within particular linguistic communities, although they did circulate worldwide: British publications of this type, for example, were reprinted and consumed in the Thirteen Colonies and the new republic of the United States;⁵¹ we can assume that those published in Spanish (though specific research is lacking) travelled similarly across the Spanish Atlantic and Pacific. While the better educated could also read manuals or anthologies in other languages, notably French, it seems that when it came to their own missives, they were more likely to resort to models in their native language. People learned to write letters by reading those they received from others which, incidentally, often included turns of phrase from the spoken language that stretched or broke the rigid rules of the written word.

It should equally come as no surprise to find traces of earlier literature in letters of this period. Many pre-eighteenth-century novels, plays, and handbooks were still available and in vogue. Letter-writing styles and formulations for constructing and expressing feelings were often based on these tried-and-tested models, a reality that should not be interpreted as mere inertia or archaistic usage. For their users, these were living sources, brought into the present through new editions and personalized through individual practice. In that respect, differences between letters suggest the ways in which the language of sensibility was articulated in Europe and America in particular cultural and political contexts, depending on the social status, educational level, and other circumstances of the women who wrote them, and reveal the tensions between national and transnational models, and between inherited codes and personal adaptations.

Echoes from the Spanish Golden Age: Re-creating Literary and Epistolary Models

The letters from Spanish women and *criollas* (American-born Spanish women) in the Miranda archive, all from the late 1770s and early 1780s,

use a lively, expressive, and ostensibly direct idiom common to an epistolary culture widely shared on both sides of the Hispanic Atlantic. There is just one letter to Miranda from his sister Rosa, sent from Somos (in the Captaincy-general of Caracas) on 25 February 1779. She had not had the same opportunity for education as her brother – her writing lacks fluency and shows an uneven command of spelling and syntax, but her letter is no less expressive for all that.⁵² It is notable for its loving but reproachful tone, bemoaning the lack of news of Pancho (her affectionate diminutive for him), with phrases such as “we have seen no letter from you, all we know of you we have learned by chance”; “don’t be unkind: since we have lost hope of seeing you, let us at least have the consolation of seeing your letters” alternating with others such as “your Sister, who truly loves you and wants to see you,” as well as snippets of information about friends and family.⁵³ This fits the pattern of many transatlantic letters written by family members of Spaniards who had emigrated, or *criollos* contacting relatives in peninsular Spain.⁵⁴ They tend to emphasize the distance – emotional as well as geographical – between the absent traveller and those left behind (usually wives; sometimes siblings, children, or parents) and the fact that they are missing him even if he has forgotten them.⁵⁵

Other letters written in Spanish between 1779 and 1780 are from women who entered into amorous relationships with Miranda while he was stationed in Cádiz, a cosmopolitan trading hub with a dynamic cultural life (newspapers, printing presses, and three theatres).⁵⁶ Little is known about these correspondents, beyond the general picture we can glean from their letters: women of the local bourgeoisie, who mixed in the city’s fashionable circles and interacted with the foreign (Irish, British, French) communities who had settled there for business reasons. The language deployed in these letters is assertive, its candour wielded as proof of emotional sincerity. “I speak frankly and politely,” writes Pepa Luque,⁵⁷ a cultivated and confident single woman whose handwriting is sometimes clear, sometimes far less so, as if she were communicating with urgency and secrecy, or perhaps while on the move.⁵⁸ She repeatedly reproaches him for not writing more often, as well as verbalizing feelings of love (“Vida mía” – “My life”), disappointment or jealousy, pain at his absence and pleasure on hearing from him (“your letters are my only entertainment and they all seem so short”), and apologizing for a verbosity stemming from the effusive nature of her feelings.⁵⁹

On shakier ground, formally speaking, are the letters of María Teresa, she too is from a good family, although less well-educated, judging by her mistakes in spelling and word separation, and the almost complete absence of punctuation in her writing. While generally legible, her penmanship worsens when she is under more strain (“I don’t know if you will be able to read this, because I am so upset and angry that I can’t write any more clearly”⁶⁰). She still displays a certain eloquence, however, using an intense and loving tone bordering on the melodramatic and using slightly archaic language, addressing Miranda as her “lord and master.” She expressively evokes her own

feelings of grief, “performing” her emotions by means of the ancient non-verbal language of tears. She depicts Miranda as unwilling to nurture their relationship from a distance, employing colourful metaphors such as that of her heart becoming a lapdog that follows him only to be mistreated.⁶¹ In the face of his supposed indifference, she inventively declares the constancy of her own affection – in her final letter, she composes a lyrical farewell whose rhythms are reminiscent of those of love poetry (“Farewell, o consolation of my sorrows, farewell o counsellor to whom I looked for solace, after God I had no other comfort but you, and now that too is gone”⁶²). We do not know the specific sources of such powerful images, but they suggest literary models (poems, songs, novels) either read or heard and then adapted in a personal fashion. Having often had no more than a piecemeal education, women would draw on such texts for striking metaphors with which to give voice to their feelings and stir the conscience of their beloved. Whatever the writers’ shortcomings in terms of literacy, letters were a potent device for shaping one’s own affections and influencing those of the recipient (Figure 7.2).

The lively language of these letters closely resembles that of many others dating from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries and preserved in Spanish and Latin American archives, many of them written in Cádiz, which, from 1717, replaced Seville as Spain’s main trading port with America. They reflect the continuity of models inspired by the handbooks published in large numbers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, such as the *Cartas y coplas para requerir nuevos amores* (1535), or in the early eighteenth, such as the hugely popular *Nuevo estilo y formulario de escribir cartas misivas* (1722), reprinted a dozen times by the mid-nineteenth century, with later editions including a “love letters” section.⁶³ In the early 1800s, Antonio Marqués y Espejo’s *Retórica epistolar o Arte nuevo de escribir todo género de cartas misivas y familiares* (1803), adapted from French originals and widely reissued, helped refresh and diversify such models “with examples from the most famous writers, foreign and Spanish.”

Literary references from the past therefore continued to weigh heavily on the Spanish sentimental imaginary of the time. As well as letter-writing handbooks, these included seventeenth-century plays whose (male and female) protagonists’ love letters were part of the dialogue and which were still read and performed in the eighteenth century.⁶⁴ The plots of Spanish-language romance novels, very popular primarily – although not exclusively – among female readers (the most famous such publication being Diego de San Pedro’s *Cárcel de amor* of 1492), often featured despairing love letters. Juan de Segura’s *Proceso de cartas de amores* (1548), meanwhile, was the first ever entirely epistolary novel.⁶⁵ This tradition would later be expanded by the new British and French moral and sentimental novels of the eighteenth century, many of them epistolary, which reached Spain in the 1780s and 1790s, sometimes in translation (Richardson’s *Pamela Andrews*, Madame de Beaumont’s *Cartas de Madame de Montier*, and so on), and inspired a late flowering in the genre that lasted until the mid-nineteenth century.⁶⁶ Sentimental plays

25

Querido miranda ábistade lo rabioso que estu-
 viste esta mañana y todo el enfado se a redu-
 cido porque yo sali ayer ala comedia y el día
 deedenk estubiste de guardia no me pare-
 ce motivo para que deje a una que te aque-
 rido y te quiere con una mor tan verdadero
 que yo me alegrara la mita que tu lo que
 as así pue de la tantas biez que me as
 dicho que me quieres a ora se a de cona
 aunque reflexiones lo que a dicho que no as
 de venir sino de me a un me me pare-
 ce que no te es tan facil como lo a dicho
 que a bien d me querido como me as
 dicho no te sera tan facil el a cerlo
 que a aunque tu quieras los mismos

Figure 7.2 Letter from María Teresa to Francisco de Miranda, undated.

Source: Archivo General de la Nación, Caracas, series *Colombeia*, section "Revolución francesa," XVIII, n. 2945, f. 25.

meanwhile, whether translations or Spanish originals, such as those of the prolific and successful Luciano Francisco Comella (1751–1812), heightened the emotional and intimate impact of love letters on stage by means of musical accompaniment.⁶⁷

Only in the late eighteenth century did the expressive formulas of this new sentimental literature begin to find their way into private correspondence,⁶⁸ which until then had remained more indebted to seventeenth-century literature.⁶⁹ Golden Age epistolary models were in no way fossilized references – they were kept alive through a prolonged and largely circular transmission: letter-writing handbooks, fictional letters, real letters, and possibly oral practices all influenced, and sometimes clashed with, one another. And they in turn were reworked by correspondents themselves or by scribes writing on behalf of the illiterate, an epistolary practice that left its own mark on creative literature. The result is the use of highly expressive phrases, some dramatic, others repetitive (particularly in the greetings and farewells), but with margins of creativity and sparks of originality in the way guidelines were adapted to the personal and local circumstances of writers and recipients, such as this emphatic request from María Teresa: “may you be as constant in loving me as I am in loving you, for I am more steadfast than the Rock of Gibraltar.”⁷⁰

From Republican Virtue and Domestic Commitment to Erotic Love: Letters from Britain and America

Also contained in the archive are letters written in English from Britain or the United States between the 1780s and the early 1800s. These include 18 letters from Susan Livingston (1748–1840), with whom Miranda maintained an intense correspondence between their first meeting in New York in 1784 and 1789. She was the daughter of a distinguished bourgeois revolutionary family: her father, the lawyer William Livingston, was a delegate to the Federal Constitutional Convention of 1787 and the first governor of New Jersey; her mother, the wealthy landowner Susannah French, was also deeply involved in the cause of US independence. Susan, then unmarried and in her thirties, like Miranda, was intelligent, intellectually curious and patriotically committed, well-informed about current affairs, discerning, and frustrated by the limits barring women from participation in institutions, while discouraging them from expressing their political opinions publicly.⁷¹

The unadorned, precise, elegant, and sometimes ironic language of her letters is personal but also characteristic of a republican political culture that rejected the moral and aesthetic values of the Ancien Régime. The rhetoric with which she refers to her feelings is more reserved than that deployed by Miranda’s Spanish correspondents of a few years earlier or his French correspondents of the revolutionary period. This is partly because they were never more than friends, enabling a more equal epistolary relationship than some of the others in which Miranda was involved: Susan does sometimes

reproach him for a lack of news (not always intentional, as letters would go astray), but she also receives the same complaint from him.⁷² Her austerity of expression also, however, reflects the moral and epistolary conventions of middle-class Protestant tradition, with its powerful model of female virtue (based above all on sexual restraint), notably, but not exclusively, in its Puritan version.⁷³ These models were disseminated through the transatlantic circulation of conduct literature, sentimental fiction, and manuals such as *Letters Written To and For Particular Friends* (1756) by Samuel Richardson, better known as the author of *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1740). Both booksellers and printers who traded in or adapted European literature and private individuals through their epistolary networks helped build interpretative communities that fostered the production and circulation of sentimental genres (such as the novel or poetry) and, more broadly, of sentimental modes of reading that gave new meaning to the consumption of more traditional literary genres. As Sarah Knott has shown, the culture of sensibility, already established in the Thirteen Colonies, developed in line with the new nation's political concerns after independence – rather than simply imitating British or French models, it adopted its own distinctive style, distancing itself from Britain despite the persistence of transatlantic cultural ties.⁷⁴

In this respect, Susan Livingston's letters fully reflect the republican notion that America was morally superior to its former metropolis, as expressed in an ideal of moderate sensibility, far removed from sentimentality. At the same time, they show how profoundly ingrained the ideas of honour and decorum were in a woman such as her, ideas understood as self as well as socially imposed: her fear that her private letters might have been read by a third party suggests both a concern for the judgement of others and, perhaps, a deep-rooted sense of propriety ("I would not for the Universe that what I say to you in the confidential friendly manner should be seen indeed"⁷⁵).

As we would expect, the letters written by Miranda's wife, Sarah Andrews, are very different in style. Much younger than her husband, Sarah came from a middle-class family of Scottish origins – she married him in 1802 and lived in London until her death. A total of ten letters survive, written from London and dated between September 1805 and August 1809: the first is addressed to Miranda in New York, the last to a house in which he was staying while travelling around the South of England and Wales.⁷⁶ If not elegant or refined, her letters are clear, eloquent, and correctly written. Sarah shows herself to be a faithful and obedient wife ("I will reward you with my Fidelity and conform in everything as I have promised"), grateful for her husband's kindnesses, and repentant for what she calls her own ingratitude.⁷⁷ She discusses her worries about their perennial financial difficulties and her efforts to manage his debts and avoid the confiscation of his books, a concern that leads her to include some of the sums and figures in one of her letters and which perhaps explains her very sparing use of paper. But she does so in a gentle, affectionate tone: she laments his absence, asks him to write at length, and is happy to do so herself, using the well-known cliché of long-distance

conversation (“forgive my longe letter for while writing it seems as if I were conversing with you”).⁷⁸ Her fond stories about their sons Leander/Leandro and Francis/Francisco show the comfort they bring her, and she makes much of the fact that they love and miss their father (“My dear Leander has kissed this twenty times”; “he is allways whithing to you and speaking of you”).⁷⁹ Sarah’s letters therefore epitomize the register of middle-class respectability and its conjugal model, marked by a wife’s respect for her husband, but also by affection and the enjoyment of domestic pleasures. A style that could bring meaning to her experience of a marriage cut short firstly by separation and then by Miranda’s imprisonment and death (Figure 7.3).

The archive also holds two notes from 1805, written by the American Leonora Sansay (1773–1821) in an explicitly erotic vein rarely found in women’s correspondence. These have so far been overlooked, despite the great interest in Sansay, whose eventful and enigmatic life and unusual literary output have been the subject of numerous postcolonial and feminist studies. Born Honora Davern in Philadelphia, she grew up in her stepfather’s tavern (the Sign of the Half Moon), a place for both pleasure and political discussion. In 1800, she married Louis Sansay, a planter from Saint-Domingue, with whom she moved to Cap-Français in 1802 to try and recover control of his properties after the Haitian Revolution of 1791.⁸⁰ Back in Philadelphia, in 1808 she published *Secret History; or The Horrors of St. Domingo*,⁸¹ which Sarah Knott calls a “hybrid text of self-writing: partly revolutionary travel letters and partly scandal memoir,” offering a fictional account of the period that blended the new codes of sensibility with the concerns of a revolutionary age.⁸² Constructed around a series of letters written by two sisters, it recounts the horrors of the Revolution, usually told as a story of Black violence, from the perspective of Clara, Sansay’s alter ego, who represents the voice of women trapped in marriages to tyrannical husbands, thus establishing a symbolic link of empathy between women and slaves fighting for their freedom.

Sansay met Miranda in New York and again in Philadelphia, where he was planning the first of his two failed expeditions to liberate Venezuela. She was probably fascinated by Miranda the adventurer, and he by an attractive, passionate, and outspoken woman with a strong interest in politics and personal views on the revolutionary processes she had witnessed. Her two brief letters to him were written in Philadelphia on a Saturday (probably 30 November 1805).⁸³ The first, penned in the morning, is friendly:

the Lady who had the pleasure of seeing Gen. Miranda at New York wishes very much to have that pleasure repeated. She is now in Philadelphia – at the corner of Pine & fourth Street the house fronts Pine street Nr. 111.⁸⁴

The second, sent later that same day, is more explicit: “I will fly on the wings of desire to die with delight in your arms.”⁸⁵ This bold and beautiful language

dear life, and may you live ameney happy happy years is the prayer
 of your sincerest best unhappy friend 23 June
 Take care my dearest General of some traitorous rascal that would
 take your precious life for the sake of a few Dollars. My dearest
 Leander love, and adorer Papa was at home - he has been
 wrought to you all day, everything that he can remember - he has the
 second angle in the world, the other leaves ending immediately
 he sends his best wishes to you - I thought me a long letter my dearest
 in what I am to do, and how to act, for I will only abide by your
 directions - the amount of the several bills are about - 600
 I know Bill shall not be payed untill I have your Green - 147-12
 better, has he has all the Property in this house - which brings 995 1/2
 and upwards of 2000 and some books and papers - 172-17-0
 Mr Peter Turnbull called to day - told him my fear at supposing
 the books to be removed - he told me, that this fast the and Mr Dunsen
 would have Mr Dunsen have writen - and after that they
 would have it stamped - that they would have every security
 and begged of me to make myself happy - that I can never be
 I look at the empty rooms, and depraved of a book, I hope my
 dearest General - You will not think it my fault, if any
 misfortune should happen I have more everything in my power
 to quiet the badness, and prevent them being removed
 I have had a fret of illness in consequence of my fretting
 and unhappiness - I am now not fit to undergo all this trouble
 but I will not leave them one moment - Mr Dunsen Clark will
 wrest them, and Peter Turnbull will be present, and am
 from Dulais to Pack them down my dearest General, I got every
 moment at the books it will be the last day I shall have them.

Figure 7.3 Sarah Andrews to Francisco de Miranda, 20 June 1807.

Source: Archivo General de la Nación, Caracas, series Colombia, section "Negociaciones," IX, n. 2167, f. 298v.

befits the strong-willed, hedonistic woman who, two years later, would risk her reputation with *Secret History*. Although published anonymously, the book was immediately attributed to her and caused a scandal: not only had she behaved with a freedom prohibited to women (writers included), but her sentimental rhetoric had exposed the moral vices of French rule, meaning

that the text could be seen as a warning about state corruption that challenged the American republic's public embrace of civic virtue.

Sensibilité: Love and Tender Friendships

Compared with those written in Spanish or English, the letters Miranda received from women in the French language, most dating from the revolutionary decade of the 1790s, deploy markedly different codes, relating to their epistolary reference points, cultural and political context, and the social status and education of their authors. The publication (1725 onwards) of the vast collection of letters by Marie de Rabutin Chantal, Marquise de Sévigné (1626–1696), had established a stylistic model that many women (and some men too) aspired to emulate throughout the eighteenth and into the nineteenth century, and to which they were constantly compared.⁸⁶ For theorists of epistolary art and literature, it represented the ideal balance between conventions and genuine emotion, between *l'art* and *le cœur*, as formulated by Charles Batteux in his *Cours de belles-lettres et principes de littérature*. *Lettres portugaises*, published in Paris in 1669 and, in 1810, attributed to Mariana de Alcoforado, also made a great impact: an instant hit in the salon world, the book appeared in numerous new editions until well into the nineteenth century. In 1926, it was revealed that the true author of these letters, supposedly written by a nun from her convent in Beja to her lover, French nobleman Noel Bouton de Chamilly, Count of Saint-Léger, was, in fact, a mediocre poet, Gabriel-Joseph de Lavergne. They nevertheless continued to be an influential model for both real-life love letters and countless epistolary novels. The most famous of these, Rousseau's *Julie, ou La Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761), caused a sensation among middle-class readers, who saw it as a lesson in life and sensibility as well as letter-writing, as the extensive correspondence addressed to its author shows.⁸⁷

Letters written by women of the past or the heroines of novels undoubtedly influenced the way flesh-and-blood eighteenth-century women wrote to lovers, friends, or relatives.⁸⁸ Take, for example, the 33 letters written between 1795 and 1798 by Delphine de Sabran, Marquise de Custine (1770–1826), widow of Armand de Custine (guillotined in 1794) – a woman of artistic tastes and ambitions who was a friend of Mme de Staël and enjoyed a long friendship, and brief love affair, with Miranda.⁸⁹ Or the 50 written by Louise Anne Suzanne Lefebvre, Mme Pétion, widow of Jérôme Pétion de Villeneuve, between 1799 and 1806; or the four sent across Paris to Miranda's house (Palais Royal 99) in 1792 by Mme Tor – about whom we know virtually nothing. All three women were affiliated with the Girondins and a similar sentimental register can be discerned in their letters, reflecting their shared readings and cultural background. The differences in their social circumstances are evident, however, with the aristocratic Mme de Custine a more competent writer than Mme Pétion.

These letters make up a sentimental correspondence in which there is also room for political news and opinions, the lending of books, complaints about family obligations, and reflections on life and the status of women. Mme Tor's language suggests the rare treasure of a sparky friendship, which she says she feels is reciprocated.⁹⁰ And Mme Pétion, who sometimes signs off as "Tinope," uses a mixture of affection and humour in asking for Miranda's news and expressing the pleasure his company and friendship bring her ("I need you here to return peace to my spirit";⁹¹ "a fine Gentleman you are, not replying to my letter ... I am a terrible woman to torment you thus").⁹² She also unburdens herself about her parental worries and responsibilities, far from the idyllic vision offered by sentimental literature ("Such are the benefits of motherhood"⁹³).

Delphine Custine's letters tend to adopt a language of great emotional intensity, sometimes verging on or indeed fully embracing the melodramatic. In presenting her own affections and those she says are shared by her family, she paints a portrait of a friendship based on intimacy and jealousy, her words of tenderness and possession closely related to the lexicon of love, as was common in the sentimental literature and correspondence of the time, in which *tendre amitié* and *amour* appear to be almost interchangeable: "my good and true friend, and *not just my friend*"; "My God, why are you not here with us. How happy we should be to be in possession of you."⁹⁴ She reiterates the fact that she misses him, longs for news of him, and suspects he has no interest in news of her; she is also at great pains to declare her constancy ("the unbreakable bond that binds me to you"), defending herself from his accusations of flirting and fickleness.⁹⁵ Her writing displays a certain taste for reflection and emotional self-analysis, using metaphors and analogies typical of sentimental literature, such as that of love as an illness ("the more a heart has been wounded by sorrow, the more susceptible it becomes to lesser injuries! It is like a convalescent recovering from an illness"⁹⁶). She worries about her children's future, notably that of her daughter Delphine, afraid that the boredom and lack of occupation determined by her gender and class will make her overly sentimental and thus prone to suffering.⁹⁷ She also evokes her own sentimental experience as a reader who feels a particular book has spoken directly to her, making her feel an intimate bond with its unknown author ("he alone has spoken to my heart, flattered its weaknesses and found his way to it. The author of that book! He has undoubtedly known love and, above all, unhappiness!")⁹⁸ At times, her highly emotional language, often full of pain and left unanswered, leads straight into pragmatic requests (such as a plea for Miranda to intervene on behalf of a young relative), suggesting that although the feeling behind it is not necessarily feigned, there is nonetheless a rhetorical dimension here, a kind of sentimental *performance* in play.

What Miranda and his female French correspondents have in common is their concern for the political situation in France, based on broadly shared ideological positions. This sense of complicity and the memory of their common misfortunes lead Mme de Custine (whose late husband had been imprisoned

with Miranda) to express her rejection of the Jacobin executive body. In an undated letter, she writes, “That Directoire terrifies me!” “Those Jacobins are swaggering more than ever,”⁹⁹ and on 10 May 1798: “I see no respite, no hope, I fear the return of the Jacobins and war! Respite, respite, that’s what most are calling for.”¹⁰⁰ Like many others, she uses the dramatic and novelistic language of the horrors of the Revolution, which fed into so many stories, memoirs, novels, and pamphlets, across a wide ideological spectrum (from realist to Girondin). In so doing she applies her own moral and sentimental judgement to her country’s current political leaders, representing herself as part of a virtuous and persecuted opposition.¹⁰¹ Mme Pétion, meanwhile, whose soul is full of “ardent imagination,” has been profoundly distressed by the terrible events of the Revolution and says she envies others’ peace of mind, presenting sensibility as both a sign of moral refinement and a cause of suffering (“I often long for the happiness enjoyed by insensible souls”¹⁰²).

As for Mme Tor, she acknowledges in an undated letter that she is very worried about the political situation in France, about which she hopes for more details from Miranda.¹⁰³ She glorifies him as a hero and humanitarian champion while at the same time presenting herself as a patriot, thus reshaping the conventional and gendered ways in which the moral and political dimensions of sensibility had been understood.¹⁰⁴ In 1772, Antoine-Léonard Thomas had argued in *Histoire des mœurs, de l’esprit et du caractère des femmes*, widely read in Europe and America, that women naturally tended to harbour moderate feelings such as conjugal and maternal love or kindness towards those closest to them, while the strong emotions of patriotism and humanitarianism, born of a more universal empathy, were more characteristic of men, an idea that seems to be echoed by the widowed Mme Dupont in an undated letter commenting on this side of Miranda: “Your heart of fire, your soul that burns and is sensible to this good cause and those who suffer.”¹⁰⁵ In a revolutionary context that had in part inherited and in part shattered the emotional styles of the past, women such as Mme Tor and Mme Dupont were constructing representations of their own affections that exploited the sentimental rhetoric of the Enlightenment, and sometimes transcended it, in order to lay claim to both the delicate feelings usually attributed to their gender and the potent political passions of revolution.

In the context of this gendered expression of sentiments, the letters sent by Geneviève – who may have been a Creole, either White or mixed-race – from Cap-Français to Miranda in Havana deserve special mention.¹⁰⁶ French travellers’ accounts teemed with clichés about the sensuality of women in this busy port city, full of sailors disembarking after long transatlantic voyages, and equally full of brothels to serve them – images based on commonplaces about the unbridled passions of the tropics and, in particular, on the eroticization of the free Black and mixed-race women who formed a significant part of the population.¹⁰⁷ Cross-referencing the letters of this Creole woman with those written to Miranda by fellow soldier Antonio de la Paz, a Spanish aide-de-camp, asked by Geneviève to act as an intermediary, offers a revealing

contrast between the way she represents herself and the way he judges her behaviour.¹⁰⁸

Paz says he cannot understand the passion and loyalty she has shown since the start of a relationship she refuses to accept is over: "My God, what a woman and what passion she has conceived for you, sir, in a short time"; "the poor thing, her weeping beggars belief, she goes to extremes that astonish me: you seduced her so quickly and she told me this morning that she will come to you no matter from whence you summon her."¹⁰⁹ And he diagnoses an abnormal passion:

G. loved you at first sight: her feelings are unusual for a woman of her kind: I see her resolved to follow you, sir, wherever you go, she has lost weight and her looks in unbelievable fashion ...; I am stunned by this and by her extreme actions.¹¹⁰

Why do Geneviève's feelings seem "strange" or "extreme" to Paz, and who, in his eyes, are women "of her kind"? Is he really surprised that she should remain loyal in love, in a city where sailors and soldiers came and went and women, especially working-class women, could only hope for fleeting encounters with the men they met? Is he genuinely shocked by the intensity of the physical symptoms (loss of looks and appetite) she suffers, like the heroine of a novel, on experiencing heartbreak and abandonment? Does he admire the delicate feelings of a woman who says she appreciates "distinguished tastes" and "erudition" in a man?¹¹¹ Social and gender-based assumptions converge in this assessment of the expected or appropriate sentiments of a woman such as her (one whose exact social and ethnic background remains unknown). The erotic and emotional imaginary of Miranda's friend, and of Miranda too perhaps, revolves around an implicitly male and European view of Caribbean ports as home to throngs of Black and mixed-race temptresses who, in the virtual absence of White women, were there to serve the sexual, material, and emotional needs of a large and transient male population. Paz speaks of his own encounters in crude, misogynistic, and racist language, brutally portraying the woman who throws him out of her home and her bed as a "vile woman," a "worthless mulatto" who makes his skin crawl.¹¹²

As a counter to such descriptions, profoundly distorted by moral expectations and erotic fantasies, it has, in fact, been shown that free Black and mixed-race women played a significant role in a wide range of economic activities (from commerce to rentier ownership). Some succeeded in accumulating considerable fortunes, occupying socially recognized positions, and maintaining stable and quasi-marital relationships with White men. Geneviève, whether she was one of the latter or a White Creole, may have had similar expectations of emotional satisfaction and social respectability. Paz, however, depicts her as desperate, determined to follow Miranda anywhere, even prepared to board a ship dressed as a man to see him again. This last is an echo of the Hispanic and European novels, plays, and chapbooks

of the sixteenth and seventeenth (and, to a lesser extent, eighteenth) centuries whose female protagonists adopted men's clothing or a male identity in order to emigrate, practise piracy, wage war, follow their husbands or lovers, or restore their honour, a genre in which art imitated life and vice versa.

These letters, penned by a man about the love felt by a woman, seem to reveal some distinct and, in certain ways, contradictory sentiments: the complicity of two single men sharing stories about their love affairs as comrades in the army, an institution that encouraged intimacy between men, contrasts with the discomfort they experience when a woman expresses feelings they consider disproportionate or not in keeping with a relationship that they always intended to be ephemeral. Geneviève's own letters, however, paint a more serene portrait of her, with none of the drama attributed to her by Paz. Her tone is that of a loving friend ("trust that I cherish the most sincere attachment and the truest friendship"¹¹³) and, if she is sad that her lover has gone, she expresses this without tears or reproaches, thus giving every appearance of a dignified response to both love and abandonment.

Particularly moving because of the way they strive to construct an unnamed form of affection are the 32 letters written between 1799 and 1803 by Françoise Pellicier, the landlady of a boarding house in Paris whom Miranda left in charge of his furniture and art collections (paintings, tapestries, engravings, sculptures) when he went into exile in England in 1797. All we know about her is that in 1806 she was living in the affluent Faubourg Saint-Germain and was the sister of an engraver, a trade whose relationship with the art of printing involved widespread literacy among men, but not necessarily among women. Her handwriting is clear and painstakingly set down; her laborious spelling is practically phonetic and sometimes barely decipherable because of her anarchic grouping of syllables. In spite of this, or perhaps precisely because of it, her writing reveals her sustained efforts to express herself, her awareness of her shortcomings, and her eagerness to improve via "some lessons in writing and grammar"¹¹⁴ (Figure 7.4).

There is clearly a certain warmth between Françoise and Miranda, with a degree of mutual affection and, on her part, a declared fidelity as well as more intense feelings bordering on love. She addresses him respectfully as "Monsieur," tells him about the accounts and her efforts to sell some of his furniture to cover debts;¹¹⁵ she sends detailed requests for items of clothing or, for her brother, English burins, described with technical precision;¹¹⁶ she asks for both money and parcels when they are delayed. But she also strays into more personal territory, offering him advice, preceded by an apology for her daring ("forgive me for making these observations"¹¹⁷), warning him against treacherous friends,¹¹⁸ and even confiding some of her innermost feelings, such as her grief at the death of her mother in 1799¹¹⁹ and her father six years later.¹²⁰ Her letters paint her as intelligent, aware of the social distance between them, and pleased that he holds her in high regard despite this; a clear-sighted woman with a definite sense of her own dignity.

Paris le 23 de fevrier

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Monsieur.

j'ai recu par la voi de ambour votre lettre du
 30 jansier mais je nai pas recu celle de
 catalis, j'apren avec le plus grand plaisir que vous
 ave termine votre voiage eurensement que vous
 jouise d'une bone saute et que votre comerce
 de liprevi va selon vos desir, je comen^{sai} deja a
 etre inquiete de ne pas recevoir de vos nouvel
 et j'avais besoin de la consolation que votre lettre
 me done car de pui mon ariste, j'ai desseije de
 tristese que vos fidel ami on cherche a disiper
 par leur atencion et que votre lettre ete seul
 capable de detruir autierement, vos males
 son rendu a leur destination, j'ai ete force par
 raison de ne pas atandre votre reponce pour
 les retire de l'annee st honore, j'ai rempli

Figure 7.4 Françoise Pelicier to Francisco de Miranda, 23 February (1799?).

Source: Archivo General de la Nación, Caracas, series Colombia, section "Revolución francesa," XVIII, n. 3127, f. 237 r. and v.

How does Françoise configure language to construct her relationship with Miranda, and from where does she draw her models? Correspondence manuals established guidelines for different circumstances (letters expressing love, requests, condolences, congratulations, or offering invitations or apologies) and for communication between equals or otherwise (ties based on friendship, love, business, or clientelism). They had nothing to say, however, on the somewhat unusual case of an epistolary relationship between landlady and former lodger (and social superior) – a case with no fictional forbear either, other than Pamela's letters to Mr B in Richardson's famous novel, which reflect a different relationship, that between maid and master, and a different register, that of virtuous resistance to seduction. Françoise, then, must forge her own path and does so by creating collages of various social languages and emotional codes. Discernible among these are epistolary models of love or friendship, sentimental fiction, and, perhaps, the guides to civility when dealing with a superior provided by etiquette manuals; other inspirations, such as phrases from spoken language, are more difficult to detect.

Françoise adjusts her chosen linguistic scraps to her emotional and practical needs and to the effect she intends to produce on Miranda. At times she uses well-worn formulas of respect ("I am, with esteem and respect, your devoted friend").¹²¹ Elsewhere, her language of intense and loyal friendship appropriates the conventions of love letters to evoke the pain of separation and desire for reunion ("Farewell, I cannot wait to see you again by my side";¹²² "I live only in the anticipation of seeing you"¹²³); the fantasy of going to live with him in London were she not needed in Paris to care for her elderly father;¹²⁴ and a burning desire to show her feelings for him in person ("I see with the keenest interest and greatest gratitude that I still hold the same place in your memory, and I long for the moment when I can see you again and renew the sentiments I have expressed to you with my own lips"¹²⁵). When Miranda expresses doubt about her good management of his affairs, she not only indignantly defends her honesty and devotion to his interests, but expresses her grief in words reminiscent of those of abandoned lovers, real and fictional: "I no longer live; rescue me from the worry and profound sorrow that have immersed me since your last letter."¹²⁶

In addressing her former lodger, a man of superior education and status, this woman of modest origins and limited education utters expressions of affection and fidelity similar to those of fictional heroines ("Yours till the last day of my life"¹²⁷). Far from arousing pathos or ridicule with her efforts to convince him of the nobility of her feelings, however, her words come across to us as profoundly moving and raise all kinds of questions for any historian interested in emotions and the language in which they used to be couched.

Conclusions

What can we conclude from this collection of letters from friends and lovers that enables us to listen to the voices of eighteenth-century European and

American women? My aim was to highlight two distinct forms of tension in our reading of them. First, that between the relatively transnational character of models of personal writing (and, more broadly, styles of sensibility) and the “national” codes linked to literary and cultural traditions shared by linguistic (and, to some extent, emotional) communities. Second, that between the constriction imposed by epistolary conventions and individuals’ ability to adapt them: in this case, women’s skill at doing so in order to “perform” their emotions and construct subjectivities.

In fact, both over time and at given moments, culturally codified languages of emotion establish a variety of possibilities for subjectivation, modified by parameters within which gender is articulated with other markers of identity (class, education, nationality, age, religion), possibilities that are unequal, as too is the distribution of economic and cultural resources. According to the eighteenth-century culture of sensibility, innate feelings, which spring from the heart, are naturally more intense and constant in women but subject to the inconstancy of desire in men: it is therefore up to women to invest more in love, express their emotions more vividly, and suffer more in the face of unrequited love. These and other letters allow us, however, to go beyond conventional representations that see nothing more than the spontaneous writing of “naturally” passionate or sentimental women. Here, the efforts made to deal with both geographical and emotional separation, to affirm the steadfastness of the writer’s own feelings, lament the asymmetrical nature of the relationship and demand greater reciprocity go hand in hand with a desire for knowledge and an eagerness to share books, exchange ideas and opinions, and, in some cases, political concerns as well.

The letters convey feelings we can assume to be both lived and learned, formulated in a language to a certain extent common to those who lived in the same period and in many cases also in similarly cultured, elitist environments open to transnational circulation, but also clearly differentiated, not only by gender, social status, and individual circumstances but also by disparate epistolary and moral cultures. Sentimental styles were European and also transatlantic; however, not all literary and epistolary models and models circulated in the same way in time and space, contributing to the creation of territorial specificities.

In Spain, the prolonged influence of Golden Age literature, whose courtly novels continued to be reprinted and read and whose plays continued to be performed to great success, despite the disdain of Enlightenment critics, resulted in the new sentimental literature of the eighteenth century taking root later and intermingling with other models and idioms. This explains why the letters of Spanish women or *criollas* preserved in Miranda’s archive, like many others of the period (written by both men and women), are more likely to use the love-related formulas of the previous century than they are to depend on the rhetoric of sensibility, which only became widespread in the late 1700s. For their part, the letters written in French, mostly by women with a more refined education, offer a vocabulary and rhetoric closer to that

sentimental register, established early and firmly in France and England in novels and plays as well as in political writings and correspondence. Among the English letters, those of Sarah Andrews reflect the specific register of respectability, obedience, and marital companionship. Susan Livingston's letters show the possibilities and limitations for a middle-class American woman involved in the moral and political construction of the new republic (in opposition to the old metropolises, France in particular as the epitome of Ancien Régime corruption), while Leonora Sansay, from her somewhat marginal position as an adventurous, transgressive woman, was able to deploy in her letters an erotic idiom rarely found in female correspondence.

If we understand that emotions are both expressed in and shaped by the words and gestures (learned, or rather absorbed) that give them a name, we can see that these women's epistolary styles indicate distinctive ways not only of writing but also of experiencing close relationships of love and friendship.

Notes

- * Research for this chapter has been funded by the European Research Council under Horizon 2020 (project CIRGEN, ERC2017-Advanced Grant 787015).
- 1 Robert Darnton, "Readers Respond to Rousseau: The Fabrication of Romantic Sensitivity," in *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 215–256; Marie-Claire Grassi, "Des lettres qui parlent d'amour," *Romantisme* 68 (1990): 23–32; Anne-Marie Sohn, ed., *La correspondance, un document pour l'Histoire* (Rouen: Publications de l'Université de Rouen, 2002), 73–81; Rosario Márquez Macías, "Cartas de amor y silencios: la correspondencia privada entre Buenos Aires y España en el siglo XVIII," *Fundación VII* (2004–2005): 229–242; Diego Navarro Bonilla, "Sentir por escrito hacia 1650: cartas, billetes y lugares de memoria," in *Accidentes del alma. Las emociones en la época moderna*, ed. María Tausiet and James S. Amelang (Madrid: Abada, 2000), 229–254; Rita Unfer Lukoschik, "Giuseppe Pelli Bencivenni et la sentimentalizzazione del carteggio," in *Scritture dell'io fra pubblico e privato*, ed. Renato Pasta (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2009), 127–140; María José de la Pascua Sánchez, "La escritura privada y la representación de las emociones," in *Educación los sentimientos y las costumbres. Una mirada desde la historia*, ed. Mónica Bolufer, Carolina Blutrach, and Juan Gomis (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 2014), 81–107; Fernando Bouza, "Escribir a corazón abierto. Emoción, intención y expresión del ánimo en la escritura de los siglos XVI y XVII," *Varia Historia* 35, no. 68 (2019): 507–534; Gabriela Martínez Pérez, "'Tu carta no me hartó de leerla': el epistolario de Lucía Carrillo de Albornoz (1735–1805)," in *Identidad autorial femenina y comunicación epistolar*, ed. María Martos and Julio Neira (Madrid: UNED, 2018), 93–112.
- 2 Meri Torras, *Tomando cartas en el asunto. Las amistades peligrosas de las mujeres con el género epistolar* (Zaragoza: Universidad de Zaragoza, 2001); Marie-France Silver and Marie-Laure Girou Swiderski, ed., *Femmes en toutes lettres. Les épistoliers du XVIIIe siècle* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2000); Vanda Anastácio, "Privacidad y publicidad en el discurso epistolar femenino: el caso de la Marquesa de Alorna (1750–1839)," in *Identidad autorial femenina y comunicación epistolar*, ed. María Martos and Julio Neira (Madrid: UNED, 2018), 113–132.

- 3 Dena Goodman, "Letter Writing and the Emergence of Gendered Subjectivity in Eighteenth-Century France," *Journal of Women's History* 17, no. 2 (2005): 9–37; Dena Goodman, *Becoming a Woman in the Age of Letters* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009); Konstantin Dierks, *In My Power. Letter Writing and Communications in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009); Sarah Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution* (Williamsburg: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 442; Isabelo Macías and Francisco Morales Padrón, eds., *Cartas desde América, 1700–1800* (Seville: Junta de Andalucía, 1991); Rocío Sánchez Rubio and Isabel Testón Núñez, eds., *El hilo que une. Las relaciones epistolares en el Viejo y el Nuevo Mundo* (ss. XVI–XVIII) (Cáceres: Universidad de Extremadura, 1999); M. Carmen Martínez Martínez, *Desde la otra orilla. Cartas de Indias en el Archivo de la Chancillería de Valladolid (siglos XVI–XVIII)* (León: Junta de Castilla y León, 2007); Jesús M. Usunáriz, *Una visión de la América del XVIII: correspondencia de emigrantes guipuzcoanos y navarros* (Madrid: MAPFRE, 1992).
- 4 G.J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility. Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1987); Anne Vincent-Buffault, *Histoire des larmes* (Paris: Rivages, 1991); Isabel Morant, "Las costumbres del amor y la diferencia de sexos en la novela de la modernidad," in *Las huellas de Foucault en la historiografía. Poderes, cuerpos y deseos*, ed. M. Isabel del Val and Henar Gallego (Barcelona: Icaria, 2013), 135–162; M. Jesús García Garrosa, *La retórica de las lágrimas. La comedia sentimental española (1751–1802)* (Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 1990); Mónica Bolufer, "En torno a la sensibilidad dieciochesca: discursos, prácticas, paradojas," in *Las mujeres y las emociones en España y América* (ss. XVII–XIX), ed. María Luisa Candau Chacón (Santander: Editorial Universidad de Cantabria, 2016), 29–56.
- 5 Konstantin Dierks, *In My Power. Letter Writing and Communications in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009); Antonio Castillo Gómez, "'Me alegraré que al recibo de ésta...'. Cuatrocientos años de prácticas epistolares (ss. XVI–XIX)," *Manuscripts* 29 (2011): 19–50.
- 6 María Luisa Candau Chacón, "Mujer y deseo: la pasión contrariada de una viuda andaluza de fines del Seiscientos," in *Mujer y deseo: representaciones y prácticas de vida*, ed. Gloria Espigado, María José de la Pascua Sánchez, and María del Rosario García-Doncel (Cádiz: Universidad de Cádiz, 2004), 405–418.
- 7 Anne Vincent-Buffault, *Histoire des larmes* (Paris: Rivages, 1991).
- 8 Arlette Farge, *Le bracelet de parchemin. L'écrit sur soi au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Bayard, 2014).
- 9 Renata Ago, *Il gusto delle cose: una storia degli oggetti nella Roma del Seicento* (Rome: Donzelli, 2006); Arjun Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
- 10 Karen Racine, *Francisco de Miranda. A Transatlantic Life in the Age of Revolution* (Wilmington: Scholarly Resources, 2003).
- 11 Known as *Colombeia* (papers of the "great Colombia"), they are held at the Archivo General de la Nación in Caracas and presently can only be accessed online: <http://www.franciscodemiranda.org/colombeia>. See also the complete edition: Francisco Miranda, *Archivo del General Miranda*, ed. Vicente Dávila (Caracas: Editorial Sur-América/Parra León Hermanos/Editorial Lex, 1926–1950).
- 12 There are also seven letters and notes from Delphine Custine at the Archives Nationales de France, published in Francisco Miranda, *Archivo del General Miranda*, ed. Vicente Dávila (Caracas: Editorial Sur-América/Parra León

- Hermanos/Editorial Lex, 1926–1950), XIII, 272–275, and a few from women in Venezuela at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich.
- 13 Unless otherwise stated, references are to the “Correspondance de femmes” section in Archivo General de la Nación (AGN), *Colombeia*, Révolution française (R.F.), XVIII. Any other volumes or series are specified.
 - 14 Many of the letters contain spelling, grammatical, and other errors, reflecting their writers’ knowledge of the language in question. These are not reflected in the English translations given here, but the original quotations are reproduced in the footnotes; English quotations are cited verbatim.
 - 15 On multilingualism among women writers, see Amélie Jaques and Beatrijs Vanacker, “Language, Gender and Authority in the Letters of Isabelle de Charrière,” in *Gender and Cultural Mediation in the Long Eighteenth Century. Women across Borders*, ed. Mónica Bolufer, Laura Guinot-Ferri, and Carolina Blutrach (London: Palgrave, 2024), 171–190.
 - 16 “il n’i a que’a vous seule que s’ouvre mon coeur” – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, 20 October 1779, f.5.
 - 17 “Jusqu’au plaisir de vous voir to God Mi Dear Friend” – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, undated, f.7.
 - 18 “adio caro amico, dolce tesoro, per la vita tu sara mio bene”; “anima mia, venite presto per consolarmy” – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., undated, XI, f.59.
 - 19 Aldo Ravà, ed., *Lettere di donne a Giacomo Casanova* (Milan: Fratelli Treves, 1912).
 - 20 Mónica Bolufer, “A Latin American Casanova? Sex, Gender, Enlightenment and Revolution in the Life and Writings of Francisco de Miranda (1750–1816),” *Gender and History* 34, no. 1 (March 2022): 22–24; Karen Racine, “Love in the Time of Liberation: Francisco de Miranda’s Relationships with Women.” In *Francisco de Miranda. Exile and Enlightenment*, ed. John Maher, 76–116 (London: Institute for the Study of the Americas, 2006).
 - 21 “pardonez ce grifon, mauvais plume et encre, et que le messenger me presse” – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, 1 February 1778, f.15.
 - 22 “Pardones mon grifonage. Je n’ai jamais appris a écrire le frances” – Francisco Miranda, *Archivo del General Miranda*, ed. Vicente Dávila (Caracas: Editorial Sur-América/Parra León Hermanos/Editorial Lex, 1926–1950), XIII, 6 February 1788, p. 227; I have been unable to find the document at the AGN.
 - 23 “j’oublie, et que vous ne voulez pas que je vous écrive, et que mon griffonage est illisible. N’importe: vous saurez que j’ai pensé a vous et que j’ai eu besoin de vous écrire” – AGN, *Colombeia*, Viajes, XVIII, 7 Thermidor (26 July) 1795, f.163.
 - 24 “Ouvrez doucement pour ne pas casser ce qui est dans la lettre” – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, undated, f.150.
 - 25 AGN, *Colombeia*, Viajes, XVIII, undated, f.150.
 - 26 AGN, *Colombeia*, Viajes, X, f.414. Catherine Hall’s silhouette is reproduced in Francisco Miranda, *Archivo del General Miranda*, ed. Vicente Dávila (Caracas: Editorial Sur-América/Parra León Hermanos/Editorial Lex, 1926–1950), VI, 98. I have been unable to find the document at the AGN.
 - 27 Cassandra A. Good, *Founding Friendships. Friendships between Men and Women in the Early American Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
 - 28 AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, undated, f.35.
 - 29 “une boucle de mouchoir” – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, 19 August 1789, f.79.
 - 30 AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, undated, f.101.
 - 31 “I shall await with pleasure [the gift of] the little dog; although it is a symbol of fidelity, I have no need of this proof of your friendship; I believe it to be sincere.” (“J’attendrai avec plaisir celui du petit chien, quoique ce soit le symbole de la

- fidélité Je n'aurais pas besoin de cette preuve de votre amitié; je la crois sincere," – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, 29 October 1782, f.32.
- 32 "el escapulario que te di no se lo des a nadie ni te lo quites del queyo" – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, undated, f.19.
- 33 AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, f.201, 208.
- 34 AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, undated, f.12.
- 35 AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, 7 November 1784, f.74.
- 36 "de lo mejor que aya en ese pueblo" – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, María Teresa to Francisco de Miranda, f.19.
- 37 AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, f.31.
- 38 AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, 29 January 1802, f.252; 1 January 1802, f.253.
- 39 AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, undated, f.13.
- 40 AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, undated, f.19.
- 41 "rappelez vous: *celle que vous a lié vos cheveux le jour de votre départ de Paris*, celle a qui vous aves donné une petite boite avec un coeur au lieu de poison: en voila assez, je crois, pour raffraichir votre mémoire." – Archives Nationales, F7, 6285, Miranda file. Included in Francisco Miranda, *Archivo del General Miranda*, ed. Vicente Dávila (Caracas: Editorial Sur-América/Parra León Hermanos/Editorial Lex, 1926–1950), XIII, 272–273.
- 42 "le cadeau que vous me fite" – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, undated, f.102.
- 43 Roger Chartier, "Revolución de la novela y revolución de la lectura," in *Entre poder y placer. Cultura escrita y literatura en la Edad Moderna* (Madrid: Cátedra, 2000), 179–198; Robert Darnton, "Readers Respond to Rousseau: The Fabrication of Romantic Sensitivity," in *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 215–256.
- 44 "Que vous etes aimable, mon digne ami, d'avoir songé a mes petits plaisirs en m'envoyant le libre tant desirés" – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, undated (sender's location unknown), f.130.
- 45 Diego Navarro Bonilla, *Del corazón a la pluma. Archivos y papeles privados femeninos en la Edad Moderna* (Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 2004); Fernando Bouza, "Escribir a corazón abierto. Emoción, intención y expresión del ánimo en la escritura de los siglos XVI y XVII," *Varia Historia* 35, no. 68 (2019), 521.
- 46 Meri Torras, *Tomando cartas en el asunto. Las amistades peligrosas de las mujeres con el género epistolar* (Zaragoza: Universidad de Zaragoza, 2001).
- 47 Isabel Morant and Mónica Bolufer, *Amor, matrimonio y familia. La construcción histórica de la familia moderna* (Madrid: Síntesis, 1998); María José de la Pascua Sánchez, "Las incertidumbres el corazón: la Historia y el mundo de los afectos," *Cuadernos de Historia Moderna. Anejos* 14 (2015): 164, 166–167.
- 48 Isabel Burdiel, *Emilia Pardo Bazán* (Barcelona: Taurus, 2019), 280.
- 49 M. Jesús García Garrosa, *La retórica de las lágrimas. La comedia sentimental española (1751–1802)* (Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 1990); Yvonne Fuentes, *El triángulo sentimental en el drama del Dieciocho (Inglaterra, Francia, España)* (Kassel: Reichenberger, 1999).
- 50 Roger Chartier, ed., *Correspondence: Models of Letter-Writing from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997); Antonio Castillo Gómez and Verónica Sierra, ed., *Cinco siglos de cartas: historia y prácticas epistolares en las épocas moderna y contemporánea* (Huelva: Universidad de Huelva, 2014); Antonio Castillo Gómez, "De reglas y sentimientos. Comunicación y prácticas epistolares en la España del siglo XVIII," in *"Las cartas las inventó el afecto": ensayos sobre epistolografía en el Siglo de las Luces*, ed. Rafael Padrón Fernández (Santa Cruz de Tenerife: Ediciones Idea, 2013), 133–174; Antonio Castillo Gómez, "De la tipografía al manuscrito. Culturas epistolares en la

- España del siglo XVIII,” *Culturas del escrito. Del Renacimiento a la contemporaneidad* (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2015), 81–97.
- 51 Konstantin Dierks, *In My Power. Letter Writing and Communications in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 141–157.
 - 52 On women’s letter-writing in South America in a later period, see Sara C. Chambers, “Cartas y salones: mujeres que leen y escriben la nación en la Sudamérica del siglo diecinueve,” *Araucaria. Revista Iberoamericana de Filosofía, Política y Humanidades* 13 (June 2005): 77–106.
 - 53 “no hemos visto letra tuía, lo poco que sabemos de ti es por casualidad”; “no seas ingrato: ya que tenemos perdida la esperanza de verte, siquiera que tengamos el consuelo de ver tus letras”; “tu Hermana, que te ama de veras y desea verte” – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, f.2–3.
 - 54 Enrique Otte, *Cartas privadas de emigrantes a Indias, 1550–1616* (Seville: V Centenario-Consejería de Cultura, 1988); Isabelo Macías and Francisco Morales Padrón, eds., *Cartas desde América, 1700–1800* (Seville: Junta de Andalucía, 1991); Jesús M. Usunáriz, *Una visión de la América del XVIII: correspondencia de emigrantes guipuzcoanos y navarros* (Madrid: MAPFRE, 1992); Rocío Sánchez Rubio and Isabel Testón Núñez, eds., *El hilo que une. Las relaciones epistolares en el Viejo y el Nuevo Mundo (ss. XVI–XVIII)* (Cáceres: Universidad de Extremadura, 1999); M. Carmen Martínez Martínez, *Desde la otra orilla. Cartas de Indias en el Archivo de la Chancillería de Valladolid (siglos XVI–XVIII)* (León: Junta de Castilla y León, 2007); Werner Stangle, “Un cuarto de siglo con Cartas privadas de emigrantes a Indias. Prácticas y perspectivas de ediciones de cartas transatlánticas en el Imperio español,” *Anuario de Estudios Americanos* 70, no. 2 (2013): 703–736.
 - 55 R. Sánchez Rubio and I. Testón Núñez, “‘Baúles de las pasiones’. La correspondencia femenina en el ámbito transatlántico del periodo moderno,” in *Pasiones en femenino: Europa y América, 1600–1950*, edited by M. Luisa Candau Chacón (Seville: Universidad de Sevilla, 2018), 29–54; María José de la Pascua Sánchez, *Mujeres solas: historias de amor y de abandono en el mundo hispánico* (Málaga: Diputación Provincial de Málaga, 1998); María José de la Pascua Sánchez, “La escritura privada y la representación de las emociones,” in *Educación los sentimientos y las costumbres. Una mirada desde la historia*, ed. Mónica Bolufer, Carolina Blutrach, and Juan Gomis (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 2014), 81–107; Rosario Márquez Macías, “Cartas de amor y silencios: la correspondencia privada entre Buenos Aires y España en el siglo XVIII,” *Fundación VII* (2004–2005); Rosario Márquez Macías, “El amor y el olvido en la correspondencia privada de los emigrantes en América,” *Cinco siglos de cartas: historia y prácticas epistolares en las épocas moderna y contemporánea*, ed. Antonio Castillo Gómez and Verónica Sierra (Huelva: Universidad de Huelva, 2014); Gabriela Martínez Pérez, “‘Tu carta no me haría de leerla’: el epistolario de Lucía Carrillo de Albornoz (1735–1805),” in *Identidad autorial femenina y comunicación epistolar*, ed. María Martos and Julio Neira (Madrid: UNED, 2018); Gabriela Martínez Pérez, “‘No dudo de tu amor que así lo harás’: emoción, comunidad y pragmatismo en las cartas de las Carrillo de Albornoz (Lima, 1744–1800),” *Dieciocho: Hispanic Enlightenment* 44, no. 1 (Spring 2021): 93–112; Gabriela Martínez Pérez, “Escenas de un matrimonio ilustrado. Las cartas de Magdalena Fernández de Córdoba a su esposo,” *Cuadernos de Estudios del Siglo XVIII* 32 (2022): 141–168.
 - 56 On love letters in the Hispanic tradition, see Jesús M. Usunáriz, *Cartas de amor en la España del Siglo de Oro* (Pamplona: Pliegos Volanderos del GRISO, 2003); María José de la Pascua Sánchez, “La escritura privada y la representación de las emociones,” in *Educación los sentimientos y las costumbres. Una mirada desde*

- la historia*, ed. Mónica Bolufer, Carolina Blutrach, and Juan Gomis (Zaragoza: Institución Fernando el Católico, 2014), 81–107 and María José de la Pascua Sánchez, “Las incertidumbres el corazón: la Historia y el mundo de los afectos,” *Cuadernos de Historia Moderna. Anejos* 14 (2015), 151–172; Montserrat Jiménez Sureda, *Amb el cor al paper. Història i teoria de les cartes d’amor* (Barcelona: Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2020), among others. A useful database of private letters in Iberian archives (sixteenth to eighteenth centuries) is *Post Scriptum*. Arquivo Digital de Escrita Quotidiana em Portugal e Espanha na Época Moderna: <http://ps.clul.ul.pt>.
- 57 “Tengo un trato franco y agradable” – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, 10 October 1779, f.5–6.
 - 58 AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, undated, f.7.
 - 59 “no tengo mas diversion que leer tus cartas y todas me parecen cortas” – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, undated, f.22.
 - 60 “no sé si lo entenderás, pues lo turbada y enfadada no me deja hacer más” – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, undated, f.25–26.
 - 61 AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, undated, f.27.
 - 62 “adiós alivio de mis penas adiós consejero mio a quien bolbere los ojos para mi desago, después de dios no tenia otro consuelo que tu yese me falta” – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, undated, f.27.
 - 63 See, for example, this edition (Barcelona: Imprenta Consortes Sierra y Martí, 1808, 329–339).
 - 64 Among others, Lope de Vega’s *El perro del hortelano*, *El acero de Madrid* and *El cuerdo en su casa*, Calderón de la Barca’s *No hay burlas con el amor*. See Diego Navarro Bonilla, *Del corazón a la pluma. Archivos y papeles privados femeninos en la Edad Moderna* (Salamanca: Universidad de Salamanca, 2004), 19, 24, 31, 36.
 - 65 Jesús M. Usunáriz, *Cartas de amor en la España del Siglo de Oro* (Pamplona: Pliegos Volanderos del GRISO, 2003).
 - 66 Ana Rueda, *Cartas sin lacrar: La novela epistolar y la España ilustrada, 1789–1840* (Madrid: Iberoamericana, 2001).
 - 67 María Angulo Egea, *Luciano Francisco Comella, 1751–1812: otra cara del teatro de la Ilustración* (Alicante: Universidad de Alicante, 2006), 324–345.
 - 68 Gabriela Martínez Pérez, “Escenas de un matrimonio ilustrado. Las cartas de Magdalena Fernández de Córdoba a su esposo,” *Cuadernos de Estudios del Siglo XVIII* 32 (2022): 141–168.
 - 69 María José de la Pascua Sánchez, “Tradición y cambio en el lenguaje de los afectos: el discurso literario,” *Ayer* 78 (2010): 47–68.
 - 70 “que seas constante en quererme que yo lo soy en quererte a ti que soy mas firme que el peñon de Gibraltar” – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, undated, f.20.
 - 71 AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, 30 August and 3 September 1784, f.59. On women and revolution across the British Atlantic, see, among others, Kate Davies, *Catherine Macaulay and Mercy Otis Warren: The Revolutionary Atlantic and the Politics of Gender* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
 - 72 On 3 September, she promises never again to write to Miranda via the Post Office, as some have got lost (AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, f.59).
 - 73 Edmund Leites, *The Puritan Conscience and Modern Sexuality* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1986); Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction. A Political History of the Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).
 - 74 Sarah Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution* (Williamsburg: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).
 - 75 AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, 30 September 1783, f.66.

- 76 AGN, *Colombeia*, Negociaciones, VI, 29 septiembre 1805, f.165–166; undated, f.167; VIII, 5 June 1806, 126–127; 1 October, f.156–157; IX, 6 January 1807, f.55–56; 9 February 1807, f.211v–212; 21 May 1807, f.180–181; 20 June, f.297–298; 4 July 1807, f.299–300; XVI, 8 August 1809, f.216. On Sarah Andrews' life, see Miriam Blanco-Fombuena de Hood, *El enigma de Sarah Andrews, esposa de Francisco de Miranda* (Caracas: Banco Nacional y Agrícola, 1981).
- 77 AGN, *Colombeia*, Negociaciones, VI, 29 September 1805, f.165.
- 78 AGN, *Colombeia*, Negociaciones, VI, 29 September 1805, f.167.
- 79 AGN, *Colombeia*, Negociaciones, VIII, f.127; VI, f.165.
- 80 Loles González-Ripoll, "Espejos trucados: la *Secret history* or the horrors of *Santo Domingo* (1808), entre la ficción y la historia antillana," *Revista de Indias* LXXV, no. 263 (2015): 103–104.
- 81 *Secret History; or The Horrors of St. Domingo, in a Series of Letters Written by a Lady at Cape François to Colonel Burr, Late Vice-President of the United States* (Philadelphia: Bradford & Inskeep, R. Carr printer, 1808). She later published other novels, including the autobiographical *Laura* (1809).
- 82 Sarah Knott, "Female Liberty? Sentimental Gallantry, Republican Womanhood, and Rights Feminism in the Age of Revolutions," *William and Mary Quarterly* 71, no. 3 (July 2014): 426–456, 442.
- 83 Miranda arrived in New York on Saturday, 9 November 1805, left for Philadelphia two weeks later, and arrived in Washington on 7 December. His expedition sailed from New York on 2 February 1806.
- 84 AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, undated, f.405.
- 85 AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, undated, f.406.
- 86 On Sévigné's influence on French women's epistolary writing, see Silver and Girou Swiderski, *Femmes*, ix–xii. On her impact in Spain, see Gabriel Sánchez Espinosa, "Madame de Sévigné y la carta familiar en España durante el siglo XVIII," in *Recepción de autores franceses de la época clásica en los siglos XVIII y XIX en España y en el extranjero*, ed. Roland Resné and Mercè Boixareu (Madrid: UNED, 2002), 111–123. Miranda owned her complete letters in ten volumes, and she was still a model for the young Emilia Pardo Bazán in the late nineteenth century (Isabel Burdiel, *Emilia Pardo Bazán* (Barcelona: Taurus, 2019) 280).
- 87 Robert Darnton, "Readers Respond to Rousseau: The Fabrication of Romantic Sensitivity," in *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 215–256.
- 88 Mme du Châtelet's love letters to Saint-Lambert, earlier than those examined here, are particularly remarkable. Gabrielle Emilie le Toneliet de Breteuil du Châtelet, *Lettres d'amour au marquis de Saint-Lambert*, ed. Anne Soprani (Paris: Paris-Méditerranée, 1997).
- 89 C. Parra-Pérez, *Delphine de Custine, belle amie de Miranda* (Paris: Excelsior, 1927).
- 90 "comme dans le monde il est rare de trouver une reciprocité de sentiment je ne suis que plus flatée de la continuation des vôtres" ("since it is rare in this world to find a reciprocity of feeling, I am all the more flattered by the continuation of yours") – Paris, 6 decembre l'an premier de la République (1792), AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, f.99.
- 91 "j'ai besoin de votre presence pour ramene le calme dans mon ame" – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, 29 June 1800, f.296.
- 92 "vous etes un Jolie Monsieur, vous eludé de repondre ama lettre ...; je suis une fame terrible pour vous tourmante" – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVII, 22 April 1800, f.297.
- 93 "Ce sont les bénéfice de la maternité" – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, 11 June 1801, f.298.

- 94 "mon bon et veritable ami, et *non mon simple ami*"; "Mon Dieu, que n'etes vous pres de nous. Comme nous serions heureuse de vous posseder" – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, f.174, Basel, 17 September 1795 (emphasis in original), AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, f.192, 30 October 1795. "[P]ensez a nous, aimez-nous, et croyez a l'amitié eternelle queje vous ai voué" ("Think of us, love us, and have faith in the eternal friendship I have pledged to you") – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, undated, f.118.
- 95 "les liens indisolubles que m'unissent a vous" – Archives Nationales de France, F7, 6285; published in Francisco Miranda, *Archivo del General Miranda*, ed. Vicente Dávila (Caracas: Editorial Sur-América/Parra León Hermanos/Editorial Lex, 1926–1950), XIII, 274.
- 96 "plus le malheur a froisé un coeur, et plus il l'a rendu susceptible de moindres impressions! C'est comme un convalescent qui sort de maladie" – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, undated, f.126.
- 97 AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, undated, f.125.
- 98 "lui seule a parlé a mon coeur, il a flatté ses foiblesses et par meme en a trouvé le chemin! L'auteur de ce libre! Sans doute a connu l'amour et surtout le malheur!" – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, undated, f.126.
- 99 "Ce directoire me fait fremir!," "ces jacobins triomphent plus que jamais" – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, f.130.
- 100 "je ne vois aucun repos, aucune espérance, que je tremble du retour des Jacobins, de la guerre! Du repos, du repos, c'est le cri général." – Francisco Miranda, *Archivo del General Miranda*, ed. Vicente Dávila (Caracas: Editorial Sur-América/Parra León Hermanos/Editorial Lex, 1926–1950), XIII, 271.
- 101 On French revolutionary passions, see Mona Ozouf, *La fête révolutionnaire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976); Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Javier Moscoso, *Promesas incumplidas. Una historia política de las pasiones* (Barcelona: Taurus, 2017).
- 102 "Jaspire souvant le bonheur dont jouise les ame ainsensible" – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, 11 June 1801, f.298.
- 103 "J'espere d'avoir le plaisir de vous voir bientot et d'apprendre notre Etat Politique- dontje ne vous cache pas que je suis tres inquiete" ("I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you soon and learning about our nation – I cannot hide the fact that I am very anxious about it") – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, f.102.
- 104 AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, 6 December 1792, f.99.
- 105 "Votre coeur de feu, votre ame brulante et sensible pour la bonne cause et les malheureux" – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, f.106.
- 106 AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, f.31–34. Editors' note: This chapter will capitalize "White" to indicate that it is a culturally constructed category, like Black or Indigenous, although we recognize that these identities reflect very different processes of racialization, in which White is the hegemonic norm against which minority identities are oppressed and asserted.
- 107 Dominique Rogers and Stewart King, "Housekeepers, Merchants, Rentieres: Free Women of Color in the Port Cities of Colonial Saint Domingue, 1750–1790," in *Women in Port. Gendering Communities, Economies, and Social Networks in Atlantic Port Cities, 1500–1800*, ed. Douglas Catterall and Jodi Campbell (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 357–397.
- 108 AGN, *Colombeia*, Viajes, IV, f.142–152.
- 109 AGN, *Colombeia*, Viajes, IV, f.142.
- 110 AGN, *Colombeia*, Viajes, IV, f.150.
- 111 "When she speaks of you, sir, it is with enthusiasm: she says she found in you not only distinguished tastes but erudition" – AGN, *Viajes*, IV, f.150.

- 112 “I never met such a whore in my life” – AGN, *Colombeia*, Viajes, IV, f.150.
- 113 “croyez moi toujours avec l’attachement le plus sincere et l’amitié la plus vraie” – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, 19 November 1782, f.32.
- 114 “quelque leson decriture et de gramair” – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, 23 February, f.237.
- 115 AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, 9 June 1799, f.239.
- 116 AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, 29 January 1802, f.252.
- 117 “pardonné sije vous fai sai opeservation” – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, 3 June 1800, f.247.
- 118 AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, 2 September 1799, f.242.
- 119 AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, 23 July 1799, f.241.
- 120 AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, 8 October 1805, f.293.
- 121 “je suis avec estime et respec votre dévou amie” – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, 21 April 1801, f.250.
- 122 “Adieu je suis dans la vive inpassiance de vour revoir aupres de moi” – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, 20 April 1800, f.246.
- 123 “je ne vis qu’avec l’inpassiance de vous voir” – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, 1 February 1803, f.281.
- 124 AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, 8 May 1803, f.290.
- 125 “je vois avec le plus tandre intere et la plus vive reconesans que je conserve la meme place dans votre souvenir, je desire ardaman le momen de vous revoir et de vous renouveler de bouche lasuranse des sentiman que je vous aivoue” – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, 23 February 1799, f.237.
- 126 “je ne vie pas, tiré moi d’inquietude et du profond chagrin que je sui plongé depui votre dernier lettre” – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, 26 June 1802, f.269.
- 127 “tou ta vous jus qau dernier jour de ma vie” – AGN, *Colombeia*, R.F., XVIII, 28 July 1800, f.249.

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