

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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Moscardó, and Elena Serrano



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Introduction

Intersecting Histories of Sensibility and Emotion: A Plural Legacy*

*Isabel Burdiel, Ester García Moscardó, and
Elena Serrano*

*Je sens, donc je suis.*¹ Rousseau's reformulation of the Cartesian maxim is considered the epitome of the cult of sensibility that spread from the mid-eighteenth century across national boundaries and substantially broadened the term "sensibility" beyond the capacity to receive impressions from the external world.² This reformulation was the product of a long and rather broken transnational evolution that spanned much of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with disparate authors—philosophes, scientists, medical doctors, writers of all sorts—and in different parts of the world such as Britain, Italy, Germany, Netherlands, and the Americas. Its development involved nothing less than an epistemological and ontological transformation concerning the moral and emotional dimensions of sensibility, which placed it at the center of the time's debates on human nature.³ Not only would equality in the capacity to harbor feelings prove the equality of all human beings, but it also implied overcoming dichotomies between feeling and mind, head and heart, reason and passion, knowledge, and emotion. Mathematician Marquis de Condorcet's pamphlet *Sur l'admission des femmes au droit de cité* established a fundamental link between sensibility, moral virtue, and the capacity for reasoning that opened up a far-reaching path of thought and action:

The rights of men result solely from the fact that they are sensible beings, capable of acquiring moral ideas, and of reasoning about these ideas. Thus, women with these same qualities necessarily have equal rights.⁴

The crucial tension of this approach was always lodged in the double argument regarding the consubstantial human character of sensibility and its dimension as something socially constructed around hierarchies of individual refinement and collective civilization. This tension was always, and simultaneously, intellectual, political, moral, and aesthetic.⁵

Considering the Enlightenment and its legacy thematically, chronologically, and geographically in a broad sense, this book explores the historical and plural character of enlightened "sensibilities." Our emphasis is on how

sensibilities were performed, paying particular attention to the interrelationship between representations and experiences of gender, race, sexuality, class, and nation. Today, we know that the Enlightenment was not a coherent set of ideas and values, nor a coherent and finished reformist program, but a polyphonic and deeply (self-)reflexive movement of ideas and practices, in which tensions and vulnerabilities, ambivalences and contradictions, constituted the intellectual, political, and moral challenges that accompanied the entry of the Western world into modernity.⁶ It was, to a large extent, the inaugural intuition of the critical relationship of different societies with themselves whose complexity, debates, and controversies must be analyzed in their historical concreteness and in the multiple crossovers that occur between the Enlightenment's various spheres. The most obvious of these ambivalences and the challenges opened up at the time refers to its controversial universalism: that is, to the Eurocentrism, racism, classism, and sexism explicit or implicit in the formulation of the Enlightenment and, above all, in its concrete practices.⁷ Attempts were made to resolve, or at least elucidate, the mutual tensions and crossovers provoked in these spheres, in accord with the idea of civilization, be it individual or collective, and its relations with nature and with a possible unity amid human diversity. Intimate spaces, along with distinctions defined by family and gender, were at the heart of these debates.⁸

In this context, the constitution of what Antoine Lilti has called a "sensitive public space" was fundamental, and equally ambivalent as the Enlightenment itself: that is, a public space not only restricted to the philosophical scene but much more broadly shaped in the social world, above all, by the press and by literature—and especially by novels and the theater.⁹ This was a space in which emotions (or as they were called at the time: affections, movements of the soul, passions) were as important as arguments, and which presupposed an implicit popular audience that was not particularly educated, and in which for the first time, women and young people occupied a prominent place. It was an audience that, as became evident in the debates of the time, threatened established social, cultural, and scientific hierarchies.¹⁰

This "sensitive public space" was, however, not only populated with sentiments and immaterial feelings, it was crowded with material things that challenged and reshaped consumers' senses, tastes, and aesthetic judgments.¹¹ The eighteenth century witnessed the consolidation of a global consumer society, in which science, commerce, and colonialism mutually reinforced each other.¹² Exciting scientific spectacles were staged to persuade the public of the usefulness of the new empirical sciences: to astonish audiences with the sparks that jumped between the lips of an electrified couple or to terrify them at the quivering of a dead limb excited by electrical currents in anatomical spectacles. Joyful communities of amateurs commented on their natural collections of shells, minerals, and plants, and discussed where to buy elegant scientific instruments or attend fashionable lectures.¹³ Delicacies for the mouth and the body—fruits, tobaccos, chocolates, and sweets, quivering jellies, and distilled brandies—were enjoyed in European cafes and salons,

reconfiguring the boundaries between luxury and necessity, nature and culture, the educated and the rest.¹⁴

The Enlightenment, therefore, was something more sensual and socially broader and more significant than the philosophy of the eighteenth century. It was and is, moreover, a heritage both local and global, essentially plural. For us as historians, this implies working beyond textual rhetoric with the profoundly dialogical character of the Enlightenment, giving voice to the dissonances, ambivalences, and contradictions it entailed. In these dissonances, the historical value of a heritage susceptible to multiple appropriations is at stake, centered on a self-reflective and critical horizon that revolves around the tensions and mutual reinforcement of reason and sentiment, tolerance, and freedom—freedom of expression, as well as freedom from religious obscurantism, unreason, and political repression. This is particularly important today, as a reminder to resist the intellectually lazy temptation to surrender to the ostensible evidence that the Enlightenment is beyond our grasp.

In that sphere of experience and circulation, fiction played an outstanding role and helped to forge a sort of coordination (always plural but effective) of individual sensibilities, allowing one or several generations of readers and spectators—who were also connoisseurs, amateurs, and collectors—to share emotions and feelings, giving them the capacity to understand and recognize each other.¹⁵ This sphere was moreover based on the notion that there is something called sensibility (or a lack of it, or a perverse play with it) that has to do with the ability (or not) to be moved, affected, or interested by the situation of others, even of nonhumans.¹⁶ Hence the importance of sympathy (in the Enlightenment sense of the term) to share and recognize diverse forms of effective otherness.¹⁷ This is a fundamentally social idea, based on experiences that always had more or less explicit political implications insofar as they are halfway between the “natural benevolence” that holds society together—what Samuel Johnson defined as “mutual sensibility”—and a social construction, with its intrinsic power relations prescribing what “natural feelings” are.¹⁸

It is this sensitive, sensual public space, linking the individual and the collective, that we aim to analyze in this volume, rescuing the possible forms of concretion of what we would today call empathy (and its opposites), though we will not find evidence of such a term because it did not yet exist. We accordingly work with a definition of sensibility that openly and fluidly participated in the rhetoric of emotions prescribed to inform the interpersonal dynamics of a formed individuality and stable society. As an all-embracing concept that involved sensations, emotions, and moral and aesthetic judgment, sensibility also worked as a mechanism for naturalizing normative constructions of behaviors, tastes, morals, and emotions. Several studies have furthermore problematized this hegemonic normativity, pointing in the opposite direction, to transgressions of normative sexual models and an increasing taste for cruelty in literature and society as a whole.¹⁹

We are fully aware not only of the criticisms of sentimentalism as ridiculous, banal, and/or hypocritical but also of its dark, perverse side. We are even more keenly aware of the effective possibility of its conversion into a disintegrating force or an antisocial drive. Criticism of sentimentalism, with its powerfully gendered connotations, is particularly interesting insofar as both its detractors and its defenders often make use of the same rhetoric while contributing from different perspectives, and with different purposes, to the same public space.²⁰

We want to contribute a fresh perspective on the history of sensibilities, integrating ideas, emotions, beliefs, values, and perceptions in ways that the application of other terms such as ideology, *mentalité*, paradigm, and epistemes do not, or have not intended to do.²¹ We are guided by the idea that “sensibility” goes beyond the history of emotions, as it incorporates an intellectual dimension; it erases the distinctions between highbrow and lowbrow culture in ways that intellectual history, and a history of *mentalités*, cannot; it transcends the theoretical concerns of these terms; and it is capable of integrating multiple perspectives, most pertinently from sensory studies. If we define sensibility as a “pattern of perception, feeling, thinking, and believing,” and thus as a kind of lens, then a history of sensibilities allows us to describe how “people perceived the world” and its hierarchies. Such a history is analytical and descriptive, rather than causal.²² It reminds us that, if the past is a foreign country, it is so largely because “people felt differently there.”²³ It is the difference in the structure of sensibility, emotions, and affections that makes the past strange and familiar at once.

Yet a history of sensibilities is not without its dangers. The problems can be summarized in three groups. First, there are issues of methodology: How should we use a category that is not only conceptually loose and fluid but historically situated so broadly and imprecisely? Moreover, how are we to manage the disparity of sources that historians must interrogate (as we are proposing) in order to address this history of sensibilities? Second, to what extent does a history of sensibilities affect the agency of historical actors? Finally, a history of sensibilities runs the risk of creating an artificial, homogeneous, and diffusionist “spirit of the age” and of forging a mythical past from which a new or different alternative sensibility now appears to diverge, or, on the contrary, such a history runs the risk of heading toward a mythical modernity.²⁴

Our response to these challenges is twofold. On the one hand, in contrast to a monolithic, static concept of sensibility, we understand sensibility as a heuristic tool that must be explored as such to test how and when it allows us to observe the variety of perceptions and ways of feeling we find in history. On the other hand, we aim to explore the mutual influence between local

sensibilities and the global context of which these form a part.²⁵ It is for these reasons that we use the plural form “histories of sensibilities.”

Our volume engages in a transnational discussion on some of the issues mentioned above and offers new perspectives on a topic where the central object remains as contested as it is ambiguous. It explores sensibility from the intersection of history and cultural studies, and from a plural perspective including political history, the history of science, the history of literature, the history of emotions, and a history of the senses, to investigate the concrete tensions in its specific definitions. It traces these tensions in a global context in terms of gender, sexuality, race, and political languages, with a particular attention to geographical areas that have not yet been well-charted. With a primary focus on Southern Europe and the Hispanic World, we analyze 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.

Considering the localized articulation of discourses and practices and their circulation and transformations across the different contexts of the Global Enlightenment, the histories of sensibilities collected in this volume are organized into two sections.²⁶ The chapters of the first section, “Making Sense, Making Difference,” address the fundamental tensions inscribed in certain spaces and discursive productions of different racial and gendered models. We are interested in where and how the problematic articulation between concrete discourses of experience occurs. The second section, “Crossing Contexts, Unsettling Sensibilities,” focuses on circulation and encounters, with particular emphasis on the destabilization of normative models that occurs in cross-cultural “contact zones” and the possible perverse drifts of sensibility that they bring about. An underlying question in both sections is a concern with how sensibility was used for fixing or transgressing masculinities and femininities, conventional desires, national identities, and racial categories.

In doing so, we aim not only to better understand the changing meanings of “Global Enlightenment” and “sensibility” but also to add to contemporary debates that problematize both gender and race as static concepts.²⁷ We define these as interactive, negotiated, and contested processes, and we are interested not only in what they are but in what they do in clearly situated practices. The central objective is to achieve a historical and locally active approach to the study of sensibilities from a perspective of transnational and global vocation that tries to go beyond a philosophical, abstract, and totalizing approach to sensibility, even going beyond a notion of Enlightened sensibility. We are less interested in the conceptual disquisitions and epistemological pre-emption—around terms that are frequently used in an indistinguishable way, such as sensitivities, emotions, sympathy, affections, or feelings—than in the importance of rescuing the multiple possible variations of what was expressed within, and shaped, that sensitive and sensual public

space we discussed earlier.²⁸ We are concerned with *when* and *how* sensibility made it possible to think of social coherence in terms of sympathy and benevolence in a world ideally governed by “soft powers,” and with when and how sensibility inspired political arguments and citizens’ education, while also constituting a kind of standard for “civilized” behavior that justified social hierarchies, abuses, and inequalities.²⁹

These questions are addressed by Magally Alegre Henderson in her chapter, “Androginopolis or the Racialization of the Peruvian Strange Society,” on the racialization of the *maricones*, where she shows that enlightened colonial elites used the social visibility of the cross-dressed man to allay the social fears provoked by the abundance of the slave population in late eighteenth-century Lima. The racialization of queers in this context represents an elite response to the problematic perception of slaves in relation to the specter of racial violence; this fear was not new, but it did become extraordinarily intense after the slave revolution in Santo Domingo, especially in the Americas and Europe. Responses to this danger were, in any case, varied. The debate about whether Black slaves could embody a modern and “civilized” subjectivity, purified of the brutal connotations that surrounded the imaginary of the “threatening Black,” is the central theme of Ester García Moscardó’s chapter, titled “Sensibility on Stage: Gender, Race, and the Modulations of Feeling in Hispanic Theatre.” García Moscardó deals with the emergence in late eighteenth-century Spain of the literary figure of the sentimental Black within the framework of the humanitarianism Enlightenment sensibility, based on a study of the melodrama *El negro sensible* (The Sensitive Black Man) by Luciano Francisco and Joaquina Comella. The emotional politics contained in the work, firmly anchored in the codes of the culture of eighteenth-century sensibility, propose a Black masculinity worthy of compassion.

The tensions derived from the subversion of these hierarchies are studied by Estela Roselló Soberón in her chapter on Pierre Bailly’s judicial experience when he tried to defend his citizenship rights as a free mulatto in late eighteenth-century New Orleans, titled “Embodied Colonial Experiences of Enlightenment: Pierre Bailly’s Defense of Equality and Citizenship. A Free Mulatto’s Voice in Spanish New Orleans (1791–1794).” Bailly’s history exemplifies an experience and a plea that was as political as it was emotional, and that was physically embodied in a history of slavery and subjugation in which the adaptation of Enlightened and revolutionary ideas into a distinct colonial context played a pivotal role. Moving to Europe, Clorinda Donato turns to the circulation of a medical novella about the transgendered story of Catterina Vizzani by the anatomist Giovanni Bianchi in different languages and literary genders in her chapter “Translating Transgender in Eighteenth-Century Europe: The Mediatic Ecosystem of Transmission, Reworking, and Perception of *The Brief History of Catterina Vizzani*.” Donato analyzes how the body, sexual practices, and identities constitute the transnational and transmedial landscape of eighteenth-century writings about gender. All these

works point to the importance of gender differences as a nodal object of debate for Enlightenment thinkers.

The sensualist epistemology that developed throughout the century reflected on the relationship between body and mind, matter and soul, and on the role played by sexual difference in modes of feeling and perceiving, including, of course, through the senses. Marta Manzanares Mileo, in her chapter “Sweet Affinities: The Gendering of Taste in Eighteenth-Century Spain,” analyzes the centrality of taste in the construction of femininity and masculinity in eighteenth-century Spain. More specifically, she examines the multifaceted (and ambiguous) ways in which sweetness, increasingly consumed in the form of sugar, shaped models of womanhood at a time of slavery and growing sugar consumption. The concept of sensibility proves useful here in examining how the gendering of sugar generated various sensory meanings and emotional responses coinciding with, or resulting from, the emergence of a new consumer culture. The senses and the passions are also the focus of Elena Serrano’s contribution, “Quivering Hearts: The Intimate Union of Bodies and Souls.” Returning to how love and other passions were thought to arise, the chapter highlights eighteenth-century beliefs in a tight-bond between soul and body. Both philosophers and doctors conducted careful “anatomies of the soul” to unveil the links between the five external senses, feelings, and the “internal senses” (imagination, memory, and a basic understanding). For the successful Spanish popularizer B. J. Feijoo (1676–1764), however, this “knowing body” was not gendered, meaning that the physiological mechanism of the passions did not distinguish between the sexes: both men and women could “feel,” Feijoo argued, with the same intensity and quality. Serrano’s elucidation of Feijoo’s perspective adds a layer of complexity to the increasing differentiation of male and female bodies that many scholars have found in the eighteenth century, showing instead that this distinction remained a contested territory.

The different codes and languages of emotions and political sentiments are explored by Mónica Bolufer. In a chapter on the wide-ranging transatlantic and multilingual correspondence of women with the *criollo* Francisco de Miranda (1751–1816), titled “Performing Sensibilities. Women’s Voices in a Transnational and Transatlantic Correspondence of the Enlightenment,” Bolufer shows how a broadly shared cosmopolitan culture created distinct gendered performances of emotional and epistolary codes expressing feelings and intellectual and political affects with linguistic, social, and geographical variations. Focusing on the later mid-nineteenth century, during the period of Romanticism in Spanish literature, Mónica Burguera explores how women writers in Spain further complicate and problematize the Enlightenment concepts of sexual and emotional difference and complementarity between men and women, conceiving sexual complementarity in terms of intellectual and virtuous equality. Her chapter, “Rewriting Romantic Love: Women, Celebrity, and the Politics of Emotion in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Spain (Avellaneda’s Farewell),” shows how these female writers drew on modern

conceptions of (male) subjectivity that balanced reason and passion and how they explored hybrid conceptions of masculinity and femininity. From that perspective, they critically rethought love and marriage at the core of the new liberal society.

As noted previously, we want to further elaborate on the concept of “contact zones,” first coined by Mary Louise Pratt to denote the “[conflictive] social space of cultural encounters, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths.”³⁰ We are especially interested in the dialectic between oppressive forces of domination and the negotiations these zones facilitated—in the transformations of the identities, complexities, and details of the encounters experienced on both sides. To cite Lissa Roberts, we are interested in how power and hierarchies were “temporarily suspended or modified in favor of more local economies of dependence and interest.”³¹ This is an approach fundamental to the whole volume, but particularly important in the chapter by Roselló Soberón on the trial of Pierre Bailly in Spanish New Orleans. It is also the central focus of the chapter by Manuel Burón and Juan Pimentel, “Hidden or Forbidden: Taboo, Circumnavigation, and Women in New Cythera (1768),” in relation to one of the most outstanding episodes of contact between cultures, which unfolded during the journey of Louis Antoine de Bougainville to Tahiti. As is well known, the French expedition included a woman named Jeanne Baret, disguised as a man, who was discovered as soon as the crew touched shore. Burón and Pimentel analyze this contact moment and consider the very different antagonistic role that women played, both in Western and Polynesian societies. Opposing taboos, the visibility and invisibility of women in those episodes, and cross-cultural misunderstandings are the main points guiding this study.

Our book is inspired by Roberts’ claim that “locally based diversification needs to be recovered” in ways that highlight the creative appropriation of ideas and things and their potential circulation in global contexts. Furthermore, rather than considering the global as a given, we are interested in how it was forged through such “formative interactions” within local exchanges. To put it another way: How and in which concrete forms did these reconfigurations of sexualities, class, politics, gender, and race have impacts that were able to transcend their local effects?

We believe that this approach is essential for understanding the Enlightenment in global, transcultural, and transchronological terms—as a territory to be charted rather than as a given. This is the point of view, for instance, from which our contributor Manzanares analyzes the discursive encounters between the notions of femininity and masculinity in her focus on growing sugar consumption during a time of growing slavery. While sweetness illustrated ideas of feminine sensibility and domesticity and provided metaphors for women’s sensuality and indulgence, the realities of colonialism, White supremacy, masculinity, and violence found representation in the visual and textual masculinization of the sugar industry.³²

The dark side of sensibility, its ambivalences and its impacts, are also questions directly addressed by Enrique Moral de Eusebio in his examination of the role of ethnosexual violence in the patriarchization of the Mariana Islands during the eighteenth century. In his chapter “Vicious Sensibilities: The Role of Ethnosexual Violence in the Patriarchalization of Tâno’ Lâguas yan Gâni (the Mariana Islands) during the Eighteenth Century,” Moral de Eusebio forcefully claims that this violence stemmed from a kind of sensibility that in fact ought to be called “vicious sensibility.” Isabel Burdiel explores similar issues in her contribution, “Entangled Sensibilities and the Broken Circulation of Mary W. Shelley’s *Frankenstein*: Gender, Race, and Otherness.” Her chapter addresses the construction of otherness as monstrous in the context of the entangled nature of Enlightenment and Romantic sensibilities and the broken (and perverse) transtemporal circulation of Mary W. Shelley’s—especially, but not only, in Southern Europe and Latin America. Burdiel analyzes the explanatory and contextual force of the various interpretations of Mary Shelley’s story—scientific, political, gendered, and racial—within the questioning of strong notions such as “Truth,” “the Virtues,” and “Identity” that have remained inherent to the tensions of modernity as it was inaugurated when Enlightened and Romantic sensibilities fertilized and contested each other.

From Tahiti to New Orleans to the Mariana Islands, Madrid to Lima, Geneva to London, Oviedo to Venice, we ask how sensibility was branched by different social, political, and cultural groups to define their identities as with or against others; how cross-cultural and cross-chronological encounters served to reconfigure ideas of gendered selves; how heterosexual and nonheterosexual relations served to empower or to subjugate non-European races; and how the circulation of local concepts of the body’s physiology reinforced or challenged hegemonic ideas of masculinity and femininity.

Our path starts with the era of the expansion of trade and commodity circulation in early modern times that would lead to the Global Enlightenment and the legacy of the Enlightenment’s idea of “sensibility” in the first half of the nineteenth century. The contributions to this volume explore how the lights of the Enlightenment largely determined debates about sensibility, race, and gender during much of the nineteenth century, especially during Romanticism, both in Europe and in Latin America and the Spanish-Asian Pacific. Retracing their circulation, not only geographically but transtemporally, and the variations implied by both, is one of this volume’s chief aims. Recovering the local histories of plural sensibilities, our volume thus contributes to a deeper understanding of the current relevance and importance of Global Enlightenment to the history of women, gender, and race.

Notes

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- 1 "To exist, for us, is to sense; our sensibility is incontestably anterior to our intelligence, and we had sentiments before ideas." From "Profession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar," in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile, or On Education*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 290.
 - 2 The term "culture of sensibility" was proposed by G. J. Barker-Benfield in his *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). See also Inger Sigrun Brodey, "Making Sense of Sensibility," *Persuasions: The Jane Austen Journal* 37 (2015): 62–80, and Mónica Bolufer, "Sensibilidad dieciochesca: discursos, prácticas, paradojas," in *Las mujeres y las emociones en Europa y América, siglos XVII–XIX*, ed. María Luisa Candau Chacón (Santander: Universidad de Cantabria, 2016), 29–58.
 - 3 Jessica Riskin, *Science in the Age of Sensibility: The Sentimental Empiricists of the French Enlightenment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010); Stephen Gaukroger, *The Collapse of Mechanism and the Rise of Sensibility: Science and the Shaping of Modernity, 1680–1760* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Roy Porter, *Flesh in the Age of Reason: The Modern Foundations of Body and Soul* (London: Penguin Books, 2003); Henry Martyn Lloyd, ed., *The Discourse of Sensibility: The Knowing Body in the Enlightenment* (Cham: Springer, 2013).
 - 4 Our translation. The original can be found in Jean-Antoine-Nicolas de Caritat marquis de Condorcet, "Sur l'admission des femmes au droit de cité," *Journal de la Société de 1789* 3 (July 1790): 1–13, on 2: "Les droits des hommes résultent uniquement de ce qu'ils sont des êtres sensibles, susceptibles d'acquiescer des idées morales, et de raisonner sur ces idées. Ainsi les femmes ayant ces mêmes qualités ont nécessairement des droits égaux." <https://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/condorcet-sur-l-admission-des-femmes-au-droit-au-cite>, accessed 19 February 2024.
 - 5 Robert Muchembled, *L'Invention de l'homme moderne: sensibilités, moeurs et comportements collectifs sous l'Ancien Régime* (Paris: Fayard, 1988); Sarah Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009); Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2007); Julio Seoane Pinilla, *Del sentido moral a la moral sentimental: El origen sentimental de la identidad y la ciudadanía democrática* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 2004); Roberto Romani, *Sensibilities of the Risorgimento: Reason and Passions in Political Thought* (Leiden: Brill, 2018).
 - 6 Antoine Lilti, *L'héritage des Lumières: Ambivalences de la modernité* (Paris: Seuil/Gallimard, 2019).
 - 7 On the limits of Enlightenment universalism, see Sarah Knott and Barbara Taylor, eds., *Women, Gender and Enlightenment* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2005); Silvia Sebastiani, *The Scottish Enlightenment: Race, Gender, and the Limits of Progress* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Andrew Curran, *The Anatomy of Blackness: Science and Slavery in an Age of Enlightenment* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011); Elsa Dorlin, *La matrice de la race: Généalogie sexuelle et coloniale de la Nation française* (Paris: La Découverte, 2009); Juanma Sánchez Arteaga, *Lo bello en la naturaleza. Alejandro Malaspina: estética, filosofía natural y blancura en el ocaso de la Ilustración (1795–1803)* (Madrid: CSIC, 2022); Laura M. Stevens, *The Poor Indians: British Missionaries, Native Americans, and Colonial Sensibility* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Jorge Cañizares Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New*

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- 8 See, for example, Mónica Bolufer, *Arte y artificio de la vida en común: los modelos de comportamiento y sus tensiones en el Siglo de las Luces* (Madrid: Marcial Pons Historia, 2019), and Norbert Elias’ classic study, *The Civilizing Process: The History of Manners* (New York: Urizen Books, 1978).
- 9 Antoine Lilti, *L’héritage des Lumières: Ambivalences de la modernité* (Paris: Seuil/Gallimard, 2019) 260–270. A wealth of literature examines the sentimental public sphere. Heather Kerr, David Lemmings, and Robert Phiddian, eds., *Passions, Sympathy and Print Culture: Public Opinion and Emotional Authenticity in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2016); Markman Ellis, *The Politics of Sensibility: Race, Gender, and Commerce in the Sentimental Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Paul Goring, *The Rhetoric of Sensibility in Eighteenth-Century Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Barbara Becker-Cantarino, ed., *The German Literature of the Eighteenth Century: The Enlightenment and Sensibility* (Rochester: Camden House, 2005); George S. Rousseau, *Nervous Acts: Essays on Literature, Culture and Sensibility* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Anne C. Vila, *Enlightenment and Pathology: Sensibility in the Literature and Medicine of Eighteenth-Century France* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); Jean I. Marsden, *Theatres of Feeling: Affect, Performance, and the Eighteenth-Century Stage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019); Anne Vincent-Buffault, *The History of Tears: Sensibility and Sentimentality in France* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1991); María Jesús García Garrosa, *La retórica de las lágrimas: La comedia sentimental española, 1751–1802* (Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 1990); and Yvonne Fuentes Rotger, *El triángulo sentimental en el drama del Dieciocho (Inglaterra-Francia-España)* (Kassel: Edition Reichenberger, 1999).
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- 12 For a general introduction on the topic, see Roy Macleod, “Introduction,” in “Nature and Empire: Science and the Colonial Enterprise,” ed. Roy Macleod, special issue, *Osiris* 15 (2000): 1–13. Other excellent books on specific topics are Londa Schiebinger and Claudia Swan, eds., *Colonial Botany: Science, Commerce, and Politics in the Early Modern World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007); Pamela Smith and Paula Findlen, eds., *Merchants and Marvels: Commerce, Science, and Art in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Routledge, 2002); Kapil Raj, *Relocating Modern Science: Circulation and the Construction of Scientific Knowledge in South Asia and Europe* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2006).
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- 15 In addition to the works on Enlightenment and literature and arts (see note 9), we would like to mention the historiography on the history of emotions, whose theoretical sophistication in the last decades is notable. See, for instance, the works of William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Barbara Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006); Sarah Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotions* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004); and Jo Labanyi, "Doing Things: Emotions, Affect, and Materiality," *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 11, no. 3–4 (2010): 223–233, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14636204.2010.538244>.
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- 18 In Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary* (1755), sympathy is defined as "fellow-feeling; mutual sensibility; the quality of being affected by the affections [feelings] of another." Editions of 1755 and 1778, <https://johnsonsdictionaryonline.com/views/search.php?term=sympathy>, accessed 21 February 2024. On the moral authority of nature, see Lorraine Daston and Fernando Vidal, eds., *The Moral Authority of Nature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Lorraine Daston, "The Naturalised Female Intellect," *Science in Context* 5, no. 2 (1992): 209–235.
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 - 22 This definition is from Daniel Wickberg, "What Is the History of Sensibilities? On Cultural Histories, Old and New," *The American Historical Review* 112, no. 3 (2007): 675.
 - 23 "The past is a foreign country" is the opening phrase of L. P. Hartley's *The Go-Between* (London: Hamilton, 1953).
 - 24 Daniel Wickberg, "What Is the History of Sensibilities? On Cultural Histories, Old and New," *The American Historical Review* 112, no. 3 (2007): 661–684.
 - 25 Sebastian Conrad, "A Cultural History of Global Transformation," in *An Emerging Global World 1750–1870*, ed. Sebastian Conrad and Jürgen Osterhammel (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), 413–649; Sebastian Conrad, "Enlightenment in Global History: A Historiographical Critique," *The American Historical Review* 117, no. 4 (2012): 999–1027; Sebastian Conrad, *What Is Global History?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016); Juan Pimentel and José Pardo-Tomás, "And Yet, We Were Modern: The Paradoxes of Iberian Science after the Grand Narratives," *History of Science* 55, no. 2 (June 2017): 133–147; Jeremy Adelman, "What Is Global History Now?," *AEON*, 2 March 2017; Lynn Hunt, *Writing History in the Global Era* (New York, London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2014); Gabriela de Lima Grecco and Sven Schuster, "Decolonizing Global History? A Latin American Perspective," *Journal of World History* 31, no. 2 (2020): 425–446, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/27106154>.
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- 30 Mary Louise Pratt, “Arts of the Contact Zone,” *Profession* (1991): 33–40. See also Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 2003).
- 31 Lissa Roberts, “Situating Science in Global History: Local Exchanges and Networks of Circulation,” *Itinerario* 33, no. 1 (2009): 9–30, on 21.
- 32 Editors’ note: In this volume, we 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, where White functions as the hegemonic norm against which minority identities are oppressed and asserted.

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Section I

Making Sense, Making Difference



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1 Androginopolis or the Racialization of the Peruvian Strange Society*

Magally Alegre Henderson

From Androginopolis with Love

“My beloved Leandro,” wrote Philaethes in a letter to a dear male friend in response to his inquiry regarding the customs of the capital city of Androginopolis. Leandro, a former resident of the city himself, must have been most familiar with these same customs that he was inquiring about so diligently. Using a pen name associated with Masonic circles, which translated from the Greek as “lover of truth” and was a reminder of the ancient Greek practice of *pederasty*, Philaethes recalled in his response that he had been imparted those habits by this very same friend Leandro. He insisted on his determination to please him in any possible way.¹

This fictional loving correspondence between two men is the beginning of the most intriguing note published in Lima, the capital of the Peruvian Viceroyalty, by the Enlightenment newspaper *Mercurio Peruano*—the main newspaper of its time. Entitled “Letter about the *Maricones*” (“Carta sobre los maricones”), this satire has recently become an icon for the LGBTQ+ rights movement in Peru, and its historical meaning and context are a unique opportunity to explore the performance and representation of male-to-male sensibilities and their appropriation from political debates to discuss citizenship, race, nation, class, and ultimately, the colonial relation itself. Drawing from Mónica Bolufer’s study of Enlightenment moral and literary ideals of masculinity, the analysis of the *Mercurio Peruano*’s fictional letter will serve as a starting point to examine the sensibilities in male-to-male correspondence as part of a gendered literary genre.² As Sophie Brokmann has demonstrated for Guatemalan *science of nature*, economic societies such as the Peruvian *Sociedad académica de amantes del País*—the one that published the *Mercurio*, were understood as male friendship networks that embraced sentiments of local pride to promote enlightened scientific and useful knowledge.³ From travel accounts to scientific correspondence, and from business letters to amicable and sentimental missives, male-gendered emotions lay at the very center of the experience of the natural world and the production of scientific knowledge. In the Americas, in particular, the realm of male feelings associated with a sense of belonging and Colonial-era patriotic sentiment was also a key factor in embodying the anxieties and concerns

created by the profound political and social disturbances of the “age of revolutions.”⁴ Sara Ahmed noted that love, sorrow, hate, fear, repugnance, and shame—which are part of a cultural politics of emotions in the contemporary world—are historically grounded sentiments that acquired a particular gendered dimension in late eighteenth-century correspondence.⁵ The history of emotions will provide the methodological and theoretical frameworks that allow us to understand different forms of sensibility and various expressions of affection in the correspondence exchanged by late eighteenth-century Spanish American Enlightenment men.⁶ By comparing the “Letter about the *Maricones*” with the historical correspondence exchanged by naturalists and explorers like Alexander von Humboldt, Francisco José Caldas, and José Celestino Mutis, we will be able to explore the sentimental tone reasoning had, and the extremely passionate affections that served as an inspiration for the fictional narratives wherein male emotions were satirized—under the guise of courtly manners—as excessive and effeminate.

I will furthermore argue that the “Letter about the *Maricones*” is key to an understanding of the representation of late eighteenth-century Lima as an effeminate city where same-sex male desire was ascribed to people of African descent alone, be they enslaved or free. The fictional letter explained at length the city’s most impressive characteristic: the profuse array of *maricones*, i.e., men who transformed into female-like bodies and who then appropriated the urban scene. By day in Androginopolis, this particular kind of man, who were depicted as Black and mulattos, made every possible effort to tailor their male clothes so as to have an effeminate look; they then used the protection afforded by the night to fully dress in women’s clothes and attend private meetings in discreet parts of the city. According to Philalethes, the *maricones* of Androginopolis, whose male dignity “seemed to have weighed on them,” were committed to imitating women in any way possible: “the movement of the body, the grace, the gait, their gestures, even the slightest movements, everything in them exuded an extravagant and ridiculous effeminacy.”⁷

In describing these men, Philalethes was very specific in marking them as people of African descent, slaves, and free mulattos. One of the particular ways used to link *maricones* with African ancestry was by alluding to their curly hair: “The wool instead of hair that nature has conceded them, reduced to half its volume in minute braids, is collected in a bow, in such a way that on the tip it forms a frizzy tassel.”⁸ The narrative goes on to describe a birthday party celebrated in honor of a *maricón* that took place at nighttime when these individuals felt more at ease fully dressing in women’s clothes and organizing private gatherings where they openly socialized with other men. Philalethes was invited by a friend to the soiree and was greatly surprised when he noticed that under the cover of darkness, the people he had thought were embellished Black and mulatto female guests were actually Black and mulatto *maricones* who used the titles of nobility of elite ladies as nicknames.⁹

The letter signed under the pen name of Philalethes has been attributed by Alberto Tauro del Pino to José Mariano Millán de Aguirre (1760–1835). Millán de Aguirre, who according to Ella Dunbar Temple and Jean-Pierre Clément also used the pen name of Sofronio, was at the time an attorney in the Real Audiencia of Lima (Lima's high court) and the parish priest of Santa María de los Olleros in Huarochirí in the Lima Archbishopric. The erudite Millán de Aguirre contributed to the replacement of Cartesian philosophy with the Newtonian system at the Real Convictorio de San Carlos, the residential college of the University of San Marcos. Born in Peru to a Guipuzcoan father and a Limeña mother, he would later become a committed patriot who spread separatist ideas and advocated for the release of imprisoned patriot clergymen. He also was one of the first to sign the Declaration of Independence in the open town hall meeting held in Lima in 1821. Millán de Aguirre twice presided over San Marcos University (1823–1824 and from 1835 to his death). Praised by his peers, Millán de Aguirre, who also appears in other sources as José Mariano de Aguirre (Mayora), was indeed a true Enlightenment *criollo* (American-born Spaniard).¹⁰

Millán de Aguirre was also a corresponding member of the *Sociedad académica de amantes del País* (Academic Society of Lovers of the Country), a society established in 1790 that published the scientific and literary newspaper *Mercurio Peruano*. Inspired by the example of Spanish economic societies, the members of the *Sociedad de académica de amantes del País* promoted the scientific study of the Viceroyalty of Peru to foster a country's sentiment and promote its economic modernization. Aligned with these ideas, their newspaper *Mercurio Peruano*, published twice a week from 1791 to 1794, sought to further the study of Peru through several articles devoted to descriptions of different regions and their natural resources, and reflections on social institutions, history, and geography. It also analyzed the potential and current economic activities and the progress of medical and natural sciences in Peru.

A Not-so-enlightened Sentiment

It is difficult to measure how far the reach of this intriguing newspaper article extended. However, it is fair to note that the circulation of the *Mercurio Peruano* extended beyond European and American scientific circles. For instance, the Prussian explorer and naturalist Alexander von Humboldt highlighted in his writings the circulation of the newspaper in Europe and praised the work of the bibliophile Friar Diego Cisneros, a contributor to the *Mercurio* and one of the most influential members of the *Sociedad académica de amantes del país*. In *Vues des Cordillères et monuments des peuples indigènes de l'Amérique* (1810), von Humboldt points out that the Peruvian newspaper was read in Europe and how he was acquainted with this Peruvian periodical before he arrived in Peru.¹¹ During his stay in Lima, he even dispatched collections of the newspaper to Europe for his friend Goethe, which were the base for a German translation of selected articles

printed in Weimar in 1808.¹² Furthermore, and as Jean-Pierre Clément has shown, approximately one out of every two (Peninsular or Creole) Spaniards in the Viceroyalty of Peru read the *Mercurio*.¹³ He also highlights experiences of readership published in the same newspaper to remind us that collective reading also extended beyond gender and social boundaries as it was lent and read aloud in public spaces such as taverns and cafes, thus incorporating women, Indigenous, and mixed-race readers into the debates of the Enlightenment.¹⁴

It is relevant in this regard to ask to what extent the satire developed with the fictional city of Androginopolis responded to the Enlightenment demand for social reforms, and at the same time, how it reflected the fame gained by the Viceroyalty capital as a city full of effeminate characters, evidenced by its representations in scientific narratives, paintings, and travel accounts.¹⁵ We can get an early glimpse of Lima's fame from the 1757 edict of Archbishop Pedro Antonio Barroeta against the presence at public dances of *maricas*—young effeminate men wearing female clothing and accessories—under the pretense of collecting alms to honor some saint.¹⁶ By the end of the century, Esteban de Terralla y Landa, a Spanish writer resident in Lima, seals the city's reputation in his book of poems *Lima por dentro y fuera* (Lima Inside and Out, 1798), calling the *maricones* “the plague of Lima's climate.”¹⁷ This notoriety was soon incorporated into common knowledge as evidenced by the words of the soldier Pedro Palomares in the statement he made in 1803, in a lawsuit against a free mulatto Francisco Pro for being dressed like a *tapada*, with the traditional skirt (*saya*) and shawl (*manto*) worn by Limeña women. Palomares, a neighbor of Francisco Pro, declared that he knew him as *maricón* “because he has always used effeminate gestures, movements, and words, and that his acquaintances are [people of] the same species, who are known by the nickname of *maricones*, of whose type of people there are many in this city.”¹⁸

Any doubts on whether the *Mercurio Peruano's* satire actually referred to the city of Lima or not were cleared by a second article that appeared in the same newspaper three months later, entitled “Letter addressed to the Society [*Sociedad de amantes del país*], it made some reflections on the article included in the 94th issue of the *Mercurio*, in which the *maricones* were portrayed.”¹⁹ Here Friar Tomás de Méndez y Lachica, who wrote under the pen name of Teagnes, responded to the acrimonious satire, arguing that *maricones* were not unique to any city. Through this reasoning, Friar Méndez y Lachica intended to dismiss the analogy of Androginopolis as the city of Lima by maintaining that a “monstrous disorder like this” was present almost everywhere in the world.²⁰ This was followed by a racial argument. Méndez y Lachica explicitly pointed out that African people were the ones to blame for having brought this custom to Lima: “Blacks have been seen arriving at this City [of Lima], [who have been] educated in the barbarous and fierce customs of Guinea, [and are] full of effeminate bad habits, or more properly said, [are] veritable *maricones*.”²¹ He claimed this “vice” was deeply rooted

among “the lowest-bred people” against whom the only effective eradication method was the attentive and meticulous prosecution of vice by judges and officials. He then contradicted himself on how characteristic it was of the city of Lima, arguing first that effeminate men were in sight at every step, and later claiming that their presence in the city was an uncommon occurrence.²²

Beyond the lowest sectors of society, to explain effeminacy among the well-to-do Peruvian men, Méndez y Lachica starts by dismissing the influence of the climate alleged by naturalists such as the Comte de Buffon and Cornelius de Pauw. This argument was embedded in a broader academic discussion over the effect that (according to European theories) the cold and humid climate of the New World had in producing smaller and degenerate species—which in the case of the Viceroyalty capital allegedly predisposed the Spaniard men born and raised in the city of Lima to effeminacy and feebleness.²³ On the contrary, Méndez y Lachica discarded the claim by reasoning against the influence of climate as a valid argument, alleging not only that effeminacy was present in different parts of the world (and not uniquely in Lima), but also that climatic determinism could not explain why in the same region coexisted men of a delicate temperament and some other more robust.²⁴ Instead, he blamed maternal care as the real cause for the presence of effeminate men, due to the excessive delicacy, indulgence in luxury, and leniency they showed when raising male children.²⁵ In doing so, Méndez y Lachica not only coincided with friar Juan Antonio Olavarrieta, editor of another newspaper in Lima, the *Semanario Crítico*,²⁶ but more importantly, his long response to the “Letter about the *Maricones*” did nothing more than confirm the perception of the satire of Androginopolis as referring to the city of Lima.

Fear Above All

Far from being a unique, single source, the Androginopolis satire was instead—as previously stated—part of a public debate. The “Letter about the *Maricones*” showed how the term “maricón” had displaced “sodomite” in Peru from the mid-eighteenth century onward and was increasingly being used to criticize the abundance of men who turned themselves into female-like bodies and who actively participated in social life seeking the attention of other men. Moreover, the “Letter,” its response, and other testimonies from the eighteenth-century’s last decade evidenced how racialized representations of the *maricones* would become prevalent in Peru, and were later adopted as part of an artistic set of social types with which the Viceroyalty of Peru will be identified during the early decades of the new republic, approximately up to the abolition of slavery in 1854. The collection Juan Carlos Verme held at the Museo de Arte de Lima, which includes early nineteenth-century watercolors in the Spanish *costumbrista* tradition of Francisco Javier Cortés and Francisco (Pancho) Fierro, portraying African descendant *maricones*, is a colorful example.²⁷

However, for the last decade of the eighteenth century, I will argue that by racializing the *maricón*, the Limeño Creole elite expressed its distrust and the social fear it felt in a convulsive context. The news of social violence during the Haitian Revolution and the resonance it had at the Viceroyalty of Peru in the light of the major Indigenous and mixed-race social uprising of all Spanish colonial times, the Tupac Amaru rebellion, significantly influenced this sentiment. In particular, the fact that people of African (and Indigenous) descent vastly outnumbered Lima's White population is a key element in understanding the racialization of the *maricón*.²⁸ *Aristocracia y Plebe*, the classic study by Alberto Flores Galindo, documented the fear and distrust that African slaves raised among slaveholders and the colonial elite.²⁹ In a *Black city* like late eighteenth-century Lima, the people of African origin and African descent were one of the major targets of social fear and racialization, as presented in the *Drama de los palanganas Veterano y Bisoño*, in which one of the characters expresses the fear of a joint uprising of Africans, mulattos, and Indians that would even include those from the jungle.³⁰ Moreover, the social fear the elite had of a joint slave and Indian uprising against their White masters became a recurring concern after 1780, when Tupac Amaru II led the most important Indian rebellion of all the colonial period, particularly because he had called for racial unity against the Spaniards, thus promising early on freedom for all the slaves who followed him.³¹ This social movement that mobilized more than 30,000 rebels called for a brotherhood of people with different racial backgrounds and miscegenated offspring to fight against the colonial power. This, along with some attacks against Spanish Peninsular and Creole properties carried out during the revolt, confirmed the fear the elites had of a racial war waged against Whites.³²

This social anxiety was compounded a few years later by the much-feared French and Haitian Revolutions. Claudia Rosas has long studied the social fear the news of these two revolutions stoked in the Viceroyalty of Peru. They immediately revived the dreaded fear of the angry and violent plebs summoned by the Tupac Amaru rebellion; this would be the basis of a counter-revolutionary policy that lasted until the downfall of the colonial regime in Peru.³³ The publication of the "Letter about the *Maricones*" in the *Mercurio Peruano* in November 1791, in particular, coincided with the climax of the slave rebellion in Saint Domingue that would become the Haitian revolution. The slave forces were gaining momentum in August–September 1791 in their quest for emancipation; the finest sugar plantations in Saint Domingue were aflame, and racial violence inflicted against Whites was rapidly escalating. With their plantations burnt to ashes, the demoralized and ruined planters, who were badly armed and disorganized, were unable to resist the rebel guerrilla force of over 15,000 slaves. Nor were the 6,000 French troops able to regain control of the colony.³⁴ What had once been the most profitable French colony of its time was nothing more than ashes and sorrow just a few months later, in February 1792, when the second letter in the *Mercurio*

Peruano was published, the one written by Fray Tomás Méndez y Lachica in response to the “Letter about the *Maricones*.”

The unfolding news of the Haitian Revolution spreading through the Americas incarnated the terrible fear of a slave revolt succeeding in seizing power and destroying the slave and colonial system.³⁵ It had a particular resonance in a city such as Lima, where according to Alberto Flores Galindo, in 1791 (the same year the “Letter about the *Maricones*” was published), slaves accounted for a quarter of the city’s population, and along with the free mulattos, the African descent mixed-race (*castas*), the Indians, and Indigenous mixed-race (*mestizos*) doubled the number of the (White Spaniard) Peninsular and Creole populations.³⁶ The number of people of African descent, who outnumbered all other groups (45% of the population, including slaves and mixed-race), gave rise to racial tensions within the popular classes, as day laborers (slaves included) had to go out on the street and compete for their daily sustenance with laborers of different racial backgrounds. There were also the runaway slaves or *cimarrones* who found shelter in the populous neighborhood of San Lázaro. Most of the bandit raids on the highways were attributed to these *cimarrones*, even though—as Flores Galindo and more recently Jesús Cosamalón have shown—these gangs were multiethnic groups, save that Indians rarely joined them.³⁷ In this context, the news of the slave revolt in Saint Domingue, and the fresh memory of the Tupac Amaru racial war, both ensured that the fear of an uprising of slaves and people of African descent would be ever-present in the social narrative of the city of Lima until the mid-nineteenth century.

The Plague of Lima’s Climate

The distrust and fear that the elite felt due to the Black slave population are also expressed in the form of sexualized representations.³⁸ The images of sexually available female slaves and extremely virile male slaves were discursive tropes that abounded in colonial literature, not just within the Spanish Colonial context, but also in the North American British colonies.³⁹ But beyond literary images, sexual relations between male owners and female slaves were used on occasion as a path to better life conditions. If the slave was able to prove she had had sexual relations with her master, she ultimately might be granted her liberty or more probably a reduction in her bill of sale as a punishment to her master for his lack of continence.⁴⁰ Some other mechanisms of domination of enslaved women that promoted sexualized representations have been studied by Christine Hünefeldt, and more recently by Tamara Walker, such as the questions posed to the social order by the offspring between master and slave woman, the intervention of the masters in conjugal life, and the high levels of marital violence due to the contradictions in gender roles implied by the condition of slavery, both for women and men.⁴¹ Besides, Maribel Arrelucea has argued that in addition to the dangers of sexual violence to

which enslaved women were subjected in their relations with their owners or masters, a potential danger lurked for all free women of African descent due to being ascribed a lack of honor in virtue of their low social standing.⁴²

Slavery at the same time demeaned male slaves by placing them in a dependent condition regarding other men so that they were incapable of legally governing themselves, just as it was believed to be the case for children and women. This diminished masculinity was not restricted just to Black slaves but was also applied to mulattos, as is shown by the report Mariano de la Torre y Vera, the Vicar General of the Army of Alto Peru, submitted to the Regency in 1814. Regarding *mulattos*, i.e., the offspring of Spaniards and Blacks, de la Torre y Vera commented that the term was an analogy with mules, as their crossbreeding made them hybrid animals. His analogy had at the same time a sexual connotation regarding the mulatto's masculinity, as all male mules are infertile.⁴³

A more common reference to diminished masculinity that started in the late eighteenth century was the depiction of all *maricones* as laboring in trades that were socially ascribed to women. For instance, in 1798, in his *Lima por dentro y fuera*—the caustic book of poems satirizing the city's personages and customs—Esteban de Terralla y Landa devoted a paragraph to the trades practiced by the *maricones* and calling them “the plague of Lima's climate.” Here the *maricones* are depicted as working in occupations like laundering and ironing:

You will see certain *maricones*
 The plague of Lima's climate,
 With effeminate voices,
 Corsets, and bandannas.
 You'll see them laundering, ironing,
 Starching with great care,
 And stretching; when they
 should be the ones stretched.
 You will see the implacable hate,
 And the utmost abhorrence,
 They have towards women;
 And these women are loving them.⁴⁴

Terralla likewise noted the alleged hatred *maricones* felt for women, in regard to the witty comments and public dialogues that they had with the *tapadas* (veiled women dressed in Limeño attire) in the central plaza while contesting for the attention of men. However, Terralla also suggested that there was a sense of complicity between them both based on their common interest in fashion, love affairs, and gossip, for instance, when he noted the way *maricones* imitated women using effeminate voices and specific pieces of clothing. Corsets were thus concealed under a shirt and helped to give form to a curvaceous body. On the other hand, the use of bandanas, ribbons, and

flowers was perhaps a more subtle way in which to adorn one's head—at least it was somewhat subtler than a corset.

Another form of relating diminished masculinities to African ancestry was the development in Lima of a *Costumbrista* watercolor tradition that represented *maricones* as African descendants. Starting in the first decades of the nineteenth century, a few years after the articles were published in the *Mercurio Peruano*, a series of watercolors portraying mulatto *maricones* were made by different artists as collectible items. The earlier ones, part of the Juan Carlos Verme collection held at the Museo de Arte de Lima, have been attributed to Francisco Javier Cortes,⁴⁵ an accomplished botanist painter and member of the *Real expedición botánica del Nuevo Reino de Granada* directed by José Celestino Mutis. Son and disciple of José Cortés Alcocer, a renowned painter from the school of Quito, Francisco Javier made the acquaintance of Alexander von Humboldt and Aimé Bonpland when they visited Mutis' Botanic Institute in Santafé de Bogotá in August 1801 and accompanied them on some of their expeditions. In 1806, Francisco Javier Cortés was designated in Lima by the Viceroy Fernando de Abascal as director of the *Academia de dibujo y pintura* affiliated with the medical school and remained in the city until his passing in 1839.⁴⁶ His watercolors of Juan José Cabezudo, a famous mulatto *maricón* in Lima in the decade of 1820s, were the first to be adopted as an iconographic social type in the art tradition of *Costumbrismo*, later to be followed by the notable watercolorist Francisco (Pancho) Fierro and other painters. Although there are earlier watercolors from this tradition, the one painted by Léonce Angrand, French vice-consul in Lima in 1834–1839, resembles many of the features described by Philalethes in his “Letter about the *Maricones*” published in the *Mercurio Peruano* in 1791 (Figure 1.1).

The “Letter about the *Maricones*” describes the effort they made to adapt their attire so as to move about freely in the urban space by day without abandoning their fashion preferences. This strategy created a specific kind of fashion that was best described by Philalethes in his “Letter”:

The low neckline, the shortened sleeves to leave the whole arm bare; the small jacket, the effort made to enlarge the clothes in the back-side as much as possible; all these trifles and many others help them—since they can't totally renounce in public to the virile attire—modify their clothing in such a way that even the less perspicacious sees a man adorned with the clothes of both sexes. In this way they present themselves in such an extravagant outfit: the hand at the waist, wrapped in the cloak with a feminine air⁴⁷

Although it comes from a satirical article, this description seems to perfectly describe the image Angrand painted more than 40 years later. Léonce Angrand painted an effeminate mulatto young man standing in the street between two other men, a layman riding on a mule, and a college student.⁴⁸



Figure 1.1 Léonce Angrand, “Street scene. Lay brother from the Recollect convent begging for alms around the city—Mulatto *maricón* in a grand lounge suit—Philosophy student from San Carlos College or the University of Lima in grand parade uniform. 1836–1837.” Watercolor on paper.

Source: *Costumes péruviens, scènes de la vie religieuse et populaire à Lima*, Tome 1 (1834–1837), f. 68. Bibliothèque Nationale de France. <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10540832f/f68.item>

The scene depicted in the painting is quite subtle: the *maricón* and the college student are both smoking while the lay brother passes by riding a mule. The *maricón* is apparently being addressed by the student, who responds with a proud and uninterested look. On the other side of the painting, the lay brother looks askance at the student and the *maricón* interacting. Angrand highlighted the phenotype of the African descent of the *maricón* by establishing a contrast between the skin tone of the mulatto, the shoulder-length dark hair of the lay brother’s mixed-race skin tone, and the college student’s lighter complexion and blonde hair. The *maricón* is wearing a women’s blouse, with ruffles at the sleeves that left the arms bare, just like women used to wear, and with his clothes enlarged under the trousers at the backside as described in the *Mercurio Peruano* article. The delicate green shoes, silk white socks,

the pink cloak worn over the shoulders, and a headpiece made of flowers and ornamental combs are meant to complement the outfit and compose a female-like silhouette. The hands are femininely arranged, with one holding a cigarette and the other one holding a white fan. The image Angrand painted of the mulatto *maricón* dressed in both female and male attire perfectly illustrates the letters published in the *Mercurio Peruano*,⁴⁹ while also evidencing the complex racialization that dominated the representation of *maricones* in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Correspondence Among Male Friends

Terralla's acrimonious satires and Léonce Angrand's watercolor aside, we can wonder what foreign travelers might have thought of the public visibility *maricones* seemed to have attained in Lima. In the same fashion as the fictional "Letter about the *Maricones*," we might ask, for instance, whether they did address their acquaintances with the same awe and wonder regarding the specific characteristics of the city of Lima. Or perhaps travelers may on the contrary have avoided the topic altogether as did the famous Prussian traveler Alexander von Humboldt in his letters about the city of Lima. Humboldt shared his disappointment with the city he visited from October 23 to December 24 of 1802 in a letter he sent to Don Ignacio Checa, the governor of the province and his host in Jaén de Bracamoros in northern Perú, where he gave his impressions on Lima and its customs. This was slightly over a decade after the "Letter" had appeared in the *Mercurio Peruano*. Humboldt, who himself read this newspaper, complained to Checa that Lima was far from being the city of luxury, elegance, and beauty of the fair sex that he had been promised in Europe. Although Humboldt confessed that he had a pleasant time in Lima, it was nonetheless "the last place in America where anyone would want to live."⁵⁰ There is no evidence to question what his true impressions actually were, but after a century, this private letter was made public in 1906 by Ricardo Palma, one of the most influential intellectuals of his time,⁵¹ and since then the question of the little attachment that Humboldt developed toward the capital of the Viceroyalty of Peru has remained unanswered. The letter Humboldt sent to Ignacio Checa was probably written without any intention of revealing specific details of his innermost impressions of the city that inspired the *Androginopolis* metaphor. After all, this might be a sensitive issue considering the enormous anticipation that preceded Humboldt's arrival in Lima and the gossip behind the Caldas affair.

Rafael Sagredo Baeza has studied the passionate letters addressed by the New Grenadian naturalist Francisco José Caldas to his mentor and benefactor, José Celestino Mutis (who directed the *Expedición Botánica* in which participated Francisco Javier Cortés), regarding his disappointment in his aspirations to accompany von Humboldt on his expedition to Lima.⁵² Celestino Mutis, the renowned botanist, mathematician, medicine, and geography savant, and also a priest, is addressed by Caldas in his letters

as “protector,” “benefactor,” and “father.” Expressing his profound admiration and gratitude in a tone that demonstrates a passionate nature and vehement involvement with science, Caldas wrote: “My heart is in a state of agitation: I do not eat, I do not sleep; at every moment Mutis, the wise, the virtuous Mutis, presents himself to my imagination. My heart is too small to love such a great man.”⁵³ Caldas even recalled that meditating on the image of his mentor was a “secret pleasure” that enraptured him.⁵⁴ The letter of Caldas to Mutis and other intellectuals raises several questions regarding male sensibilities expressed through a love for science. Also, the similarities in the affectionate tone of Caldas in his letters and the one used in the “Letter about the *Maricones*” generate queries regarding a homosocial bonding that might have arisen as part of Enlightenment circles. But these questions are beyond the scope of the present research.

In relation to the intricate interaction between science and passion expressed in the Caldas affair, Rafael Sagredo interpellates it as a starting point for a study on Humboldt’s sentiment as a keen scientist. On the contrary, invoking a moderate character, on April 6, 1802—several months before the arrival of Humboldt in Lima—Caldas complained to Mutis of Humboldt’s passionate character and immoderate profound affection for young males. In a lengthy letter, Caldas gave numerous details of Alexander von Humboldt’s alleged friendship with “obscene, dissolute young men who drag him to houses where the impure love flourishes.”⁵⁵ Caldas used expressions such as “abominable secret,” “shameful passion,” and “obscure and effeminate life,” which would have a great impact on well-informed readers not just to distance himself from Humboldt’s alleged preference for male partners, but also to avoid any possible misinterpretation of the nature of the relationship he had with Humboldt. He emphasized this in his letter:

Since I have frequented this wise man’s [Humboldt’s] house, since we have lived a month together in a beautiful *hacienda*, there have been repeated occasions where he could acquaint himself with my different way of thinking in regard to pleasures. When they were spoken of, I could not help but show my displeasure with my countenance, and in a certain way my indignation too.⁵⁶

With this confession to his mentor, Caldas was reacting to what he considered a capital offense inflicted upon him by Humboldt. The German naturalist had favored the young and inexperienced Carlos Montúfar, the son of the Marquis of Selva Alegre, as his traveling companion for the rest of his American expedition over Caldas’s scientific achievements and his thirst for knowledge. Caldas refers to young Montúfar and Humboldt’s other male friends as the “object of his love” and his “accomplices in his frailties.”⁵⁷ In contrast, as José Antonio Amaya has demonstrated, Mutis had not only offered to finance Caldas’ placement in Humboldt’s expedition, but he also had a particular scientific interest in it. Without his direct knowledge, Caldas

had the mission of protecting the Mutis scientific legacy, the *Flora de Bogotá*, in the form of a botanical collection given by the director of the *Expedición botánica* to Humboldt and Bonpland during their visit to Santafé de Bogotá in August 1801. Humboldt and Bonpland were entrusted to take the botanical collection of drawings and specimens to the National Museum of Natural History in Paris. Instead, the collection was absorbed by Humboldt and Bonpland without providing credit, as Amaya has established, tracing its vestiges. Amid this tension between rival polymaths, the incorporation of Caldas in Humboldt's entourage (also supported by local naturalists) might have been interpreted by him as an unnecessary imposition, although the concerns of Mutis were ultimately justified.⁵⁸

In comparison with the affectionate letters of Caldas to Mutis, there is no salutation in the letter that Humboldt sent to don Ignacio Checa, the governor of Jaén. There is no "beloved Ignacio" or any other salutation in a letter Humboldt wrote in Guayaquil on January 18, 1803, after having spent almost three months in Lima. Neither does he reference anywhere the fame that Lima had acquired as an effeminate city, or the intriguing "Letter about the *Maricones*" that he must have certainly been familiar with, given his acquaintance with the newspaper where it was published. Humboldt, however, was quite explicit in his dislike of the Peruvian capital. For him, Lima lacked the commercial development of Buenos Aires, Santiago de Chile, or Arequipa, and was even lacking in cultural and social terms; for Humboldt, Lima lagged behind vibrant cities like Havana or Caracas:

I saw no magnificent houses, no lavishly dressed women, and I know that most families are completely ruined. The hidden reason behind this situation lies in social enmities and the passion for gambling. There are no amusements other than a (mediocre and poorly attended) theater and a (most flamboyant) bullring. [...] In the city of Lima there is not a single salon that is attended by more than eight people, and whenever they are gathered for the sake of gambling, [...] then this ephemeral society lasts only until the time when one has lost one's entire estate.⁵⁹

The scant interest Humboldt had for Peru in his vast oeuvre has repeatedly intrigued Andean researchers, and in particular the dislike he apparently had for its capital city, Lima. This may have been due to the fact that he found the country immersed in total gloom, or perhaps because his desire to join the expedition led by his friend Captain Nicolas Baudin in the port of Callao, Peru, was frustrated due to a sudden change in the expedition's plans, or even because his stay in Peru was just a few months long in comparison with the extended periods he spent in other parts of the continent.⁶⁰ Whatever the reason, Humboldt—whose emotional bonding with his male friends has been recently addressed—never referred to the public visibility that the *maricones* of African ascendancy had in early nineteenth-century Lima. Perhaps it was not that he didn't like *Androginopolis*, but rather that he would not say so.

Or maybe—in one of those cases in which reality imitates fiction—wanderlust was a more relevant emotion for him. For many others—religious and local authorities, journalists, prosecutors, and police officers, as well as foreign travelers—the city of Lima was a source of public concern due to the visibility that *maricones* were able to have as unavoidable and characteristic personages of the social landscape.

Furthermore, the concern over any particular form of male bonding was also part of the social anxiety raised by the vast number of slaves, free Blacks, mulattos, and other mixed-race African descendants in colonial Lima, and therefore the fear of social upheaval, slave insurrections, or any other configuration of racial violence embodied by both the Tupac Amaru rebellion and the Haitian revolution. The depiction in *Androginopolis* of these same fierce slaves who were rebelling in Saint Domingue as effeminate men dressed in female attire must have been a soothing image in comparison with the distressing news coming from the French colony.

Notes

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- 2 Mónica Bolufer, “‘Hombres de bien’: Modelos de masculinidad y expectativas femeninas, entre la ficción y la realidad,” *Cuadernos de Ilustración y Romanticismo* 15 (2007): 7–31; Mónica Bolufer, “Reasonable Sentiments. Sensibility and Balance in Eighteenth-Century Spain,” in *Engaging the Emotions in Spanish Culture and History*, ed. Luisa Elena Delgado, Pura Fernández, and Jo Labanyi (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2016).
- 3 Sophie Brokmann, *The Science of Useful Nature in Central America. Landscape, Networks and Practical Enlightenment, 1784–1838* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 2020): 20, 111. Thanks to Norberto Barreto Velázquez for introducing me to the vast literature on “knowledge production” as part of a contested imperial sentiment. *La amenaza colonial: el imperialismo norteamericano y las Filipinas, 1900–1934* (Madrid: CSIC, 2010).
- 4 Mónica Bolufer analyzes the forms of masculinity embodied by Francisco de Miranda amid the era of revolutions in “A Latin American Casanova? Sex, Gender, Enlightenment and Revolution in the Life and Writings of Francisco de Miranda (1750–1816),” *Gender & History* 34, no. 1 (2022): 22–41.
- 5 Sara Ahmed, *La política cultural de las emociones* (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Programa Universitario de Estudios de Género, 2015); Luisa Elena Delgado, Pura Fernández, and Jo Labanyi, “Introduction,” in *Engaging the Emotions in Spanish Culture and History*, ed. Luisa Elena Delgado, Pura Fernández, and Jo Labanyi (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2016).
- 6 Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Amor. Una historia en cinco fantasías* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2022); Rob Boddice, “The History of Emotions,” *Revista de Estudios*

- Sociales*, 62 (2017), <https://journals.openedition.org/revestudsoc/939>; Anne C. Vila, "Introduction: Powers, Pleasures and Perils of the Senses in the Enlightenment Era," in *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Age of the Enlightenment*, ed. Anne C. Vila (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014); Javier Moscoso, *Promesas incumplidas: Una historia política de las pasiones* (Barcelona: Taurus, 2017); Bernabéu, Salvador and Frédérique Langue, coords., *Fronteras y Sensibilidades en las Américas* (Madrid: Doce Calles/MASCIPO, 2011).
- 7 "El ayre del cuerpo, el garbo, los pasos, las acciones, hasta los menores movimientos, todo respira en ellos una afeminación ridícula y extravagante." Filaletes (pseud.), "Carta sobre los Maricones," *Mercurio Peruano* 3, no. 94 (November 27, 1791): 230.
 - 8 "La lana que en lugar de cabello les concede la naturaleza [a los maricones], reducida hasta la mitad en menudísimas trenzas, la reunen en un lazo, de modo que en la extremidad forma una encrespada poma." Filaletes (pseud.), "Carta sobre los Maricones," *Mercurio Peruano* 3, no. 94 (November 27, 1791): 230.
 - 9 Filaletes (pseud.), "Carta sobre los Maricones," *Mercurio Peruano* 3, no. 94 (November 27, 1791) facsimile ed. (Lima: Instituto Nacional de Cultura, 1970): 231.
 - 10 "Lista de señores subscriptores al Mercurio Peruano," *Mercurio Peruano. Edición facsimilar*, vol. 6 (Lima: Instituto Nacional de Cultura, 1970), xii; "AGUIRRE, José Mariano de," in Alberto Tauro del Pino, *Enciclopedia Ilustrada del Perú*, vol. 1 (Lima: Peisa, 1987), 49; Ella Dunbar Temple, "Prólogo," in Colección Documental de la Independencia del Perú, *La Universidad: Libros de posesiones de cátedras y actos académicos, 1789–1826. Tomo XIX*, vol. 1 (Lima: Comisión Nacional del Sesquicentenario de la Independencia del Perú, 1972), 40–44; Jean-Pierre Clément, "Índices del Mercurio Peruano," *Fénix. Revista de la Biblioteca Nacional* 26–27 (1979): 195, 217.
 - 11 Alejandro de Humboldt, *Sitios de las cordilleras y monumentos de los pueblos indígenas de América* (Madrid: Gaspar, 1878), 254.
 - 12 Alejandro de Humboldt, *Humboldt en el Perú. Diario de Alejandro de Humboldt durante su permanencia en el Perú (agosto a diciembre de 1802), traducido del francés por Manuel Vegas Vélez* (Piura: Centro de Investigación y Promoción del Campesinado, 1991), 87; Estuardo Núñez, "Alejandro de Humboldt. El viaje memorable por el Perú," *Cuadernos literarios. Cuadernos de viaje* 8 (2009), 63–72. Francisco Javier Campos y Fernández refers to the German translation of selected articles from the *Mercurio Peruano* published by F.J. Bertuch in Weimar (1808, 2 vols.). Francisco Javier Campos y Fernández, "El padre Diego Cisneros, intelectual ilustrado, bibliotecario, librero del Nuevo Rezado," *Revista del Archivo General de la Nación* 31, no. 1 (2016): 219, <https://doi.org/10.37840/ragn.v31i1.33>.
 - 13 Jean-Pierre Clément, *El Mercurio Peruano, 1790–1795, Vol. I: Estudio* (Frankfurt: Vervuert Verlag, 1997), 65.
 - 14 Jean-Pierre Clément, *El Mercurio Peruano, 1790–1795, Vol. I: Estudio* (Frankfurt: Vervuert Verlag, 1997), 63–64. For the collective readership experience of the *Semanario Crítico*, another contemporary Peruvian newspaper, see Juan Antonio de Olavarrieta, "Prospecto del nuevo papel periódico intitulado Semanario Crítico," *Semanario Crítico* (Lima: Imprenta Real de los Niños Expósitos, 1791): 1–2.
 - 15 On the *Mercurio Peruano*'s response to climatic determinism theories such as the ones of Buffon and De Paw that claimed Peruvian men lacked virile features, see Magally Alegre Henderson, "Degenerate Heirs of the Empire. Climatic Determinism and Effeminacy in the Mercurio Peruano," *Historia Crítica* 73 (2019): 117–136, <https://doi.org/10.7440/histcrit73.2019.06>. On *petimetres*, courtesan effeminacy and male fashion, see Magally Alegre Henderson,

- “‘Hombres de temperamento delicado’: Determinismo climático, moda masculina y cuidados maternos en la prensa ilustrada,” in Claudia Rosas Lauro, ed., *Género y mujeres en la Historia del Perú. Del hogar al espacio público* (Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú-Fondo Editorial, 2019). For early nineteenth-century *costumbrist* watercolors of men wearing female attire, see Natalia Majluf, ed., *La creación del costumbrismo. Las acuarelas de la donación Juan Carlos Verme* (Lima: MALI, 2016).
- 16 Pedro Antonio de Barroeta, “Nos el D. D. Pedro Antonio de Barroeta y Angel por la gracia de Dios, y de la Sta. Sede Apostolica, Arzobispo,” in José Toribio Medina, *La imprenta en Lima (1584–1824)* (Santiago de Chile: Fondo Histórico y Bibliográfico José Toribio Medina, 1966), 2: 507. Juan Carlos Estenssoro analyzes Barroeta’s complaint as part of his Enlightenment reform. “Modernismo, Estética, Música y Fiesta: Elites y cambio de actitud frente a la cultura popular. Perú 1750–1850,” in *Tradición y Modernidad en los Andes*, comp. Henríque Urbano (Cusco: Centro Bartolomé de las Casas, 1992), 184.
 - 17 Simón Ayanque (Esteban de Terralla y Landa), *Lima por dentro y fuera* (Madrid [Lima]: Imprenta de Villalpando, 1798). “Expediente duplicado de memoriales, autos y diligencias por la prohibición de la circulación y venta del libro ‘Lima por dentro y por fuera,’” AHMLM, Expedientes y Particulares: 1796–1839, Caja 1, Doc. 3; Palma, “El poeta de las adivinanzas,” 712.
 - 18 “respecto de que este ha usado siempre de acciones y movimiento y palabras afeminadas, y han sido sus juntas con otros de la misma especie, los cuales son conocidos por el sobre nombre de maricones, de cuya especie de gentes hay muchas en esta ciudad.” *Causa seguida contra Francisco Pro por encontrarse vestido como mujer en la Alameda*, 1803, Real Audiencia, Causas Criminales, Leg. 98. Cuad. 1192, Archivo General de la Nación del Perú, fol. 15r–15v.
 - 19 Fray Tomás Méndez y Lachica (pseud. Teagnes), “Carta remitida a la Sociedad haciendo algunas reflexiones sobre la que se contiene en el *Mercurio* num. 94 en que se pinta a los *Maricones*,” *Mercurio Peruano* 4, no. 118 (February 19, 1792), facsimile ed. (Lima: Instituto Nacional de Cultura, 1970), 118–122.
 - 20 Mariselle Meléndez has studied the cultural production of the effeminate body as deviant and monstrous in *Deviant and Useful Citizens: The Cultural Production of the Female Body in Eighteenth-Century Peru* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2011), 2.
 - 21 “a esta Ciudad se han visto venir Negros de partida educados entre las bárbaras y feroces costumbres de la Guinea, llenos de resabios afeminados, o mas propiamente verdaderos Maricones.” Fray Tomás Méndez y Lachica (pseud. Teagnes), “Carta remitida a la Sociedad haciendo algunas reflexiones sobre la que se contiene en el *Mercurio* num. 94 en que se pinta a los *Maricones*,” *Mercurio Peruano* 4, no. 118 (February 19, 1792): 118–119.
 - 22 Fray Tomás Méndez y Lachica (pseud. Teagnes), “Carta remitida a la Sociedad haciendo algunas reflexiones sobre la que se contiene en el *Mercurio* num. 94 en que se pinta a los *Maricones*,” *Mercurio Peruano* 4, no. 118 (February 19, 1792): 118–119.
 - 23 Magally Alegre Henderson, “Degenerate Heirs of the Empire. Climatic Determinism and Effeminacy in the *Mercurio Peruano*,” *Historia Crítica* 73 (2019): 123–125.
 - 24 Fray Tomás Méndez y Lachica (pseud. Teagnes), “Carta remitida a la Sociedad haciendo algunas reflexiones sobre la que se contiene en el *Mercurio* num. 94 en que se pinta a los *Maricones*,” *Mercurio Peruano* 4, no. 118 (February 19, 1792): 120.
 - 25 Fray Tomás Méndez y Lachica (pseud. Teagnes), “Carta remitida a la Sociedad haciendo algunas reflexiones sobre la que se contiene en el *Mercurio* num. 94 en que se pinta a los *Maricones*,” *Mercurio Peruano* 4, no. 118 (February 19, 1792), facsimile ed. (Lima: Instituto Nacional de Cultura, 1970): 118–122; Magally

- Alegre Henderson, “Degenerate Heirs of the Empire. Climatic Determinism and Effeminacy in the Mercurio Peruano,” *Historia Crítica* 73 (2019): 127.
- 26 Juan Antonio Olavarrieta, “Prosigue la materia de primera educacion. Sobre los puntos insinuados en el antecedente discurso,” *Semanario Crítico*, no. 11 (1791): 97–98.
 - 27 Natalia Majluf, “La creación del costumbrismo. Las acuarelas de la donación Juan Carlos Verme,” in *La creación del costumbrismo. Las acuarelas de la donación Juan Carlos Verme*, ed. Natalia Majluf (Lima: MALI, 2016), 16–20.
 - 28 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.
 - 29 Alberto Flores Galindo, *La ciudad sumergida. Aristocracia y plebe en Lima, 1760–1830* (Lima: Horizonte, 1991), 79–86.
 - 30 Alberto Flores Galindo, *La ciudad sumergida. Aristocracia y plebe en Lima, 1760–1830* (Lima: Horizonte, 1991), 79–80.
 - 31 Joseph Gabriel Thupa Amaro Inca, “Bando de 16 de noviembre de 1780 para el Cuzco para que desamaparen [sic] los chapetones, ofreciendo libertad a los esclavos,” in Colección Documental de la Independencia del Perú, *La Rebelión de Túpac Amaru*, t. II, vol. 2 (Lima: Comisión Nacional del Sesquicentenario de la Independencia del Perú, 1972), 271–272.
 - 32 Scarlett O’Phelan, *Un siglo de rebeliones anticoloniales. Perú y Bolivia 1700–1783* (Cusco: Centro Bartolomé de Las Casas, 1988); Sergio Serulnikov, *Revolución en los Andes. La era de Túpac Amaru* (Buenos Aires: Sudamericana, 2010); Charles Walker, *La rebelión de Túpac Amaru* (Lima: IEP, 2015); Charles Walker, “¡Qué complejo es su destino! El Perú y la difícil transición de colonia a república (1780–1840),” in Paulo Drinot and Alberto Vergara, *La condena de la libertad. De Túpac Amaru II al bicentenario peruano en seis ensayos y un colofón* (Lima: Crítica, 2022), 32–34.
 - 33 Claudia Rosas, “El fantasma de Tupac Amaru II. El miedo al líder indígena y su movimiento en los albores de la independencia del Perú,” in *Los miedos sin patria. Temores revolucionarios en las independencias iberoamericanas*, ed. Manuel Chust and Claudia Rosas (Madrid: Sílex, 2019), 246; Claudia Rosas, *Del trono a la guillotina. El impacto de la Revolución Francesa en el Perú (1789–1808)* (Lima: IFEA, PUCP, 2006). See also Scarlett O’Phelan, “La construcción del miedo a la plebe a través de las rebeliones indígenas del siglo XVIII,” in *El Miedo en el Perú, siglos XVI–XX*, ed. Claudia Rosas Lauro (Lima: PUCP, SIDEA, 2005).
 - 34 Michel-Rolph Trouillot, “Una historia impensable: la revolución haitiana como un noventa,” in *Antropología Política. Temas contemporáneos*, ed. Montserrat Cañedo Rodríguez and Aurora Marquina Espinosa (Barcelona: Edicions Bellaterra, 2010); Carolyn E. Fick, *The Making of Haiti* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2000), in *The Haitian Revolution Timeline*, ed. Kona Shen, <https://thehaitianrevolution.com/> (Providence: Brown University, 2008–2022). Also, Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004); Julius S. Scott, *El viento común. Corrientes afroamericanas en la era de la Revolución haitiana* (Madrid: Traficantes de Sueños, 2021).
 - 35 On the constant fear the elite had of a slave and African American uprising, see “Expediente causado con motivo del informe que pidió el Virrey de Lima a la Sala del Crimen sobre si podría autorizar a las Justicias para castigo de Zambos, mulatos y negros,” Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de Lima, Leg. 943, n° 77 (1791).
 - 36 Alberto Flores Galindo, *La ciudad sumergida. Aristocracia y plebe en Lima, 1760–1830* (Lima: Horizonte, 1991), 79–80.

- 37 Alberto Flores Galindo, *La ciudad sumergida. Aristocracia y plebe en Lima, 1760–1830* (Lima: Horizonte, 1991), chaps. 4 and 5; Jesús Cosamalón, *El juego de las apariencias. La alquimia de los mestizajes y las jerarquías sociales en Lima, siglo XIX* (México: COLMEX, IEP, 2017). See also, Alonso Carrió de la Vandra, *El lazarrillo de ciegos caminantes* (Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1984 [1775–1776]); Carlos Aguirre and Charles Walker, *Bandoleros, abigeos y montoneros. Criminalidad y violencia en el Perú, siglos XVIII–XX* (Lima: Instituto de Apoyo Agrario, 1990).
- 38 Joseph Rossi y Rubí (pseud. Eustaquio Filomates), “Amas de Leche,” *Mercurio Peruano* 1, no. 8, (January 27, 1791); Fray Francisco González Laguna (pseud. Thimeo), “Descripción anatómica de un monstruo,” *Mercurio Peruano* 1, no. 1 (January 2, 1791); Joseph Rossi y Rubí (pseud. Hesperióphilo), “Apólogo histórico sobre la corrupción,” *Mercurio Peruano* 1, no. 15 (January 16, 1791); Carrió de la Vandra, *El lazarrillo de ciegos caminantes*, 175–176; “Art. Comunic.,” *El Investigador del Perú* 121 (June 16, 1814), 1. Sexualized representations of slaves have received the attention of Peruvian cultural studies, see Helen Melling, “‘Colourful Customs and Invisible Traditions.’ Visual Representations of Black Subjects in Late Colonial and 19th Century, Post-Independence Peru (1750s–1890s),” doctoral diss. (King’s College London, 2015); Marcel Velázquez Castro, *Las máscaras de la representación. El sujeto esclavista y las rutas del racismo en el Perú (1775–1895)* (Lima: UNMSM, BCR, 2005); Patricia Oliart, “Poniendo a cada quien en su lugar: estereotipos raciales y sexuales en la Lima del siglo XIX,” in *Mundos interiores: Lima 1850–1950*, ed. Aldo Panfichi, Felipe Portocarrero (Lima: UP, 1995).
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- 40 Alberto Flores Galindo, *La ciudad sumergida. Aristocracia y plebe en Lima, 1760–1830* (Lima: Horizonte, 1991), 108–109; Rosario Rivoldi, “El uso de la vía judicial por esclavas domésticas en Lima a fines del siglo XVIII y principios del siglo XIX,” in *Etnicidad y discriminación racial en la Historia del Perú*, ed. Ana Cecilia Carrillo (Lima: PUCP-IRA, Banco Mundial, 2002).
- 41 Christine Hünefeldt, *Lasmanuelos, vida cotidiana de una familia negra en la Lima del s. XVIII. Una reflexión histórica sobre la esclavitud urbana* (Lima: IEP, 1992); Christine Hünefeldt, *Paying the Price of Freedom. Family and Labor among Lima’s Slaves, 1800–1854* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1994); Tamara Walker, *Exquisite Slaves. Race, Clothing, and Status in Colonial Lima* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).
- 42 Maribel Arrelucea, *Sobreviviendo a la esclavitud: negociación y honor en las prácticas cotidianas de los africanos y afrodescendientes: Lima, 1750–1820* (Lima: IEP, 2018), 284.
- 43 “La mescla [del español] con negro origina mulatos, que es una analogía de los mulos, como animales de tercera especie.” Contestación que dirige el Doctor Don Mariano de la Torre y Vera. Respuesta al interrogatorio de las 36 circunstancias, Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de Lima, Leg. 1568 (1814).
- 44 “Verás ciertos maricones/Plaga del clima Limeño,/Con voces afeminadas/Cotillas, y barbiquejos./Verás que lavan, planchean (sic)/Almidonan con esmero,/Y estiran;

- quando debieran/Estar estirados ellos./Veras el odio implacable,/Y sumo aborrecimiento,/Qué tienen a las mugeres,/Y ellas los están queriendo.” Terralla y Landa, *Lima por dentro y fuera*, 73; Giuseppe Campuzano, *Museo Travesti del Perú* (Lima: Campuzano, Institute of Development Studies, 2008), [51].
- 45 Natalia Majluf, “La creación del costumbrismo. Las acuarelas de la donación Juan Carlos Verme,” in *La creación del costumbrismo. Las acuarelas de la donación Juan Carlos Verme*, ed. Natalia Majluf (Lima: MALI, 2016), 128–129.
- 46 Natalia Majluf, “La creación del costumbrismo. Las acuarelas de la donación Juan Carlos Verme,” in *La creación del costumbrismo. Las acuarelas de la donación Juan Carlos Verme*, ed. Natalia Majluf (Lima: MALI, 2016), 6; José A. de Lavalle, “Abascal. El marqués de la concordia,” in *El Ateneo de Lima. Publicación quinquenal. Año III, tomo quinto* (Lima: Torres Aguirre, 1888), 130; Alberto Gómez Gutiérrez, *Humboldtiana Neogranadina. Tomo I. Relatio. Apuntes y encuentros (1800–1801)*, (Bogotá: CESA, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, et al., 2018), 383–385, in https://catalogoenlinea.bibliotecanacional.gov.co/custom/web/content/humboldtiana_neogranadina/index.html.
- 47 “El descote, las manguitas altas que dexan todo el brazo descubierto: la chaquetilla, el fomento que abulta del modo posible la ropa por detrás; todas estas y mil otras menudencias les sirven, ya que en público no pueden renunciar del todo al vestido viril, para modificarlo de tal suerte que el menos perspicaz ve un hombre adornado con la ropa de ambos sexos. Así se presentan en tan extravagante traje: la mano en la cintura, embozados en la capa con aire mugeril.” Filaletes (pseud.), “Carta sobre los Maricones,” *Mercurio Peruano* 3, no. 94 (November 27, 1791): 230.
- 48 For more of Angrand’s watercolors of Lima, see Angrand, *Imagen del Perú*.
- 49 Giuseppe Campuzano, *Museo Travesti del Perú* (Lima: Campuzano, Institute of Development Studies, 2008), 54–55.
- 50 “Lima es el último lugar de América, donde nadie quisiera vivir.” Alexander von Humboldt to Ignacio Checa, 18 January 1803, Alejandro de Humboldt, *Cartas Americanas* (Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1980), 92–93.
- 51 *El Ateneo*, vol. II, n. 40 (Lima, 1906), 116–120, in Mark Thurner, “Peruvian Desencuentro: Humboldt’s Fog, Unanue’s Light,” in Mark Thurner and Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, eds., *The Invention of Humboldt. On the Geopolitics of Knowledge* (New York: Routledge, 2023), 196.
- 52 Rafael Sagredo Baeza, “Ciencia y pasión en América,” in *Amor e historia. La expresión de los afectos en el mundo de ayer*, coord. Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpuru (México: Colegio de México, 2013), 125–132.
- 53 “Mi corazón está agitado: yo no como, no duermo; en todos los momentos se presenta a mi imaginación Mutis, el sabio, el virtuoso Mutis. Ya es pequeño mi corazón para amar a hombre tan grande.” Francisco José de Caldas to José Celestino Mutis, April 6, 1802, Francisco José de Caldas, *Cartas de Caldas*, ed. Eduardo Posada (Bogotá: 1917), 146.
- 54 “[cuando] meditaba sobre el exterior del sabio Mutis: un secreto placer me arrebatava y no me cansaba de mirar al padre de nuestros conocimientos.” Francisco José de Caldas to José Celestino Mutis, April 21, 1802, Francisco José de Caldas, *Cartas de Caldas*, ed. Eduardo Posada (Bogotá: 1917), 152.
- 55 “Entra el señor Barón en esta Babilonia, contrae por su desgracia amistad con unos jóvenes obscenos, disolutos; le arrastran a las casas en que reina el amor impuro” Caldas to Mutis, April 21, 1802, Francisco José de Caldas, *Cartas de Caldas*, ed. Eduardo Posada (Bogotá: 1917), 153.
- 56 “Como yo he frecuentado la casa de este sabio, como hemos vivido un mes juntos en una bella hacienda, hemos tenido ocasiones repetidas de que él conozca mi diverso modo de pensar en materia de placeres. Cuando se hablaba de ellos yo no podía sino mostrar en mi semblante mi disgusto y en cierto modo mi indignación.”

- Caldas to Mutis, April 21, 1802, Francisco José de Caldas, *Cartas de Caldas*, ed. Eduardo Posada (Bogotá: 1917), 154.
- 57 “[Montúfar:] el objeto de sus amores, o el de los cómplices de sus fragilidades.” Caldas to Mutis, April 21, 1802, Caldas, *Cartas de Caldas*, 153. On the nature of the friendship between Carlos Montúfar and Alexander von Humboldt, see Teodoro Hampe Martínez, “Carlos Montúfar y Larrea (1780–1816), el quiteño compañero de Humboldt,” *Revista de Indias* 62, no. 226 (2002): 711–720.
- 58 José Antonio Amaya, “An Archaeology of Mutis’s Disappearing Gift to Humboldt,” in Mark Thurner and Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, eds., *The Invention of Humboldt. On the Geopolitics of Knowledge* (New York: Routledge, 2023), 120–127.
- 59 “No vi casas magníficas, ni mujeres vestidas con lujo, y sé que la mayor parte de las familias están totalmente arruinadas. La razón oculta de esta situación reside en las enemistades sociales y la pasión del juego. Excepto un teatro (mediocre y poco concurrido) y una plaza de toros (muy vistosa), no existe ninguna otra diversión. En la ciudad de Lima, no hay ni una tertulia a la que acudan más de ocho personas, y cuando están reunidas por el interés del juego, [...] entonces esa efímera sociedad no dura más que hasta la hora en que pierde una toda su hacienda.” Humboldt to Checa, January 18, 1803, in Alejandro de Humboldt, *Cartas Americanas* (Caracas: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1980), 92.
- 60 Christiana Borchart de Moreno reflects upon the impact of scientific setbacks, the critiques received in Quito, and the problems Humboldt’s acquaintances had with the Peruvian Inquisition, and his “negative vision of [his] Lima sojourn,” in “El favor de la Corte abre todas las puertas. Aspectos políticos del viaje americano de Alexander von Humboldt,” *HiN. International Review for Humboldt Studies* XX, no. 39 (2019): 11–28, <http://dx.doi.org/10.18443/284>. See also Alejandro de Humboldt, *Humboldt en el Perú. Diario de Alejandro de Humboldt durante su permanencia en el Perú (agosto a diciembre de 1802), traducido del francés por Manuel Vegas Vélez* (Piura: Centro de Investigación y Promoción del Campesinado, 1991); Estuardo Núñez and Georg Petersen, *El Perú en la obra de Alejandro de Humboldt* (Lima: Librería Studium, 1971); Scarlett O’Phelan and Sandro Patrucco, eds., *Saberes, Silencios, Intuiciones. Alexander von Humboldt a los 250 años de su nacimiento* (Lima: Instituto Riva-Agüero, Fundación M.J. Bustamante de la Fuente, 2023); Teodoro Hampe Martínez, “Humboldt y el mar peruano. Una exploración de su travesía de Lima a Guayaquil (1802/1803),” *HiN. International Review for Humboldt Studies* VIII, no. 15 (2007).

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2 Embodied Colonial Experiences of Enlightenment

Pierre Bailly's Defense of Equality and Citizenship. A Free Mulatto's Voice in Spanish New Orleans (1791–1794)

Estela Roselló Soberón

A Brief Methodological Note before Beginning

Kimberly Hanger's seminal research on Spanish New Orleans frames this study on the 1794 Havana trial of Pierre Bailly, a free mulatto convicted of sedition.¹ Despite Hanger's untimely death, her work laid a foundation underpinning my analysis of Bailly's history as a specific sensibility reflecting his agency and the mulatto communities in the Americas, despite official characterizations that served to emphasize his Otherness. While I draw heavily from her work in reconstructing the historical context of Bailly's trial, my approach differs from hers in focusing on his body and emotions. In any case, this chapter is written in her memory.

New Orleans in the Era of the Atlantic Revolutions: The Complex and Sensitive Universe of a Spanish Colony at the End of the Eighteenth Century

In 1763, after a bloody war between three European monarchies fighting for hegemony in the Old World and more territory in America, the French king Louis XV signed the Treaties of Paris, thereby ceding the territories of Louisiana to the Spanish Crown in exchange for an alliance against Great Britain. Over the next 41 years, Spain ruled over a frontier geography—a zone of contact between very different populations dedicated to a wide diversity of economic activities and belonging to extremely different economic, political, social, and cultural contexts.

Within the Louisiana territory, New Orleans functioned as a strategic lynchpin for commercial relations and cultural exchange between the Caribbean, Europe, Spanish America, and North America. Hybridization and constant movement were hallmarks of the city.² Contact, exchange, adaptations, and cultural and intellectual exchange—along with the dynamism of being a coastal and frontier region—shaped the vital sense and sensibility of

a complex, deeply hierarchical, divided, and unequal colonial society, with subjects from widely differing groups who interpreted their existence through embodied experiences such as emotions and feelings.

As scholars such as Shannon Lee Dawdy, Julie Hardwick, Connie Eble, and Mary Helen McMurrin have pointed out,³ Spanish rule opened up the city of New Orleans even more directly to the universe of eighteenth-century imperial cosmopolitanism.⁴ In a world in which the Spanish, Dutch, French, and English vied for commercial control over the Caribbean and the Atlantic, the coasts of Louisiana, the Gulf of Mexico, and the West Indies formed a maritime geography with distinct cultural characteristics. The cities of New Orleans, Tampico, Veracruz, Campeche, Havana, and Curaçao formed a commercial network for the constant traffic of licit and illicit materials. Yet they also represented a maritime, coastal, and border geography within which ideas, beliefs, practices, habits, and customs circulated—and where, most significantly for the revolutions and conflicts that would soon erupt, feelings and emotions flowed. To put it another way: New Orleans was a city where shared experiences based on emotions and the senses arose as a result of specific colonial realities characterizing a pivotal territory that some authors have dubbed an “American Mediterranean.”⁵

Many factors fostered an underlying sense marked by constant tension, threats, civil discord, competition, resentments, and injustice: smuggling and slavery, each interwoven with the plantation economy and the market economy; the constant flow of travelers from all over the world; and the diversity of exchange and daily contacts that took place throughout the region. This violent and hostile emotional atmosphere intensified during the first years of the 1790s, as New Orleans became entangled in tensions between the local conditions of the city’s social structures and the repercussions of conflicts within the European international order.

The city of New Orleans evinced a tripartite, stratified, and highly unequal social order, comprising a group of Black slaves, another of free people of color (Blacks, mulattos, and pardos), and a group of Whites.⁶ Between 1700 and 1800, the slave trade to Louisiana expanded, and during the last decade of the eighteenth century, the group of free Blacks, pardos, and mulattos saw significant demographic growth, with increasing economic and social strength. Slowly but steadily, free people of color acquired property, bought slaves, and gained greater prestige by joining the church as well as pardo and mulatto militias, that is, battalions created by the Spanish Crown to defend the city against external threats, especially from the French. The pardos and mulattos who were members of these institutions enjoyed a higher social status and recognition by White residents for their efforts in defending the city against revolutionary invaders.⁷ However, free people of color did not enjoy full equality with those who were White, and there remained an enormous gap separating Black slaves from both free mulattos and Whites. Significant inequality could be felt in everyday life, prompting hatred, resentment, and latent violence, as I will show below.

Tensions in the city were also stoked by global Atlantic and Caribbean politics, with France and Spain at odds in the Convention War from 1793 to 1795 and Spain's monarchy threatened by the French Revolution. It is hardly surprising that the conflicts of the Old World found an echo in the Americas, where the Spanish and French continued their confrontation in the Caribbean, and more specifically, in the French colony of Saint-Domingue, where the Spanish monarchy sought to harness maroon slave discontent in forging an alliance to regain control over the entire island.⁸

The outbreak of the Haitian Revolution and the Guarico Revolution in 1791 raised hopes for free people of color in New Orleans and elsewhere in the Spanish Caribbean and the Atlantic world, while amplifying a widespread fear among authorities: the potential threat of a united Afrodescendant community, which they saw as constantly on the verge of revolt. Among those oppressed by the existing order, anger and resentment grew more widespread, fueled by emerging sentiments of freedom and equality, inspired by Enlightenment ideas and revolutionary events and ideas from France and the United States. These notions spread via banned books, pamphlets, and articles in the local press, but they also circulated in the taverns, squares, and ports of the small American Mediterranean.⁹ Free mulattos in the Caribbean and the American Atlantic were part of this new public. Even those who were illiterate participated via the oral circulation of news and rumors, forging a new mulatto public opinion shared among Afrodescendant men.¹⁰ Pierre Bailly, who could neither read nor write, is emblematic of this emerging point of view (though in the records of his trial, he is presented as referring only to French ideals, without any mention of events or ideas from the United States). And as this chapter will explore in more detail, these feelings were expressed in their bodies in ways that bespoke deep-seated desires to resist the colonial order, rebel against colonial authorities, and ultimately fight for liberation from centuries-old colonial oppression. Existing alongside the new sensibilities yearning for freedom, these embodied experiences were rooted in many historical, colonial realities: centuries of slavery, abuse, humiliation, and discrimination had left indelible marks on bodies of color, fueling deep historical grievances.

During the two centuries before the Haitian Revolution, relationships between Afrodescendant women, both free and enslaved, and White European men in New Orleans produced a significant mulatto population that played an important mediating role between the three different groups in the city. Despite prohibitions on marriage between Whites and Blacks under both French and Spanish rule, during the French period, many European men formed unions with Black women through the institution of *plaçage*, akin to common-law marriage.¹¹ The resulting mulatto population grappled with complex identities and contradictory feelings toward their heritage, often experiencing mixed emotions such as shame or anger coupled with love for their mothers and a desire to fight against the injustices they experienced, or

hatred toward their White fathers coupled with admiration and a desire to become more like them.

By the end of the eighteenth century, many free mulattos gained wealth and status, owning land and slaves. They lived among White communities, sharing certain privileges but not equal political rights. Striving to achieve a higher social status, they often sought to distinguish themselves from the enslaved population of African origin, with whom they shared cultural and historical connections, and most of all a memory of experiences from the slave past of their mothers, imprinted in and on their bodies through emotions and their senses, even as they rejected associating with this group on equal terms. Despite this shared collective memory, free mulattos aspired to distance themselves from slavery and claim the White privileges that dominated the colonial social order.

Spring 1794, News from La Cabaña Castle, Havana

In March 1794, Pierre Bailly, a free mulatto resident of New Orleans and lieutenant in the militias of pardos and mulattos in New Orleans, was imprisoned in Havana's Castillo de la Cabaña. Following the trial, Luis de las Casas, Captain General of Louisiana and the Floridas, notified the Crown of Bailly's conviction for voicing seditious opinions and advocating for French principles of equality.¹² Citing Bailly's "extremely malevolent disposition," the colonial authorities wrote that they would continue his confinement to "prevent his pernicious ideas from being propagated and imprinted on the minds of the unwary and the ill-contented" until they received further instructions.¹³ Bailly's trial exemplifies the tensions caused by late eighteenth-century changes in the Atlantic world in which New Orleans played such an important part. Indeed, Bailly's advocacy for French egalitarianism posed a significant threat to the Spanish monarchy, which still clung to outdated assumptions of the *ancien régime* despite the rapid shift of social and political norms during these revolutionary times.

Embodied Enlightenments: Notes for Understanding the Experience of Alternative Modernities

Viewing modernity as hegemonic or singular, as Saurabh Dube and others have emphasized, nullifies the possibility of thinking and recognizing Otherness.¹⁴ The arrival and development in America of Enlightenment thought and revolutionary ideals, from the French and American Revolutions, fostered unique economic, political, social, and cultural configurations that were distinct from Europe and more aligned with American societies and, more specifically, with American bodies. In Asia and America, Dube shows, non-Western subjects actively appropriated and reinterpreted the concepts Europeans used to assert dominance and privilege, adapting them to reflect their own subjective and cultural realities.¹⁵ This produced "alternative modernities" where the meanings of ideals such as equality, freedom, fraternity, and human

rights diverged significantly from those in European metropolises where they originated.

Including embodied aspects in this history of alternative modernities is essential to grasp the distinct cultural perceptions and experiences of modernity and Enlightenment in eighteenth-century American colonial settings compared with their development in Europe. Colonial subjects born in the New World interpreted and appropriated Enlightenment and revolutionary ideologies based on unique bodily sensations and emotions, shaped by histories and cultures vastly different from those in Europe. This is not a trivial point if we follow scholars such as Sara Ahmed or Rob Boddice who have emphasized how it is through the body that individuals perceive, understand, and ascribe meaning to the world in more holistic ways.¹⁶ Our embodied experiences inevitably and individually shape our rational comprehension of ideas in ways that could be called, with Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, “hinking with the body.”¹⁷

In eighteenth-century Europe, those influenced by Enlightenment and revolutionary ideals were less exposed to colonial inequalities prevalent in the Americas, such as discrimination based on skin color, slavery, and complex power dynamics within a social order marked by exclusion and inequality. Under colonial rule in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, asymmetrical power relations “shaped spaces, time, language and bodies” and generated a social equilibrium that was paradoxically sustained by countervailing tensions, forms of exclusion, and contradictions in everyday life.¹⁸ As the eighteenth century came to a close, colonial subjects in the Americas who were not entirely White faced a reality where Whiteness was key to social standing and privilege and began embracing and appropriating ideals from the European Enlightenment and revolutionary modernity in ways that differed from European societies. They sought to forge new languages, practices, and social relations to reshape the power structures that had long disadvantaged them in terms of status and social recognition, as well as escape from the situations of dependence, inequality, and marginality that had long defined their lives. They fashioned, in other words, “different ways of being modern” and new subjectivities in navigating their culturally and historically marginalized positions in ways that were entwined with embodied experience and emotion and thus also deeply connected with Whiteness and Otherness, as Sara Ahmed has argued.¹⁹

It is in this sense that the case of Pierre Bailly provides valuable insights into the role of the body and emotion in transforming political culture, hierarchies, and personal status in New Orleans’s complex social and cultural landscape. Building on work by scholars such as Kimberly Hanger and Lawrence N. Powell that directly examines Bailly’s case, this chapter now turns to his trial to highlight how embodied, emotional experiences significantly influenced the construction of modern discourse, public opinion, and common sense, and egalitarian demands within the colonial American reception of eighteenth-century Enlightenment and revolutionary ideals and events from Europe.

Common Sense within an Emotional American Community: Free Mulattos in Spanish New Orleans

The notion of thinking-feeling with the body discussed in this chapter can be said to find public expression in the common sense that guides a community, giving meaning to all the habits, relationships, customs, practices, and actions within a cultural community.²⁰ Sophia Rosenfield elucidates common sense as a faculty for making value judgments based on lived realities.²¹ Following these definitions, one can say that during the late eighteenth century, the traditional common sense of the *ancien régime* began to unravel, as global changes outpaced established interpretative frameworks.

On the one hand, the Atlantic world's upheaval sowed doubt in the *ancien régime*'s truths, paving the way for Enlightenment ideals of equality and liberty. More local forms of common sense emerged as more individualistic perspectives asserted themselves, and this shift empowered new groups in colonial societies, including free mulattos, who carried the emotional and historical weight of slavery. Notably, nascent antislavery sentiments in Britain and France echoed these emergent empathetic sensibilities toward human suffering, albeit adapted uniquely by colonial subjects in ways viscerally informed by their lived experiences and memories. On the other hand, the confrontation between common sense in its traditional form and a new sensibility that was more modern and more suited for understanding the complexity of the changes in the American territories generated tension and fear, making it more difficult for Spanish colonial authorities to maintain peace and govern the colonies. This dissonance was vividly illustrated by Governor Carondelet's shock at Pierre Bailly's actions in 1794 and how they challenged the Spanish colony's accepted norms.

I will now show that the case of Pierre Bailly exemplifies how this unique emotional universe manifested itself in the ways that Bailly used, displayed, and presented his body before the White authorities he wished to defy. This is also apparent, however, in how he appeared to many other free mulattos—some of whom found him inspiring, even as others found him insolent, disruptive, and disturbing.

New Orleans: Revolutionary Ideas, Changes, and Local Tensions Challenge the Colonial Order

In the last third of the eighteenth century, Spanish-ruled New Orleans was a vital strategic point at the Mississippi River delta, thriving with its cotton and sugar plantations despite its swampy geography. This "water city" was home to a diverse and stratified society, comprising Spanish and French officials, English merchants, Indigenous populations, Afrodescendant slaves, soldiers, nuns, clergymen, plantation owners, artisans, sailors, travelers, and various property and business owners.²² Crucially, during this period, the city also saw the rise of a significant free mulatto population who interacted in everyday activities and spaces with both the slave population and the city's

White Europeans.²³ As scholars such as Kimberly Hanger and Jessica Marie Johnson have observed, this community of free people of color was quite complex. It ranged from wealthy landowners to middle-class merchants and artisans striving to move up socially and economically despite facing prejudice that classified them as inferior to Whites and Creoles in the order of colonial privileges and rights.²⁴ The city was also home to recently freed Blacks who often lived and worked in precarious and difficult circumstances;²⁵ some sought work in the regular economy, while others had little choice but to resort to theft. Many liberated women, especially mothers, sought protection and, ultimately, liberation from “white or free mulatto godparents ... based on the articulation of affective bonds that generated intimacy, charity and care.”²⁶

The last third of the eighteenth century also saw a boom in the plantation economy, leading to increased imports of slaves of African origin to Louisiana and a growing presence of free Blacks and mulattos in city life.²⁷ With their numbers rising even as they lacked the same rights as Whites, this community posed a challenge to public order, prompting Spanish authorities to seek strategies of “good governance” to maintain peace within this increasingly dynamic and complex American city.²⁸

To this end, the Crown sought to divide slaves from free people, undermining unity among people of African origin.²⁹ Spanish authorities nevertheless granted people of color rights and freedoms closer to those enjoyed by White Europeans. During the second half of the eighteenth century, the *coartación* laws allowed slaves to buy their own freedom or that of others, offering a challenging yet hopeful path toward liberation.³⁰ Yet these laws were not the only changes disrupting the established order in New Orleans and elsewhere in the colonies; global movements for liberty and equality, too, unfolded uniquely in different regions. As France approached the brink of egalitarian revolution—ostensibly for “all men,” yet evidently only if these men were White—a Spanish royal decree issued on 14 April 1789 by Charles IV guaranteed freedom to fugitive slaves arriving in Spanish territory, and the Spanish Black Code of the same year introduced significant rights for American colonial slaves, aiming to enable a freer, more equitable life with privileges more similar to those long enjoyed by the White population.³¹ These Spanish Bourbon reforms aimed to appease an increasingly restless Afrodescendant slave population.³² However, they also inadvertently emboldened free Blacks and mulattos who aspired to these same privileges. By the 1790s, New Orleans’s White population viewed these groups as a growing threat, with their demands for economic, political, and social rights once exclusive to Whites.³³ Any affinity shown by free people of color for French revolutionary ideals or for the revolution in Haiti alarmed Spanish colonial authorities and White settlers alike.³⁴

In 1794, Pierre Bailly—43 years old, and a free mulatto and former lieutenant in the militia³⁵—was a prominent yet divisive figure in New Orleans. Emancipated by his master Josef Bailly in 1776 and married to the free

mulatto Neneta Manuela Carriere, with four children, he owned considerable property (including a slave), which had allowed him to easily purchase his mother's freedom. According to the records of his trial, his assertive behavior drew the wary eye of Spanish officials. To them, and especially to Louisiana governor Carondelet, Bailly was a "dangerous Negro" lacking the submission expected of a vassal who had always been "well treated" by royal authorities. Instead, authorities believed, Bailly's "genius and character" prevented him from acting with "moderation and gentleness"—the civic virtues necessary to maintain public peace in a society that still subscribed to feudal values—even as he challenged the social order by aspiring to the "absolutely ridiculous" principle of French equality.³⁶ According to the common sense reflected in the opinions of Baron de Carondelet, Bailly's aspirations should be limited to the "equality" dispensed by the monarch's grace to loyal subjects. This favor, not an inalienable right as proclaimed by revolutionary ideals from France, was earned through service to the Crown, reflecting the feudal mentality underpinning the ancien régime's social hierarchy.³⁷

Slavery, Race, Citizenship, and Equality: Back-and-Forth Discussions

Yet these developments in the global Atlantic world were neither unidirectional nor emanated solely or even mainly from revolutionary France. Scholars such as David Patrick Geggus and Jeremy D. Popkin have argued that political, economic, and social shifts in the American colonies not only played a crucial role in transformations in the New World but also fueled many of the debates and political reforms around slavery, race, citizenship, and equality taking place in Europe.³⁸

Among the greatest contradictions of Enlightenment thought were voices advocating for the "Rights of Man and of the Citizen" while also deeming non-European, non-White peoples to be inferior and thus undeserving of these rights.³⁹ And even as Enlightenment philosophers sought to understand the "universal" nature of man, they insisted on recognizing human diversity as a basis for inequality, pointing out how diversity produced different physical traits and differing levels of civilization among different human cultures. As Devin Vartija points out, Enlightenment thought was neither totally racist nor absolutely universalist, and yet it undeniably underpinned Western justifications for subjugating and exploiting non-White populations. This sense of White supremacy manifested itself in colonial policies that upheld traditional hierarchies, denying citizenship and equal rights to Afrodescendant populations and other non-White, non-European groups. Efforts to define who could be considered a "man" or a "citizen" produced declarations, decrees, and laws aiming to institute new values of freedom and equality that were being propagated in theory. The reality, though, was more complex and contradictory, as expressed most brutally in the facts of colonial slavery. The 1789 "Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen" in France, for instance, affirmed universal equality among "men," yet failed to address

slavery,⁴⁰ and the 1789 French constitution explicitly excluded slaves and serfs in the colonies from the rights of citizenship. Between 1789 and 1791, French revolutionaries were generally reluctant to confront colonial realities, and it was not until 1792 that the General Assembly declared equal rights between Whites and free Blacks and mulattos in its American territories.⁴¹

Similarly, Enlightenment thinkers and revolutionaries from the 1780s and 1790s held ambiguous positions on abolition. Influenced by advocates such as Saint-Just and Condorcet, some groups—including wealthy Blacks and mulattos who had emigrated from the American colonies—pushed for the rights of free Blacks and mulattos in France, yet they often sidelined the plight of slaves in America.⁴² Meanwhile, the news of slave revolts in the colonies generated great concern and confusion in the Old World, prompting the French National Assembly to declare the abolition of slavery in the colonies to be a local matter to be decided by colonial authorities, despite its proclaimed ideals and awareness of events and conditions in America. Without a doubt, these egalitarian and libertarian discourses in Europe were constructed from European realities, far removed from those of the New World. But the interconnected social and political reality of the time meant that American events had an impact on Europe, too: it was in response to the 1793 slave rebellion in St. Domingue that the French government decided to abolish slavery in its American colonies—a decision thus motivated perhaps less by abstract ideals and more by immediate colonial realities.⁴³ Hence, even if France between 1789 and 1794 saw intense intellectual debates on equality, liberty, race, and citizenship, in practice and especially in translating these theoretical principles into the colonial and slave-owning realities of the Americas, what prevailed was hesitancy and inconsistency. Despite the fact that France formally granted rights to free Blacks and mulattos in 1792, colonial and metropolitan authorities were slow to extend full citizenship, influenced by prevailing racist attitudes that deemed non-Whites to be inferior.

This was the context in which Pierre Bailly's "seditious words" were heard by the Spanish authorities in Louisiana in 1794—the emotional atmosphere that shaped the meaning attributed to his words, body language, and acts by the official who recorded them in his trial. As I will explore in more detail below, this body language included explicit gestures and involuntary expressions of emotion. But even apart from the evident fears and biases of these officials as recorded in these documents, it is not hard to imagine that Bailly, like many other mulattos, was moved and spurred to action by the Enlightened and revolutionary ideas and events of his day. This charged atmosphere likely influenced his thoughts, emotions, and sensibility—most strikingly, in the ways he conceived new possibilities of moving, using, placing, showing, and inhabiting his own body as a mulatto body belonging to a group of bodies that had endured physical and symbolic violence committed by Whites for centuries. Bailly's history, as we will now see, shows that he was no longer willing to endure such historical and cultural oppression.

Pierre Bailly's Body, Color, and Emotions: A Challenge to Colonial Order at the Placaminos Fort

Amid the Haitian Revolution in August 1791, Spain, eyeing its former colony in Hispaniola, allied with St. Domingue's rebels in a royal proclamation promising they could become Spanish subjects, with the accompanying freedoms and privileges. It also sent troops to support the revolt against France. Unsurprisingly, this escalated tensions between the two regimes, leading to a Spanish declaration of war on 27 March 1793.⁴⁴ Fearing a French invasion from the Gulf, Spanish Louisiana strengthened the Placaminos fort in the port of San Felipe, on the Mississippi River very near to New Orleans. The pardo and mulatto militia corps made up of free men of color played a crucial role in these efforts, with men such as Pierre Bailly, a mulatto lieutenant, holding prestigious positions.⁴⁵ And yet as Bailly's trial records indicate, during the three-month period of construction, he exhibited body language and attitudes that the White authorities perceived as insubordinate and threatening.⁴⁶ The Spanish officials write that Bailly gained a reputation in particular as a subject who incited unrest and challenged authority among Charles IV's "colored" troops. A number of White lieutenants testified against Bailly during his 1794 trial (including François Dorville, Charles Simon, Gilbert Saint Maxent, Louis Declonet, and Josef Duplais), and despite other differences in their statements, they uniformly depicted Bailly as rebellious and confrontational and thus dangerous to the sociopolitical fabric and order of the colony.

The trial records indicate that prior to Bailly's arrival, the militia in San Felipe dutifully participated in the fort's construction. Yet upon arriving, according to witnesses, Bailly frequently stirred up discontent, arguing during breaks between work shifts that the pardos and free mulattos should not be subject to forced labor and should refuse to work under White officials' coercion. He moreover insisted that "White individuals at the fort earned more" in their positions than those of color in similar positions.⁴⁷ The trial records a scene in which a White officer invoked duty to the king and honor as motivation, to which Bailly sarcastically and furiously responded (in a way that witnesses indicated was typical for him): "Honor?! Honor?! It is true that Monsieur Maxent now calls us *mon fils* and other similar things, but this is because they need us and then they will tell us that we are dogs."⁴⁸

The discussion between the White officer and the free mulatto clearly reveals a clash of two very different mentalities. While the European upheld the duty of a militia member to serve the king honorably, Bailly insisted on fair compensation for the free mulattos' labor, more in alignment with the modern values of the time of individualism and freedom.⁴⁹ Bailly's statements, as recorded by the Spanish officials, further challenged the pervasive discrimination and mistreatment of people of color, whom Bailly claimed were being treated like "animals."⁵⁰ One can assume that Bailly's anger and frustration at this unfair social order was what moved him to speak out and

attempt to convince his companions in the fort to refuse any further work for their White officers.

It is worth asking whether Bailly's forceful protests against forced labor and the expectation that free Blacks and mulattos should serve as subordinates reflected a growing rejection of servitude in general. Without a doubt, the growing number of free mulattos in New Orleans during the late eighteenth century, along with their rising economic importance and social status, questioned the established hierarchies that Bailly, too, was no longer willing to endure. At the same time, Enlightenment discourse on equality called for the elimination of any kind of bond that implied dependence or subordination between human beings. Both Condorcet and Saint-Just, for instance, argued that social relations should be based on a new "equal and sacred commitment of care between the man who works and the one who pays him,"⁵¹ while the French Constitution of 1793 established that the only bond that could exist "between the man who works and the one who employs him" was that of "care and gratitude." That said, the French Constitution of 1789 excluded slaves and servants from the right to citizenship. Citizenship required that a man "not be in any servile condition, that is to say, in any personal relationship that was absolutely incompatible with the independence necessary to exercise political rights."

Bailly could not have read Condorcet, Saint-Just, the *Encyclopédie*, or the French constitutions. Yet his views must have been informed by political sentiments at the time against serfdom and slavery, which spread through rumors and conversations in crowded spaces and at oral debates in streets, on squares, and at public dances, which also nurtured the voice of free mulattos in the colonies. During Bailly's trial, Lieutenant Louis Declonet recounted an incident at the Placaminos fort where Bailly asked, "what [Declonet] thought about the news of the enemies." Declonet replied that they were certainly coming and that the defenders should prepare to repel them, "since besides being enemies of the state and of religion, they were also enemies of humanity."⁵² To this, Declonet testified, Bailly responded in anger:

Enemies of humanity! I do not see, sir, the inhumanities they have committed. Well, they have done wrong in having killed their king, but sir, I am going to speak to you in all frankness, persuaded that you are a man of honor. Well sir, the French are just, they have granted men their rights ... a general equality among men, we, colored people, have in the Island of Saint-Domingue and other French islands the title of active citizen. We can speak openly as any White man and hold the same degrees as they do. And under our domination do we have any of this? No sir, and it is unjust. Being all human, there should be no difference, color should not distinguish men, but the way of thinking.⁵³

Bailly's revolutionary ideas, expressed here so clearly before his peers at Placaminos, were fueled by widespread—and in part ill-founded—rumors

circulating among the Afrodescendant population of the Caribbean and Louisiana at the time. Despite the fact that the French revolutionaries had granted increased freedoms to those of African descent in their colonies, the concept of active citizenship defined by the French Constitution of September 1791 was explicitly limited to “people born or naturalized French, at least twenty-five years old, living in the city or canton, paying taxes for three days’ work, enlisted in the municipal National Guard and not a domestic servant.”⁵⁴ Even when the distinction between active and passive citizens was abolished in 1792, the French revolutionaries did not give the right of citizenship to domestic servants.⁵⁵

Thus, Bailly’s trial gives us insight into how the great political and social novelties that took place in revolutionary France were received in the Americas. In discussions with White officers and fellow free mulattos in Placaminos, Bailly consistently saw himself as belonging to a community that included mulattos but not slaves. Still, his views drew from an imagined community forged through shared histories of slavery and ongoing discrimination. It is crucial here to note that in the American colonies, the racist notion of color was less about physical traits and more about culturally constructed and imposed identities that perpetuated inequality, and that mulattos were subject to subjugation, exploitation, and mistreatment in their everyday lives based on racist prejudices regardless of any legal status of freedom. This complexity of color and identity affected interrelations among people of African descent themselves, with some Blacks and mulattos perceiving themselves as closer in status to Whites than to those with whom they shared certain “non-White” physical traits, such as skin color.

Pierre Bailly’s case highlights the complexities of these racial dynamics. As a free mulatto, he experienced daily discrimination, and his primary solidarity was with other free mulattos who likewise experienced discrimination. Yet he also aspired to the status of the Whites he resented, not the enslaved persons with whom he shared physical traits singled out by racist ideologies. This inner conflict fueled his fight for liberty for free mulattos, expressed not just verbally but through defiant body language and gestures traditionally reserved in the colonies for free White people. One illustrative incident, as recorded in Bailly’s trial, occurred at the Placaminos fort, where Bailly’s confrontation with White officers sparked outrage over a gesture that, while minor to some, was profoundly significant to him. Underscoring how the White officers, and in particular the influential figure Gilbert de Saint Maxent, were discriminating against the free mulattos and treating them as inferior, Bailly is recorded to have said:

Mr. Saint Maxent has welcomed us here with a lot of political talk telling us that on this occasion there would be no difference between us and the Whites. But that means that on other occasions there will be. Every day, this same Mr. Saint Maxent invites Mr. Verbois and other

White militia officers to eat at his table, and why does he not pay us this attention? Are we not officers like them?⁵⁶

Bailly's observation and questions—and his decision about where to plant his own body—highlight and challenge the persistent racial hierarchies in the American colonies; in this case, it seems to have been inconceivable for White men to sit at the same table with people of color. The scene recalls the catechisms employed by seventeenth-century Jesuits to evangelize slaves in America, which portrayed heaven as a perfect place “where slaves could sit at table with their masters,” suggesting equality beyond earthly bounds. Yet, even by the late eighteenth century, amid revolutionary fervor for freedom and equality in so many parts of the globe, such celestial promises remained unfulfilled for the Afrodescendant communities long subjected to exploitation and discrimination.

In the societies of the *ancien régime*, social order hinged on a widely accepted hierarchy, which Louis Declonet defended against Bailly's call for equality among citizens, which he called a “ridiculous pretension”: “among the Whites themselves there are always distinctions and it is one of the most indispensable and sacred things in human society that all of us should all rather tend to than despise.”⁵⁷ The common sense of the *ancien régime* held that public peace and order depended on respecting social stratification. This included racist ideas that put different bodies in different places. But it also included, as Declonet argued, social differences of estate within the races. This article argues that the history of slavery and the suffering this common sense entailed gave these racial differences a unique significance among colonized communities of color. Influenced by burgeoning egalitarian ideals, Bailly and his community increasingly saw such disparities, especially those based on color, as violations of human dignity. During his trial, Bailly is recorded to have argued that “pardos and Whites were all men and that there should be no difference between one and the other because the difference of color was accidental and should not be taken into account.”⁵⁸ This belief echoes the 1791 declaration of the French National Assembly that skin color was to be irrelevant to the rights of citizenship.⁵⁹ Yet what is most interesting in this context is to ask how such European ideas fared amid colonial realities. Bailly's life and the defense he advanced at his trial demonstrated his belief in the equality of free Blacks and mulattos with Whites. Indeed, he and many free African descendants in New Orleans *felt* exactly the same as their White parents, and they sought to have this perception recognized by being granted equal legal and social rights. In his defense, Bailly declared that “the Whites enjoyed their rights too much,” underpinning the arrogance and superiority characterizing their everyday dealings with free Blacks and mulattos like him.

During the trial, Bailly recounted an incident with a certain Monsieur Bernandy to illustrate the condescension he faced. Bernandy, Bailly testified, approached him saying “*my* mulatto, you are a good man, do me a favor.”

Feeling “suffocated” with indignity, Bailly felt prompted to reply: “My mulatto? My mulatto? When have I been a mulatto by your grace? And how do you treat your Blacks?”⁶⁰ The dismissive pronoun “my” used by Bernandy in referring to Bailly reflected deep-rooted paternalistic attitudes, paired with expectations of servitude, that were remnants of a slave order in which White Europeans assumed superiority over people of African descent. It reflected, in short, the condescension a “good master” felt toward his servant or his slave. Yet it is crucial to note that Bailly’s outrage at being patronized was tinged with contradictions; despite denouncing this European paternalism and calling out how Bernandy must surely have treated his Black slaves, he did not extend his solidarity to them. It is crucial to reiterate here: Bailly had no interest in defending slaves based on their shared skin color. Rather, he was concerned with defending people he considered to be like him: what angered him was that Whites were treating him, a free mulatto, as though he were equal to the Black slaves, to whom he himself felt far superior.

Bailly’s situation and his view of himself reflect a broader dilemma among free mulattos who “felt” White, and this White sensibility in the body of a free mulatto was deeply problematic not only within the established social order but against the background of the new ideals of freedom and equality. Bailly and many other free mulattos like him upheld the oppressive structures of the colonial slave societies, even as they fought for equality with the Whites as, in many cases, children of White parents. The common sense that Bailly used to structure and understand his world was thus profoundly contradictory.⁶¹ As a free mulatto who felt like a White man, without being White, Bailly challenged the White lieutenants’ attempts to impose forced labor on the pardos in the militias in the Placaminos fort by treating them as servants. And yet when the White lieutenants reprimanded him for failing to fulfill his obligations and not accepting the hierarchies of feudal social relations, he defended himself by arguing that “this is why there were corporals and sergeants and that he was an officer.” In other words, Bailly was no longer willing to respect the hierarchical relations of the ancien régime when they placed him in a subordinate position vis-à-vis the Whites, and yet he defended and invoked these same hierarchies when they placed him above others he considered inferior to himself. What remains clear even in this complex situation is that the revolutionary ideals of the era had indeed transformed the self-perception, identity, and sensibility of Bailly, and of many other free mulattos in the Caribbean colonies and Louisiana.

Conclusion

Pierre Bailly’s story, set against the backdrop of New Orleans between 1791 and 1794, exemplifies the struggles of non-White individuals seeking equal rights and freedoms long denied to them. It is thus to be understood as part of a wider history of other modernities lived and produced by non-White American subjects. Neither this quest for equality nor the racial notions of

“White” or other “races” were defined solely on the basis of skin color or other physical traits; rather, they encompassed the broader experiences and socioeconomic or sociopolitical circumstances of each individual life history. Despite the unrealizability of Bailly’s egalitarian dreams for civil equality in the colonial context of the late eighteenth century, his demands reflected the emerging formation of new sensibilities and political agencies among subjects ready to reimagine the meaning, use, and experience of their bodies. Bailly’s defense of equality among citizens—as expressed in his actions at Placaminos fort, in his trial, and in the other details of his life examined in this chapter—shows how he, and many of the free mulattos in the colonies, began to employ the language and ideas of the Enlightenment and the revolutions of his day, advocating for the inclusion of some of those of African descent, heirs to a history of slavery, into the new public and private spaces emerging within the modern, global societies of the day.

Notes

- 1 The records from this trial are held today in the General Archive of the Indies [AGI] under the classification Estado 14, no. 60 (1).
- 2 See Julie Hardwick, Sarah M. S. Pearsall, and Karin Wulf, “Introduction: Centering Families in Atlantic Histories” in *William and Mary Quarterly* 70, no. 2 (2013): 205–224.
- 3 Shannon Lee Dawdy, “La Nouvelle-Orleans au XVIIIe siècle: Courants d’échange dans le monde caraïbe,” *Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 62, no. 3 (2007): 663–685; Connie Eble, “Creole in Louisiana,” *South Atlantic Review* 73, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 39–53; Mary Helen McMurrin, “The New Cosmopolitanism and the Eighteenth Century,” *Eighteenth Century Studies* 47, no. 1 (2013): 19–38; Julie Hardwick, Sarah M. S. Pearsall, and Karin Wulf, “Introduction: Centering Families in Atlantic Histories” in *William and Mary Quarterly* 70, no. 2 (2013): 205–224.
- 4 Mary Helen McMurrin, “The New Cosmopolitanism and the Eighteenth Century,” *Eighteenth Century Studies* 47, no. 1 (2013): 21.
- 5 Shannon Lee Dawdy, “La Nouvelle-Orleans au XVIIIe siècle: Courants d’échange dans le monde caraïbe,” *Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 62, no. 3 (2007): 663–685, on 664.
- 6 Kimberly Hanger, *Bounded Lives, Bounded Places: Free Black Society in Colonial New Orleans, 1769–1803* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997). 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.
- 7 Jessica Marie Johnson, *Wicked Flesh: Black Women, Intimacy, and Freedom in the Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020), 192.
- 8 Jorge Victoria Ojeda, “De la Revolución Haitiana a la Guerra Franco Hispana, 1793–1795: Papel de las tropas auxiliares en esa historia,” *Boletín americanista* 60 (2010): 263–283, on 264.
- 9 To better understand the emergence of this new public opinion among free mulattos in the Caribbean and the Atlantic World, it is necessary to consult the works of Jeremy D. Popkin, Wim Klooster, David Patrick Geggus and David Barry Gaspar, and Gabriel Torres Puga, among others. Jeremy D. Popkin, *You Are All Free: The Haitian Revolution and the Abolition of Slavery* (Cambridge: Cambridge

- University Press, 2010); Wim Klooster, “The Rising Expectations of Free and Enslaved Blacks in the Greater Caribbean,” in *Curacao in the Age of Revolution, 1795–1800*, ed. Wim Klooster and Geert Oostindie (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 57–74; David Patrick Geggus and David Barry Gaspar, *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997); Gabriel Torres Puga, *Opinión pública y censura en Nueva España. Indicios de un silencio imposible* (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 2010). Puga, in particular, has studied the importance of rumors and the nature of the emergence of new public spaces and a New Spanish public opinion during the eighteenth century.
- 10 It is extremely interesting in this context to note the concept of “rumor syndrome” used by Jorge Victoria Ojeda, as a typical cultural phenomenon of plantation societies. Jorge Victoria Ojeda, “De la Revolución Haitiana a la Guerra Franco Hispana, 1793–1795: Papel de las tropas auxiliares en esa historia,” *Boletín americanista* 60 (2010): 263–283, on 263.
 - 11 See Connie Eble, “Creole in Louisiana,” *South Atlantic Review* 73, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 39–53, on 46.
 - 12 There are two main documents to study Bailly’s case and history. These are two judicial trials that can be found at the AGI and the Louisiana Colonial Documents Collection of the Louisiana Historical Center. The reference for the first, on which this article is based, is AGI, Estado 14, no. 60, 11 February 1794. The reference for the second is 7 October 1791, SJR.
 - 13 AGI, Estado 14, no. 60, 11 February 1794.
 - 14 Dube insists on the need to study different ways of being modern in order to foster discussions capable of integrating different non-Western experiences, pasts, and cultures into the construction of “alternative modernities.” Saurabh Dube and Ishita Banerjee-Dube, eds., *Unbecoming Modern: Colonialism, Modernity, Colonial Modernities* (New York: Routledge, 2019). See also Josef Estermann, “Colonialidad, descolonización e interculturalidad: Apuntes desde la filosofía intercultural,” *Revista Latinoamericana* 13, no. 38 (2014): 347–368, on 354.
 - 15 Saurabh Dube and Ishita Banerjee-Dube, eds., *Unbecoming Modern: Colonialism, Modernity, Colonial Modernities* (New York: Routledge, 2019).
 - 16 Rob Boddice, *The History of Emotions* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), 133. See also Rob Boddice, “What Is the History of Experience?” <https://www.tuni.fi/alustalehti/2019/04/18/what-is-the-history-of-experience/>.
 - 17 Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, *Un mundo ch’ixi es posible: Ensayos desde un presente en crisis* (Buenos Aires: Tinta Limón, 2018), esp. 105.
 - 18 See Saurabh Dube and Ishita Banerjee-Dube, eds., *Unbecoming Modern: Colonialism, Modernity, Colonial Modernities* (New York: Routledge, 2019), xi.
 - 19 Sara Ahmed, *La política cultural de las emociones* (Mexico City: UNAM, 2015), especially 22–23. Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui has traced how this history shapes postcolonial realities through “multiple memories” inhabiting the subjectivities of the Americas. See Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, *Un mundo ch’ixi es posible: Ensayos desde un presente en crisis* (Buenos Aires: Tinta Limón, 2018), 111.
 - 20 In this section, “common sense” is understood as the “cultural dimension” described by Clifford Geertz; that is to say, as the way in which a society or community gives meaning to the apparently “most obvious things” in the world around us. Clifford Geertz, “Common Sense as a Cultural System,” *The Antioch Review* 33, no. 1 (Spring, 1975): 5–26.
 - 21 Sophia Rosenfeld, *Common Sense: A Political History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014), 1.
 - 22 For a synthetic account of New Orleans’s history during its Spanish period, see Lawrence N. Powell, *The Accidental City* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University

- Press, 2012), 129–315. Powell devotes several pages to Pierre Bailly’s case. Other authors studying Spanish New Orleans who must be mentioned here include Gilbert C. Din, *The Canary Islanders of Louisiana* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988); Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, “The Slave Conspiracy in Pointe Coupée: Impact of French Revolution,” *Proceedings of the Meeting of the French Colonial Historical Society*, vol. 15 (Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1992); and Thomas N. Ingersoll, *Mammon and Manon in Early New Orleans: The First Slave Society in the Deep South, 1719–1819* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999).
- 23 As Kimberly Hanger noted, between 1788 and 1791, the only social group that increased in number was the free mulattos. By 1771, they comprised only 3.1 percent of the total population, but by 1803 they had reached 19 percent. Kimberly Hanger, *Bounded Lives, Bounded Places: Free Black Society in Colonial New Orleans, 1769–1803* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 17.
 - 24 As Kimberly Hanger has shown in many of her works, the complex and hierarchical social and cultural order in New Orleans was based on a tripartite differentiation scheme: Whites, Black slaves, and free mulattos. This social order generated a number of contradictions centered on identity, originating from conflicting loyalties and cross-linkages. See Kimberly Hanger, *Bounded Lives, Bounded Places: Free Black Society in Colonial New Orleans, 1769–1803* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997) and “Conflicted Authorities.”
 - 25 Jessica Marie Johnson, *Wicked Flesh: Black Women, Intimacy, and Freedom in the Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020), 188
 - 26 Emancipations occurred through various means, including acts of gratitude from dying masters and purchases by relatives. See Jessica Marie Johnson, *Wicked Flesh: Black Women, Intimacy, and Freedom in the Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020), 188. For women, freedom was less about citizenship rights and more about bodily autonomy and self-care. See Erica L. Ball, Tatiana Seijas, and Terri L. Snyder, *As If She Were Free* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 11.
 - 27 In 1771, free mulattos in New Orleans numbered no more than 97; by 1805 there were 1,566. Eric Herschtal, “Slaves, Spaniards, and Subversion in the Early Louisiana: The Persistent Fears of Black Revolt and Spanish Collusion of the Early Republic,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 36, no. 2 (Summer 2016): 283–311, on 293.
 - 28 Jessica Marie Johnson, *Wicked Flesh: Black Women, Intimacy, and Freedom in the Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020), 191.
 - 29 In their attempt to ascend socially, many free mulattos fought against rebel slaves during the Caribbean Revolutions. But in other moments, they acted as their allies, as they shared the interest of weakening the Whites. This was the reason that Spanish authorities tried to keep these groups divided. Wim Klooster, “The Rising Expectations of Free and Enslaved Blacks in the Greater Caribbean,” in *Curacao in the Age of Revolution, 1795–1800*, ed. Wim Klooster and Geert Oostindie (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 57–74, on 59.
 - 30 Thomas N. Ingersoll, *Mammon and Manon in Early New Orleans: The First Slave Society in the Deep South, 1719–1819* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 223.
 - 31 Jorge Álvarez, “El código negro francés y la esclavitud en América,” https://www.academia.edu/7467784/El_código_negro_francés_y_la_esclavitud_en_América.
 - 32 Some authors, such as David Patrick Geggus or Jeremy D. Popkin, conclude that these Spanish politics on slavery had no humanitarian intentions and were only pragmatically inspired. I disagree on this point, since in the Spanish Catholic mentality, dignity and charity have always been fundamental values. See David Patrick

- Geggus and David Barry Gaspar, *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), and Jeremy D. Popkin, *You Are All Free: The Haitian Revolution and the Abolition of Slavery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).
- 33 Wim Klooster, "The Rising Expectations of Free and Enslaved Blacks in the Greater Caribbean," in *Curacao in the Age of Revolution, 1795–1800*, ed. Wim Klooster and Geert Oostindie (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 57–74, on 57.
 - 34 Kimberly Hanger, "Conflicting Loyalties: The French Revolution and Free People of Color in Spanish New Orleans," *Journal of the Historical Association* 34, no. 1 (Winter 1993): 5–33, on 11.
 - 35 See Kimberly Hanger, "Conflicting Loyalties: The French Revolution and Free People of Color in Spanish New Orleans," *Journal of the Historical Association* 34, no. 1 (Winter 1993): 15–19.
 - 36 AGI, Estado 14, no. 60, 11 February 1794. Bailly makes no reference whatsoever to American ideals in the records of what he said at the trial, pointing rather always to France and Haiti.
 - 37 It is David Patrick Geggus who has insisted on this different origin of the conception of equality within the common sense of the ancien régime and within the new emerging revolutionary ideas. David Patrick Geggus and David Barry Gaspar, *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 9.
 - 38 David Patrick Geggus insists on the increasing importance that the local colonial dimension had in the construction of antislavery movements in America; Geggus affirms that even if ideas from revolutionary France had some influence on these social movements, local realities carried much more weight. See David Patrick Geggus and David Barry Gaspar, *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 10.
 - 39 For an insightful analysis of these contradictions bound up with Enlightenment ideas of equality, slavery, and race, see Devin Vartija, "Revisiting Enlightenment Racial Classification: Time and the Question of Human Diversity," *Intellectual History Review* 31, no. 4 (2021): 603–625.
 - 40 Rafaella Sarti, *From Slaves and Servants to Citizens? Regulating Dependency, Race and Gender in Revolutionary France and the West Indies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).
 - 41 Rafaella Sarti, *From Slaves and Servants to Citizens? Regulating Dependency, Race and Gender in Revolutionary France and the West Indies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).
 - 42 Wim Klooster, "The Rising Expectations of Free and Enslaved Blacks in the Greater Caribbean," in *Curacao in the Age of Revolution, 1795–1800*, ed. Wim Klooster and Geert Oostindie (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 57–74, on 59.
 - 43 See Wim Klooster, "The Rising Expectations of Free and Enslaved Blacks in the Greater Caribbean," in *Curacao in the Age of Revolution, 1795–1800*, ed. Wim Klooster and Geert Oostindie (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 57–74, on 62.
 - 44 Jorge Victoria Ojeda, "De la Revolución Haitiana a la Guerra Franco Hispana, 1793–1795: Papel de las tropas auxiliares en esa historia," *Boletín americanista* 60 (2010): 265.
 - 45 See Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, "The Slave Conspiracy in Pointe Coupée: Impact of French Revolution," *Proceedings of the Meeting of the French Colonial Historical Society*, vol. 15 (Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1992), 130.
 - 46 Kimberly Hanger was the first to write a splendid article showing how Pierre Bailly's presence in Placaminos offers an extremely interesting historical subject for microhistories of Spanish New Orleans. See Kimberly Hanger, "Conflicting Loyalties: The French Revolution and Free People of Color in Spanish New Orleans," *Journal of the Historical Association* 34, no. 1 (Winter 1993): 5–33.

- 47 AGI, Estado 14, no. 60, 11 February 1794.
- 48 AGI, Estado 14, no. 60, 11 February 1794.
- 49 See, however, David Patrick Geggus, who has explained how the demands for equality and freedom of the American mulattos were being made not from a bourgeois democratic mentality, but from one which continued to recognize the “good king” of the ancien régime. David Patrick Geggus and David Barry Gaspar, *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 9.
- 50 As it is well known, the words “cimarrón” and “mulato” came from “mule” and from words that originally referred to animals that left their herds.
- 51 This and additional citations in this paragraph are from Rafaella Sarti, *From Slaves and Servants to Citizens? Regulating Dependency, Race and Gender in Revolutionary France and the West Indies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 74–77.
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- 60 AGI, Estado 14, no. 60, 11 February 1794.
- 61 In many of her works, Kimberly Hanger has pointed out such contradictions in free mulatto identity; the essay “Conflicting Loyalties” (see especially 9) explores many of the cultural and social contradictions resulting in ambivalent self-identities for many people from Spanish New Orleans. Yet Hanger does not emphasize how these contradictions were embodied in mulatto individuals of the time.

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3 Sensibility on Stage

Gender, Race, and the Modulations of Feeling in the Hispanic Theater*

Ester García Moscardó

Formulated during the Enlightenment and still being disputed well into the nineteenth century, discourses on what constituted modernity and how it should be experienced were based on concepts used to define human difference. Debates about the nature of the races, the destiny of women, and even national character, which had been raging in Europe since the mid-eighteenth century, illustrate the limits of the universalism supposedly at the heart of the emancipatory discourses of the Enlightenment and their subsequent liberal refinements. Notions of gender and race played a central role in the ideal construction of the modern and national political subject, that *self* suited to life in common which was expressed in normative-prescriptive models of proper masculinities and femininities. They also informed a certain idea of a fulfilled life, according to a social and moral order which since the mid-eighteenth century had increasingly been based on biological – i.e., physically innate – criteria.¹ In this context, the introduction of the variable of *race* brought tension to the discursive constructions shaping social hierarchies and their specific power dynamics. One thing beyond doubt is that the highest place in those hierarchies, across the board, was – and is – occupied by the European White male,² as constructed, significantly, in relation to the female *other* and the racial *other* (among various alterities), the latter being an example of a masculinity that did not respond to the norm.³

Within this general context, this chapter approaches racial imaginaries and their gender implications from the basis of literary sources, since these offer invaluable access to the kinds of tensions and uncertainties inherent to the process of constructing the aforementioned *self* suited to life in common: tension between the universal and the particular and uncertainties about the potential horizons being opened up by the universalist-humanitarian discourse of the Enlightenment. There is a solid academic tradition of analyzing race in literature in European and American historiographies,⁴ particularly in the English-speaking world, but Spanish historiography has paid little attention to this area, especially for the period in question here.⁵ To be clear, I am taking two premises as given in my approach. First, my discussions are based on the fact that the concept of *race* lacks any scientific basis as a biological category of analysis. I consider it as a signifying system used to establish

human differences and hierarchies – in other words, as a discursive construct endowed with its own historicity that operated in the past and continues to operate in the imaginative processes involved in structuring reality. It is therefore necessary to take into account the framework of cultural signifiers that constitute this system at a specific time and place.⁶ Here the categories used to define human difference rely not only on anatomical distinctions but also on moral categories linked to the body; these play a substantial role when it comes to historically assessing what it means to be human.⁷ Second, I believe the incontestable potential of narratives to crystallize identities in specific contexts draws our attention to the importance of literature, and notably of such popular genres as theater, as a *material used in constructing* modern subjects. Literature plays a fundamental part in shaping the imagination and its limits: it provides models of masculinity and femininity for us to reject or identify with, suggests attitudes and forms of action, presents social constructs in a naturalistic manner, and determines the quality of the emotional bond that can be established with different groups.⁸

Starting from these premises, this chapter examines theatrical production in Spain in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, a crucial moment in terms of the consolidation of the symbolic and conceptual frameworks that made a meaningful construction of reality and its hierarchies possible at that point in time. My analysis focuses in particular on the anti-slavery melodrama *El negro sensible*, “signed” by popular dramatist Luciano Francisco Comella in 1798. Despite the notable presence of free Blacks in the colonial space, the symbolic association between *Black people* and *slavery* was very much part of the social imaginaries of the day. Take, for example, part of the entry for the word *negro* [Black] given in the *Diccionario de Autoridades* (1734):

No somos negros [“we are not Black people”]. Phrase used in response to being insulted or treated as inferior by another to tell the latter that he should not deem the former a slave (to reprimand anyone who treats others inconsiderately and roughly), since most Blacks are slaves. Latin. *Non ut mancipia habendi sumus* [We are not to be taken for slaves].

According to Antonio Feros, the image of Black Africans in Spain at this time was informed by the persistence of slavery more than by racial theories, and therefore, “the racialist discourse used in Spain to describe Africans adopted the grammar of slavery.”⁹ This is why antislavery theater – and literature more broadly – is particularly useful for the aim of this chapter.¹⁰ I intend to analyze *El negro sensible* from the perspective of the eighteenth-century culture of sensibility, an emotional culture whose fundamental premises, far from disappearing over time, persisted throughout the nineteenth century. The rise of this emotional style resulted in an emphasis on reasonable sentiments as

essential to communal living, based on the idea that sensibility meant the human moral ability to feel emotion through sympathy. Understood as a novel and modern ethical and aesthetic proposition, one typical of civilized nations, the culture of sensibility prescribed and legitimized new and kinder ways of wielding authority and the affective masculinities associated with the latter. It also played a crucial role in the hierarchical organization of human diversity.¹¹

This sensibility-centered perspective will enable me to analyze three aspects of life at the turn of the nineteenth century. First, the increasing number of fictional *sentimental Black characters* in the latter half of the eighteenth century – closely linked to the boom in antislavery literature as part of Enlightenment humanitarianism. Second, the way in which the code of sensibility operated in building the racial imaginaries proposed by Comella and where its limits lay. Third, the nature of the politics of emotion at work in his melodrama, in that the cognitive assumptions of the culture of sensibility appealed to sentiment as a tool for conflict resolution.¹²

The *Black Character* in Literature: The Impact of Sensibility on Racial Imaginaries

As noted above, antislavery literature is a particularly useful source when it comes to observing the configuration of racial imaginaries in specific contexts, as well as the ways in which those imaginaries affect the processes of constructing modern identities. Léon-François Hoffmann's studies demonstrated that the expansion of this kind of literature toward the end of the eighteenth century gave birth to a new type of Black character, one defined by his status as a slave and by the suffering that was therefore his lot in life. These circumstances defined his personality and guided his actions in abolitionist narratives that revolved around the conflict between Black people and White people. Thus was born a figure employed as both a literary theme and a political weapon. With this political-cultural proposition, European writers were not only creating a new stereotypical image of the Black African as a being worthy of compassion, whose life experience was reduced to his enslavement – thus ignoring the American reality of free *people of color* – they were also constructing their own image as sensitive White Europeans, based on what they saw as humanitarian forms of feeling and models of behavior. The antislavery imagination could not go beyond the boundaries of what was thinkable at the time; hence, the potential of this kind of literature for investigating the unstable racial frontier that defined identity and difference. Between the late 1700s and early 1800s, European writers could deplore the inhumanity of slavery at the same time as endorsing the racial hierarchies that justified White domination.¹³

In a context in which the discursive and conceptual frameworks enabling the deliberation of modern identities were being consolidated, this new

literary figure was introducing a fresh modulation into the imaginaries about Black otherness that were by then circulating in Europe and America via multiple materials. Reports from travelers and expedition members fed the fascination of Enlightenment thinkers about matters relating to human difference and fomented the intense late eighteenth-century debate about the nature of races. The development of natural history and the so-called *sciences de l'homme* encouraged an advance in ways of thinking about human variety that accepted the *naturalized* convergence of physical and moral characteristics, providing a biological basis on which to argue for the modern order and its hierarchies, at the same time cementing the image of the (European and civilized) White man as the model of perfection, occupying the top rung of the *Scala Naturae*.¹⁴ In this ranking system, the Black African was relegated to the lowest rung, since he constituted the human type furthest removed from the European canon. Descriptions of the age frequently offer an animalized and hypersexualized image of Black men, who were also generally considered to be ugly.¹⁵ From an emotional perspective, the reaction aroused by this imaginary tended to be expressed as contempt for or fear of the figure of the intimidatory Black man, especially after the Haitian Revolution of 1791.¹⁶ There were, moreover, clear political implications to this consideration of the physical and moral imperfections of Black men, since it called into question their capacity to embody a masculinity that would fit them for communal living according to the tenets of *civilized* societies.¹⁷ The debate was intense and opinions were varied. Some theorists refused to accept that the so-called *color etiópico* (“Ethiopian color”) implied inferior intellectual faculties or the impossibility of advancement.¹⁸ Others, at the far end of the scale, argued that Black people had no intellectual capacity, morals, taste, or sensibility at all. In spite of the various shades of opinion, however, late eighteenth-century writers were unanimous in noting the imperfection and inferiority of Black people, in a context in which the idea that there existed a *Black race* whose characteristics were intrinsic and immutable was widely held.¹⁹

The debate between supporters and opponents of slavery was fed by all the information concerning human difference developed by philosophers, travelers, and naturalists; this knowledge shaped the conflicting arguments expounded in a problematic fashion in the antislavery literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Writing an abolitionist novel or play involved dramatizing the intellectual context, so it was standard practice for authors and playwrights to add prefaces to their work in which they set out their humanitarian theories – one such example is that penned by Olympe de Gouges for her play *L'Esclavage des noirs ou l'heureux naufrage* (1789). Some explicitly cited the sources that had inspired their plots, such as the popular dramatist August von Kotzebue who, in the preface to *Die Negerklaven* (1796), refers to Raynal and Diderot's *Histoire des deux Indes*, the most influential work of the age in terms of antislavery rhetoric.

Travel books were a common source of information not just for antislavery works but also for others dealing with American themes; this is true of *La bella selvaggia* (1758) by Carlo Goldoni, who took his references from the Abbé Prévost's *Histoire générale des voyages*.²⁰ Through the new politico-cultural figure of the Black character in literature, European writers were participating in a broader reflection on human nature and its modulations, the conditions of equality, and subtleties of domination by disseminating the hotly debated arguments and racial imaginaries of the time. It is worth noting in this respect that specialists have pointed to a link between antislavery writing and thinking on the female condition during the period in question. Following in the footsteps of their British precursor Aphra Behn, author of the novel *Oroonoko, or the Royal Slave* (1688), many female writers turned their minds to antislavery texts, using these as a way of depicting their own situation and hopes for emancipation. The connection between abolitionism and early feminism can be seen in the work of figures such as Olympe de Gouges or, in Spain, Concepción Arenal. And it was no coincidence that the signatories of the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 were also abolitionists.²¹

In Spain, the first works with an antislavery theme appeared in the late 1700s. Here I need to make an observation that will strengthen my argument as to the historical importance of literary sources. Generally speaking, academics who have specialized in the antislavery and abolitionist movements in the Atlantic world have noted an absence of antislavery sentiment in Spain during this period. This perception was, in fact, documented at the time by the French abolitionist Henri Grégoire in his *De la littérature des nègres* (1808), although he attributed it to the lack of conflict in the Spanish colonies. The late emergence of an organized antislavery movement in the form of the *Sociedad abolicionista española*, set up as late as 1864, seemed to confirm a lack of concern about the issue in earlier decades. Scholars including Josep Maria Fradera, Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, and Jesús Sanjurjo have highlighted the pioneering antislavery writings of Agustín Argüelles, Isidoro de Antillón, and José María Blanco White, among others, in the context of the Cortes de Cádiz (1810–1812), although the arrival of the debate in Spain is usually attributed, to a greater or lesser degree, to British interests relating to the abolition of the slave trade. There is unanimous agreement that the first public antislavery statement in Spain was Isidoro de Antillón's *Disertación sobre el origen de la esclavitud de los negros*, written in 1802 but only published in 1811.²² By taking literary sources into account, however, we can see that the issue had raised its head years earlier in the sphere of public entertainment.

With a literary antecedent in José Cadalso's *Cartas marruecas* (1789), Spanish antislavery theater first emerged around 1800, in an intellectual environment in which slavery was beginning to arouse some interest.²³ It was in this same period that the melodramas *El negro y la blanca* (1797) by Vicente Rodríguez de Arellano and *El negro sensible* (1798) "signed" by Luciano Francisco Comella were first staged. We should also mention here the 1804

publication of *Zinda*, a play by María Rosa de Gálvez, which was not staged at the time but did receive its premiere at a later date.²⁴ These Spanish works rarely feature the kind of programmatic prologues included by writers of other nationalities, as mentioned earlier. It is significant, therefore, that the only foreword to refer to slavery should have been written for the stage adaptation of Bernadin de Saint-Pierre's *Paul et Virginie* (1787). Translated into Spanish in 1798 by José Miguel Alea, this sentimental novel became hugely popular, with adaptations appearing in romances, cartoons, and chapbooks. The novel does not have an antislavery theme, but the theatrical version created by Edmond de Favières in 1791 and translated into Spanish by Juan Francisco Pastor in 1800 introduced a character who had not been part of the original work: the African slave Zavi, who bitterly laments the inhuman enslavement that has separated him from his family. In his preface, Pastor addresses those who might be surprised at the "candour with which Zavi complains of the harshness with which he is treated" or even think it "implausible ... that he should state the reasons for the injustice dealt him." Although he attributes the slave's ability to express himself so eloquently to the fact that he could have heard about these "reasons" from "a shepherd who knows them and lives nearby," he argues that sentiment enables Zavi to understand his ill treatment. He ends by roundly condemning the slave trade:

A concern for expediency might say that this part of the human species was born into slavery, indolence, insensibility, and ignorance; but those who, to their shame, continue to practice this barbarous trade know the bad faith with which they excuse the object of their ill-gotten gains.²⁵

Pastor's foreword anticipates some of the themes common to antislavery literature that will be discussed at greater length below. However, the incorporation of the issue into a work as well-known as *Pablo y Virginia* shows there was a certain degree of interest in it by then, an impression backed up by looking at some of the other texts published at the time – as books or in the press – Jean-François de Saint Lambert's *Zimeo* of 1796, for instance, or Jean-Pierre Claris de Florian's *Selico* of 1797, both of which were translated into Spanish by Francisco de Tójar. Finally, here we should bear in mind that it was also at this time (1802) that Isidoro de Antillón gave a private reading of his *Disertación sobre el origen de la esclavitud de los negros* at the Madrid Academy of Spanish Law. According to Schmidt-Nowara, Antillón's arguments are close to those set out by Bartolomé de las Casas and by Raynal and Diderot, though the fear of the *revenge of the Black people* that had grown in the aftermath of the Haitian Revolution plays a key role as well.²⁶ As noted earlier, the dissertation was only published in 1811. By this time, the debate had long since entered the public arena via literature.

As happened in other European literatures of the period, then, the appearance of a dramaturgy linked to the antislavery imagination in Spain led to a modulation in the imaginaries of Black otherness. To grasp the scope of this

change, it should be noted that although the way in which Black characters were treated in these works was new, they were well-known types in Spanish theater by 1800. Until the eighteenth century, they had primarily been used on stage for comedic purposes. In the traditional farces known as *entremeses*, White dramatists portrayed Black characters as funny, innocent, and childlike, identifiable by their status as slaves or servants and their particular *habla de negros* (form of speech). They were treated as everyday types, given the significant Black presence in cities such as Cádiz and Seville, in which many plays were set. But the Black characters who began to appear from the mid-1800s onward are different. They move from secondary to leading roles and lose their comic nature; significantly, the *habla de negros* is dropped for characters now embodying dramatic roles.²⁷ The change is discernible not only in antislavery melodramas but also in other works that paint Black men as brutal, threatening figures, as is the case in Sebastián Vázquez's *El negro esclavo* (1783). What is notable here is the fear inspired in the White Aurelina by the presence of the Black Trobante based on the threatening nature of his color and ugliness, terrifying enough to give her nightmares. The threat lies in Trobante's inability to master his passion for Aurelina despite the warnings of the wise Menelao: he gains sexual access to her by deception and is, ultimately, killed by her. Unlike either the comic or the brutal depiction of the Black man, the new literary figure of the *sentimental Black man* issuing from the pens of antislavery dramatists conveys a benevolent image, in line with the codes of the new humanitarian sensibility of the Enlightenment.

Comella's *El negro sensible*: Culture of Sensibility and Politics of Emotion

El negro sensible was premiered on 25 August 1798 at Madrid's Teatro del Príncipe with notable success, running for seven successive days. Its author, Luciano Francisco Comella (1751–1812), was a playwright who enjoyed huge popularity in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. I used the term “signed by” above because it is well known that he and his daughter Joaquina (1778–1800) collaborated as writers, though he claimed authorship of all their works.²⁸ This helps to explain his prolific output – around 100 plays of various kinds are attributed to him, from heroic tragedies to sentimental comedies, as well as melodramas such as the one discussed here. The theme of slavery appears in many of their plays, including *La esclava del Negro Ponto* (1781), *Los esclavos felices* (1793), and *La moscovita sensible* (1794), as part of the backdrop of their many orientally themed works. In these, slavery is associated with captivity in a Mediterranean setting, in other words, with the kind of *legal enslavement* linked to the conflict with the Ottoman world that had practically ceased to exist. The slaves here are White Christians, captives seeking to return to their families; while they deplore their situation, they do not inveigh against brutality in the way that the protagonist does in *El negro sensible*. In that respect, this is an anomalous work

in Comella's output – the only one to deal with Black slavery in America and have a fiercely antislavery discourse.

Comella was one of the leading exponents of an approach to the theater defined by Ignacio de Luzán as “popular, free, not tied to the rules of the ancients,” one shared by other writers, including Rodríguez de Arellano – author of *El negro y la blanca* – and Gaspar Zavala y Zamora. This made him a target for the contempt of neoclassical writers such as Leandro Fernández de Moratín, with whom he conducted a long feud. The ridicule with which Moratín, in particular, treated both Comella and his work gave the latter a reputation – as a pedant, a tavern poet – which critics have only started to question in recent decades.²⁹ Interestingly, a few days after the premiere of *El negro sensible*, an anonymous “Y.B.” devoted a few lines in the *Diario de Madrid* to expressing his disapproval of the very title of the play: “more than apt to put off any person of good taste.” The “ideas of pedantry and affectation” suggested by the title had dissuaded him from going to see that “thing entitled *El negro sensible*,” his assumptions having been confirmed by a man of his acquaintance *respected for his wisdom* who had been caused “great irritation” by seeing the title in the newspaper.³⁰ Y.B. gave no opinion on the serious subject matter dealt with by the work, and none of the high priests of neoclassicism cultivated abolitionist themes. Perhaps it is no coincidence that, except for María Rosa de Gálvez, the writers who brought the issue of slavery to the Spanish stage around 1800 all belonged to a popular current far removed from neoclassical aesthetics, as was also true of the German dramatist August von Kotzebue, whose work has much in common with that of Comella.³¹

Comella's dramatization of slavery and its implications revolves around the story of Catul, a Black slave who is working on the plantation of slave trader Jacobo until the latter finds a buyer for him. His wife Bunga has been sold, and Catul has been left alone with his son – simply referred to as “el negrito” – a young child (with no lines to speak). The arrival of Martina, with her son Juanito and her servants, prior to setting sail for La Coruña, disrupts day-to-day life on the plantation. A rich Spanish widow, Martina is a sensitive and educated woman who deploras slavery. Trouble arises when, in Catul's absence, she buys his son, intending to take the child to Spain and give him his freedom. Jacobo lies to Catul, telling him that Martina has already shipped the boy off to Europe, whereas, in fact, both have fallen asleep under a tree while she was reading the *Maxims* of La Rochefoucauld. Maddened with grief, Catul finds them and, believing the sleeping child to be Juanito, attempts to take his revenge by killing him, but Martina stops him at the last moment, revealing the child to be his own son. Catul falls at her feet, and she then buys him in order to set him free, just as it becomes clear that she has also bought his wife Bunga. The grateful Catul offers to continue working as Martina's slave, but she refuses, instead taking in the whole family as her servants. As I shall argue below, in the process of developing his plot, Comella re-creates imaginaries of the *Black other* and the *White*

European that only make sense when they interact and which, furthermore, serve different purposes. In the first place, the aesthetic choice of melodrama ties in with the work's politics of emotion, aimed at making the audience feel a sense of compassion that will override any sense of fear for the *Black other*. In the second, the work confirms European superiority and the idea that its civilizing intervention is needed to shape a subjugated Black masculinity that will pose no harm to the social order. Finally, it offers a political solution that does away with the danger of abusive authority by prescribing a form of benevolent domination capable of sponsoring a new colonial pact that would not affect existing racial hierarchies.

Comella's decision to tell Catul's story through melodrama clearly establishes his desire to move his potential audiences. The genre had grown in the final decades of the eighteenth century since the first production of *Pygmalion* (1770) by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who had broken new ground in cultivating this form characterized by its mix of the spoken word and orchestral music.³² In the context of Enlightenment dramatic theory, whose aim, in the words of Horace, was *docere et delectare*, the advance of sentimental formulas could be linked to the education of a "simple and ignorant" audience, whose members, as noted by Mariano Luis de Urquijo in 1791, "would be conquered by the sensitive emotions that goodness would stir within their souls."³³ The operation of educating people's eyes to see goodness was based, in the context of the culture of sensibility, on mankind's supposedly innate moral capacity to feel sympathy for the unhappiness of others. With this principle in mind, melodrama appealed to audiences' sense of compassion through stories of family misfortune and by expressing clashing ideas through conflict, the latter underlined by the accompanying music.³⁴

However, the chance of creating a space that would allow for the development of benevolent feelings toward Black people occurred through the construction of the Black slave as a sensitive being, endowed with the qualities necessary for his redemption. The portrait of Catul as the ideal father, gentle and affectionate, in line with the eighteenth-century code of sensibility, is supported in extraordinary style by the conventions of melodrama. His natural sensitivity can be seen not only in the words he says but also in a series of actions, gestures, and physiological processes that convey the impulses of the sentimental heart – he weeps freely, blushes, and even, on occasion, faints. His character becomes clear as soon as the curtain rises: the action, set in a "delightful place" in America, opens with an extended soliloquy for Catul during which he holds his sleeping son in his arms. The language of sentiment is used here to present the inhumane nature of slave ownership and its dire consequences, particularly as regards the break-up of the family unit. Catul's first words are a lament for his enforced separation from his "gentle and loving companion" caused by "a cruel right which the proud Europeans have awarded themselves over the man who did not have the luck to be born White." Added to this, he fears he may lose his son as well since "the absolute power of a tyrant" may decide to sell him to another owner "in contempt

for nature.”³⁵ This is a common element of antislavery literature, whose aim is to highlight not only slavery’s unjust nature but its systematic violation of natural law, in a cultural context in which the family is a natural sphere for the construction of emotions. Indeed, it is the pain caused by this transgression of the laws of nature that reveals to Catul the injustice of his situation. In other words, it is a sentiment that leads him to an intuitive recognition of his enslaved status. Through his words, the conditions of his oppression are formulated in specifically racial terms by means of a systematic opposition between *Black people* and *Europeans*, as when he states that “a Black man is a matter of scorn for the educated nations.”³⁶

Comella does not hold back verbally – “absolute power,” “tyrant,” “oppressors,” “arbitrary power,” “despotism” – when it comes to describing the coercion practiced by the slave trader Jacobo, who is seen wielding a whip against his slaves as he makes his first entrance on stage. It is Jacobo who voices the commonplaces of the slavery discourse, referring to the indolence, insensibility, arrogance, laziness, brutality, cowardice, and natural slave status of Black people, justifying White domination on the grounds that owners would “instruct and teach” their slaves. Unlike Catul, who lays claim to his humanity when confronted by the trader by forcefully declaring “I am a man,” Jacobo is cruel and deaf to the slave’s laments.³⁷ He does not use sentimental language, is lacking in sympathy, and shows no sign of feeling any affection for his fellow man. Comella uses the character to represent a form of domination that goes against the codes of sensibility and finds its correlate in a brutal, inadequate masculinity. The hatred Catul shows toward Europeans, who for him have no sensibility at all – “no White man is capable of sensitivity”³⁸ – a telling reversal of values, stems from his contact with Jacobo. The effects of that power that transgresses the laws of nature may prove disastrous, in that it is Catul’s paternal love that holds back, as he puts it, his “violent impulses.” Moreover, the hypothetical separation from his son would leave him without the “support of other sentiments” that would dissuade him from “killing himself.” It is the only solution to the problem of slavery under a despotic and unfeeling domination: there is no way out in life from the “pain of being a slave.”³⁹

In contrast to the abuse of authority represented by Jacobo, Martina embodies the ideal of the modern and civilized *sensitive soul*, characterized by qualities such as benevolence, mercy, and compassion, closely related to charity and the personal satisfaction derived from the *pleasure of doing good*. Through her, Comella depicts a humane way of wielding authority, which will ultimately lead to what he sees as a satisfactory resolution to the slavery problem. As soon as she first appears, Martina behaves in an overtly sensitive way. She shows pity for the Black slaves, asks Jacobo to lighten their burden by giving them the day off, gives them alms, and shows her generosity by saying, “I am sensitive, I cannot bear to see suffering without offering help.”⁴⁰ It is Martina who sets out the humanitarian arguments of abolitionism, primarily those derived from the religious principle of the equality of souls: if

Black people are savages, it is not because of their lack of human qualities, but because they have been subjected to such brutal treatment.⁴¹ Therefore, despite being horrified by the slave trade, she buys Catul's son in the hope of "bringing him fortune." The exemplary figure of the Spanish woman prescribes not only a model of behavior that is recognizable as human but also the quality of the emotional connection that the audience has to establish with Catul. In this respect, she explicitly rejects both the contempt shown by Jacobo and the fear of the brutal Black man that had become especially widespread after the Haitian Revolution. This becomes clear when Martina and Juanito first come across Catul, whose grief when he believes his son has been sent away to Spain has caused him to faint:

Juanito: Ah, mother, there's a Black man over there.
Martina: So there is:
it looks as if he is dead, or has fainted.
Juanito: Are you not afraid?
Martina: No, my child:
I think he's breathing, give me the cup.
Drink this, you poor man.⁴²

Despite her help, Catul remains antagonistic toward Europeans and seeks vengeance, going so far as attempting to kill the child he believes to be Martina's. He justifies his act by his status as a slave: "slavery drives me to strike, it is angered, and only listens to its resentment. Die, die, innocent one."⁴³ Comella uses Catul's despair to illustrate the catastrophic consequences of an abuse of authority and to offer a solution. Martina is able to stop the slave from striking, symbolically revealing the truth by uncovering the face of the sleeping child. Not only does she not blame Catul for his violent intentions, but she also decides to buy him herself to give him his freedom and thereby redeem him:

Catul: And you are European?
Martina: Who could doubt it?
Catul: My shame grows ever greater.
Dispose of my life and his:
From today I welcome my chains;
Blessed enslavement! Happy day!
For it is my good fortune to be a slave.
Martina: Neither your son nor you will be my slave.⁴⁴

Just as she reveals her plan to set them free, we also discover that she has previously bought Bunga, Catul's wife. The restoration of family order puts an end to the conflict, thanks to Martina's intervention. She, a *sensitive soul*, represents a synthesis of the imaginary of the European civilizing mission, although on very different terms from those of Jacobo. Catul has innately

good sentiments, but these have to be guided by sensitive and civilized souls so that they do not run wild. By setting an example of kindness, Martina not only manages to protect herself from violent masculinity – one capable of taking innocent lives – and the fear associated with it, but she also succeeds in getting Catul to consent to remain subjugated, if now to a benevolent authority.

Martina: ... Tell me what it is that you want.
Catul: All I wish
 is that you take me to Spain, where
 we three may humbly serve you for ever:
 in your mercy, allow us to be your slaves.
Martina: I cannot permit it, even if you desire it.
 You will both work for me as servants ...
Catul: I had a hatred of Europeans,
 believing them incapable of noble traits;
 but now that through you I have learned
 that there are both good and bad among them,
 I thank you, my lady, and I bless you,
 and offer to become a Christian as soon as I can.⁴⁵

The notion of consent is important, as it reinforces the Rousseauian air discernible throughout the work. Notably, it is a female character who embodies the *sensitive soul* that guides the Black slave on his path to redemption. In Enlightenment culture, women were granted a central role in the civilization of customs, especially in relation to the containment of male passions, through mixed sociability and a virtuous, loving, and modest form of femininity.⁴⁶ Given that women were particularly endowed with sentiment, it was no accident that they should embody the exemplary figure – kind, compassionate, and sensitive – in antislavery rhetoric. However, the character of Martina as a widowed and virtuous mother is interesting given Comella's writings as a whole. In general, he tends to use the mother figure for satirical purposes, reserving emotion to depict decorous and faithful wives.⁴⁷ If, as noted above, *El negro sensible* is anomalous in his production, the character of Martina is even more so. All these details, together with the specific association here between abolitionism and female authority, lead me to wonder whether this melodrama might have been written by Joaquina Comella. It is true that she was very young – just 20 – at the time, but it is also true that her father's output diminished significantly after her death and that the theme of slavery does not reappear in any of his later plays. This is just a hypothesis that I cannot prove, but it is at least worth asking the question.

In my opinion, Comella's narrative is focused on defending a form of benevolent domination, legitimized in the new affective ways of wielding authority, which does not attempt to alter existing power relationships or racial hierarchies but can erode them in the long term. While the slave is not

denied his capacity for redemption, the moral superiority of the *educated nations* is confirmed and their paternal supervision is justified. Notably, the only illustration in the Mexican edition of *El negro sensible* of 1825 depicts the moment at which Martina reveals the truth to Catul, just as he is about to strike (Figure 3.1).

This White female figure is constructed in opposition not only to the racial *other* but to an abusive manner of wielding power summed up by the image of the cruel slave trader living in the colonies. This was an approach increasingly used by European abolitionists from around 1780 onward as they constructed a new imaginary of Black people, arguing that their barbarism was due to their subjugation and the influence of cruel plantation owners.⁴⁸ In this context, the figure of the *sensitive Black character* offered European audiences a version of Black people in which sentiment overcame fear and emancipation became a viable possibility, albeit as part of a new colonial pact that would not question White superiority. Although racial categories were unstable, they are presented in a fictional realm as if they were well-established and naturalized.

By Way of Epilogue

The unreserved condemnation of Comella's stage works by neoclassical intellectuals was not shared by the public. Not only was *El negro sensible* a success on its premiere, it also became one of the dramatist's most frequently staged and best-known works, to the point that in 1825 the New Spanish writer José Joaquín Fernández de Lizardi wrote a second part to it, which premiered in Mexico City on 11 February 1827. A non-exhaustive search of the press of the period reveals that the melodrama was staged intermittently over the years in various Spanish and American cities – Madrid, Barcelona, Palma de Mallorca, Cádiz, Toledo, Cuenca, Salamanca, Mexico City, Buenos Aires – until as late as the 1870s, although its presence in Spanish theaters was stronger in the first quarter of the century.⁴⁹ The work was also reprinted in Madrid, Salamanca, Valencia, Seville, Barcelona, Córdoba, and Mexico City, and possibly Buenos Aires as well. Added to this, we know it received some amateur performances in rural areas of what is now Spain's Castilla la Mancha region,⁵⁰ and that a version of the play had been arranged to be performed at aristocratic gatherings, in this case in Jaén, which says something about the level of popularity it achieved.⁵¹

It is striking to note that Comella's work remained relevant throughout the nineteenth century, and in contexts very different from the one in which it had originally been produced. Above and beyond its philanthropic content, it may be that the antidespotic message conveyed by this literary slave had a wider political reading, at least in the context of the early decades of the nineteenth century in Spain, between the crisis of the Ancien Régime and the rise of liberalism. The metaphorical use of the image of the slave in revolutionary languages is well known, and various scholars have pointed to

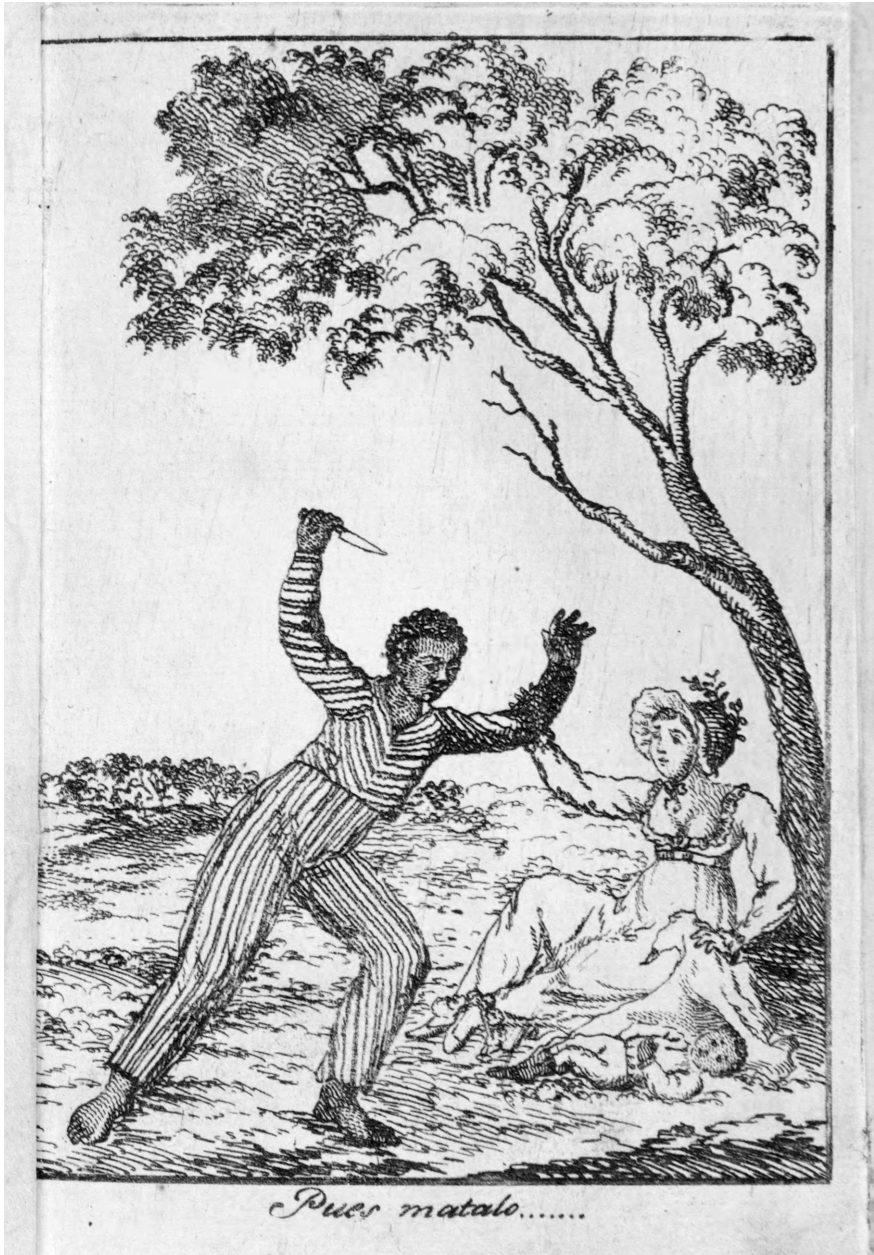


Figure 3.1 “Pues matalo...”

Source: Plate in *El negro sensible. Primera y segunda parte. Hecha la ultima por el Pensador Mexicano* (Mexico, 1825), Plate I. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. <https://collections.library.yale.edu/catalog/2110206>

the multiple applications and appropriations of the antislavery imaginary in the metropolises.⁵² Hegel's concept of otherness, for example, in which the master-slave dialectic played a central role, was very much influenced by the Haitian Revolution.⁵³ The counterhegemonic function of antislavery literature emphasized by Drescher can be traced in the words with which Antillón evoked the environment in which he had written his *Disertación* of 1802:

At a court in which the most absolute and glorified despotism reigned ... who would believe it? A congress of honest young people who, facing prison, exile and the displeasure of the favourite and all the ministers, freely discussed extremely delicate matters of morality and politics, and considered the liberty of the citizen and the constitution of societies.⁵⁴

We do not know whether Comella had close links to Antillón's circle, but he is known to have frequented other literary gatherings, such as the Tertulia de la Fonda de San Sebastián, where such matters may have been discussed. Either way, it is certainly possible that an interest in the figure of the African slave as a literary theme had something to do with a critical view of the policies of the last Bourbon monarchs. Some evidence suggests that his work's antidespotism and defense of a benevolent authority governed by consent gave it particular relevance in the context of liberalism. Significantly, for instance, in 1841, a group of amateur players staged *El negro sensible* in Madrilejos "to celebrate the opening of Parliament and the anniversary of the Constitution."⁵⁵ A few years earlier, Republican writer Wenceslao Ayguals de Izco had written a play on an antislavery theme entitled *Los negros* to celebrate the reinstatement of the 1812 Constitution as a result of the liberal revolutionary triumph of 1836. It was first staged in Valencia in August of that year and was a hit, its popularity with audiences linked to the contemporary "climate of patriotic elation."⁵⁶ Although undated, the version of *El negro sensible* published in Cordoba must have been printed around this time, since the print house that produced it was operating in the mid-1830s. In it, we find the only known cordel literature illustration for the play. This shows Jacobo cracking the whip, but the figure he is beating, presumably Catul, is not Black but White. It could be that the image has been reused from another source, a common practice in cordel literature, but it could also be taken as further proof of the abovementioned hypothesis of its continued pertinence against the backdrop of liberalism, which opens up the fascinating prospect of further investigations into the use of the figure of the Black character in literature as a political-cultural tool, at least in the first few decades of the nineteenth century.

Notes

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- 1 Andrew Curran, *The Anatomy of Blackness: Science and Slavery in an Age of Enlightenment* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2011); Londa Schiebinger, "The Anatomy of Difference: Race and Sex in Eighteenth Century Science," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 23, no. 4 (1990): 387–405; Nicholas Hudson, "From 'Nation' to 'Race': The Origin of Racial Classification in Eighteenth-Century Thought," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 29, no. 3 (1996): 247–264; Elsa Dorlin, *La matrice de la race. Généalogie sexuelle et coloniale de la Nation française* (Paris: La Découverte, 2009); Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon, 1995).
- 2 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.
- 3 From the field of sociology, R.W. Connell formulated the concept of hegemonic masculinity, which, although problematic, has served as a tool for understanding the power relationships established within a society, not only between men and women but between different models of masculinity. See R.W. Connell, "La organización social de la masculinidad," in *Masculinidad/es. Poder y Crisis*, eds. Teresa Valdés and José Olavarría (Santiago: Isis Internacional-FLACSO Chile, 1997), 31–48; and, for a revised approach, R.W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept," *Gender and Society* 19, no. 6 (2005): 829–859. See also Nerea Aresti's critique, "La historia de género y el estudio de las masculinidades. Reflexiones sobre conceptos y métodos," in *Feminidades y masculinidades en la historiografía de género*, ed. Henar Gallego Franco (Granada: Comares, 2018), 173–194.
- 4 Among an extensive bibliography, see, for example, Léon-François Hoffmann, *Le nègre romantique: personnage littéraire et obsession collective* (Paris: Payot, 1973); Jeffrey M. Leichman and Karine Bénac-Giroux, eds., *Colonialism and Slavery in Performance: Theatre and the Eighteenth-Century French Caribbean* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2021); Franca Dellarosa, *Slavery on Stage: Representations of Slavery in British Theatre, 1760s–1830s* (Bari: Edizioni dal Sud, 2009); Jenna M. Gibbs, *Performing the Temple of Liberty: Slavery, Theater, and Popular Culture in London and Philadelphia, 1760–1850* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2014); Brychan Carey, *British Abolitionism and the Rhetoric of Sensibility: Writing, Sentiment and Slavery, 1760–1807* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Christine Levecq, *Slavery and Sentiment: The Politics of Feeling in Black Atlantic Antislavery Writing, 1770–1850* (Lebanon: University of Hampshire Press, 2008); Hazel Waters, *Racism on the Victorian Stage: Representation of Slavery and The Black Character* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Sarah J. Adams, *Repertoires of Slavery. Dutch Theater Between Abolitionism and Colonial Subjection, 1770–1810* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2023).
- 5 Most of the research covering Black characters in Spanish literature comes from the field of literary studies and is focused on the Golden Age. See, for example, Luis Morales-Oliver, *África en la literatura española*, 3 vols. (Madrid: CSIC, 1957); Baltasar Fra Molinero, *La imagen de los negros en el teatro del Siglo de Oro* (Madrid: Siglo XXI de España, 1995); Nicholas R. Jones, *Staging Habla de Negros: Radical Performance of the African Diaspora in Early Modern Spain* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State UP, 2019); Aurelia Martín Casares, "Comba y Dominga. La imagen sexualizada de las negroafricanas en la literatura de cordel," in *La Esclavitud Negroafricana en la Historia de España (Siglos XVI–XVII)*, comps. Aurelia Martín Casares and Margarita García Barranco (Granada: Comares, 2010), 173–188; José Luis Cortés López, *El negroafricano en*

- la literatura española* (Madrid: Ed. Mundo Negro, 2019); Lisa Surwillo, *Monsters by Trade: Slave Traffickers in Modern Spanish Literature and Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014).
- 6 This is in line with Stuart Hall's conceptualization in *Representation. Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (London: Sage, 1997) and *The Fateful Triangle: Race, Ethnicity, Nation* (Cambridge MS: Harvard University Press, 2017). For a recent long-range survey, see Jean-Frédéric Schaub and Silvia Sebastiani, *Race et histoire dans les sociétés occidentales (XVe–XVIIIe siècles)* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2021).
 - 7 Elsa Dorlin, *La matrice de la race. Généalogie sexuelle et coloniale de la Nation française* (Paris: La Découverte, 2009), 29–49.
 - 8 On the importance to history of literary sources, see Isabel Burdiel and Justo Serna Alonso, *Literatura e historia cultural o Por qué los historiadores deberíamos leer novelas* (Valencia: Episteme, 1996) and Isabel Burdiel, “Lo que las novelas pueden decir a los historiadores. Notas para Manuel Pérez Ledesma,” in *El historiador consciente. Homenaje a Manuel Pérez Ledesma*, eds. José Álvarez Junco et al. (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2015), 263–282.
 - 9 Antonio Feros, *Speaking of Spain: The Evolution of Race and Nation in the Hispanic World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 214. The more limited nature of discussions on race in Spain, while debatable, is referenced by Josep Maria Fradera in his study of the racial issue in the Cortes de Cádiz. See Josep Maria Fradera, *Gobernar colonias* (Barcelona: Península, 1999), 51–69.
 - 10 I adopt Seymour Drescher's definition of antislavery as a counterhegemonic political and cultural phenomenon. For a survey of the changes in the historiographic conceptualization of antislavery, see Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, *Empire and Antislavery: Spain, Cuba, and Puerto Rico, 1833–1874* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999), 9–13.
 - 11 Mónica Bolufer, “Reasonable Sentiments: Sensibility and Balance in Eighteenth-Century Spain,” in *Engaging the Emotions in Spanish Culture and History*, eds. Luisa Elena Delgado, Pura Fernández and Jo Labanyi (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2016), 21–38 and “‘Hombres de bien’: modelos de masculinidad y expectativas femeninas, entre la ficción y la realidad,” *Cuadernos de la Ilustración y el Romanticismo* 15 (2007): 7–31; Carolyn D. Williams, “‘The Luxury of Doing Good’: Benevolence, Sensibility, and the Royal Humane Society,” in *Pleasure in the Eighteenth Century*, eds. Roy Porter and Marie Mulvey Roberts (London: Macmillan Press, 1996), 77–107.
 - 12 Sarah Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotions* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004).
 - 13 Léon-François Hoffmann, *Le nègre romantique: personnage littéraire et obsession collective* (Paris: Payot, 1973); Andrew Curran, *The Anatomy of Blackness: Science and Slavery in an Age of Enlightenment* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2011). On free *people of color* in the Hispanic context, see José Antonio Piqueras and Imilcy Balboa Navarro, eds., *Gente de color entre esclavos. Calidades raciales, esclavitud y ciudadanía en el Gran Caribe* (Granada: Comares, 2019).
 - 14 On travel literature as a primary source for expanding philosophical-scientific knowledge and Enlightenment regimes of truth, see Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London-New York: Routledge, 2003); Joan-Pau Rubiés, “Travel Writing and Ethnography,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, eds. Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 242–260; Juan Pimentel, *Testigos del mundo. Ciencia, literatura y viajes en la Ilustración* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2003). For more on the ambiguity of the word *man* in this context, see Silvia Sebastiani,

- “Man, secluded from the company of women is... a dangerous animal to society”: The History of Women in Scotland’s Enlightenment,” in *Gender and Cultural Mediation in the Long Eighteenth Century. Women across Borders*, eds. Mónica Bolufer, Carolina Blutrach, and Laura Guinot-Ferri (London: Palgrave, 2024), 73–97.
- 15 Juanma Sánchez Arteaga, *Lo bello en la naturaleza. Alejandro Malaspina: estética, filosofía natural y blanca en el ocaso de la Ilustración (1795–1803)* (Madrid: CSIC, 2022), 42–43 and 77–116; Andrew Curran, *The Anatomy of Blackness: Science and Slavery in an Age of Enlightenment* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2011); Londa Schiebinger, “The Anatomy of Difference: Race and Sex in Eighteenth-Century Science,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 23, no. 4 (1990): 387–405; Silvia Sebastiani, *The Scottish Enlightenment: Race, Gender, and the Limits of Progress* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).
 - 16 María Dolores González-Ripoll et al., *El rumor de Haití en Cuba: temor, raza y rebeldía, 1789–1844* (Madrid: CSIC, 2004).
 - 17 Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon, 1995), 70–107.
 - 18 See, for example, Benito Jerónimo Feijoo, “El color etiópico,” *Teatro crítico universal*, vol. VII (Madrid: Imp. de Lorenzo Francisco Mojados, 1736).
 - 19 Jessica Riskin, *Science in the Age of Sensibility. The Sentimental Empiricists of the French Enlightenment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Mónica Bolufer, “En torno a la sensibilidad dieciochesca: discursos, prácticas, paradojas,” in *Las mujeres y las emociones en Europa y América: siglos XVII–XIX*, ed. María Luisa Candau (Santander: Universidad de Cantabria, 2016), 29–56; Daniel Wickberg, “What Is the History of Sensibilities? On Cultural Histories, Old and New,” *The American Historical Review* 112, no. 3 (2007): 661–684; Antonio Feros, *Speaking of Spain: The Evolution of Race and Nation in the Hispanic World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 200–214; Andrew Wells, “Masculinity and Its Other in Eighteenth-Century Racial Thought,” in *Masculinity and the Other: Historical Perspectives*, eds. Heather Ellis and Jessica Meyer (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 85–113.
 - 20 René Tarin, “L’Esclavage des noirs, ou la mauvaise conscience d’Olympe de Gouges,” *Dix-huitième Siècle* 30 (1998): 373–381; Catherine Ramond, “Slavery and the Colonies on the French Stage in the Eighteenth Century: The Emergence of a Critical Gaze,” in Jeffrey M. Leichman and Karine Bénac-Giroux, eds., *Colonialism and Slavery in Performance: Theatre and the Eighteenth-Century French Caribbean* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2021), 169–187; Sarah J. Adams, “Democratizing Abolitionism: Anti-Slavery Discourses and Sentiments in August von Kotzebue’s *Die Negersklaven* (1796),” *Cultural History* 9, no. 1 (2020): 26–45; Mónica García Aguilar, “Virtud femenina e ilustración. El caso de *La bella selvaggia* de Carlo Goldoni,” *Revista Internacional de Culturas y Literaturas* 10 (2011): 66–76. On the importance of the third edition of Raynal and Diderot’s *Histoire des deux Indes* in antislavery rhetoric, see Andrew Curran, *The Anatomy of Blackness: Science and Slavery in an Age of Enlightenment* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2011), 194–199.
 - 21 Doris Y. Kadish and Françoise Massardier-Kenney, eds., *Translating Slavery: Gender and Race in French Women’s Writing, 1783–1823* (Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1994), 1–10; Brycchan Carey, *British Abolitionism and the Rhetoric of Sensibility: Writing, Sentiment and Slavery, 1760–1807* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 1–17.
 - 22 Josep Maria Fradera and Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, eds., *Slavery and Antislavery in Spain’s Atlantic Empire* (New York, Oxford: Berghahn, 2013); Jesús Sanjurjo, *In the Blood of Our Brothers: Abolitionism and the End of the*

- Slave Trade in Spain's Atlantic Empire, 1800–1870* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2021); Emily Berquist, “Early Anti-Slavery Sentiment in the Spanish Atlantic World, 1765–1817,” *Slavery and Abolition* 31, no. 2 (2010): 184–186; Lisa Surwillo, *Monsters by Trade: Slave Traffickers in Modern Spanish Literature and Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014).
- 23 Arturo Morgado García, “*Zinda* (1804) de María Rosa Gálvez de Cabrera, y las reflexiones sobre la esclavitud en la España finidieciochesca,” in *Mujeres esclavas y abolicionistas en la España de los siglos XVI al XIX*, eds. Aurelia Martín Casares and Rocío Periañez Gómez (Madrid, Frankfurt: Iberoamericana-Vervuert, 2014), 187–209.
- 24 On the link between slavery and the female condition in the work of this important writer, see Elizabeth Franklin Lewis, “Breaking the Chains: Language and the Bonds of Slavery in María Rosa Gálvez’s *Zinda* (1804),” *Dieciocho. Hispanic Enlightenment* 20, no. 2 (1997): 263–275.
- 25 The thought occurs that the mention of a *pastor* (shepherd) might be a self-referential allusion to the writer’s surname. Juan Francisco Pastor, *Pablo y Virginia. Drama pastoral en tres actos* (Madrid: Oficina de D. Benito García y Compañía, 1800), n.p.
- 26 Trouillot has emphasized that the argument of the *revenge of the blacks*, which circulated widely after the Haitian Revolution of 1791, drained the actions of black slaves – whether these were violent or forms of resistance – of any political significance. Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon, 1995), 70–107.
- 27 Baltasar Fra Molinero, *La imagen de los negros en el teatro del Siglo de Oro* (Madrid: Siglo XXI de España, 1995); Nicholas R. Jones, *Staging Habla de Negros: Radical Performance of the African Diaspora in Early Modern Spain* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State UP, 2019).
- 28 Critics have not yet been able to determine who wrote what, although some tonadillas/songs have been attributed with certainty to Joaquina Comella. See María Jesús García Garrosa, “Joaquina Comella, autora desconocida de los libretos para siete tonadillas de Blas de Laserna,” *Cuadernos Dieciochistas* 16 (2015): 125–163, and Juan Antonio Hormigón, dir., *Autoras en la historia del teatro español (1500–994)*, vol. I (Madrid: Asociación de Directores de Escena de España, 1996), 433–434.
- 29 María Angulo Egea, *Luciano Francisco Comella (1751–1812). Otra cara del teatro de la Ilustración* (San Vicente del Raspeig: Publicaciones de la Universidad de Alicante, 2006), 65–80. The quotation from Luzán’s *Poética* (1737) comes from 21.
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- 33 Emilio Palacios Fernández, “Teatro y política (1789–1833),” in *Se hicieron literatos para ser políticos. Cultura y política en la España de Carlos IV y Fernando VII*, coord. Joaquín Álvarez Barrientos (Cádiz: Universidad de Cádiz, 2004), 185–242; Joaquín Álvarez Barrientos, *El actor borbónico (1700–1831)* (Madrid: Publicaciones de la Asociación de Directores de Escena de España, 2019), 75–82. The quotation from Urquijo comes from 76–77.
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- 9, no. 1 (2020): 28; Sigrid G. Köhler, “Beautiful Black Soul? The Racial Matrix of White Aesthetics (Reading Kotzebue against Kleist),” *Image & Narrative* 14, no. 3 (2013): 36–37. For a detailed study of music as a narrative element in Comella’s works, see María Angulo Egea, *Luciano Francisco Comella (1751–1812). Otra cara del teatro de la Ilustración* (San Vicente del Raspeig: Publicaciones de la Universidad de Alicante, 2006), 301–323. On the rise of sentimental genres in Spain, see María Jesús García Garrosa, *La retórica de las lágrimas. La comedia sentimental española, 1751–1802* (Valladolid: Universidad de Valladolid, 1990) and Yvonne Fuentes Rotger, *El triángulo sentimental en el drama del Dieciocho (Inglaterra-Francia-España)* (Kassel: Edition Reichenberger, 1999).
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- 44 *El negro sensible. Primera y segunda parte. Hecha la última por El Pensador Mexicano* (Mexico City: Oficina del finado Ontiveros, 1825), 18.
- 45 *El negro sensible. Primera y segunda parte. Hecha la última por El Pensador Mexicano* (Mexico City: Oficina del finado Ontiveros, 1825), 19.
- 46 Mónica Bolufer, *Arte y artificio de la vida en común. Los modelos de comportamiento y sus tensiones en el Siglo de las Luces* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2019).
- 47 María Angulo Egea, *Luciano Francisco Comella (1751–1812). Otra cara del teatro de la Ilustración* (San Vicente del Raspeig: Publicaciones de la Universidad de Alicante, 2006), 173–188.
- 48 Andrew Curran, *The Anatomy of Blackness: Science and Slavery in an Age of Enlightenment* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2011), 204.
- 49 *El Diario Oficial de Avisos de Madrid* tells us it was staged between 6 and 10 February 1875 at the Teatro de Novedades. As late as 1877, there are reports of the premiere of the “one-act play” *El negro sensible* in Salamanca, although it is attributed to a certain Ángel Polo, I have not been able to find out whether it was a different work of the same name. See *El Eco del Tormes. Revista Semanal Científico Literaria*, 8 April 1877, 7.
- 50 An amateur production in Madrilejos in 1841 attracted “a sizeable attendance”: see *El Corresponsal*, 26 March 1841, 4. It was also staged in Toledo, in 1830, on a small scale, “at the tavern”: see *El Heraldo Toledano. Semanario Científico-Literario y de Información*, 14 November 1908, 3.
- 51 Virginia Sánchez López, “Aportaciones al estudio del melólogo en España e Hispanoamérica: *El negro sensible* entre dos orillas y varios contextos,” *Revista Musical Chilena* 73, no. 231 (2019); Rey Fernando Vera García, “Una copia novohispana del melodrama *El negro sensible*, de Francisco Luciano Comella,”

- Dieciocho* 42, no. 2 (2019): 363–390; Frieda Koeninger, “Race at the Intersection of Religion, Aesthetics and Politics: Comella’s *El negro sensible* and the Censors,” *Dieciocho* 40, no. 2 (2017): 217–232; Beatrice Schuchardt, “La esclavitud en el espejo de la Ilustración, la religión y el liberalismo. *El negro sensible* (1798/1825) como secuela transatlántica,” *Dieciocho* 44, no. 2 (2021): 349–370.
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- 54 Isidoro de Antillón, *Disertación sobre el origen de la esclavitud de los negros* (Mallorca: Imprenta de Miguel Domingo, 1811), III.
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- 56 Xavier Andreu, *España o la hija de un jornalero. Wenceslao Ayguals de Izco y el primer republicanismo* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2021), 71–74. The quotation comes from 74.

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4 Sweet Affinities

The Gendering of Taste in Eighteenth-Century Spain*

Marta Manzanares Mileo

At the end of the eighteenth century, Cayetano María Huarte (1741–1806), poet and canon of the Cadiz cathedral, wrote a mock-epic poem entitled *La Dulciada. Poema épico dividido en siete cantos*.¹ Inspired by classic epic poems, his piece is a tribute to sweet food. The poet embarks on a dream-like journey through mountains of biscuits, rivers of honey and milk, and forests of syrupy fruit trees. Guided by the *Buen Gusto* (Good Taste), depicted as a *petimetre* (fop), the poet finally reaches the palace of *Golosina* (Sweet Tooth). Inspired by Doña María Amoroso, to whom the author dedicates the poem, *Golosina* is a Goddess with a “sweet and loving character,” “who governs all the sweet things.”² This succulent poem illustrating a sugary paradise reminds us of the central place of sweets in early modern food imagery.³ Sweets, broadly understood as those food products made with sugar and, more occasionally, honey, were widely praised for their intense sensual qualities, and for their social and cultural values as markers of social distinction and luxury. *La Dulciada* entices the imagination of readers while echoing many of the contemporary debates over a set of dualisms including modernity and tradition, cosmopolitanism and Spanishness, mind and body, masculinity and femininity. Specifically, the male character of *Buen Gusto* and the female *Golosina* reveal broader moral and social agendas of gender ideologies in this period.

Historians of the senses have extensively shown that sensory experiences and perceptions are deeply imbued with social meanings based on categories of gender, class, and race.⁴ These scholars have argued that taste, like the rest of the human sensorium, is not universal and uniform; rather, it is socially and culturally constructed and historically specific. The sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, among others, has stressed the pivotal role of taste in creating social identities and hierarchies. Bourdieu argued that taste is culturally produced and internalized by individuals according to their social position, contrasting the “taste of luxury” of the bourgeoisie and the “taste of necessity” of the working class.⁵ On the other hand, taste has been defined as an “affective sense,” because it requires an intimate union between the subject and object of perception.⁶ Eating is a deeply bodily experience, in which

food is ingested and absorbed to be part of the self. In so doing, it generates diverse emotional responses, from happiness, gratification and satisfaction to disgust, guilt, and anxiety. How individuals and society construct affective responses to food has changed over time and depends on the social meanings attributed to each commodity.

This chapter explores the centrality of taste in the construction of femininity and masculinity in eighteenth-century Spain. More specifically, it examines the multifaceted (and ambiguous) ways in which sweetness, increasingly consumed in the form of sugar, shaped models of womanhood at a time of increasing plantation slavery and sugar consumption.⁷ Certain foods and tastes have been highly gendered throughout history. For instance, red meat and liquors have been constructed as “male” foods while light, vegetarian, and sweet foods have been conceptualized as “feminine” in Western societies.⁸ Wendy A. Woloson has argued that sugar became a feminine substance as a result of its economic and cultural devaluation in nineteenth-century North America.⁹ Nevertheless, early modernists have persuasively shown that the feminization of sweet products can be traced back to earlier centuries, in the period when sugar was still a status symbol across Europe.¹⁰ On the other hand, Kim F. Hall has convincingly shown that discourses of race were closely intertwined with ideas of gender in an age of expanding colonialism, global trade networks, and increasing consumption of foreign commodities.¹¹ Hall notes that sugar was a commodity associated with both White women and Black male slaves,¹² showing the significance of gender ideologies in the consumption of colonial goods in early modern England.¹³ This chapter builds on and extends current conversations on gender, food, and taste by shifting the focus of research to the Hispanic context.

As Huarte suggests in *La Dulciada*, in the eighteenth century, the peninsular Spain witnessed a real sugar craze. Between 1747 and 1778, the economic value of sugar imports sharply increased. According to Antonio García-Baquero, sugar imports represented 28.47% of total colonial imports, second only after cocoa imports, which constituted 35.52% during this period.¹⁴ From refined sugarloaves to muscovado sugar and molasses, the retail market of sugar and its by-products diversified and expanded, making these products widely available to all levels of society. Endless varieties of confectionery, biscuits, sweetened cold drinks, and chocolate were widely consumed on a regular basis and on special occasions across an ever-widening social spectrum. This was only made possible by the ever-increasing imports of colonial sugar arriving in Cadiz from enslaved sugar plantations in Brazil and the Caribbean.¹⁵ Despite having introduced sugarcane in the Americas, the Spanish monarchy mostly depended on sugar imports from colonial possessions other than their own until 1760, when enslaved sugar plantations began to develop in Cuba and Puerto Rico. The late development of the export-oriented sugar plantation in the Spanish Caribbean is a point of difference that urges us to decentre

the main historiographical narratives of sugar, slave trade, and slavery.¹⁶ Furthermore, it invites us to reconsider whether Spanish consumers would have thought, perceived, and experienced a taste for sugar differently from their European counterparts in the eighteenth century.

The dramatic rise of foreign food, drinks, and other luxury objects enticed and altered the sensory experiences, tastes, and habits of European consumers, thus creating new subjectivities. On the other hand, the Enlightenment witnessed the emergence of new understandings of the body, emotions, and senses, particularly of taste. Taste provided a powerful metaphor for the judgement of aesthetic beauty and rational discernment because it was increasingly seen as a form of sensibility and knowledge of the material world.¹⁷ Additionally, taste, both physiological and aesthetic, indicated one's refinement, morality, education, and social class in complex and multifaceted ways. The concept of sensibility may prove useful to examine how the gendering of sugar created various sensory meanings and emotional responses that coincided with, or as a consequence of, the emergence of a new consumer culture.

By that time, sweetness described women's sensibilities and tastes, but it was also used to explain (perhaps paradoxically) women's weak constitution and greediness. Drawing on medical, religious, philosophical, and pedagogical treatises, along with literature and the press, this study provides a starting point into the complex ways in which women were associated with sugary food through the male gaze. The Hispanic world was greatly influenced by the scientific, philosophical, and cultural ideas, fashions, and social practices of the European Enlightenment. Several versions and translations of foreign texts, mainly from France and England, circulated widely throughout Spain and colonial Latin America. Spanish intellectuals and translators transformed the original foreign texts by incorporating additional extracts and adapting the original works to local cultures, sensibilities, and the Catholic tradition.¹⁸

Using sugar as a case study, this chapter opens a window to further explore attitudes to food in the construction of gendered bodies and ideologies at the heart of the Hispanic Enlightenment. The first section outlines how sensory metaphors of sweetness expanded and contributed to promoting ideals of femininity as well as women's self-fashioning. The second section examines how gender-based ideas of taste were explained in certain physiological and medical discourses in line with redefined theories of sexual differentiation. The third section focuses on *golosina*, meaning cravings for sweet food, as a highly gendered concept, which allows us to further explore the affective dimension of sugar consumption in a dialectic interplay between pleasure and anxiety, indulgence and self-restraint. Overall, this study stresses the significance of sugar in shaping gender identities and roles while addressing its wider economic and social implications in an era of expanding consumerism, slavery and global capitalism.

The Sweetest Gender

Sweetness is considered a source of pleasure, probably because of the inborn predisposition for this flavour among humans and most mammals.¹⁹ Sweetness palatability is perceived biologically as nourishing food, in contrast to bitterness, which indicates toxins and poison. Pleasant responses to sweet substances can be observed even in newborns. Eighteenth-century Spanish dictionaries already evidenced a close assimilation between sweet taste and sensual pleasures. The *Diccionario de Autoridades* (Dictionary of Authorities) (1726–1739), the first modern Spanish dictionary, explains that *dulzura* (sweetness) is “the quality of things with no bitterness, which cause a pleasant impression on one’s taste, pleasing the sensitive part of the palate.”²⁰ According to this dictionary, sweetness is equivalent to *suavidad* (softness) and *deleite* (pleasure). The appealing properties of sweetness have been applied not only to define gustatory perceptions, but also to describe a wide range of sensory perceptions and experiences: olfactory, haptic, and auditory.²¹

In the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the growing availability and consumption of sugar transformed the ways in which people tasted (and thought of) sweetness.²² The very qualities of sugar expressed desirable human traits as shown in the *Diccionario de Autoridades*. This dictionary contains the expression *Es un azúcar, ò como un azúcar* (To be sugar, or like sugar) used to “praise the pleasant and mild condition, temperament, and nature of a person.”²³ Similarly, the 1807 educational treatise *Lecciones de virtudes sociales* (Lessons of Social Virtues) holds that sweetness is “a sign of rational superiority, goodness of heart and good character,” in contrast to bad temper, depicted as bitter bile.²⁴ Although sweetness was not explicitly gendered in these definitions, it was endowed with alleged feminine attributes, including softness, gentility, and delicacy. Therefore, *dulzura* became central in the discursive representations of femininity, describing women’s characteristics such as their voice, manners, and demeanour. In the influential work of François de Salignac de la Mothe Fénelon, translated in Spain as *Tratado de la educación de las hijas* (*Treatise on the Education of Daughters*), sweetness portrays conjugal love, maternal tenderness, and kindness towards their servants within the household.²⁵ Spanish Enlightenment reformers turned to a lexicon of sweetness to promote women’s social function as mothers and housewives in their prospects of reforming society and the nation.²⁶ Indeed, some Spanish intellectuals pointed to the prominent role of women in *sweetening* men’s nature and behaviour, as being the bearers of morality and civility, in the household and, in turn, society.²⁷ On the other hand, sweetness has been extensively connected to erotic pleasure and feminine sexuality in diverse historical periods and cultures. Sweet taste, in the shape of decadent desserts, has been (and continues to be) a potent metaphor for the female body, reinforcing the identification of women *with* food, and *as* food in Western culture.²⁸

In addition, sweetness, in the form of sugary food, became an important component of women's self-fashioning in early modern Spain. Seen as a laudable and genteel entertainment for elite women, many of them dedicated themselves to make homemade sweets as a way to display their culinary skills and social identities.²⁹ As in the rest of Europe, Hispanic women also offered and exchanged homemade sweets and their recipes to reinforce their social bonds in their communities. A good example is the manuscript recipe book compiled by María Rosa Calvillo de Teruel (c. 1740), in which she noted several recipes for stews, pies, fish, cold meat cuts, fruit preserves, and cakes.³⁰ Many of these recipes are attributed to specific women, such as a recipe entitled "How to make María Teresa's *quajado*" (a kind of sweet pudding), and "How to make María Manuela's *piñonate*" (a confectionery made of mixed nuts).³¹ These annotations reveal that women overtly shared their culinary knowledge across their social and family networks.

Additionally, sweet food and drinks became pivotal in the new forms of polite sociability, such as *tertulias*, or social gatherings in households. During these social events, *refrescos*, or refreshments of hot chocolate, *horchata*, and lemonade, along with biscuits, small cakes, and confectionery, were served.³² As hostesses and guests, women were central to *tertulias* and visits, leading the conversation and organizing *refrescos* following the latest trends and fashions. These social gatherings were a means of displaying luxury goods, refined manners, and taste in line with the new values of utility, comfort, and pleasure.³³ Serving a splendid *refresco* became a serious matter, as shown in the anonymous *El ceremonial de estrados, y crítica de visitas* (The Ceremonial of *Estrados* and Critique of Visits) published in 1789. This treatise addressed the ladies who, when receiving at home, "do not want to look uneducated" in front of their female friends.³⁴ Nevertheless, like contemporary tea parties in England, moral literature condemned these social gatherings as the main arena for women's indulgence, vanity, idleness, and corrupting luxury.³⁵ In the 1785 *Vicios de las tertulias y concurrencias del tiempo* (The Vices of Social Gatherings and Events of this Time), the clergyman Gabriel Quijano presents a fictional dialogue between the wealthy Lady Proba and a clergyman, who warns against the devastating moral, economic, and social implications of *tertulias*.³⁶ While Lady Proba asserts that *refrescos* were tasty refreshments offered to guests as "*prueba de honestidad y amistad*" ("a token of honesty and friendship"), the clergyman fiercely criticizes the corrupting nature of *tertulias*, as being the main venues of inappropriate behaviour and gluttony.³⁷ The clergyman states that *tertulias* must be abolished because they had caused the moral and economic ruin of several families in the country.

Such discursive assimilations did not address all women; rather, they were clearly determined by class and race, as they portrayed exemplary White, upper-class femininity. These associations between sugar and refined femininity co-existed with images of exploited Black masculine bodies in sugar plantations. However, these two aspects of sugar might have developed in

two separate discursive spheres.³⁸ There is considerable scholarly debate on the reasons why certain aspects of sugar production, mainly the human cost of slave labour, were usually overlooked in contemporary accounts of sugar.³⁹

For the Hispanic context, the question of slavery emerged as an issue of public debate at the end of the eighteenth century, at a time when slaves of African descent were still frequently found both in the colonies and the Iberian Peninsula. Some intellectuals advocated for the abolition of enslaved labour in periodicals and literary texts. One of the most engaged periodicals was the *Espíritu de los mejores diarios literarios que se publican en Europa* (Spirit of the Best Literary Periodicals Published in Europe), which included a few essays and news echoing the emerging antislavery politics in England and France between 1787 and 1791.⁴⁰ However, it is not clear how Spanish consumers linked and explained that the rise of sugar consumption mainly relied on slave labour and trade. This fact was denounced in the 1811 *Disertación sobre el origen de la esclavitud de los negros* (Dissertation on the Origins of the Enslavement of Black People) written by the politician Isidoro de Antillón (1778–1814).⁴¹ Antillón argues that even the most respectable and devoted individuals are very fond of chocolate, without thinking that, by consuming cocoa and sugar, they contribute to the cruelty and exploitation of slaves of African descent in the Americas.⁴² His *Disertación* is one of the pioneering defences of abolitionism by the turn of the nineteenth century, coinciding with the development of sugar plantations and the slave trade in Cuba and Puerto Rico. The author also suggests various alternatives to the enslaved sugar plantation system, such as reintroducing sugar production within the Iberian Peninsula and encouraging the consumption of honey and other sweeteners instead of sugar.⁴³

A Female Taste

Not only were women expected to embody sweetness through their manners and nature, but also in their tastes. In the sentimental novel *Émile, ou De l'éducation* (Emile, or On Education), published in Geneva in 1762, Jean-Jacques Rousseau notes that Sophie, the virtuous heroine, “has retained the peculiar taste of her own sex, she loves pies and cakes, and desserts, but eats very little meat; she never tasted any wine, nor other stronger liquor.”⁴⁴ This passage echoes Rousseau’s views on the “natural order” of tastes, as part of broader discourses on gender difference, stressing the physical frailty and sensitive nature of women. For Rousseau, young virtuous women preserved the natural human taste for sweetness, while adult men corrupted their palate with meaty and spirituous flavours.⁴⁵ These ideas also evidence Rousseau’s critiques on the artificiality of French urban polite society. He advocates instead for the natural simplicity of country life and diets based on fresh, light foods and simple meals.⁴⁶ For Rousseau, as for many of his contemporaries, food preferences reflected the distinct physiological and moral

constitution between women and men, thus underpinning the differentiated social roles ascribed to each sex.⁴⁷

In early modern Europe, taste preference was understood as a sign of one's temperament according to dietetics theories based on humours.⁴⁸ Following the classic theories of Galen, women's temperament was said to be moister and colder than men's, which would have explained their alleged bodily weakness and inferior rationality. Sugar, categorized as hot and moist, might explain women's penchant for sugary things, according to some scholars.⁴⁹ In the eighteenth century, taste was regarded as a sign of people's temperaments, as endorsed by numerous physiological and scientific theories. Most physicians advised adapting one's diet according to temperament, age, gender, social status, and occupation. In the *Encyclopédie*, the physician Gabriel-François Venel (1723–1775) gives a series of dietary prescriptions, arguing that sweet substances are appropriate for people of weak constitution, including most women, *les gens de lettres*, and all men with a sedentary lifestyle.⁵⁰ On the other hand, peasants, the working class, and more generally “people with vigorous work and life,” must refrain from eating sweet foods because it would cause indigestion and other digestive ailments. Instead, lower-class people should eat salted or smoked meat, heavy bread, and strong wines. Venel's dietary advice echoes the prevailing understanding of dietary choices whereby one should eat according to one's social status: light and delicate foodstuffs were suitable for the wealthy, while ordinary and even rustic food was more appropriate for the lower classes.

Following Venel's ideas, the physician Henri Fouquet (1727–1806) stated that digestion depended on the particular “sensibility of the stomach,” as well as “of its appetite and food preferences.”⁵¹ Based on new theories relating to the brain and the nervous system, Fouquet points to women's frail constitution and nerves, as well as heightened susceptibility to external impressions, as being like those of children. Sensibility, therefore, became central to understandings of gustatory preference: the sensitive stomachs of women and children would also explain their taste for delicate, sweet substances. According to the *Encyclopédie* contributor Louis de Jaucourt, children's delicate nerves would also explain why they disliked Rhine wine yet adult men loved it.⁵² Following this principle, sweet things please children while adult men find them tasteless, as they favour savoury, acrid, spirituous, strong, and seasoned food. When children grow up, they begin to develop a taste for “grown-up” flavours and foodstuffs.

The gendered ideas that men had a preference for wines and strong flavours while women preferred sweet, light things also pervaded Hispanic popular thinking. In a satirical poem, the dramatist Leandro Fernández de Moratín portrays a *tertulia* scene where ladies daintily partook of all the sweet treats, while the *hombrazos* (big strong men) asked for sherry wines from Jerez, the Canaries, and Montilla.⁵³ Not surprisingly, eating sweets came to be seen as a sign of childishness and effeminacy in this period. The journalist José Clavijo y Fajardo called *refrescos* of chocolate and sweets as

“*esta puerilidad de nuestra nación*” (“this puerility of our nation”).⁵⁴ In the newspaper *El Pensador*, Clavijo y Fajardo fiercely criticized *refrescos*, arguing that “they should be seen rather as an object worthy of the request of some school children than of the attention of women of reason and of serious and bearded men.”⁵⁵

Despite Rousseauian influence on gender ideas, his views were not shared by all intellectuals. In 1726, the Benedictine monk Benito Jerónimo Feijoo y Montenegro (1676–1764) published his *Defensa de las mujeres* (*Defence of Women*) as part of the *Theatro crítico universal* (*Universal Critical Theatre*), where he condemned the idea that women’s delicate nerves and greater sensitivity would explain their intellectual inferiority.⁵⁶ Moreover, in a 1734 discourse entitled *Razón del Gusto* (*Reason of Taste*), Feijoo points to the gender neutrality of taste.⁵⁷ Drawing on the principles of medical theory, Feijoo asserted that food preference depended upon one’s temperament and custom. However, he did not explicitly suggest that “all” women have a particular taste for certain foods. Indeed, he contends that there were no universal criteria for food preference, and everyone must make their own food choices by applying reason and individual experience.⁵⁸

***Golosina*: A Female Weakness?**

Seen as a feminine trait, eating sweet food was inevitably used to condemn female gluttony in the early modern period. Cultural tropes of women as “slaves to their bellies” pervaded medical and moral discourses and popular thinking, which can be traced back to medieval and Renaissance Europe.⁵⁹ Deeply rooted in the theme of Eve’s sinful taste for the forbidden fruit, women have been pervasively represented as greedy, and *golosas*, that is, with a dainty fondness for sweet things. It is important to point out a subtle difference between gluttony and *golosina*. While *gula* (gluttony) relates to the intemperance of eating sheer amounts of food, *golosina* refers to indulgent eating as well as a dainty penchant for food delights, in particular sweet treats.⁶⁰ The *Diccionario de Autoridades* defined *golosina* as a “disordered appetite for unnecessary food of little nourishment.”⁶¹ On the other hand, this term referred to the food itself, that is, “a food delicacy that one eats for the sake of pleasure rather than for nourishment, such as fruits or sweets.”⁶² This idea of *golosina* clearly evidences a shifting meaning of sugar at the time when this foodstuff was consumed in larger quantities. Although sugary food had been seen as a medicinal food in previous centuries, these foodstuffs were now considered mere treats.⁶³ By the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, sugar was no longer seen as beneficial for the body and some physicians began to warn of the risks of consuming sugar in excess. In the *Traité des aliments*, the chemist Louis Lémery indicated that sugar itself turns to bile, provokes tooth decay, and heats the body to excess, thus causing nervous affections (vapours).⁶⁴

Golosinas, or sugary treats, were perfect bite-sized delights that artificially stimulated the appetite, easy to snack on and indulge in between meals. According to the *Diccionario castellano* (Castilian Dictionary) authored by Esteban de Terreros y Pando, *goloso* is “someone who lets themselves go through their appetite, as well as for the delicacy of fine meals, beverages, and sweets.”⁶⁵ More specifically, being *goloso* was portrayed as feminine in literary imagery and popular thinking. In one of his comic plays, the playwright Ramón de la Cruz holds that “*madamas [...] ellas son golosas todas por naturaleza*” (“Ladies [...] they were all *golosas* by nature”).⁶⁶ Similarly, in the 1611 *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o Española* (Treasure of the Castilian or Spanish Language), the lexicographer and chaplain Sebastián de Covarrubias argued that eating *golosinas* is “something [of the domain] of women and children.”⁶⁷ Covarrubias thus repeats here the lasting preconception that women, like children, were governed by their sensations and appetites rather than by reason, due to their weakness.⁶⁸

Golosina, denoting both frivolous food and unruly appetite, became central to the problematization of pleasure in the age of reason and sensibility. Medical and moral literature agreed that unrestrained indulgence, that is, experiencing too much pleasure in eating, had harmful consequences for the body and emotions. In his *Aviso a los literatos y poderosos acerca de su salud* (Treatise on the Health of Men of Letters), the physician Samuel Auguste André David Tissot warned that the fragrant smell, colour, and taste of edible delicacies overexcited the palate, leading to self-indulgence and excess, thus causing indigestion. Furthermore, the intense sensations from eating delicious food and drink overstimulated the nerves, causing frailty and extreme susceptibility.⁶⁹ Therefore, people with delicate stomachs and nerves, that is women, intellectuals, and men of delicate temperament, must be particularly vigilant against the risks of pleasurable eating. In a similar vein, Benito Jerónimo Feijoo cautioned against all foodstuffs with rich flavours, such as extremely sweet, spicy, or sour, because tasty foods make one eat with no real hunger, which may cause health ailments. In his discourse *Régimen para conservar la salud* (Regime to Preserve Health), Feijoo asserted that even an intense desire for certain food or drink can be harmful.⁷⁰

Moral authorities made similar claims in line with the directions of the Catholic Church. In 1792, the journalist Francisco Mariano Nifo Cagigal translated a French sermon for Lent, in which he placed emphasis on “mortifying the senses,” especially taste, through fasting and abstinence. The author defends that the denial of all pleasures, delicacies, and worldly things was a medium to “reform the heart.”⁷¹ Food deprivation and temperance, along with chastity, were key elements to preserve women’s virtue in the period when gustatory appetite was still closely linked to sexual desire.⁷² In the eighteenth-century culture of sensibility, as Joan Brumberg noted, appetite represented “the highest moral and aesthetic sensibilities,” and eating practices became significant forms of self-expression and identity for women.⁷³

In addition, unrestrained indulgence and lack of self-control would point to unreason and incivility.

Pedagogical literature stressed that a culture of moderation and self-control must be imbued into girls from childhood, at an age when their delicate brains were still malleable and easily influenced. A good example is the already mentioned *Tratado de la educación de las hijas* (*Treatise on the Education of Daughters*), the Spanish translation of Fénelon's work. Fénelon insists that education is paramount in correcting the "ordinary defects among girls," including their strong inclination to intense amusements and pleasurable food.⁷⁴ The author offered dietary advice for children: temperance, a plain diet, regular mealtimes, and avoidance of highly seasoned meals. For authors like Fénelon, children's appetites must be tamed and their bodies disciplined, endorsed by the new values of moderation, civility, and reason.

Eighteenth-century intellectuals stressed the fundamental role of reason over appetite: reason must exert control over emotions and a sensitive body so as not to succumb to excess. This does not necessarily mean complete abstinence from pleasurable food; rather, many Enlightenment thinkers celebrated "sensual moderation," that is, still enjoying the pleasures of the table through rational diets and self-control.⁷⁵ A discourse for rational moderation paralleled the construction of a new ideal of masculinity: the *hombre de buen gusto* (Man of Good Taste). Strongly influenced by Baltasar Gracián's work on the ideal courtesan, *buen gusto* (Good taste) referred to an accurate judgement and ability to perceive quality. Drawing on the physiological taste, that is, the ability of the palate to distinguish flavours, this concept was widely used to express the capacity for aesthetic and rational judgement in the eighteenth century.⁷⁶ In addition, *buen gusto* referred to moral social conduct, good manners, and civility. *Buen gusto* flourished in this period as a wide-ranging concept; it defined the capacity to recognize true beauty and quality in all aspects of social life, from literature and arts to fine meals and wines. The Man of Taste possessed a new sensitivity in discerning the quality of food and wines, based on the new set of culinary standards of the *nouvelle cuisine*, which spread across Europe.⁷⁷ Unlike the gluttons, the Man of Taste enjoyed the pleasures of the table while displaying moderation and good manners. The control over bodily pleasures, in particular eating and sex, projected men's social superiority, reason, and sensibility.⁷⁸ Although many philosophes conceived the senses as neutral and universal, taste acted as a marker of social discrimination and gender and racial difference in the eighteenth century.⁷⁹ This modern conception of taste was conceived and based on a few privileged educated White men, who were considered to be the "tastemakers" of their time.⁸⁰

In conclusion, the *hombre de buen gusto*, in control of his appetites and rational dietary choices, is clearly opposed to the idea of the decadent, pleasure-seeking woman. Depictions of nurturing mothers and housewives alongside those of fickle candy-eaters aimed to promote a "civilized" model of

womanhood in the Hispanic Enlightenment. The gendered idea of *golosina* encapsulates the moral problematization of women's eating in a dualism between pleasure and restraint. As a source of sensory pleasure and moral anxieties, sugar was central in exerting control over women's bodies, sensibilities, and tastes. Nevertheless, the gendering of sweet taste was fraught with inconsistencies and ambiguities, showing the multifarious ways in which women were associated with sweet food in the period. As we have seen, discourses of "sweet femininity" were socially delimited and specifically addressed upper-class and White women. Further research needs to be done to elucidate how women of different social backgrounds received and responded to these normative prescriptions, and how gendered stereotypes of taste translated across the Hispanic Atlantic. As we have seen, by producing and consuming sugar, women proved central in shaping tastes and eating practices in eighteenth-century Spain. We must now uncover how women of different classes, races, and origins used their appetite "as voice" (to borrow Joan Brumberg's expression), in shaping and negotiating gender ideologies and inequalities in an era of emerging empires and capitalism.⁸¹

Notes

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- 1 Cayetano Huarte y Ruiz de Briviescas, *La Dulciada: poema épico en siete cantos*, edited by Rafael Bonilla Cerezo (Madrid: Iberoamericana Frankfurt Vervuert, 2022).
- 2 Cayetano Huarte y Ruiz de Briviescas, *La Dulciada: poema épico en siete cantos*, edited by Rafael Bonilla Cerezo (Madrid: Iberoamericana Frankfurt Vervuert, 2022), 180.
- 3 See also: Carolyn A. Nadeau, "Sweetmeats and Preserves: Food Imagery in Lope de Rueda's Pasos" (1996). *Scholarship*. Paper 9.
- 4 Among an extensive literature, see David Howes, *Empire of the Senses: The Sensual Culture Reader* (Milton: Taylor & Francis Group, 2004); Mark M. Smith, "Making Sense of Social History," *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 1 (2003): 165–186; Constance Classen, *The Colour of Angels: Cosmology, Gender and the Aesthetic Imagination* (London: Routledge, 1998).
- 5 Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984).
- 6 See, for instance, Carolyn Korsmeyer, *Making Sense of Taste: Food and Philosophy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014), intro.
- 7 Among an extensive literature, see the seminal work: Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Penguin Books, 1985).
- 8 Carole M. Counihan, "Introduction: Food and Gender: Identity and Power," in Carole M. Counihan, Steven L. Kaplan, eds., *Food and Gender: Identity and Power* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1998), 1–10.
- 9 Wendy A. Woloson, *Refined Tastes: Sugar, Confectionery, and Consumers in Nineteenth-century America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 222–224.

- 10 Kim F. Hall, "Culinary Spaces, Colonial Spaces: The Gendering of Sugar in the Seventeenth Century," in Valerie Traub, M. Lindsay Kaplan, and Dymphna Callaghan, eds., *Feminist Readings of Early Modern Culture: Emerging Subjects* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 168–190; Florent Quellier, *Gourmandise, histoire d'un péché capital* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2010), 163–187; Laura Giannetti, *Food Culture and Literary Imagination in Early Modern Italy: The Renaissance of Taste* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2022), esp. ch. 4.
- 11 Kim F. Hall, *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996); see, also: Gitanjali Shahani, *Tasting Difference: Food, Race, and Cultural Encounters in Early Modern Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2020), ch. 2.
- 12 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.
- 13 Kim F. Hall, "Culinary Spaces, Colonial Spaces: The Gendering of Sugar in the Seventeenth Century," in Valerie Traub, M. Lindsay Kaplan, and Dymphna Callaghan, eds., *Feminist Readings of Early Modern Culture: Emerging Subjects* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 169.
- 14 Note that between 1747 and 1778, tobacco, sugar, and cocoa represented 77% of total imports. Antonio García-Baquero, *Cádiz y el Atlántico [1717–1778]: el comercio colonial español bajo el monopolio gaditano* (Cadiz: Diputación Provincial, 1988), vol. 1, 339–340.
- 15 Antonio García-Baquero, *Cádiz y el Atlántico [1717–1778]: el comercio colonial español bajo el monopolio gaditano* (Cadiz: Diputación Provincial, 1988), vol. 1, 273.
- 16 Josep Maria Fradera, Christopher Schmidt-Nowara, eds., *Slavery and Antislavery in Spain's Atlantic Empire* (New York, NY: Berghahn Books, 2013), intro.
- 17 Anne C. Vila, "Introduction: Powers, Pleasures, and Perils of the Senses in the Enlightenment Era," in Anne C. Vila, ed., *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Age of Enlightenment* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 1–20.
- 18 Jesús Astigarraga, *The Spanish Enlightenment Revisited* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2015); Elizabeth Franklin Lewis, Mónica Bolufer Peruga, and Catherine Marie Jaffe, eds., *The Routledge Companion to the Hispanic Enlightenment* (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2020).
- 19 Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Penguin Books, 1985); Claude Fischler, *L'Homnivore: le goût, la cuisine et le corps* (Paris: Éditions Odile Jacob, 2001), ch. 10.
- 20 *Diccionario de Autoridades* (5 vols, Madrid, 1726–1739), vol. III (1732), entry: *dulzura*.
- 21 For a general overview of the rhetorical uses of sweetness, see Mary Carruthers, "Sweetness," *Speculum* 81, no. 4 (2006): 999–1013.
- 22 Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Penguin Books, 1985), 44.
- 23 "se usa de ella metaphoricamente para exagerar y alabar lo blando, apacible, dócil y suave de la condición, genio y natural de alguna persona." In: *Diccionario de Autoridades* (5 vols, Madrid, 1726–1739), vol. I (1726), entry: *azúcar*.
- 24 "La dulzura es una señal que manifiesta la superioridad del juicio, la bondad del corazón, y un buen carácter." In: J.B.D.V., *Lecciones de virtudes sociales* (Madrid, 1807), 2 vol., 161.

- 25 François de Salignac de La Mothe Fénelon, *Tratado de la educación de las hijas*, trans. Remigio Asensio (Madrid, 1769).
- 26 On the Spanish Enlightenment, see Mónica Bolufer Peruga, *Mujeres e Ilustración: La construcción de la feminidad en la Ilustración Española* (València: Institució Alfons el Magnànim, 1998); Catherine Marie Jaffe and Elizabeth Franklin Lewis, eds., *Eve's Enlightenment: Women's Experience in Spain and Spanish America, 1726–1839* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 2009); Theresa Ann Smith, *The Emerging Female Citizen: Gender and Enlightenment in Spain* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).
- 27 Joaquín Álvarez Barrientos, *Ilustración y Neoclasicismo en las letras españolas* (Madrid: Síntesis, 2010), 117.
- 28 See, for instance, Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: University of California, 1988), ch. 9; Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli and Lucia Re, eds., *Il cibo e le donne nella cultura e nella storia: Prospettive interdisciplinari* (Bologna: Clueb, 2005).
- 29 Kim F. Hall, “Culinary Spaces, Colonial Spaces: The Gendering of Sugar in the Seventeenth Century,” in Valerie Traub, M. Lindsay Kaplan, and Dymphna Callaghan, eds., *Feminist Readings of Early Modern Culture: Emerging Subjects* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Amanda E. Herbert, *Female Alliances: Gender, Identity, and Friendship in Early Modern Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), ch. 2.
- 30 María Rosa Calvillo de Teruel, *Libro de apuntaciones de guisos y dulces*, edited by Víctor Infantes and Elena di Pinto (Madrid: Visor Libros, 2013). And, more generally, see María de los Ángeles Pérez Samper, “Los recetarios de mujeres y para mujeres. Sobre la conservación y transmisión de los saberes domésticos en la época moderna,” *Cuadernos de Historia Moderna* 19 (1997): 121–154.
- 31 María Rosa Calvillo de Teruel, *Libro de apuntaciones de guisos y dulces*, edited by Víctor Infantes and Elena di Pinto (Madrid: Visor Libros, 2013), 50 and 53.
- 32 María de los Ángeles Pérez Samper, “Espacios y prácticas de sociabilidad en el siglo XVIII: tertulias, refrescos y cafés de Barcelona,” *Cuadernos de Historia Moderna* 26 (2001): 11–55.
- 33 Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
- 34 *El ceremonial de estrados y crítica de visitas; obra útil, curiosa, y divertida, en que con estilo jocoserio se describe como deben hacerse las visitas de bien venida, de boda, de parida, de duelo, las diarias, y otras cosas que tocan y atañen al propio asunto, y deben saberse y observarse por las Damas que no quieren pasar plaza de poco cultas* (Madrid, 1789). See also: Marta Manzanares Mileo, “Dunking bizcochos: Sociability and the Material Culture of Chocolate in Eighteenth-Century Spain”, *Cultural and Social History* 21, no. 2 (2024): 185–120.
- 35 Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects: Women, Shopping, and Business in the Eighteenth Century* (New York; Chichester: Columbia UP, 1997); G.J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility: Sex and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1996), ch. 4; Soile Ylivuori, *Women and Politeness in Eighteenth-century England: Bodies, Identities, and Power* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2019), 213–218.
- 36 Gabriel Quijano, *Vicios de las Tertulias y concurrencias del tiempo: excesos y perjuicios de las conversaciones de día, llamadas por otro nombre Cortejos* (Madrid, 1784). See, also: Carmen Martín Gaité, *Love Customs in Eighteenth-century Spain* (Oxford: Berkeley, 1991), 140.
- 37 Gabriel Quijano, *Vicios de las Tertulias y concurrencias del tiempo: excesos y perjuicios de las conversaciones de día, llamadas por otro nombre Cortejos* (Madrid, 1784), 163–165.

- 38 Elizabeth Heath, "Sugarcoated Slavery: Colonial Commodities and the Education of the Senses in Early Modern France," *Critical Historical Studies* 5, no. 2 (2018): 169–207. For a similar account on the English context, see Simon Gikandi, *Slavery and the Culture of Taste* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), 111.
- 39 One exception is Voltaire's novel *Candide, ou l'Optimisme*, published in 1759. This novel was not translated into Spanish until 1813. Elizabeth Heath, "Sugarcoated Slavery: Colonial Commodities and the Education of the Senses in Early Modern France," *Critical Historical Studies* 5, no. 2 (2018): 169–170.
- 40 Arturo Morgado García, "Zinda (1804), de María Rosa Gálvez de Cabrera, y las reflexiones sobre la esclavitud en la España finidieciochesca," in Aurelia Martín Casares and Rocio Periañez Gómez, coords., *Mujeres esclavas y abolicionistas en la España de los siglos XVI al XIX* (Madrid: Iberoamericana Vervuert, 2014), 187–209.
- 41 Isidoro de Antillón, *Disertación sobre el origen de la esclavitud de los negros motivos que la han perpetuado, ventajas que se le atribuyen y medios que podrían adoptarse para hacer prosperar sin ella nuestras colonias* (Valencia, 1820) [1811]. This dissertation was previously read at the Academia de Derecho de Madrid in 1802. Arturo Morgado García, "Zinda (1804), de María Rosa Gálvez de Cabrera, y las reflexiones sobre la esclavitud en la España finidieciochesca," in Aurelia Martín Casares and Rocio Periañez Gómez, coords., *Mujeres esclavas y abolicionistas en la España de los siglos XVI al XIX* (Madrid: Iberoamericana Vervuert, 2014), 208.
- 42 Isidoro de Antillón, *Disertación sobre el origen de la esclavitud de los negros motivos que la han perpetuado, ventajas que se le atribuyen y medios que podrían adoptarse para hacer prosperar sin ella nuestras colonias* (Valencia, 1820) [1811], 117.
- 43 Isidoro de Antillón, *Disertación sobre el origen de la esclavitud de los negros motivos que la han perpetuado, ventajas que se le atribuyen y medios que podrían adoptarse para hacer prosperar sin ella nuestras colonias* (Valencia, 1820) [1811], 140–142. Note that Spanish reformers were concerned about how to revitalize sugar production on the coast of Granada (Motril) and Gandia (Valencia) to develop the national economy.
- 44 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile, ou de l'éducation* (Geneva, 1762) vol. 2, 246.
- 45 Despite Rousseau's works being censored by the Inquisition, his models of femininity and masculinity strongly influenced Spanish intellectuals in the redefinition of gender roles in the Hispanic world, which circulated in the form of manuscript copies, translations, and adaptations. See Mónica Bolufer Peruga, *Mujeres e Ilustración: La construcción de la feminidad en la Ilustración Española* (Valencia: Institució Alfons el Magnànim, 1998), 125–126; Jefferson Rea Spell, *Rousseau in the Spanish World before 1833: A Study in Franco-Spanish Literary Relations* (New York: Gordian, 1969).
- 46 Emma C. Spary, *Eating the Enlightenment: Food and the Sciences in Paris* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2012). See also: Aubrey Rosenberg, "Food for Thought in Rousseau's *Emile*," *Lumen* 14 (1995): 97–108.
- 47 On medical theories of sexual difference, see, for instance, Thomas W. Laqueur, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992). For critiques of Laqueur's "two-sex model" in the eighteenth century, see, among others: Amber Davy, "An Evolving Conception of Sexual Difference: Evaluating Thomas Laqueur's Theory on the Emergence of a 'Two-Sex Model' in the Eighteenth Century," *Trinity Women's Review* 3, no. 1 (2019): 57–71.
- 48 Ken Albala, *Eating Right in the Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 51.
- 49 rolande Bonnain, "La femme, l'amour et le sucre," *Papilles* 8 (1995): 15–23. On sugar in the humoral system, see Ken Albala, *Eating Right in the Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 78 and 82.

- 50 See *doux* in Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert, eds., *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* (Paris, 1751–1777), 5:90. In: University of Chicago: ARTFL Encyclopédie Project (Autumn 2017 Edition). Despite being forbidden by the Spanish Inquisition, the *Encyclopédie* had a great impact on Spanish intellectual thought by 1770–1780.
- 51 See *sensibilité* in Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert, eds., *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* (Paris, 1751–1777), 15:42. In: University of Chicago: ARTFL Encyclopédie Project (Autumn 2017 Edition).
- 52 See *Goût*, in Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert, eds., *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* (Paris, 1751–1777), 7:760. In: University of Chicago: ARTFL Encyclopédie Project (Autumn 2017 Edition).
- 53 Leandro Fernández de Moratín, *Poesías completas (poesías sueltas y otros poemas)* (1778–1822), 356. In: Real Academia Española: Banco de datos (CORDE) [online]. Corpus diacrónico del español. <http://www.rae.es> [13/05/2023].
- 54 José Clavijo y Fajardo, *El Pensador*, vol. 5 (Madrid, 1767), 238.
- 55 José Clavijo y Fajardo, *El Pensador*, vol. 5 (Madrid, 1767), 238–239, cited in: María Ángeles Pérez Samper, “Enlightened Meals: Literary Perspectives on Food in Eighteenth-Century Spain,” in Rafael Climent-Espino and Ana M. Gómez-Bravo, eds., *Food, Texts, and Cultures in Latin America and Spain* (Nashville, Tennessee: Vanderbilt University Press, 2020), 162.
- 56 Benito Jerónimo Feijoo y Montenegro, *Theatro crítico universal, Discursos varios en todo género de materias, para desengaño de errores comunes* (Madrid: 1726–1740), vol. 1, §. XVI. See also: Mónica Bolufer Peruga, *Mujeres e Ilustración: La construcción de la feminidad en la Ilustración Española* (València: Institutió Alfons el Magnànim, 1998), ch. 1.
- 57 Benito Jerónimo Feijoo y Montenegro, *Theatro crítico universal, Discursos varios en todo género de materias, para desengaño de errores comunes* (Madrid: 1726–1740), vol. 6, 11, §. II, 8.
- 58 Benito Jerónimo Feijoo y Montenegro, *Theatro crítico universal, Discursos varios en todo género de materias, para desengaño de errores comunes* (Madrid: 1726–1740), vol. 1, §. IV, 16.
- 59 Constance Classen, *The Colour of Angels: Cosmology, Gender and the Aesthetic Imagination* (London: Routledge, 1998), 79; Florent Quellier, *Gourmandise, histoire d'un péché capital* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2010), 163–187; Laura Giannetti, *Food Culture and Literary Imagination in Early Modern Italy: The Renaissance of Taste* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2022), 209.
- 60 A similar distinction can be found in French between the *glutton* and the *friend*, see Viktoria Von Hoffmann, *From Gluttony to Enlightenment. The World of Taste in Early Modern Europe* (Baltimore: University of Illinois Press, 2016), 41; Florent Quellier, *Gourmandise, histoire d'un péché capital* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2010).
- 61 *Diccionario de Autoridades* (5 vols, Madrid, 1726–1739), vol. IV (1734), entry: *golosina*.
- 62 *Diccionario de Autoridades* (5 vols, Madrid, 1726–1739), vol. IV (1734), entry: *golosina*.
- 63 Ken Albala, *Eating Right in the Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 172–180; Claude Fischler, *L'Homnivore: le goût, la cuisine et le corps* (Paris: Éditions Odile Jacob, 2001), 290.
- 64 Louis Lémery, *Traité des aliments* (Paris, 1705), 522.
- 65 Esteban de Terreros y Pando, *Diccionario castellano con las voces de ciencias y artes y sus correspondientes en las tres lenguas francesa latina, e italiana* (Madrid, 1786–1793).
- 66 Ramón de la Cruz, *La botillería* (1766), 265. In: Real Academia Española: Banco de datos (CORDE) [online]. *Corpus diacrónico del español*. <http://www.rae.es> [12/05/2023].

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- 68 Wendy A. Woloson, *Refined Tastes: Sugar, Confectionery, and Consumers in Nineteenth-Century America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), ch. 4. See also: Florent Quellier, *Gourmandise, histoire d’un péché capital* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2010), 170.
- 69 Samuel Auguste André David Tissot, *Aviso a los literatos y poderosos acerca de su salud, o tratado de las enfermedades más comunes a esta clase de personas*, trans. Félix Galisteo y Xiorro (Madrid, 1786) 135–136. *Avis au gens de lettres et aux personnes sédentaires sur leur santé* (Paris, 1767).
- 70 Benito Jerónimo Feijoo y Montenegro, *Theatro crítico universal, Discursos varios en todo género de materias, para desengaño de errores comunes* (Madrid: 1726–1740), vol. 1, discurso VI, 16.
- 71 *Sermones de los más celebres predicadores franceses de este siglo, para la Quaresma y otros tiempos del año*, trans. Francisco Mariano Nifo (Madrid, 1792), vol. 1, 4, and 11.
- 72 Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast. The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley: University of California, 1988); Joan Brumberg, *Fasting Girls: The Emergence of Anorexia Nervosa as a Modern Disease* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988).
- 73 Joan Brumberg, *Fasting Girls: The Emergence of Anorexia Nervosa as a Modern Disease* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988).
- 74 François de Salignac de la Mothe Fénelon, *Tratado de la educacion de las hijas... / escrito en frances por el... Señor Don Francois de Salignac de la Mothe Fenelon traducido en español por D. Remigio Asensio* (Madrid: Viuda de Eliseo Sanchez, 1769).
- 75 Joaquín Álvarez Barrientos, *Ilustración y Neoclasicismo en las letras españolas* (Madrid: Síntesis, 2010), 110; Emma C. Spary, *Eating the Enlightenment: Food and the Sciences in Paris* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 220.
- 76 Joaquín Álvarez Barrientos, *Ilustración y Neoclasicismo en las letras españolas* (Madrid: Síntesis, 2010), 130; Pedro Álvarez de Miranda, *Palabras e ideas: el léxico de la Ilustración temprana en España (1680–1760)* (Madrid: Real Academia Española, 1992), 198; Rebecca Haidt, *Embodying Enlightenment: Knowing the Body in Eighteenth-century Spanish Literature and Culture* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), 115–116.
- 77 For a general account on the French influence in Spanish gastronomy, see María de los Ángeles Pérez Samper, *Mesas y cocinas en la España del siglo XVIII* (Gijón: Trea, 2011).
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5 Quivering Hearts

The Intimate Union of Bodies and Souls*

Elena Serrano

Introduction

Lover, in love: ... One is *in love* with her whose beauty touches the heart.¹

The *Encyclopédie* of D’Alambert and Diderot notes that “one is in love with her whose beauty touches the heart.” This chapter focuses precisely on how beauty was thought to touch the heart and arouse love—*literally*. We will discuss what the Spanish philosopher Benito J. Feijoo (1676–1764) described as “a delicate mechanism”: how passions (or emotions, as we would say today) arise.² This will entail engaging with the physiological foundations of what would later in the century be called sensibility: the “essential link between the human body and the psychological, intellectual and ethical faculties of humankind,” to cite Anne Vila.³

During the eighteenth century, the classification of the passions, how to distinguish them, how to control them, and how they affected judgment were all objects of much debate. But one definition on which most contemporaries could have agreed was given by Ephraim Chambers in 1741: “the different motions and agitations of the soul according to the different objects that present themselves to the senses.”⁴ Note that Chambers traces the origin of passions first to the senses. Physiology was intertwined with psychology, meaning that different psychological states (love, anger, ire) were held to correspond to certain physiological states (the flowing of internal fluids such as animal spirits and blood; changes in the body’s internal fibers; special movements of the organs, etc.). Or as John Sutton poetically put it: “Love, wonder, dreams, desire and memory were involved in the great circulation of spirits, fluids, and humor in the body and between the body and the world.”⁵

Most people at the end of the seventeenth century conceived of the body as a machine of flesh, a *machina carnis*, composed of “levers, pulleys, cogs, pipes and wheels, in vessels.”⁶ But how this machine of flesh was animated, be it by matter alone or by some kind of soul, varied considerably from author to author. What was fundamentally at stake in these disagreements

was the perennial question of what makes living matter so substantially different from nonliving matter, and how it might produce immaterial phenomena such as thoughts and feelings.⁷ The details of how this machine worked were crucial because they had philosophical, theological, moral, and political consequences. Did the physiological model, for instance, accommodate free will and thus permit the moral accountability of the subject or not? It demarcated boundaries and defined ontologies, in particular, of what it means to be human and what comprised biological differences, if any, between the sexes, classes, and “races.” Some authors (such as the British anatomist Thomas Willis and his followers) argued that human beings had a rational and immortal soul, while both animals and humans possessed a material one (*anima brutorum*); others (such as Descartes) proposed that animals had no soul at all but were merely pure automatons. Yet others argued that if even the sophisticated behavior of some animals could be explained by matter alone, would that not open the door to thinking that humans also lacked a soul, and therefore, lead to materialism?⁸

Turning to Feijoo (1676–1764), in this context, there are at least two reasons to consider how he envisioned the physiology of passions and the relationship between body and soul. First, Feijoo held a privileged place in the public sphere. Not only was he extremely famous, but he also played a role that was almost entirely new in the Spanish-speaking world: that of the scientific popularizer.⁹ He wrote short, witty, and provocative essays in a humorous style to combat superstitions and “wrong ideas” about the natural world, on many different topics, from physics to anthropology to medicine to history. His works were reprinted in astonishing numbers for the Spanish market. To be sure, he was widely read, but the fierce polemics they provoked were read even more widely, boosting his fame even further.¹⁰ The first volume of his *Teatro Crítico Universal* (1726), a collection of short essays, was a blockbuster, and eight more volumes followed (1726–1740). He then published five volumes of his *Cartas Eruditas* (1742–1760), collections of even shorter pieces that were supposed to answer readers’ questions.

For his followers, Feijoo represented the enlightened face of Catholicism. He had ferocious detractors among reactionaries as well as reformist elites, who accused him of not being rigorous enough. Yet his supporters maintained influential roles within the Spanish government, such that in 1750 King Ferdinand VI issued a prohibition against the publication of any opinions that opposed him.¹¹

Feijoo’s ideas were eclectic. He greatly admired Francis Bacon (1561–1626) and John Locke (1632–1704) and was a detractor of Descartes and what he called the “atomist sect” (Pierre Gassendi, Nicolas Malebranche); but he did not hesitate to use some of their ideas when needed. As a professor of theology at the University of Oviedo, he had a profound knowledge of Scholastic methods of reasoning, which he criticized fiercely; yet he himself often used Aristotelian language and concepts. He mastered the works of the

classics (Ovid, Pliny), the Renaissance humanists, and the “French Christian libertines,” all of whom he frequently quoted.¹² He drew information from encyclopedias and dictionaries (such as those by Moréri, Corneille, Savérien), and particularly from Pierre Bayle’s *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (1697) and the Jesuit *Dictionnaire universel françois et latin*, popularly known as *Dictionnaire of Trevoux*, which reflected up-to-date discussions on many issues of the day. He was mostly interested, though, in scientific polemics. He was a keen reader of the reports from Europe’s various academies of sciences (Leipzig, London, Paris), the *Journal des Savants* published by the Jesuits (which issued reviews of recent publications), and the English-language *Spectator* when it was translated into French. He knew Regnault’s scientific bestseller *Entretiens physiques*, the *Spectacle de la Nature* by Pluche, Nollet’s course on electricity, and Boyle’s works, as well as works by major figures of the Enlightenment (such as Fontenelle, Voltaire, Maupertuis, Muratori, Rousseau, Montesquieu, and Réaumur).¹³ Most of his sources were French (and the French translations of foreign works) and Latin, yet he also read Portuguese and Italian. He exchanged news, books, and manuscripts with his extended network and often received scholars in his monk’s cell who passed through Oviedo to see him.¹⁴ Above all, he was interested in medicine, being himself an honorific member of the Royal Academy of Medicine of Sevilla, and a friend of the famous royal doctor Martín Martínez at the Spanish court and of Gaspar Casal in his hometown.¹⁵

To be sure, Feijoo never systematized his ideas. This was not his aim: he was a moralist with a pedagogical mission. He arguably influenced the ways his followers thought about their bodies and their souls, which links with my second point: Feijoo complicates the narrative emerging at the time of the progressively gendering of bodies, according to which female bodies were supposed to have greater sensibility than male ones, particularly in amorous and venereal matters.¹⁶ To quote Anne C. Vila: “bodily senses were a tool for constructing the theory of sexual dimorphism.”¹⁷ As I have argued elsewhere, Feijoo defended a “feminist physiology,” in the sense coined by Ian McLean and employed by Gianna Pomata, meaning that female and male bodies were thought to work in the same manner and that female bodies were not inferior copies of male bodies.¹⁸

Feijoo published his ideas about the intellectual equality of the sexes right away in the very first volume of his *Teatro* (1726), thus stepping into a long debate that was especially vigorous during the seventeenth century: the “querelle des femmes,” which saw arguments for and against women’s intellectual and moral capacities put forward by both sides.¹⁹ In this debate, Feijoo used various kinds of arguments (including catalogs of celebrated women, that is, examples of women who had excelled in the arts and letters), but more importantly in the context of this chapter, he dismantled those theories that based the inferiority of women on biological characteristics.²⁰ He opposed, for instance, the notions that the arguably smaller size of women’s brains, the supposed tenderness of their brain fibers, or

the coldness and dampness attributed to their bodies precluded intellectual capacities equal to those of men, which were supposedly dry and hot. Feijoo even explained the revolutionary ideas of a Spanish sixteenth-century female author, Oliva de Sabuco, whose work had recently been reprinted with a preface written by his friend, the doctor Martín Martínez.²¹ Sabuco's physiology supported the idea that women had at least the same intellectual capacities as men, if not more.²² Feijoo's point, though, was not to defend Sabuco's system, but to show how "philosophical discourses" could be used to support her views:

But what I feel is that with such philosophical discourses everything can be proved, and nothing is proved. Every man philosophizes in his own way: and if I were to write for flattery, or for caprice, or for ostentation of wit, it would be easy for me, by weaving consequences out of admitted principles, to raise the understanding of women miles above that of our own ... We are all blind, and the blindest of all is the one who thinks he sees things clearly.²³

Yet in showing that there were no scientific reasons justifying sexual differences in mental and moral capacities, Feijoo also showed that there could not be any differences in men's and women's ways of feeling their appetites and passions, particularly in love. Love could arise, he argued, with equal strength in male and female bodies, and the intensity of amorous feelings was not a mark of femininity. Feijoo, for instance, heartily disagreed with the common opinion that statesmen and military men should not be of an "amorous nature" because that was a symptom of "childish and effeminate spirits." On the contrary, he argued, people capable of feeling love deeply often have the qualities needed by statesmen. They are often "sweet, benign, kind, obliging, human, liberal, deferential, and caring."²⁴

This chapter thus adds to the recent historiography demonstrating that several, even contradictory, models of male and female bodies coexisted at the time, especially if one focuses on different literary genres, such as natural philosophy, sexual medical advice, sentimental novels, erotica, or pornography, or considers other categories that intersect with gender (such as "race" or sexual orientation), as some of the chapters in this volume have argued.²⁵

Above all, however, this chapter intends to highlight an aspect of these discourses that is often forgotten today: that the relationship between soul and body was imagined to be far more complex and intimate than the simplified picture of a solitary soul in an unruly body. One important consequence of such intense interactions among the various parts of the body and soul was that no insurmountable gap appeared to exist between the sensorial, the intellectual, and the emotional world—assuming there were even such separations at all.

The remainder of this chapter is organized into two parts. In the first, I explore how Feijoo understood what he considered to be the necessarily

intimate relationship between the soul and body, or the “commerce” between soul and body, as it was called at the time. In the second part, I discuss his physiology of passions and other competing theories, further illuminating Feijoo’s choices to align his thoughts with his religious and political ideals.

The Commerce between Soul and Body

In 1733, the Benedictine monastery of San Martín in Madrid which controlled Feijoo’s production decided it was time to publicize his face. It would be sold as a plate to his fans and included in the sixth volume of the *Teatro*. An oil painting was commissioned from a local artist, Francisco Antonio Martínez Bustamante, and executed in Feijoo’s monastery in Oviedo. Feijoo, now 57 years old, was represented at his desk in the usual iconography of an erudite monk: his cell’s library full of volumes, his hand in the very act of writing. The engraving based on this portrait would become his official image, reproduced and copied innumerable times (Figure 5.1).²⁶

However, Feijoo was far from pleased. Writing to his friend the Benedictine Martín Sarmiento, he complained about the painter’s scant skills. Not only did the artist dress him in a “course cloth, typical of the Cappuccinos in older times” but he failed to represent Feijoo’s eyes: “they showed no vivacity and kindness” (“viveza y agrado”); even when Bustamante copied a very expressive painting, Feijoo continued, one “with much soul in the face” (“con mucha alma en el semblante”), the result was a work with “dull or indifferent” eyes.²⁷

Beyond providing evidence for Feijoo’s concerns about his appearance and his self-confidence, the anecdote also reflects a common belief in his time: that the interior self and one’s emotions could be reflected in one’s face, especially in one’s eyes. Discussions about the relevance of physiognomy, or the art of knowing the other through the physical traits and colors of the body, were booming.²⁸ The works of Giovan Battista della Porta, among them *De Humana Physiognomia* (1586), which argues that individuals’ moral and psychological traits could be deciphered by their similitude to animals, were constantly reprinted; however, Charles Le Brun’s *Conférence sur l’expression générale et particulière*, pointed in a different direction.²⁹ Based on Descartes’ descriptions of the passions (*Traité des passions*, 1649) and Marin Cureau de La Chambre’s works on the same topic, Le Brun systematized the ways emotions are taken to be reflected in the face: he argued that wonder, love, hate, desire, joy, sorrow, fear, extreme hope, despair, courage, and anger could all be recognized by the ways in which the mouth curves or the eyes open or close, and especially in how the eyebrows move, as the soul was taken to express its actions primarily through a special place in the center of the brain near the eyebrows, the pineal gland.³⁰ In Spain, a compendium of Le Brun for painters had just appeared in 1730.³¹

Attentive to what was being discussed in the public sphere, Feijoo published two essays on physiognomy in 1733.³² He employs his usual

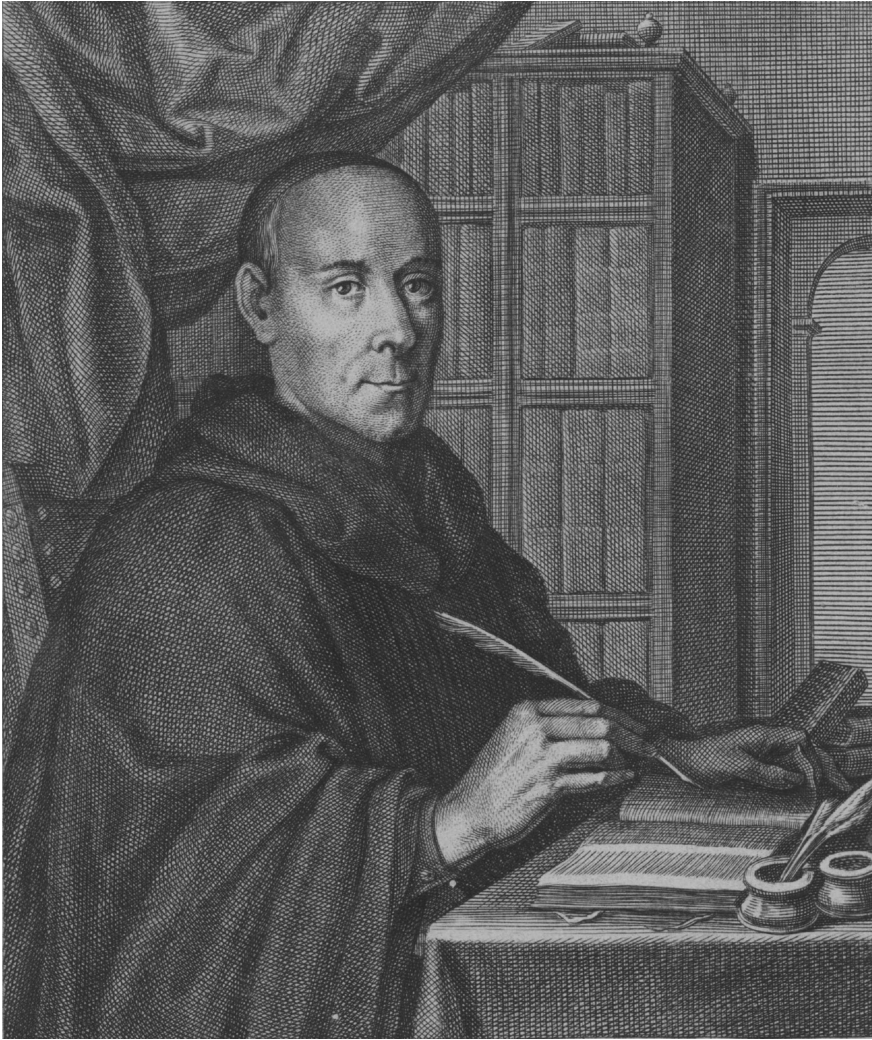


Figure 5.1 Benito Jerónimo Feijoo at his desk (1731), by Juan Bernabé Palomino.

Source: Biblioteca Nacional de España. <http://bdh.bne.es/bnsearch/detalle/bdh0000246450#>

pedagogical tactic: a question as a hook (has the art of physiognomy any foundation?) to drag the reader into deeper waters, in this case, the intimate relationship between the soul and the body. He begins in his first piece, *Fisionomia*, by attacking the physiognomy in art as it was classically conceived. He humorously mocked della Porta, asking: How could one conclude that an individual is fierce simply because they resemble a lion? Or that one is witty simply because one's body was rather plump, with a wide

front and long arms?³³ But he also attacked the ancient belief that ugliness was bound up with evilness. It is the rejection, the derision of the others that made those who are unattractive hideous, he argued, not the other way around.

In his second piece, however, *Nuevo Arte Fisionómico*, he presented what he describes as the fruit of his own observations: a method for developing a “true physiognomy.” According to Feijoo, the relationship between external appearance and character could not be grasped through the static traits of the face (look at a dead person, he suggested, and you will be able to see that it is impossible to perceive their mood or temperament). The only way to know someone’s internal state is through their expression or “gesture” (“el gesto”), as it was called in Spanish, the subtle changes in the face triggered by the soul when one is alive:

Shame, bringing the blood to a person’s face, bathes him in honest confusion; anger, rushing it tumultuously, clothes him in fierce turmoil; fear, withdrawing it, strips him of his native color; pleasure moderately enlivens him, soothes his eyes, and dilates a little the whole texture of his face; the affection of laughter considerable varies it.³⁴

These are signals that everyone understands, Feijoo argues, they correspond to the passions and affections of the soul, and as we have seen, they had been well characterized by Le Brun and others. But Feijoo holds that there were still other, much more revealing movements in the face that could only be discovered with “highly reflective perspicacity” (similar, he writes, to the way in which we know that the little stars in the heavens exist, though they can only be seen with a telescope). Looking attentively at one’s eyes, for instance, one might ascertain “a very good physiognomic sign”: “A calm, opportune gaze, which only focuses on specific objects, signifies a calm, serene and sane spirit”; while a “restless, vague, mischievous gaze, which stops at no object, but wanders everywhere, signifies imprudence and lightness of mind.”³⁵ Feijoo concluded that an attentive observer, with time and a very active social life (as it would be necessary to observe many individuals), could eventually match these signs with meanings.³⁶

Feijoo repeats his central message in these two essays, that there was an intimate commerce between body and soul, in other pieces.³⁷ Especially illuminating is the one he would write 20 years later, in which he discussed why music affects us so deeply.³⁸ There, he compares this union of soul and body to harmonious music. Like other doctors and philosophers of the time (one thinks here of the English doctor David Hartley, the anatomist Thomas Willis, the scholar Samuel Johnson, or the French anatomist Claude Perrault, to note but a few), Feijoo believed that although “pure matter” and “pure spirit” were “philosophically separated,” and that we were ignorant of how one could possibly act on the other, their mutual influence was undeniable. Between body and soul, Feijoo writes, there shines the “most sublime, the

most admirable harmony”: “what sounds in the body, resounds in the soul; what sounds in the soul, resounds in the body.”

Just how the union worked was a topic Feijoo particularly developed in two thrilling essays: “Causas del Amor” and “Remedios del Amor” (1736).³⁹ Love was a particularly thorny passion for Christian theologues, since love for God and for one’s fellow human beings was central to religious practice but could also easily slip into lechery and sinful behavior. It was also central to theories that tried to explain animal and human behavior, as looking for pleasure and avoiding pain were thought to be the driving forces behind actions (some scholars even postulated that, strictly speaking, there was only love and its contrary, hate, while all the rest of the passions—hope, despair, etc.—were merely variations depending on circumstances).⁴⁰ Feijoo distinguishes three types of love. One is “pure appetite,” the passion we feel when we smell a delicious fruit, for instance. These tantalizing objects excite “love,” or rather appetite, because the soul has already experienced them and can evoke the “representation of the pleasure.” The second type of love is “intellectual love,” in which only the rational part of the soul is excited. This is, for instance, the love that one feels for God. Finally, Feijoo argues, there is “passionate love,” the love that one feels for friends and lovers—and this is the kind of love that Feijoo was interested in discussing with his readers. Feijoo was keen to show them what he claimed to be a new way of looking at the issue; this was something addressed not by poets but by natural philosophers: the “physics of love.”

To what extent was Feijoo echoing other authors? As with most of his contemporaries, his ideas about the passions and their origins had roots in the late seventeenth-century “sciences of the soul” (“*scientia de anima*”), which were themselves based on Aristotle.⁴¹ This body of knowledge, taught in the universities of both Protestant and Catholic countries during the late seventeenth century, structured the soul into three “faculties” (or some spoke of three classes of souls). The “vegetative” faculty was responsible for the basic functions of living beings (nutrition, growth, and reproduction). The rational faculty, only found in humans, was served by the will and the understanding and was responsible for the higher cognitive functions, such as love toward God. And finally, the “sensitive” faculty was responsible for the behavior of animals and humans; it explained animal instincts, as well as the lower passions and appetites. It needed not only the five external senses but also the “internal senses” (of which there were normally considered to be three: imagination, memory, and a rudimentary cognition), and it had the “faculty of movement” (that is to say, it could produce movements both physical and emotional).⁴² Rather than inquiring into the properties of the soul, which had been the preoccupation of earlier times, natural philosophers at the end of the seventeenth century were more interested in explaining their effects, a project that Feijoo continued. Yet as we will see in the following, Feijoo also differed from some of his contemporaries in the mechanism that he envisioned. Crucially, he did not find it necessary here to involve the subtle “animal spirits” invoked by others.

The Senses, the Soul, and the Passions

Consider the painting of *Ariadne and Bacchus on the Isle of Naxos* by the French artist Antoine Coypel, who famously copied Le Brun's representation of love in Ariadne's head (see Figures 5.2 and 5.3).⁴³ If we apply the physiological theories about the passions at the time, and Feijoo's in particular, what can we say was happening in Ariadne's heart at this moment—when she had been abandoned by Theseus after rescuing him from the labyrinth but was now enthralled by Bacchus?

According to natural philosophers, the “delicate mechanism” that caused love to arise and be reflected in the face and other parts of the body must connect the senses, the brain, the soul, and the organs through the nervous system, which had recently been described in great detail by the British anatomist Thomas Willis (1621–1675). Feijoo agreed with his contemporaries' ideas that the five external senses worked as receptors of the impacts of



Figure 5.2 Bacchus and Ariadne on the Isle of Naxos, c. 1693. Antoine Coypel (French, 1661–1722).

Source: Philadelphia Museum of Art: purchased with funds (by exchange) from the bequest of Edna M. Welsh and the gift of Mrs. R. Barclay Scull, 1990, 1990-54-1. <https://philamuseum.org/collection/object/85904>

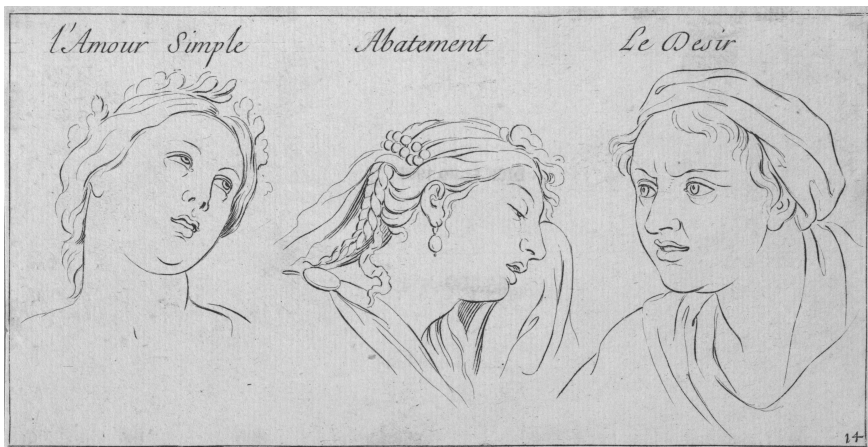


Figure 5.3 *L'Amour simple*, after Charles Le Brun, *Love*, from Picart's edition of the *Conférence* (London, 1701).

Source: <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/681486>

different kinds of particles:⁴⁴ corpuscles of light that touch the retina, air that touches the timpanos, and odoriferous particles that reach the nervous filaments of the nasal mucosa.

According to Feijoo, nerves have a great capacity to respond to different impacts of matter; as he writes, they can “separate, corrugate, stretch, compress, loose, or become more flexible or rigid” depending on the stimulus.⁴⁵ The sensorial nerves, he continues, meet together in one particular place in the brain, the “sensorium commune,” where the soul was held to be. The soul then receives the “commotions” of the sensorial nerves (once again, Feijoo admits total ignorance of how this occurs)⁴⁶ and then deciphers these undulatory movements to produce “perception” (“percepción”). Feijoo recalls the idea that “it is the soul that sees, not the eyes,” a well-known aphorism.⁴⁷ But sometimes, he adds, the imagination itself can add to the agitation of the fibers in the brain—which also means that an object need not even be present to excite a passion! Perhaps, he speculated, even in the presence of the object, the imagination itself moves the fibers of the brain (which would explain why we love even without willing).⁴⁸ Memories would then add to the interpretation of the soul. If we continue with our example of Coppel's painting and how it depicts Ariadna, we could say that Ariadna's soul has experienced this “perception”: it recognizes the sweetness of Bacchus's smell, the warmth of his hand, his deep and assuring voice, and his strength.⁴⁹ Ariadne's imagination might even be picturing her in the arms of Bacchus.

The soul (or the imagination) then might send the fitting response to this perception to the brain—which might be to “feel a passion,” such as love. In Feijoo's model, the brain communicates via the spinal nerves with the corresponding organs to produce certain passions. Love is, for Feijoo an “internal

sensation” and, as such, must take place in an internal organ.⁵⁰ Similar to the way the sensations of hunger and thirst are felt in the stomach, or lewdness in “other parts of the body,” the organ that feels the sensation of love (“sensación de amor”) is, for Feijoo, the heart. Feijoo is quite explicit on this point—how the flames of love influence the heart: love “disturbs, agitates, compresses, expands, infuriates, saddens, distresses, gladdens, dismays, and encourages [the heart] according to the different states in which the lover may be.”⁵¹ Sometimes, if love has what Feijoo calls a “concupiscent part,” these agitations are transmitted to the genitals and the breast. On this point, Feijoo quotes the English anatomist Willis, who describes how the intercostal nerve facilitates communication between the brain, the heart, the breast, and the genitals.

At this point, the reader might be asking why the brain should be involved, not only the soul and the nerves. Feijoo clarifies this point, too: the reason is that its involvement explains certain empirical phenomena. It would explain, for instance, what happens in patients who suffer from “apoplexy”—i.e., who cannot feel if their foot or hand is pricked because the part of the brain that communicates with the nerves of these limbs is damaged. Or why, if our senses are not damaged, we do not hear or see when we are sleeping. Or what causes the problem of “phantom limbs”: that is, why a patient still feels pain after an amputation.⁵²

It is not only in the heart and other internal organs that one feels the agitations of love, but such agitations also reach the muscles and thus produce external signs of love (in the same way as with other passions, such as anger, fear, etc.). This is what the painters, according to Le Brun, should reflect in the faces of their historical or mythological actors. Coppel used Le Brun’s advice to depict the passion of love: Ariadna’s head is bowed, her mouth is slightly opened, her cheeks have flushed, and her lips are “moistened by the vapors which rise from the heart.”⁵³ Seen thus, Bacchus’s “beauty” in the painting has literally touched Ariadna’s heart, as we discussed in the Introduction. For Feijoo, though, it is not only external beauty that awakens love. In another essay from 1739 that provoked an investigation by the Inquisition, “Importancia de la ciencia física para la moral” (The Importance of the Physical Sciences for Morality), he claims that other attributes, such as kindness and discretion (and even arrogance), could arouse men: “concupiscence has much variability.”⁵⁴

It should be noted, furthermore, that Feijoo does not here invoke “animal spirits,” as other authors did, such as Feijoo’s friend, the doctor Martín Martínez, Descartes, Le Brun, or Willis. Willis and others had argued that animal spirits act as messengers between the soul and the internal organs. They were supposedly subtle, quick fluids; or in Swift’s satirical description: “a Crowd of little Animals, but with Teeth and Claws extremely sharp.”⁵⁵ They moved rapidly from the brain to the various parts of the body, sometimes through the nerves, or through pores, or through well-worn channels in the nerves that had been traversed many times (thus explaining the

“tendencies” of people to always react in certain ways, such as how those who are “choleric” react with anger, etc.). The advocates of animal spirits needed to prove that the nervous system was suited for this traffic: Martínez, for instance, believed that the aggregation of thin nervous filaments in the nerves left some gaps for the animal spirits to travel. The Leiden professor Hermann Boerhaave believed in hollow nerves through which animal spirits could travel.⁵⁶ The opinion of Willis was that, even though the peripheral nerve structure (cranial nerves, spinal nerves, and the nerve plexuses) was solid, this did not impede spirits from percolating through them.⁵⁷ Animal spirits, he argued, were the executors of all visible and invisible bodily reactions: from blushing in the face to the sensation of hunger in the stomach and the sensation of love in the heart. Even into the 1750s, animal spirits persisted as an explanation for passions, as one can see in this entry in the *Encyclopédie*:

We know the extent to which passions depend on the degree of the movement of blood and on the reciprocal impressions produced by animals['] spirits on the heart and brain, the union of which is made so intimate by the agency of the nerves.⁵⁸

Feijoo, however, in his explanations of the “physics of love,” did not consider the existence of animal spirits. His scheme required only the vibrations of the solid nerves. The senses, the soul, the brain, and the organs—all communicated, in his model, through the undulatory movements of the nerves.⁵⁹

Other questions debated at the time in regard to the relationship of the soul and the body included the physical site of the soul and whether animals had one. For Claude Perrault (1613–1688), for instance, an anatomist working in the Paris Academy of Sciences who dissected most of the exotic animals that entered the Royal Menagerie and author of the acclaimed four-volume *Essais de physique* (1680–1688), the idea of a soul that dwelled in the body “as one is in a house” was absurd. Perrault instead saw the soul “intimately united with” the body, and as something that “ought to be considered as involved in all our actions.”⁶⁰ Like his predecessor and contemporary of Descartes, Marin Cureau de la Chambre (1594–1669), Perrault believed that even the simplest action of the senses implied that some thinking was also taking place. Drawing on a long tradition, Cureau de la Chambre defended two types of souls, the sensible and the rational, in which the former was implicated in sensing and feeling and a degree of thinking; and the latter, belonging only to humans, was devoted to the high cognitive potencies. Like many members of the Royal Academy of Sciences, both Perrault and Cureau de la Chambre opposed Descartes in his arguments denying animals a soul. For Descartes and his followers, the actions of animals could be explained by the movements of matter alone, similar to the automatons that many people in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries found so fascinating.

Feijoo, however, felt it was crucial to defend the position that animals have a soul, and specifically one with sensitive functions. But this provoked the question of what substance animal souls might be made of. According to Feijoo, the substance that formed the soul of the animals must be neither matter nor spirit but “must be material.”⁶¹ By this, he means that the animal soul “depends on matter for its operations” and its sphere of action would be limited to the “material entities,” that is to say, animals would not be capable of abstract thinking, of knowing spiritual things, or reflecting on their acts.⁶² Building on this idea, Feijoo discusses the intermediate state in which animals seemed to be—with actions that could not be easily explained solely by “blind instinct” but rational capacities that were not as advanced as those of humans.⁶³ One might wonder why Feijoo did not simply think, with Willis and others, that animal souls were composed of “subtle matter”? One possible explanation is that this would mean giving matter too much capacity, thus opening the door to materialism.

One might ask: How does this physiological model conceive of both subjectivity and gender? As each person has different “internal constitutions, disposition of fibers, etc.,” Feijoo replies here, they would necessarily be affected by the external particles differently and ultimately have different feelings. Feijoo disputes that internal dispositions are related either to Galenic temperaments (both the sanguine and the melancholic temperaments could be passionate, for example) or to gender, as men could also be of an “amatory nature.”

In various essays over the years, Feijoo addressed other pressing issues entailed by any physiological model of the passions. He asked, for instance, how we might change or improve if our tastes and feelings are somehow determined by our internal constitutions; or how we might control our passions if all of them are driven by a physiological mechanism. This chapter does not afford space to delve into these issues, but I would like to end by highlighting that Feijoo showed that there was room for improvement, learning, and controlling our feelings and passions by training the imagination (in particular, a part of the imagination called “apprehension”) and the memory.⁶⁴

This chapter has discussed the bodily bases of sensibility, i.e., the physiological processes that connect the external and the internal worlds of living beings. This is also what philosophy since the nineteenth century has construed as the body-mind/soul problem, the puzzling nature of which was expressed by G. S. Rousseau:

why it has been the case (and still is) that conceptualizing consciousness, the human body, and the interactions between the two has proved so confusing, contentious, and inconclusive—or, as we might

put it, has acted as the grit in the oyster that has produced pearls of thought.⁶⁵

Returning to the ways in which love and other passions were thought, in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, to arise, the chapter highlights the beliefs of thinkers at the time in an intimate bond between soul and body. Philosophers and doctors of this period, such as Descartes, Feijoo, Willis, Perrault, and Gassendi, developed careful “anatomies of the soul” to unveil the links between them. The “sentient souls” were understood to communicate incessantly with the flesh, either through nerve waves as with Feijoo, or through swift animal spirits. These theories were also expected to account for both the particular and the universal: the belief that different subjects might have reacted differently to the same stimuli, even as all subjects were (usually) able to recognize others’ emotions and make judgments about their character at first sight.

In all cases, the physiological models that explained the links between the external world captured by the senses and the behavior and feelings of animals and human beings were forced to explain observations of doctors and philosophers and to be congruent with other knowledge about the body that was widely circulating at the time.⁶⁶ This included the findings of anatomical dissections of sense organs, nerves, and brains, and especially vivisections of animals; examples of specific aspects of animal behavior (such as animals that ran away from humans who once mistreated them); collections of “medical cases” in which doctors described patients who lacked sensation, even though the sense organ in question was not damaged; contrary cases of amputations in which patients still felt “phantom” limbs; the lack of sensitivity of sleeping bodies, unable to sense the world when not awake; deceptive perceptions of memory and imagination; and questions of how mood affects the exacerbation of diseases and, vice versa, how cheerful thoughts can sweeten pain.

This puzzle, of course, is still with us. In Ishiguro’s novel *Klara and the Sun* (2021), humans develop a new series of robots, the EF (Especial Friends), supposedly designed to accompany teenagers. One particularly observant robot in the novel is Klara, who studies the faces of the people passing by, from the screen window where she was exposed to the world, to try to understand their reactions. Like many other science fiction writers, Ishiguro confronts the question posed by Feijoo: Could one, given enough time and individuals to observe, learn to pair gestures with feelings and grasp the interior selves of others? Or, to pose the question in another way: could a robot, an AI, then replace a person? At the end of the novel, Klara seems to have understood that the problem is not to achieve “accuracy” in “learning” the other—in this case, Josie, the teenager for whom she cares. Rather, the question is whether a machine can finally be loved, can touch the hearts of humans: “I’d never have reached what they felt for Josie in their hearts.”⁶⁷ The paradox posed by Ishiguro—no matter what Klara says—is that the robot actually moves us as

readers. How do we now redefine these questions about love and empathy, about emotions? Can Klara feel “something” for us? If the “delicate mechanism” that causes empathy can be reproduced, then what does it mean to be human?

Notes

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- 1 “AMANT, AMOUREUX, adj. (*Gramm.*) Il suffit d’aimer pour être *amoureux*; il faut témoigner qu’on aime pour être *amant*. On est *amoureux* de celle dont la beauté touche le cœur,” *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, 1:315–316 (Paris, 1751). ARTFL Encyclopédie (uchicago.edu), accessed 14 February 2024. The definitions were taken from the dictionary compiled by Gabriel Girard (1677–1748): Gabriel Girard, *Synonymes français, leurs significations et le choix qu’il en faut faire pour parler avec justesse* [Texte imprimé], par M. l’abbé Girard (Paris: impr. de la Vve d’Houry, 1736); cited from Gallica, “Amoureux,” <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k57126368/f41.item>, accessed 14 February 2024. The definition was also found in the edition of 1718: Gabriel Girard, *La justesse de la langue françoise ou les différentes significations des mots que passent pour synonymes* (Paris: Chez Laurent D’Houry, 1718), <https://archive.org/details/lajustessedelal00giragoog/page/n68/mode/2up>.
 - 2 Benito J. Feijoo, “Causas del amor,” in *Theatro Crítico Universal*, vol. 7 (1736), 348–394, on 364 <http://www.filosofia.org/fejoo.htm>. The *Theatro* was a collection of eight volumes published between 1726 and 1740. The contents of volume 9, which collected additions and commentaries to texts from the first eight volumes, were placed by later editors (beginning in 1765) in the original eight volumes. The *Cartas* was a collection of five volumes published between 1745 and 1760. All the works by Feijoo discussed in this chapter will be quoted from the digital version at <https://www.filosofia.org/fejoo.html>. The texts in the *Theatro* are from the edition of Madrid: Real Compañía de Impresores y Libreros del Reino, 1787, while the texts of the *Cartas* are from the edition of Madrid, Real Compañía de Impresores y Libreros del Reino, 1779. I will note only the year of the piece’s first publication, otherwise directing the reader to the digital version. On the differences between emotions and early modern terminology, see Thomas Dixon, “‘Emotion’: The History of a Keyword in Crisis,” *Emotion Review* 4, no. 4 (2012): 338–344; Thomas Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). This chapter builds on some of the ideas I proposed in “A Feminist Physiology: B.J. Feijoo (1676–1764) and His Advice for Those in Love,” *ISIS* 112, no. 4 (Dec. 2021): 776–784. I am grateful to the editors for granting me permission to return to those arguments here.
 - 3 Anne C. Vila, *Enlightenment and Pathology: Sensibility in the Literature and Medicine of Eighteenth-Century France* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998), 2.

- 4 Ephraim Chambers, *Cyclopaedia*, vol. 2 (1741), “Passion,” https://artflsrv04.uchicago.edu/philologic4.7/chambers_new/navigate/2/3194, accessed 14 February 2024. Passions, of course, could also arise from memories and by associations of these with the imagination, as discussed in this chapter.
- 5 John Sutton, “Controlling the Passions: Passion, Memory and the Moral Physiology of Self in Seventeenth Century Neurophilosophy,” in *The Soft Underbelly of Reason: The Passions in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Stephan Gaukroger (London: Routledge, 1998), 115–146, 116–117.
- 6 Anita Gerrini, *The Courtiers’ Anatomists. Animals and Humans in Louis XIV’s Paris* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 124; Jacques Roger, *The Life Sciences in Eighteenth-Century French Thought* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).
- 7 Roy Porter, *Flesh in the Age of Reason: The Modern Foundations of Body and Soul* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2003), 50–54, on 51. For the main lines of the problem, i.e., how the material impressions of the senses were translated into immaterial entities (feelings, thoughts, ideas), see especially chapters 3, 4, and 5. On this topic, see also G. S. Rousseau and Roy Porter, “Introduction: Toward a Natural History of Mind and Body,” in *The Language of Psyche: Mind and Body in Enlightenment Thought*, ed. G.S. Rousseau (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 3–44.
- 8 Robert G. Frank, Jr. “Thomas Willis and His Circle: Brain and Mind in Seventeenth-Century Medicine,” in *The Language of Psyche: Mind and Body in Enlightenment Thought*, ed. G.S. Rousseau (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 107–147.
- 9 With all the caveats of using this definition in the eighteenth century.
- 10 On the publishing figures, see Antonio Lafuente and Nuria Valverde, “Las políticas del sentido común: Feijoo contra los dislates del rigor,” in *Feijoo, hoy (semana Marañón 2000)*, ed. Inmaculada Urzainqui (Oviedo: Fundación Gregorio Marañón/Instituto Feijoo de Estudios del siglo XVIII, 2003), 131–157, on 135: Between the 40 years of the first volume of the *Teatro* and his death, there seem to have been 90 editions, with a total of 500,000 volumes printed. On the opponents and enemies of Feijoo, see Antonio Lafuente and Nuria Valverde, “Las políticas del sentido común: Feijoo contra los dislates del rigor,” in *Feijoo, hoy (semana Marañón 2000)*, ed. Inmaculada Urzainqui (Oviedo: Fundación Gregorio Marañón/Instituto Feijoo de Estudios del siglo XVIII, 2003), 137 and 140.
- 11 On the position of Feijoo among intellectual elites, see Giovanni Stiffoni, “Introducción: Biografía y Crítica,” in *Benito Jerónimo Feijoo, Teatro Crítico Universal* (Madrid: Clásicos Castalia, 1986), 9–71. The works published in favor of and against Feijoo are also available digitally at <https://filosofia.org/fejoo.htm>. On how Feijoo himself used the paratexts in his works to reinforce his authority, see Pedro Álvarez de Miranda, “Los paratextos de las obras de Feijoo,” in *Con la razón y la experiencia: Feijoo 250 años después*, ed. Inmaculada Urzainqui Miqueleiz and Rodrigo Olay Valdés (Oviedo: Trea, Instituto Feijoo de Estudios del Siglo XVIII, 2016), 331–350.
- 12 José Antonio Maravall, “El primer siglo XVIII y la obra de Feijoo,” in *II Simposio sobre el padre Feijoo y su siglo. Ponencias y comunicaciones* (Oviedo: Centros de Estudios del S.XVIII, 1981), 151–196, on 166. Also available online: <https://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra/ii-simposio-sobre-el-padre-feijoo-y-su-siglo-ponencias-y-comunicaciones--0/>, accessed 14 February 2024.
- 13 G. Delpy, *L’Espagne et l’esprit europden. L’ouvre de Feijoo (1725–1760)* (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1936) and G. Delpy, *Bibliographie des sources françaises de Feijoo* (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1936); S. J. Ramón Ceñal, “Fuentes jesuíticas francesas de la erudición filosófica de Feijoo,” *Cuadernos De Estudios Del Siglo XVIII* 18, no. 2 (Nov. 1996): 285–314.

- 14 Harcourt Brown, "History and the Learned Journal," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 33, no. 3 (1972): 365–378.
- 15 Gregorio Marañón, *Las ideas biológicas del padre Feijoo* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1962), 125–131.
- 16 Sara Toulalan and Kate Fisher, eds., *The Routledge History of Sex and the Body, 1500 to the Present* (London: Routledge, 2013).
- 17 Anne C. Vila, "Introduction: Powers, Pleasures, and Perils of the Senses in the Enlightenment Era," in *A Cultural History of the Senses in the Age of Enlightenment*, ed. Anne C. Vila (Bloomsbury, 2014), 1–20, on 16. For a discussion of the topic of women's sensibility versus men's in Spain and France around 1780, see Isabel Morant Deusa and Mónica Bolufer Peruga, "Sobre la razón, la educación y el amor de las mujeres: mujeres y hombres en la España y en la Francia de las luces," *Studia Histórica. Historia Moderna* 15 (1996): 179–208.
- 18 Elena Serrano, "A Feminist Physiology: B. J. Feijoo (1676–1764) and His Advice for Those in Love," in "It's a Match!," ed. Hansun Hsiung and Elena Serrano, special issue, *ISIS* 112, no. 4 (Dec. 2021): 776–785. See also Ian Mclean, *The Renaissance Notion of Woman: A Study in the Fortunes of Scholasticism and Medical Science in European Intellectual Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), especially chapter 3 (28–46); Gianna Pomata, "Was There a Querelle des Femmes in Early Modern Medicine?," *Arenal* 20, no. 2 (2013): 313–341.
- 19 Benito J. Feijoo, *Theatro Crítico Universal* (1726), "Defensa de las mujeres." <https://www.filosofia.org/bjf/bjft116.htm>.
- 20 Mónica Bolufer, "Medicine and the *Querelle des Femmes* in Early Modern Spain," *Medical History* 53, no. S29 (2009): 86–106.
- 21 Martín Martínez, "Elogio de la Obra de nuestra insigne Doctriz doña Oliva de Sabuco," in Olivia de Sabuco, *Nueva filosofía de la naturaleza del hombre* (Madrid: Imp. Domingo Fernández, 1728). There is some debate today about whether this text was written by Oliva de Sabuco, by her father, or by both of them. See Álvaro Martínez-Vidal "Los orígenes del mito de Oliva Sabuco en los albores de la Ilustración," *Al-Basit* 13 (Dec. 1987): 137–151.
- 22 See the introduction by Gianna Pomata to her translation of Oliva de Sabuco, *The True Medicine* (Toronto: Victoria University, 2010), 1–86.
- 23 Benito J. Feijoo, "Defensa de las mujeres" in *Theatro Crítico Universal*, vol. 1 (1726), 367–368, 366. <https://www.filosofia.org/bjf/bjft116.htm>.
- 24 Benito J. Feijoo, "Causas del amor," in *Theatro Crítico Universal*, vol. 7 (1736), 348–394, 378. <https://www.filosofia.org/bjf/bjft715.htm>.
- 25 See, for instance, the chapters in this volume edited by Clorinda Donato, Magally Alegre Henderson, and Enrique Morales de Eusebio; Karen Harvey, *Reading Sex in the Eighteenth Century: Bodies and Gender in English Erotic Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1–34; Julie Peakman and Sarah Watkins, "Making Babies: Eighteenth-Century Attitudes towards Conception, Reproduction and Childbirth," in *The Secrets of Generation: Reproduction in the Long Eighteenth-Century*, ed. Raymond Stephanson and Darren N. Wagner (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 458–476; Roy Porter, "The Literature of Sexual Advice before 1800," in *Sexual Knowledge, Sexual Science: The History of Attitudes to Sexuality*, ed. Roy Porter and Mikuláš Teich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 134–157. On the debates about the equality of the sexes in Spain, see Mónica Bolufer Peruga, "New Inflections of a Long Polemic: The Debate between the Sexes in Enlightened Spain," in *A New History of Iberian Feminism*, ed. Silvia Bermúdez and Roberta Johnson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018), 38–49.
- 26 Javier González Santos, "Iconografía dieciochista del padre Feijoo: Un estudio del mercado editorial y su incidencia en la difusión de la imagen del sabio," in *Feijoo hoy*, ed. Inmaculada Urzaizqui (Instituto Feijoo, 2003), 159–224.

- 27 Javier González Santos, "Iconografía dieciochista del padre Feijoo: Un estudio del mercado editorial y su incidencia en la difusión de la imagen del sabio," in *Feijoo hoy*, ed. Inmaculada Urzainqui (Instituto Feijoo, 2003), 164: "estameña bastísima, de la que vestían un tiempo los capuchinos;" "y así, en todas sus copias, aun las que saca por otras pinturas de mucha alma en el semblante, deja unos ojos neutros o indiferentes."
- 28 Roy Porter ed., "Making Faces: Physiognomy and Fashion in Eighteenth-century England," *Etudes Anglaises* 38, no. 4 (1985): 385–396; David Harris Sacks, "'The Confusion of Faces': The Politics of Physiognomy, Concealed Hearts, and Public Visibility," in *Making Publics in Early Modern Europe: People, Things, Forms of Knowledge*, ed. Bronwen Wilson (London: Routledge 2011); Natalia Delgado Martínez, "Fisiognomía y expresión en la literatura artística española de los siglos XVII y XVIII," *Anuario del Departamento de Historia y Teoría del Arte, UAM* 14 (2002): 205–230. For a discussion about the ways in which these novelists used or subverted the rules of physiognomy, see Roy Porter, *Flesh in the Age of Reason: The Modern Foundations of Body and Soul* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2003), 244–256.
- 29 Charles Le Brun, *Méthode pour apprendre à dessiner les passions, proposée dans une conférence sur l'expression générale et particulière* [facsimile of the edition Amsterdam, 1702] (Hildesheim: Olms, 1982). There is a facsimile of Mathías de Yrala Ayuso, *Método sucinto i compendioso de cinco simetrías: apropiadas a las cinco órdenes de arquitectura: adornada con otras reglas vitales. Año de 1739 in Vida y Obra de Fray Matías de Irala, grabador y tratadista español del siglo XVIII*, Antonio Bonet Correa, 2 vol. (Madrid: Turner, 1979). On the possible sources of Le Brun, see Jennifer Montagu, *The Expression of the Passions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), Appendix III.
- 30 Cureau de la Chambre published *Les Characters des passions* in six parts between 1640 and 1662.
- 31 Le Brun gave his lecture "Sur l'expression générale et particulière" to the Académie Royale de Peinture in 1668. It was to be completed in two other parts, the first on how to use expression in painting in general, and the second—never finished—on a system of physiognomy. The lecture was printed posthumously. An English translation can be found in Jennifer Montagu, *The Expression of the Passions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 125–140.
- 32 Benito J. Feijoo, "Fisionomía" <https://www.filosofia.org/bjf/bjft502.htm>, and "Nuevo Arte Fisionómico," <https://www.filosofia.org/bjf/bjft503.htm>, both in *Theatro Crítico Universal*, vol. 5 (1733).
- 33 These were the ones based on Giambattista della Porta, *De humana physiognomonia libri IIII* (1586).
- 34 Benito J. Feijoo, "Nuevo Arte Fisionómico," in *Theatro Crítico Universal*, vol. 5 (1733), 63–72, 66: "La vergüenza, llevando la sangre al rostro, le baña de una honesta confusión; la ira, precipitándola tumultuariamente, le viste de una turbación feroz; el miedo, retirándola, le desnuda del nativo color; el placer le aviva moderadamente, serena los ojos, y dilata un poco toda la textura de la cara; el afecto de risa, la varía considerablemente." <https://www.filosofia.org/bjf/bjft503.htm>.
- 35 Benito J. Feijoo, "Nuevo Arte Fisionómico," in *Theatro Crítico Universal*, vol. 5 (1733), 63–72, 71: "Ve aquí una señal Fisionómica muy buena. Un mirar tranquilo, oportuno, que sólo se determina a los objetos precisos, significa un ánimo quieto, sereno, y cuerdo. Al contrario, un mirar inquieto, vago, travieso, que en ningún objeto para, sino que por todos discurre, significa imprudencia y ligereza de ánimo." <https://www.filosofia.org/bjf/bjft503.htm>.
- 36 Benito J. Feijoo, "Nuevo Arte Fisionómico," in *Theatro Crítico Universal*, vol. 5 (1733), 63–72, 72: "para que pueda cultivar este terreno quien tenga más ocio, y

- más comercio con el mundo que yo; pues es materia ésta que pide necesariamente dos cosas: mucho comercio con el mundo, para hacer observación en muchos individuos; y mucha reflexión para cotejar las señas con los significados.” <https://www.filosofia.org/bjf/bjft503.htm>.
- 37 According to Feijoo, the influence of the soul on the body was total (“there is rarely an affection in the soul that it is not communicated to the body”); the influence of the body on the soul, by contrast, could operate only through “images” fabricated in the brain.
- 38 Benito J. Feijoo, “El deleite de la Música, acompañado de la virtud, hace en la tierra el noviciado del Cielo: A una Señora devota, y aficionada a la Música,” *Cartas Eruditas y Curiosas*, vol. 4 (1753), 1–32. <https://filosofia.org/bjf/bjfc401.htm>. On Hartley, Willis, and Johnson, see Roy Porter, *Flesh in the Age of Reason: The Modern Foundations of Body and Soul* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2003); on Claude Perrault, see below in this chapter.
- 39 Benito J. Feijoo, “Causas del Amor,” y “Remedios del Amor” in *Theatro Crítico Universal*, vol. 7 (1736).
- 40 Thomas Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003; paperback edition, 2006); see chapter 1.
- 41 I am following Fernando Vidal, *The Sciences of the Soul: The Early Modern Origins of Psychology* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2011), 32–40: “The physiological dimensions of the *scientia the anima* came from the Galenic tradition, whose influence in physiology prevailed longer than his anatomical conclusions (revised by Vesalio, 1543). Galeno himself drove in older traditions attributed to Hippocrates.”
- 42 On internal senses, see Jon McGinnis, “Avicenna on Medical Practice, Epistemology, and the Physiology of the Inner Senses,” in *Interpreting Avicenna: Critical Essays*, ed. Peter Adamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Charis Charalampous, *Rethinking the Mind-Body Relationship in Early Modern Literature, Philosophy and Medicine: The Renaissance of the Body* (NY, London: Routledge, 2015), 5.
- 43 Coppel also used Le Brun’s depictions of joy and surprise in the other characters of the painting. See Jennifer Montagu, *The Expression of the Passions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 85.
- 44 Here, Feijoo distanced himself from the Scholastics and followed Newton and others in the mechanistic views of light, sound, etc. Benito J. Feijoo, “Causas del amor,” in *Theatro Crítico Universal*, vol. 7 (1736), 348–394, 366–367.
- 45 Benito J. Feijoo, “Causas del amor,” in *Teatro Crítico Universal*, vol. 7 (1736), 348–394, 367: “Es distinta la impresión por el modo, y por la parte en que se hace: la impresión, que hace en el cerebro el objeto agradable, aunque se haga en las mismas fibras, es muy distinta de la que hace el objeto ingrato: y aun en la clase de gratos, como también en la de ingratos, hay gran variedad.”
- 46 Benito J. Feijoo, “Causas del amor,” in *Teatro Crítico Universal*, vol. 7 (1736), 348–394, 366: “y mediante la conmoción que reciben las fibras de esta parte príncipe se excita en el alma la percepción de todos los objetos sensibles.”
- 47 Feijoo, *Cartas Eruditas y Curiosas*, vol. 4 (1752): “Que no ven los ojos si no el alma, y se extiende esta máxima a las demás sensaciones,” 363–374, <https://www.filosofia.org/bjf/bjfc426.htm>.
- 48 Benito J. Feijoo, “Remedios del amor,” in *Theatro Crítico Universal*, vol. 7 (1736), 410–411: “creo que en algunas pasiones, aun en la presencia del objeto, es la imaginación quien da todo el impulso a las fibras del cerebro, o sólo mueve el objeto las fibras del cerebro por medio de la imaginación.”
- 49 Benito J. Feijoo, “Causas del amor,” in *Theatro Crítico Universal*, vol. 7 (1736), 348–394, 367: “Esta percepción es una resultancia natural de la conmoción de las

- fibras del cerebro, siendo la conexión de uno con otro consiguiente necesario de la unión del alma al cuerpo.”
- 50 Benito J. Feijoo, “Causas del amor,” in *Theatro Crítico Universal*, vol. 7 (1736), 348–394: “que el origen así del amor, como de todas las demás pasiones, no puede menos de colocarse donde está el origen de todas las sensaciones internas. La razón es clara; porque el ejercicio de cualquiera pasión no es otra cosa, que tal, o tal sensación ejercida, o ya en el corazón, o en otra entraña, o en otro miembro.”
- 51 Benito J. Feijoo, “Causas del amor,” in *Theatro Crítico Universal*, vol. 7 (1736), 348–394, 365: “El efecto fervoroso del amor hace sentir sus llamaradas en el corazón: le inquieta, le agita, le comprime, le dilata, le enfurece, le humilla, le concongoja [sic], le alegra, le desmaya, le alienta, según los distintos estados en los que esté el amante.”
- 52 On the discussions about the “the phantom member,” see Alanna Skuse, *Surgery and Selfhood in Early Modern England: Altered Bodies and Contexts of Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 2021), chapter 6.
- 53 Jennifer Montagu, *The Expression of the Passions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 134.
- 54 Benito J. Feijoo, “Importancia de al ciencia física para la moral,” in *Teatro Crítico Universal*, vol. 8 (1739), 378: “la concupiscencia tiene mucho de respectiva.” <https://www.filosofia.org/bjf/bjft811.htm>.
- 55 John Sutton, “Controlling the Passions: Passion, Memory and the Moral Physiology of Self in Seventeenth Century Neurophilosophy,” in *The Soft Underbelly of Reason: The Passions in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Stephan Gaukroger (London: Routledge, 1998), 115–146, 138.
- 56 Roy Porter, *Flesh in the Age of Reason: The Modern Foundations of Body and Soul* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2003), 351. On Martín Martínez’s ideas about the nerves, see Alvar Martínez Vidal, *Neurociencias y revolución científica en España: La circulación Neural* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1989).
- 57 Willis also thought of a second mechanism of neuronal effects: “percussion waves within the fluid mass of particulate animal spirits.” Robert G. Frank, Jr. “Thomas Willis and His Circle: Brain and Mind in Seventeenth-Century Medicine,” in *The Language of Psyche: Mind and Body in Enlightenment Thought*, ed. G.S. Rousseau (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 133–134.
- 58 Claude Yvon, “Animal Soul,” *The Encyclopedia of Diderot & d’Alembert Collaborative Translation Project*, trans. Mary McAlpin (Ann Arbor: Michigan Publishing, University of Michigan Library, 2003), web, accessed 22 February 2024, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.did2222.0000.023>. Translation of “Ame des bêtes,” *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1751), <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.did2222.0000.023>. On the permanence of animal spirits during the long eighteenth century, see N. Wagner Darren, “Body, Mind and Spirits: The Physiology of Sexuality in the Culture of Sensibility,” *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 39, no. 3 (2016): 335–358.
- 59 See Roy Porter, *Flesh in the Age of Reason: The Modern Foundations of Body and Soul* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2003), 347–360, on David Hartley and his *Observations of Man, His Frame, His Duty, and His Expectations* (1749), who also believed in solid nerves. His ideas were previously presented in an earlier work: David Hartley, *The Progress of Happiness Deduced from Reason* (1734). We have left aside the question of whether Feijoo might have known this earlier text. On Feijoo’s ideas about the body behaving as a musical instrument, see Elena Serrano, “Touching the Soul: Nerves, Music, and Sex in the Physiology of Passions by B. J. Feijoo (1676–1764),” in “Touching Visions: Intersensoriality and Gender

- in the History of Science,” edited by Hansun Hsiung, Elena Paulino, and Elena Serrano, special issue, *Nuncius* 39, no. 2: 338–361 (2024).
- 60 Quoted in Anita Gerrini, *The Courtiers’ Anatomists. Animals and Humans in Louis XIV’s Paris* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 126.
- 61 Benito J. Feijoo, “Racionalidad de los brutos,” in *Theatro Crítico Universal*, vol. 3 (1729), 187–223; on 217: “Pero aunque no es materia, es material el alma del bruto. ¿Qué quiere decir esto? Que es esencialmente dependiente de la materia en el hacerse, en el ser, y en el conservarse. Y esto se entiende por ente material *adjectivè*, a diferencia del ente material *substantivè*, que es la materia misma. Esta dependencia esencial de la materia en las almas de los brutos se colige evidentemente de que todas sus operaciones están limitadas a la esfera de los entes materiales; como al contrario la independencia del alma humana de la materia, se infiere de que la esfera de su actividad intelectual, incluye también los entes espirituales.” <https://www.filosofia.org/bjf/bjft309.htm>.
- 62 Benito J. Feijoo, “Racionalidad de los brutos,” in *Theatro Crítico Universal*, vol. 3 (1729), 187–223, 215: “el conocimiento de los entes espirituales, el de las razones comunes, o universales, y el reflejo de sus propios actos. Estos tres géneros de conocimientos son privativos del hombre, y en ellos se distingue del bruto, como ya advertimos arriba.” <https://www.filosofia.org/bjf/bjft309.htm>. Feijoo also dealt with the animal soul in three other pieces: Benito J. Feijoo, “Guerras Filosóficas,” in *Teatro Crítico Universal*, vol. 1 (1726); Benito J. Feijoo, “Sátiros, tritones y nereidas,” in *Theatro Crítico Universal*, vol. 6 (1734), and in the same volume, “Examen filosófico de un peregrino suceso de estos tiempos (El anfibio de Liérganes);” Benito J. Feijoo, *Cartas Eruditas y Curiosas*, vol. 3 (1750): “Si es racional el afecto de compasión respecto de los irracionales”.
- 63 See José Manuel Rodríguez Pardo, *El alma de los brutos en el entorno del padre Feijoo* (Oviedo: Pentalfa Ediciones, 2008); Robert Ricard, “Feijoo y el misterio de la naturaleza animal,” in *Cuadernos de Estudios del Siglo XVIII* 23 (1970): 7–22.
- 64 See, for instance, Benito J. Feijoo, “Razón del Gusto,” in *Theatro Crítico Universal*, vol. 6 (1734), <https://www.filosofia.org/bjf/bjft611.htm>.
- 65 G. S. Rousseau and Roy Porter, “Introduction: Toward a Natural History of Mind and Body” in *The Languages of Psyche: Mind and Body in Enlightenment Thought*, ed. G.S. Rousseau (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 3–44, 3.
- 66 Of course, we are considering here that observations are always theory-driven.
- 67 Kazuo Ishiguro, *Klara and the Sun* (London: Faber & Faber, 2021), 338. See the reflections on this topic in the chapter by Isabel Burdiel, “Entangled Sensibilities and the Broken Circulation of Mary W. Shelley’s *Frankenstein*: Gender, Race, and Otherness.”

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6 Rewriting Romantic Love

Women, Celebrity, and the Politics of Emotion in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Spain (Avellaneda's Farewell)*

Mónica Burguera

Barely four years after arriving in Spain in 1836, the Cuban-born writer Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda (Camagüey 1814–Madrid 1873) had become Madrid's greatest literary celebrity. By the early 1840s, Avellaneda had reached the highest echelons of Romantic Spain's growing circles of women writers, and her premieres filled the most popular theaters in the capital for 15 years.¹ Garnering extraordinary publicity and criticism, Avellaneda stood out among writers in Spain. She embodied the liberal remaking of the “illustrious woman,” a theme in circulation since the 15th century that referred to exceptional intellectual women across diverse and overlapping religious, literary, and scientific traditions. Avellaneda, following in the footsteps of French literary figures such as Madame de Staël and George Sand, represented the Romantic idea that lyrical and literary expression liberated the inner emotional self. This emancipated self, I will argue, exacerbated the tensions within enlightened codes of sensibility that implied “reasonable sentiments” while holding on to these codes.² With the “soul of a poet and the heart of a woman,” Avellaneda struggled to reconcile her image as a talented, free, and passionate woman with a liberal respectability that set reason against sentiment, public against private, and masculinity against femininity.³ By investigating her life and work as a female literary celebrity, I also highlight the discursive contexts in which modern female subjectivities and feminisms were forged *through* Romanticism.⁴ Avellaneda embodied the contradictions inherent in the transition to female affective individualism; that is, the belief in women's capacity, as free and equal individuals, to feel and discern who they want to love and to whom they wish to commit, a tenet of modern feminisms.

As Luisa Passerini has shown, the romantic remaking of medieval courtly love played an essential role in creating assumptions about European and Western civilizing and moral superiority in the world.⁵ Conceptions of love and love culture also shaped Christian narratives about women's emancipation throughout post-revolutionary Spain.⁶ Christian narratives about women drew on enlightened Eurocentric discourses about religion's redemption that pitted Western civilization against the uncivilized, enslaving East and the notion that women's status defined a nation's progress and modernity.⁷

Avellaneda, employing these ideas, participated in reformulations of romantic love and women's affective nature. Hewing to traditional Christian ideas on pathologizing sexual desire and negating the body, her writings relied on a dual conception of love that differentiated between passionate, fleeting love—carnal love—and good, spiritual, virtuous, and true love.⁸ Only the latter would lead to the fulfillment of love and the illusion that the bonding of lovers formed a complementary whole. This affective union was to serve as a source of happiness, emerging reciprocally, naturally, and permanently from each individual. From this Western conception of complementary love, Avellaneda evoked the redemptive potential of the new liberal Christian order while rewriting the narratives of romantic love and the so-called “complete emancipation” of women.

As I have argued elsewhere, debates about the nature of women and their “social mission” moved into the realm of literature, especially with the rise of female literary celebrity. This shift coincided with liberal Spain's conservative turn, beginning in the mid-1840s—after the Constitution of 1845—which tried to erase public discussions of the “woman question.”⁹ Women writers became both central and marginal, exceptional and exemplary, in Spain's new liberal literary scene. In this chapter, I explore how Avellaneda's sentimental life and critical view of women's affective nature became politicized. As her final act in the capital shows, Avellaneda's ways of loving and ideas about marriage permeated her work as she reinvented her public persona but also became part of a broader political debate on the “woman question,” Spanish national femininity, and the possibility of complete emancipation.

In early 1858, nearly 20 years after her arrival in Madrid, Avellaneda announced the debut of her long-anticipated play *Baltasar*. Following the critical reception of her last comedy in 1855, she made no secret of her anxiety surrounding her comeback. Describing the drama she had worked on for years, she invoked a “final tribute of appreciation and a most affectionate *farewell*.”¹⁰ Writing to Juan Eugenio de Hartzenbusch, one of Madrid's most recognized literary figures, she noted:

Baltasar (rewritten and much improved after you read it) will soon premiere, and I am depending on you to do me the favor of attending the great trial. I shall take care to send you a good seat; as I shall also do for the premiere of another little drama which I have written entitled *Los tres amores*, and which I shall probably also debut this season. I am very, very much afraid, because I am leaving the stage irrevocably, and I would deeply regret bidding farewell to the din of hisses and boos.¹¹

This essay focuses on *Los tres amores* [The Three Loves] and *Baltasar* because both plays, premiering some 20 days apart, demonstrate Avellaneda's final, careful, and expressive self-representation.¹² Both plays echo her previous

work and public life in Spain. Taken together, they offer Avellaneda's reflections on her life and work amid political, aesthetic, and emotional change.¹³ In *Los tres amores*, "a little play she wrote in fifteen days," Avellaneda likely sought to complement her public farewell with a claim to her own virtue and genius when it came to her distinctive take on love.¹⁴ To bolster her reputation and dignified departure from Madrid's literary scene, her portrayals of female characters invoked both her private life and public image. Following her brief marriage to Pedro Sabater, from May to August 1846, Avellaneda's status as a single woman literary star shifted to that of a widow in mourning. After her second marriage to Domingo Verdugo in the spring of 1855, however, she could appear before the public once again as a woman of exceptional genius and a virtuous wife, a complete woman of "reasonable sentiments," to use Mónica Bolufer's term, capable of tempering her passions. In *Baltasar*, Avellaneda envisioned an ambitious Christian—and implicitly Catholic—ideal with enlightened overtones around the two inseparable axes of "faith and love." Uniting religion and progress, she reflected on the meaning of life, the mastery of emotions, and Christianity's emancipation of women while perpetuating political and emotional clichés about the barbaric, despotic, and promiscuous East. But in engaging with this narrative, she used a subtle literary strategy to reformulate it. Avellaneda recast the religious fantasy of redemption and love, rooting it in an affective form of individualism that transcended the divisions of sex, class, and race.

A Third Way of Loving

For a celebrity such as Avellaneda, representations of private life forged her public image, literary recognition, and respectability.¹⁵ An interesting example comes from the well-known love letters between the writer and Antonio Cepeda, with whom she enjoyed a much-discussed romantic relationship and intermittent correspondence.¹⁶ These epistolary sources illustrate Avellaneda's proposed conceptualization of love and romance based on egalitarian affective individualism. From the start, the correspondence between the two established the discursive framework of a sentimental relationship that was understood in terms of freedom and reciprocity between equals. In 1839, she wrote to him:

Cepeda! I want your heart, your heart with no compromises whatsoever. I am free, as are you; we must both always be free, and the man who takes it upon himself to degrade a woman, the man who abuses his power, wrests that precious freedom from the woman. Because she is no longer free who knows a master.¹⁷

The writer was constructing a public self as an embodiment of the Spanish Corinne, Madame de Staël's popular character, whose public and overflowing

talent was difficult for a man to “complement” in private. This is what had happened to Avellaneda and Mariano Ricafort, to whom she had been engaged, but whose “talent” was “very inferior to his heart,” as she wrote to Cepeda.¹⁸ In public, the illusion of a sentimental relationship between equals was expressed in the tension between (masculine) talent and (feminine) love: head and heart, or the individual (man) and woman. In Avellaneda’s early drama *Leoncia* (1839), first volume of poetry (1841), and first novels, *Sab* (1841) and *Dos mujeres* (1842), she unravels that tension as her female characters perform two different femininities and two equally virtuous ways of loving: one emotional, creative, and independent; the other normative, patient, and submissive.¹⁹ She was two women in one. As she explained to Cepeda, this was the irresolvable drama of her life: that of a talented and passionate but virtuous Romantic heroine doomed to solitude and death. She was not opposed to marriage, as some thought, but would marry only if she found “a heart big enough to receive mine without oppressing it.”²⁰ Her apparent “aversion to marriage” came from her “soul, which covets freedom.”²¹

Reinventing Avellaneda

Avellaneda reinvented herself as a national literary icon by remaking her sentimental life. In the spring of 1846, she married Pedro Sabater, a conservative political leader in Madrid who had already fallen ill. Her marriage was likely intended to conceal the scandal of her single motherhood. Her daughter, born the previous year from a relationship with the poet Gabriel García Tassara, died at just a few months old. Avellaneda sought to redirect the “rehabilitative tendencies” that linked her to George Sand and put her at the forefront of “women’s armies” against marriage and in favor of divorce and the “complete” emancipation of women.²² Since the death of her first husband three months later, and after a short religious retreat to a monastery, Avellaneda reemerged as a Catholic writer and self-confessed devotee, “albeit in her own way,” as she wrote in a letter to Cepeda.²³ This transformation also shaped her work. Rather than portraying the tension between two women and two virtuous but conflicting ways of being and loving, which appeared in her earlier works, now her female characters embodied a single Christian, virtuous femininity that could reconcile head and heart, self-control and passion. But this shift did not mark a return to a normative self-sacrificing, submissive femininity.²⁴ Instead, the writer’s “innovative” dramatic contribution, as David Gies has noted, was in “creating determined, tenacious, stubborn women who, until the moment they are overcome by forces beyond their reach, are clearly in control of their lives.”²⁵ Matilde and Elda, the protagonists of the two plays on which this essay focuses, must be understood in light of this turn toward emotional temperance, but still in keeping with feminine dignity and equality between the sexes in what Avellaneda called the “faculties of the soul.”²⁶ Her works, from *Egilona* (1846) through *Saúl* (1849),

from comedies and dramas staged from 1852 to 1855, and even her final works published in Cuba, can be understood from this perspective.

But this shift, rife with tensions between individuality and femininity, was not easy. In early 1853, Avellaneda's formal application for a seat in the Royal Spanish Academy was rejected on the grounds of "the incompatibility of the difference in sex with this position."²⁷ The *individua* [female individual] Avellaneda, her critics scoffed, faced greater animosity, and criticism of her work had hardened. The six plays she premiered between 1854 and 1855 bore the excessive weight of a celebrated female figure, transgressive and disruptive, in a masculine and highly personalistic literary and political milieu, subject to strict censorship and unsettled in a period of aesthetic and political change. It was likely Avellaneda's engagement to her future husband, Domingo Verdugo, made her cancel her return trip to Cuba, arranged for September 1854. A few months later she was married and no longer, as she put it, "alone in the world," or "living on her own and eccentric."²⁸ Avellaneda could reconstruct her image as part of a couple, complete and complemented. Like her husband, Verdugo, she became close to the less conservative Liberal Union. After the July 1854 revolution, even as critics raged against plays she premiered between February and March for "their lack of moral, philosophical or political purpose," she enjoyed a brief revival.²⁹

After the so-called Progressive Biennium (1854–1856), Avellaneda and her husband found themselves out of place in Madrid's political and literary climate. The reordering of liberal and antiliberal political cultures promoted alternative models of femininity that sought to stabilize the sexual order of various national projects, but all of them were based on family romance and the sentimental domestic wife. From opposite ends of the political spectrum, the new contours of the "Spanish woman" emerged in a renewed middle-class domesticity that was critical of traditional misogyny that confined, subjugated, and "enslaved" women. Two literary celebrities of Avellaneda's time, Carolina Coronado and Cecilia Böhl, the latter pseudonymously known as Fernán Caballero, represented a new respectable democracy and antiliberal neo-Catholicism, respectively, performing a new kind of national femininity.³⁰ The *mujer Española* [Spanish woman] also emerged as rational, autonomous, and dignified, like Avellaneda. And yet its adherents confronted the Cuban writer's exceptional, illustrious femininity. Coronado and Böhl, however, embodied the Spanish woman as the "most womanly," as Coronado wrote, or as a renovated "strong woman" that drew on biblical types. National womanhood did not belong to an excessive, fiery, and masculinized "French Spain" that Madrid came to represent and Avellaneda had always symbolized.³¹ It was in this context that Avellaneda reshaped modern femininity and her public image to conform to a virtuous and complementary Christian femininity.³² But she did so by harnessing the radical affective individualism with which she had depicted her relationship with Cepeda and expressed her exceptional talent two decades earlier. She dedicated *Los*

tres amores, an autobiographical play à clef, to “her beloved husband.” “Superior” women knew how to moderate their amorous affections and lead an orderly, virtuous sentimental life, she intended to show.³³

Matilde or “The Love of the Head” in Los tres amores (1858)

On March 20, 1858, *Los tres amores* premiered at Madrid’s Teatro del Circo. In the prologue and three acts, the writer summarizes her life in the character of Matilde, a “poor girl from the mountains,” who flees to the city and becomes the “foremost actress of Spain, of Europe, of the world,” following her first performance as the Greek female poet Sappho.³⁴ But just as Avellaneda had done with her first marriage and explicit religious devotion since 1846, Matilde learns to moderate herself as a brilliant woman doomed to loneliness and without complementary love. In a few acts, she is transformed from an “ardent, passionate artist” into a tempered wife, and yet her idea of romantic love questions the hierarchy between the sexes.³⁵ Matilde’s glory grows from a sentimental tension that stood at the heart of Avellaneda’s life and work. Matilde, like Avellaneda, is a romantic heroine who must decide between two men, between “love of the heart” and “fiery love.” Throughout the play, she is deeply troubled by the need to choose between Antonio, with whom she had happily grown up in the bucolic mountains of Navarra, and Víctor de San Adrián, a renowned poet who spent some time in the farmhouse where they were raised. Matilde undergoes “a great change in her existence” when she falls in love with Víctor. She embarks on an intellectual and sentimental journey toward a sublime love that is liberating, irrepressible, and virtuous because it arises naturally from the depths of her being.³⁶ Playing the Greek woman poet in the play San Adrián wrote, she triumphs. The recognition of her talent, she believes, will lead her to unite with her soulmate, her “ideal of intelligence and the object of her everlasting love.”³⁷ “I am equal to him!” she exclaims near the end of the play.³⁸ From this intellectual and affective equality, Matilde imagines that the two will join in a sublime, passionate love. It is precisely at the height of her success, however, that the actress realizes that it is the “mad intoxication of triumph” that has made her doubt Antonio’s “heroic” and “selfless” love. His love “humbles the petty glory of his intelligence” and makes her decide to leave everything for him and return to Nature, far away from a “disjointed” society.³⁹

The romantic interlude reproduced throughout the narrative dismantles the hierarchy of traditional sentimental relations in a dual sense.⁴⁰ On the one hand, it turns Matilde, a female character, into the heroine who actively sets out to conquer idealized love and determines her own way of loving. On the other, it transfers the qualities of feminine love to Antonio, a man. It is he who harbors “an exaggerated passion,” who trembles and weeps for love, and for whom “happiness would not fit in his soul” if Matilde were to at least allow him to be her “slave.” This good, feminine love leads her to forsake

the “dismal victories” of recognition and passion. Matilde (Avellaneda) is Sappho, but a “Christian Sappho.” From a “radiant world of intelligence and glory” that she renounces, she conceives of a third way of loving, which she calls the “love of the head.” This love aligns feminine self-sacrifice with masculine “fiery” love. This third way reconciles her (masculine) talent and (womanly) affections. It is “true love,” resembling what she had displayed with her husband since 1855. It was not the “ardent, impetuous, and overwhelming kind,” but the “patient, steady, and peaceful” form of love. She embraced a reformed Christian love based on intellectual and affective equality between individuals and the sexes. By undoing hierarchies of love between men and women, she reformulated the notion of complementarity to mean equality between “immortal souls,” “varied and infinite,” thereby blurring sexual difference.⁴¹

And yet *Los tres amores* was hurried, self-absorbed, and poorly resolved. It is difficult to imagine Matilde’s (Avellaneda’s) intellectual and affective power complemented by the submissive, coarse masculinity of Antonio (Verdugo?). It was meant as a final reckoning with Avellaneda’s lovers and critics. Throughout the play, gestures to Tassara and Cepeda appear. Like San Adrián, Cepeda had not considered marrying her for “not having a name.” Avellaneda’s rejection of the social conventions of marriage included “that senseless world that mixes admiration with contempt (...) that crowns the artist and tarnishes the woman.”⁴² *Los tres amores* is a metaphorical journey back to Nature and the mountains of Navarra, or to the author’s native Cuba. It offers a harsh critique of life in the metropolis, which both exalted and destroyed her because she was a woman. Perhaps that is why the show did not end. In the last act, following the phrase “something is fishy,” a group of rabble-rousers in the audience let a cat loose, which jumped onto the stage, producing “general hilarity and the complete defeat of the play.”⁴³

Baltasar (1858)

One of the major themes of *Baltasar*, Avellaneda’s greatest success, is the remaking of the romantic idyll as love between equal free souls, an emancipatory project for women. On April 9, 20 days after the fiasco of *Los tres amores*, Avellaneda’s much-awaited “eastern drama,” which she had worked on for years, premiered with “astonishing luxury” in a costly production at the newly renovated Teatro de Las Novedades, before the Spanish king and queen and a packed auditorium. The play is considered one of the foremost examples of Romantic religious drama in the wake of José Zorrilla.⁴⁴ In *Baltasar*, Avellaneda turns to a brief biblical episode where the prophet Daniel predicts the fall of the Babylonian Empire and the subsequent liberation of the Jewish people—the origin of Christian civilization. The legend surrounding Babylon’s last king and the link between his fall and that of his empire to his licentious life inspired many Romantics. Byron’s play, *Sardanapalus*,

which premiered in 1821, and Eugène Delacroix's *Mort de Sardanapale*, a large-scale painting completed in 1827, are two notable examples. According to Juan Valera, the young, renowned critic, *Baltasar* offered an alternative "moral and religious" take on the biblical character and the fall of the Asian Empire. Avellaneda, the "eminent and Christian poetess," said Valera, wrote from a "philosophical and disinterested *neocatolicismo*" that could not conceive of virtue, respectability, or beauty outside of God's enlightenment.⁴⁵ Avellaneda celebrated an affective individualism that was regulated by "faith and love" and operated within a civilizing project of order and reasonable sentiments, mastered by the will of God.

But as Brígida Pastor has pointed out about her early work, referring to *Sab* (1841), which is widely considered one of the first abolitionist novels, "Avellaneda admirably produces a discourse of otherness within a dominant discourse."⁴⁶ This was still the case almost 20 years later, in the late 1850s, although the emphases had changed. The play's glowing reception included praise for its originality and verisimilitude, historicity, and ability to maintain "dramatic unity" according to the "common rules of dramatic art."⁴⁷ Critics agreed that in *Baltasar*, Avellaneda had captured the "serious characteristics" and "elevated thought," the "sonorous and elegant" versification of that "great poet, whose heart and intelligence are hidden in the form of a woman," as indicated by the professor of Hebrew, Severo Catalina, for example.⁴⁸ But no one pointed to the transgressive nature of Avellaneda's female characters. For Juan Valera, "God and Baltasar are the essential characters of the drama; the others are episodic characters."⁴⁹ For Pedro Antonio de Alarcón, Elda and Nitócris were types "of a sweetness that hints at Christian civilization."⁵⁰ In part, they were all correct. The writer had placed women at the center of Christian and Catholic civilization, suggesting its redemptive potential by also reconceptualizing the traditional narrative of romantic love and gender equality for the "complete" emancipation of women. From this perspective, Avellaneda wrote *Baltasar* as an Eastern drama about what we might call the emancipation of humanity by women.

An Eastern Drama

In her prologue, Avellaneda portrayed "great philosophical thought" as she tried to "capture in a theatrical composition" a moral confrontation between a modern, Christian, and civilized West and a backward Eastern world. Discourses about the Eastern "Other" were riddled with clichés about despotism, enslaved peoples, corruption, and the promiscuity of elites, and symbolized by the harem and the slavery of women. A "clash of civilizations" worldview was widespread in post-Enlightenment Western Europe, amplified by liberal nationalisms. The drama *Baltasar* belonged to a liberal and literary tradition that identified the nation at the heart of redemptive and religious civilizing progress. By extension, all modern European nations had "emancipated" their women.⁵¹ The author depicted the modern moral

project of Christianity as “progress,” together with a universal mission that aspired to “racial fusion” and the “unity of humankind,” which no other civilization had achieved, as Avellaneda put it in her prologue to the printed edition. Examining the play in some detail highlights the contrasts and ironic mood that Avellaneda creates to underline Christianity’s redemptive potential through the others, that is, the East and women, as Baltasar and Elda embody them.

The first act takes place in the prison where Joaquín, Judea’s elderly ex-king, is imprisoned with his grandson Rubén and Elda, his fiancée, later wife, and niece of the prophet Daniel.⁵² King Baltasar’s mother, Nitócris, intends to free her son from the state of “tedium” that “consumes his soul” and prevents him from governing his empire owing to the “profound, haughty disdain” with which he approaches his existence and exercise of power over his people. Baltasar’s “materialism,” which he has “enjoyed without pleasure” is because he “possesses everything without desiring” or “conquering” it. Distrustful of the ambition of satraps and a nation “led with apathy,” Nitócris, who “commands” while “the king is silent,” has decided to free Elda to offer her to his son in the hope that a young woman’s beauty will awaken his virtuous emotions to bring him out of his existential *ennui*. In the second act, which takes place in the gardens of the “palace of Babylon,” the satrap Rabsares presents Elda before Baltasar.⁵³ The king sees her as just another slave in his harem until Elda, to the astonishment of the court and the king’s retinue of slaves, defies his orders by refusing to sing. She cannot sing, she says, before the oppressor of her family, her religion, “her people, and her God.” She cannot sing “where there is no freedom.” Surprisingly, Baltasar orders the release of Joaquín and Rubén, believing them to be Elda’s father and brother, respectively. Elda’s bold refusal arouses the emotions of the king, who falls in love with her and wishes to make her his favorite slave. But Elda refuses this attempt to “buy her virtue.” Baltasar, however, his senses awakened and in a burst of “celestial lucidity,” demonstrates the magnanimity of his sleeping soul when Rubén challenges him to a duel. He decides to spare his life after defeating him.

The third act transpires in a harem hall “decorated in the eastern style.”⁵⁴ Baltasar is in love and exultant after Elda and Rubén’s courage spurred, as the king’s mother intended, his desire to love and be loved by Elda and the Babylonian people. He confesses to her that love and faith have transformed him, freeing her so that she can marry him. Elda rejects him without mentioning that Rubén is her husband. In the final scenes, as we hear the crowd’s opposition to their king’s sympathy with the Hebrew God and people, Baltasar discovers that Elda and Rubén are not siblings. As Rabsares had plotted, the king, “beside himself,” cannot bear Elda’s deception and revokes her freedom while handing over Rubén to the “ferocious mob” invading the palace.

Thus begins the fourth and final act depicting the banquet in the biblical passage, the epitome of tyranny and Eastern debauchery in its sumptuousness,

excessive “materialism,” and pagan desire, provoking the tedium into which Baltasar relapses, experiencing a pain that he seeks to extinguish with the “bustle of the orgy” or the “agony of the world.”⁵⁵ Nitócris’s sadness reemerges, thanks to the indolence into which her son has fallen once again and the insubordination of her people. In the play, sentimental and political events grow in intensity in an interrelated manner. Thunder sounds, announcing the biblical scene described by the prophet Daniel. Wearing a “somber expression,” Baltasar commands the satraps, however, that “gladness” should reign over a feast “without limits,” and that they “stir themselves up and lose their wits among the fragrance of women!” Elda wanders delirious, “pathetic,” senseless, between grief for the loss of her husband and honor and “a mysterious intuition of the great and forthcoming catastrophe” before the coldness of a king who had once loved her so much. Tension mounts as Baltasar challenges the only God, “the king of kings.” In front of Joaquín, Baltasar offers a defiant toast with the “sacred vessels of Solomon’s temple,” a symbol of the reputed Babylonian Siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, the banishment of the Hebrew people to Babylon, and Baltasar’s disregard for Jewish rites and beliefs. At the moment of that sacrilegious toast and amid drunken laughter, a violent gust of wind interrupts the banquet, opening windows, knocking down statues, and extinguishing the lights. A great thunderclap inscribes on a wall in letters of fire the famous mysterious phrase “Mane, Thecel, Phares,” sowing terror in the room. Daniel, as the transmitter of the divine word, is the only one who can decipher the writing that confirms his prophecy and the judgment of God on the “immense monarchy” whose imminent fall into the hands of the Persians will atone for “eighteen centuries of oppression.” The “greatness” of Baltasar then shines again as he throws himself into battle at the palace gates. Mortally wounded and sentenced to defeat by Cyrus, he acknowledges before Joaquín the truth of the one Hebrew God who “magnifies man.” Joaquín, contrary to what Baltasar denied to his son Rubén and Elda, forgives him because his religion “makes forgiveness a duty.” With the palace in flames, he explains to Nitócris on the deathbed of her son Baltasar that his end “is glorious,” thanks to this final, authentic, and redemptive conversion. But the fall of Baltasar and Babylon is the origin of the second temple in Jerusalem that “will hear the voice of the Messiah,” and thus the emancipation of Christian civilization.

The Politics of Irony: From the Emancipation of Women by Christianity to the Emancipation of Humanity by Women

The narrative on how Christianity had liberated women circulated widely in post-revolutionary Spain throughout the middle decades of the nineteenth century.⁵⁶ Madrid’s most important illustrated magazine, *Semanario Pintoresco Español*, stated in August 1838: “Christianity came to destroy all kinds of slavery: it put an end to domestic slavery, opprobrium of ancient times, and began the emancipation of women,” who went “from the harem

to the altar, from slave to lady.”⁵⁷ This narrative relied on a deeply rooted conception of sexual difference and hierarchical complementarity between men and women, “born to forge men’s happiness.” They were “two different beings who had been made imperfect by God and forced by him to be necessary for each other.”⁵⁸ Avellaneda, however, pushed the limits of the narrative when it came to the liberation of women. In an ironic twist, she simultaneously affirmed and denied this redemptive fantasy: Christianity had emancipated women; Christianity had not emancipated women (yet). Two temporalities and ways of envisioning the clash of civilizations—and the place of women—overlap in *Baltasar*. On the one hand, Baltasar (the East) is depicted as the embodiment of negative values in his carnal love for the enslaved women in his harem. In this context, Elda (a Christian woman), strong and loyal, needs two kinds of liberation: from slavery, to which Baltasar subjects her until she loses her mind; and from the bondage of Rubén, a weak, unworthy husband. On the other hand, this second temporality is evoked by Baltasar’s fleeting lucidity, awakening of emotions, and way of loving Elda, which would have liberated both of them. The ideal of a dignifying Christianity, envisioned in *Baltasar*’s momentary happiness, comes from an omnipotent, vigilant, and yet merciful God who has endowed nature with equal and free human beings. And yet humanity must organize itself according to a moral order regulated by “love and faith,” Christian marriage, and family.

Avellaneda begins by reconsidering a modern question about *ennui* and the meaning of life, which she links to Christian ways of loving, or rather, to their absence. Baltasar is plunged into an existential void that prevents him from effectively running his empire. Only the “love and faith” that his Jewish slave Elda’s courage and “wild virtue” foment in him are able to shake him from his lethargy and allow him to regain energy, courage, and joy, as a man and a ruler.⁵⁹ By refusing to sing for him in front of his court, she makes Baltasar fall in love and converts him to Christianity. In other words, she spreads Christianity and frees humankind from the “other,” meaning the Babylonian East and its king. Avellaneda thus transforms the narrative about Christianity’s liberation of women into a story about the emancipation of humanity through women (and slaves). An echo in her work since *Sab*, her 1841 novel, Avellaneda turns to the women-slaves equation. Both lead a religious, affective, and political “moral revolution,” as she had called it years earlier.⁶⁰ They represent the “invincible limit of the tyrannical power of the eastern despot,” “the first revelation of human dignity.”⁶¹

But Avellaneda has endowed her Eastern king with a “great soul,” which his mother confides, is only “sleeping, it is not dead.” He and his people could be civilized if only he were “illuminated by faith or made fertile by love.” Baltasar’s ephemeral “celestial lucidity” awakens his emotions and liberates his inner, authentic self to desire and love, and by extension, the Christian faith and his way of governing. Political and sentimental scripts do not develop in two parallel plots. Instead, they are intertwined. The culture

of love structures the moral order that organizes both intimate private and public political life. In this episode, Baltasar has quickly recognized, if only in passing, the keys to a Christian, Western, romantic love conceived between equal beings. When he proposes to Elda and offers her marriage, he declares his faith and egalitarian love for her at once:

... for if this unbelieving being
 can finally believe and love,
 you alone will realize
 that desired change.
 You, who proves that a slave
 can give happiness to a king ...
 for they are made equal by a law
 of love, of which I was ignorant.⁶²

The play is an open call for the recovery of affections and the reaffirmation of the self, but also the ability to control them and control oneself. Baltasar exultantly confesses to Rabsares:

I feel an ineffable pleasure
 to understand that I can love,
 that to show it is my ambition
 and that I hope to be loved
 (...)
 —I am a man! I desire!⁶³

The king has discovered good love that “elevates him” and “enlightens him, that which makes him happy.”⁶⁴ Spiritual love between liberated souls, which denies the body, only exists in freedom. He tells Rabsares, “I seek a soul, not a body!” (...) “a free, ardent soul.”⁶⁵ Envisioning Baltasar’s potential Christian love, Avellaneda celebrates romantic love in terms of equality between the souls and minds of men and women in marriage as the heart of Western civilization. On the other hand, the problem is that Baltasar does not know how to control his passions. When he discovers Rubén and Elda’s marriage, he stifles his fury with indolence and tedium, thereby eliminating the possibility of governing his empire with freedom and fidelity, just as he would have loved her. He reclaims evil love, which Rabsares has proposed. Throughout the drama, he is confronted with the need to discover and then temper his emotions. This is the key to the play: Christian love, good love, not only gives meaning to life but also regulates, organizes, and tames the emotions. Baltasar, on the other hand, rejects emotion. “All affection is madness!” he says to himself without “compassion” before the spectacle of Elda without honor and judgment that he has provoked. It is only his final moment of lucidity, already fading, that makes him understand the power of

God and the need for mercy. Only Christianity, faith in God, and love allow him to accept and temper the passions of the spirit.

Finally, as in *Los tres amores* and previous works by Avellaneda, the protagonist's boundless, heroic femininity contains a critique of a normative masculinity from which women must also be freed. This masculinity must conform to the patterns of romance between equal souls. Rubén appears awkward and anxious in every scene. Lost in his emotions, he seems like a parody of the romantic hero, and as such, ennobles the lucid Baltasar, who casts onto the Hebrew man the same clichés of cowardice and effeminacy that surrounded the image of Eastern monarchs.⁶⁶ His father, Joaquín, addresses him with a dismissive and harsh, "And you say it?" for not knowing how to defend his wife's virtue, believing her "lost, sullied." In contrast, Elda leads the redemption of her family, people, God, and religion "with dignity." In the same way, she stands firm and "dignified" before her husband, while the drama reveals his weaknesses. After believing her sullied in Baltasar's harem, Rubén asks her distrustfully, "Can I still give you the sacred name of wife?" Because Rubén's love is conventional, it belongs to the society that distorted the natural order God created, and with it, equality between souls. Elda shouts to him in a true assertion of herself, her will, and autonomy, and "with dignity": "I exist!"⁶⁷ But Elda's madness reminds us that in the other world where there is no Christian love and faith, there is no hope for women—neither for her nor Nitócris, the other female character, who mourns both the son's impiety and death.

Five days after the premiere of *Baltasar*, Avellaneda's husband was attacked on the street. The scandal, related to the cat incident and the couple's political feuds, occupied the press for the next several days.⁶⁸ The injury was not fatal, but the couple left Madrid during that summer of 1858. Despite the unusual success of *Baltasar*, Avellaneda left for her homeland, Cuba, where she was received as a great celebrity. In 1860, writing in a magazine she edited, she discussed "the emancipation of women" in the same terms we have analyzed, taking "into her hands her own interests" and showing "irrefutable arguments in favor of the intellectual equality of both sexes" in pursuit of their "common right."⁶⁹

Conclusions

As Eva Illouz has explained, in the ambivalence of nineteenth-century Western modernity, love gave a transcendent meaning to life, which now revolved around the individual.⁷⁰ Discourses on love constituted moral order and regulated emotions and relations between the sexes, as Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda was well aware. As I have argued, in Spain, by the late 1850s, the radicalization of affective individualism, which characterized Romanticism and which Avellaneda expressed in her personal life and public persona, had strained the contradictions embedded in enlightened female sensibility of "reasonable sentiments," as Bolufer put it. Avellaneda's celebrity and

performance of the new liberal illustrious woman reproduced these tensions in mid-nineteenth-century Romantic Madrid. Love became a contested terrain, especially for women who faced the (im)possibility of being a (reasonable, talented) individual and (passionate) woman. Avellaneda understood the significance of love in all its political valences and developed a critical, ironic perspective on modernity and her own identity, “uniting two truths that appear to be opposed to each other,” as Carolina Coronado wrote about the Cuban Spanish writer.

Considering her final plays in Madrid, *Los tres amores* and *Baltasar*, which premiered in early 1858, together with her life and other work, underscores the importance of conceptions of love in feminist debates. Within discourses about the moral superiority of Western Christian civilization, Avellaneda pushed the boundaries of what we could call the fantasy of emancipation for women by redefining the narrative of romantic love. In *Los tres amores*, she appropriated what she called a third way of loving that was neither submissive nor overflowing; it was manly, genial but feminine, and devoted. She reinvented herself in public for the last time, reconciling her masculine intellectual superiority with her feminine heart in an ideal serene relationship with Domingo Verdugo. In her characters, Avellaneda mixed the talents and affective natures of the other sex. She dissolved the intellectual and affective differences between the “immortal souls” of men and women. The same irony with which *Baltasar*, in his moment of lucidity like a dream vision, fell in love and converted to Christianity, at the same time, evoked an alternative moral and political order articulated around a love affair between two equal souls, an Eastern King and a Jewish woman. Avellaneda celebrated Christianity’s moral purpose as the only path to civilizing progress while subtly displacing a key structural piece of this moral order: the hierarchical conception of love between reasonable Western men and sentimental Western women. Her proposal of a romantic, Christian ideal between equal male and female souls (of all races and classes) assumed their intellectual and affective equality, and by extension, the complete emancipation of dignified, autonomous women. Throughout the nineteenth century, Western feminisms were forged through this elusive reconciliation between reasonable sentiments and affective individualism.

Notes

- * This work is part of the project PGC2018-097445-B-C22 funded by MICINN.
- 1 The classic study by Emilio Cotarelo y Mori, *La Avellaneda y sus obras* (Madrid: Tipografía de Archivos, 1930), is fundamental. Susan Kirkpatrick, *Las Románticas: Women Writers and Subjectivity in Spain (1835–1850)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Evelyn Picón Garfield, *Poder y sexualidad: el discurso de Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda* (Amsterdam and Atlanta: Rodolpi, 1993); David T. Gies, “‘¡Es mucho hombre esta mujer!’: mujeres y teatro (1838–1900),” in David T. Gies, *El teatro en la España del siglo XIX* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 268–321; Brígida Pastor, *El discurso de Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda: identidad femenina y otredad* (Alicante SUA, 2002); María C. Albin, *Género*,

- poesía y esfera pública. Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda y la tradición Romántica (Madrid: Trotta, 2002); Alexander R. Selimov, *De la Ilustración al Modernismo: la poética de la cultura romántica en el discurso de Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda* (Boulder: Society of Spanish and Spanish-American Studies, 2003). Recent works: Milena Rodríguez, ed., Special Issue “Entre Cuba y España: Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda en su bicentenario (1814–2014),” *Arbor* 190, no. 770 (2014) <https://doi.org/10.3989/arbor.2014.i770>; Brígida Pastor, ed., Special Issue “Bicentenary of Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda: A Life and a Literature of her Own,” *Romance Studies* 32, no. 4 (2014): 215–217; Ángeles Ezama, ed., *Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda: Autobiografía y otras páginas* (Madrid: RAE, 2015); Maria C. Albin, Megan Corbin, and Raúl Marrero-Fente, eds., Special Issue “Gender and the Politics of Literature: Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda,” *Hispanic Issues On Line* 18 (2017): 1–66; Mónica Burguera, “Coronado a la sombra de Avellaneda. La reelaboración (política) de la feminidad liberal en España entre la igualdad y la diferencia (1837–1868),” *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma* 29 (2017): 93–127.
- 2 Mónica Bolufer, “Reasonable Sentiments. Sensibility and Balance in Eighteenth-Century Spain,” in *Engaging the Emotions in Spanish Culture and History*, ed. Luisa Elena Delgado, Pura Fernández, and Jo Labanyi (Madrid: Cátedra, 2018), 35–56; and Ana Rueda, “Virtue in Distress in the Spanish Sentimental Novel: An Unsustainable Model of Rational Sensibility,” in *Eve’s Enlightenment: Women’s Experience in Spain and Spanish America, 1726–1839*, ed. Catherine Jaffe and Elisabeth F. Lewis (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State U. Press, 2009), 197–217. See Bolufer’s critical reading of William Reddy’s notion of “emotional regimes” in late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Spain on page 35. William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling. A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
 - 3 Emilio Cotarelo y Mori, *La Avellaneda y sus obras* (Madrid: Tipografía de Archivos, 1930), 76.
 - 4 Mónica Burguera, “Women and Gender in Nineteenth Century Spain: A History of Their Own” in *Routledge Handbook of Spanish History*, ed. Andrew Dowling (London: Routledge, 2023), 211–221; and “Ecos ilustrados, fantasías liberales, tintes católicos. Subjetividad, mujer y feminismo en la España del segundo tercio del siglo XIX,” in *Saber y crear en femenino: género, cultura y modernidad entre los siglos XV–XIX*, eds. Mónica Burguera and Gloria Espigado (Granada, Comares, 2023), 73–93. In reconsidering the history of feminism in the nineteenth century, I am indebted to the work of Joan Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminist and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996) and *The Fantasy of Feminist History* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).
 - 5 Luisa Passerini, *Europe in Love, Love in Europe. Imagination and Politics in Britain between the Wars* (London, New York: I.B. Tauris, 1999). On the political dimension of love, I draw from Sarah Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotions* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 122–143; and, particularly, Eva Illouz, *Why Love Hurts: A Sociological Explanation* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012).
 - 6 Jo Labanyi, “Sentimental Biopower: Rereading the Spanish Nineteenth Century,” *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 22, no. 2 (2021): 175–185.
 - 7 Mónica Bolufer, “A Centuries-long Enslavement? Gender and Islam in the Hispanic Enlightenment: an Exploratory Approach,” *Diciottesimo Secolo* 7 (2022): 53–63; Xavier Andreu and Mónica Bolufer, eds., *European Modernity and the Passionate South. Gender and Nation in Spain and Italy in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2022).
 - 8 William M. Reddy, *The Making of Romantic Love: Longing and Sexuality in Europe, South Asia & Japan, 900–1200 CE* (Chicago-London: University of Chicago Press, 2012); Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Love: A History in Five Fantasies*

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- 9 Mónica Burguera, “Women and Gender in Nineteenth Century Spain: A History of Their Own” in *Routledge Handbook of Spanish History*, ed. Andrew Dowling (London: Routledge, 2023), 211–221; and Mónica Burguera, “Ecos ilustrados, fantasías liberales, tintes católicos. Subjetividad, mujer y feminismo en la España del segundo tercio del siglo XIX,” in *Saber y crear en femenino: género, cultura y modernidad entre los siglos XV–XIX*, eds. Mónica Burguera and Gloria Espigado (Granada, Comares, 2023), 73–93.
 - 10 Ricardo de la Fuente Ballesteros, “El ‘Baltasar’ de Gómez de Avellaneda y algunas cartas a Hartzenbusch,” *Siglo XIX* 1 (1995), 125.
 - 11 Ricardo de la Fuente Ballesteros, “El ‘Baltasar’ de Gómez de Avellaneda y algunas cartas a Hartzenbusch,” *Siglo XIX* 1 (1995), 130.
 - 12 Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, *Los tres amores. Drama en tres actos precedidos de un prólogo* (Madrid: Imprenta José Rodríguez, 1859) and *Baltasar. Drama oriental en cuatro actos y en verso* (Madrid: Imprenta José Rodríguez, 1859). Recent studies, Fabián Gutiérrez, “La configuración del personaje en *Baltasar*, de Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda,” *Teatro* 6–7 (1995): 201–212; Ricardo de la Fuente Ballesteros, “El ‘Baltasar’ de Gómez de Avellaneda y algunas cartas a Hartzenbusch,” *Siglo XIX* 1 (1995), Iñigo Sánchez-Llama, “‘Baltasar’ (1858), de Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda (1814–1873): análisis de una recepción institucional,” *Hispanófila*, 133 (Sept. 2001): 69–94; José Luis González Subías, “Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda y la tragedia romántica española,” *Lectora, heroína, autora: (la mujer en la literatura española del siglo XIX)*, ed. Virginia Trueba et al. (Barcelona: Universitat de Barcelona PPU, 2005), 173–183; Miguel Ángel Muro, “El subgénero teatral del romanticismo religioso español: *Baltasar* de Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda,” *Revista de Literatura* 72, no. 144 (Jul–Dec 2010): 341–377; and María Elena Ojea Fernández, “El proceso de lectura en *Baltasar* de Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda: los personajes femeninos y sus modos de actuación,” *Monteagudo* 25 (2020): 149–169.
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- 25 David T. Gies, "¡Es mucho hombre esta mujer!": mujeres y teatro (1838–1900)," in David T. Gies, *El teatro en la España del siglo XIX* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 283.
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- 29 Emilio Cotarelo y Mori, *La Avellaneda y sus obras* (Madrid: Tipografía de Archivos, 1930), 278–279.
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- 31 Carolina Coronado, "Doña Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda," in "Galería de poetisas españolas contemporáneas," *La Discusión*, May 29, 1858. See also, Mónica Burguera, "¿Cuál será la poetisa más perfecta? La reinención política de Carolina Coronado en la Galería de poetisas españolas contemporáneas (*La Discusión*, 1857)," *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 19, no. 3 (2018): 297–317; and "Fernán Caballero y la celebridad romántica femenina," in *Fernán Caballero: escritura y contradicción*, ed. Mercedes Comellas (Sevilla: Junta de Andalucía, 2022), 71–81.
- 32 Maria C. Albin, "El genio femenino y la autoridad literaria: 'Luisa Molina' de Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda," *Atenea* 490 (II Sem. 2004): 115–130.
- 33 Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, "Cartas y otros escritos de Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda e Ignacio de Cepeda," *Pasiones epistolares: La correspondencia amorosa entre la Avellaneda e Ignacio de Cepeda*, ed. Cristina Ramos Cobano (Granada: Comares, 2021), 89.

- 34 Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, *Los tres amores. Drama en tres actos precedidos de un prólogo* (Madrid: Imprenta José Rodríguez, 1859), 31 and 43. Female characters that emerge from nature are recurrent in Avellaneda, as is especially the case of the successful *Flora*. In the context of the construction of the “Spanish woman,” the character of Matilde must be read in contraposition to Marisalada, the protagonist of Fernán Caballero’s *La Gaviota*.
- 35 Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, *Los tres amores. Drama en tres actos precedidos de un prólogo* (Madrid: Imprenta José Rodríguez, 1859), 34
- 36 Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, *Los tres amores. Drama en tres actos precedidos de un prólogo* (Madrid: Imprenta José Rodríguez, 1859), 16. On the “hydraulic model” of emotions that conceives of them as liquids that emanate from the inside to the outside, see Barbara H. Rosenwein, “Worrying about Emotions,” *The American Historical Review* 107, no. 3 (June 2002): 821–845.
- 37 Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, *Los tres amores. Drama en tres actos precedidos de un prólogo* (Madrid: Imprenta José Rodríguez, 1859), 11.
- 38 Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, *Los tres amores. Drama en tres actos precedidos de un prólogo* (Madrid: Imprenta José Rodríguez, 1859), 61.
- 39 Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, *Los tres amores. Drama en tres actos precedidos de un prólogo* (Madrid: Imprenta José Rodríguez, 1859), 54.
- 40 Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, *Los tres amores. Drama en tres actos precedidos de un prólogo* (Madrid: Imprenta José Rodríguez, 1859), 11. Gies has also drawn attention to these strategies of “inverting accepted patterns” in works such as *Saúl, Flora, or Baltasar*: David T. Gies, “¡Es mucho hombre esta mujer!': mujeres y teatro (1838–1900),” in David T. Gies, *El teatro en la España del siglo XIX* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 283.
- 41 Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, *Los tres amores. Drama en tres actos precedidos de un prólogo* (Madrid: Imprenta José Rodríguez, 1859), 80–82.
- 42 Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, *Los tres amores. Drama en tres actos precedidos de un prólogo* (Madrid: Imprenta José Rodríguez, 1859), 55.
- 43 Emilio Cotarelo y Mori, *La Avellaneda y sus obras* (Madrid: Tipografía de Archivos, 1930), 320.
- 44 David T. Gies, “¡Es mucho hombre esta mujer!': mujeres y teatro (1838–1900),” in David T. Gies, *El teatro en la España del siglo XIX* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 272–273.
- 45 Juan Valera, “Observaciones sobre el drama titulado Baltasar de la señora doña Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda,” in *Obras literarias de la Señora Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda V*, ed. Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda (Madrid: Imprenta M. Rivadeneyra, 1871), 353–365. Avellaneda has been linked to neocatholic anti-liberalism, but I do not think that is accurate. As Valera explains, “We are not talking about the *neocaticismo* of those who apply religion to politics with crude artifice.”
- 46 Brígida Pastor, “El discurso abolicionista de la diáspora: el caso de Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda y su novela *Sab* (1841),” *América sin Nombre* 19 (2014): 35.
- 47 Juan Valera, “Observaciones sobre el drama titulado Baltasar de la señora doña Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda,” in *Obras literarias de la Señora Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda V*, ed. Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda (Madrid: Imprenta M. Rivadeneyra, 1871), 364, and Pedro Antonio de Alarcón, “Baltasar de la señora Gómez de Avellaneda” in *Obras literarias de la Señora Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda V*, ed. Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda (Madrid: Imprenta M. Rivadeneyra, 1871), 319.
- 48 Severo Catalina, “Baltasar,” in *Obras literarias de la Señora Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda V*, ed. Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda (Madrid: Imprenta M. Rivadeneyra, 1871), 327.

- 49 Juan Valera, "Observaciones sobre el drama titulado Baltasar de la señora doña Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda," in *Obras literarias de la Señora Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda V*, ed. Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda (Madrid: Imprenta M. Rivadeneyra, 1871), 364.
- 50 Pedro Antonio de Alarcón, "Baltasar de la señora Gómez de Avellaneda" in *Obras literarias de la Señora Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda V*, ed. Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda (Madrid: Imprenta M. Rivadeneyra, 1871), 320.
- 51 Jesús Millán and M^a Cruz Romeo, "Individuo, nación y religión en el liberalismo español, 1808–1868," *Ayer* 132 (2023): 23–47.
- 52 Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, *Baltasar. Drama oriental en cuatro actos y en verso* (Madrid: Imprenta José Rodríguez, 1859), 1–22.
- 53 Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, *Baltasar. Drama oriental en cuatro actos y en verso* (Madrid: Imprenta José Rodríguez, 1859), 23–46.
- 54 Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, *Baltasar. Drama oriental en cuatro actos y en verso* (Madrid: Imprenta José Rodríguez, 1859), 47–65.
- 55 Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, *Baltasar. Drama oriental en cuatro actos y en verso* (Madrid: Imprenta José Rodríguez, 1859), 66–92.
- 56 Mónica Burguera, *Las damas del liberalismo respetable: los imaginarios sociales del feminismo liberal en España (1834–1850)* (Madrid: Cátedra, 2012), 173–179; Mónica Burguera, "Ecos ilustrados, fantasías liberales, tintes católicos. Subjetividad, mujer y feminismo en la España del segundo tercio del siglo XIX," in *Saber y crear en femenino: género, cultura y modernidad entre los siglos XV–XIX*, eds. Mónica Burguera and Gloria Espigado (Granada, Comares, 2023), 84–85; Gloria Espigado, "El concepto 'emancipación femenina' y sus significados a lo largo del siglo XIX en España," unpublished paper presented at XXI Coloquio Internacional de la AEIHM: *Tras la estela de los feminismos históricos*, Bilbao, October 26–28, 2022.
- 57 "De la mujer," *Semanario Pintoresco Español*, August 5, 1838: 660–661.
- 58 "De la mujer," *Semanario Pintoresco Español*, August 5, 1838: 660–661.
- 59 Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, *Baltasar. Drama oriental en cuatro actos y en verso* (Madrid: Imprenta José Rodríguez, 1859), 49.
- 60 Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, "Capacidad de las mujeres para el gobierno," *La Ilustración. Álbum de Damas* 8, November 2, 1845: 1. Maria C. Albin, "Fronteras de género, nación y ciudadanía: La Ilustración. Álbum de Damas (1845) de Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda," in *Actas XIII Congreso Asociación Internacional de Hispanistas*, vol. II (Madrid, Castalia, 2000), 67–75.
- 61 Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, "A.S.A.R El Srmo. Sr. D. Alfonso de Borbón, Príncipe de Asturias," in Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, *Baltasar. Drama oriental en cuatro actos y en verso* (Madrid: Imprenta José Rodríguez, 1859).
- 62 Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, *Baltasar. Drama oriental en cuatro actos y en verso* (Madrid: Imprenta José Rodríguez, 1859), 57.
- 63 Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, *Baltasar. Drama oriental en cuatro actos y en verso* (Madrid: Imprenta José Rodríguez, 1859), 51–52.
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- 65 Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, *Baltasar. Drama oriental en cuatro actos y en verso* (Madrid: Imprenta José Rodríguez, 1859), 53 and 56.
- 66 Lou Channon-Deutsch, "Hatred alone warms the heart. Figures of Ill Repute in the Nineteenth-Century Spanish Novel," in *Engaging the Emotions in Spanish Culture and History*, ed. Luisa Elena Delgado, Pura Fernández, and Jo Labanyi (Madrid: Cátedra, 2018), 95–110.
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Section II

Crossing Contexts, Unsettling Sensibilities



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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 Burdiel,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

2

25

Querido miranda ábistade lorabioso que estu
 biste esta mañana y todo el enfado se a redu
 cido porque yo sali ayer ala comedia y el día
 te deden te estubiste de guardia no me pare
 ce motivo para que dejer a una que te aque
 rido y te quiere con una mot tan verdadero
 que yo me alegrara la mita que tu lo yie
 ras asi pue de la tantas bizer que me as
 dicho que me quieres a ora se a de cona
 aunque reflexiones lo que a dicho que no as
 e tenir sino de me a unes me pare
 e que no te tan facil como lo a dicho no
 quer a biendome querido como me a
 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 *Colombia*, 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 long 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 amey happy happy years in the prayer
 of your sincerest but unhappy friend ^{the} 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 has, and when 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 immediately
 he sends his best wishes to you - I might 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 I shall not be payed until I have your ^{town} 1817-18
 letter, has he has all the Property in this hands - which brings 998 1/2
 and upwards of 2000 and some books and papers ^{which} 1792-1793
 Mr Peter Furbush called to day - told him my fear at supposing
 the books to be removed - he told me, that this was the one Mr Dunnett
 would have Mr Dawson have writen - and after that they
 would have it stamp'd - that they would have every security
 and beg'd of me to make myself happy - that I can never be
 I look at the empty rooms, and dep'read 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 any place
 to quiet the badness, and prevent them being removed
 I have had a felt of relief, 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 Dawson Clark will
 wrest them, and Peter Furbush will be present, and a man
 from Dulais to pack them up, 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 janvier mais je n'ai pas recu celle de
 catalis, j'ayren 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'ay besoin de la consolation que votre lettre
 me done car de pui mon arise, j'ai dessuje 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 retine 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 forebear 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 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), 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)," *Manuscrits* 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 simbole 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 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); 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 Voladeros 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 Tonelie 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 décembre 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’êtes 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 convalessent 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 malhereux” – 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 c1799, 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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8 Translating Transgender and Sensibility in Eighteenth-Century Europe

The Mediatic Ecosystem of Transmission, Reworking, and Perception of *The Brief Story of Catterina Vizzani*

Clorinda Donato

The circulation of texts and stories recorded in every genre of print media shaped debates about gender. Indeed, the translation of works into other languages in the eighteenth century is increasingly proving to be an important means of documenting reception; more significantly, however, it allows us to chart how different communities of knowledge and practice reframed and resignified texts across languages, cultures, and times, often referencing or commenting upon the community of culture, in our case, gender culture, from which the source text emerged. It is within these cross-cultural debates that we may identify the evolution of ideas surrounding gender, grounded in the perception of experiences and the often resulting conundrum of how those experiences should be read across transnational temporalities.¹

This chapter allows us to track transgender, its visibility, and subsequent acceptance or rejection through the publication of the Italian source text, anatomist Giovanni Bianchi's *Breve storia di Catterina Vizzani* about Catterina Vizzani's transition to male as Giovanni Bordoni in 1744; through its translation into English in 1751; and finally through its translation into German in 1755. Following consideration of the research into the anatomy of generation and the relationship between the presentation of the physical body, passions, and emotion, this study will examine how each iteration, its language, and referencing of a particular community of gender culture reveals how texts and their translation both reflected and shaped opinions around gender identities, and in this particular case, those around transgender. The chapter also revisits the highly fraught topic of tribadism and the (erroneous) belief that any form of non-normative sexual activity involving women was rooted in physiology, in particular, possessing a large clitoris.²

Anatomical study reached its apex in the eighteenth century, with a subset of members of the Republic of Letters made up of anatomists in university centers throughout Europe constituting a discrete network of information exchange that would move beyond disciplinary boundaries into more

public discussions.³ From Bologna to Padua, to Göttingen, to Leiden, Berne, Uppsala, Edinburgh, Paris, Montpellier, and London, a close network of anatomists exchanged copious letters, often in Latin, but increasingly in French, English, German, and Italian. They published treatises, textbooks, and journal articles about the functioning of the body. This knowledge was continually gleaned from autopsies and dissections for learning purposes that took place in anatomical theaters, hospitals, and private cabinets. The reading public was increasingly informed about anatomical discoveries from the burgeoning periodicals that featured reviews and extracts of scientific works on anatomy. Over time, that same public clamored for information about solutions to medical conditions and explanations about “monstrous” births and increasingly “aberrant” behaviors and the motivation behind them. In these instances, anecdotal and experiential information flowed together with medical information: the body, behavior, and science met where the private became a public site of analysis.

Enter sensibility, symptom of a growing sense of the private self being observed in public with behaviors, lifestyles, and public demeanor becoming a category of moral judgment formed and expressed through public opinion, shared through published sources and translations of those same sources about different ways of life. Indeed, it is at the juncture of sensibility that the history and life story of the transgender Catterina Vizzani/Giovanni Bordoni (female to male) in the eighteenth century, the focus of the present study, reveals the growing visibility and awareness of the category of identity, in particular, sexual identity/identities.⁴

The Story of Catterina Vizzani and Giovanni Bordoni

The life story of Catterina Vizzani, the Italian woman who transitioned to male to become Giovanni Bordoni, was first told in a 29-page novella, *Breve storia di Catterina Vizzani*, published in 1744 by anatomist Giovanni Bianchi. The hybrid medical narrative genre was unique and provocative, and an enticement to the reader to learn about the strange story alluded to in the long form of the title.⁵ From the age of 14 when the story begins, Catterina Vizzani woos Margherita, doing so in the clothing of a man, but also considering himself to be a man. Fleeing Rome to escape persecution by both church and state for the life she has chosen to live, Catterina transitions into Giovanni Bordoni, male in spirit, deed, and body through what was then the most complete possible physical transformation, the fashioning of a leather dildo that Bordoni strapped to his body. Respected for his capabilities as a butler and household manager in the Tuscan countryside, in the town of Libbrafratta he falls in love with the niece of his employer, a local administrator with an ecclesiastical affiliation. Having proposed to the niece, Giovanni wants to bring her to Rome for the wedding. Thus, they plan their escape from the uncle’s house, with the younger niece in tow, for she does not want to be left behind to further endure the uncle’s strict upbringing

practices. But the escape doesn't go as planned, and they are sidelined by a broken-down carriage wheel, which allows the uncle and his search party to reach them. The uncle shoots Giovanni in the leg and he is taken to the local hospital in Poggibonsi and later transferred to Siena, where the anatomist Giovanni Bianchi was employed. Giovanni Bordoni's festering wound was not attended to, and shortly before dying, he reveals to the good nuns who were caring for him that he was anatomically a woman. The nuns dismiss Giovanni's dildo, focusing on preserved virginity, and thus, Giovanni reluctantly becomes Catterina again and is buried with that name in an eighteenth-century case of deadnaming. But Giovanni Bianchi and his assistant are called to perform an autopsy on the body. Bianchi considers the dildo as a body part, giving one of the first readings validating the construction of gender *avant la lettre*. He also debunks the prevalent theory that "women who love other women" do so as the result of having a large, or hypertrophied, clitoris. Bianchi tells us that the cadaver he is examining possesses a clitoris that is smallish in size. Bianchi, as his profession demanded, wrote clinical abstracts and findings. However, he also dabbled in creative writing and had penned several novellas in the style of Boccaccio to entertain his friends. The *Breve storia* is a conflation of these two genres of writing, making the story of Catterina a medical novella, and history's first scientific exploration of lived transgender experience. As can be seen from the translations we will examine here, the story and science take on a life of their own across the boundaries of language, culture, and social practices.

What distinguishes this story from a mere tale of cross-dressing or disguised identity is Giovanni Bianchi's grafting of a scientific event, that of the autopsy of Catterina-Giovanni's body, and Bianchi's clinical description of the body and its parts with Giovanni Bordoni's life story. It is at this juncture that the question of identity resides, for Vizzani, who becomes Bordoni, firmly and defiantly transitioned and made this public. Bianchi wanted to know the extent to which this transitioned identity was acknowledged by those who knew him, and he gathered this information through letters to his friends in Rome who knew the story and knew that his parents accepted him as a man. We need only recall that Bordoni was bringing home his future wife to be married as a man in Rome.

The infusion of Giovanni Bianchi's own story as a doctor into the narrative establishes a space for moral and social reflection that lends the story its extraordinarily modern position and awakening to transgender as an identity category. Doctors usually didn't tell stories, although some had begun to include lifestyle and diet in their evaluation of their patients' illnesses. While Bianchi shared an interest in the role of lust with his Dutch anatomist forebears, Reinier De Graaf (1641–1673), Antonie van Leeuwenhoek (1632–1723), and Jan Swammerdam (1637–1680), and most especially, Dutch humanist Adrian Beverland (1650–1716), who wrote extensively on sexual lust, he sought to understand the workings of lust and desire that operated physically, to be sure, but also psychologically, emotionally, and socially. So

central is this intention to his motivation for writing the story that he opened the novella with it and an observation:

Truly strange and remarkably incredible are at times human appetites, especially in matters of love; therefore no one should be surprised if some people, only hearing about the fire of love, are at times so enflamed that they go awandering through various and distant lands to try to possess at last the object of their desire. Thus, it is no wonder if at times some are so powerfully inflamed by this very fire, whether through twisted or proper pathways, that neither class, nor parentage, nor gender may impede the satisfying of that appetite, to the extent that they are able.⁶

As we move through the various iterations of Bianchi's text rendered in multiple languages, we will discover how "the fire of love" and the bodies that felt it and acted on it were interpreted for audiences ever more demanding of information about sexuality and its social face.

Fearing death at the hands of an ecclesiastical tribunal should the father file a formal complaint, Catterina takes refuge at the Church of Santa Maria di Trastevere, with all of the trappings of a "safe house" where diverse sexualities were protected. Catterina wore men's clothing and identified as male with the name of Giovanni Bordoni upon meeting the canon at Trastevere. She sought protection from her lover's father, to be sure, but once in the "safe house," Bordoni also sought protection from the homosexual men who propositioned him. Giovanni Bordoni only loved women. The canon's willingness to assist Giovanni in finding employment as a butler to wealthy families in Tuscany, the first of whom was the canon's own brother, reveals a fascinating network of complicity and assistance that also included Catterina/Giovanni's parents, who were fully aware of their daughter's transitioned identity.⁷ They visited the canon about Giovanni's options, simply stating that he was born that way. The revelation of a social fabric of support, which Bianchi documented through letters to his friends in Rome, and its central role in the telling of this transgender story, constitutes precisely the life-writing aspect of Bianchi's approach and his strategy of offering his readers a slice of life about a person whom, he believes, they should know and accept.⁸ Bianchi also offers examples of the negative reaction to Giovanni Bordoni's plight, most especially in the attempt on Bordoni's life from his fiancée's uncle as the couple sought to escape to Rome to marry later in the story. As we will see, the dildo in John Cleland's English-language translation will produce an outpouring of condemning and mocking verbiage, as much of Bianchi as of Vizzani/Bordoni, together with the notion of illicit marriage between women, which would make Bordoni a "female husband" as transitioned women living in domestic relationships were widely known in England, as we shall see in this essay when we discuss Henry Fielding's text, *The Female Husband*, and how John Cleland would use it as context for his English translation of Bianchi's *Breve Storia*.

John Cleland's 1751 "Translation," i.e., Adaptation: Between Italy and England

In all likelihood, the Italian text entered England through Livorno, where the book trade thrived. It may have also been known to Horace Walpole through his doctor, Antonio Cocchi, a friend of Bianchi's with whom Bianchi had shared the text.⁹ In London, the text falls into the hands of John Cleland, author of the 1749 *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, better known as *Fanny Hill*. When his highly embellished English translation appears in 1751, its paradoxically prurient moralizing only underlines the divergent sexual politics driving Bianchi's sympathetic objectivity and Cleland's mercenary but sadly influential distortions.

Evident to any reader of *Fanny Hill* is Cleland's penchant for combining sexual content with social commentary, and the story of Catterina Vizzani would offer Cleland an enticing second act. Even the short title of his translation, *An Historical and Physical Dissertation on the Case of Catherine Vizzani*, demonstrates Cleland's desire from the outset to focus on the body through the addition of the word "physical" to Bianchi's title. Catterina's body, with its dildo as an aberrant symbol of an aberrant life as a "female husband" passing as a man, could only have been written by an aberrant physician like Bianchi. Indeed, Cleland condemns doctor, dildo, and Catterina Vizzani in a disparaging addition to the story in mock horror over the dildo, Catterina/Giovanni's manhood, "The Doctor enters into a nauseous Detail of her Impostures, which is the more inexcusable, they not being essential to the main Scope of the Narrative."¹⁰

As mentioned above, Cleland took his cue from Henry Fielding, whose 1746 *The Female Husband* inspired Cleland's own opportunity to bolster England's collective handwringing over women passing as men.¹¹ The story's Italian locus added the opportunity to condemn Italian moral turpitude with mock horror through titillating prose.¹² The story also aligned with the British medical discourse around sexuality found in any number of English eighteenth-century medical works, most especially Robert James's 1743–1745 *A Medicinal Dictionary* published in multiple editions and translations, or James Parsons's 1741 *A Mechanical and Critical Enquiry into the Nature of Hermaphrodites* where Parsons debunks the category of hermaphrodite, classifying ambiguous genitalia as belonging to defective women who need to be fixed. This corroborated Robert James's assessment in *A Medicinal Dictionary* that surgery on the offending member was the only option.¹³ Parsons and James both offered examples of ambiguously sexed, "defective women." These reflections coincided with the display of an African hermaphrodite brought from Angola who was installed in a museum-like space for public viewing. Observers sketched her genitals and shared the drawings, together with write-ups of other cases in which women and girls had deformed genitalia.¹⁴ James and Parsons both were thoroughly focused on the physical "aberration" of the oversized, monstrous clitoris as the cause

of tribadism, drawing, for James, an indisputable relationship between body and behavior.¹⁵ Henry Fielding factors in the social consequences resulting from the ability of these defective women to pass as men and become the dreaded female husbands that figure in the title of his 1746 book *The Female Husband*, which Cleland expands upon in his translation/adaptation of the story of Catterina Vizzani. As Maayan Sudai has noted, in early modern common law, cases that required determining a “husband’s” sex were not solely focused on the body but on social and cultural indicators as well.¹⁶ The body, the imagined body, and its social status are all at stake in the story of Catterina. Fielding’s application of medical knowledge to diagnosing the social and family problem of the female husband ultimately corroborates the solution proffered by both doctors in the prevention of female “sodomitic” abuse by calling for the amputation of clitorises that were supposedly too large, with Robert James detailing how the surgeon should perform this operation.

We note that this is precisely what Bianchi had set out to debunk, for it is not Catterina’s body that matches the body of the tribade who needs surgery to conform to the acceptable look of female genitals. The body that should be performing the behavior of the tribade, i.e., Catterina Vizzani’s body, is not a body possessing a monstrous clitoris, but rather a “normal” female body. Bianchi is also debunking the widely held belief that Italian women, like African women, were far more prone to having clitorises that could perform like a penis than other women. This notion had been widely disseminated, thanks to the Italian jurist Lodovico Maria Sinistrari who wrote extensively on all manner of sexual matters and claimed in 1700 that the penis-like clitoris was the only way women could have penetrative intercourse among themselves.¹⁷ For Sinistrari, the amputation of women’s genitals in southern countries was proof that tribadic physiology and the sexual misconduct associated with it were particularly widespread there.

In my monograph on the Catterina Vizzani story, I described in detail how Cleland sensationalized Bianchi’s text in his translation. I will recap a few of those instances here so that the German translation, the objections raised by readers, and responses to by the editors, will be clear. As mentioned above, Cleland’s scornful jocularly is evident from the paratextual material he and the English publisher added to the title page with the epigraph “What odd, fantastic things we women do.” This fanciful and enticing epigraph, combined with Cleland’s assertion of authority on the title page through his declaration of having added “useful remarks,” sets up the reader for the casting of aspersions on the anatomist Bianchi, not to mention generations of Italian anatomists trained at the Universities of Bologna and Padua, as was Bianchi himself. Bianchi’s couching of the medical within the lived experience of Giovanni Bordoni is also done with the scientific intent of trying to understand the origins of lust and the role played by physiology in desire. By focusing on Vizzani’s transition to male, to Bordoni, and relating the private and public places where Bordoni lived his life, Bianchi has gone far beyond

the physical to embrace the whole person, paving the way for an exploration of sensibility, which this paper addresses in its examination of the story across three languages and sexual-medical cultures.¹⁸ Cleland's tone of mock horror subverts and undermines the scientific and sociological aspects that Bianchi melds in his novella as a condemning device for the figure of the female husband as discussed earlier (Figure 8.1).

As stated above, John Cleland's additions to the title page in bold (our addition) indicate the extent to which he planned to intervene in the text, signaling to the reader that there is quite a bit amiss in the original:

[An] His[toric]al and phy[sic]al dissertation on the case of Catherine Vizzani, containing the adventures of a young woman, born at Rome, who for eight years passed in the habit of a man, was killed for an amour with a young lady; and being found on dissection, a true virgin, narrowly escaped being treated as a saint by the populace. With some curious and anatomical remarks on the nature and existence of the hymen. By Giovanni Bianchi, Professor of Anatomy at Sienna, the surgeon who dissected her. *To which are added certain needful remarks by the English editor.*¹⁹

Cleland makes good on his promise of editorial remarks that are interwoven throughout the text, not to mention the derogatory spin he gives to the dildo that Giovanni had permanently strapped to his body, the way in which Giovanni had transitioned. As explained earlier, the "*piuolo*" in Italian, meaning a wooden stick, raised none of the reactions that Cleland's translation of the term "leathern contrivance" did. Here, Cleland was clearly referencing a visual image that was probably familiar or at least known through descriptions of the leather dildos that existed at the time, replete with leather testicles.²⁰ Cleland's condemning of Italian taste, which he refers to as the "Italian Gouccarrat" permeates the entire translation, which is laced with unpleasant words such as "ordures" and descriptions in asides that he himself added, such as presenting Giovanni as "the most abandoned Whoremaster that ever seduced a Woman." Cleland's domestication of this translation, adapting it to the very English concern of the proliferation of "female husband" sightings that filled English periodicals and have been collected for consultation in Fraser Easton's Waterloo Cross-Dressing Archive (WXDA). This online resource contains documented cases, mainly in the British and French periodical press, of cross-dressing, with analysis of its possible intent, i.e., for work, for the sexual reason of pursuing other women, or transgender.²¹

It is no coincidence that anatomists were particularly intent on understanding the functioning of the organs of generation and the confluence of desire, if not uncontrollable lust, that was associated with those organs. But they asked themselves, was the lustful discharging of the passions with any potential recipient of such a release of the senses the only impulse behind sex acts, or was there a question of an identity that either complied with nature



Figure 8.1 Frontispiece in Giovanni Bianchi, *The true history and adventures of Catharine Vizzani, a young gentlewoman a native of Rome, who for many years past in the habit of a man*, translated by John Cleland, 2nd ed. (London, 1755).

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_True_History_and_Adventures_of_Catharine_Vizzani_-_frontispiece.jpg

as a heterosexual sex act or was it intrinsically “against nature” involving partners of the same sex? And could the heterosexual sex act be aberrant, too? How complex was a sex act and what did it entail beyond the organs of generation? As behaviors became more public, did some sexual behaviors deserve to be considered crimes, and by whom? In Italy and Spain, the Inquisition had been trying to adjudicate “crimes against nature” within ecclesiastical communities as well as among the nobility and the ordinary people of both the professional and artisanal classes, with a great deal of recent publication documenting cases discovered in inquisitorial archives.²² Often these trials were bolstered by forensic evidence and expert witnesses from the medical field who were called upon to describe what had happened to the bodies on trial, whether dead or alive, as forensic proof had become a feature of trials for everything from sainthood to what were defined as sexual crimes carrying a particular portent of changing social mores. As we shall see in our discussion of the German translation of the case of Catterina Vizzani/Giovanni Bordoni, there was no difference in how bodies were put on trial in Catholic and Protestant countries, the case of Catharina Margaretha Linck, discussed below, being a case in point.

Catterina Vizzani-Giovanni Bordoni in German and in the German States: Journals, Letters, Manuscripts²³

There are six instances in which the Catterina Vizzani-Giovanni Bordoni story circulated in German that we have been able to document so far. They deserve a thorough, chronological vetting in a future publication.²⁴ Here, however, we are going to address the last three: the translation itself into German,²⁵ a review of the German translation,²⁶ and the response of the German editors to complaints from the readership about the “dirty story” that they had published.²⁷ Why did this novella garner so much attention in Germany? There are two immediate answers to that question, the first one being the strong ties that linked German and Italian intellectuals throughout the eighteenth century.²⁸ Indeed, the correspondence between Giovanni Bianchi and Albrecht von Haller was consistent over a period of several years, and in all likelihood, Bianchi sent some copies of his medical novella to Haller, but also to other German medical doctors and anatomists, such as Peter Christian Wagner, with whom Giovanni Bianchi was also in epistolary contact.²⁹

The other answer has to do with parallel histories of transgender, with the German case known to us through the copious documentation produced by what is perhaps the most famous trial of a transgender person in the eighteenth century, that of Catharina Margaretha Linck, or Anastasius Lagrantinus Rosenstengel, a Prussian female-to-male transgender who died by hanging in 1721 for transforming her body with a dildo, adopting a male name, and transitioning into a man to the extent possible in the eighteenth century as Vizzani would do some 23 years later.³⁰ Linck was accused of

sodomizing women with the dildo. Thus, Linck's trial documents raise the hotly debated issue of what constitutes a sexual crime when a dildo is used to penetrate a woman. In its report on Catharina Margaretha Linck's case, the Berlin Criminal Collegio also referred to the "Oriental women" who were "sodomitically" inclined because of their large clitorises. We note that the Linck trial documents have become a source of contemplation and comparison in the twenty-first century, with a scholarly monograph devoted to the story by Angela Steidele, and even a compelling graphic published by German comic book artist and illustrator, Elke R. Steiner³¹ (Figure 8.2).

In the seventeenth century, Italian Franciscan Ludovico Maria Sinistrari had already imagined the need for adjudicating a matter of the use of a dildo to sodomize women, and Linck became a textbook case. Sinistrari had penned *De Delictis et Poenis Tractatus Absolutissimus or The Most Absolute Treatise of Crime and Punishment*, of which one section was about sodomy (and is often published separately). It included the sodomitical sex acts of women with large clitorises or dildos used to penetrate other women anally. The crime, according to Sinistrari, consisted of deriving pleasure through the touching of genitalia in the case of the large clitoris penetrating the vagina or anus of another woman. However, penetration by dildo, according to Sinistrari, could not produce pleasure and was therefore not a crime. This discussion of pleasure and the use of a dildo was debated in Linck's case and printed in the write-up of the trial. Let us delve further into the case. Catharina Margaretha Linck was a Prussian woman who had presented herself as a man for most of her adult life. She married a woman. Based on their sexual activity together, she was convicted of sodomy and executed by order of King Frederick William I in 1721. Linck's was the last documented execution for lesbian-transgender sexual activity in Europe and an anomaly for its time. According to the documents, Mrs. Mühlhahn, the mother of Catharina's wife, "charged the defendant with being a woman and not a man, ... ripped open her pants, examined her, and discovered that she was indeed not a man but a woman." Mühlhahn's mother provided the authorities with the artificial penis along with a "leather-covered horn" that Linck wore next to her body, which constituted part of her "male disguise" and allowed her to urinate standing up.³²

We are reminded of Catterina's leather dildo and the accusation of imposture that would also be used by Cleland in describing Catterina Vizzani. For Bianchi, instead, when Vizzani transitions to Bordoni, Bianchi recognizes that status in his medical novella through the exclusive use of male pronouns from the moment Catterina changes his name to Giovanni. The most important indicator of the transition for Giovanni Bordoni was the permanent tethering of the dildo to his body. It was not, therefore, merely an instrument for providing sexual pleasure to one's partner, but rather a means of constructing and asserting one's identity. As we have seen with the accusations of Linck's mother-in-law, Catharina Margaretha Linck-Anastadius Lagratinus Rosenstengel had done precisely the same thing, i.e., he wore the leather



Figure 8.2 Catharina Margaretha Linck dressed as a woman and as a man. Plate in *Umständliche und wahrhaffte Beschreibung einer Land- und Leute-Betrügerin: Welche im 12ten Jahre ihres Alters unter die so genannten Inspiraten gerathen, und in Manns-Kleidern mit ihnen herum vagiret, sich etliche mahl tauffen, auch als eine Manns- mit einer Weibs-Person trauen lassen ... endlich aber von dem ihr anvertrauten Weibsbild verrathen, folglich im 27ten Jahr ihres Alters in diesem 1720ten Jahr in Arrest genommen, und gegen sie mit der Inquisition verfahren, auch dadurch ihr vielfältiger Betrug und Boßheiten entdecket worden* (1720).

Source: Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt. https://opendata.uni-halle.de/explore?bitstream_id=975e8c7d-9b45-4ce2-b912-be5f21a15cc4&handle=1981185920/98263&provider=iif-image

penis constantly, together with a leather-covered horn for urinating standing up like a man. Both Vizzani-Bordoni and Linck-Rosenstengel are transgender, having both transitioned at a decisive point and both using male names and altering their bodies to the extent possible through the constant wearing of a dildo as a body part. As far as the use of pronouns is concerned, in the

case of Linck-Rosenstengel, we have court documents in lieu of a novella, but those court documents use male and female pronouns interchangeably when referring to Linck-Rosenstengel; the pronouns were also used by the two doctors and the midwife who participated in the trial as expert witnesses to determine the sex of Linck-Rosenstengel's body. What the two share, however, is the sex with which they identify themselves. Neither had a hypertrophied clitoris, and both considered themselves male and behaved as males socially. These were the realities of transgender that Giovanni Bianchi was trying to bring forth.

Indeed, the six instances we have found of the story of Catterina Vizzani-Giovanni Bordoni in German letters and the periodical press can now be better understood in a context in which the question of sexuality, gratification, lust, and, as we shall see going forward, sentiment, continued to evolve and to be found in genres that are powerful in their ability to chart what people were thinking and feeling about sexuality, especially trans sexualities and lives that in many ways mirror the discussions that are ongoing today.

The German Translation of the *Breve Storia* and Its Reception

The German translation of Vizzani/Bordoni's life, *Historische und physikalische Beschreibung des merkwürdigen Falles mit Catterina Vizzani*, was published in 1755 in the periodical *Allegemeines Magazin der Natur, Kunst und Wissenschaften*. The German translation was based on Cleland's English translation and not the original Italian, as indicated on the title page, "Aus dem Englischen übersetzt." The review of the German translation that appears in the *Zuverlässige Nachrichten* reflects the interest that the translation had inspired among readers. This publication, which can be defined as a review or abstract and indexing journal, appeared between 1740 and 1757. While the word "reliable" that appears in its title seeks to instill in the reader a sense of impartiality, in the case of the review it published on the German translation of the story of Catterina, the opposite is true. Instead, the review takes a decisive stance on the story, expressing the opinion that the English translation used as the basis for the German translation was a better option than using the Italian original (a fascinating statement on translation theory and practice in the eighteenth century), which states that it avoids the salacious passages that would be offensive to modesty, for which reason it was better that the German translator had translated from the English rather than the Italian. In reality, the salacious passages and asides were added by the English translator, who was John Cleland, which was unknown to the abstractor of the story. The author of the review expresses confusion over the presentation of the social aspects of the story, what we would call lifestyle, and struggles to frame Vizzani-Bordoni historically, which he does by referring to Vizzani as "the Italian Saffo."³³ Of note is the use of the term heart in referring to the heart of the readers, who might be influenced to imitate Vizzani, the "naughty" heart of those who are like Vizzani, and finally,

the heart as a moral compass. All of these references to the heart bring the story into the domain of sensibility and feeling for the first time. The heart will be taken up in even greater detail in the sixth instance to be discussed below. We also note that the index to the *Zuverlässige Nachrichten* gives the discussion of the Vizzani story two entries: Vizzani, Catharina, who has described her case (370), Vizzani Catharina, who has been similarly afflicted (372).

The “Vorrede,” i.e., preface to the *Allegemeines Magazin der Natur, Kunst und Wissenschaften* to the issue of 1756 constitutes the most striking aspect of the Catterina Vizzani-Giovanni Bordoni story in Germany. It contains the response of the editors of the periodical that had published the translation to readers who wrote to complain about the publication of a “dirty story” a “schmutzige Geschichte.” The “Vorrede” or preface reflects on the role of a journal such as the *Allegemeines Magazin der Natur, Kunst und Wissenschaften* and the declared freedom of the editors to offer to a vast reading public forms of knowledge, especially controversial new knowledge, which the story of Catterina represents. The editors argue that the story is no more “dirty” than old medical books and anatomical diagrams of the body that the public was wont to consult and look at, often, it is implied, for titillation. Instead, the editors ask their readership to extend their empathy to Catterina Vizzani-Giovanni Bordoni, consider the “heart” of the transgendered person, and expand their understanding of human gender. They state that as editors, it is their duty to decide what should be published in the interest of sparking debate and contributing to the discussion of moral philosophy. The editors cite the didactic purpose of their journal:

So far we have described the conditions we have established for selecting the pieces we publish, which are intended primarily for instruction. However, there is yet another condition, not to be entirely neglected in this kind of publication, which is that of satisfying the reader’s curiosity and providing pleasure, which is as strong as the desire for instruction. If curiosity and pleasure may be satisfied through knowledge about things pertaining to nature, art or science, then they belong to the range of topics that should appear in our magazine. While the goal of instructing should never be out of sight, the gratification of commendable curiosity, the great impulse behind all human knowledge, and the promotion of legitimate pleasure, may also serve as the compelling reasons for selecting a piece for our magazine. Thus, as a means of furnishing variety in our offerings, we reserve the right to occasionally include in our magazine writings for which the satisfaction of curiosity and the providing of pleasure form the main purpose.³⁴

Giovanni Bianchi would have been pleased to read this defense of his work by editors whose intention in translating and disseminating the Vizzani novella perfectly matched his intention in writing it.

As noted above, the German translation of Vizzani/Bordoni's life, *Historische und physikalische Beschreibung des merkwürdigen Falles mit Catterina Vizzani*, was published in 1755 in the journal *Allegemeines Magazin der Natur, Kunst und Wissenschaften*. The German translation was based on the English translation and not the original Italian, as indicated on the title page, "Aus dem Englischen übersetzt." Yet the editors of the journal that commissioned and published the German translation were fully aware of Bianchi's Italian original and Cleland's heavy-handed rewriting through translation and editorializing in his translation, which they discussed in the long "Vorrede." The editors' lengthy response, which we examine here, defends their choice to have the work translated so as to expose their readers to important questions of moral philosophy where matters of the body and heart were concerned. While the review that appeared in the *Zuverlässige Nachrichten* expressed reservations about a story told in such a "loose" way, meaning that it cohered neither to a medical treatise nor to a novelistic prose work, allowing the reader to actually become familiar with a person who should have been considered taboo and not written about at all, the position of the editors of the *Allegemeines Magazin der Natur, Kunst und Wissenschaften* turn the page on such false claims of propriety. Instead, the editors lay claim to the importance of knowing and trying to understand how the body of Catterina Vizzani-Giovanni Bordoni is sentient and alive, responding to the impulses that make us human, such as desire, lust, and "Geilheit," the German term for horniness that the *Zuverlässige Nachrichten* actually mentions:

From the memoirs of the ancient writers of Comedy one learns that this disease had raged terribly among the women of Athens at the height of that city's civilization. Additionally, those same writers remind us of the damned tool, which surging horniness caused both the women of Athens and Vizzani to use to feel their ardor.³⁵

The author of this review notes that Bianchi is the first to describe "circumstantially... the origins, growth, and outcome of such an illness." We note the importance of the "circumstantiality" of Bianchi's narration and how the reviewers of the *Zuverlässige Nachrichten* remark on this feature of Bianchi's story, noting as well that the story will certainly have garnered more readers than other items in the *Allegemeines Magazin der Natur, Kunst und Wissenschaften*. This is certainly borne out by the need felt by the editors to speak to their readership about it. As we have noted, they are unapologetic and stand their ground in explaining why it is important to be exposed to change and new knowledge, especially so that our moral compass may grow to accommodate the circumstances of such a person. Rather than defend the unknown English translator's claims to have avoided salacious discourse, the editors instead chide Cleland for the amount of extra commentary he added, casting the entire translation under a shadow. They advocate

for Catterina-Giovanni's right to be seen for who they are, rather than being condemned and mocked through what the editors imply is ignorance. Never has there been a more transcultural encounter, in which the original text, the English translation, and the German translation function on a transnational continuum of interlocking, local sensibilities.

Conclusion, or How Did These Stories Engender Each Other?

By examining the Italian original, Cleland's English translation and rewriting, and the German translation and showcasing of the text as an exemplum for contemplating the human heart in matters of gender transformation and desire, this chapter has traversed a salient example of transcultural encounter. Here, transgender is noticed, perceived, and sensed differently across cultural and textual boundaries. Its circulation and reiteration have produced the polyphonic conversation and mediatic resonance of this medical novella that, when considered as a mediatic event, reveals how the category of gender was destabilized and resignified in the textual contact zones of Italian Enlightenment centers and academies, England, and German-speaking areas. As we have seen, these zones included correspondence networks, medical treatises on anatomy, trials, encyclopedias, and journals, all addressing women who "passed" as men. The figure of the transgender person resonates differently as a result of its description and reception in a particular local context. What Giovanni Bianchi has done, however, is introduce the "circumstantial" element remarked upon in the *Zuverlässige Nachrichten* review, and we note that once you emerge from the purely anatomical to the body in space and time, one is called upon to reckon with a person made of a body and desire. As we have seen at the beginning of this discussion, Bianchi is trying to understand how anatomy and instinct function in the human being. He wonders what we can learn if we study their intersection. The only way to study instinct, here, lust, is to see how it functions in human relations in particular social settings. For Bianchi, in an Italy rich with local academies and Enlightenment centers through which knowledge moved, Catterina Vizzani-Giovanni Bordoni was being studied in their habitat to understand how their life and body, as constructed, worked, and how relationships were imagined and forged. He hints that the marriage between the Vicar's niece and Giovanni Bordoni would have taken place with no consequences in Rome had Giovanni not been shot by the uncle. For Bianchi, this represented one of the (many) ways that people live and love, for in the relationship between the niece and Giovanni, lust and love intertwine. In the English translation, instead, the threat to domesticity (the kind of bourgeois, urban domesticity that did not yet exist in Italy or Germany) and patriarchy is immediately registered, corroborating Henry Fielding's 1746 fictional account of female husbands mentioned earlier. In the German accounts and reactions to the translation, the imperative to recognize the sensibility of the transgender person and how "tools" and genital anatomies of all sorts do

not change the fact that this is a person who deserves to be recognized and understood.

We have seen how translation operates as a dynamic means of juxtaposing histories of gender and the sensibilities and perceptions such histories sparked, both locally and transnationally, not to mention transhistorically, as we may contemplate their relationship to contemporary transgender sensibilities. The role of instinct in the shaping of human life both publicly and privately has long been a topic of inquiry, one that historians of ideas have studied when contemplating how sensibility becomes an important category during the second half of the eighteenth century. Rousseau is cited, especially his sensibilities vis-à-vis the philosophes whose rational proposals seemed hollow. But Rousseau did not address some of the many issues that Swiss scientists such as Haller and Charles Bonnet were investigating in their studies of the nervous system and the sensitivity of plants. It is for this reason that the story of Catterina Vizzani-Giovanni Bordoni, in three distinct but intrinsically interconnected textual moments through translation, offers concrete proof of this moment of translation and the raging debate over human acceptance and reflection on the many ways of being in the world. Bianchi's circumstantial telling of how a trans person lived in the world places us right in the public sphere, as informed observers who have been forced to see multiple facets of this person's life, body, and relationships. The amount of consternation provoked by Giovanni Bianchi's medical novella in Italian, English, and German reveals how sensibility to an unknown being forced readers to reckon with their own insecurities over the definition of human and the role of emotions. Not unlike Montaigne's attempt to understand the cannibal as "like us" in his famous essay of 1580 "Of Cannibals," Bianchi has challenged us to include those of all bodies, desires, and preferences into the category of human and to accept them by considering their corporality combined with the new criteria of sensibility emerging from the recognition of the role of instinct and desire that combined with the body, becomes the anthropological perspective of Pierre Jean Georges Cabanis at the end of the eighteenth century, who, in his 1802 *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme* understands the human as a "being of desire" (*être de desir*), a passionate subject.³⁶ As we recall from Bianchi's opening to the story of Catterina, his interest in understanding the power of desire and lust in human sexual experience propelled his writing of the novella. Bianchi understood that all of the medical treatises in the world were meaningless in the absence of human subjects and their life experiences. And while the "minor" genre of the medical novella was of low prestige like the novel, it was capable of reaching and influencing a far wider reading public than the high-brow medical treatise. However, and most importantly, it also added knowledge that high culture and scholarship had missed. The editors of the *Allegemeines Magazin der Natur, Kunst und Wissenschaften* expressed this very concept in their defense of having published the translation of the Vizzani-Bordoni story. They argue that those who have written to criticize their choice to

publish the story in the previous issue of the magazine have missed the point of a publication such as theirs, which prints works that add to the kind of experiential knowledge that formal erudition prints. The editors also point out that the readers' judgment that they were being subjected to a "dirty story" was merely a question of cultural perspective—they note that the works of anatomists can be considered just as dirty:

A magazine may be considered inadequate if those whose job it is to supply the reading public adequately fail to do so. May we venture to say that this is precisely why we rightly published the Vizzani story in one of the earlier issues of this magazine? The dirty story? Hey, what is dirtier than what one finds in all the treatises of physicians about the structure of the natural and unnatural nature of the action and the diseases of certain parts of the human body? Wherever the intention is considered good and praiseworthy, and a true benefit is deemed to flow, then it is considered pure. But instead, you want to say that that is simply not the case here? You wonder how a few observations from physics, or the art of dissection contained in such a story gain for it a place among the treatises of the learned. Can it explain everything? No, such stories cannot do it alone: but they do make a contribution.³⁷

The editors point out the shortcomings of scholarly treatises, highlighting the advantages of a story of this nature to convey new information: "The main intention in such writings is first of all the history of the human heart" ("Die Hauptabsicht bey solchen Schriften geht zunächst auf die Geschichte des menschlichen Herzens"); they go on to argue for the right of the story to claim the place accorded to it, for:

this strange case shows the absurdity in the nature of the human heart. Must not a philosopher speak of it? Must he not prove it by experience? And where does he find this experience, indispensable for evidence, if no history of such cases has been preserved for him? But the more such a case is special and rare in all of its circumstances, the more it can serve its purpose because it makes so much more of an impression. And how many moral considerations might one make to derive the greatest benefit from the consideration of such a case?³⁸

Giovanni Bianchi's medical novella combined lived sexuality with anatomical knowledge about sexuality that had been published in medical dictionaries, encyclopedias, journals, and medical treatises to debunk the suspicions, superstitions, and realities of lived sexuality. The medical novella is threatening because the circumstantial combined with the anatomical brings together two sources of knowledge that are incomplete, one without the other, for as the editors of the "Vorrede" say, the story does contribute to our knowledge, shutting down speculation. This is the social history of sexuality, with

the story of Catterina Vizzani being corroborated across England with the accounts of female husbands and in Germany with Catharina Margaretha Linck and her trial. Normal female genitalia, dildos, and male dress abound, together with domestication, sentiment, and lust. Sensibility, desire, and lust motivated trans social agency. It took an anatomist who understood that human beings possess a sentient body connecting mind, heart, and body, not the machine of La Mettrie's "homme machine." Far more consequential, however, was the emerging sense of sexual identity that the Vizzani history and story announce, and the conflation of body and life story in the notion of identity, specifically transnational trans identity, that met in the translated versions of an original Italian story, with nuances to be sure, but when taken as a whole, they attest to a sexual, social, and cultural reality, consolidated in the transnational medical novella that has been the topic of this study. Identities constitute a delicate balance of an inner sense of who we are, combined with the perception that others have of who we are. The three iterations of the Vizzani\Bordoni story allow us to examine individual and collective behaviors transnationally that were recognized by the individuals themselves and the societies in which they lived. They allow us to examine individual and collective behaviors, as well as the dynamics through which—within these behaviors—a sense of belonging to an identity group emerged and became reinforced.

Notes

- 1 See Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, ed. *Gendered Temporalities in the Early Modern World*. Amsterdam University Press, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv5qdfst>
- 2 Katherine Park, "The Rediscovery of the Clitoris: French Medicine and the Tribade, 1570–1620," in *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Carla Mazzio and David Hillman (New York: Routledge, 1997), 171–193.
- 3 See André Holenstein, Hubert Steinke, Martin Stuber, and Philippe Rogger, eds., *Scholars in Action: The Practice of Knowledge and the Figure of the Savant in the 18th Century*. History of Science and Medicine Library, volume 34 (Leiden; New York: Brill, 2013) for an in-depth look at how the Republic of Savants operated in the eighteenth century. This work is remarkable in its coverage of all of Europe.
- 4 See my *The Life and Legend of Catterina Vizzani: Sexual Identity, Science and Sensationalism in Eighteenth-Century Italy and England*, Oxford University Studies in the Enlightenment (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, Voltaire Foundation, 2020).
- 5 The full title of Bianchi's medical novella is: *Breve storia della vita di Catterina Vizzani Romana che per ott'anni vestì abito da uomo in qualità di Servidore la quale dopo vari Casi essendo in fine stata uccisa fu trovata Pulcella nella sezione del suo Cadavero*. My English translation is: *Brief History of the Life of Catterina Vizzani, Roman Woman, Who for Eight Years Wore a Male Servant's Clothing, who after Various Vicissitudes Was in the End Killed and Found to Be a Virgin During the Autopsy of Her Cadaver*. Both may be found in the appendix to my monograph, *The Life and Legend of Catterina Vizzani: Sexual Identity, Science and Sensationalism in Eighteenth-Century Italy and England*, Oxford University Studies in the Enlightenment (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press,

- Voltaire Foundation, 2020) together with John Cleland's sensationalized translation, whose translated title, *[An] His[toric]al and Phy[sic]al Dissertation on the Case of Catherine Vizzani, Containing the Adventures of a Young Woman, Born at Rome, Who for Eight Years Passed in the Habit of a Man, Was Killed for an Amour with a Young Lady; and Being Found on Dissection, a True Virgin, Narrowly Escaped Being Treated as a Saint by the Populace* is already indicative of the salacious spin he would give to the novella in his translation.
- 6 Bianchi, *Brief History of Catterina Vizzani*, Donato translation, in Clorinda Donato, *The Life and Legend of Catterina Vizzani: Sexual Identity, Science and Sensationalism in Eighteenth-Century Italy and England*, Oxford University Studies in the Enlightenment (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, Voltaire Foundation, 2020), 296. "Strani veramente e incredibili oltremodo sono talora gli appetiti umani massimamente ne' fatti d'Amore; per la qualcosa niuno maravigliar si debbe, se altri per sola udita d'amoroso foco talvolta cotanto siasi acceso, che per varie e remote contrade sia andato vagando per vedere di giugnere in fine al possedimento della disiatata cosa. Così non è maraviglia, se talora di questo medesimo foco per torte vie altri resti così gagliardamente acceso che ne a condizione, ne a parentado, ne a sesso perdoni, si veramente che a quello appetito che più in grado gli è possa soddisfare." *Breve storia di Catterina Vizzani*, 308.
 - 7 See Clorinda Donato, *The Life and Legend of Catterina Vizzani: Sexual Identity, Science and Sensationalism in Eighteenth-Century Italy and England*, Oxford University Studies in the Enlightenment (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, Voltaire Foundation, 2020), 189–190, for a discussion of the crackdown of the holy tribunal on homosexuality and the warranted fears of Catterina Vizzani had she been reported to them for sexual misconduct. See, too, Maria Baldassari, *Bande giovanili e 'vizio nefando: violenza sessuale nella Roma barocca* (Rome: Viella, 2010), for a discussion of youth gangs and "the unspeakable vice" in baroque Rome, which talks specifically about the Trastevere church grounds.
 - 8 In a letter of 27 July 1742, Antonio Leprotti offers the following judgment about the worthiness of the Vizzani-Bordoni story: "The case of the purported Giovanni, who lived in a virginal state and was employed as a manservant, having been a real woman, is worthy of memorialising." Biblioteca Gambalunghiana Rimini [BGR], Fondo Gambetti, Miscellanea Manoscritta Riminese, Bianchi Giovanni [FGMB], from Antonio Leprotti to Giovanni Bianchi.
 - 9 BGR, Fondo Gambetti, Antonio Cocchi to Giovanni Bianchi, 25 May 1744.
 - 10 Clorinda Donato, *The Life and Legend of Catterina Vizzani: Sexual Identity, Science and Sensationalism in Eighteenth-Century Italy and England*, Oxford University Studies in the Enlightenment (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, Voltaire Foundation, 2020), 280.
 - 11 Henry Fielding, *The Female Husband, or the Surprising History of Mrs. Mary, alias Mr. George Hamilton, Who Was Convicted of Having Married a Young Woman of Wells and Lived with Her as Her Husband. Taken from Her own Mouth since Her Confinement* (London: printed for M. Cooper, at the Globe in Pater-Noster Row, 1746).
 - 12 See Evelyn Lord, *The Hell-Fire Clubs: Sex, Satanism and Secret Societies* (New Haven, Conn.; London: Yale University Press, 2008).
 - 13 Parsons referred to the clitoris of tribades as a "macroclitorideus," in James Parsons, *A Mechanical and Critical Enquiry into the Nature of Hermaphrodites* (London: J. Walthoe, 1741), 13, while James described a penis-like clitoris, "so shamefully large as to protuberate without the lips of the pudenda," in Robert James, *A Medicinal Dictionary, Including Physic, Surgery, Anatomy, Chymistry, and Botany, in All Their Branches Relative to Medicine*. (London: T. Osborne, 1743–45), 14.

- 14 See Sara Welz Geselowitz, "Rationalizing Sex: the Hermaphrodite in Eighteenth-Century Medical Writing," *Chicago Journal of History* 6 (2016): 20–28, <https://cjh.uchicago.edu/issues/spring16/6.7.pdf>.
- 15 Lynne Friedli has noted that "small penises or large clitorises were always attributed to deformed women," in "Passing Women: a Study of Gender Boundaries in the Eighteenth Century," in *Sexual Underworlds of the Enlightenment*, eds. G. S. Rousseau and Roy Porter (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987), 234–260, 249.
- 16 Maayan Sudai, "Sex Ambiguity in Early Modern Common Law (1629–1787)," *Law & Social Inquiry* 47, no. 2 (2022): 478–513, <https://doi.org/10.1017/lsi.2021.34>
- 17 Valerie Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 213.
- 18 See Clorinda Donato, *The Life and Legend of Catterina Vizzani: Sexual Identity, Science and Sensationalism in Eighteenth-Century Italy and England*, Oxford University Studies in the Enlightenment (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, Voltaire Foundation, 2020), 120, for further discussion about these aspects of the British text.
- 19 Clorinda Donato, *The Life and Legend of Catterina Vizzani: Sexual Identity, Science and Sensationalism in Eighteenth-Century Italy and England*, Oxford University Studies in the Enlightenment (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, Voltaire Foundation, 2020), 275.
- 20 See Kaia Bell, "The 18th-Century Dildo Found in a French Convent," June 30, 2021, <https://medium.com/actaeon-eros/the-18th-century-dildo-found-in-a-french-convent-3552ffebbe2a>; Consulted 4-28-23.
- 21 See *The Waterloo Crossdressing Archive*, https://heuristref.net/h6-alpha/?db=Waterloo_Cross_Dressing_Archive&website&cid=961&pageid=982#. The WXDA is part of a larger project conducted by Professor Fraser Easton that aims to map and make visible a wide range of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century cross-dressing practices, and the complex ways in which those practices were represented across historical periods, report genres, and different sexes and genders, especially in periodical reports. The questions he seeks to answer: "Was this cross-dressing instrumental (to work as a man), sexual (to pursue other women), transgender (to be a man)?"
- 22 See Vincenzo Lagioia and Fernanda Alfieri, eds., *Infami macchie. Sessualità maschile e indisciplina in età moderna* (Rome: Viella, 2018) for the discussion of several cases that have emerged in recent years from the archives. An English translation, *Infamous stains: Male sexuality and disobedience in the early modern age*, is currently in press with the same publishing house.
- 23 I would like to thank Professor Annette Keilhauer for her invaluable help in locating and translating some of the German documents that are discussed in this chapter. Sincere thanks are also in order to Dr. Paola Delbianco, manuscript librarian emerita at the Biblioteca Gambalunghiana in Rimini, and Prof. Giulia Cantarutti for her publications on the German-Italian exchange that informs this article, as well as her expert advice.
- 24 (1) Review *Breve Storia della vita di Catterina Vizzani in 1744*, 27 November 1747, in *Neue Zeitungen von gelehrten Sachen*, 841–842. (2) A two-page manuscript in Latin entitled "Buchbesprechung Breve Storia della vita di Caterina Vizzani Romana," i.e., "Review of Breve Storia della vita di Caterina Vizzani Romana," is housed among the papers cataloged as Die Briefsammlung des Nürnberger Arztes Christoph Jacob Trew (1695–1769) in the Universitätsbibliothek Erlangen (Letters collected by Nürnberg doctor Christoph Jacob Trew (1695–1769) at the Erlangen University Library, <http://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:bvb:29-bv043698693-3>, concerned

- with Giovanni Bianchi (1693–1775), place of origin, unknown, [1744?], two pages, 24.3 X 17.2, its catalog number is H62/TREWBR BIANCHI_GIOVANNI[BEIL b, and it is part of the Digital Collection of the University Library, Erlangen-Nürnberg.
- (3) On 18 December 1752, a review of the first edition of John Cleland’s 1751 translation was published in the *Göttingische Zeitungen von gelehrten Sachen*.
- 25 “Historische und physikalische Beschreibung des merkwürdigen Falles mit Catharina Vizzani,” vom Herrn Joh. Bianchi,” Aus dem Englischen übersetzt,” *Allgemeines Magazin der Natur, Kunst und Wissenschaften*, Vol. 5 (1755): 101–126.
- 26 Review of “Historische und physikalische Beschreibung des merkwürdigen Falles mit Catharina Vizzani,” vom Herrn Joh. Bianchi, Aus dem Englischen übersetzt, published in *Allgemeines Magazin der Natur, Kunst und Wissenschaften 1755*,” *Zuverlässige Nachrichten von dem gegenwärtigen Zustande, Veränderung und Wachsthum der Wissenschaften*, Vol. 7 (1756): 370–373.
- 27 “Vorrede” (Foreword), *Allgemeines Magazin der Natur, Kunst und Wissenschaften*, Vol. 7 (1756): 12 pages, unnumbered.
- 28 Giulia Cantarutti, “Giovanni Bianchi e la sua scuola. Prospezioni e prospettive,” in *Storia della Chiesa riminese, Vol. III, Dal Concilio di Trento all’età napoleonica*, a cura di S. Giombi (Rimini: Pazzini Editore, 2013), 458–483.
- 29 BGR, Fondo Gambetti, Letters from Giovanni Bianchi.
- 30 This case has had a long history in scholarship, thanks to Angela Steidele’s *In Männerkleidern: Das Verwegene Leben Der Catharina Margaretha Linck Alias Anastasius Lagrantinus Rosenstengel Hingerichtet 1721: Biographie und Dokumentation* (Köln: Böhlau 2021[2004]). See also Brigitte Eriksson, “A Lesbian Execution in Germany, 1721: The Trial Records,” *Journal of Homosexuality* 6, no. 1–2 (1981): 27–40.
- 31 Elke R. Steiner, *Catharina Margaretha Linck, Executed for Sodomy*, a graphic representation of the trial, found in the blog “Queens, Saints, Sinners, and Martyrs,” <https://wordswithoutborders.org/read/article/2011-06/catharina-margaretha-linck/>. The blog states that Steiner based her graphic rendering on the 2004 edition of Angela Steidele’s monograph, cited above.
- 32 Brigitte Eriksson, “A Lesbian Execution in Germany, 1721: The Trial Records,” *Journal of Homosexuality* 6, no. 1–2 (1981): 33.
- 33 Review of “Historische und physikalische Beschreibung des merkwürdigen Falles mit Catharina Vizzani,” vom Herrn Joh. Bianchi, Aus dem Englischen übersetzt, published in *Allgemeines Magazin der Natur, Kunst und Wissenschaften 1755*,” *Zuverlässige Nachrichten von dem gegenwärtigen Zustande, Veränderung und Wachsthum der Wissenschaften*, Vol. 7 (1756):371.
- 34 “Vorrede” (Foreword), *Allgemeines Magazin der Natur, Kunst und Wissenschaften* Vol. 7 (1756): 10–11 (this is our count, as the pages are unnumbered). “Bisher haben wir die Bedingungen, unter welchen wir unsere Stücke wählen wollen, in so fern sie hauptsächlich zur Belehrung dienen sollen, angegeben. Es is noch eine Absicht übrig, die bey Büchern von dieser Art nicht gänzlich zu versäumen ist. Der Mensch will eben so wohl seine Neubegierde befriedigt und sein Vergnügen befördert sehen, als sich belehret wissen. Wenn jenes durch eine Erkenntniss von Dingen, welche die Natur, Kunst oder Wissenschaft betreffen, geschehen kann: so gehört es mit zu dem Umfange der Sachen, die in unserm Magazine vorkommen sollen. Es muss zwar niemals ohne alle Absicht auf eine Belehrung geschehen: aber die Befriedigung einer löblichen Neubegierde, des grossen Triebwerfs bey aller menschlichen Erkenntniss, und die Beförderung eines erlaubten Vergnügens kann doch die Hauptabsicht dabey seyn. Zur Abwechselung behalten wir uns das Recht vor, aus dem angeführten Grunde bisweilen auch Schriften, bey denen diess die Hauptabsicht ist, in unser Magazin aufzunehmen.”

- 35 Review of “Historische und physikalische Beschreibung des merkwürdigen Falles mit Catharina Vizzani,” vom Herrn Joh. Bianchi, Aus dem Englischen übersetzt, published in *Allgemeines Magazin der Natur, Kunst und Wissenschaften* 1755”, *Zuverlässige Nachrichten von dem gegenwärtigen Zustande, Veränderung und Wachsthum der Wissenschaften*, Vol. 7 (1756): 372. “Aus den Denkmahlen der alten Comodienschreiber erfährt man, dass diese Krankheit unter den Frauen zu Athen bey dieser Stadt blühendem Zustande schrecklich gewüthet habe. Auch Gedenken eben dieselben des verdammten Werkzeuges, dessen sich die aufwallende Geilheit sowohl bey jenen als der Vizzani zu Abföhlung ihrer Brunst bediente.”
- 36 Sergio Moravia, “La filosofia degli *Ideologues*. Scienza dell’Uomo e riflessione epistemologica tra sette e ottocento,” in *Letterature italiana e cultura europea tra illuminismo e romanticism*, ed. Guido Santato (Geneve: Droz, 2003), 65–79, 78.
- 37 “Vorrede” (Foreword), *Allgemeines Magazin der Natur, Kunst und Wissenschaften* Vol. 7 (1756): 9 (this is our count, as the pages are unnumbered). “Ein Magazin ist mangelhaft, und derjenige, welcher es mit seinem gehörigen Vorrathe versehen soll, zieht sich einen gerechten Vorwurf zu: wenn sie vergebens darinne versucht werden. Dürfen wir uns unterstehen zu sagen, dass wir die Geschichte der Vizzani, eben aus einer solchen Ursache mit grossem Rechte in einen der vorhergehenden Theile dieses Magazins eingerückt haben? Die schmutzige Geschichte? Ey, was ist denn schmutziger daran, als was man in alten Abhandlungen der Aerzte von dem Bau, der natür natürlichen und unnatürlichen Beschaffenheit, der Wirkung und den Krankheiten gewisser Theile des menschlichen Körpers finden? Wo eine gute und rühmliche Absicht zu erhalten ist, und aus der Vorstellung solcher Begebenheiten ein wahre Nutzen fliesset: da muss den reinen alles rein seyn. Aber das ist eben hier nicht der Fall, will man sagen: können wohl einige wenige Betrachtungen aus der Physik, oder Zergliederungskunst, einer solchen Geschichte einen Platz unter den Abhandlungen der Gelehrten erwerben? Nein alleine können sie es nicht thun: aber sie tragen doch etwas dazu bey.”
- 38 “Vorrede” (Foreword), *Allgemeines Magazin der Natur, Kunst und Wissenschaften*, Vol. 7 (1756): 9. “zeigt ja dieser seltsame Fall das Widersinnige in der Beschaffenheit des menschlichen Herzens. Muss ein Philosoph nicht davon reden? Muss er es nicht durch die Erfahrung beweisen? Und wo findet er diese zum beweis unentbehrlich Erfahrung: wenn ihm seine Geschichte von solchen Fällen aufbehalten ist? Je besonderer und seltener aber ein solches Fall nach allen seinen Umständen ist: desto mehr kann er ihm zu seiner Absicht Dienste thun; weil er um so viel mehr Eindruck macht. Und wie viele sittliche Betrachtungen lassen sich über eine solche Begebenheit nicht mit dem grössten Nutzen anstellen?”

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9 Hidden or Forbidden

Taboo, Circumnavigation, and Women in New Cythera (1768)

Manuel Burón and Juan Pimentel

The brief stay of Louis-Antoine de Bougainville's expedition in Tahiti in April 1768 soon became famous in Europe. In barely 15 days, the visitors circumvented coral reefs, weathered a couple of storms, and had several encounters with the Native people. They were unequal encounters, governed by misunderstandings and performances. There was room for everything: the exchange of objects, violence, mutual inspection, and sex. At the time, the few eyewitness accounts given by some of the sailors generated special supplements, commentaries, essays, and fictional accounts ranging from Diderot to Fourier, later giving rise to a long anthropological tradition going from Margaret Mead to Greg Dening, Anne Salmond, and Serge Tcherkézoff, to name but a few.¹

More than the other inhabitants of Polynesia, the Tahitians seemed to epitomise primitive happiness and a disregard for private property. Their traditions benefited from bountiful nature. One after another, outpourings of enlightenment clichés swept over these people, seen in most cases as primitive and in an earlier, infantile stage of human development. But if there was one thing that fired the imagination of the Europeans, it was the sexual customs, the polygamy that the Tahitians practised, and which they invited their guests to share. The offer of the women shocked and at the same time seduced Bougainville and his party, torn between offence, morality, desire, and the call of pleasure.²

The judgements and comments about Tahitian women obviously tell us more about the Enlightened who make them than about the women, who have been the subject of many interpretations in the literature about the encounters in the South Pacific. In this chapter, we shall look at the role played in these encounters by Tahitian women from a new perspective, that of taboo: the clash between sacred and profane, the use of women as a weapon, talisman or shield against a possible threat, and their role within the codes of what is prohibited or what is acceptable.

In addition, there is a happy coincidence not mentioned in many studies, or rather usually reported as an unrelated anecdote. Travelling on the same voyage was the person usually considered to be the first woman to

circumnavigate the globe, Jeanne Barret, disguised as a man, defying the laws of the French Navy and the history of exploration itself, a strictly male preserve. Partner and servant of the naturalist Philibert Commerson, Barret collected botanical samples around the globe and transgressed one of the most deep-seated taboos in European navies, achieving a feat characteristic of the Enlightenment, a round-the-world voyage.³ Into the bargain, in Tahiti, or perhaps as a result of her stay in Tahiti, her true identity was uncovered, a revelation in which the inhabitants of Tahiti were probably involved. While some witnesses point to Aoutourou, the unwary Native who embarked with Bougainville bound for France, others point to the Tahitian women. This is a story about rules and their transgression, about bodies and disguises, about taboos, women, and circumnavigation. Our intention is to highlight the simultaneity and symmetry of what is permitted and what is prohibited for women in both cultures.

The emergence of the Pacific Ocean and its archipelagos opened up a whole new scenario for the myths of the Enlightenment.⁴ And there is no doubt that the image the Europeans painted of their women was one of the main reasons for the success and wide diffusion of their voyages. Tahiti in particular became the place where the lasciviousness and sensuality of the women were concentrated. This was the case for Bougainville, but also for explorers before and after him, like William Bligh and James Cook. The latter even told his publisher, John Hawkesworth, how uncomfortable he felt at the most erotic parts of his voyages. However, Hawkesworth knew perfectly well what he was doing and spared none of the details in his 1773 compilation, which met with considerable success.⁵ Diderot also took advantage of such encounters in his famous *Supplément au voyage du Bougainville*. And so the name of Otaheite and the fame of its women soon earned a place in literature: they appear in the memoirs of Chateaubriand, in Lord Byron's diaries, in the ravings of the Marquis de Sade, and in many adventure novels of the nineteenth century. After all, these were the years before the French Revolution, the years of voluptuous and sensual love, of Fragonard and Boucher's paintings, those of a *douceur de vivre* that none of those born later would ever know, as Talleyrand allegedly remarked.

However, despite the myths and literary licence, there is no doubt about the role of Indigenous women in encounters with Europeans. All the accounts agree on the same point: contrary to Western tradition, the women did not hide and were not expected to stay demurely at home. Quite the contrary, they seemed to play an essential part, an uninhibited leading role in the first contacts with those strange beings from so far away: they let themselves be seen, they flaunted themselves, they haggled, they talked, they shouted, and they danced. To the Western seafarers, this behaviour was quite unbelievable.

Iberian navigators of the sixteenth century had already recorded receptions in canoes with the active participation of women, scenes that would later be confirmed in the Enlightenment. Thus, Vicente de Nápoles, who travelled to the Moluccas in 1527, noted on one of his stopovers the presence

of an important female character, a woman who looked like a sorceress and who “tempted them with her hands”.⁶ In 1595, Álvaro de Mendaña also recorded the leading role of women in the Marquesas: “[the Indian women] came out” [he says, as if appearing in step on a stage] “the sailors affirmed that they were very beautiful and that it had been easy to join them in good conversation”.⁷ The same had been the case with Samuel Wallis’ crew, just a year before Bougainville’s arrival. One of them, Robertson, said that “young girls play a great many droll wanton tricks”.⁸ Francis Wilkinson, who was in Tahiti with both Wallis and Cook, commented that “the woman was derected by the men in the prow of their canoes & expose their bodys naked to our view”.⁹ Bougainville confirmed the scene in what was probably his most famous passage, recounting how, in their second meeting, they were surrounded by canoes full of women who could rival and surpass European women in beauty. They were like “naked nymphs”, because the men and old women who accompanied them took off the scanty clothing that covered them. They made gestures ranging between innocence and voluptuousness, because “even where the Frankness of the golden age still reigns [certain women and girls] appear not to want that which they desire most”, one of those comments that would prompt an essay on misogyny in Western civilisation. In the same passage, Bougainville also included the episode of a Tahitian woman who, once on board, undressed deliberately and delicately in full view of everyone:

such as Venus shewed herself to the Phrygian shepherd, having indeed the celestial form of that goddess (...) At last our cares succeeded in keeping these bewitched fellows in order” added Bougainville, “though it was no less difficult to keep the command of ourselves.”¹⁰

Other rituals in which women clearly played a leading role were the dances: dances full of contortions, lively movements, and obscene gestures, where the women even exposed their genitals to the sight of the Europeans. Repeated sources agree in their descriptions of such rituals. In the sixteenth century, Mendaña described these frenetic movements as “wantonness, grimaces, and shaking”.¹¹ Wallis spoke of “gesture, wanton tricks & wanton antics”; Bougainville, of “*agaceries*”; Joseph Banks, of “most indecent words using most indecent actions and setting their mouths askew in a most extraordinary manner (...) especially the young girls”.¹² And finally, Arcadio Pineda, one of the crew members of the Malaspina Expedition, capturing the double sexual and warlike nature of those dances, described them as “lubricious military dances”.¹³

An essential part of receptions and celebrations, the women of Tahiti were described with clichés from antiquity to neoclassicism: Virgil, Ovid, *Orlando Furioso*, and Rousseau. The women of the Pacific seemed like Venus, ready to yield to love. Bougainville baptised Tahiti as *New Cythera*, the Island of Aphrodite. And not just any Aphrodite, but the one from Cythera, as against

Aphrodite Ourania, the sublime goddess of sensual love and not of intellectual love. Another fundamental contrast in this story.¹⁴ Commerson, the naturalist of the expedition and partner of our disguised heroine, also surrendered to the charms of the island:

[P]erhaps the only one [place] on earth, where men live without vices, without prejudices, without want, without dissent. Born under the most beautiful sky, nourished by the fruits of soil which is fertile without cultivation, governed by family fathers rather than by kings, they know no other God than Love; each day is dedicated to her, the whole island is her temple, every woman is her idol, every man is her worshipper.¹⁵

It seems practical to see this active role of women from the point of view of *taboo*. Taboo is surely the main Indigenous contribution of the Pacific to the international heritage. Discovered by Cook, it was soon seen as the keystone underpinning the entire social life of those societies. Margaret Mead left us a classic definition: “taboo can be defined as a negative sanction, a prohibition whose infraction, without human or superhuman intervention, results in an automatic penalty”: places where the Native people did not enter, certain moments when it was not propitious to carry out particular actions, unexpected offences that caused excessive reactions. Even the death of Cook, its discoverer, was due to a mysterious taboo, as evidenced by the famous anthropological controversy between Marshall Sahlins and Gananath Obeyesekere.¹⁶ In reality, taboo was just one of the more visible consequences of a complex and variable religious and social combination. Explaining every ritual or religious procedure, and every social phenomenon in Polynesia, by resorting to taboo, was like explaining the entire West through sin.¹⁷

To start with, taboo represented one of the two sides of the problem: its opposite was *noa*. To the contrast between the sacred and profane states (*tapu* and *noa* in New Zealand Māori) was added the dichotomy between the pure and the contaminated, forming a kind of fundamental axis on which a good part of the social and ritual order of the cultures of Polynesia seemed to be based. This complex contrast between states was magical, governed by fluctuating energies, traditionally reduced to the concept of *mana* (power or prestige in the Māori or Māʻohi languages). It was also religious, being based on a series of myths and beliefs that varied in intensity and form in the different archipelagos. And, finally, it was labile, since it was possible and desirable to take action to mediate, avoid, or favour the transition between the two states. The universe was a huge game of opposites, where taboo was a sacred quality that could be infected, used defensively for one’s own good or offensively for the evil of others.¹⁸

The taboo of women, along with that of food, was the first to attract the attention of Westerners. In reality, women were not *taboo* (sacred) but, on the contrary, profane (*noa*). “Man was made *tapu*, woman was left in a *noa* state, just like the mouth for food”, explained an early Māori source.¹⁹ This might

lead one to think that women were simply considered impure. However, the issue is more complex.²⁰ The women of the Pacific participated, with their actions and their displays, in numerous rituals throughout the Pacific, generally related to the elimination of taboo. In New Zealand, it was customary for women to be the first to enter fortresses or houses that had just been built in order to *desecrate* the space. In fact, among the New Zealand Māori, there are still many ritual objects in which the woman appears exposing her genitals, such as the *hei tiki* or the *pare*. The latter are finely carved wooden lintels, located in the entrance areas of the *whare* or traditional houses. Art historians seem to agree that the function of these objects was that of a talisman.²¹ With her presence and display, the woman eliminated the danger of any stranger or visitor who passed beneath her. In Tahiti, the woman was also important in the rituals concerning 'Oro, the fearsome god of war. The chronicle of Moerenhout, a Belgian explorer and ethnologist, describes how the woman's sex act eliminates the "frenzied state" of war provoked by 'Oro, its god.²² Wallis was surprised at the appearance of a canoe with a raised platform from which the women performed shockingly exhibitionist acts (Figure 9.1).

All of these testimonies seem to indicate that the visibility and display of the women were fundamental elements in propitiatory rituals aimed at the elimination of the danger of taboo. One of the most sacred and delicate moments for all the Pacific cultures was the encounter with outsiders. In his classic study, *The Golden Bough*, James Frazer explains it as follows:

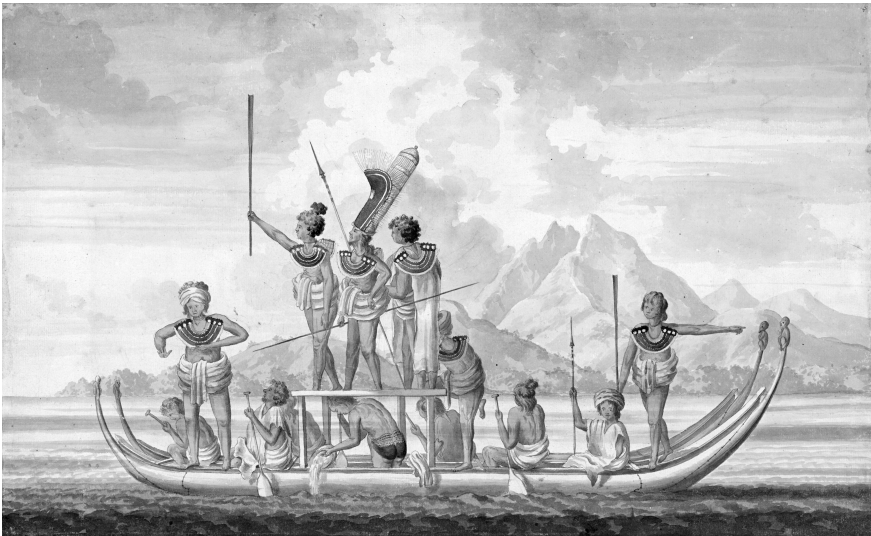


Figure 9.1 This illustration shows the Tahitian women showing themselves off from a raised platform on an island boat.

Source: *Women in a war canoe*, by Sydney Parkinson, © British Library, London, Add. MS 23921, f.21. <https://imagesonline.bl.uk/asset/24562>

Hence before strangers are allowed to enter a district, or at least before they are permitted to mingle freely with the inhabitants, certain ceremonies are often performed by the natives of the country for the purpose of disarming the strangers of their magical powers, of counteracting the baneful influence which is believed to emanate from them, or of disinfecting, so to speak, the tainted atmosphere by which they are supposed to be surrounded (...) It is probable that the same dread of strangers, rather than any desire to do them honour, is the motive of certain ceremonies which are sometimes observed at their reception, but of which the intention is not directly stated.²³

Therefore, it was visibility, display, and agency – and not concealment, seclusion, and passivity – that characterised the woman’s role in certain oceanic rituals. While Europeans were shocked and seduced by the behaviour of the women in Tahiti, their function within their own cultural codes was to eliminate or regulate the *tapu*, something of which the Europeans of the time were still unaware.²⁴ As is often the case, it was even more difficult to identify and recognise their own taboos. This is illustrated by the adventures of Jeanne Barret, the woman who disguised herself as Commerson’s servant, and who has enabled us to carry out this small reflection of symmetrical anthropology on the roles of women in Polynesian and Western culture.

In contrast to the nakedness of those nymphs or Venuses, the first thing that stands out in Barret’s story is precisely the clothing, her disguise, the concealment of her feminine attributes under a sailor’s uniform and the bandages that bound her breasts, causing her severe injuries. If the peoples of Polynesia offered the Enlightenment an example of primitive innocence and natural goodness, that is, of a “naked truth”, Barret’s story betrays the hypocrisy and despotism of civilisation: in other words, its disguise. If these encounters between barbarians and civilised people had something of charades and theatrical performances, as Greg Dening and others have pointed out, it must be admitted that both sides overreacted in their nudity and in their bulky clothes, that is, in what they exhibited and what they concealed.²⁵

The story of Jeanne Barret (1740–1807) has been told on several occasions, with more or less speculation and fictional elements, since we lack her own testimony.²⁶ Barret is even more mute than Man Friday, Robinson Crusoe’s servant.²⁷ She left nothing in writing, although some suspect that many of the botanical descriptions and herbariums collected on her journey were her work and not Commerson’s.

Born in 1740 in La Comelle, in the Bourgogne region of France, she was employed as a domestic servant in the house that Philibert Commerson had nearby in about 1764. By then, the naturalist was already a notable figure in the Republic of Letters. He had been educated as a physician and botanist in Montpellier, had collaborated with Linnaeus in ichthyological work in the Mediterranean, and was a friend of the Jussieus (the hegemonic family in French botany at the time). Voltaire had even asked him to be his secretary.

Commerson had married a somewhat older rich aristocratic woman, but she died in childbirth in 1762, leaving him a widower. It was then that Commerson employed Barret in his house in Toulon-sur-Aroux. There has been speculation as to whether Barret was illiterate before she met him and he taught her to read, or whether she already had some knowledge of botany, practical rather than theoretical, based on local medical and herbal practices. It has even been claimed that Commerson's later notebook of medicinal plants was really Barret's, something impossible to prove, according to Danielle Clode, author of what is in our opinion the most reliable and well-documented work about our heroine.²⁸ This is a story full of silences: the profound silence of Jeanne Barret, who left no written evidence and of whom we only have the signature on some administrative documents; and the significant silence of Commerson, who rarely mentioned her and only did so marginally or elusively.

In any case, what is clear is that in 1764 Barret signed an official register declaring that she was pregnant. Women were obliged to make a public declaration, although Barret did not mention the name of the father, obviously to protect the honour of the naturalist. She was 24 at the time and he was 37. They both left for Paris, perhaps to avoid gossip and also because Commerson was already preparing to join the great circumnavigation voyage of the French Navy. There in Paris, Barret gave up her own son to an orphanage, a dramatic episode in what was a storybook life if ever there was one. The decision appears to be related to her wish to embark on Bougainville's expedition (1766–1769), where Commerson was travelling as the king's naturalist.

The regulations of the French Navy forbade women from embarking on this type of undertaking. It was stipulated in an order of 1689, ratified in 1765. The penalties for infringing the rule were severe: sailors who brought a woman on board to spend the night were punished with 15 days in chains; officers would be suspended for a month. Commerson interviewed several candidates for the post of his assistant, and naturally chose Barret, disguised as a sailor under the name of Jean Baret. Historians have speculated as to why she disguised herself – was it for love or scientific vocation? To follow Commerson or a longing for adventure? An unsolved mystery, for Jeanne remained silent. There are inscrutable silences; others, however, speak for themselves. That of her companion, as a case in point. It is significant that, once her identity had been unmasked after the stay in Tahiti, Commerson denied knowing anything about the deception, which was unlikely. They were a couple and shared a cabin for several years aboard the *Étoile*, the fluyt or cargo ship which accompanied the *Boudeuse*, Bougainville's frigate. Indeed, it also seems significant that Commerson chose to travel on board the *Étoile*: there he had more space for his collections of specimens, and there he could more easily keep the secret that travelled with him.

In fact, Commerson and Barret formed what has been called a “creative or collaborative couple” in the history of science.²⁹ Such is the case with several

famous married couples: the Hevelius family in astronomy, the Bucklands in palaeontology, and the Lavoisiers in chemistry, couples where the predictable division of labour was mostly followed: the women collected data, organised materials, carried out field or laboratory work, while their husbands named species, formulated theories, signed off the studies, and were appointed as academics.³⁰

In fact, due to Commerson's precarious health during the voyage, it was Barret who collected the hundreds of specimens from what was the largest botanical collection amassed "by one individual" at the time, and which are preserved today in the Natural History Museum in Paris. Thanks to the notes of Vivez, the surgeon of the *Étoile*, we have interesting details of how they worked. During the stay in Montevideo and Rio de Janeiro, for example, Commerson was barely able to direct operations from a barge: he had a terrible wound in his leg, which threatened to turn gangrenous. According to Danielle Clode, of the 3,000 botanical specimens collected during the expedition, 40% came from South America, and more than half of them, some 600 species, were collected in the Rio de la Plata and Rio de Janeiro.³¹ Among these species, naturally, was the *Bougainvillea* (today *Bougainvillea spectabilis*), the beautiful bush of white flowers surrounded by pink, red, and violet bracts that they identified near Rio de Janeiro. Obviously, Commerson baptised it as such in tribute to his commander, with ever greater success: today, the plant is far better known than the French seafarer. Well, it is very likely that the *Bougainvillea* was collected by Barret, who, of course, stayed hidden, like so many servants, like so many women, like so many men and particularly women who collected data, file clerks, and laboratory technicians. Indeed, as Steven Shapin has said, the servants were hidden behind their masters' voices, like wives behind their husbands, and thus were hired help, subordinates.³² In this case, Barret is doubly subordinate, doubly invisible: wife and servant (the few times Commerson mentions her, he uses the term *valet*, servant, or worse "beast of burden", alluding to her great physical ability to haul around samples and instruments in the field).³³

Now, as far as we know, and from what has been recorded, Barret was the first woman to achieve a circumnavigation, a feat characteristic of the Enlightenment, more masculine – that is, more heroic and more physical – than the other circular pedagogical enterprise of the period, the *Encyclopédie*. She did it disguised as a man, as other women had disguised themselves as pirates, soldiers, missionaries, and other genuinely masculine roles. The list is long: the pirates Mary Read and Anne Bonny; Catalina de Erauso, the *Ensign Nun*; Mademoiselle Beaumont, the spy and diplomat who spent 49 years as a man in the eighteenth century; and later on, the Unionist soldier Sarah Emma Edmonds, and Concepción Arenal, the pioneer of Spanish feminism who disguised herself as a man to attend university law classes at the end of the nineteenth century.

But returning to the beaches of the Pacific and the idealised descriptions of a rediscovered Arcadia, it is difficult today to read the comments of

Bougainville and Commerson about the inhabitants of Tahiti without thinking of Barret: those men “without prejudice, without vices, without conflict”; those women devoted to love, freed from work, men devoted to leisure. “In no way submissive or confined in their homes”, the naturalist actually said, in a real *lapsus linguae* that any psychoanalyst or half-attentive interpreter would link to Barret, the woman confined in her false identity.³⁴

There are several versions of how it was discovered that Barret was a woman disguised as a manservant. The accounts of Bougainville, Commerson himself, the surgeon Vivez, and the other witnesses do not agree. Some say it was Aoutourou, the Tahitian who went on board the *Étoile*; others that it was the men – or rather, women – of Tahiti who discovered that Barret was also female. Apparently, when Barret disembarked in Tahiti to collect botanical specimens on 29 April 1768, a crowd surrounded her shouting “ayenene, ayenene” (“it is a woman”).³⁵ Some said it was because of her smell. Diderot subscribed to this theory because it fitted in with his idea of the superiority of the lower senses in primitive peoples. The traditional hierarchy in the West has always assigned an undeniable epistemological superiority to sight, while the minor senses predominate in barbarian people (and animals). But sight, the source of all knowledge, is also that of all deceit, all illusion. As popular language has it, appearances deceive. Western culture is very visual and so is full of disguises. Sight is the source of great confusion. In short, several accounts say that there was a real or attempted rape or aggression, either by the Native people or by the crew. Cornered, Barret claimed that she was not a woman, but a eunuch, a claim confirmed by several witnesses.

When her sexual identity was revealed, Commerson claimed that he, like Bougainville and the other officers, knew nothing. Did some of them, apart from Commerson, know about it before the revelation in Tahiti? Specialists disagree on this point. Some assert that several officers knew, perhaps Bougainville himself. What is clear is that once Barret’s identity had been revealed, Bougainville decided to be tolerant and wrote that, whatever she was, this woman had behaved with “admirable resolution” and “scrupulous modesty”.³⁶

The expedition continued on its course. The ships crossed the Pacific as far as New Guinea and the Moluccas. Then they crossed the Indian Ocean to Mauritius, also known as the Île de France, where Commerson and Barret (travelling in separate rooms this time) disembarked in November 1768 and stayed, while Bougainville returned to France with the *Boudeuse* and the *Étoile*. In the capital of Mauritius, Port Louis, Commerson worked for some years with the administrator Pierre Poivre in the botanical garden of Pamplemousses. It was a strategic enclave in the ocean routes and the acclimatisation of plants. In any case, his health worsened and he died in 1773. And Barret? Some sentimental versions of the story assert that she stayed by his side, accompanying him in his dying hours.³⁷ This would raise our heroine to sainthood if it were not for the fact that, in reality, Jeanne Barret, as she was now known, rebuilt her life in Mauritius, with a change of partner and

occupation. She ran a tavern in Port Louis and married a naval officer, Jean Dubernat. It is a happy coincidence that Mauritius was the setting for the famous sentimental novel, *Paul et Virginie* (1787), the tragic love story that captivated Humboldt and Napoleonic France, written by another officer and explorer, the engineer and naturalist Bernadín de Saint-Pierre.³⁸ But ours is not the story of a fatal love, an ill-fated romance, or an idyllic tale, but rather a real story, full of asymmetries, unequal relationships, and long silences that are difficult to fill.

After seven years in Mauritius, Barret returned to France in 1775, thus completing her round trip of the world. The collections she had contributed to had reached the Jardin des Plantes in Paris, with other keepers and naturalists to study them.³⁹ No women were yet part of any scientific institution in Enlightenment Paris, at least formally.⁴⁰ The track of Barret is lost in the Dordogne, near Bordeaux, the home of her husband. She never again appears in any documents related to botany or natural history. She died in 1807, but before that, in 1785, she received a pension of 200 *livres* from the French navy for services rendered, for the perils she had suffered in her voyage around the world, and for her “*grand courage*”.

That was not the only recognition she received. There was also the furtive and encrypted tribute that Commerson paid her, baptising a botanical species from Mauritius with her name, *Baretia bonafidia*, a phanerogam (flowering plant) – according to Commerson’s own Latin comment – “that deceives with its dress or leaves” and which is named after the heroine who “changed her feminine clothes and behaviour for those of a man, and dared to travel the entire planet by land and sea with us”. The inscription concludes:

Armed like Diana and shrewd as Minerva, she miraculously escaped safe and sound from the snares and dangers of men and wild animals, not without putting her own life and honour at risk. She was the first of her sex to circumnavigate the world, leaving more than 15,000 leagues behind her.⁴¹

It was customary to name plants after friends, collaborators, or patrons, playing with physical and moral analogies – in other words, transferring the features of the persons so honoured onto the natural world, or vice versa, naturalising human behaviour. It is significant that Commerson should choose this heterophyllous species – that is, characterised by an environmental adaptation manifested in two different types of leaves: the younger are more lobular and the older are smoother. A plant with two garments, a heterophyllous or chameleonic Minerva: a most apt choice in the context of a discipline, botany, full of moral fables, particularly those involving sex and women, since Linnaeus explained the reproduction of plants in terms of polygamy, polyandry, and the language of learned licentiousness.⁴²

Tahiti is the “beach crossing” of this story, where women, plants, their names, and disguises come together, where two opposite ways of exhibiting



Figure 9.2 The allegory of truth being unveiled in the well-known frontispiece of the *Encyclopédie*, by Benoît-Louis Prevost (Paris, 1772).

Source: Bibliothèque Nationale de France. <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8409673t.r=frontispice%20enciclopedia?rk=42918;4#>

and hiding femininity cross over. Indeed, we can understand the episode of the discovery of Barret's sex by invoking this formula which, under the influence of scientific studies, is known as the principle of symmetric anthropology.⁴³ Basically, it consists of trying to get an epistemologically equidistant viewpoint between familiar and foreign cultures. To "play the stranger" was always a useful way to penetrate the mysteries of one's own culture.

One very emblematic image will serve as our conclusion: truth being unveiled by reason and metaphysics, surrounded by the sciences and the arts, by philosophy, history, poetry, mathematics, geometry, and, further down, technology and the mechanical trades. It is the frontispiece of the *Encyclopédie*, Prévost's engraving from a drawing by Cochin, an iconic picture. It was done in 1772, when Barret was in Mauritius, shortly after the events in Tahiti, and not long before she completed her voyage around the world. It is the illustrated version *par excellence* of the *nuda veritas*, the naked truth, and the *aletheia* (ἀλήθεια), the unveiling of truth, that elusive goddess: hidden down a well or wrapped in a veil, but in any case, hidden. This is a classical theme if ever there was one, not without gender-related interpretations, a correlation of truth or nature with the female body. We only have to imagine for a moment a switching of roles: if this *aletheia* were Jeanne Barret, the sciences and liberal arts surrounding her could well be the women of Tahiti. Observations of subjects alien to a culture often reveal what the conventions of that culture hide from its own members (Figure 9.2).

Notes

- 1 The main printed accounts of the visit to Tahiti were those of Louis-Antoine de Bougainville himself in his *Voyage autour du monde* (1771) (we have used the 1772 English translation by John Reinhold Forster); and Philibert Commerson, "Sur la découverte de la nouvelle Isle de Cythère ou Taïti", *Mercure de France*, November 1769: 197–205. There are also other manuscript diaries, such as those of Bougainville and Commerson, as well as other members of the expedition: Charles-Pierre-Félix Fesche, a volunteer on the frigate *Boudeuse*; Saint-Germain, notary on the *la Boudeuse*; François Vivez, surgeon on the cargo vessel; the Prince of Nassau-Siegen; and Caro, a lieutenant from the East India Company, aboard the *Étoile*. They have all been published in Étienne Taillemite, ed., *Bougainville et ses compagnons autour du monde 1766–1769* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale Éditions, 2006). Subsequently, the *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville, ou Dialogue entre A et B sur l'inconvénient d'attacher des idées morales à certaines actions physiques qui n'en comportent pas*, written by Denis Diderot in 1776 and published in 1796 in a miscellaneous posthumous collection, was the first of the philosophical commentaries on Bougainville's voyage, and undoubtedly the one partly responsible for its fame. Ever since, Tahiti has been the focus of attention. Among the numerous anthropologists who have studied these cultural encounters and sexuality in Polynesia throughout the 20th century, we cannot fail to mention at least Margaret Mead, *Coming of Age in Samoa* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1928); Greg Denning, *Beach Crossings: Voyaging Across Times, Cultures and Self* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing, 2004); Anne Salmond, *Aphrodite's Island: the European Discovery of Tahiti* (Los Angeles: University of

- California Press, 2009); and Serge Tcherkézoff, *Le mythe occidental de la sexualite polynesienne. 1928–1999: Margaret Mead, Derek Freeman et Samoa* (Paris: PUF, 2001).
- 2 Andy Martin, “The Enlightenment in Paradise: Bougainville, Tahiti, and the Duty of Desire”, *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 41, no. 2, Special Issue: *Dangerous Liaisons in the South Pacific* (Winter, 2008): 203–216; Carol E. Harrison, “Replotting the Ethnographic Romance. Revolutionary Frenchmen in the Pacific, 1768–1804”, *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 21, no. 1 (2012): 39–59. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41475055>
 - 3 About round the world voyages, Joyce Chaplin, *Round about the Earth: Circumnavigation from Magellan to Orbit* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2012).
 - 4 A classic on this subject is still Bernard Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).
 - 5 It was passages like the following, with forced but very effective eroticism, that upset Cook: “A young man near six feet high performed the rites of Venus with a little girl about eleven or twelve, before several of our people and a great number of the natives. Among the natives were several women of superior rank, particularly Oberea, who may properly be said to have assisted at the ceremony. For they gave instructions to the girl how to perform her part, which young as she was, she did not seem much to stand in need of” John Hawkesworth, *An Account of the Voyages Undertaken by the Order of His Present Majesty for Making Discoveries in the Southern Hemisphere...* III vols (London: Strahan & Cadell, 1773). vol. II, p. 12. Cook’s description of the same episode in his diaries is far less detailed: “this day closed with an odd Scene at the Gate of the Fort where a young fellow above 6 feet high lay with a little Girl about 10 or 12 years of age publicly before several of our people and a number of the Natives. What makes me mention this, is because, it appear’d to be done more from Custom than Lewdness”, quoted in John C. Beaglehole, ed., *The Journals of Captain James Cook on His Voyages of Discovery*, vol. 1 (London: Hakluyt Society and Cambridge University Press, 1955): 93 and 94.
 - 6 Account of Vicente de Nápoles with Álvaro de Saavedra. *Circa 1528*. Archivo General de Indias (España) [hereafter AGI], México, Patronato, 43, n. 2, r. 11, ff. 10r–12v.
 - 7 *Relación y derrotero del primer viaje del Adelantado Álvaro de Mendaña*, Biblioteca Nacional de España, MSS/10267, f. 35.
 - 8 Oliver Warner (ed.) *An Account of the Discovery of Tahiti, from the Journal of George Robertson, Master of the H. M. S. Dolphin* (London: Folio Society, 1955), 32.
 - 9 Quoted in Anne Salmond, *Aphrodite’s Island: the European Discovery of Tahiti* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009) 54.
 - 10 English translation taken from Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, *A Voyage Round the World Performed by Orders of His most Christian Majesty, in the Years 1766, 1767, 1768, and 1769*, trans. John Reinhold Forster (London: J. Nourse, 1772), 128–129.
 - 11 *Relación y derrotero del primer viaje del Adelantado Álvaro de Mendaña*. s. l., 1701–1800. BNE, MSS/10267, f. 5.
 - 12 Joseph Banks, *Manners and Customs of South Sea Islands, 1769*. After 14-VII-1769. State Library, New South Wales (Australia), SAFE/Banks Papers/Series 03.01 (Safe 1/12), f. 364.
 - 13 Arcadio Pineda, *Viaje en limpio de las corbetas “Descubierta” y “Atrevida” desde su salida de Cádiz en 1789 hasta su regreso a Montevideo en 1794 por Arcadio Pineda*. AMN, 0142 Ms. 0181/000, f. 459.
 - 14 “According to Plato in the *Symposium*, Aphrodite Ourania, the older of the two, was the goddess of spiritual love, while the one from Cythera, worshipped by the

- common people, was the goddess of sensual love”, Friedrich Schiller, *Cartas sobre la educación estética del hombre* (Barcelona: Acantilado, 2018 [1794]): c. vi.
- 15 Philibert Commerson, “Post-scriptum sur l’isle de la Nouvelle Cythère ou Taïti”, *Mercure de France*, November 1769: 197–207, 198. Can be consulted in <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k38132591>. Also in manuscript version in Collection MARGRY, *relative à l’histoire des Colonies et de la Marine françaises*, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, NAF 9407, f.146–149. <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10089719b>.
 - 16 Margaret Mead, *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, vol. 14 (New York: Macmillan, 1934): 502; Marshall Sahlins, *Islands of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985); Gananath Obeyesekere, *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook: European Myth-Making in the Pacific* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).
 - 17 Sometime later, an early missionary in the Society Islands and Hawaii, William Ellis, would declare: “The natives, *when they speak to outsiders*, use [the word taboo] unceasingly, applying it to what is prohibited or inappropriate”. William Ellis, *Polynesian Researchers*, 4 vols (London: Fisher, Son and Jackson, 1831): iv, 385 and s. (Our italics). See also Michael P. Shirres, “Tapu”, *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, XCI, 1 (1982): 29–51. <https://www.jps.auckland.ac.nz/document/?wid=3806>
 - 18 Anne Salmond, “Te Ao Tawhito: a Semantic Approach to the Traditional Maori Cosmos”, *Journal of the Polynesian Society* 87 (1978): 5–29. <http://www.jps.auckland.ac.nz/document/?wid=4022>
 - 19 Quoted in Herbert Williams, *Dictionary of the Maori Language* (Wellington: Government Printer, 1957): 385.
 - 20 See the classic study of Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 1966). And the revision by F. Allan Hanson, “Female pollution in Polynesia?” *The Journal of the Polynesian Society* 91, no. 3 (1982): 335–381. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20705663>
 - 21 Terence Barrow, *Maori Art of New Zealand* (Paris: The UNESCO Press, 1978): 53 and ss.
 - 22 “Whenever an Indian felt that he was in that state (imbued by ‘Oro, the god of war), he would normally wrap his arm with cloth in a strange and recognizable way, a sign that gave him the right to the favours of women. He could have up to twelve of them, the same number as granted to priests [...] These women would stay with him so long as he was in this frenzied state, yielding ardently to his embraces, taking them as if they were from the very god who inspired them. This female courtly service [sigisbéisme] was also offered by high-ranking women; but they all left him as soon as he returned to normal, and the spirit of the god was thus supposed to have left him”, Jacques A. Moerenhout, *Voyages aux Illes du Grand Océan...* (Paris: Adrien Maisonneuve, 1873): vol. II: 48 [our translation].
 - 23 James Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (New York: Macmillan, 1951 [1890]): 226–227.
 - 24 Jean Smith, “Tapu Removal in Maori Religion”, *The Journal of the Polynesian Society* I (1974): 1–42. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20705038>. See an amplification of this argument in Manuel Burón, “La Venus profana. Mujer y transgresión en los primeros encuentros en el Pacífico Sur”, *Revista Complutense de Historia de América* 49 (2023): 191–214. <https://dx.doi.org/10.5209/rcha.87987>.
 - 25 See, for example, Greg Dening, *Islands and Beaches, Discourse on a Silent Land: Marquesas 1774–1880* (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1980); Greg Dening, *Performances* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996).
 - 26 Much has been published recently about Jeanne Baret or Barret, coinciding with the commemoration of the fifth centenary of Magallanes-Elcano’s first circumnavigation. We have basically used Carole Christinat, “Une femme globe-trotter avec

- Bougainville: Jeanne Barret (1740–1807)”, *Revue française d’histoire d’outre-mer* 83, no. 310 (1er trimestre 1996): 83–95; John Dunmore, *Monsieur Baret: First Woman around the World 1766–1768* (Auckland: Heritage Press, 2002); Londa Schiebinger, “Jean Baret: the First Woman to Circumnavigate the World”, *Endeavour* 27, no. 1 (2003): 22–25; Glynis Ridley, *The Discovery of Jeanne Baret: a Story of Science, the High Seas, and the First Woman to Circumnavigate the Globe* (New York: Crown, 2010); Danielle Clode, *In Search of the Woman Who Sailed the World* (Sydney: Picador, 2020); María Teresa Tellería, *Sin permiso del Rey* (Madrid: Planeta, 2021). There is also a good guide for anyone wishing to look at her biography and bibliography: Claude Dutreix, *Jeanne Barret. La personne réelle d’un tour du monde devenue en ce XXIe siècle un personnage pour tout le monde* (Hongrie: Z’EST Éditions, 2021).
- 27 For a Crusoe tale in a feminine key, see the novel of the South African Nobel prize-winner, John Coetzee, *Foe* (Barcelona: Mondadori, 2004), where the survivor of the shipwreck and narrator of the story is a woman, Susan Barton.
 - 28 Danielle Clode, *In Search of the Woman Who Sailed the World* (Sydney: Picador, 2020), 35–36.
 - 29 Much has been written about women in science since the seminal work of Margaret W. Rossiter, *Women Scientists in America: Struggles and Strategies to 1940* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982). On collaborative couples: Helena M. Pycior, Nancy G. Slack, and Prina G. Abir-Am, eds., *Creative Couples in the Sciences* (New York: Rutgers University Press, 1996); Annette Lykknes, Donald L. Opitz, Brigitte van Tiggelen, eds., *For Better or For Worse? Collaborative Couples in the Sciences*, Science Networks. Historical Studies 44 (Birkhäuser, 2012).
 - 30 We speak in general terms and about periods prior to the eighteenth century. Of course, in the nineteenth century, not to mention the twentieth century, many women signed their work and took ownership of their contributions.
 - 31 Clode’s data, in Danielle Clode, *In Search of the Woman Who Sailed the World* (Sydney: Picador, 2020), 127.
 - 32 Steven Shapin, “The Invisible Technician”, *American Scientist* 77 (1989): 554–563. On the visibility and invisibility of women in scientific practice, see Francesca Antonelli, “Becoming Visible: Marie-Anne Paulze-Lavoisier and the Campaign for the ‘New Chemistry’ (1770s–1790s)”, *Ambix* 69, no. 3 (2022): 221–242. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/670946>.
 - 33 Danielle Clode, *In Search of the Woman Who Sailed the World* (Sydney: Picador, 2020), 188.
 - 34 Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, *A Voyage Round the World Performed by Orders of His most Christian Majesty, in the Years 1766, 1767, 1768, and 1769*, trans. John Reinhold Forster (London: J. Nourse, 1772), 25–260; Commerson, “Post-Scriptum”, 200.
 - 35 Louis-Antoine de Bougainville, *A Voyage Round the World Performed by Orders of His most Christian Majesty, in the Years 1766, 1767, 1768, and 1769*, trans. John Reinhold Forster (London: J. Nourse, 1772), 301. The episode also appears in the diary of Vivez, reproduced in Étienne Taillemite, ed., *Bougainville et ses compagnons autour du monde 1766–1769* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale Éditions, 2006), vol II: 169–291, 240.
 - 36 Étienne Taillemite, ed., *Bougainville et ses compagnons autour du monde 1766–1769* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale Éditions, 2006), vol. I: 350
 - 37 This is the case of one of the earliest biographies of Commerson: Paul-Antoine Cap, *Philibert Commerson, naturaliste voyageur* (Paris: Victor Masson et fils, 1861).
 - 38 See the chapter “La naturaleza novelada: Bernardin de Saint-Pierre”, in Juan Pimentel, *Testigos del mundo. Ciencia, literatura y viajes* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2003): 291–328.

- 39 These naturalists were Jacques Maillart-Dumesle and, above all, Paul Philippe Sanguin de Jossigny, the draughtsman and assistant of Commerson in Mauritius who accompanied the collections to Paris.
- 40 Mary Terrall, “Masculine Knowledge, the Public Good, and the Scientific Household of Réaumur”, *Osiris* 30 (2015): 182–201. <https://www-jstor-org.ueab.cat/stable/10.1086/682980>.
- 41 Yves Laissus, “Catalogue des manuscrits de Philibert Commerson (1727–1773) conservés à la Bibliothèque centrale du Muséum national d’Histoire naturelle (Paris)”, *Revue d’Histoire des Sciences*, 31, 2 (1978): 131–162. The inscription is transcribed in Paulin Crassous, *La décade philosophique*, 8 juillet 1798, 150–151. The plant is now known as *Turraea rutilans*.
- 42 He had also dedicated another species to his legitimate wife, after her death: the *Pulcheria commersonia*. On the sexual readings of botany: Janet Browne, “Botany in the Boudoir and Garden: the Banksian Context”, in *Visions of Empire. Voyages, Botany, and Representation of Nature*, ed. David Philip Miller and Peter Hanns Reill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 153–172. On colonial botany: Londa Schiebinger, *Plants and Empire. Colonial Bioprospecting in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).
- 43 Bruno Latour popularised the formula of “symmetric anthropology” in his study *We Have Never Been Modern* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993) [originally published in France with the title *Nous n’avons jamais été modernes: Essai d’anthropologie symétrique* (Paris: La Découverte, 1991)], to establish a sort of neutrality between modernist and nonmodernist, an epistemological equilibrium that allows us to explore the life of the laboratory with the eyes of an anthropologist, becoming unfamiliar with those cultures we see as our own, and becoming familiar with those of others. Latour’s essay, as we know, revolved around the influential book by Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle and the Experimental Life* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985).

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10 Vicious Sensibilities

The Role of Ethnosexual Violence in the Patriarchalization of Tãno' Lãguas yan Gãni (the Mariana Islands) during the Eighteenth Century*

Enrique Moral de Eusebio

Introduction

The armed conflicts between the Spanish colonizers and the Indigenous peoples of Tãno' Lãguas yan Gãni, also known as the Mariana Islands¹ (Figure 10.1), ended in the late seventeenth century.² According to some scholars, the Spanish conquest led to the patriarchalization of the archipelago.³ In this chapter, I will argue that this patriarchalization was achieved, in part, through the physical and sexual violence perpetrated by the colonizers against the populations they sought to dominate. I will also claim that this violence stemmed from a kind of sensibility that I call “vicious sensibility.”

By “vicious sensibilities,” I refer broadly to the sensations, emotions, and (im)moralities that guided the colonizers' violent behavior. I show that these vicious sensibilities ultimately normalized their abuses and led to new social

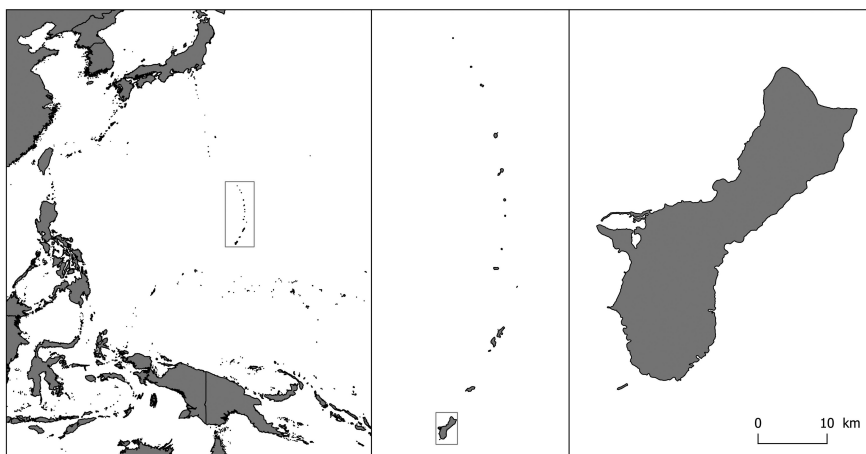


Figure 10.1 Maps of the Western Pacific (left), Tãno' Lãguas yan Gãni (center), and the island of Guãhan (right).

Source: Prepared by the author with the help of Jorge Canosa Betés.

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hierarchies and inequalities on the islands. “Vicious” has a double connotation here: on the one hand, it refers to the physical violence that resulted from (as well as shaped) these sensibilities. On the other hand, due to its shared etymology with “vice,” it also alludes to sexual immorality and to a certain taste for combining cruelty and self-gratification. In addition, the performance of these vicious sensibilities was closely linked to power. It is, therefore, necessary to acknowledge that, in the cases of sexual violence that I examine in this chapter, although the aggression was committed by sexual means, it was not only aimed at libido, but also at the domination of the victims, their relatives, and the territories they inhabited.⁴ Vicious sensibilities thus show the complex ways in which violence, pleasure, and power are intertwined in contexts of domination such as colonial situations.⁵

Most colonial agents that performed their vicious sensibilities in Tãno’ Lâguas yan Gâni were European or came from New Spain, while their victims were CHamoru or *Mestisu* women. CHamoru or Chamorro is the endonym by which the Indigenous people of the archipelago refer to themselves today, while *Mestisu* is the name given to a person of mixed parentage during the Spanish colonial rule.⁶ Consequently, the sexual violence suffered by these women was crossed not only by gender but also by “race” or ethnicity. For this reason, I will talk about “ethnosexual violence,” borrowing a term that Joane Nagel defines as “the intersection and interaction between ethnicity and sexuality and the ways in which each defines and depends on the other for its meaning and power.”⁷ Although ethnosexual violence stemmed from the vicious sensibilities of the aggressors, these sensibilities were not always expressed through sexual means. Sometimes they involved physical violence without a sexual component, as I will show below.

Through cases involving governors, mayors, and even Jesuit missionaries, I explore how vicious sensibilities affected the configuration of the axes of “race” and gender in the archipelago. To do this, I use a heuristic tool borrowed from Black feminisms: the matrix of domination.⁸ I also examine how different femininities and masculinities resulted from this matrix of domination using a concept developed by Rita Segato, the “pedagogy of cruelty.”⁹ These masculinities and femininities emerged and developed in an emotional landscape that, through fear, suffering, and coercion, contributed to the patriarchalization of Tãno’ Lâguas yan Gâni throughout the eighteenth century.

Matrix of Domination and Ethnosexual Violence

The Spanish colonization of Tãno’ Lâguas yan Gâni strengthened during the last years of the seventeenth century, with the end of the Spanish-CHamoru conflicts. After the armed confrontations, most of the CHamoru communities were forcibly resettled into villages built mainly on the islands of Guåhan (Guam) and Luta (Rota). Testimonies from the time suggest that this process of forced relocation, known in the Jesuit documents as “reduction”

(*reducción*), decimated the Indigenous populations of the archipelago. For instance, in 1709, the new governor of the islands, Juan Antonio Pimentel (1709–1720), wrote a letter to report on his assumption of office. In the document, the governor highlighted the poor state of the archipelago’s population, referring to the epidemics and armed clashes of the previous century. He also added another reason to explain the population decline: “the change of rites and customs to which the said missionary fathers have reduced them, to a common and political life in the villages they have formed, removing them from their old rancherías where they lived scattered.”¹⁰ Indeed, regardless of the governor’s interest in criticizing the missionaries’ work, “reducing” the CHamoru communities ultimately meant disrupting their traditional ways of life.¹¹ While there were continuities, such as in some aspects of food production and consumption,¹² in areas of everyday life like sexuality, the “reduction” wiped out previous practices and institutions.¹³

To understand how the “reduction” configured a new colonial society, it is first necessary to outline the way of life of the CHamoru people prior to the establishment of a Jesuit mission in their territories. The *Latte* CHamoru populations (900/1000–1700CE), named after the “*latte* stones” or pillars that supported some of their buildings, lived on most of the islands in the archipelago.¹⁴ These communities were organized in villages located both on the coast and in the interior of the islands.¹⁵ Certain aspects of their social organization are still debated in current historiography. For example, the hierarchies between and within groups are not clear. Some sources indicate that there were no “lords” among them, while others speak of “main ones” (*principales*), people of some prestige and authority.¹⁶ In terms of gender relations, *Latte* communities seem to have had a sexual division of labor.¹⁷ Several authors also agree that these populations were matrilineal, that is, their kinship and inheritance ran through the female line.¹⁸ Some Jesuit missionaries misinterpreted this matrilineality as a greater power of CHamoru women over men, defining *Latte* communities as an “empire of women” (*empire des femmes*).¹⁹ However, it is not clear whether, prior to the arrival of Europeans in the archipelago, CHamoru communities were completely egalitarian in terms of gender, or whether there were small differences in power between men and women, that is, a kind of “low-intensity patriarchy.”²⁰ Eventually, the Spanish colonization originated or increased these gender inequalities to the point of establishing a high-intensity patriarchy, as I will show below.

The disruption of traditional CHamoru daily life, coupled with the reorganization of labor that came with life in the new villages or “*reducciones*,” exposed the Indigenous communities to various abuses. Around 1737, Joseph Calvo, who was general procurator of the Society of Jesus in the Philippine Islands, wrote the following about Tãno’ Lãguas yan Gãni:

In former times the burden of labor for all these things was shared by thousands of families; and now there are less than five hundred who

have to do the same. How, then, can they not be diminishing year by year! How can it not be observed that the Indian women who are married to Indian men either have no children, or very few; when, on the contrary, those married to soldiers have many! And to what other cause can this difference be ascribed than to the fact that the latter are exempt from labor, and the former are under such pressure for it that they either have no virtue to conceive, or they deliberately sterilized themselves so as not to give birth to slaves for the Spaniards, as they are sometimes heard to say.²¹

According to the Jesuit, the new labor regime after the “reduction” affected the women of the archipelago in different ways: CHamoru women married to Indigenous men were forced to work in the fields, while those married to soldiers were exempted. Through a particular intersection of gender and race, marriage defined which women would engage in the sufferings of farming, to the point that, as Calvo argues, some CHamoru women purposely sterilized themselves to spare their offspring from that burden. Although this argument could be an exaggeration by the missionary to denounce the terrible conditions of the Indigenous populations, it is plausible and consistent with other cases in which women subjected to hard forced labor (as enslaved Black women) deliberately sterilized themselves or aborted to prevent their offspring from being subjected to the same oppression.²²

To better understand how CHamoru women could occupy such diverse social positions, a heuristic tool from Black feminisms is useful: the matrix of domination. Coined by Patricia Hill Collins, the term is defined as “the overall social organization within which intersecting oppressions originate, develop, and are contained.”²³ The matrix of domination, or matrix of oppression, thus recognizes the whole of a society as the place where oppressions and privileges are (re)produced. It is through this matrix that social diversity is categorized in terms of difference, and that certain differences are used to establish inequality and social hierarchies. Similarly, the matrix of domination allows for a contextual analysis that hierarchizes oppressions, recognizing that in certain contexts one oppression may determine an individual’s life to a greater extent than any other. In this light, in eighteenth-century Tâno’ Lâguas yan Gâni, the institution of marriage played a fundamental role in organizing the matrix of domination, as it allowed women with the same social identity (same gender, same ethnicity) to be oppressed or privileged differently.

Apart from the exploitation suffered by women in the fields, the “reduction” brought about another kind of abuse: ethnosexual violence. Some of the cases of sexual abuse that took place in the archipelago at the beginning of the eighteenth century are known thanks to the rivalry between two influential personalities: Governor Juan Antonio Pimentel and Sergeant Major Joseph de Quiroga y Losada. The confrontations between the two men date back to at least 1709 and account not only for the animosity between them but also for the tensions that sexuality raised among colonial authorities.

Their discrepancies in the severity of the sexual violence exercised by the soldiers are especially telling. In Pimentel's aforementioned letter, the governor complained to the king about the sergeant major's lack of "instinct for government" and "military discipline," and suggested that he should be "transferred to the Philippines and given an encomienda to spend the few days he has left to live."²⁴ Pimentel also stated that, in the absence or death of the interim governors, Quiroga y Losada imposed "severe" punishments on those soldiers who were "mischievous" (*trabiosos*) with CHamoru women. Furthermore, he argued that the sergeant major only punished those soldiers who had committed the "sin of concupiscence," regardless of whether the accusations were true, and ignored other equally serious "sins" such as theft and drunkenness. The punishments were so terrible that, according to Pimentel, soldiers and CHamoru men alike "trembled with fear" at the mere mention of Quiroga y Losada's name.²⁵

Joseph de Quiroga y Losada, in turn, denounced the governor's misconduct to the authorities, including the Council of the Indies. In 1720, the sergeant major declared that the islands were in "great misery" under Pimentel's regime.²⁶ He revealed that both the governor and his mayors (*alcaldes*) exploited the CHamoru population, using them for hard labor in exchange for a few leaves of bad tobacco. Furthermore, neither Pimentel nor his subordinates provided clothing for the CHamoru people or the infantry, who were "in very indecent conditions, even on solemn days."²⁷

For Quiroga y Losada, however, the most "pitiful" fault of the governor was the spiritual—even moral—situation in which he held the islands. According to the sergeant major, the CHamoru people at the time were "very meek and Christian." But the Spaniards who came to the archipelago were the "trash" of New Spain, filling the islands with "scandals" and "vices of lust." Stephanie Mawson notes that knowledge of these men, mostly soldiers, is still rudimentary.²⁸ Most were Indigenous Filipinos, Mexican mestizos, and Spanish convicts sent to serve in Tāno' Lāguas yan Gāni in some degree of unfreedom.²⁹ Some of these soldiers, especially in the case of the convicts, arrived in the archipelago without their families, and some took CHamoru women as their wives.³⁰ The number of sexual assaults committed by these newcomers was such that, in the words of Quiroga y Losada, they "leave no woman, virgin or married, whom they do not solicit and deceive; they even coerce the husbands with threats to leave their own wives and houses to their infamous will."³¹ The sergeant major explained that Pimentel was fully aware of this situation since the Jesuit missionaries denounced the "scandals" in their sermons. However, the governor did nothing about it, not even in the case of those subordinates who lived in "public cohabitation" (*amancebados*) with women, as I will further discuss in the next section. Finally, Quiroga y Losada reported that:

The greatest scandal comes from the palace: because this governor, being a man of age and without a wife, has always had a sort of school

for girls in his house; which at first did not seem very bad, but with the passage of time many things have come to light that are unworthy of being written, that is, deformities and abominations that belong to old godforsaken men who do not want to leave women, even when they are no longer for them: It has already become a public scandal and universal murmur in the Marianas as well as in Manila, to the point that the palace of this governor is known by the name of the Seraglio of the Grand Turk. He later marries these girls to soldiers, some with considerable consent, others almost by force, according to what they say. And even after they are married, some of them continue to live in the palace, in cohabitation with the governor himself.³²

These abuses illustrate the “pedagogy of cruelty.” This term refers to the part of male socialization that trains men to dominate by using violence against “others” who are considered inferior (such as women, children, or subordinate men).³³ The sergeant major’s testimony shows that not even the most vulnerabilized people in the entire archipelago—the orphaned girls—escaped the vicious sensibilities of Governor Pimentel.

Thanks to Quiroga y Losada, the ethnosexual violence perpetrated by the governor reached the ears of the Council of the Indies, which drew up a manuscript accusing Pimentel of “maintaining a collection of girls and women in his own house with remarkable scandal for the results that it produces.”³⁴ The Council members also mentioned that the Jesuit missionaries, both in private councils and in public sermons, had asked the governor to put an end to this behavior. In response, Pimentel expelled from the archipelago both the Vice Provincial Ignacio de Iburgüen and Juan Antonio Cantova, who served as rector of the seminary of the islands.³⁵

These hostilities between Governor Pimentel and other colonial agents, such as Joseph de Quiroga y Losada and the Jesuit missionaries, show that accusations concerning sexual matters played a relevant and strategic role in the administration of the archipelago during the eighteenth century. For instance, Pimentel and Quiroga y Losada tried to tarnish each other’s reputations with their mutual complaints, even involving the Spanish king and the Council of the Indies in their disputes. In the following section, I will discuss other cases of ethnosexual violence that took place in the archipelago and show the legal consequences that such violence had for Governor Pimentel.

Mayors, “Scandals,” and Social Hierarchies Built on Sexual Abuse

In the villages of Tãno’ Lãguas yan Gãni, the governor’s power was embodied, in a capillary way, by the mayors. These “stewards of the governor,” as described by the Jesuit Felipe María Muscati,³⁶ were also the highest authority within each district (*partido*) of the islands. Archival evidence shows that in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, the mayors of the archipelago emulated the vicious sensibilities of the governor by physically and sexually

abusing the populations they administered. In a letter written in 1724, Muscati denounced the abuse of power by some of these mayors, which led to numerous “disturbances” and “scandals”:

they abuse their authority in such a way that, making themselves masters of all women, they use slight pretexts to cruelly punish those husbands who keep a watchful eye on their wives, and they do the same to those women who resist them, and so, instead of being, as they should be, the straight line of the minister to avoid scandal and to promote divine worship, they are the ones who scandalize the most and who most hinder and destroy the spiritual good of souls.³⁷

This letter reveals that the mayors’ vicious sensibilities were not only directed toward sexual abuse but also toward physical and “cruel” assaults on those women and husbands who opposed them. The trial of residence (*juicio de residencia*) against former governor Juan Antonio Pimentel reveals more details about the abuses committed by mayors. A week before Felipe María Muscati wrote his letter, the Royal *Audiencia* and *Chancillería* of the Philippine Islands issued the sentence of the trial.³⁸ The indictment contained nine charges against Pimentel and several of his lieutenants and mayors, including Andrés de Areo, Juan de Argüelles, Juan Núñez, Juan de Retana, and Joseph de Sandoval. They were all accused of “publicly trading” (*comerciar públicamente*) with married women and widows from the territories where they ruled, giving “scandal” and “bad example” to the rest of the inhabitants. In addition, Pimentel was charged:

for having committed this Lieutenant General the same excess during his government with six girls that he kept as orphans in his palace, continuing the same excess after he got them married, with the scandal and punishment of two husbands of the aforementioned girls and the absence of another husband of theirs.³⁹

The “scandal” and “abominations” that Joseph de Quiroga y Losada had denounced a few years earlier ended up in court. The sentence notes that at least two of the men on trial with the governor had been mayors of villages in the archipelago: Joseph de Sandoval had served for several years in Luta, Sa’ipan (Saipan), Malesso’ (Merizo), Humatak (Umatac), and Inalâhan (Inarajan),⁴⁰ while Andrés de Arceo had been mayor of Pâgu (Pago).⁴¹ Both were accused of publicly “trading” with married women in the villages they administered. However, Arceo was charged with a further offense: he was said to have whipped a boy aged between 11 and 12, named Francisco Ego, so severely that his buttocks and part of his waist were swollen and burst, and he died three weeks later.⁴² The reason for this terrible punishment was that the boy had lost a turkey that belonged to the mayor. Arceo’s cruelty was such that he would not allow the boy’s father to take him to the city

to receive the sacraments. Mayor Arceo's extreme physical and even spiritual violence against this boy is another example of both vicious sensibilities and the male pedagogy of cruelty that shows domination through violence against inferior "others."

Despite the seriousness of all the accusations, the verdict in the trial against Pimentel and his subordinates is surprising for the impunity that resulted. The Royal *Audiencia* and *Chancillería* of the Philippines decided to acquit all the defendants of the charges, except for two: the former governor was found guilty of having committed "excesses" with the six orphaned girls he kept in his palace and was ordered to pay 200 pesos plus court costs.⁴³ On the other hand, Juan Núñez, captain and secretary to the governor, had to pay a third of the court costs for having publicly "traded" with the widow Teresa Yda.⁴⁴

This almost total impunity probably contributed to the continuation of the abuses against CHamoru and *Mestisu* populations during the administration of the new governor, Luis Antonio Sánchez de Tagle (1720–1725). Five months after the publication of the aforementioned sentence, Captain Manuel Díaz Dozal arrived in Guåhan from Manila with orders to investigate such abuses. In November 1724, Díaz Dozal questioned 16 witnesses from different parts of the island, and the survey he prepared included three questions about physical and sexual abuse. Question number 16 asked, "[i]f the said mayor in his village mistreats them both in word and deed without giving sufficient reason to the said natives."⁴⁵ The next question read: "[i]f the said mayor has caused scandal in his town by usurping the wives of the married men, or by other cohabitations (*amancebamientos*)."⁴⁶ Finally, question number 18 inquired "[i]f, upon knowing the said mayor that the natives complain to the Father about those humiliations, he punishes them."⁴⁷

Although one of the questions focused on whether the women of the village had been abused by the mayor, it is striking that, according to their names, the 16 witnesses questioned were all men. This means that the abused women were doubly victimized since they were denied the opportunity to testify and denounce the sexual aggressions they suffered. By not including women among the witnesses, Díaz Dozal prevented them from actively participating in a process that could entail legal consequences against their aggressors.

Despite the absence of female witnesses, the testimonies recorded by Díaz Dozal showed that the mayors of five villages had abused their female neighbors. The villages were Humåtak, Mumu (probably Mongmong), Malessó', Inalåhan, and Pueblo Nuevo. Felis Ysso, a CHamoru man from Humåtak, explained that when Joseph de Sandoval was mayor, the village was "upside down" (*alborotado*) because he took the wives of married men and, when the husbands objected, he demoted them from their positions in the militia and gave them more work in the fields.⁴⁸ Timoteo Aegon, also a CHamoru neighbor from Humåtak, said that those husbands who agreed to the abuses were given the positions of captain and sergeant major, which Sandoval took

away from the others. Likewise, he mentioned that the mayor mistreated and punished those women who opposed his sexual aggressions.⁴⁹ Dionisio Gadao, from Malesso', stated that in his village men who did not allow the mayor to have sex with their wives and daughters were harassed with more work and beaten, and the same happened to women who resisted the mayor's abuses.⁵⁰ Angel Ydi, from the same village, claimed that the mayor had promised a "leading man" (*un principal*) that he would make him an officer in the militia if he would allow him to engage in sexual intercourse with his wife or provide him with another female neighbor from the village.⁵¹ Finally, Estanislao Canno, from Hagåtña (Agana), said that the mayor of his town punished and mistreated the CHamoru neighbors "worse than they do with slaves," and that when they whipped them, they took off their pants "as if they were boys."⁵²

The above testimonies provide a detailed account of how the mayors of the archipelago performed their vicious sensibilities through physical and sexual violence. According to witnesses, during the first quarter of the eighteenth century, the military hierarchy of the archipelago followed a system of sexual abuse of women. This system regulated the granting and withdrawal of military positions. For instance, a man was promoted in the militia if he consented to the rape of his female relatives (wife or daughters) by his superiors. On the other hand, if the man objected, he was subject to demotion, expulsion, and/or physical punishment. Women were doubly oppressed, and, in both cases, they suffered either sexual or physical violence. Four years before the arrival of Díaz Dozal in Guåhan, Joseph de Quiroga y Losada had already denounced this situation. He explained that those husbands who allowed the governor, or one of his officers and mayors, to lie with their wives were quickly promoted to the military positions of lieutenant (*alférez*) and captain, while those who refused were punished in two ways: by being demoted within the militia or condemned to the stock (*cepo*) and "beaten" (*reventados a palos*).⁵³

Hard labor in the fields, which, as I have already mentioned, sometimes led to deliberate abortions among CHamoru women married to Indigenous men, also served as an element of coercion. Timoteo Aegon, a witness for Judge Díaz Dozal, stated that when a husband objected to the mistreatment of his wife by his superior, both the husband and the wife were punished with more work. On the other hand, if the husband consented, the workload was reduced for both.⁵⁴ This means that, although in principle CHamoru women married to soldiers were exempt from working in the fields, in some cases they could end up performing this task. However, the documents do not specify whether these women worked under the same harsh conditions as their counterparts married to CHamoru men.

On the other hand, just as marriage generated different types of femininity (one subjected to hard labor in the fields, barely able to conceive children, and the other one privileged in terms of labor and more linked to motherhood), the vicious sensibilities of the military and administrative authorities of the

archipelago also produced different masculinities. High-ranking members of the military and administrative hierarchy had the power to gain carnal access to their subordinates' wives and female relatives. As a result, in addition to the pain and suffering they inflicted on the women, they may also have caused feelings of helplessness and humiliation in their husbands and fathers. Moreover, those husbands who resisted were often beaten. Men were also physically humiliated, as in the case of the mayor of Hagåtña who stripped them "as if they were boys" before the flogging. This entanglement of emotions and feelings reconfigured the matrix of domination present in the archipelago, giving rise to a gender hierarchy in which there were hegemonic and subordinate masculinities.⁵⁵ Sayak Valencia argues that these colonial hegemonic masculinities not only fulfilled the task of conquering territories and accumulating wealth but also reaffirmed an architecture of power through their right and access to all bodies.⁵⁶ The (re)configuration of this matrix of oppression shows that sexual violence, although perpetrated by sexual means, aimed not only at the aggressors' libido and gratification but also at domination.⁵⁷ The administrative and military authorities of the archipelago, through carnal access to the women's bodies and physical punishment of their husbands, guaranteed sovereignty over all of them and, ultimately, over the villages and territories they inhabited.

Unfortunately, neither the abuses nor the gender hierarchy ended after Manuel Díaz Dozal's investigations. A letter from the *Audiencia* of Manila, dated July 1726, stated that Governor Luis Antonio Sánchez de Tagle and his mayors forced CHamoru women to work until they were exhausted, and some of the mayors also "abused them" (*violentando algunas*).⁵⁸ In the following years, there was a debate in the archipelago about whether the position of mayor should be abolished, with Jesuits such as Juan Antonio Cantova arguing in favor, claiming that:

it was absolutely convenient and necessary for the common good of those islands and their inhabitants to extinguish the positions of mayors that existed in almost all the villages of two or three hundred souls [...], because of the very serious harm that was done in the spiritual and temporal to the natives and the little or no benefit done to the infantry guild.⁵⁹

The new governor, Manuel de Argüelles y Valdés (1725–1730), argued that abolishing the office of mayor would leave the archipelago in a "miserable state."⁶⁰ Argüelles was Sánchez de Tagle's successor and Juan Antonio Pimentel's son-in-law.⁶¹ This debate once again highlights the tensions that existed between different colonial agents in the wake of sexual abuse. In the following section, I will present a striking case in which the abuse of CHamoru women came not from the military and administrative authorities of the archipelago but from the clergy.

The Vicious Sensibilities of the Missionaries

Following the expulsion of the Society of Jesus from Tâno' Lâguas yan Gâni in 1769, a new case of sexual abuse of CHamoru and *Mestisu* women came to light: that of the Jesuit Francisco Xavier (Franz) Reitterberger. The peculiarity of this case is that the aggressor was a member of the clergy, that is, one of the missionaries who preached in the islands. However, his acts of ethnosexual violence were also acts of domination. Reitterberger's victims belonged to the Congregation of Our Lady of Light, which he had founded in 1758.⁶² By instigating emotions and feelings of fear, coercion, and suffering, Reitterberger gained sovereignty⁶³ over the bodies of the congregants and ultimately over the whole Congregation.

Franz Reitterberger's vicious sensibilities are traceable since his misbehavior constituted an offense prosecuted by the Holy Office of the Inquisition: the *crimen sollicitationis* or crime of solicitation. Solicitation occurred when a priest asked his penitents for sexual intercourse during confession.⁶⁴ After the arrival of the Augustinian Recollects in the archipelago, the new commissioner of the Holy Office issued a briefing order (*auto informativo*) against Reitterberger in 1774. Although the accused had died in October 1767, the trial went ahead. According to some scholars, the inquisitors' purpose in trying the German missionary was not only to investigate his "licentious" behavior but to discredit the Society of Jesus for its "loose" and "accommodative" morality.⁶⁵ Although the full inquisitorial process of Franz Reitterberger has not survived, his case can be traced from two documents: a copy of the closing arguments of the trial, held at the Archivo Histórico Nacional in Madrid,⁶⁶ and the prosecution against two Augustinian Recollect friars, accused of breaking the sacramental seal by exposing the Jesuit's aggressions, held at the Archivo General de la Nación in Mexico City.⁶⁷

According to these documents, most of the abuses took place in the 1760s. Decades later, a Discalced Augustinian friar, Tomás de Santa Rita, was appointed deputy of the case. He prepared 26 questions for 39 witnesses, all between 25 and 60 years of age.⁶⁸ Twenty-eight of these witnesses were women from Hagâtña and members of the Congregation of Our Lady of Light. Although the summary part of the case (*sumaria*), and thus the actual questions and answers of Santa Rita's interrogation, are missing, some of the declarations are briefly reproduced in the closing arguments of the trial. This document is therefore an exceptional source of information: it contains the testimonies of several Indigenous and *Mestisu* women from the Western Pacific who, in the eighteenth century, had the opportunity to denounce the sexual abuse they suffered at the hands of a European missionary. The text also gives the proper names of most of these women, all members of the Congregation at Hagâtña. As CHamoru historian Anne Perez Hattori argues, "extraordinarily androcentric Spanish historical documents [...] mention no more than a handful of women by name."⁶⁹ However, the case of Franz

Reittemberger makes it possible to know the names of several CHamoru women as well as their experiences and their role as historical agents in the trial against the German missionary.

The documents of the Reittemberger trial are so rich in information because, as in other Holy Office procedures, every detail helped the inquisitors create the juridical “truth” of the case.⁷⁰ This wealth of detail allows me to explore the concrete ways in which the Jesuit performed his vicious sensibilities by means of ethnosexual violence, as well as the emotions and feelings that such violence provoked in his victims. However, several filters detach the evidence contained in the documents from the actual experiences of the witnesses. In the words of Zeb Tortorici, “[i]n the space between that which is perceived through the senses and that which is subsequently represented as having been seen or heard or felt, we find all manner of misinscription.”⁷¹ The first distortion comes from the witnesses themselves. In their testimonies, they gave a version of events that could have been altered by factors such as the influence of their new confessors or the passing of years. The second bias is due to Tomás de Santa Rita, the deputy in the case. During his examination of the women, he did not record their testimonies literally, but in accordance with the methods and formulas in use at the time. The last misinscription can be attributed to the Mexican inquisitors who, in order to prepare the closing arguments of the trial, reproduced the content of the original testimonies recorded by Santa Rita in a less extensive and detailed manner.⁷²

Although the misinscriptions detach the information in the surviving documents from the original experiences of the witnesses, the written sources still provide evidence of the different physical and sexual abuses suffered by the CHamoru and *Mestisu* women, as well as the contexts in which such abuses occurred. For instance, according to the closing arguments of the trial, Reittemberger abused the congregants by exploiting the intimacy of the religious exercises he conducted in chapels (like the Chapel of Sorrows) or in his steward’s house in Hâgat (Agat).⁷³ Such spatial intimacy, combined with the coercive practices I will describe below, prevented his assaults from coming to light.

Within these spaces, Reittemberger abused the members of the Congregation in various ways. For example, one of the questions that Santa Rita put to one of the Augustinian confessors was:

if he knows through confession that Fr. Xavier [Reittemberger] ordered the women to get down on all fours; and that the aforementioned Father would stick his head in and lick the woman’s private part, and that later he would command her to lie down like a cross, other times on her knees, and that he would wash her parts, and behind, with the snot rag soaked in saliva.⁷⁴

This abuse, which consisted of washing the congregants’ private parts (*partes verendas*, or genitals⁷⁵), was reported by witness Antonia de los Ríos. She

stated that “when the prisoner cleaned her private part with saliva or a rag, he would say: Most Holy Virgin, do not allow the Devil’s temptation, or any bad thing, to reach this creature.”⁷⁶ Likewise, Juana Ramírez referred to this washing, but without mentioning the “private parts”:

at his steward’s house, in the town of Agat, he ordered them to strip naked and lie on their backs on the ground, and taking the prisoner a vessel of water, he would wash their whole bodies, telling them that just as a mother washes the body of her little daughter, the prisoner did the same with all those who participated in that exercise.⁷⁷

Susana del Castillo also alluded to these “washes,” stating that they first took place in the house of the missionary’s steward and later, after it was demolished, in the church of Hågat.⁷⁸ The previous testimonies show that Reittermberger sought to dissuade his victims by claiming that his abuses freed them from the temptation of the Devil and that they were not sinful because he acted like a mother to her daughter. Another coercive formula used by the missionary was to identify himself with Christ and speak of the congregants as Mary Magdalene. The aforementioned Antonia de los Ríos asserted that “the prisoner touched her in a similar way as Christ did with the Magdalene, to cast seven demons, or seven sins out of her.”⁷⁹ Likewise, María Tenorio stated that, according to Reittermberger, “the touching that the prisoner had with her mimicked the one that Christ had with the Magdalene.”⁸⁰ Teresa Torres also expressed that “when the prisoner touched her private parts, he told her not to fear any of these things or to be scandalized because Christ had done the same with the Magdalene.”⁸¹ Alluding to the purging and redeeming power of his hands and lips was another of Reittermberger’s coercive strategies. Three witnesses, Teresa Tenorio, Josefa Tatacon, and María Delgado, alluded to this practice. For example, the latter expressed that “whenever he licked such parts [the genitals], the prisoner said that she would have no more sins if she cooperated with him in such exercises, because wherever he put his hands, and sacred lips, no bad thing could enter.”⁸²

Sometimes there was no sexual component to the violence that Franz Reittermberger inflicted on the CHamoru and *Mestisu* women. María Nanagota testified that the Jesuit “used to hit her on the teeth, ears, eyes, and hands with a key, telling her that this was how he washed away her sins.”⁸³ Witness number 30, whose name is not mentioned in the closing arguments of the trial, claimed the same as María Nanagota, adding that “with the same key he twisted her hair and pulled it out, saying that that was how Santa Rosalía did it.”⁸⁴ These sadistic practices, which combined physical and sexual harm against the women of the Congregation, were guided by Reittermberger’s vicious sensibilities. As Segato points out, both sexual and physical abuses are violence whose purpose is the expression of absolute control of one will over another.⁸⁵ The missionary’s aggressions against the

congregants thus guaranteed him sovereignty over their bodies and, in the end, over the Congregation, his own niche of power in the archipelago.

As I pointed out at the beginning of this section, no action was taken against Reitterberger until the expulsion of the Jesuits from Tãno' Lâguas yan Gãni. It is striking, however, that his misconduct went unnoticed by the rest of the missionaries. His authority as founder of the Congregation, combined with his coercive practices, could have ensured the silence of his victims. For instance, witness Juana Ramírez reported that "out of fear of her husband, she did not allow the prisoner to cut off the hair on her head, and the hair on her parts, and for this reason the prisoner expelled her from the Congregation."⁸⁶ Likewise, María Tenorio explained that she was afraid to confess the abuse she had suffered to the Augustinian Recollects because "the things the prisoner did were always hidden and unknown."⁸⁷ However, when questioned, some congregants revealed that the Jesuits were fully aware of the violence they had suffered. Susana Ramírez stated that, when she denounced Reitterberger in front of the Jesuit fathers Francisco Xavier Urfahrer and Francisco Xavier Stengel, they told her that there was no sin in what their companion was doing and asked her to change her confessor.⁸⁸ Thus, when the Jesuits learned of Reitterberger's assaults, they decided to let them go unpunished, probably so as not to tarnish the reputation of their Order with the scandal. As a result, the German missionary could continue abusing the women of the Congregation for several years.

The sentence against Franz Reitterberger is unknown.⁸⁹ However, the archival evidence leaves no doubt: the German missionary used his authority in the Congregation of Our Lady of Light to abuse its members. To conclude this section, I would like to acknowledge the courage of the victims in denouncing their abuser, even though he was already dead. The testimonies that I have reproduced above reflect the fear that the congregants felt in disclosing the violence that they had suffered. However, unlike the victims of ethnosexual violence in the early eighteenth century, who did not have the opportunity to testify before Judge Díaz Dozal, in this case, the victims of Reitterberger overcame their fear and had the chance to denounce their aggressor before the representatives of the Tribunal of the Holy Office. By giving their testimonies and denouncing Reitterberger, these CHamoru and *Mestisu* women played a fundamental role as political and therefore historical actors in the trial, showing "[t]he power" or, rather, the agency "held by ordinary women in Chamorro society."⁹⁰ Their perspectives, though distorted by the (mis)inscriptions of the Inquisition officials, offer a very different vision of the archipelago's past.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I have shown how the colonization of Tãno' Lâguas yan Gãni led to the patriarchalization of its population. CHamoru communities went from having little or no gender differences to a high-intensity

patriarchy. Vicious sensibilities, understood as the colonial authorities' inclination to perform physical and sexual violence, played a fundamental role in this patriarchalization.

As Daniel Wickberg argues, written sources offer “patterns of perception” that make certain sensibilities visible.⁹¹ Through documents recording disputes and trials against colonial agents on the islands, I have been able to trace their vicious sensibilities and the connection between such sensibilities and power. After the “reduction” of CHamoru populations, this connection resulted in new gender and social hierarchies that shaped the new colonial society. These hierarchies were organized through a matrix of domination that produced different masculinities, some hegemonic and others subordinate. These hegemonic masculinities dominated those they considered inferior (women, girls, boys, and subordinate men) through a pedagogy of cruelty. Even men who had taken a vow of chastity, such as the Jesuit Reitterberger, used the violence taught by this pedagogy to control their small niche of power on the islands. As Segato points out in other contexts, the conquest of women's bodies did not end with the conquest of the territories. On the contrary, it continued in a permanent raping and dispossessing “conquestuality” (*conquistualidad*).⁹²

Finally, vicious sensibilities created a new emotional landscape in the archipelago. This landscape was made up of sensations, feelings, and emotions such as the women's terror of being abused by the mayors of their district, their fear of confessing the missionaries' aggressions, the pain and impotence of being beaten when they resisted, the exhaustion of working in the fields, and the despair that led some of them to abort their children—but also their courage, for instance, when they finally denounced their aggressors, as in the case of Reitterberger. In this sense, the cases of sexual violence mentioned in this chapter are only the tip of a much larger iceberg, since only a small part of the abuses reached the ears of those interested in reporting them. In conclusion, the vicious sensibilities that prevailed in Tãno' Lãguas yan Gãni throughout the eighteenth century are yet another reflection of the violence that was inherent to modernity,⁹³ that is, of the shadows in which those other sensibilities of the Enlightenment emerged.

Notes

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1 Throughout the chapter, I will use the toponyms in the CHamoru language proposed by the *Kumisión I Fino' CHamoru* (CHamoru Language Commission) of Guãhan. I will give the English form of each toponym in brackets the first time it appears in the text.

- 2 Francis X. Hezel, *When Cultures Clash. Revisiting the 'Spanish-Chamorro Wars.'* (Saipan: Northern Marianas Humanities Council, 2015), 73–74; Francis X. Hezel, “Reduction” of the Marianas. *Resettlement into Villages under the Spanish (1680–1731)* (Saipan: Northern Marianas Humanities Council, 2021), 2.
- 3 Carmen Á. Granell, “Guåhan: inafa’maolek. El rastreo material de la socialización infantil en una colonia moderna y sus aportes para una Pedagogía Descolonial” (MA diss., Universitat Pompeu Fabra, 2018), 8; Sandra Montón-Subías, “Despatriarcalizar descolonizando, descolonizar despatriarcalizando. Algunas reflexiones en torno al colonialismo, el patrimonio y la memoria histórica,” *Complutum* 32, no. 2 (2021): 568.
- 4 Rita Laura Segato, *La guerra contra las mujeres* (Madrid: Traficantes de Sueños, 2016), 18.
- 5 For other contexts, see Daina Ramey Berry and Leslie M. Harris, eds. *Sexuality and Slavery: Reclaiming Intimate Histories in the Americas* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2018); Nicholas R. Jones and Chad Leahy, “Introduction. Rethinking the Pornographic in Premodern and Early Modern Spanish Cultural Production,” in *Pornographic Sensibilities: Imagining Sex and the Visceral in Premodern and Early Modern Spanish Cultural Production*, eds. Nicholas R. Jones and Chad Leahy (New York: Routledge, 2021), 1–16.
- 6 Carlos Madrid, “Mestizo (Mestisu).” *Guampedia*. Accessed 7 December 2023. <https://www.guampedia.com/mestizo-mestisu/>
- 7 Joane Nagel, *Race, Ethnicity, and Sexuality. Intimate Intersections, Forbidden Frontiers* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 10.
- 8 Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York and London: Routledge, 2001), 228–229.
- 9 Rita Laura Segato, *La guerra contra las mujeres* (Madrid: Traficantes de Sueños, 2016), 57, 79.
- 10 Juan Antonio Pimentel, “El teniente general don Juan Antonio Pimentel, gobernador y capitán general de las Islas Marianas, da cuenta a Vuestra Majestad de haber tomado posesión de aquel gobierno a 22 de agosto de 1709,” 24 November 1709, Archivo General de Indias [hereinafter AGI], Seville, Ultramar 561, N. 9, 102. Original in Spanish: “la mudanza de ritos, y costumbres, y á que dichos Padres Misioneros, los han reducido, á vida comun y politica en Pueblos que han formado, sacandolos de sus antiguas rancherías, donde vivian esparcidos.” Unless otherwise noted, all translations are by the present author.
- 11 Sandra Montón-Subías, “Gender, Missions, and Maintenance Activities in the Early Modern Globalization: Guam 1668–98,” *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 23, no. 2 (2019): 412.
- 12 Verónica Peña Filiu, “Apetitos imperiales en el Pacífico: La colonización de las islas Marianas y su impacto sobre los hábitos alimentarios de los chamorros (1668–1769),” in *España y las islas Marianas. Una historia compartida*, eds. Carlos Madrid Álvarez-Piñer, David Atienza de Frutos, and Carlos Martínez Shaw (Madrid: Editorial UNED, 2022), 115–141.
- 13 See Enrique Moral de Eusebio, “Sexual (Mis)Encounters in the Mariana Islands: Tracing Sexuality in Spanish Policies and CHamoru Responses to Contact and Colonization, 1521–1769,” PhD diss. (Universitat Pompeu Fabra, 2022), Chapter 4.
- 14 Mike T. Carson, *Archaeological Landscape Evolution: the Mariana Islands in the Asia-Pacific Region* (Heidelberg: Cham, Springer International Publishing, 2016), 221.
- 15 Scott Russell, *Tiempon I Manmofona: Ancient Chamorro Culture and History of the Northern Mariana Islands* (Saipan: Division of Historic Preservation, 1998), 109; Boyd Dixon and Laura Gilda, “A Comparison of an Inland Latte Period

- Community to Coastal Settlement Patterns Observed on Southern Guam,” *People and Culture of Oceania* 27 (2011): 65–66.
- 16 Scott Russell, *Tiempon I Manmfo’na: Ancient Chamorro Culture and History of the Northern Mariana Islands* (Saipan: Division of Historic Preservation, 1998), 141–144; Sandra Montón-Subías, “Gender, Missions, and Maintenance Activities in the Early Modern Globalization: Guam 1668–98,” *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 23, no. 2 (2019): 409.
 - 17 James M. Bayman et al., “Household economy and gendered labor in the 17th century A.D. on Guam,” *Journal of Field Archaeology* 37, no. 4 (2012): 260; Sandra Montón-Subías, “Gender, Missions, and Maintenance Activities in the Early Modern Globalization: Guam 1668–98,” *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 23, no. 2 (2019): 411.
 - 18 Laura Marie Torres Souder, *Daughters of the Island: Contemporary Chamorro women organizers of Guam* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1992), 44; Sandra Montón-Subías, “Gender, Missions, and Maintenance Activities in the Early Modern Globalization: Guam 1668–98,” *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 23, no. 2 (2019): 408–409; Enrique Moral de Eusebio, “Sexual (Mis)Encounters in the Mariana Islands: Tracing Sexuality in Spanish Policies and CHamoru Responses to Contact and Colonization, 1521–1769,” PhD diss. (Universitat Pompeu Fabra, 2022): 68–73.
 - 19 Charles Le Gobien, *Histoire des Isles Marianes, nouvellement converties à la Religion Chrestienne; & de la mort glorieuse des premiers Missionnaires qui y ont prêché la Foy* (Paris: Chez Nicolas Pepie, 1700), 61–62.
 - 20 Carmen Á. Granell, “Guåhan: inafa’maolek. El rastro material de la socialización infantil en una colonia moderna y sus aportes para una Pedagogía Descolonial” (MA diss., Universitat Pompeu Fabra, 2018), 46; Sandra Montón-Subías, “Gender, Missions, and Maintenance Activities in the Early Modern Globalization: Guam 1668–98,” *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 23, no. 2 (2019): 420–421. See also Rita Laura Segato, *La guerra contra las mujeres* (Madrid: Traficantes de Sueños, 2016), 18–19.
 - 21 Joseph Calvo, “Joseph Calvo de la Compañía de Jesus, Procurador General de su Provincia de Philipinas,” probably 1737, AGI, Seville, Filipinas 299, N. 33, 2r–2v. Original in Spanish: “Antes el trabajo para todo lo dicho se repartia entre millares de Familias; y aora no llegan à quinientas las que han de hacer lo mismo. Como pues no han de ir cada año en disminucion! Como no se ha de experimentar, que las Indias cassadas con Indios, ò no tienen hijos, ò son muy pocos; quando al contrario las cassadas con soldados tienen muchos! Y à que otra causa se puede atribuir esta diferencia; sino à que las segundas estan exemptas de el trabajo, y las primeras tan apuradas de el que, ò no tienen virtud para concevir, ò se esterilizan de proposito, por no parir esclavos para el español, como se les ha oydo decir alguna vez.”
 - 22 Liese M. Perrin, “Resisting Reproduction: Reconsidering Slave Contraception in the Old South,” *Journal of American Studies* 35, no. 2 (2001): 255–256.
 - 23 Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York and London: Routledge, 2001), 228–229. I thank Florencia Brizuela González for suggesting and taking the time to explain this heuristic tool to me.
 - 24 Juan Antonio Pimentel, “El teniente general don Juan Antonio Pimentel, gobernador y capitán general de las Islas Marianas, da cuenta a Vuestra Majestad de haber tomado posesión de aquel gobierno a 22 de agosto de 1709,” 24 November 1709, AGI, Seville, Ultramar 561, N. 9, 104. Original in Spanish: “retirarle à las Filipinas, y darle una encomienda para que pasase en ella los pocos dias que le quedan de vida.”

- 25 Juan Antonio Pimentel, "El teniente general don Juan Antonio Pimentel, gobernador y capitán general de las Islas Marianas, da cuenta a Vuestra Majestad de haber tomado posesión de aquel gobierno a 22 de agosto de 1709," 24 November 1709, AGI, Seville, Ultramar 561, N. 9, 103.
- 26 Joseph de Quiroga y Losada, "Los grandes males que suceden en estas islas Marianas," in Hagåtña, 26 May 1720, AGI, Seville, Filipinas 95, N. 1, 1r–4v. See also Marqués de Rivas, Diego de Zúñiga, Gonzalo Machado, Antonio de la Pedrosa, Gonzalo Baquedano y Marqués de Almodóvar, "Carta del Consejo de Indias," Madrid, 11 February 1722, AGI, Seville, Filipinas 95, N. 1, 1r–5v.
- 27 Joseph de Quiroga y Losada, "Los grandes males que suceden en estas islas Marianas," in Hagåtña, 26 May 1720, AGI, Seville, Filipinas 95, N. 1, 2v. Original in Spanish: "muy indecentes aun en día de solemnidad." For a discussion of the role that dress played in the conquest of Tãno' Lãguas yan Gãni, see Sandra Montón-Subías and Enrique Moral, "A Body Is Worth a Thousand Words: Early Colonial Dress-Scapes in Guam," *Historical Archaeology* 55, no. 1 (2021): 269–289.
- 28 Stephanie Mawson, "Rebellion and Mutiny in the Mariana Islands, 1680–1690," *The Journal of Pacific History* 50, no. 2 (2015): 130.
- 29 Stephanie Mawson, "Rebellion and Mutiny in the Mariana Islands, 1680–1690," *The Journal of Pacific History* 50, no. 2 (2015): 129.
- 30 Stephanie Mawson, "Rebellion and Mutiny in the Mariana Islands, 1680–1690," *The Journal of Pacific History* 50, no. 2 (2015): 134.
- 31 Joseph de Quiroga y Losada, "Los grandes males que suceden en estas islas Marianas," in Hagåtña, 26 May 1720, AGI, Seville, Filipinas 95, N. 1, 3r. Original in Spanish: "no dexan muger, ni donzella, ni casada, que no soliciten, y engañen; apremiando aun con amenazas a los maridos; para que les dexen a su infame alvedrio las propias mugeres, y casas."
- 32 Joseph de Quiroga y Losada, "Los grandes males que suceden en estas Islas Marianas," in Hagåtña, 26 May 1720, AGI, Seville, Filipinas 95, N. 1, 3r–3v. Original in Spanish: "él mayor Escandalo sale de Palacio: porque siendo este Gov[ernad]or hombre de Edad, y sin muger, ha tenido siempre en su casa, como un colegio de Niñas; el qual al principio no parecia muy mal, pero En el discurso del tiempo se han llegado a saber muchas cosas indignas de Escribirse esto es deformidades, y abominaciones propias de viejos, dexados dela mano de Dios, y que no quieren dexar las mugeres aunque no Esten mas para ellas: ya se ha buuelto en publico escandalo y murmuracion universal assi en Marianas, como en Manila; asta llamar al Palacio deste Gov[ernad]or con el nombre de Serrallo del gran Turco. Estas niñas las casa despues con soldados, unas con bastante consentimiento, otras casi por fuerza, segun dizen ellas. y aun despues de casadas, prosiguen algunas à vivir en palacio amanebadas por el mismo Gov[ernad]or."
- 33 Rita Laura Segato, *La guerra contra las mujeres* (Madrid: Traficantes de Sueños, 2016), 57, 79.
- 34 Marqués de Rivas, Diego de Zúñiga, Gonzalo Machado, Antonio de la Pedrosa, Gonzalo Baquedano, and Marqués de Almodóvar, "Carta del Consejo de Indias," Madrid, 11 February 1722, AGI, Seville, Filipinas 95, N. 1, 2v. Original in Spanish: "el mantener en su misma casa un recojim[ien]to de Niñas y Mujeres con notable escandalo por las resultas que de ello producen."
- 35 Marqués de Rivas, Diego de Zúñiga, Gonzalo Machado, Antonio de la Pedrosa, Gonzalo Baquedano, and Marqués de Almodóvar, "Carta del Consejo de Indias," Madrid, 11 February 1722, AGI, Seville, Filipinas 95, N. 1, 2v–3r.
- 36 Felipe María Muscati, "Carta de Felipe María Muscati, capellán y viceprovincial de las Islas Marianas, al señor fiscal don Pedro Bedoya y Osorio, escrita en las Islas Marianas a 8 de junio de 1724," 8 June 1724, AGI, Seville, Ultramar 561, 31.

- 37 Felipe María Muscati, “Carta de Felipe María Muscati, capellán y viceprovincial de las Islas Marianas, al señor fiscal don Pedro Bedoya y Osorio, escrita en las Islas Marianas a 8 de junio de 1724,” 8 June 1724, AGI, Seville, Ultramar 561, 32. Original in Spanish: “se abusan de tal suerte de una autoridad que haciendose como dueños de todas las mugeres se valen de leves pretextos para castigar cruelmente á sus maridos que selan á sus mugeres, y de estas mismas á las que se les resisten, y asi en lugar de ser como debieran el trazo derecho del Ministro para evitar los escandalos y promover el servicio divino con ellos, los que mas escandalizan y los que mas estorban y destruyen el bien espiritual de las almas.”
- 38 Marqués de Torre Campo, Francisco Martínez, Francisco López Adán, “Sentencia de vista de la Residencia del Theniente General don Juan Pimentel,” in Manila, 1 June 1724, AGI, Seville, Filipinas 99, N. 43, 40v–51v.
- 39 Marqués de Torre Campo, Francisco Martínez, Francisco López Adán, “Sentencia de vista de la Residencia del Theniente General don Juan Pimentel,” in Manila, 1 June 1724, AGI, Seville, Filipinas 99, N. 43, 42r–42v. Original in Spanish: “por haber cometido dicho teniente general el mismo exceso durante su gobierno con seis niñas que tenía en su palacio con título de huérfanas, continuado el mismo exceso después que las había casado, con escándalo y castigo de dos maridos de las susodichas y ausencia de otro, marido de ellas.”
- 40 Marqués de Torre Campo, Francisco Martínez, Francisco López Adán, “Sentencia de vista de la Residencia del Theniente General don Juan Pimentel,” in Manila, 1 June 1724, AGI, Seville, Filipinas 99, N. 43, 48r.
- 41 Marqués de Torre Campo, Francisco Martínez, Francisco López Adán, “Sentencia de vista de la Residencia del Theniente General don Juan Pimentel,” in Manila, 1 June 1724, AGI, Seville, Filipinas 99, N. 43, 44v.
- 42 Marqués de Torre Campo, Francisco Martínez, Francisco López Adán, “Sentencia de vista de la Residencia del Theniente General don Juan Pimentel,” in Manila, 1 June 1724, AGI, Seville, Filipinas 99, N. 43, 44v–45r.
- 43 Marqués de Torre Campo, Francisco Martínez, Francisco López Adán, “Sentencia de vista de la Residencia del Theniente General don Juan Pimentel,” in Manila, 1 June 1724, AGI, Seville, Filipinas 99, N. 43, 48r.
- 44 Marqués de Torre Campo, Francisco Martínez, Francisco López Adán, “Sentencia de vista de la Residencia del Theniente General don Juan Pimentel,” in Manila, 1 June 1724, AGI, Seville, Filipinas 99, N. 43, 49r.
- 45 Manuel Díaz Dozal, “Auto: En la ciudad de Agaña, por el Capitán don Manuel Díaz Dozal, juez pesquisidor del Gobernador de las Islas Marianas,” in Hagåtña, November 1724, AGI, Seville, Ultramar 561, 39. Original in Spanish: “Si dicho Alcalde en su Pueblo los maltrata asi de palabra como de obra sin dar motibo suficiente á dichos naturales.”
- 46 Manuel Díaz Dozal, “Auto: En la ciudad de Agaña, por el Capitán don Manuel Díaz Dozal, juez pesquisidor del Gobernador de las Islas Marianas,” in Hagåtña, November 1724, AGI, Seville, Ultramar 561, 39. Original in Spanish: “Si dicho alcalde ha dado en su Pueblo escandalo usurpando á los casados las mugeres, ó con otros amancebamientos.”
- 47 Manuel Díaz Dozal, “Auto: En la ciudad de Agaña, por el Capitán don Manuel Díaz Dozal, juez pesquisidor del Gobernador de las Islas Marianas,” in Hagåtña, November 1724, AGI, Seville, Ultramar 561, 39. Original in Spanish: “Si por saber dicho Alcalde que los naturales se quexan con el Padre por dichas vejaciones los castigan.”
- 48 Manuel Díaz Dozal, “Auto: En la ciudad de Agaña, por el Capitán don Manuel Díaz Dozal, juez pesquisidor del Gobernador de las Islas Marianas,” in Hagåtña, November 1724, AGI, Seville, Ultramar 561, 54.

- 49 Manuel Díaz Dozal, "Auto: En la ciudad de Agaña, por el Capitán don Manuel Díaz Dozal, juez pesquisidor del Gobernador de las Islas Marianas," in Hagåtña, November 1724, AGI, Seville, Ultramar 561, 57.
- 50 Manuel Díaz Dozal, "Auto: En la ciudad de Agaña, por el Capitán don Manuel Díaz Dozal, juez pesquisidor del Gobernador de las Islas Marianas," in Hagåtña, November 1724, AGI, Seville, Ultramar 561, 65.
- 51 Manuel Díaz Dozal, "Auto: En la ciudad de Agaña, por el Capitán don Manuel Díaz Dozal, juez pesquisidor del Gobernador de las Islas Marianas," in Hagåtña, November 1724, AGI, Seville, Ultramar 561, 70.
- 52 Manuel Díaz Dozal, "Auto: En la ciudad de Agaña, por el Capitán don Manuel Díaz Dozal, juez pesquisidor del Gobernador de las Islas Marianas," in Hagåtña, November 1724, AGI, Seville, Ultramar 561, 47.
- 53 Joseph de Quiroga y Losada, "Los grandes males que suceden en estas islas Marianas," in Hagåtña, May 1720, AGI, Seville, Filipinas 95, N. 1, 3r.
- 54 Manuel Díaz Dozal, "Auto: En la ciudad de Agaña, por el Capitán don Manuel Díaz Dozal, juez pesquisidor del Gobernador de las Islas Marianas," in Hagåtña, November 1724, AGI, Seville, Ultramar 561, 57.
- 55 See Raewyn W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept," *Gender and Society* 19, no. 6 (2005): 829–859.
- 56 Sayak Valencia, "La isla es exótica, el archipiélago es post-exótico," in Manuel Borja-Villel, María Salgado, Sergio Raimondi, Marco Baravalle, Kike España, Gerald Rauning and Sayak Valencia, *Yendo leyendo, dando lugar. Rogelio López Cuenca* (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, 2019), 196.
- 57 Rita Laura Segato, *La guerra contra las mujeres* (Madrid: Traficantes de Sueños, 2016), 18.
- 58 Audiencia de Manila, "Una carta de la misma Audiencia [de Manila], fecha 1º de Julio de 1726, con testimonio de autos número 23, sobre la causa seguida al Capitán Don Luis Antonio Sánchez de Tagle, Gobernador que fue de las islas Marianas por la deserción que hizo de ellas y otros excesos," 1 July 1726, AGI, Seville, Ultramar 561, 4.
- 59 Juan Antonio Cantova, "Carta del padre Juan Antonio Cantova, en Maysilo, a 18 de junio de 1727," in Maysilo, 18 June 1727, AGI, Seville, Ultramar 561, 112–119, 113. Original in Spanish: "era absolutamente conveniente y necesario al bien comun de aquellas islas y de sus habitantes extinguir las plazas de Alcaldes que habia casi en todos los pueblos de doscientas o trescientas almas [...] por el gravisimo perjuicio que se seguia en lo espiritual y temporal a los naturales y poco o ningun provecho al gremio de la infantería."
- 60 Manuel de Argüelles Valdés, "Carta de Manuel de Argüelles Valdés de 24 de abril de 1726," 24 April 1726, AGI, Seville, Ultramar 561, 109–112, 109.
- 61 Alexandre Coello de la Rosa, "Corruption, Greed and Public Good in the Mariana Islands, 1700–1720," *Philippine Studies Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints* 61, no. 2 (2013): 201–202.
- 62 Alexandre Coello de la Rosa, "Luces y sombras: la efímera congregación de Nuestra Señora de la Luz en las islas Marianas (1758–1776)," in *Jesuitas e imperios de ultramar. Siglos XVI–XX*, eds. Alexandre Coello, Javier Burrieza, and Doris Moreno (Madrid: Sílex Ediciones, 2012), 228; Ulrike Strasser, *Missionary Men in the Early Modern World: German Jesuits and Pacific Journeys* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020), 175.
- 63 Rita Laura Segato, *La guerra contra las mujeres* (Madrid: Traficantes de Sueños, 2016), 18.
- 64 Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition. An Historical Revision* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997), 267; Jorge René González Marmolejo, *Sexo y*

- confesión. La iglesia y la penitencia en los siglos XVIII y XIX en la Nueva España* (Mexico City: Plaza y Valdés, 2002), 17.
- 65 Alexandre Coello de la Rosa, “Luces y sombras: la efímera congregación de Nuestra Señora de la Luz en las islas Marianas (1758–1776),” in *Jesuitas e imperios de ultramar. Siglos XVI–XX*, eds. Alexandre Coello, Javier Burrieza, and Doris Moreno (Madrid: Sílex Ediciones, 2012), 244–245.
- 66 Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in Mexico, “Alegación fiscal del proceso de fe de Francisco Javier Reitemberger,” after 1778, Archivo Histórico Nacional [hereinafter AHN], Madrid, Inquisición, 3730, Exp. 149, 1r–8v.
- 67 Fray Tomás de Santa Rita, “Examen al padre Andrés de San Joseph,” in Hagåtña, 8 July 1774, Archivo Histórico de la Nación [hereinafter AGN], Mexico City, Inquisición 1162, Exp. 2, 63r–63v.
- 68 Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in Mexico, “Alegación fiscal del proceso de fe de Francisco Javier Reitemberger,” after 1778, AHN, Madrid, Inquisición, 3730, Exp. 149, 1v.
- 69 Anne Pérez Hattori, “Textbook Tells: Gender, Race, and Decolonizing Guam History Textbooks in the 21st Century,” *AlterNative* 14, no. 2 (2018): 179.
- 70 Zeb Tortorici, *Sins against Nature. Sex and Archives in Colonial New Spain* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2018), 51.
- 71 Zeb Tortorici, *Sins against Nature. Sex and Archives in Colonial New Spain* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2018), 49.
- 72 Enrique Moral de Eusebio, “Sexual (Mis)Encounters in the Mariana Islands: Tracing Sexuality in Spanish Policies and CHamoru Responses to Contact and Colonization, 1521–1769,” PhD diss. (Universitat Pompeu Fabra, 2022): 249–250.
- 73 Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in Mexico, “Alegación fiscal del proceso de fe de Francisco Javier Reitemberger,” after 1778, AHN, Madrid, Inquisición, 3730, Exp. 149, 2r.
- 74 Fray Tomás de Santa Rita, “Examen al padre Andrés de San Joseph,” in Hagåtña, 8 July 1774, AGN, Mexico City, Inquisición 1162, Exp. 2, 63r–63v. Original in Spanish: “si sabe por confesion q[ue] el P[adre] Xavier mandava poner en quatro pies a las mugeres; y que el susodicho Padre metia la cabeza y lamia la parte verenda de la mujer, y que despues la mandava postrar en cruz, otras veces de rodillas, y que hacia cierto lavatorio con el paño de los mocos mojado con saliva en sus partes, y atras.”
- 75 Jorge René González Marmolejo, *Sexo y confesión. La iglesia y la penitencia en los siglos XVIII y XIX en la Nueva España* (Mexico City: Plaza y Valdés, 2002), 149.
- 76 Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in Mexico, “Alegación fiscal del proceso de fe de Francisco Javier Reitemberger,” after 1778, AHN, Madrid, Inquisición, 3730, Exp. 149, 2r. Original in Spanish: “q[ue] cuando el reo la limpiaba con saliva ó panuelo la parte verenda, decia: virgen santissima no permitais q[ue] à esta criatura lleguen tentaciones del Demonio, ni cosa mala.”
- 77 Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in Mexico, “Alegación fiscal del proceso de fe de Francisco Javier Reitemberger,” after 1778, AHN, Madrid, Inquisición, 3730, Exp. 149, 2r–2v. Original in Spanish: “en casa de su mayordomo en el Pueblo de Agat las mandaba desnudar, y echarse en el suelo boca arriba, y sacando el reo una vasija de agua, las lababa todo el cuerpo diciendolas, q[ue] assi como una Madre lava el cuerpo de su hijita del mismo modo lo hacia el reo con todas las q[ue] entraban en aquel exercicio.”
- 78 Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in Mexico, “Alegación fiscal del proceso de fe de Francisco Javier Reitemberger,” after 1778, AHN, Madrid, Inquisición, 3730, Exp. 149, 2v.

- 79 Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in Mexico, “Alegación fiscal del proceso de fe de Francisco Javier Reitemberger,” after 1778, AHN, Madrid, Inquisición, 3730, Exp. 149, 2r. Original in Spanish: “tocamientos semejantes a los q[ue] el reo tenia con ella, havia tenido Christo con la Magdalena p[ara] echar de ella siete demonios, ó 7. pecados.”
- 80 Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in Mexico, “Alegación fiscal del proceso de fe de Francisco Javier Reitemberger,” after 1778, AHN, Madrid, Inquisición, 3730, Exp. 149, 2r. Original in Spanish: “los tocamientos que tenia el reo con [ella] eran à imitacion de los q[ue] tuvo Christo con la Magdalena.”
- 81 Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in Mexico, “Alegación fiscal del proceso de fe de Francisco Javier Reitemberger,” after 1778, AHN, Madrid, Inquisición, 3730, Exp. 149, 2r. Original in Spanish: “q[quando] el reo la manoseaba sus partes verendas la decia, q[ue] de nada de estas cosas temiese ni se escandalizasse porq[ue] lo mismo havia hecho Christo con la Magdalena.”
- 82 Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in Mexico, “Alegación fiscal del proceso de fe de Francisco Javier Reitemberger,” after 1778, AHN, Madrid, Inquisición, 3730, Exp. 149, 2r. Original in Spanish: “decia el reo quando lamia dichas partes, q[ue] ya no tendria mas pecados si cooperaba con èl à d[ic]hos exercicios, porq[ue] donde ponía sus manos, y labios sagrados, no podia entrar cosa mala.”
- 83 Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in Mexico, “Alegación fiscal del proceso de fe de Francisco Javier Reitemberger,” after 1778, AHN, Madrid, Inquisición, 3730, Exp. 149, 2v. Original in Spanish: “la daba con una llave en los dientes, oídos, ojos, y manos, diciendola q[ue] assi la quitaba los pecados.”
- 84 Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in Mexico, “Alegación fiscal del proceso de fe de Francisco Javier Reitemberger,” after 1778, AHN, Madrid, Inquisición, 3730, Exp. 149, 2v. Original in Spanish: “y q[ue] con la misma llave enredaba el pelo, y lo arrancaba diciendo, q[ue] assi lo hacia Sta. Rosalia.”
- 85 Rita Laura Segato, *La guerra contra las mujeres* (Madrid: Traficantes de Sueños, 2016), 39.
- 86 Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in Mexico, “Alegación fiscal del proceso de fe de Francisco Javier Reitemberger,” after 1778, AHN, Madrid, Inquisición, 3730, Exp. 149, 2r. Original in Spanish: “por temor à su marido no quiso permitir q[ue] el reo la cortasse el pelo de la cabeza, y bello de sus partes, y por esto la echó el reo de la Congregacion.”
- 87 Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in Mexico, “Alegación fiscal del proceso de fe de Francisco Javier Reitemberger,” after 1778, AHN, Madrid, Inquisición, 3730, Exp. 149, 6r. Original in Spanish: “d[ic]has cosas executadas con el reo siempre havian estado ocultas, y sin saberse.”
- 88 Alexandre Coello de la Rosa, “Luces y sombras: la efímera congregación de Nuestra Señora de la Luz en las islas Marianas (1758–1776),” in *Jesuitas e imperios de ultramar. Siglos XVI–XX*, eds. Alexandre Coello, Javier Burrieza, and Doris Moreno (Madrid: Sílex Ediciones, 2012), 242.
- 89 Alexandre Coello de la Rosa, “Luces y sombras: la efímera congregación de Nuestra Señora de la Luz en las islas Marianas (1758–1776),” in *Jesuitas e imperios de ultramar. Siglos XVI–XX*, eds. Alexandre Coello, Javier Burrieza, and Doris Moreno (Madrid: Sílex Ediciones, 2012), 253.
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- 91 Daniel Wickberg, “What Is the History of Sensibilities? On Cultural Histories, Old and New,” *The American Historical Review* 112, no. 3 (2007): 684. <https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr.112.3.661>
- 92 Rita Laura Segato, *La guerra contra las mujeres* (Madrid: Traficantes de Sueños, 2016), 22–23.
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11 Entangled Sensibilities and the Broken Circulation of Mary W. Shelley's *Frankenstein*

Gender, Race, and Otherness*

Isabel Burdiel

In considering what constitutes a “classic”, Italo Calvino came up with numerous definitions – some more ironic in tone than others – stating, for example, that “a classic is a book that has never finished saying what it has to say” and one which prompts an endless dust cloud of critical opinions but continues to shake off their detritus. He also defined as classics those books which “come down to us bearing upon them the traces of readings previous to ours, and bringing in their wake the traces they themselves have left on the culture or cultures they have passed through” and those “we find all the more new, fresh, and unexpected upon reading, the more we thought we knew them from hearing them talked about”.¹ Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's *Frankenstein, or, The Modern Prometheus* (1818) is one such book.

This is a work dismissed by canonical literary critics for more than 150 years as a happy, but half-accidental, mixture of Gothic, allegorical, and Romantic elements, whose success was due to its early adaptation for the theatre and, later, the cinema. For years, its lack of literary merit was simply taken for granted. Its author, barely out of adolescence, was assumed to have been little more than a kind of passive, kaleidoscopic reflection of the many significant characters who peopled her cultural background, past and present. These included two poets whose work not only won them fame in their own right (something denied to her) but has long been firmly established in the Romantic canon, namely her husband, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and Lord Byron. And nearby, of course, hovered the ghostly figures of her parents – radical philosopher William Godwin and pioneer of Anglo-Saxon feminism Mary Wollstonecraft.

As a political historian, I see *Frankenstein* as a work that enables boundaries to be crossed in a way long considered dangerous by academia precisely because it has demonstrated its ability to travel from *high culture* to *popular culture* and back again. The story of its long and tortuous circulation allows us to explore the slippery territory that lies at the intersection between history and fiction by pointing out the importance of taking into account that which did not happen but was imagined and socially disseminated.

The aims of this chapter fall within these areas of interest with regard to the nature and transcultural and transhistorical forms of circulation of “that

which only fiction can express”, to use a formulation coined by Hermann Broch and later explored by many others.² I want to discuss what Mary Shelley’s fiction contributed to the self-reflectiveness of a period crucial to the origins of Western modernity at the key moment marking both the zenith and twilight of the “Romantic Revolution”. Aware of the multiple possible readings of *Frankenstein*, I shall focus on what seems to me to be a pivotal aspect of Mary Shelley’s novel: the tension, connections, and hierarchical shifts to be found between the normative discourse of Enlightenment sensibility and the Promethean will of the Romantic hero.

The hero in this case, Victor Frankenstein, obsessed with his desire to reinvent humanity, becomes criminally insensible not only to the suffering and fate of his creature but to *reasonable affections*, to the idea of the “affective circle” imagined by the sentimentalists of the eighteenth century.³ That circle was based on concentric spaces of sociability mutually dependent on one another for the reinvention (and redemption) of humanity: from the family to the local community to wider political and moral society. Victor Frankenstein’s failure – crucially referred to in the novel as an aesthetic failure – is essentially a profound violation of the basic rules of the eighteenth-century sensibility, whose dreams had originally prompted his scientific undertaking. More disturbingly, in fact, what unleashes the story and the tragedy is not only a failure in Victor’s sensibility, but to a large extent, its opposite if we think of the strength of the connection – at the very core of the notion of sensibility of the time – between moral judgement and aesthetic judgement; between the beautiful and the good, the ugly and the perverse.

This aesthetic and moral tension is what sets the tale and its disastrous consequences in motion – and it is precisely what impacted the text’s circulation (or lack thereof) during the Romantic era and the nineteenth century in general. I shall therefore attempt to explore a more far-reaching debate on the evolution and/or revolution represented in historical terms by the uncertain and full of ambivalences movement away from an Enlightenment sensibility understood as fundamental to sociability, and towards a sensibility based on the celebration of a Romantic self at odds with or resistant to sociability. Away from a self that saw itself as part of the wider society and towards a self intent on rebelling against the idea of that society as the ultimate moral and emotional mandate.⁴ This is an ongoing debate – concerning a more general conception of historical change – and one for which, as I hope to demonstrate, Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* offers significant avenues of exploration and analysis that challenge dichotomies traditionally seen as clear-cut.

At some point in the final decade of the eighteenth century, Victor Frankenstein, a student with an interest in the natural sciences – a subject then known as “natural philosophy” – conceives the possibility of discovering the origins and workings of life itself and thereby creating a human being:

Life and death appeared to me ideal bounds, which I should first break through, and pour a torrent of life into our dark world. A new species would bless me as its creator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me. No father could claim the gratitude of his child so completely as I should deserve theirs.⁵

The creature he cobbles together from parts of different corpses, chosen for their beauty, unexpectedly turns out to be monstrous once brought to life: “His limbs were in proportion, and I had selected his features as beautiful. Beautiful! – Great God!”⁶ Despite his outer ugliness, however, the newly created being demonstrates from the start the goodness of his feelings, his sympathetic instincts, his need for affection, and his enormous thirst for knowledge about his own origins and the world around him. His secret readings of Goethe, Rousseau, Volney, Plutarch, and Milton – a carefully constructed Romantic canon – educate his sensibility, and thus his humanity. In fact, what is so fascinating about the creature is that he turns out to be far more human, not to mention more articulate and cultivated, than his creator, a man who denies him the slightest hint of recognition or affection.

In a scene evoking that of Eve in Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, the creature sees his reflection in a pool and recognises not his beauty, in this case, but his monstrosity, which is also mirrored in the horror and rejection with which he is greeted by anyone he tries to approach. He then directs his resentment against his father and creator, responsible for his existence and his misfortune: “I ought to be thy Adam; but I am rather the fallen angel, whom thou drivest from joy for no misdeed”.⁷ In his thirst for revenge, he murders or causes the deaths of Frankenstein’s family and friends. Excluded from the concept of what it is to be human, and conditioned by the horror his appearance awakens in people, when he first catches sight of his own reflection, he says, “I became fully convinced that I was in reality the monster that I am”.⁸ The rejections to which he is subjected corrupt his natural sensitivity and turn him, eventually, into the monster others say he is: “Everywhere I see bliss, from which I alone am irrevocably excluded. I was benevolent and good; misery made me a fiend. Make me happy, and I shall again be virtuous”.⁹ He will only find such happiness if Victor creates a female companion for him.

The links between sociability, sensibility, virtue, truth, and identity – typical of the eighteenth-century sentimental circle – inform the creature’s account of the shaping of his identity and the violence into which he is forced.

If I have no ties and no affections, hatred and vice must be my portion; the love of another will destroy the cause of my crimes, and I shall become a thing, of whose existence every one will be ignorant. My vices are the children of a forced solitude that I abhor; and my virtue will necessarily arise when I live in communion with an equal. I shall feel the affections of a sensitive being, and become linked to the chain of existence and events, from which I am now excluded.¹⁰

Victor initially agrees to comply with his request but later changes his mind and destroys his second creation. At this, the monster issues a threat – “I shall be with you on your wedding-night” – which he ultimately executes by strangling Frankenstein’s bride, the gentle, faithful Elizabeth, who has suffered in silence her long separations from this modern Prometheus and his failure to meet his emotional obligations to her.¹¹

Frankenstein then embarks on a desperate quest to take the very life he has created. The longer this goes on, the more confused the identities of pursued and pursuer become. Indeed, on more than one occasion, both creator and creature use the terms “monster”, “victim”, “master”, and “slave”. No wonder people soon began to confuse the two characters and refer to the creature rather than the scientist as Frankenstein. The quest finally ends somewhere near the North Pole, where a sick and exhausted Victor Frankenstein dies. Now repentant, the monster mourns bitterly the death of the father who abandoned him and vows to put an end to his own life. At the conclusion of the novel, however, all we know is that the forlorn creature is “lost in darkness and distance”.¹²

The original 1818 edition of *Frankenstein* absorbs and imaginatively addresses the debate about the traumatic changes to what could be understood as (human) *sensibility* and *sympathy*, in the specific context of contemporary concerns about the consequences of the scientific and technological development linked to the Industrial Revolution and the resulting conflicts (most notably the Luddite movements between 1811 and 1816, a year before the novel’s conception), as well as the socio-political changes brought about by the French Revolution. As regards the ambivalent fascination with science in Romantic circles – an area beyond the remit of this chapter – it is worth remembering that it was Coleridge, whom Mary Shelley had heard recite *The Ancient Mariner* at her parents’ home, who made the phrase “second scientific revolution” famous when he used it in his *Philosophical Lectures* of 1819. Much discussed in the Shelley circle, this new science was dominated by Sir Humphry Davy’s work on chemical philosophy, the evolutionary biology of Erasmus Darwin, and the debate on the nature and effects of electricity, stemming in particular from the work of Joseph Priestley. The rapid scientific evolution had, in addition – and this is important to understand the context of the gestation of *Frankenstein* – an unprecedented popular impact with the proliferation of more or less scientific spectacles that attracted crowds.¹³

In recent years, increasing emphasis has also been placed on the influence that another seemingly minor upheaval may have had on Mary’s familial, social, and romantic life: the slave revolution in Haiti, then a French colony, which broke out in 1791 and turned into a 13-year bloodbath. For British radicals in general and abolitionists in particular, the events in Haiti and the revolutions that followed in Jamaica and elsewhere in the West Indies were

as significant as the French Revolution, giving rise to discussions about freedom and equality that ran more deeply and were harder to resolve because they involved the issue of racial difference.¹⁴ These thorny issues expanded into another major (and in this case scientific) debate in the aforementioned period of transition and entanglement between two models of sensibility by bringing together abolitionism, women's emancipation, race, and the dichotomy between "savage and civilised people" in a discussion about the boundaries of what it meant to be human that had begun in the seventeenth century, run through the eighteenth century, and continued for much of the nineteenth century.¹⁵

Mary Wollstonecraft, William Godwin, Mary Shelley, and Percy Shelley were all abolitionists, feminists, and what we would today call "animalists".¹⁶ They also refused to eat sugar because of the monstrous way in which it was produced. Behind the sweet taste of sugar lay the bitter taste of enslaved blood. "C'est à ce prix que vous mangez du sucre" wrote Voltaire in 1758.¹⁷ Shelley's vague physical descriptions of her monster, as well as the decision not to give the creature a name, which was very common in anti-slavery sentimental stories, suggest a racial distinction or an animalisation, or at least the possibility of one or the other:

I was, besides, endowed with a figure hideously deformed and loathsome; I was not even of the same nature as man. I was more agile than they, and could subsist upon coarser diet; I bore extremes of heat and cold with less injury to my frame; my stature far exceeded theirs. When I looked around, I saw and heard of none like me.¹⁸

A fundamental debate has long revolved around the question of whether or not *Frankenstein* is a conservative work in crucial areas such as its reaction to the political, scientific, and moral utopias of early feminism or abolitionism in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. There is certainly a tension here, one typical of the disillusioned children of the revolutionary generation. However, as I shall argue throughout this chapter, it is not the creation of the monster as such that makes Frankenstein's scientific operations questionable: it is the scientist's inability to take responsibility for the being he has created and to cherish any kind of *feeling* for him as a legitimate Other. Victor Frankenstein commits the same crime for which that other great political and social visionary Jean-Jacques Rousseau (so admired by Percy Shelley) was to become known throughout Europe: he abandons his offspring for an idea, for an abstraction that never fully comes to fruition, can never be perfect, never quite beautiful enough. A fundamental question, this last one, in a circle as aestheticist as that of the Shelleys.

Like Rousseau, Frankenstein betrays himself and his work by failing to acknowledge his creature as a human being, a sentient subject. He fails, in fact, to live up to the enlightened materialist philosophy he claims to profess, and – just like the humanity he wishes to reform and in whose name he has

initiated his creation – reveals himself to be in thrall to the oldest and most ingrained prejudices. The creature is rendered monstrous in the eyes of his creator not by his character traits (he is naturally good and humane) but by his ugliness (a mask, a representation). In this sense, and this sense alone, Victor Frankenstein's scientific utopia, the "dream of his reason", dissociated from the basic sensibility of the father-son bond, has created a monster.

There is no question here of imposing today's thinking on the past: these were very much concerns of the time. In 1823, the same year in which the first stage version of *Frankenstein* appeared, the British Foreign Secretary George Canning, who was opposed to slavery but favoured a process of gradually improving the lives of slaves, alluded to the work in a parliamentary debate to illustrate the potential danger and unforeseen consequences of a policy of sudden emancipation:

In dealing with the negro, Sir, we must remember that we are dealing with a being possessing the form and strength of a man, but the intellect only of a child. To turn him loose in the manhood of his physical strength, in the maturity of his physical passions, but in the infancy of his uninstructed reason, would be to raise up a creature resembling the splendid fiction of a recent romance; the hero of which ... [is] unable to impart to the work of his hands a perception of right and wrong.

A few years later, in 1848, Elizabeth Gaskell set in motion the confusion that persists today between the name of the creature and his creator when she wrote, in her best-selling novel *Mary Barton*, "The actions of the uneducated seem to me typified in those of Frankenstein, that monster of many human qualities, ungifted with a soul, a knowledge of the difference between good and evil". During the Crimean War, a *Punch* cartoon depicted "The Russian Frankenstein and his Monster", and there were various similar allusions used to represent the different factions involved in the Irish question.¹⁹

Indeed, throughout the great political upheavals of the British and Irish nineteenth century, *Frankenstein* was repeatedly put to metaphorical political use, employed as shorthand for any tension arising from the unintended, monstrous consequences of humane, universal, and sensitive social reform introduced, with the best of intentions, to the public sphere. The problem seems to lie in the "leap", in the inevitable disconnection between the realm of domestic virtues and sensibility and the ambition to regenerate and reinvent humanity. It is this converging of spheres that produces monsters. The socially oriented self of eighteenth-century normative sensibility becomes a Prometheus unbound, obsessed with his work and an end goal that justifies all the violence done to himself, to those around him, to reasonable sentiments, and to society as a whole. A change which was perceived at the time as the great Romantic revolution.

In Victor Frankenstein, and his scientific undertaking, the discussion about the scope and limits of Enlightenment and Romantic sensibilities in

relation to particular forms of social, political, aesthetic, and scientific engineering would be closely linked to reflections on a shared project of altering the foundations of the old society, a project described (by some) as aberrant, unnatural, and monstrous. The discussion about what makes us human, entitled to freedom, rights, and affection, brings together three issues and three movements that were closely connected to each other at the time, in both practical and symbolic terms. The nature and rights of women, the boundaries and characteristics of humanity, and the critique of forms of domination old and new: the dark and disturbing dimensions of Western expansion into the rest of the world. In Mary Shelley's work, that global stage stretches across Europe, from England to Switzerland and Germany, and onwards to the far reaches of the Arctic and even to the "vast wilds" of South America in which the hopeful monster promises to take refuge when Frankenstein creates a companion for him.

The gender, class, race, and aesthetic implications of such concerns are in turn linked, in my opinion, to the conflict between (but also the coexistence and hybridisation of) the dominant forms of masculinity of Enlightenment Sensibility and their subversion by the Promethean will of the Romantic hero, essentially in terms of the exaltation of (but also the criticism of and resistance to) a new masculinity, perceived as a disruptive, destructive influence on the domestic world of calm and reasonable affections. Since the 1970s, the history of women and gender has undoubtedly revitalised conventional readings of *Frankenstein*. One might expect an interpretation of the work as scientifically and politically reactionary to go hand in hand with the view that it glorifies a female domesticity based on self-sacrifice and suffering, in contrast to the dreams of male reason and men's immoderate behaviour in the public sphere. This is certainly true of *Frankenstein*, as has been amply written about, but such a reading runs the risk of being a reductive interpretation of the dialogic potential of Mary Shelley's work, particularly since I see it as a text at whose heart lies the issue of multiple representations of the relationship between sensibility and identity. How are monsters created? How are male and female identities created? How are separate spheres created and what are their consequences? Ideas that Shelley's mother, Mary Wollstonecraft, had developed extensively in her own work.²⁰

There are three more specific objections to the idea that in *Frankenstein* it is only or primarily women who represent the culture of eighteenth-century sensibility that is swept away by Victor Frankenstein, in his Promethean madness, and by the monster, in his thirst for revenge. First, Victor's best friend Henry Clerval, also killed by the creature, is, in fact, and much more clearly than the women around Victor, the embodiment of the sensitive, responsible, and reasonable domestic emotions and feelings, as too, broadly speaking, is Robert Walton, who makes the decision not to risk his men's lives in what he realises will be an impossible attempt to discover the North-West Passage.

Second, although I cannot explore this in depth here, I do wish to underline the fact that the women in *Frankenstein* are all sweet, docile, discreet, and beautiful. They all die at the hands of the creature precisely because they are submissive and never question Frankenstein's sanity. All are cast in the image of Rousseau's loving, tragic Julie. The only exception is the young Turkish woman Safie, who rebels and runs away to seek her freedom. And it is no coincidence that, having agreed to create a companion in order to get rid of the monster, Victor Frankenstein then destroys his second creation with the telling realisation that "she, who in all probability was to become a thinking and reasonable animal, might refuse to comply with a compact made before her creation. She also might turn with disgust from [the creature] to the superior beauty of man".²¹ The idea that a woman might conceivably refuse to abide by an agreement in which she had had no say is the real danger because such a refusal might lead to something more disturbing than reproduction or a challenge to male authority: a monstrous form of hybridisation.

Finally, and closely related to the allusion to Julie and the female monster, what Mary Shelley does with her nameless (but gendered) creature is to use and subvert the codes of the sentimental heroine, the resigned victim of the actions of others, by conceiving her (male and female) creatures as victims whose sensitivity is precisely what leads them to rebel (or threaten to do so in the case of the potential female monster) in a kind of emotional subversion of the classic codes of conduct of the sentimental novel.

It is no coincidence that it was a woman, still in her teens, brought up in a period and in an emotional and intellectual environment that straddled the Enlightenment and Romantic sensibilities, who managed to inspire simultaneous rejection, fear, and sympathy for her nameless creature. The strong sense of empathy that she succeeds in arousing stems largely from the emotional tension that runs through the whole work. This may not have been the main interpretation in the nineteenth century, but as early as 1824 one commentator wrote that justice was indisputably on the creature's side and acknowledged that he found his sufferings highly moving.²² In that respect, the young Mary Shelley's readings of Milton, Goethe, Rousseau, Coleridge, and so on (and her turbulent experiences in the emotionally volatile circle of Percy Shelley and Lord Byron) must clearly be taken into account to avoid assessing *Frankenstein* in too linear a fashion as (merely) a conservative cautionary tale, in both its production and its reception.

From all these perspectives, *Frankenstein* lies within one of the hot spots of the debate on the new humanitarianism as it was being reframed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The construction of the idea of the natural rights of all human beings is rooted in Rousseau's maxim, and in the broad social reformulation of classical Cartesianism by "sentimentalism" and the sentimental novel of the Enlightenment. Hence, it was possible, and unsurprising, to suggest such strange (and counter-intuitive) things as the idea that we could all eventually enjoy the same rights and laws because

we could all, of our own free will, reach a reasoned agreement – that would remain in place throughout our lives – on what it is to be human.²³

To tell her story, Shelley used and subverted the tradition of the epistolary sentimental novel, arranging a series of concentric narratives in order (or disorder) around the letters that Robert Walton, a young explorer and scientist hoping to find the North-West Passage, writes to his sister back home in England. In them, he recounts the story told to him by Victor Frankenstein, who in turn tells the story of his monstrous creature who, finally, speaks for himself and pleads his own case. This narrative structure is central to the meaning of the work in that the great voyages of exploration of the time, with their associations of isolation, danger, and disturbing discoveries, are both a metaphor for and the reality of the so-called “romantic science”, which, according to Richard Holmes, can be symbolically bookended by Captain Cook’s first voyage, which began in 1768.²⁴

As Mary Douglas noted some years ago, any structure of ideas is vulnerable in marginal spaces.²⁵ Located far from the centre of the story and yet crucial to everything we are reading – the very reason all these voices are making themselves heard – is the absent presence of the recipient of these letters, Margaret Walton Saville (who shares her initials with Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley). To my mind, this (apparently silenced) voice demonstrates that the core of the story is not necessarily *inside*, at the centre, but outside, somewhere on the margins. And on those margins, as in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, there waits a respectable woman in England, reading about what is happening outside, in the far reaches of the civilised world.

However, what is sent to this woman – the epitome of the civilised world linked to the culture of sensibility and the ideology of domesticity – is not a single story (or voice) with a definitive moral meaning. What she receives are a series of overlapping and conflicting voices. She receives questions that undermine the very possibility of establishing any kind of unambiguously true or virtuous moral or political judgement on the relationship between sensibility and humanity.

In fact, and to underline the point that my interpretation is not conditioned by current thinking, it was precisely this moral ambiguity that caused a scandal in Shelley’s own time. The novel had no sooner been published than, in April 1818, the prestigious *Monthly Review* condemned it as “An uncouth story, in the taste of German novelists, trenching in some degree on delicacy, setting probability at defiance, and leading to no conclusion either moral or philosophical”. The *Quarterly Review*, in a piece printed immediately after an article entitled “The Congo Expedition – African Discoveries”, expanded on the same idea: “Our taste and our judgement alike revolt at this kind of writing, and the greater the ability with which it may be executed the worse it is – it inculcates no lesson of conduct, manners, or morality”.²⁶ Aside

from its conservative nature, the concern expressed by both publications was fundamentally well directed.

In that mix of ambivalent values and conflicting narratives, there lies perhaps one of the keys to both *Frankenstein's* historicity and its ability to have become an enduring myth. The structure of the work, as a series of concentric narratives, works beautifully in this respect. Each narrative challenges the one before, and at the heart of them all can be heard a voice saying that the real problem lies in calling Victor Frankenstein's creature a monster. The latter's enlightened creator – the first to do this – becomes the first culprit. It is not, then, the dream of reason that creates the monster: it is sleepless reason that rejects its creation and, in doing so, ends up renouncing itself.

The story received by Margaret Walton Saville, and by Shelley's readers, is not a linear narrative with a beginning, a middle, and an end and a single narrator who makes sense of every detail. It is told by several different overlapping and conflicting voices who struggle to make themselves understood, to justify themselves, to reveal their ambitions and their failures, experiences, and feelings. To tell their stories within history. This perhaps demonstrates the impossibility of answering those old ontological and epistemological questions: what is that which exists, and how do we know that what appears to exist, really does so?

Who is responsible for the monstrous creation that results from the best of intentions? Where does innocence end and guilt begin? What happens when utopias become dystopias (in the world of emotions, sensibility, and reason too)? What happens when our actions, our emotions, and great collective and personal hopes have unforeseen and undesired consequences? Is it possible to be guilty and innocent at the same time, like the monster, like Victor Frankenstein himself? Is the respectable English lady who receives the letters and the world she represents (the empire, the civilised and domestic world) the solution, the last refuge, or the prime culprit?

The ambiguous or contradictory answers to these questions open up an unsettling angle of reflections on the possibility of the monstrous potential for exclusion and violence within what we call Sensibility, Truth, or Identity (as capitalised concepts, absolute and exclusive). Might there not be several true but mutually incompatible answers to the same question or solutions for the same problem? For it is true, and indeed this lies at the heart of the plot, that the creature becomes violent, *truly* monstrous, when his story, his truth, his self, his human sensibility and identity are denied in the name of another truth, another story, other forms of sensibility. A proposal – that of the conventional nature of what we call *truth* – which, as Isaiah Berlin wrote years ago, lies at the root of the Romantic “revolution”.²⁷ That same revolution shattered the Classical, and very eighteenth-century, relationship between ethics and aesthetics: now the beautiful could be bad and the ugly could be good. This in turn affects the ultimate meaning of Rousseau's “I feel, therefore I am”, words in which he was convinced human identity was anchored. What were the forms and limits of that identity, the hidden ghosts, the voices



Figure 11.1 Image of the poster of the lecture “Monstrous progeny” given at the BBVA Foundation on 24 May 2018. (Design: La Factoría de Ediciones)

silenced by the received sensibility and also by the Romantic Prometheus’ struggle against it? To what extent does Victor Frankenstein betray the genuinely rebellious, revolutionary myth of Prometheus by continuing to abide by the conventions that justify the horror of and will to destroy the Other, so similar and yet so different? (Figure 11.1).

In my view, however, restricting ourselves to a postmodern celebration of this chorus of multiple voices and meanings merely reinforces the conventional and complacent metaphors relating to the timelessness and “enduring myth” aspect of Mary Shelley’s story, and to the very existence of timeless, acultural fears or monsters.²⁸ We historians know that texts, and more precisely narratives, mean different things in different temporal, cultural, social, and political contexts. Therein lies (or does not lie) their transtemporality or transculturality.

The history of *Frankenstein* readings, of the way the novel circulated (or did not circulate) outside Great Britain, has yet to be written. Is *Frankenstein* (the original text) a global myth or one of significance only in the Western or the English-speaking world? Under what conditions has it acquired (or not acquired) mythical status; when and how has it done so? Jeremy Adelman has recommended that global history should distance itself from complacent assumptions about the circulation of texts and experiences in order to encompass and analyse the importance of that which does NOT circulate, texts and people that do not travel, are not really connected, or only in very ambiguous and broken ways.²⁹

At this stage in my research, I believe I can argue the following: Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, today considered the epitome of Romantic sensibility,

was NOT part of nineteenth-century European Romantic culture in a broader sense. It was part of that culture, if in fairly equivocal and marginal terms, in Great Britain and Ireland – and in the United States (where it made less impact but enjoyed a certain level of popularity), whose experience and timeline of Romanticism differed considerably from Europe's. Various reviews of the work were published in its country of origin, the tone of which I have reflected above, but which also included, for example, one written in glowing terms by Walter Scott, when it was believed that the anonymously published novel was the work of Percy Shelley.³⁰ However, *Frankenstein* reached a far wider audience in the popular milieu of “illegitimate theatre”, a term referring to all those London playhouses that had not been granted royal patents, as opposed to the Theatres Royal that enjoyed sole rights over staging the conventional comedies and tragedies of high culture. The illegitimate theatre was generally active in the summer months, outside the main theatrical season, and was only allowed to produce genres such as pantomime, spectacle (involving scenes of fire, natural disaster, etc.), farce, burlesque, melodrama, musical, and so on.

Following this pattern, *Presumption*, later rechristened *Presumption, Or, the Fate of Frankenstein*, was first staged at the English Opera House in 1823. It was a hit and, with minor alterations, ran almost uninterrupted until the 1850s, as well as being produced in New York in 1821 and at the Théâtre de la Porte Saint-Martin in Paris in 1826. This successful stage adaptation – treated with scorn by “serious” critics – had only a hint of what we would conventionally call Romanticism and was much closer in style to popular theatre from Gothic melodrama to the “melodramatic imagination” of the post-revolutionary nineteenth century. It contained a large dose of entirely stereotypical sensationalism, culminating in the avalanche that kills both the creator and his creature. It included a comic servant character (forebear of the famous Igor) and his equally comic wife; it silenced the monster and turned him into a being devoid of all traits of human sensibility, except for the musical numbers.³¹ This portrayal of him was later carried over into the proto-science fiction cinematic treatments of the story.

What happened to the text outside England and other English-speaking countries? Here I shall take a transnational view encompassing the areas regarded since the eighteenth century as a decadent and emotional “South”, as opposed to an energetic and rational “North”.³² My reflections cover Italy, Spain, and Portugal in particular, along with three of the Latin American countries, in a European and American context that transcends the symbolic North-South border.

I have only been able to locate one nineteenth-century translation that remains fairly faithful to the original 1818 publication: the French version published in 1821 and attributed to Mme Shelley, niece (sic) of William Godwin, author of *La Justice Politique* and *Caleb William*, by the radical Parisian bookshop Chez Corréard. Incidentally, this bookshop was widely popular in Spanish liberal circles during the Liberal Triennium of

1820–1823.³³ The book was not published in the United States until 12 years later (Philadelphia, 1833), and then in the (author’s own) extensively revised and far more conservative edition of 1831. This was a kind of “other text”, which ironed out the more transgressive and iconoclastic connotations of the original in various key areas: there are warnings of a religious nature about the sacrilegious ambitions of science, absent from the 1818 edition; the cautionary tale aspects of pre-revolutionary and Promethean illusions are emphasised; there is more emphasised idealisation of a domestic world in which women embody eighteenth-century sensibility and find their rightful destiny as victims; Victor Frankenstein is to some extent exonerated of personal responsibility; and the compassion (and in a sense admiration) for his creature that runs throughout the 1818 edition is less explicit.³⁴

While not exhaustive, my research is extensive enough to suggest there were no translations into other languages in Europe or Latin America until well into the twentieth century, and that all such versions were based on the 1831 version. The anonymous text of 1818, whose fundamental aim, as asserted in its preface, was to deal with human passions, emotions, and feelings, through “the exhibition of the amiableness of domestic affection, and the excellence of universal virtue”, was lost “in darkness and distance” for almost a century.³⁵

It was 1912 before the first of these later translations appeared – the German edition translated by Heinz Widtmann and issued in Leipzig by Max Altmann, who specialised in esoteric and occult publications and had also published Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*. This came two years after the first film adaptation of the work in the United States: a 14-minute silent film, in which the science fiction and Gothic elements are foregrounded. Widtmann’s translation is still available, reprinted as recently as 2020. The first Spanish-language edition also appeared in 1912, when Luis Costarias’s translation was published in Argentina (La Nación, Buenos Aires); it remained the only Spanish version until a Chilean edition was issued in 1942. All subsequent European and American editions came after the release of the two great twentieth-century films that brought the book worldwide fame and were primarily responsible for creating the Western myth of Frankenstein with which we are familiar today: James Whale’s *Frankenstein* (Universal, 1931) and Terence Fisher’s *The Curse of Frankenstein* (Hammer Film Productions, 1957). As discussed below, this change of medium had a substantial influence on the interpretation of Mary Shelley’s original story.

The 1944 Italian edition was translated by Ranieri Cochetti, who, in his introduction to the work, emphasised the supernatural elements (of which there are in fact none in Shelley’s original) and categorised the tale as a typical and globally recognised *romanzo nero* in which “the incubus represents the most irrational and profound part of our being”. Cochetti (who may have been familiar with psychoanalysis and with Eugenio Testa’s now-lost 1920 film *Il mostro di Frankenstein*) honed in above all on the idea of parallel binaries and the splitting of the human soul. It is one of the most perceptive

early reviews, no doubt influenced by the timing of its publication at the end of the Mussolini régime, but does state that Victor Frankenstein “is as human as the monster is beyond nature” (“al di fuori della natura”), thus establishing a dialectic in which a sense of the “infernal” is transmitted between the creator and the creature.³⁶

The first edition printed in Spain (La Pléyade) also dates from 1944 and consists of a translation of the text by Simón Santainés and a short, anonymous introduction that erroneously states that before writing *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley had penned such novels as *Valperga*, *Lodora*, and *The Last Man*, which were actually much later works. It calls *Valperga* a romantic tale perfected by William Godwin, and asserts that Mary was unlikely to have written *Frankenstein* “without the influence of her husband’s brilliance”. Clearly swayed by the tone of the 1931 film, the writer also considers the book to be “the masterpiece of the horror genre ... since it invests it with psychological depth through the description of tempestuous human passions, an aspect hitherto lacking in this kind of novel”³⁷ (Figure 11.2).

To end this brief survey, I shall just add that the first edition in Portuguese was published in Brazil, in 1957, and that although we know the first Mexican edition only appeared in 1967, the comic book *Pepín*, issued with the *Semanario Ilustrado*, had featured a cartoon entitled *Frankenstein* years earlier. In this Mexicanised version of Shelley’s story created by Francisco Casillas and Alfonso Tirado, the monster, explicitly referred to by the name of his creator, is always accompanied by his faithful dog Tirado. There is a good doctor (the creator, Dr José del Río) and an evil one, whose aim is to get hold of the monster for his own nefarious purposes. Meanwhile, the creature devours human beings and takes on local bullies such as El Ronco. These inadvertently funny strips were produced in 1937–1938 by Editorial Juventud of Mexico City, a branch of the firm established in Barcelona in 1923, which to this day continues to publish the most widely read children’s version of the Frankenstein story.³⁸

I am of course aware that the English and French versions were circulating long before the book’s publication in any other language and that it became a useful metaphorical touchstone for the press, primarily in stories about politics or scientific progress and its consequences. In a fascinating article about Spanish illustrators’ approaches to *Frankenstein*, Beatriz and Fernando González-Moreno point to the publication in a 1917 issue of the ultra-Catholic weekly *La hormiga de oro* of an item entitled “Las maravillas de la ciencia” (The wonders of science). This refers to a certain Dr Born of Breslau as a “modern Frankenstein” in its discussion of the surgical advances he had achieved, which included having created a live frog from the halves of two other frogs.³⁹

Even before news broke of this incredible achievement (certain versions of or allusions to the work do lean more towards comedy than horror), reports had appeared in the Spanish and Mexican press (and no doubt elsewhere in Europe and America) about a dinner given at the Covent Garden Theatre for



Figure 11.2 Illustration in *Frankenstein's* first Spanish edition, by Joan Palet Batiste. Source: Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein, novela*, trans. Simón Santainés (Barcelona: La Pléyade, 1944). Biblioteca Nacional de España.

Daniel O’Connell, in March 1844, shortly after the latter had been sentenced to serve a year in prison for conspiracy. On that occasion, the Irish leader had borrowed the Frankenstein metaphor for political purposes and, in the process, added to the confusion initiated by Mrs Gaskell between the creator and his creature. The version of the story that appeared in Spain’s *El Corresponsal* (26 March 1844) was a fairly free translation of the original *Illustrated London News* report, according to which, after asserting that the conspiracy for which he had been convicted had been dreamt up by the judges, O’Connell had said:

One of our female authors of celebrity, in the fulness of her feminine imagination, has depicted to the world an imaginary being of extraordinary dimensions and of ferocious capacity, and has denominated that being “Frankenstein”. That conspiracy which had been tried in Ireland was the Frankenstein of the law. [Great laughter.] As the one was uncouth of limb, unshaped in form, undefined and indefinite in nature, having nothing of humanity about it – so the other had nothing of law but its monstrosity.⁴⁰

The report on the same event printed in Mexico’s *El Siglo Diez y Nueve* (7 June 1844), meanwhile, was based on information from its French office on 20 March 1844. Other European newspapers with an interest in the Irish question presumably did likewise.

In 1853, another Mexican newspaper, the right-wing *El Universal*, writing about its liberal rival *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*’s critical stance on General Santa Anna during his final presidential mandate of 1853–1855, castigated the paper for looking to the past and conjuring “bloodstained ghosts from the grave to fight for its cause”, adding, “it will be no wonder if, in the end, like another Frankenstein, *El Siglo* sees those ghosts turn against it in anger”.⁴¹ Sixty years later, *The Mexican Herald* – an English-language newspaper published in Mexico City between 1895 and 1913, during the authoritarian rule of Porfirio Díaz, with the aim of advancing a programme of modernisation modelled on and backed by the United States – wrote the following about the suffragette movement:

Suffragette militance seems to be a sort of Frankenstein for it is now said that the number of incendiary and fanatical women has dwindled to less than forty. The army that formerly broke windows, set fires and put acid in pillar boxes has disappeared.⁴²

Again, although not exhaustive, my searches have not uncovered many other references to or reviews of Mary Shelley’s novel in the nineteenth-century Spanish or Latin American press, in other words, before the release of the film versions some decades later. At this stage, the story remained an essentially Anglo-Saxon phenomenon. When Whale’s film came out in Spain in 1932, not only did it not revive interest in the original novel, it hid it away

behind a conventional horror movie about a scientist, driven half-mad by his obsession, and a diabolical, monstrous creature. Moreover, in the year of its Spanish release, barely half a dozen reviews of the film appeared, although it was undoubtedly a box-office hit that thrilled the nation's cinema-goers.⁴³ As a curious side note, however, the famous and openly misogynist Spanish writer Pío Baroja included the following exchange in a dialogue he wrote several years later, portraying an encounter with a seemingly cultured lady on a train. She begins with a question:

“Did you see *Frankenstein*?” “No”. “Well, that was something original”. “Not really. *Frankenstein* is a novel by the wife of the English poet Shelley, published in the early nineteenth century”. “Really? I didn't know that”. “Yes, they say he helped his wife write it”.⁴⁴

The much-celebrated transtemporality and transculturality of *Frankenstein*, in the contexts set out above, were ruptured, thanks to a systematic amputation of the intensely dialogic dimension of the original text. This kind of appropriation is fundamental in accurately calibrating what we mean by “the Frankenstein myth”.

I shall end with a brief summary of what has been altered or lost in the stage and screen versions of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's novel. First, and by no means least significantly, there is the question of readership, as the story has been made available to a popular, mass audience. Second, and this is closely connected to the previous point, there is the treatment of time and the past by horror movies (and their precursor, horror theatre, with its varying degrees of comic content) – they subvert the modernity of the setting, the narrative, and the philosophy of Shelley's text by emphasising or, more accurately, creating the anachronistic atmosphere of a world shrouded in Gothic fog, a world in which science and magic overlap. Much the same can be said, incidentally, of Universal's other great horror film of 1931, *Dracula*. Third, the narrative form is substantially altered, since neither the plurality of voices and alternative truths nor the concentric narratives, both of which – as noted above – are essential features of Mary Shelley's story, translate well to stage or screen.

Fourth, there is the impact on content: in the canonical Whale-Karloff film version, there are fundamental omissions and modifications. Robert Walton, the explorer who writes the letters, vanishes – and with him, the possibility of a different kind of scientist, different models of technological progress and personal moral responsibility (and, crucially, sensibility) from those represented by Victor Frankenstein. As for the monster, who speaks more eloquently than anyone else in the novel, he is completely silenced because his cinematic incarnation is mute. Moreover, his brain is now the wrong brain: that of a murderer – a telling aspect in an era (the late nineteenth and early twentieth century) regarded as “the neurological age”, that of “brainhood ideology”. An age in which the brain, rather than the emotions, was seen as

the basis of individuality and personality, the somatic limit of the self; the brain took the place of the soul and/or the capacity to feel as the essential requirement of what it means to be human. As Peter O’Flinn has written: “the novel makes [the monster] human, while the film makes him sub-human”.⁴⁵

In the fifth and final place, as I have tried to show in the first part of this chapter, the latest twist in the process of transhistorical appropriation of Mary Shelley’s original text – from the final few decades of the twentieth century to the present day – has turned it into a kind of postmodern myth that should be analysed as such. On the one hand, as regards its audience, because it involves *Frankenstein*’s return to high, specifically academic culture. On the other, at the same time, it supposes the work’s posthumous, transtemporal (Romantic) canonisation and the restoration of its transgressive, critical, and dialogic potential.⁴⁶ It is no coincidence, of course, that this process of canonisation has taken place in the context of the debate about exactly how the Western literary canon is constructed and its historical procedures of exclusion and inclusion. Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, now (significantly) in its original 1818 version, feeds popular culture back into that high culture, blurring or confusing the boundaries between the two.

This process is a key theme in a book such as this, dealing with the histories of sensibility and the implications for race, gender, and otherness in the Global Enlightenment.⁴⁷ Its analysis tells us much about the strong situated character of sensibility.⁴⁸ What makes the past a foreign country is that difference in the nature of sensibility: there they feel differently. That is why I propose – as a colophon to this chapter – the interest of studying in depth the projection of *Frankenstein* between the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries and, especially, the conditions of its recovery by poststructuralist and postcolonial criticism as a fundamental mechanism for its transtemporal circulation between popular culture and high culture.

In December 2017, looking ahead to the novel’s bicentenary year, Richard Holmes stated with alarm in the *New York Review of Books* that *Frankenstein* was “out of control”.⁴⁹ A Google search of the name returns over 60 million hits, more than *Macbeth*.⁵⁰ Since it was first published on New Year’s Day 1818, it has never been out of print. In English alone, there are more than 300 editions of the original novel, more than 650 comics, 100 films, and so on. In 2018 and 2019, Danny Boyle’s 2011 production of the stage adaptation at London’s National Theatre was screened in cinemas the world over. The off-Broadway and UK stagings of Mark Baron and Jeffrey Jackson’s musical adaptation were very well received. In May 2018, an original new stage version, directed by Carme Portaceli, was premiered at the Teatre Nacional de Catalunya in Barcelona. Haiffaa al-Mansour’s uneven but interesting biopic (*Mary Shelley*) also dates from the bicentenary year, while in Kenneth Branagh’s film version, starring Robert De Niro and Helena Bonham-Carter,

the phenomenon of intellectualising the myth and giving the monster *greater sensibility* takes second place to a heightened version of the psychological and sentimental struggle between Victor Frankenstein and his creature (as they fight over the latter's companion).

In Spain, one of the great films of the final years of the Franco dictatorship was Victor Erice's *El espíritu de la colmena* (The Spirit of the Beehive), in which a young girl – having seen the Whale film at a village cinema in 1940, just after the end of the Spanish Civil War – becomes obsessed with Frankenstein's creation and gives aid to a republican soldier fleeing the Francoist forces, believing him to be the monster. Whether intentionally or not, Gonzalo Suárez's extraordinary and subtle film *Remando al viento* (Rowing with the Wind, 1988), starring Hugh Grant and Lizzy McInnerny, closely reflects feminist and psychoanalytical readings of the association between Mary Shelley herself and Victor Frankenstein's tortured creature. Sandra Hernández does so in a far more explicit fashion in her recent and well-received graphic novel (Bang Ediciones, 2023) in which Victor Frankenstein is a woman.

Beginning in the 1960s–1970s, and with particular momentum from the 1980s onwards, a strange hybridisation has therefore taken place between so-called “high” and “popular” culture, as well as between written and visual culture. The emergence of what has become known as cultural studies, ever since art and science, history, and literature began to transgress their conventional boundaries, has resulted in this ghost story of the early 1800s being brought back to life in an environment unthinkable in its day and for much of the twentieth century. Academia (itself so prone to creating the myths it claims to despise) is now turning its attention to trying to decipher the mystery of this short novel, written in the already *foreign country* of the early nineteenth century, and is rediscovering a surprisingly self-aware, elaborate, complex, and flexible work. Today, *Frankenstein* appears in courses on ethics, philosophy, and political, cultural, and scientific history; in debates about feminism and women's history, gender, and race, and the historical shaping of modern femininities and masculinities; and in discussions of bioethics, gene editing (CRISPR), transgenics, stem cell research, AI, chemical and nuclear weaponry, drones, and so on.

As a result of this reconversion process, *Frankenstein* (the book) is today not only enjoying global circulation, no longer confined to the Anglo-Saxon world, it is also expanding its life and meanings as a vehicle for disseminating ideas and political, scientific, and cultural agendas as relevant now as they were when the novel was first published.⁵¹ They are now, almost without exception, steeped in the post-Romantic sensibility that characterises our era, preoccupied as it is with questions relating to the diversity of humanity, the porosity of its limits, the possible forms of sensibility and identity – and to our ambivalence towards Reason and Truth, and even Science, as objective concepts. From all these perspectives, the iconic status of Mary Shelley's work is a modern cultural construct. Yorgos Lanthimos's carnivalesque and

postmodern version of the myth of *Frankenstein* (*Poor Things*, 2023) is its latest cinematographic spin.⁵²

Therefore, this kind of academic criticism (and its far-reaching repercussions on theatre and film) – if we are talking about transtemporal and transcultural forms of appropriation and circulation of Enlightenment and Romantic texts (and sensibilities) – should not just be seen as a historiographical reference but should undergo historical analysis in its own right. That would enable us to address the shifting meanings and means of circulation of the Frankenstein myth, which are as fractured and ambivalent as the current discussions about the darker and more dangerous meanings of Rousseau's *je sens, donc je suis*.

Notes

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- 1 Italo Calvino, “Italiani, vi esorto ai classici”, *L'Espresso*, 28 June 1981 [translated by Patrick Creagh in *The New York Review of Books* 33, no. 15, 9 October 1986] and *Perché leggere i classici* (Milan: Mondadori, 1991), 13–20.
- 2 Guy Scarpetta, “La littérature, miroir de l'histoire? Ce que seuls les romans peuvent dire”, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, 30 March 2003. François Dosse, *Les vérités du roman. Une histoire du temps présent* (Paris: Les Éditions de Cerf, 2013). This theme is discussed at length in Isabel Burdiel, “Lo que las novelas pueden decir a los historiadores. Notas para Manuel Pérez Ledesma”, in José Álvarez Junco et al., *El historiador consciente* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2015), 263–282.
- 3 Sarah Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution* (Williamsburg: University of North Carolina Press, 2009) and Mónica Bolufer, “Reasonable Sentiments. Sensibility and Balance in Eighteenth Century Spain”, in *Engaging Emotions in Spanish Culture and History*, eds. Luisa Elena Delgado, Pura Fernández, and Jo Labanyi (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2015), 21–38.
- 4 Tim Blanning, *The Romantic Revolution* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson 2011) and Andrea Wulf, *Magnificent Rebels: The First Romantics and the Invention of the Self* (London: John Murray, 2022) – to mention two well-known recent works, both of which, in particular the former, argue in terms of a sudden leap, or a revolution, with which I do not fully agree.
- 5 All quotations from *Frankenstein* included here are taken from the Oxford World's Classics version, edited by Nick Groom: Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein. 1818 Text* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 34.
- 6 Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein. 1818 Text* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 37.
- 7 Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein. 1818 Text* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 70–71.
- 8 Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein. 1818 Text* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 82.
- 9 Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein. 1818 Text* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 71.
- 10 Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein. 1818 Text* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 109.
- 11 Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein. 1818 Text* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 127. For more on the implications of this threat, see Mary Lowe-

- Evans, *Frankenstein: Mary Shelley's Wedding Guest* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1993).
- 12 Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein. 1818 Text* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 172.
 - 13 S.H. Vasbinder, *Scientific Attitudes in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1976) broke new ground in exploring the image of science in *Frankenstein*. See also *Frankenstein: Annotated for Scientists, Engineers, and Creators of All Kinds* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2017).
 - 14 Matt Clavin, "Race, Rebellion, and the Gothic. Inventing the Haitian Revolution", *Early American Studies* 5, no. 1 (2007): 1–29.
 - 15 Silvia Sebastiani, "A 'monster with human visage': The orangutan, savagery, and the borders of humanity in the global Enlightenment", *History of the Human Sciences* 34, no. 4 (2019): 80–99. Karen Sánchez-Eppler, "Body Bounds: The Intersecting Rhetorics of Feminism and Abolitionism", *Representations* 24 (1988): 28–59.
 - 16 David Lewes, *A Brighter Morn. The Shelley Circle's Utopian Project* (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2003).
 - 17 Voltaire, *Candide, in Romans et contes*, ed. R. Pomerai (Paris: Flammarion, 1969), 222. Alan Coffee, "Frankenstein and Slave Narrative: Race, Revulsion and Radical Revolution", in *Creolizing Frankenstein*, ed. Michael Paradiso-Michau (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2023). For the gender connotations of the sugar industry, see Marta Manzanera's chapter in this volume, and Julie L. Holcomb, "Blood-Stained Sugar: Gender, Commerce and the British Slave-Trade Debates", *Slavery and Abolition* 35, no. 4 (2014): 611–628. There is an interesting quotation from Coleridge on how the blood of slaves was sweetening English food in Carlos Jaúregui, *Canibalia. Canibalismo, antropofagia cultural y consumo en América Latina* (Madrid: Iberoamericana, Frankfurt, Vervuert, 2008), 278. Brycchan Carey, *British Abolitionism and the Rhetoric of Sensibility* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 40.
 - 18 Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein. 1818 Text* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 87. Marie Mulvey-Roberts, "Mary Shelley, Frankenstein and Slavery", *Dangerous Bodies: Historicising the Gothic Corporeal* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 52–91. Lizabeth Young, *Black Frankenstein. The Making of an American Metaphor* (New York: New York University Press, 2008).
 - 19 Nick Groom, ed., Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein. 1818 Text* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), XLIX; Elizabeth Gaskell, *Mary Barton. A Tale of Manchester* (London: Penguin, 2012); and Anne K. Mellor, *Mary Shelley. Her Life, Her Fiction, Her Monsters* (New York and London: Methuen, 1988), 113–114.
 - 20 I discuss Wollstonecraft's ideas on monstrosity and the female condition in Isabel Burdiel, ed., *Mary Wollstonecraft. Vindicación de los Derechos de la Mujer* (Madrid: Cátedra-Clásicos del Feminismo, 2018, [1994]).
 - 21 Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein. 1818 Text* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 125.
 - 22 Anon. *Knights Quarterly*, August–November 1824: 195–199.
 - 23 David Marshall, *The Surprising Effects of Sympathy. Marivaux, Diderot, Rousseau, and Mary Shelley* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1988). Julio Seoane Pinilla, *Del sentido moral a la moral sentimental. El origen sentimental de la identidad y la ciudadanía democrática* (Madrid: Siglo XXI, 2004). Siep Stuurman, *The Invention of Humanity. Equality and Cultural Difference in World History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017).
 - 24 Richard Holmes, *The Age of Wonder. How the Romantic Generation Discovered the Beauty and Terror of Science* (New York: Harper and Collins, 2008).
 - 25 See, in particular, Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 2002 [1966]).

- 26 Monthly Catalogue, *Monthly Review, Or, Literary Journal. Art*, 19 April 1818: 439. *The Quarterly Review* (1818). Art. V: 379–385.
- 27 Isaiah Berlin, “The Apotheosis of the Romantic Will: The Revolt against the Myth of an Ideal World”, in Isaiah Berlin, *The Crooked Timber of Humanity: Chapters in the History of Ideas* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 219–252.
- 28 Paul O’Flinn, “Production and Reproduction: The Case of *Frankenstein*”, in *Frankenstein. Contemporary Critical Essays*, ed. Fred Botting (London: Macmillan, 1995), 21–47.
- 29 Jeremy Adelman, “What is Global History Now?”, AEON, 2 March 2017. <https://aeon.co/essays/is-global-history-still-possible-or-has-it-had-its-moment> Consulted 16 February 2023.
- 30 Walter Scott, *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* 2, March 1818: 613–620.
- 31 Douglas William Hoehn, “The First Season of Presumption, Or, The Fate of Frankenstein”, *Theatre Studies*, 26–27 (1979–1981): 79–88, and “Early Dramatic Versions of Frankenstein”, *Romantic Circles*, undated. <https://romantic-circles.org/editions/peake/apparatus/earlyversions.html>. Consulted 7 April 2023. Peter Brooks, *The Melodramatic Imagination* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995). Rohan McWilliam, “Melodrama and the Historians”, *Radical History Review* 78 (2000), 57–84.
- 32 Xavier Andreu and Mónica Bolufer, eds., *European Modernity and the Passionate South* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2023).
- 33 *Le Prométhée Moderne, Dédié a William Godwin, Auteur de la Justice Politique, de Caleb William, etc., Mme. Shelley, sa nièce. Traduit de l’Anglais par J.S.* *** (Paris: Chez Corréard, Libraire, Palais Royal, Galerie de Bois, no. 258, 1821). Gérard Dufour, “La Santa Alianza de los Pueblos. Liberales franceses y españoles en el Trienio Liberal”, *Pasado y Memoria* 22 (2021): 109–127.
- 34 Nick Groom, ed., “Appendix B. The Third Edition (1831): Substantive Changes”, in Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein. 1818 Text* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) 178–198.
- 35 The preface was probably written by Percy Shelley, who expanded on this interpretation in his review of the book. I have no room to discuss that text here but it does merit further consideration. Nick Groom, ed., “Appendix C. On *Frankenstein* by Percy Bysshe Shelley”, in Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein. 1818 Text* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) 199–200.
- 36 Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (Rome: Donatello De Luigi, 1944), 9–16.
- 37 Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (Barcelona: La Pléyade, March 1944). Cover and frontispiece illustrations by Palet; introduction (anon.), 5–6. Biblioteca Nacional de España, Signatura 4/17616. The earliest English edition held by the BNE is that published in 1922 by J.M. Dent & Sons, London, part of the Juan Benet archive. Cat. no. Juan 11/149761. Sede de Alcalá.
- 38 “Frankenstein”, in *Pepín. Semanario Ilustrado*, 53 and 70 (México City: Editorial Juventud, 1937–1938).
- 39 Beatriz González-Moreno and Fernando González-Moreno, “The Reception of *Frankenstein* in Spain by the Hand of its Illustrators”, *Spanish Journal of English Studies* 43 (2022): 11–38, <https://doi.org/10.24197/ersjes.43.2022.11-38>. “Maravillas de la Cirugía”, *La Hormiga de Oro* 34, no. 4 (27 January 1917): 23. Born’s work dated from 1894 and was continued, ultimately with extremely dubious implications, by the French surgeon Alexis Carrel.
- 40 *The Illustrated London News*, 16 March 1844.
- 41 *El Universal. Periódico Independiente*. Mexico, 3 May 1853.
- 42 *The Mexican Herald*, 13 August 1913.
- 43 *El Heraldo de Madrid*, 2 March 1932; *Caras y Caretas* (Buenos Aires), 27 February 1932; *Luz* (Madrid) 9 March 1932; *La Época* (Madrid), 11 March 1932; *Ahora* (Madrid), 19 January 1936.

- 44 Pío Baroja, "Locuras de Carnaval", *Ahora* (Madrid), 19 January 1936.
- 45 Fernando Vidal, "Frankenstein's Brain: 'The Final Touch'", *SubStance* 140, no. 45.2 (2016): 88–117. Paul O'Flinn, "Production and Reproduction: The Case of *Frankenstein*", in *Frankenstein. Contemporary Critical Essays*, ed. Fred Botting (London: Macmillan, 1995), 37.
- 46 Its acceptance into the Romantic canon owes much to Harold Bloom, "Frankenstein, or the New Prometheus", *Partisan Review* 32 (1965): 611–618. Groundbreaking in their day were G. Levine and U.C. Knoepfelmacher, eds., *The Endurance of 'Frankenstein': Essays on Mary Shelley's Novel* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1979); S.M. Gilbert and S. Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979); Harold Bloom, *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein: Modern Critical Interpretations* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1985); and Chris Baldick, *In Frankenstein's Shadow: Myth, Monstrosity and Nineteenth-Century Writing* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987).
- 47 For a substantial discussion of its analytical context, see Mónica Bolufer and Elena Serrano, "Decentering the Enlightenment: Crossing Global and Gender Perspectives", *Entremons: UPF Journal of World History* 13 (2022): 66–99. <https://doi.org/10.31009/entremons.2022.i13.03>
- 48 Obviously, the reference is to L.P. Hartley, *The Go-Between* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1953).
- 49 Richard Holmes, "Out of Control", *New York Review of Books*, 21 December 2017.
- 50 Jill Lepore, "The Strange and Twisted Life of *Frankenstein*", *The New Yorker. Life and Letters*, 12 and 19 February 2018.
- 51 Carol Margaret Davison and Marie Mulvey-Roberts, eds., *Global Frankenstein. Studies in Global Science Fiction* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).
- 52 I thank Pablo Jauregui for bringing this latest film to my attention.

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