

The *Lettres portugaises*: Scripting and Selling Female Desire

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ABSTRACT

This article builds on previous literary scholarship to analyse the social and publication history of the enormously successful *Lettres portugaises* (1669), five letters published in the voice of an anonymous Portuguese nun to a French officer. Although the letters were based on an ancient model, this article suggests that their references to contemporary gendered constructions of biology and love, especially for enclosed women, were successfully used by publishers to commercialise a historically recurring gender binary of heterosexual love: men were rejected and women were abandoned. The popularity of the text was such that it entrenched notions of women's helplessness in matters of the heart for almost three centuries. This article argues that the *Lettres portugaises*' success was as much the result of the text's literary qualities as it was of the canny paratextual strategies deployed by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century publishers to sell the book, its sequels and its imitations.

The *Lettres portugaises traduites en François* were a publishing sensation.¹ Published in 1669 by the Parisian publisher, Claude Barbin, five short letters written by a Portuguese nun named Mariana to her French lover in the aftermath of the Portuguese Restoration War (1640–1668) rapidly became one of the most popular books of the seventeenth century. Indeed, no sooner had Barbin released his edition in Paris than pirated editions appeared attributed to Isaac van Dyck of Amsterdam and Pierre Marteau of Cologne, the latter an Amsterdam imprint used by anonymous publishers to print anti-French satire, sexually explicit titles and bootlegged editions of texts protected by a royal privilege.² Although the first edition was published anonymously, Dutch editions were sold with an altered title in order to expose Mariana's correspondent and her translator. Curious readers learned that the Marquis de Chamilly was the scoundrel while Gabriel de Guilleragues had deciphered the Portuguese.³ Barbin retaliated by publishing a second edition with two additional letters, and the same was done in pirated editions shortly thereafter.⁴ A Parisian rival, Jean-Baptiste Loyson, and a Grenoblois publisher, Robert Philippes, were also quick to capitalise on the rapidly growing interest in the letters, publishing fictitious replies from 'Chamilly' in the same year, the former adopting an epistolary paratext highly evocative of Barbin's, designed to link the two editions.⁵

The cultural impact of the letters was swift: Madame de Sévigné was already using *une portugaise* as shorthand for a passionate love letter in 1671.⁶ This is not surprising. In less than twelve months, five different editions appeared in France and

the Low Countries. Within five years, twenty-one editions were in circulation to meet the demand, forty-nine by 1700, sixty-three by 1725 and eighty-one by 1800.⁷ Although most scholars today believe that Guilleragues wrote the *Lettres portugaises*, Mariana's authorship went virtually unchallenged for almost three hundred years because it was assumed that only a woman could write so passionately.⁸ As Madeleine de Scudéry (1607–1701) opined, men wrote *lettres galantes* and women wrote *lettres d'amour* which were full of *sentiment*, rather than *esprit* (wit).⁹ Publishers were also aware of the binary: the preface to a Grenoblois edition claimed that 'a violent passion inspired the five first Letters: No man will ever be touched by similar ardour'.¹⁰ The popularity of Mariana's epistolary suffering strengthened a gendered idea of how women experienced love that had been in place since antiquity: their passions were stronger and more destructive than those of men, and this made them better at expressing love's torments.¹¹

Over the last forty years, feminist scholars have extensively analysed the rhetorical and ideological qualities of the *Lettres portugaises*. Initially, scholars like Nancy K. Miller and Gabrielle Verdier examined how the writer of the *Lettres portugaises* constructed the female voice of Mariana. Miller accepted Guilleragues as the author and argued that he was, in effect, a pornographic writer, who depicted the effect that men imagined they had on their abandoned lovers.¹² Verdier deviated slightly from this analysis and claimed that Guilleragues' female impersonation was so successful because it was in line with public expectations of a woman's voice.¹³ Joan DeJean traced such mimesis to Ovid, identifying the *Heroides* as the model for the *Lettres portugaises*.¹⁴ Katherine Jensen later named this model 'Epistolary Woman', which, she argued, was constructed by men to limit women's literary expression.¹⁵ Donna Kuizenga followed Jensen and argued that the *Lettres portugaises* inaugurated a successful formula for the epistolary novel, a formula which enabled authors to sell their works during the latter part of the seventeenth century, albeit while perpetuating what Miller called the 'penultimate masochism' of Epistolary Woman.¹⁶

This article builds on this previous literary scholarship by analysing the social and publication history of the *Lettres portugaises* to re-examine the strategies adopted by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century publishers to commercialise a historically recurring gender binary.¹⁷ While literary scholars have connected the text to earlier epistolary models of amatory writing, there has been less analysis of the book history of the *Lettres portugaises*. An analysis of the titles and paratexts in different editions across Europe reveals that publishers capitalised on the intense interest in the abandoned woman's voice using emotional and transactional strategies that strengthened the objectification of normative female love and sexual desire in literary and societal discourse. In other words, the way in which the letters communicated the Portuguese nun's despair was reliant on Western European seventeenth-century gendered modes of expressing love. The publishers then marketed the letters as genuine because they reflected literary, religious, medical and popular ideas about women in love.¹⁸

As a result, this article adds another dimension to our understanding of the rhetorical and ideological techniques that contributed to the success of the *Lettres portugaises*. Like Kuizenga, I see the text as a turning point that concretised the transition of the sexual abandoned woman from manuscript to print, contributing to the continued circulation of the idea, both contested and celebrated, in artistic and popular culture for another three centuries.¹⁹ I also address the sequels and replies, taking up Clare

Goldstein's call for further investigation of the way they provide 'important clues regarding contemporary readings of the *Lettres portugaises*, readings which influence a definition of feminine writing formulated in the criticism of this text and then expanded to define and contain all women's writing'.²⁰ In so doing, this essay suggests that the enduring popularity and cultural impact of the *Lettres portugaises* is better understood when taking into account the ways in which gendered forms of expressing love inspired the marketing tactics of European publishers in the years and decades after Barbin first introduced the *Lettres portugaises* to a Parisian public.

Barbin and amatory literature

Between 1656 and 1660, Barbin published only eight books, mainly copies, but once he entered into a consortium to publish the satire *Les Précieuses ridicules* (1659) by Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, better known as Molière, his fortunes changed.²¹ Between 1660 and 1669, he published 107 titles mainly on the subject of love, both classical, like an edition of Ovid's elegies in 1666, and neoclassical, like Du Perret's *La Cour d'amour* (1667). In this space, Barbin also gained a reputation as 'a publisher of women authors'.²² Barbin published fifty-one titles by fourteen different women throughout his career, like Henriette de Coligny La Suze's collection of *galant* letters.²³ Although this was only about 10 *per cent* of the total books he published, it was a sizeable minority relative to his peers.²⁴ Barbin, in particular, worked closely with Marie-Catherine-Hortense Desjardins (1640–1683), also known as Madame de Villedieu, and their partnership enabled her to become one of the few women writers of the seventeenth century to earn an income solely through writing.²⁵ Barbin, however, was no proto-feminist. When Villedieu's ex-lover, Antoine Boësset, Sieur de Villedieu, offered to sell her private love letters to Barbin, the publisher jumped at the opportunity. Perhaps it was a deliberate ploy by all three individuals to create a scandal and a profit, but there is insufficient evidence to resolve intent.

In 1668, a year before the publication of the *Lettres portugaises*, Barbin published *Lettres et billets galants* naming Villedieu as the author in the privilege, but not the title page.²⁶ Written over six years, the epistles tenderly exposed the difficult balance between her public identity as the writer Villedieu and her private life as Desjardins.²⁷ After discovering that her lover, Antoine Boësset, Sieur de Villedieu, had sold her letters to Barbin, she wrote to the publisher to explain why her correspondence should not be printed.²⁸ First, she claimed, they would not make any sense to outsiders because of the intimacy between correspondents.²⁹ Moreover, she told Barbin, the letters 'belong to my heart alone, and even if my hand had the audacity to steal away a few, no printer should be allowed to take advantage of those thefts'.³⁰ This could have also been a strategy to protect her reputation because if her epistolary pleas to stop its publication were real, this only increased interest in the letters' contents.³¹ Katharine Jensen has speculated that Villedieu's immodest and immoral behaviour as a woman in the public eye in the seventeenth century justified Barbin's violation of her wishes.³² Either way, Barbin decided that the letters made good business sense and published them in July 1668 to moderate success.³³ Barbin's only concession was removing her name in the second edition.³⁴ Even so, Barbin held legal ownership of Villedieu's letters through a royal privilege and, like the Portuguese nun six months later, saw fit to make her sentiments public.³⁵

A privilege issued October 1668 suggests that the *Lettres portugaises* were to be published jointly in *Les Valentins, Lettres portugaises, Epigrammes et Madrigaux de Guilleragues*.³⁶ However, Barbin had spotted a new trend: love letters, thanks to Villedieu. He chose to publish the *Lettres portugaises* as a single volume in January 1669, after registering the privilege in November 1668.³⁷ Barbin published the rest of Guilleragues' writings in October of the same year, prefacing its contents with reference to the recent enthusiasm for expressions of love.³⁸ He hoped that: 'the diversity of epigrams on all sorts of subjects will entertain you'.³⁹ The decision to separate the two texts was probably motivated by profit: both were slightly over one hundred pages long. Any longer than that was unlikely to attract a customer desiring a cheap confection. Barbin also removed Guilleragues' name from the text, presumably to generate mystery.⁴⁰ Finally, he renamed the October collection *Valantins, questions d'amour & autres pieces galantes*, removing literary terms like epigram or madrigal and replacing them with keywords that appealed to the vogue for all things *galant* and, implicitly, Ovidian. However, before analysing how publishers like Barbin sold the *Lettres portugaises*, it is first important to address the letters' sociocultural context. In the following section, I argue that the letters' structure was Ovidian, but that the language was contemporary and represented changing attitudes towards love based on contemporary medical and popular understandings of women's physiology. This gave the letters verisimilitude, which publishers used to market the book.

Ovidian, popular and medical models of love

In the 1970s, Ellen Moers identified the *Heroides*, a collection of fifteen epistles written to and from famous classical heroines, as the archetext for fictional works that articulate amatory experiences from the female point of view, especially love letters.⁴¹ A decade later, the literary scholar DeJean expanded Moers' claims to distinguish between male and female writers.⁴² According to DeJean, the Ovidian model of female-voiced amatory narrators was considered by seventeenth-century French writers to be authentically female, regardless of whether the text was written by a man or a woman.⁴³ However, some women writers like Scudéry resisted the Ovidian model: two of Scudéry's earliest works offered an alternative to the traditional Ovidian heroine: *Lettres amoureuses de divers auteurs de ce temps* (1641) and *Les Femmes illustres ou les harangues héroïques* (1642).⁴⁴ The latter of which are twenty classical women's impassioned tirades that do not desire the return of their lovers, but rather set out the women's side of the story, especially for Sappho.⁴⁵ Yet, despite the popularity of Scudéry's writing, most seventeenth-century French writers followed the Ovidian construction of heterosexual love: men are rejected and women are abandoned, issuing a lament directed towards the man who left her behind.⁴⁶

The first letter of the *Lettres portugaises* contains the three elements of the abandoned woman's lament: desire, betrayal and death.⁴⁷ According to Mariana, her lover 'betrayed [her] with false hopes', the 'passion that once bred so many prospects of pleasure' is now responsible for her pain, her eyes 'are deprived of the sole light that brought them life, now nothing is left, but tears'.⁴⁸ Finally, Mariana has just learned that her lover has 'committed at last to a separation that is unbearable to [her] and will kill [her] very soon'.⁴⁹ Thus, before the reader has even turned the first page, Mariana has already linked herself to one famous abandoned women: Dido. The nun's

circumstances vividly recall those of the Queen of Carthage: Like Mariana herself and many other women, Dido was left behind by a man leading a military campaign.⁵⁰ Indeed, the first English edition hinted at the parallels between the queen and the Portuguese nun in the preface: ‘There was (it seems) an Intrigue of Love carry’d on betwixt a French Officer, and a Nun in Portugal. The Cavalier forsakes his Mistress and Returns for France’.⁵¹ Appearing in both Virgil’s *Aeneid* and Ovid’s *Heroides*, Dido’s lovelorn suicide is a critical moment in both texts, and Mariana implies that her heart may lead her to a similar fate.⁵²

Although the *Lettres portugaises* largely imitated the Ovidian model of the abandoned woman, their lexicon instead reflected seventeenth-century French constructions of love and its risks for young women.⁵³ Between 1670 and 1695, *sentiment* and *sensibilité* replaced Descartes’ *émotion* (1649) and Scudéry’s *tendresse* or *tendre* (1650–1670) to become the dominant forms of describing affect in seventeenth-century French literature.⁵⁴ Previously, *passion* was the primary synonym for love, but this was replaced by a group of words, *sentiment*, *sensibilité*, *sentir*, *tendresse*, *tendre*, *amour*, *aimer*, used by authors like Villedieu and Scudéry to scribe romance.⁵⁵ Moreover, when such words were used by authors, they were often used in conjunction with the heart.⁵⁶ The heart was depicted as operating independently of the body, controlling its owner. This represented a shift away from love being a ‘passion of the soul’ and becoming instead a ‘sentiment of the heart’.⁵⁷ Importantly, love taking on a physiological meaning made it easier to affirm that women were more susceptible to love’s cruelty because of their biologically weaker organs.⁵⁸

The physiological nature of women’s love was also linked to their intense sexuality. For example, in the second letter, Mariana reminisces about the day her ‘unhappy passion’ was kindled, explaining how she was standing on her balcony when she spotted a solitary French soldier on horseback.⁵⁹ She gazed longingly at the uniformed man who had paused in front of her. Convinced that he did so for her benefit, she continued to watch as he trotted his horse.⁶⁰ Throughout her letters, she describes her sexual attraction using physiological language: she watched the soldier, succumbed to his touch, and ached in his absence. Contemporaries believed women to have a larger sexual appetite that could prove overwhelming, particularly in cloistered women.⁶¹ Indeed, in her last letter, Mariana attributed her lust to being young and having been ‘enclosed in this convent since childhood’.⁶² Although Mariana’s sexual frustration reflected popular and medical discourse, especially concerning cloistered women, it was unusual for a female narrator to make such immodest claims in literary works.⁶³

As the letters unfold, Mariana moves away from typical Ovidian heroines to reveal behaviour in line with contemporary expectations of women’s emotional and physiological responses to love, particularly with regard to anger. Contemporaries believed women to be more prone to anger due to their inferior physiology, but it was uncommon to see a woman write about her ire.⁶⁴ Yet, Mariana’s third letter opens with outrage: ‘What will become of me, and what would you have me do?’ followed by an indirect accusation: ‘How far I am now from all that I had looked forward to!’⁶⁵ She accuses her lover of taking advantage of her licentiousness after he: ‘deliberately, and in cold blood, conspired to awaken my love; [yet] you only regarded my passion as your triumph, and your heart was never deeply touched’.⁶⁶ Mariana asks her lover to help her overcome the ‘febleness of my sex’ and end her despair by returning to her.⁶⁷ If not, she ponders whether a ‘tragic end’ would force her lover to ‘think of [her]

often', since such an 'uncommon death' would make her memory 'dear to you', evoking Dido's suicide.⁶⁸ Mariana is aware of the intensity of her emotions, claiming in the fourth letter that 'it was the violence of my own desire that seduced me'.⁶⁹ Pleasure, it turned out, became: 'pain I had never felt before; all the fluctuating moods that you cause in me are extreme'. Her only cure, she surmised, was to cease writing and forget about the soldier. The final paragraph of the penultimate letter begins and ends with 'good-bye', intermingled with further references to her death: 'I love you a thousand times more than my life' and, despairingly, 'Why have you poisoned my life?'⁷⁰

Women writers did not typically express anger because it was immodest, yet Mariana did not hold back from describing her ire and desire for violent revenge.⁷¹ Yet, the fifth and final letter openly blames the 'pride common to [her] sex', which stops her from resolving her anger.⁷² Despite her best intentions, the missive is caught in a discursive loop of rage, despair and shame. Her feelings and her love are both 'violent', which leads her to suggest revenge twice: once by her own hand and the second subject to the 'vengeance of [her] kinfolk'.⁷³ At the same time, she is 'miserable', and 'vividly' feels 'shame for the crimes you made me commit'.⁷⁴ Mariana does not address each emotion in turn; she jumps from one to the other, often in contradictory terms. To emphasise that Mariana truly has no control over her *sentiments*, despite her protestations otherwise, her last words are formulated as a question: 'Am I under any obligation to render you an exact account of all I do?'⁷⁵ It contrasts dramatically with the preceding sentence that claimed that she would not think of him nor write to him again.

Mariana's contradictory outbursts are another significant divergence from the Ovidian model. The articulate heroines of the *Heroides* were replaced by Mariana's repetitive and illogical prose, which created an effect of spontaneity and realism. Literary scholars like Jonathan Mallinson have claimed that Mariana appeared to be so real to contemporary readers because of the intensity of her lament.⁷⁶ Unlike fictional characters in the works of Gomberville, La Calprenède and Scudéry, Mariana was immodest, immoral and controlled by her *sentiments*, which made her appear authentic and vulnerable to a seventeenth-century audience.⁷⁷ But it was more than just sentiment: it was also her sexuality and physiological reactions which made her seem authentic to readers. Mariana reflected the consequences of poorly judged love for women whose biology made them seek out sexual attention, especially when confined to a convent.

Therefore, while the *Lettres* borrowed from the *Heroides*, and other elegiac and even epic poetry to structure the letters, Mariana was also constructed using her contemporaries' understanding of love and its physiological effects on women. As a result, she lacks substance, and it is unclear *who* Mariana is beyond her habit and lust. Even she admitted: 'I don't know who I am, nor what I am doing, nor what I want'.⁷⁸ Literary scholars have suggested that this made it easier for men to project their own fantasies onto the nun because she lacked any defining qualities which implied agency or autonomy.⁷⁹ I argue it also made it more enjoyable for men and women to read because, in the absence of complex rhetoric and allusive imagery, a publisher could market the *Lettres* as a diversion, something entertaining and scandalous to read. Its transgressive depiction of a woman in love compared with modest literary heroines was undoubtedly appealing. Therefore, the text's representations of gendered

seventeenth-century physiological manifestations of love, rather than strictly literary models of expressing female heterosexual love, enabled publishers to market it in various ways to suit different markets and interests.

Commodifying Mariana

Without the literary artifice of Latin elegy, Mariana's voice seemed to give the reader unadulterated access to the mind of a woman trapped by her own desire. In England, for example, publishers capitalised on Mariana's 'Extravagant and Unfortunate Passion' to promote the text in prefaces, translator's notes and advertisements.⁸⁰ The context in seventeenth-century London, however, was quite different to Paris. There was little support for women writers and this would have affected how the *Lettres portugaises* was read and received.⁸¹ However, scholars suggest that at the time there was an emerging demand for eroticism, which may have played a role in the success of the first edition.⁸² The paratext in the first edition reassured the reader that it was 'one of the most Artificial Pieces perhaps of the Kind, that is anywhere Extant'.⁸³ In the seventeenth century, 'artificial' initially meant a piece of literature that displayed 'special art or skill' before it acquired its modern meaning in the eighteenth century.⁸⁴ The second English edition went further and subtitled the letters 'one of the Most Passionate [p]ieces That Possibly Ever Has Been Extant'.⁸⁵ Passion in eighteenth-century Britain was an emotional experience of which love was one of the most important permutations.⁸⁶ Publishers seemed to claim that the *Lettres portugaises* represented the authentic passionate experience of an individual, as suggested by an early eighteenth-century verse translation that was simply titled *Love without affectation*.⁸⁷

Other European publishers exploited the transgressive nature of the romantic pairing, like one of the first foreign editions printed by 'Pierre Marteau of Cologne' in 1669. In five pirated editions between 1669 and 1681, the preface was barely altered from that of Barbin, keeping the epistolary paratext word-for-word except for the inclusion of the name of the soldier and the translator.⁸⁸ The bootlegged copies, however, had the title changed to *Lettres d'amour d'une religieuse* to draw attention to the scandalous nature of the letters and added *Escrites au Chevalier de C., Officier François en Portugal*.⁸⁹ Cloistral pornography was a popular genre that began as an oral tradition picked up by Giovanni Boccaccio in the fourteenth century and popularised in the seventeenth century.⁹⁰ Early modern men, therefore, were positioned by such literature to view young nuns as especially lascivious due to being enclosed and, were consequently sexually frustrated.⁹¹ The title change may have also appealed to French Protestant refugees who perhaps would have appreciated a slight at Catholicism.⁹²

In Venice, Mariana's devotion was used in the context of patronage. The first Italian translation was dedicated to a patrician, Federico Marcello, whom the translator, 'Narbonte Pordoni', thought might be interested in reading about a love affair between two elites.⁹³ Pontio Bernardon had just started his publishing career and was forming a reputation for publishing translated and untranslated French works.⁹⁴ Unlike the Dutch editions, the Italian edition did not mention an enclosed woman, titled instead: 'Portuguese love letters between a Portuguese noblewoman and a French *chevalier*'.⁹⁵ Pordoni claims that it might be 'indecent' to read about the life that the 'impassioned *Dama*' has led, but it certainly lent itself to be read 'with utmost curiosity, or [perhaps] close attention'.⁹⁶

Perhaps Bernardon wanted to avoid religious controversy, given Venetian censorship, and instead appeal to the sensibilities of a high-ranking patrician who would find entertainment in a scandalous affair between elite families.⁹⁷ Indeed, the preface is written specifically for Marcello. Searching for patrons, Bernardon used the story of the 'noblewoman' and the 'grand *chevalier*' as a metaphor for his patron-client relationship. He claimed that 'the Passion of another bears witness to my own', evidence of his 'obsequious Devotion' to Marcello.⁹⁸ This paratext gestures towards the continued relevance of social status in the expression of passion, in this case, patron and client. In other words, the *Lettres portugaises* could be interpreted in different ways, in different geographical and linguistic contexts, based on how the publisher presented it.

Once the initial novelty of the letters wore off in the early eighteenth century, British publishers repackaged the text to revive interest in the text. In 1702, a new publisher advertised the *Lettres portugaises* as a language-learning method by re-releasing the translation in a parallel-text edition aimed at a general readership: 'the English being on the opposite page for the benefit of the ingenious of other languages'.⁹⁹ The edition also included an advertisement informing the reader that the publisher had just released the 'Nineteenth Edition of that Excellent French Grammar, by *Claudius Mauger*', as well as the French *Common-Prayer* 'on a good Paper and Character'.¹⁰⁰ Seven years later, another publisher produced a verse translation which was accompanied by educational material, including a 'Prefatory Discourse of the Nature and Use of Such Epistles', 'the Time when They Were Written' and the 'True Names and Circumstances of the Persons Concern'd in Them'.¹⁰¹ The popularity of the text encouraged publishers to find different uses for it, allowing it to evolve from an erotic tale of female desire to a pedagogical tool that nevertheless reinforced gendered dynamics of love.

The commercial success of the *Lettres portugaises* did not go unnoticed or uncriticised, at least by Barbin's peers in France. In 1700, a satirical dialogue, *L'École du monde*, featured a series of interviews between a father and son. In the fifth interview, the father instructed his son on the importance of education. He explained that a young woman would be unable to 'tell the difference between Boileau, or a satire, and a *Barbinade* or the *Mercurie galant*'.¹⁰² 'And', the son asked, 'What do you mean by *Barbinade*?'¹⁰³ A *Barbinade*, the father began, 'are trinket-like books that do nothing except to waste time fruitlessly. After reading one of these [books], one's *esprit* is as improved as if one had read nothing'. But, he continued, 'that did not stop [them] from enriching our friend, Barbin'.¹⁰⁴ A *Barbinade* may have been a trifle to some, but educated men evidently read them enough to line Barbin's pockets. They were also enthusiastic for similar epistolary works, which led women writers to imitate the *Lettres portugaises*, particularly in France, albeit with critical changes to the paradigm.

Imitations of the *Lettres portugaises*

The success of the *Lettres portugaises* fuelled a market for a certain consumable version of female desire, inspiring a number of imitations that took part in or challenged this market. For example, Madame de Villegieu published several titles in the 1670s that appeared to be inspired by the Portuguese nun. In 1670, she published *Annales galantes* (1670), a tale of a passionate love affair between a cloistered woman and a

rogue.¹⁰⁵ A couple of years later, she addressed the real-life theft of her amatory correspondence in *Mémoires de la vie de Henriette-Sylvie de Molière* (1672–1674) by fictionalising one of her own stolen letters, taking back control of its words.¹⁰⁶ Similarly, in *Portefeuille* (1674), she subverted the *Lettres portugaises* by claiming to have found a collection of male-authored love letters abandoned in a Parisian garden. Like Barbin, she did not know the author's identity, but, as she told a female correspondent, she saw fit to publish them because 'the manner in which they are written is quite fashionable'.¹⁰⁷ The letter in *Princesse de Clèves* (1678), published anonymously, but thought to be the work of Madame de La Fayette (1634–1693) was also likely to have been a reference as well.¹⁰⁸

In England, Aphra Behn also experimented with the narrative elements of the *Lettres portugaises* after the first London editions were published. Although *Love-Letters Between a Nobleman and His Sister* (1684–1687) was initially published anonymously, the second volume has the imprint 'London: printed for the author, 1685', and the dedication of the second and third volumes are signed: 'A. B.'.¹⁰⁹ It is unclear why Behn made her authorship difficult to discern, but it is possible that Behn wanted to generate interest through mystery, take control of the writing process, or shield herself from criticism on account of being a woman.¹¹⁰ Evoking the circumstances of the *Lettres portugaises*, and Desjardin's *Portefeuille*, Behn's opening epistle explained that when she was: 'at Paris last Spring, met with a little Book of Letters, call'd *L'Intregue de Philander et Silvia* I had a particular fancy, besides my inclinations to translate 'em into English, which I have done as faithfully as I cou'd'.¹¹¹

However, Behn, like Villedieu, resisted the *Lettres portugaises*' treatment of the female heterosexual romantic voice. Part One includes, for example, the letters of both man and woman writing towards their eventual consummation, rather than from the woman's perspective after the abandonment.¹¹² It also addressed contemporary English politics by alluding to a recent sex scandal: the marriage of Lady Henriette Berkeley and Lord Grey of Werke.¹¹³ Behn substituted the English political context for analogous French institutions and families while also drawing on seventeenth-century postal, legal and espionage practices.¹¹⁴ It was successful and circulated throughout the first half of the eighteenth century in London and Dublin.¹¹⁵

By distilling discourse around female heterosexuality into an attractive and readable format, the *Lettres portugaises* and the epistolary novel remained in circulation for centuries. However, women writers continued to challenge its construction of love and how this emotion affected the female lover. For example, the *Lettres portugaises* likely inspired, in part, the eighteenth-century publishing sensation: the *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* (1747) by Françoise de Graffigny (1695–1758).¹¹⁶ Like the *Lettres portugaises*, the *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* was printed around fifty times within the first thirty years of its publication and translated into five languages in the same period.¹¹⁷ Unlike the *Lettres portugaises*, it was written by a woman and challenged both Eurocentrism and the institution of marriage. The Incan protagonist, Zilla, is kidnapped by Spanish conquistadors, captured by the French, and transported to France in the aftermath of a maritime battle. Struck by melancholy, the cure for her malady is to write. Her letters deliver a searing critique of French society as an outsider and as a woman. In particular, Zilla's decision to choose celibacy over marriage generated enormous controversy, but Graffigny refused to change the ending in the 1752 edition.¹¹⁸

Unofficial sequels, however, satiated the public's appetite for an ending that promised marriage, and which undermined Zilla's independence and control over her destiny.¹¹⁹

Although the *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* declined in popularity in the nineteenth century, the *Lettres portugaises* still had an audience as late as the twentieth century. Henri Matisse was so inspired by the passion in the letters that he illustrated a special edition with portraits of the Portuguese nun.¹²⁰ Similarly, the German poet Rainier Maria Rilke declared that Mariana was: 'that incomparable woman, in whose eight [sic] heavy letters woman's love is for the first time charted from point to point without display, without exaggeration or mitigation, as by the hand of a sibyl'.¹²¹ When he loaned the book to the artist Gwen John, she agreed they were beautiful, but unsophisticated 'like a bird singing'.¹²² Yet, to Rilke and his contemporaries, Mariana's intense sentiments that controlled and overwhelmed her were what they had been socialised to believe flowed in the minds and bodies of women for centuries.

Conclusion

In 1972, three centuries after the *Lettres portugaises*, three Portuguese women reclaimed Mariana in a text called *Novas Cartas Portuguesas* (1972). Maria Isabel Barreno, Maria Teresa Horta and Maria Velho da Costa copied the nun's original correspondence and added their own fiction, letters, essays, poems and even legal documents to create a literary work that defies classification. The three women wrote in the voices of both oppressed women -- cousins of Mariana -- and violent men fighting in the Portuguese Colonial War (1961–1974) in Africa, abandoning their wives who remained faithful to them.¹²³ The text does not have an internal logic, forming a collage of erotica, poetry and legislation, with no identifiable author. This was purposeful because the three writers wanted the work to be unified as 'a symbol of their sisterhood and the common sufferings of women'.¹²⁴ They called their writing a 'trialectic', which disrupted the binary oppositions used to 'define and circumscribe women, desire, discourse'.¹²⁵ For their efforts, the three women were arrested under charges of 'abuse of the freedom of the press' and 'outrage to public decency' in authoritarian Portugal under the *Estado Novo*.¹²⁶ International outrage followed until they were finally pardoned after a coup ended the dictatorship of Marcelo Caetano on 25 April 1974.¹²⁷

The implicit and explicit uses of the *Lettres portugaises* over time is symbolic of its shifting reception. In the 1990s, Frédéric Deloffre, one of a pair of French literary scholars who had dismissed Mariana as the author in the 1960s, neatly summarised how reading the *Lettres portugaises* was like peering into a looking glass.¹²⁸ Readers admired the letters for 'what they did not have: a work without a past, without references, without an author, a meteor that came from nowhere'.¹²⁹ Anyone, he went on, could 'attribute it to this or that (national) literature, Portuguese or French, to this author, known or unknown, change the title, change the order of its parts, or even join it to its "sequels" or "replies"'.¹³⁰ Literary scholars, he claimed, deprived the text of 'all human reality, an empty place populated by the spectre of "readings", semiotic, feminist, psychoanalytic, deconstructionist readings, above all rhetorical'.¹³¹ Yet, while these readings were critical to understanding the text's literary milieu, the *Lettres portugaises* had a visible impact on the wider cultural imagination. This impact was naturally facilitated by the letters themselves, but it was the way that they were presented

to the public tells us something of the way in which they struck such a chord with readers between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries.

The publisher's role in commodifying the female voice is an overlooked but crucial means to understand the enduring popularity of both the text and the paradigm it created. Although the *Lettres portugaises* were structured according to a classical model, their contents were based on contemporary sociocultural ideas of women that created verisimilitude. Rather than publicise the literary qualities of Mariana's correspondence, publishers instead marketed the intensity of her *sentiments* and the scandal inherent in the love letters of an enclosed woman to attract would-be readers. Barbin, Brome, the Amsterdam bootlegs, Loyson, Philippe and Bernardon all highlighted, in titles, prefaces and sequels, the exotic and sordid characteristics of the letter-writer. This practice was not limited to early modern editions. Indeed, as late as the 1990s, the cover of a French edition depicts a wide-eyed nun staring at the viewer, raising her habit to expose her right nipple, pushed up by her seventeenth-century *corps à baleines*.¹³²

Therefore, publishers helped encourage the early modern notion that women in love were controlled by their inferior biology that led them to make irrational and immodest decisions. Mariana's reactions, her threats and her submission to her heart's desire all were characteristic of seventeenth-century Western European ideas of love and its physiological impact on the woman's body. Alerted to these themes by titles, prefaces and sequels, readers in different geographical contexts responded to the familiar tropes in the letters and the scandalous disconnect between Mariana's vocation and her actions. This led publishers to procure similar texts by women writers to capitalise on the commercial success of the *Lettres portugaises*. Although several of these writers subverted the model introduced by the Portuguese nun, most successfully Graffigny, the popularity of the original letter writer endured well into the twentieth century. As a result, the continued circulation of Mariana's letters encoded and recoded culturally specific ideas about women in love for almost three hundred years, readers spellbound by the passions of the Portuguese nun.¹³³

Acknowledgements

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Notes

1. 'Lettres portugaises', in Jean Rohou (ed.), *Lettres d'amour du XVII siècle* (Paris: L'École des lettres, 1994), pp. 219–67.

2. A. Gonçalves Rodriques, 'Mariana Alcoforado', *Biblos* 11 (1935), pp. 85–136, here, p. 119. Pierre Marteau was a false name for a publishing house allegedly located in Cologne, but probably located in Amsterdam to evade French censors. See Léonce Janmart de Brouillant, *Histoire de Pierre du Marteau: imprimeur à Cologne, XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles* (Paris: Maison Quantin, 1888) and Olaf Simons, *Marteaus Europa* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001).
3. *Lettres d'amour d'une religieuse: Ecrites au Chevalier de C., Officier François en Portugal* tr. Gabriel de Guilleragues (Cologne: Pierre Marteau, 1669), 4. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Rem.IV 779. A royal privilege dated 1668 suggests that Guilleragues authored the letters: F. C. Green, 'Who Was the Author of the "Lettres Portugaises"?', *The Modern Language Review* 21 (1926), pp. 159–67, here p. 162. See also A. Gonçalves Rodriques, 'Mariana Alcoforado', *Biblos* 11 (1935), pp. 85–136; Leo Spitzer, 'Les "Lettres Portugaises"', *Romanische Forschungen* 65 (1953), pp. 94–135; Jacques Rougeot, 'Un Ouvrage Inconnu de l'auteur Des Lettres Portugaises', *Revue Des Sciences Humaines* 101 (1961), pp. 23–36; W. Leiner, 'Vers une nouvelle interprétation des "lettres portugaises": Marianne entre son amour et son amant', *Romanische Forschungen* 77 (1965), pp. 64–74; Antônio Belard da Fonseca, *Mariana Alcoforado: a freira de Beja e as Lettees portugaises* (Lisbon: Imprensa Portugal-Brasil, 1966); J. Chupeau, 'Vanel et l'énigme des "Lettres portugaises"', *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* 68 (1968), pp. 221–28; Frédéric Deloffre and Jacques Rougeot, 'Les "Lettres Portugaises", miracle d'amour ou miracle de culture', *Cahiers de l'AIEF* 20 (1968), pp. 19–37; J. Chupeau, 'Remarques sur la genèse des "Lettres portugaises"', *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* 69 (1969), pp. 506–24; Charles R. Lefcourt, 'Did Guilleragues Write "The Portuguese Letters"?', *Hispania* 59 (1976), pp. 493–97; Jean-Michel Pelous, 'Une héroïne romanesque entre le naturel et la rhétorique: le langage des passions dans les "Lettres Portugaises"', *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France* 77 (1977), pp. 554–63; Jacques Rougeot, 'Un roman épistolaire vécu par l'auteur des «Lettres portugaises»', *Cahiers de l'AIEF* 29 (1977), pp. 159–72.
4. Rodriques, 'Mariana Alcoforado', p. 119.
5. Rodriques, 'Mariana Alcoforado', p. 119. *Réponse aux Lettres portugaises. Traduites en françois* (Paris: I. B. Loyson; H. Loyson, 1669), i. British Library. General Reference Collection DRT Digital Store 10909.aaa.33.
6. *Correspondance*, T 1 (Paris: Gallimard, 1972) c.299 cited in Claire Goldstein, 'Love Letters: Discourses of Gender and Writing in the Criticism of the "Lettres Portugaises"', *Romanic Review* 88 (1997), pp. 571–90, p. 576.
7. Rodriques, 'Mariana Alcoforado', p. 119.
8. In the 1950s and 60s, philologists and literary scholars studied the text and found it was unlikely to have been written by a Portuguese woman. Leo Spitzer, 'Les „Lettres Portugaises"', *Romanische Forschungen* 65 (1953), pp. 94–135; Frédéric Deloffre and Jacques Rougeot, 'Les "Lettres Portugaises", miracle d'amour ou miracle de culture', *Cahiers de l'AIEF* 20 (1968), pp. 19–37.
9. Madeleine de Scudéry, *Clélie* (1654–60: repr. Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1973]), vol 2, pp. 1145–46, cited in Jensen, *Writing Love*, p. 171, n. 13.
10. 'Nouvelles réponses aux Lettres portugaises', in Eugène Asse (ed.), *Lettres portugaises, avec les réponses* (Paris: G. Charpentier, 1889), pp. 113–52, p. 116.
11. An early example from antiquity is Ovid. *Ars* III, 1–4. Women writers in the long eighteenth century also endorsed this view: Aleksandra Hultquist, 'Eliza Haywood's Progress through the Passions', in Heather Kerr, David Lemmings and Robert Phiddian (eds), *Passions, Sympathy and Print Culture: Public Opinion and Emotional Authenticity in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016), pp. 86–104.
12. Nancy K. Miller, 'I's' In Drag: The Sex of Recollection', *The Eighteenth Century* 22 (1981), pp. 47–57, p. 57; Gabrielle Verdier, 'Gender and Rhetoric in Some Seventeenth-Century Love Letters', *L'esprit créateur* 23 (1983), pp. 45–57, p. 51. See also, Elizabeth C. Goldsmith and Dena Goodman (eds), *Going Public: Women and Publishing in Early Modern France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); Goldstein, 'Love Letters', pp. 571–90.
13. Verdier, 'Gender and Rhetoric', p. 46.
14. Joan DeJean and Professor Joan DeJean, *Fictions of Sappho, 1546–1937* (University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 78, 96. See also Joan E. DeJean, *Tender Geographies: Women and the Origins of the Novel in France, Gender and Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).
15. Katharine Ann Jensen, *Writing Love: Letters, Women, and the Novel in France, 1605–1776* (Carbondale: Southern Indiana University Press, 1995), p. 5. Several studies followed which built on Jensen's thesis and expanded our understanding of Mariana's apparent authenticity. See Jonathan Mallinson, 'Writing Wrongs: Lettres Portugaises and the Search for an Identity', in Shirley Jones Day (ed.), *Writers and Heroines: Essays on Women in French Literature* (Berne: Peter Lang, 1999), pp. 31–47; Mary Jo

- Muratore, *Expirer au Féminin: Narratives of Female Dissolution in French Classical Texts* (New Orleans: University Press of the South, 2003).
16. Donna Kuizenga, 'Writing in Drag: Strategic Rewriting in the Early Epistolary Novel', *Studies Early Modern France* 8 (2002), pp. 149–72, p. 150
 17. The *Lettres portugaises* were not the first example of a commercialised female-voiced text. Sixteenth-century French women writers, notably Hélisenne de Crenne (1510–1555) and Margaret of Navarre (1492–1549), challenged gender norms through reinventions of literary traditions that were continued by writers like Madeleine de Scudéry in the seventeenth century. See Susan Broomhall, *Women and the Book Trade in Sixteenth Century France* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), pp. 93–125.
 18. In sixteenth-century France, medical writers claimed that the uterus was responsible for corrupting women. In particular, women's bodies, as daughters of Eve, were seen as possessing an uncontrollable sexual appetite that led to irrational decision-making in their love lives Susan Broomhall, 'French Women Writers, Sexuality, and Publication', *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* 29 (2003), pp. 119–44, here p. 120. See also: Rebecca May Wilkin, *Women, Imagination and the Search for Truth in Early Modern France* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008). See also Marianne Legault, *Female Intimacies in Seventeenth-Century French Literature* (London: Routledge, 2016).
 19. On reprint histories as a tool to measure success, see Broomhall, *Women and the Book Trade*, p. 121.
 20. Goldstein, 'Gender and Writing', p. 574.
 21. Gervais E. Reed, *Claude Barbin, libraire de Paris sous le règne de Louis XIV* (Paris: Droz, 1974), pp. 3–4. See also the appendix in Reed, *Claude Barbin*, pp. 83–119. On Molière and Barbin, see Michael Call, *The Would-Be Author: Molière and the Comedy of Print* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2015).
 22. Nathalie Grande, 'Claude Barbin, un libraire pour dames?', *Revue de la BNF* 39 (2011), pp. 22–27.
 23. Grande, 'Un libraire pour dames', p. 26. On the term 'galant', see Alain Viala, *La galanterie* (Paris: Seuil, 2019) and, in English, Alain Viala and Daryl Lee, 'Les Signes Galants: A Historical Reevaluation of Galanterie', *Yale French Studies* 92 (1997), pp. 11–29. Barbin also published other genres, including travel accounts and fairy tales, see Arafat Abdur Razzaque, 'Genie in a Bookshop: Print Culture, Authorship, and 'The Affair of the Eighth Volume' at the Origins of *Les Mille et Une Nuits*', in Ibrahim Akel and William Granara (eds), *The Thousand and One Nights: Sources and Transformations in Literature, Art, and Science* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), pp. 82–120, here p. 84.
 24. Women's writing constituted less than 1 per cent of printed editions in the sixteenth century. Broomhall, *Women and the Book Trade*, p. 1.
 25. Anne R. Larsen and Colette H. Winn, *Writings by Pre-Revolutionary French Women* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 361. See also Elizabeth Goldsmith, 'Secret Writing: Public Reading: Madame de Villedieu's Letters et Billets Galants', in Roxanne Decker Lalande (ed.), *A Labor of Love: Critical Reflections on the Writings of Marie-Catherine Desjardins (Mme de Villedieu)* (British Columbia: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2000), pp. 111–26; Faith E. Beasley, 'Apprentices and Collaborators: Villedieu's Wordly Readers', in Roxanne Decker Lalande (ed.), *A Labor of Love: Critical Reflections on the Writings of Marie-Catherine Desjardins (Mme de Villedieu)* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2000), p. 177–204. Roxanne Decker Lalande, 'Sex, Lies, and Authorship in Villedieu's Les Désordres de l'amour', in Roxanne Decker Lalande (ed.), *A Labor of Love: Critical Reflections on the Writings of Marie-Catherine Desjardins (Mme de Villedieu)* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2000), pp. 165–77. In French, see Micheline Cuénin, *Madame de Villedieu: Marie-Catherine Desjardins 1640–1683* (Paris: Atelier Reproduction des thèses, Université de Lille III; Diffusion Librairie Honore Champion, 1979).
 26. Madame de Villedieu, *Recueil de quelques lettres ou relations galantes* (Paris: Claude Barbin, 1668), Bibliothèque nationale de France, Z 39430; Z 14404. The privilege names 'la Damoiselle Des-lardins' at p. 278. See also Jensen, *Writing Love*, p. 36.
 27. Elizabeth Goldsmith, 'Secret Writing: Public Reading: Madame de Villedieu's Letters et Billets Galants', in Roxanne Decker Lalande (ed.), *A Labor of Love: Critical Reflections on the Writings of Marie-Catherine Desjardins (Mme de Villedieu)* (British Columbia: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2000), pp. 111–26, here p.112.
 28. Goldsmith, 'Secret Writing: Public Reading', p. 112.
 29. Jensen, *Writing Love*, p. 92.
 30. Cited in Jensen, *Writing Love*, p. 92.
 31. See precedents in Broomhall, *Women and the Book Trade*, p. 95
 32. Jensen, *Writing Love*, p. 39.

33. See Edwige Keller-Rahbé, 'Mme de Villedieu, la 'poule aux œufs d'or' de Claude Barbin?', in Edwige Keller-Rahbé (ed.), *Les Arrière-Boutiques de la Littérature: Auteurs et imprimeurs-libraires aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles* (Toulouse: Presses universitaires du Mirail, 2010), pp. 87–111.
34. Madame de Villedieu, *Memoirs of the Life of Henriette-Sylvie de Moliere*, tr. Donna Kuizenga (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), p. 6.
35. Broomhall, *Women and the Book Trade*, pp. 117–119.
36. Green, 'Who Was the Author of the 'Lettres Portugaises'?', p. 162.
37. Green, 'Who Was the Author of the 'Lettres Portugaises'?', p. 162.
38. Roger de Bussy-Rabutin (1618–1693) published *Histoire amoureuse des Gaules* (1665) a year earlier.
39. *Valantins, questions d'amour & autres pieces galantes* (Paris: Claude Barbin, 1669), Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Réserve des livres rares, RESP-YE-2189.
40. Many women in erotic literature from the classical period were not identified, and obtaining their identity was part of the thrill of reading their stories. See Ovid: 'people still often ask me who Corinna really is' (*Ars III*, 538).
41. Ellen Moers, *Literary Women* (Norwell: Anchor Press, 1977), p. 244. See also Lawrence I. Lipking, *Abandoned Women and Poetic Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. xviii. Although Héloïse's letters could be a model, they were only published in 1642 and were not in high circulation. See Verdier, 'Gender and Rhetoric', p. 47. The *Heroides*, however, were published in translation and imitation like Jean Lemaire de Belges', *Première Epître de l'Amant vert* (1505) and DeJean points out their popularity during this time: DeJean, *Fictions of Sappho*, p. 61.
42. Joan DeJean, *Fictions of Sappho: 1546–1937* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 45.
43. DeJean, *Fictions of Sappho*, pp. 45–46. See also See Helena Taylor, *The Lives of Ovid in Seventeenth-Century French Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 3–8.
44. DeJean, *Fictions of Sappho*, p. 46.
45. DeJean, *Tender Geographies*, p. 79.
46. DeJean, *Tender Geographies*, p. 79.
47. The order of the *Lettres portugaises* is contested, but I have followed the order as it appears in the 1669 edition published by Barbin. On the abandoned woman, see Lawrence I. Lipking, *Abandoned Women and Poetic Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), p. xviii. On the elements of the abandoned woman's lament, see: Marilyn Desmond, *Reading Dido: Gender, Textuality, and Medieval Aeneid* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), p. 103.
48. Emphasis my own. 'Lettres portugaises', p. 221.
49. Emphasis my own. 'Lettres portugaises', p. 221.
50. See Suzanne Hagedorn, *Abandoned Women: rewriting the classics in Dante, Boccaccio, and Chaucer* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003) and Margaret W. Ferguson, *Dido's Daughters: Literacy, Gender, and Empire in Early Modern England and France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).
51. *Five Love-Letters from a Nun to a Cavalier Done out of French into English*, tr. Roger L'Estrange (London: Henry Brome, 1678), iii. British Library, General Reference Collection C.118.a.23.
52. Lipking, *Abandoned Women*, p. xv.
53. Historical scholarship of emotions has identified the chronologically and culturally bound nature of emotions and their performance in the early modern period. The three classic theoretical interventions are William Reddy on emotional regimes, Barbara Rosenwein on emotional communities and Monique Scheer on emotions as practice: William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge University Press, 2001); Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007); Monique Scheer, 'Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (and Is That What Makes Them Have a History)? A Bourdieuan Approach to Understanding Emotion', *History and Theory* 51 (2012), pp. 193–220; For a recent state of the field, see Katie Barclay, 'State of the Field: The History of Emotions', *History* 106 (2021), pp. 456–66. On letter writing and emotions, see Carolyn James and Jessica O'Leary, 'Letter Writing and Emotions, 1100–1700', in Susan Broomhall and Andrew Lynch (eds), *The Routledge History Handbook to Emotions in Europe, 1100–1700* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), pp. 256–68, esp. p. 265 for discussion of the *Lettres portugaises*.
54. Joan E. DeJean, *Ancients against Moderns: Culture Wars and the Making of a Fin de Siècle* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), pp. 78–124.
55. DeJean, *Ancients against Moderns*, pp. 86–87.
56. Bronwyn Reddan, *Love, Power, and Gender in Seventeenth-Century French Fairy Tales* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2020), p. 51. See further Susan Broomhall, 'Heart Tombs: Catherine de' Medici and the Embodiment of Emotion', in Katie Barclay and Bronwyn Reddan (eds), *The Feeling Heart in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Meaning, Embodiment, and Making* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2019), pp. 143–61.

57. Reddan, *Love, Power, and Gender*, p. 51.
58. Hultquist, 'Eliza Haywood's Progress through the Passions', p. 91.
59. 'Lettres portugaises', p. 227.
60. 'Lettres portugaises', p. 227.
61. See discussion of cloistral pornography.
62. 'Lettres portugaises', p. 264.
63. Broomhall, 'French Women Writers, Sexuality, and Publication', pp. 119–44, p. 122.
64. Gwynne Kennedy, *Just Anger: Representing Women's Anger in Early Modern England* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000).
65. 'Lettres portugaises', p. 233.
66. 'Lettres portugaises', pp. 234–35.
67. 'Lettres portugaises', p. 237.
68. 'Lettres portugaises', pp. 237–38.
69. 'Lettres portugaises', p. 241.
70. 'Lettres portugaises', p. 252.
71. Maria Barbara, 'Visual Representations of Medea's Anger in the Early Modern Period: Rembrandt and Rubens', in Karl A. E. Enenkel and Anita Traninger (eds), *Discourses of Anger in the Early Modern Period* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), pp. 355–377. See also Aleksandra Hultquist on emotion and affect: 'Introductory Essay: Emotion, Affect, and the Eighteenth Century', *The Eighteenth-Century Theory and Interpretation* 58 (2017), pp. 273–80.
72. 'Lettres portugaises', p. 255.
73. 'Lettres portugaises', p. 257 and p. 261.
74. 'Lettres portugaises', p. 263.
75. 'Lettres portugaises', p. 265.
76. Jonathan Mallinson, 'Writing Wrongs: Lettres Portugaises and the Search for an Identity', in Shirley Jones Day (ed.), *Writers and Heroines: Essays on Women in French Literature* (Berne: Peter Lang, 1999), pp. 31–47, p. 31.
77. Mallinson, 'Writing Wrongs', p. 32. Since women were prone to falling deeply in love, they needed to exercise considerable judgement when choosing a lover: See Hultquist, 'Eliza Haywood's Progress through the Passions', p. 93.
78. *Lettres portugaises*, p. 235.
79. Mallinson, 'Writing Wrongs', p. 45.
80. *Five Love-Letters from a Nun*, tr. Roger L'Estrange, unnumbered.
81. I thank one of the anonymous reviewers for their insight here.
82. Kathleen Lubey, *Excitable Imaginations: Eroticism and Reading in Britain, 1660–1760* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2012) and Rebecca Tierney-Hynes, *Novel Minds: Philosophers and Romance Readers, 1680–1740* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2012).
83. *Five Love-Letters from a Nun*, tr. Roger L'Estrange, unnumbered.
84. Joseph Black, 'The Romantic Mind and Its Literary Productions', in Joseph Black (ed.), *The Broadview Anthology of British Literature: Concise Volume B* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2021), pp. 21–31, p. 24.
85. *Seven Portuguese Letters Being a Second Part to the Five Love-Letters from a Nun to a Cavalier: One of the Most Passionate [p]ieces That Possibly Ever Has Been Extant* (London: H. Brome, 1681).
86. Hultquist, 'Eliza Haywood's Progress through the Passions', p. 89.
87. *Love Without Affectation, in Five Letters from a Portuguese Nun, to a French Cavalier. Done Into English Verse* (London: H. Meere, 1709), British Library General Reference Collection DRT Digital Store 1085.d.25.
88. See for example, the 1669 edition held at Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Rem.IV 779.
89. *Lettres d'amour d'une religieuse*, tr. Gabriel de Guilleragues.
90. Thomas Keymer, 'Samuel Richardson (1689–1761): The Epistolary Novel', in Michael Bell (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to European Novelists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 54–71, p. 59.
91. Barbara R. Woshinsky, *Imagining Women's Conventual Spaces in France, 1600–1800: The Cloister Disclosed* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), pp. 224 and p. 340.
92. By 1700, a quarter of Amsterdam's inhabitants was Huguenot: WTM Frijhoff, 'Uncertain Brotherhood: The Huguenots in the Dutch Republic', in Bertrand Van Ruymbeke and Randy J. Sparks (eds), *Memory and Identity: The Huguenots in France and the Atlantic Diaspora* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), pp. 128–72 and pp. 135–136.

93. Pordoni, like Pierre Marteau, was also fictitious, being an anagram of the publisher, Pontio Bernardon.
94. *L'arte dell'hvomo di spada, overo il ditionario del gentil'hvomo* (Venice: Pontio Berardon, 1683) and *La chymie charitable et facile en faveur des dames* (Venice: Pontio Bernardon, 1682).
95. *Lettere amorose portughesi: Fra una dama di Portogallo e un cavaliere di Francia* (Venice: Pontio Bernardon, 1682).
96. *Lettere amorose portughesi*, no pagination.
97. On Venetian censorship, see Marino Zorzi, 'La produzione e la circolazione del libro', in G. Benzoni and G. Cozzi (eds), *Storia di Venezia dalle origini alla caduta della Serenissima*, VII, *La Venezia barocca* (Rome: Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, 1997), pp. 921–985.
98. *Lettere amorose*, no pagination.
99. *Five Love-Letters from a Nun to a Cavalier. Done out of French into English, by Sir Roger L'Estrange. The Second Edition* (London: R. Wellington; E. Rumball, 1702), British Library, General Reference Collection DRT Digital Store 1081.b.4.(2.).
100. *Five Love-Letters from a Nun to a Cavalier; The Second Edition*, B.
101. *Love Without Affectation*.
102. Boileau was a famed French poet and critic. *Mercure galant* was a French newspaper. Eustache Le Noble, *L'École du monde, ou instruction d'un père à un fils, touchant la manière dont il faut vivre dans le monde, divisée en entretiens* (Paris: Martin Jouvnel, 1700), vol 5, pp. 218–19, University of Ghent Library, BIB.PHIL.000949. Le Noble was also an author and there was likely some commercial rivalry that motivated his comments.
103. Le Noble, *L'École du monde*, p. 219.
104. Le Noble, *L'École du monde*, p. 219. The term was republished in the Dictionary of Trévoux (1711): Rahbé, 'Mme de Villedieu', p. 95.
105. Marie-Catherine Desjardins, *Annales galantes* (Paris: Claude Barbin, 1670). Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Littérature et art, Y14045-14048; Y2-7502-7503.
106. Marie-Catherine Desjardins, *Mémoires de la vie de Henriette-Sylvie de Molière* (Paris: Claude Barbin, 1682–1674). Bibliothèque nationale de France. Département des Manuscrits. Rothschild 1540. Vol. 4, pp. 7, 41–43.
107. Marie-Catherine Desjardins, *Œuvres meslées 1* (Rouen: Machuel, 1674), p. 2. München: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, 2012 (counterfeit).
108. I thank one of the anonymous reviewers for this observation.
109. I reference the volumes held at Yale University Library, Early English Books, 1641–1800 Wing/B1740.
110. It was published at least four times by 1712 by different London publishers: *Love-letters between a nobleman and his sister; with the history of their adventures. In three parts*, 4th edition (London: D. Brown, J. Tonson, J. Nicholson, B. Tooke, and G. Strahan, 1712). Early modern women writers toyed with the anonymity trope in impassioned women's writing, which Joan DeJean has argued was a tool to assume control of the writing process: Joan DeJean, 'Lafayette's Ellipses: The Privileges of Anonymity', *PMLA* 99 (1984), pp. 884–902.
111. *Love-letters between a nobleman and his sister or the Amours of Philander and Silvia Wing* (London: Randal Taylor, 1684), p. i. Yale University Library, Early English Books, 1641–1800 Wing/B1740, i. It also likely evoked the fad for 'found letters', in the vein of Procopius' *Secret History*: Michael McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).
112. See further, Warren Chernaik, 'Unguarded Hearts: Transgression and Epistolary Form in Aphra Behn's 'Love-Letters' and the 'Portuguese Letters'', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 97 (1998), pp. 13–33.
113. Barnes, 'The Print Letter', p. 8.
114. Barnes, 'The Print Letter', p. 8.
115. *Love-letters between a nobleman and his sister; with the history of their adventures. In three parts* (Dublin: printed by S. Powell, for Phillip Crampton, 1729) and *Love-letters between a nobleman and his sister; with the history of their adventures. In three parts. The seventh edition* (London: D Brown & ors, 1759).
116. Françoise de Graffigny, in Joan E. DeJean and Nancy K. Miller (eds), *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* (New York: Modern Language Association, 1993) and Françoise de Graffigny, *Letters of a Peruvian Woman*, tr. G. J. Mallinson, *Oxford World's Classics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).p. vii.
117. Graffigny, *Lettres d'une Péruvienne*, p. vii.
118. Graffigny, *Lettres d'une Péruvienne*, p. xiv.
119. Graffigny, *Letters of a Peruvian Woman*, pp. xxii–xxiii.

120. Henri Matisse (1869–1954): *Lettres Portugaises de Mariana Alcoforado* (Lisbon: Fundação Arpad Szenes-Vieira da Silva, 2004).
121. Rainer Maria Rilke, *Letters of Rainer Maria Rilke, 1910–1926* (W. W. Norton & Company, 1969), p. 47.
122. Sue Roe, *Gwen John: A Life* (New York: Random House, 2002), p. 104.
123. Linda Kauffman, *Discourses of Desire: Gender, Genre, and Epistolary Fictions* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), pp. 279–311.
124. Jane Kramer, 'The Three Marias', *The New York Times*, 2 February 1975, section Archives <<https://www.nytimes.com/1975/02/02/archives/the-three-marias.html>> [accessed 17 March 2021].
125. Kauffman, *Discourses of Desire*, p. 287.
126. John Howard Payne, *Conquest of the New Word: Experimental Fiction and Translation in the Americas* (Redwood City, California: Stanford University Press, 1990), p. 272.
127. Hilary Owen, *Portuguese Women's Writing, 1972 to 1986: Reincarnations of a Revolution* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 2000), p. 11.
128. Frédéric Deloffre, 'Guilleragues et les Lettres portugaises, ou de l'œuvre à l'auteur', *Littératures classiques* 15 (1991), pp. 259–70.
129. Deloffre, 'L'œuvre à l'auteur', p. 261.
130. Deloffre, 'L'œuvre à l'auteur', p. 261.
131. Deloffre, 'L'œuvre à l'auteur', p. 261.
132. *Lettres portugaises: suivies de Guilleragues par lui-même* Frédéric Deloffre (ed.) (Paris: Gallimard, 1990). On early modern sexualisation of pushed-up breasts, see Sarah A. Bendall, *Shaping Femininity: Foundation Garments, the Body and Women in Early Modern England* (London: Bloomsbury, 2021), pp. 188–197.
133. On the way in which the print trades repeated the masculinising publication culture of medieval intellectuals, see Broomhall, *Women and the Book Trade*, p. 70.

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