

Chapter 4

On this Occasion, Seven Letters

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Es war schon, als hätt ich Wurzel gefaßt in diesem schönen Briefleben (Arnim 246).¹

I took my first course with Ruth-Ellen Boetcher Joeres in spring 1992 (“German Women Writers of the Eighteenth Century”) and completed my dissertation, *Addressing Epistolary Subjects*, in 2000. My dissertation sought to investigate ways in which the letter’s characteristics, both of form and function, contribute to defining its place in the system of genres and discourses on literature. I was fascinated by the oft-repeated announcements of the *death* of the letter (and of the epistolary novel)

¹It was as if I had taken root in this beautiful life of letters” (my trans.).

and of the letter's persistent association with women. My first encounter with this idea was in "The Writer as Re-collector," a course I took in college with Paul Holdengräber. Tacked onto the end of the edition of Gustave Flaubert's *Bouvard et Pécuchet* (1881) that we read was Flaubert's *Dictionnaire des idées reçues*, a short work published in 1911–13 from notes compiled by Flaubert during the 1870s, satirizing clichés ("automatic thinking") prevalent in France at the time (1850–1880).

Genre épistolaire: genre de style exclusivement réservé aux femmes (169)²

In a letter to Louise Colet in 1852, Flaubert wrote of his conception of the dictionary: "It would be the justification of *Whatever is, is right*.... After reading the book, one would be afraid to talk, for fear of using one of the phrases in it" (Barzun 3). Why, if Flaubert was already making fun of the association of women and the letter in the late nineteenth century, did the association persist? Why was the death of the letter announced repeatedly? What cultural work is/was being done here?

When I thought about what to write for this volume, I realized I wanted to write letters to the writers whose letters—real, fictionalized, and fictional—I had read and written about twenty years ago, while writing my dissertation with Ruth-Ellen. These texts have stayed by me.

*Let me begin again.*³

• • •

Liebe Pauline und Rahel,

I decided to write to the two of you together. I take pleasure in thinking of you *zusammen* on the other side of my letter. Your correspondence was so much about your being apart, but, as the reader separated from you by more than a century, I often thought of you as occupying one place/one time and me the other. I hope you are having fun together.

I am not an easy crier, but my eyes welled up with tears when I finished your correspondence—partly because I realized that Rahel

²"Epistolary genre: genre of style exclusively reserved for women" (my trans.).

³Echoing Vuong 3.

died not long after her last letter but mostly because the correspondence was over. I had so enjoyed being a part of your world, your relationship, and had somewhat forgotten that both of you had already been dead for a good long time. Of course, you'll never read this letter.

I started my dissertation with your letters because it made sense to me to start with the *real* letters before moving on to the fictionalized and the fictional, but also because in the background of all the texts I examined are the themes of (female) friendship and isolation, creativity and intellectual engagement. Yours was such a strong example. As co-authors of a narrative and witness to each other, the (my?) friends I encountered in the letters about which I wrote were crucial to each other's understanding of themselves (and my understanding of myself?) and their (and my?) experiences. Do you know what I mean?

By your own count, Rahel, you wrote more than 10,000 letters to almost 300 correspondents. I've read that 6,000 of those letters survive (people saved them!). The correspondence I read is made up of 257 letters (92 written by Rahel to Pauline and 165 by Pauline to Rahel) between 1801 and 1833. This letter increases the correspondence *I read* to 258 letters.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen,

Martina

p.s. Rahel, thought you'd be amused that astronomers Freimut Börngen and Lutz Schmadel named a minor planet (5.6 km in diameter) after you on October 10, 1990.

• • •

Liebe Bettine,

You have been very much on my mind this week. I passed by a kiosk with free books at the corner of Main and Ames Street in Kendall Square in Cambridge (Massachusetts, not England). I don't always stop to look at what's available, and it's rare that I see something worth taking. But a pile of books caught my eye:



FIGURE 4.1

A total flashback to graduate school. These books were old friends (and friends of friends). I looked around quickly as if I might see who had left them. Of course, that was silly—but I felt I might recognize the person. Later I googled the name written in pencil inside the front covers—P. Conant—but my Google searches yielded no information.⁴ Graduate school, now twenty to thirty years ago (!), was when I first read and wrote about *Die G nderode*, and there it was, stacked just one book away from *Der Schatten eines Traumes*, which I had loved reading and which inspired me to read *Die G nderode* (in between those two books was your *Briefwechsel mit Goethe*, which I never read). And there are three books by Christa Wolf, who also wrote “Ein Brief  ber die Bettine,” which follows the text of *Die G nderode* in the edition I read. What was the course that P. Conant took, I wonder?

But what fun to see these books. I’m not sure why, but I couldn’t leave *Die G nderode* and *Der Schatten* sitting there. I already own them but needed to take them to put on a shelf in my cubicle at work. Passing by the kiosk again, I saw that the rest of the books were gone, so I may have deprived someone of the joy of reading them. But it makes me happy to see them on the shelf at home and in the office. They remind me of the person I was when I first read them. Also,

⁴ Harnessing the power of personal connection and memory over technology, Helga Thorson made short shrift of this mystery, immediately recalling the name Peggy Conant. The Internet subsequently provided me with the information that my P. Conant works at MIT and graduated from UMass Amherst with a BA in Women’s Studies and German in the mid-1980s.

interesting to see Elizabeth Abel's *Writing and Sexual Difference* (1982) in the pile. Are people still reading this book or was P. Conant in college or graduate school around the same time I was and just now Marie Kondo-ing their books? Abel most recently—oh, I guess it's now actually almost a decade ago—wrote *Signs of the Times: The Visual Politics of Jim Crow* and edited *The Signs Reader: Women, Gender, and Scholarship* (1983)—different signs? And, wow, I just looked at the selections for *The Signs Reader*: selected from the first 30 issues of *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, the thirteen articles “[indicate] salient trends in the scholarship created since the journal's inception in 1975” (Abel and Abel 1). The contributors were Joan Kelly-Gadol, Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, Fatima Mernissi, Myra Jehlen, Elaine H. Pagels, Evelyn Fox Keller, Donna Haraway, Adrienne Rich, Diane K. Lewis, Heidi Hartmann, Catharine A. MacKinnon, Judith Herman, Lisa Hirschman, and Hélène Cixous. So many significant articles, but the two that probably influenced me the most, and that I read first in college, were Adrienne Rich's “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence” and Helene Cixous's “The Laugh of Medusa.” Quite a (white) list. I don't think you'd see that now (or I hope not).

And ... I'm babbling away, as I do, far from any topics that likely interest you, worlds colliding, time collapsing, sorry! I'll finish by letting you know that I have always loved (and felt kinship with you in) this passage of yours from *Die Gùnderode*:

Im Frühjahr nahmen wir unsre Stecken und wanderten, denn wir wären als Einsiedler und sagten nicht, daß wir Mädchen wären. Du mußt Dir einen falschen Bart machen, weil Du groß bist, denn sonst glaubst's niemand, aber nur einen kleinen der Dir gut steht, und weil ich klein bin, so bin ich als Dein kleiner Bruder, da muß ich mir aber meine Haare abschneiden. – So einer Reise machen wir im Frühjahr ... (Arnim 318).⁵

Mit freundlichen Grüßen,

Martina

⁵In the spring, we will take our sticks and hike, as if we were hermits, and we won't say we are girls. You will have to make yourself a fake beard because you are tall, and otherwise nobody will believe it, but only a small one that looks good on you, and because I am small, I will be your little brother, but I will have to cut my hair. — Such a trip, we will take in the spring... ” (my trans.).

. . .

Liebe Karoline,

I just wrote to Bettine to tell her about my having seen two of her books in a free book kiosk in Kendall Square. Your *Schatten* was there, too (of course, you probably don't know that Christa Wolf edited a volume of your writing and gave it that title), and I had to take it (your book) even though I already own it. It includes letters you wrote to Gunda, Bettine's sister, and to her brother Clemens. Oh, I just googled Gunda von Savigny (née Brentano), and I had completely forgotten that Sophie von La Roche was their grandmother. Literary bloodlines. Apparently after their mother died, Gunda and her sisters—Bettina, Lulu, and Meline—went to live for some time in the Kloster der Ursulinen in Fritzlar. I have a story about cloisters to tell you, but according to the rules I set out for myself, I realize I am not supposed to be writing to you at all, since you are a character in Bettine's fictionalized version of your letter exchange. So, I have to cut this short, but wanted you to know that I still think about your writing.

Bis bald,

Martina

. . .

Mon cher Jacques,

I hope you are well. I was just writing to Bettine von Arnim and realized I've always meant to ask if you were referring to Bettine in *La Carte Postale*. Linda Kauffman and Gayatri Spivak both thought you were. (Having just been reminded of her book, I also wonder whether Elizabeth Abel's book was echoing your *Writing and Difference*?)

I did not know until just now (I googled you, of course) that you were born Jackie Élie Derrida and possibly named after Jackie Coogan (that's funny). You were born in 1930, four years after Walter, my partner Andrew's father, and four years before my mother. I never considered—or really even noticed— your age when I first read your

writings, but it jumped out at me as I was reading your Wikipedia entry just now.

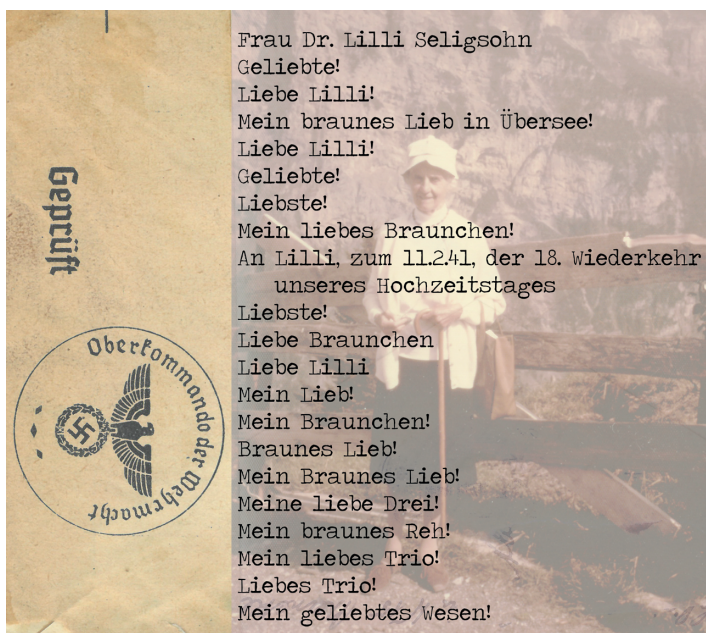


FIGURE 4.2

I've been working on the enclosed collage for some time—it's just a draft, but I'm curious what you think. The salutations are from letters written by Julius Seligsohn to his wife Lilli (Andrew's grandparents). Julius died February 28, 1942, in KZ Sachsenhausen (Lilli died in 1990 in NYC). Lilli and their two children left Germany in 1938, first to the Netherlands and then a year later to New York City. Julius wrote the letters during the time of their separation—from their home on Meinekestraße in Berlin and, after his deportation on March 18, 1941, from Sachsenhausen. It's clear from the content of the letters that Lilli was writing back, but those letters did not survive.

When you get a chance, let me know what you think.

Amitiés,

Martina

...

Oi très Marias,

I've thought of you a lot recently—the three of you and Mariana Alcoforado, “the Portuguese nun” (I was also recently reminded that Bettine and her sisters spent time in a convent). My parents and I recently translated the poem “Hold,” by my friend Sally Ball from English into German. It's from her recent volume *Hold Sway*. The text of the poem accompanies a limited-edition artist's book by the Czech artist Jan Vičar that was exhibited in the museum Druck 19 in Schwandorf in early 2019—and a translation of the poem was needed for the exhibit. There's a line in the poem that caused us much translation trouble, raising all kinds of questions about interpretation, authorial intention, imagery, symbolism, female isolation, female freedom, female intellect, etc., etc. I thought you'd be interested in the exchange that we had about how to translate the lines. (Sally had been reading Roy Scranton's *Learning to Die in the Anthropocene: Reflections on the End of a Civilization*. I've included the two lines before the lines that gave us trouble for the tiniest bit of context.)

*So many places cancel
our sense of the dire.*

*Cloister me—
Cloister me forward* (Ball 56–57)

And here is the email exchange (three-pronged and edited lightly to take up less space) about how we decided to translate those lines (not recorded here are the hours of talking about them on the phone).⁶

• • •

From: Martina Anderson
Date: Mon, Feb 4, 10:49 PM, to Sally
Subject: Title

... We have been living and breathing your poem. We have a complete translation, and we've had another German speaker read it

⁶ I thank Sally Ball, David Anderson, and Sigrid Anderson for granting me permission to reproduce the text of their emails.

(and approve), and I think we have just a few questions. The main one is “Cloister me.” In French and English, there is both the literal and more figurative meaning of cloister—the actual convent and the idea of secluding/shutting in/isolating/hiding. How important to you is the idea of the actual convent? We’ve struggled with this idea and disagreed and discussed, etc....

xxoo Martina

• • •

From: Sally Ball
Date: Tues, Feb 5, 11:53 AM, to me
Subject: Re: Title

... Cloister: what I most love here is the echo of Roethke—in “The Lost Son” there is a semi-famous line, “Snail, snail, glister me forward,”—and it will sound silly but when I wrote the first draft of the poem (not yet thinking of (or knowing I was thinking of?!) Roethke) and arrived at the cloister me line, I heard the echo of his glister me too and felt like I knew I had something.

Then I went to reread the Roethke (for I’m guessing the first time since Rael Meyerowitz’s class my senior year!), and that poem had so many chimes with what I was writing—so then the epigraph, and the worm, and I think too—some other small tonal/syntactical echoes came in.

In a German translation, I would bet precisely zero people will hear or recognize or—anything—be moved by—this glister echo (in English this moment of recognition is probably something like 0.2% ... I know that too! but I love it anyway!)

So: all to say—I doubt my favorite thing about that moment will factor into the translation at all, and I don’t think churchiness is as important as the idea of hiding oneself away from knowing the truth. The moment in the poem is basically—the rising up of the desire to see those beautiful places and believe things can’t be as bad as we know that they are, the wish to be protected from/ignorant of that knowledge and then—a hint of the future (“forward”)—and the speaker knows that seeking protection is the same as failing to protect.... xo! so much huge gratitude!

. . .

From: Sigrid A. Anderson
Date: Wed, Feb 6, 9:16 PM, to me
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL SENDER] Fwd: Title

Hi Martina,

Well, the cloister line ...

Daddy and I vary a bit.

He is very determined ...

We'll talk. *Mammi*

. . .

From: Martina Anderson
Date: Wed, Feb 6, 9:58 PM, to Sigrid
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL SENDER] Fwd: Title

Getting ready for bed now, but, yes, let's talk Friday or the weekend. Is Daddy committed to the idea of the cloister despite Sally's saying that she doesn't need the idea of a convent? Sally says: hide me away (could be: shield me, isolate me, seclude me.)....

:-) Love you and talk to you soon!

Martina

. . .

From: David R. Anderson
Date: Wed, Feb 6, 10:17 PM, to me
Subject: cloister schmoister?

Hi Martina,

We've run into a little bit of conflict, your mama and I, over "cloister" that has had fuel thrown onto the flames by Sally's hedging on really being committed to the word after all. I feel that as a translator of a poem, there is a certain commitment to the language of the poem that is mirrored by the language into which the poem is being trans-

lated. “Cloister” is a strongish word with lots of echoes, allusions, implications back through the language of literature as well as the architectural heritage of the world that is being reflected on in the poem. Cloister appears twice in two lines, and a reader of the English (and perhaps the French) might expect that it would be retained since “Kloster” is an exact German cognate without ancillary meanings.

But apparently it doesn't have to be. At least not in the German translation. (I concede entirely that “Stels” should be left without a built-in gloss. The mystery of language ought not be minimized. T. S. Eliot & Ezra Pound included untranslated German, Chinese, Italian in their poems).

So I am stepping out at this point and allowing you, Sally, and Sigrid to decide.

Just so you know.

Daddy, the Stubborn.

• • •

From: Martina Anderson

Date: Wed, Feb 6, 11:01 PM, to David

Subject: Re: cloister schmoister?

I am really headed to bed but wanted to say that I do understand your point, and it is not always that one has the chance to talk to the poet when doing a translation.

But I also very much believe that not everyone has the same sense of words. You (David) hear and use words very differently than someone else might/does. I personally don't think it makes sense to insist on the literary history of a word when the poet herself was not reaching for that history. I think that Sally would very much appreciate your reading of the poem; she'd be interested to hear what you have seen there—but, as I think you know, it's not the only thing to see there. Your interpretation is your interpretation, and you are seeing something that the poet did not (consciously at least) build—that is part of the mysterious nature of language, of poetry. I know that many many pages have been written about just these questions—where/with whom does meaning lie, what does the author control, etc. etc. I respect your desire/decision to step away,

and I hope that I haven't caused you and Mammi to argue in ways that don't make sense.

I do have to say that I also trust your sense of words to help us find one that contains the other elements of the word "cloister" that Sally was reaching for—and that other readers of the poem feel more strongly than "convent." She used the word also (and strongly) because it echoes Glister for her, but we aren't going to capture that (!). You may think it's odd that Glister is a stronger association and drove her choice of the word more than the historical and literary allusions of the word cloister ... but in this case, we actually know that to be the case. And I think we owe it to the poem/poet to lean in the direction of what she says is important, not what is important to our own interpretation of her poem.

She is very much letting us translate as we think is best—and knows that we can't and won't produce a text that has the same meaning as her poem in English. I would hate for you to abandon the poem and your co-translators at such a late point. Stubbornness is a family trait, so I'll let you be if that's really what you want (but I hope you'll come around?).

Love you and talk to you soon,

Martina

• • •

From: David R. Anderson
Date: Thu, Feb 7, 11:10 AM, to me
Subject: kloster

Do Googleimages for "Kloster Wienhausen"—I'm not sure whether you ever went with us to this cloister—still in operation—outside of Celle. We discovered it fairly late into our trips, very likely post 1984 with Denny. I am certain that its effect on me overpowers my ability to deal in the abstraction with the word.

Daddy



FIGURE 4.3

• • •

From: David R. Anderson
Date: Thu, Feb 7, 12:20 PM, to me
Subject: Cast your glimmers on this!

Have you seen the image that accompanies “Hold” on the Scoundrel Time website (<https://scoundreltime.com/hold>)? It could be Wienhausen! Didi pointed the way (he went right to this site—which we hadn’t done. *Deutsche Gründlichkeit*) while he was talking with Mami on the phone just now. She may well not have chosen the illustration—but whoever did was reading the lines very much as I do.

• • •

From: Sigrid A. Anderson
Date: Thu, Feb 7, 12:38 PM, to me
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL SENDER] Re: cloister schmoister?

Had a long talk with Didi.

Of course, he asked abt the author, then as we talked, he googled her. So Didi had a few answers re usage of words. Also suggested we could be creative and use *einklostern*. He said children are often very creative that way. Stels bikes are totally unknown in Germany. He knew nothing abt the Russian/Norwegian border crossing but googled that right away and saw the *aufgehäuften Räder*.

Recyclables is back in. Etc etc. *Mammi*

• • •

From: Martina Anderson
Date: Thu, Feb 7, 3:31 PM, to David
Subject: Re: Cast your glimmers on this

Point taken. And it's a good one. It means that the artist took the words in a more literal way than Sally may have meant, but that still gives us a context that we may want to take into account. I still think the more figurative translation is legitimate (even given the image), but given the image, I feel differently about the text—even if the text will also exist separate from the images.

And it's funny that you mention this point because I was talking to work colleagues about the opposing views about the translation this morning and someone asked about the images from the artist's book—which I realized we haven't seen! And we didn't think about (until now)!

What do you think of Didi's suggestion of *einklostern*?

xxoo Martina

• • •

From: David R. Anderson
Date: Thu, Feb 7, 7:29 PM, to me
Subject: Re: Cast your glimmers on this

I love *einklostern*: *kloster mich ein / von jetzt an kloster mich ein*.

• • •

From: David R. Anderson
Thu, Feb 7, 2019, 7:44 PM, to me, Sigrid
Subject: The prize award statement for “Hold”

In celebration of Scoundrel Time’s second anniversary, our editorial team is excited to announce the winners of our second annual Editors’ Choice Awards. Sally Ball’s “Hold” is the award-winner in poetry. Here is what Poetry Editor Daisy Fried says about “Hold”:

Sally Ball’s “Hold” is a rigorous, gorgeous, personal and political examination of climate change. Part prayer, part song, part analysis, part fragments of narrative, the poem has been made into a limited-edition artist’s book by the Czech artist Jan Vičar. For more information, www.saralouiseball.com

This is the statement from the blurb on awarding the prize, which you’ve likely also seen. n.b. “Part prayer ...”

• • •

From: Martina Anderson
Date: Feb 7, 9:31 PM, to David
Subject: Re: The prize award statement for “Hold”

I already *said* I understand your point/your reading! I never doubted that it was legitimate to read the poem in the way you are reading it. I think it makes sense to lean in the direction of the poet’s intent since we happen to know it. But I think our disagreement has taken us to a better solution, so it’s good that we all stuck to our guns. It can be good (I believe) to think about how and why other people may read the same words differently and yet still meaningfully and with good reason. We are so close to done!

Martina

There you have it. Crisis of the twenty-first century averted. Power in/to the cloister.

Saudações cordiais,

Martina

• • •

Salut Roland!

I write with the hope that you are well. I've recently been pondering your words about the letter from *Fragments d'un discours amoureux*:

[J]e pense à vous.

*Q'est-ce que ça veut dire, « penser à quelqu'un »? Ça veut dire: l'oublier (sans oubli, pas de vie possible) et se réveiller souvent de cet oubli. Beaucoup de choses, par association, te ramènent dans mon discours. « Penser à toi » ne veut rien dire d'autre que cette métonymie. Car, en soi, cette pensée est vide: je ne te pense pas; simplement, je te fais revenir (à proportion même que je t'oublie). C'est cette forme (ce rythme) que j'appelle « pensée »: je n'ai rien à te dire, sinon que ce rien, c'est à toi que je le dis (Barthes, *Fragments d'un discours amoureux* 187).⁷*

I have been thinking about letters and photographs as objects— letters by and photographs of people we know and those by and of people we don't, especially old family letters and photographs— objects to which we have a close connection, but one made distant by time. I am the keeper of several photo albums that belonged to my partner's grandmother's sister, Hilde Werthauer, a Berlin Jew who fled Germany in 1940—traveling via the Trans-Siberian Railway to Japan and arriving in the U.S. that same year.

In 2012, my final project for a Digital Libraries class was a design proposal for a digital collection entitled “The Photographs of Hilde Werthauer (1902–1992).” The primary purpose of the digital collection was “to provide visual evidence of aspects of Jewish life, in particular the experience of young adults among Berlin's Jewish elite, before the rise of the Nazi regime (although later photographs would also be included in the collection)” (Anderson, “Design Proposal for a Digital Library,” 1). The collection consisted of five photograph albums, approximately 100 loose photographs, and a box in which many of the photographs were stored (a small shipping box from Haeberlein-

⁷“I am thinking of you./What does ‘thinking of you’ mean? It means: forgetting ‘you’ (without forgetting, life itself is not possible) and frequently waking out of that forgetfulness. Many things, by association, bring you back into my discourse. ‘Thinking of you’ means precisely this metonymy. For, in itself, such thinking is blank: I do not think you; I simply make you recur (to the very degree that I forget you). It is this form (this rhythm) which I call ‘thought’: I have nothing to tell you, save that it is to you that I tell this nothing” (Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse* 157).

Metzger A. G. Nürnberg, which originally contained Lebkuchen, sent from Germany to New York City in December 1958).

In my proposal, I grappled with the question of why this collection of photographs (and a box) should be preserved and made accessible to a wider audience. Hilde Werthauer was an ordinary person whose photographs show what is in many ways an unremarkable life. On the one hand, I did not intend to present these photographs in any way as representative of all Jews—Hilde Werthauer was, as the photographs suggest, a highly assimilated, upper-class German Jew; she was not “typical.” However, presented out of context, the photographs quickly take on a representative status—if not for all German Jews, then at least for upper-class, assimilated Jews. The historical record and the identities that emanate from it are made up of the material that has survived, whether by chance or by intentional selection.



FIGURE 4.4



Handwritten text in German script, likely names of the women in the kitchen above.



Handwritten text in German script, likely the name of the dining room.

FIGURE 4.5



FIGURE 4.6

Your words again, Roland: “The Photograph does not necessarily say *what is no longer*, but only and for certain *what has been*” (Barthes, *Camera Lucida* 85).

Je pense à vous.

I look for you, for me, in letters and photographs. I search for you in photographs taken by people I don't know, of people I don't know. I want, I seek, to recognize you. I imagine you've written the letters I read by people I don't know to people I don't know. I imagine you've addressed these letters to me; do they address me? Will you appear to me?

*I am writing to reach you.*⁸

Bisouxx,

Martina

...

⁸Echoing Vuong 3.

Dear Ana,

Over the twenty years since I wrote about *The Mixquiahuala Letters*, I have often thought of Ruth-Ellen's repeated question to me about the role of lesbianism in your letters. At the time, I was not able to articulate the way in which sexuality was *inextricably* bound into the text's epistolarity. Female friendship, female relationships, yes, but sexuality, and lesbianism specifically, no. I felt that I could write about the role of lesbianism or sexuality in the text, but it did not shed light for me on its epistolarity, and I felt it was impractical to imagine that I could include all aspects of the text in my analysis. At the time, I asked myself repeatedly: what difference does it make for the aspects of the text that *I have chosen* to write about? (and I kept coming up empty).

Years and years later, as Kimberlé Crenshaw's term intersectionality has become part of everyday vocabulary (her original article was published the year I graduated from college), I have come to understand Ruth-Ellen's point. Crenshaw says, "Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects. It's not simply that there's a race problem here, a gender problem here and a class or LGBTQ problem there" ("Kimberlé Crenshaw on Intersectionality").

You see, twenty years ago, I wrote about the way I saw you using "the characteristics of the letter form to break silence, to understand experience collectively (as a woman and a Chicana), to expose the systems of genre and gender and of race/ethnicity/nation that subordinate and complicate" Teresa, your main character (Anderson, *Addressing Epistolary Subjects* 68). Sexuality certainly feels like a glaring omission from where I stand now. Mostly this realization makes me smile, a bit sheepishly. Here's to dwelling on the past!

All the best,

Martina

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