

“I May Be Seized by Curiosity”: Echoes of Lesbian Desire in a Spanish Letter from Smith College in the 1920s

SANTIAGO LÓPEZ-RÍOS

Universidad Complutense de Madrid

IN THE CONTEXT OF CONSERVATIVE early twentieth-century Spain, Lillian Faderman’s classic question—“who hid lesbian history?”—could produce a wide range of responses.¹ While the subject of passionate female friendship and same-sex relationships at the beginning of the last century has received considerable attention in English and American studies, we know far too little about this aspect of Spanish history.² In addition to a

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¹ Lillian Faderman, “Who Hid Lesbian History?,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 4, no. 3 (1979): 74–76.

² Carroll Smith-Rosenberg’s groundbreaking study of intimate female friendships in America during the nineteenth century inspired other very important works, particularly by Lillian Faderman and Martha Vicinus. See Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, “The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America,” *Signs* 1, no. 1 (1975): 1–29; Lillian Faderman, *Surpassing the Love of Men: Romantic Friendship and Love between Women from the Renaissance to the Present* (New York: Morrow, 1981); Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991); and Martha Vicinus, *Intimate Friends: Women Who Loved Women, 1778–1928* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004). For a recent survey of lesbian historiography, see Alison J. Laurie, “Introduction: A History of ‘Lesbian History,’” *Journal of Lesbian Studies* 13 (2009): 349–61. For an overview of the history of lesbianism in Spain between 1900 and 1936, albeit from the perspective of literature, see Angie Simonis, *Yo no soy esa que tú te imaginas: El lesbianismo español del siglo XX a través de sus*

certain neglect of gay and lesbian issues within Hispanism, another reason for this gap could be the dearth of documentary evidence. A letter in Spanish that mentions what we would today call “lesbian desire” is therefore of exceptional historical value. In 1921 Juana Moreno, a Spanish schoolteacher who was an exchange student at Smith College, wrote to her Spanish mentor, María de Maeztu. This letter found its way into a Madrid archive but is now reported missing there. Fortunately, it was photocopied by a researcher before it vanished. With the permission of the author’s estate, the letter is published in Spanish and in an English translation and analyzed here for the first time.

In her highly influential essay, Faderman denounces the way that lesbian history has been systematically hidden, and she expresses hope that these stories may yet be found. She calls for a thorough search for archival materials of this kind, their recovery and proper assessment, and she “pray[s] that they have not already been expurgated by some-well meaning heterosexist hand.”³ This article answers Faderman’s call. Indeed, this newly uncovered source represents a significant contribution to the endeavor to establish the social history of homosexuality, “the categories used by ordinary people to interpret sexual relations, and the patterns of homosexual behavior in everyday life.”⁴ This essay also engages with Sally Newman’s ideas about tracing “lesbian desire” in historical papers. More specifically, I will heed her warnings about the implication of the scholar in the elaboration of meaning. It is indeed vital to avoid “archival fever,” the risk of becoming so involved in a document as to construct a whole narrative about it without enough evidence.⁵

Juana Moreno (1895–1971) was an exchange student and teaching fellow at Smith College (Northampton, Massachusetts) during the 1921–22 academic year. Her mentor in Madrid, María de Maeztu (1881–1948), was a prominent educator and the director of the Residencia de Señoritas (Young Ladies’ Residence), where Moreno had lived for some time before her trip to the United States. Like its better-known male counterpart, the Residencia de Estudiantes (Students’ Residence), which had housed cultural luminaries such as the poet and playwright Federico García Lorca, the

estereotipos (Alicante: Universidad de Alicante, 2009), 85–96. Two important titles dealing with lesbian images in contemporary Spanish literature are Beatriz Cela Carrillo, *La mujer deseante: Sexualidad femenina en la cultura y novela españolas (1900–1936)* (Newark, DE: Juan de la Cuesta, 2006) and María Castrejón, . . . *Que me estoy muriendo de agua: Guía de narrativa lesbica española* (Barcelona: Egales, 2008).

³ Faderman, “Who Hid Lesbian History?,” 76.

⁴ Georges Chauncey Jr., Martin B. Duberman, and Martha Vicinus, introduction to *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, ed. Martin B. Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey Jr. (New York: NAL Books, 1989), 1–13, 4.

⁵ Sally Newman, “The Archival Traces of Desire: Vernon Lee’s Failed Sexuality and the Interpretation of Letters in Lesbian History,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 14, nos. 1–2 (2005): 51–75.

painter Salvador Dalí, and the filmmaker Luis Buñuel, the Residencia de Señoritas was much more than simply convenient student accommodation. Founded in 1915, it was funded by the Junta para Ampliación de Estudios, a government body for the promotion of education and research in Spain, and it was inspired by American women's colleges. While not able to award academic degrees, it offered its own courses, lectures, sports, and leisure activities for its Spanish and international residents. The institution also organized exchange programs with foreign educational establishments, such as the one with Smith College, which allowed Juana Moreno to spend a year in Northampton. Significantly, given the strong influence of the Catholic Church on education in Spanish traditional society, there was neither a chapel nor compulsory religious instruction. In brief, the Residencia played a fundamental role in giving women access to higher education in a country where they had not been admitted to university until 1910. The Residencia de Señoritas was closed by the dictator Francisco Franco at the end of the Spanish Civil War (1936–39), and residents and employees with liberal or progressive sympathies were persecuted or forced out of their jobs, as happened to Juana Moreno. María de Maeztu died in Argentina in 1948.⁶

Moreno's letter was written from Smith College's Baldwin House on 28 February 1921. Responding to María de Maeztu's previous correspondence, which has not been preserved, Moreno's letter is spiked with humor and offers considerable insight into the young Spanish student's experience in the United States. The letter reveals great affection between the two women. Conversational in tone, sprinkled with privately understood references, and flitting from one topic to another, it shows that the respect Moreno felt for her mentor did not preclude a considerable ease and openness. Moreno seems confident that Maeztu will respond to her frequent jokes if not with laughter, then at least with an indulgent smile. From a sociolinguistic perspective, this letter is a valuable example of women's colloquial language in 1920s Spain, one that documents very specific linguistic codes used in informal communication. The student, for example, declares herself thrilled to be taking a course in genetics, and she jokes about continuing her experiments at the Residencia on her return. There, however, she will use rabbits, rather than the flies that she is breeding in Northampton, to produce some free food for the women of the Residencia. The señoritas need not worry about smell or mess from the rabbits, Moreno writes: "I'm telling you, these

⁶ On María de Maeztu, see Isabel Pérez-Villanueva Tovar, *María de Maeztu: Una mujer en el reformismo educativo español* (Madrid: UNED, 1989). On the Residencia de Señoritas and its residents, see Carmen de Zulueta and Alicia Moreno, *Ni convento ni college: La Residencia de Señoritas* (Madrid: Publicaciones de la Residencia de Estudiantes, 1993); Isabel Pérez-Villanueva Tovar, *La Residencia de Estudiantes, 1910–1936: Grupo Universitario y Residencia de Señoritas* (Madrid: Acción Cultural Española / CSIC / Publicaciones de la Residencia de Estudiantes, 2011); and Raquel Vázquez Ramil, *Mujeres y educación en la España contemporánea: La Institución Libre de Enseñanza y la Residencia de Señoritas de Madrid* (Madrid: Akal, 2012).

experiments are nice and clean.” She deploys similar humor when talking about her experience of teaching Spanish, opining that “it is terribly dull listening to stuttering in your own language.”

Moreno’s comments about student life illustrate her perception of the huge gap between Spanish and American mentalities. One target of her satire is the Smith Student Committee, which, after months of discussions, had managed to reach only two decisions: any student leaving the campus could not go beyond a given point without wearing a hat (this point was solemnly defined as “the third shop on Main Street”), and students had to testify in writing that they did not receive any help with their exams. “You will understand that anyone who is wicked enough to cheat would also be capable of swearing falsely,” was Moreno’s frank appraisal of this new policy. She was also dismissive of the student clubs, remarking, “I really believe that we at the Residencia would be able to make them more interesting. . . . Here, the best they can do is to end the meetings with *ice cream*.” Conversely, Juana Moreno did admire the way the Smith alumnae supported students in need of financial assistance. Mindful that many Spanish women were precluded from studying because they could not afford to attend a university, she suggested that such an approach could be copied by the Residencia.

However, the most intriguing passages of this letter are those describing, in passing, the attentions of Professor Caroline Bourland, chair of the Department of Spanish and Moreno’s advisor at Smith. A distinguished Hispanist, Bourland (1871–1956) was well known to Maeztu. Indeed, the American scholar had spent the 1918–19 academic year in Madrid organizing the Smith-Residencia teaching fellows exchange program with her Spanish colleague.⁷ Moreno wrote:

Miss Bourland is still as delightfully charming as on the first day. I am both startled and disconcerted by her friendly overtures. And this is to say nothing of the fact that she has shown me her legs [*patitas*] on two occasions. I pretended not to notice. I have no desire to see any more leg than the skirts of these young Americans oblige one to see, especially not from members of the faculty. Goodness me, María! How agitated Miss Bourland becomes when she receives letters about the instructorship (the legs affair has got nothing to do with this).⁸

⁷ On Caroline Bourland, see Carmen de Zulueta, *Cien años de educación de la mujer española: Historia del Instituto Internacional* (Madrid: Editorial Castalia, 1992), 242–48. Pilar Piñón (International Institute, Madrid) is currently doing research into Caroline Bourland. I am grateful to her for sharing information about this interesting American woman and for discussing the contents of Moreno’s letter with me.

⁸ In the original, Moreno uses the word *becaria*, which I have translated as “instructorship”; the literal translation would be “female fellowship recipient.” However, the Smith-Residencia agreement was, in fact, a teaching fellow exchange: Smith students traveling to Madrid had to teach English, and *residentes* going to Northampton had to give Spanish classes, meaning that it was not a simple exchange of students funded by grants. I have therefore

In another part of the letter she adds the following:

I have been offered a position with a starting salary of \$1,600. But if I accept it and stay here, I shall die of “dollaritis.” I am not accustomed to so many dollars. This is what many ordinary people in Spain earn in pesetas. Before I leave, I shall have to tell Miss Bourland. She thinks that the \$1,300 that Smith gave to Enriqueta, and is giving to Milagros, are gifts from heaven for a Spanish woman. I am not saying anything to her now, because if I see her leg [*patita*] for a third time, I may be seized by curiosity to know what it is like, and I may have to get angry.

Moreno’s wordplay in these paragraphs is strikingly complex. It is, first of all, difficult to know exactly what she means when she says of Bourland that she has shown Moreno her *patitas*. *Patita* is the diminutive form of *pata*, a word that does indeed mean “leg” but that is more properly reserved for the leg or paw of an animal or for furniture; the standard word for a human leg is *pierna*. The Spanish colloquial expression “enseñar la pata” (to show one’s leg) means “descubrir a alguien las intenciones que quería mantener en secreto” (to reveal the intentions that a person wished to keep secret).⁹ This expression has been documented in Spanish lexicography since the 1737 *Diccionario de autoridades*.¹⁰ There are thus two possible interpretations of Moreno’s reference to *patitas*. The first is that Moreno is using the phrase “enseñar la pata” in its figurative sense with her own variant in the plural and with a humorous touch implied in the use of the diminutive (*patitas*). In other words, Bourland has revealed some secret intention that was apparently displeasing to her student. But the phrase could also be a coded reference to an expression of sexual interest on the part of the professor: by lifting her skirt and revealing her legs, Bourland was signaling a sexual attraction not reciprocated by Moreno.

There are solid historical grounds for the second interpretation. Historian Emily Bingham suggests that same-sex relationships between professors and students were not unknown at Smith College at the time when Juana Moreno was writing to María de Maeztu—relationships that were

preferred to use the term “teaching fellowship.” The undated document in English recording the agreement uses the expression “teaching fellow.” See “Residencia de Señoritas—Smith College Agreement,” box 409, Office of the President, William Allan Neilson Papers, Smith College Archives, Northampton, Massachusetts.

⁹ Real Academia Española, *Diccionario de la lengua española*, 22nd ed., <http://www.rae.es>, accessed 7 November 2013.

¹⁰ “ENSEÑAR o sacar la pata. Phrase con que se significa que el que se halla elevado, siendo de bajos principios, ha ejecutado alguna acción por donde los da a conocer” (Show or produce the leg. Phrase meaning that one who enjoys a high position, although of low principles, has committed some action revealing his true nature) (*Diccionario de autoridades* [1737], in Real Academia Española, *Nuevo tesoro lexicográfico de la lengua española*, <http://www.rae.es>, accessed 7 November 2013).

in some ways similar to the “Wellesley marriages” studied by Patricia Ann Palmieri.¹¹ Bingham’s forthcoming book, tentatively titled *Irrepressible: Sex, Privilege, and Love’s Limits in Henrietta Bingham’s Heartbreaking Jazz-Age Life*, examines the life of the author’s great-aunt (1901–68), who entered Smith College in 1920, fell in love with her English professor, Mina Kirstein (later Curtiss) (1896–1985), and traveled with her to Europe in 1922. The couple spent the academic year in London, where both became patients of Dr. Ernest Jones, a prominent Freudian analyst, and where they became active members of the broader Bloomsbury Group. Jones’s 1927 essay, “The Early Development of Female Sexuality,” drew on five cases of homosexuality in women, including Kirstein, Bingham, and Eleanor Chilton, who graduated from Smith in 1922.¹²

Caroline Bourland embodies the archetype of what Smith-Rosenberg calls the “New Woman,” and describing all aspects of her life would take us beyond our present purposes.¹³ But it is significant that I found no conclusive evidence to support the interpretation that she tried to seduce any student or that she was ever involved in a relationship or passionate friendship with any other woman (such as her colleague Professor Mina Kirstein) in any of the surviving papers and correspondence at the Smith College Archives, at the Hispanic Society of America (New York), or at the Archivo de la Residencia de Señoritas (Madrid).¹⁴ On the contrary, in the summer of 1932, when the Hispanist was in Madrid, rumors spread about her having an affair with a married man, Arthur Byne (1884–1935), an American art dealer living in Spain. Katherine Jones, a student of Bourland who was in Spain to study the language, noted this rumor in her private scrapbook the following fall.¹⁵ In a letter to María de Maeztu, Bourland revealed how profoundly hurt she was by the rumors, and she accused Mrs. Byne of being an evil person responsible for disseminating lies to destroy her good name.¹⁶ None of this

¹¹ Patricia Ann Palmieri, *In Adamless Eden: The Community of Women Faculty at Wellesley* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), 137–42.

¹² Ernest Jones, “Early Development of Female Sexuality,” *International Journal of Psycho-analysis* 9 (1927): 459–72. As Martha Vicinus indicates, “Some [female] long-lasting relationships began as a cross-age mother-daughter relation before they became a husband-wife marriage” (*Intimate Friends*, 109).

¹³ About the “New Woman,” see Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, “Discourses of Sexuality and Subjectivity: The New Woman, 1870–1936,” in Duberman, Vicinus, and Chauncey, *Hidden from History*, 264–80, esp. 264–68.

¹⁴ Correspondence from Caroline Bourland to María de Maeztu, *caja* 9, Archivo de la Residencia de Señoritas, Fundación José Ortega y Gasset, Madrid (cited hereafter as ARS); membership folder and temporary folder of Caroline Bourland, Hispanic Society of America Archives, New York; box 687, Faculty (Caroline B. Bourland), and box 409, Office of the President, Neilson Papers.

¹⁵ Jones noted that Bourland and Byne “had a big romance, which was the scandal of Madrid” (annotation dated 16 November 1933, Katherine Jones Scrapbook, box 2067, Smith College Archives).

¹⁶ “I imagine that all the unpleasant things which happened to me at the end of the term poisoned the spirit. Not only the mendacity of Mrs. B. [Mildred Stapley Byne] but also the

provides very conclusive evidence about Bourland's sexuality, and it has no direct bearing on the question of whether she really did make sexual advances to Moreno. We must avoid giving in to "archival fever." No matter how intriguing it might be to explore Caroline Bourland's private life, it has little bearing on Juana Moreno's letter. With only one version of the story to go on, an interpretation of Moreno's words as a literal reference to an expression of erotic interest by her professor could be easily countered with the argument that the Spanish woman simply misinterpreted Bourland's gestures or that she could have invented the whole episode. Whether or not there really was a sexual encounter is beside the point. Rather, what is interesting is that Moreno appears to allude to such a topic in a letter to another woman. To paraphrase the title of Sheila Jeffreys's classic essay, while "it does not matter if they did it," it does matter that one of the two women wrote about it.¹⁷ It matters very much. What is truly significant is the language that Moreno uses to describe Bourland to none other than María de Maeztu, the director of the Residencia de Señoritas. The twenty-five-year-old student is entirely at ease using a vocabulary loaded with allusions to "lesbian desire."¹⁸ Since this language was very much "hidden

deeply disrespectful way that Mary Sweeney behaved toward me and the inexplicable behavior of Mrs. Vernon really spoiled the last part of my stay in Madrid. As Mrs. Byne is a truly wicked person, I am not so bothered about what she did to me, unpleasant as it was; but as for the other two, it will be very difficult to forget their treatment of me" (Supongo que las muchas cosas desagradables que me pasaron a fin de curso me envenenaron todo el espíritu. No solo la mendacidad de la Sra. de B [Mildred Stapley Byne] sino el modo de portarse conmigo tan irrespetuosa de Mary Sweeny y la conducta inexplicable de Mrs. [Susan Huntington] Vernon me amargaron mucho toda la última parte de mi estancia en Madrid. Como Mrs. Byne es verdaderamente una mala persona, no me afecta tanto lo que me ha hecho, por desagradable que haya sido; pero respecto a las otras dos, me será muy difícil olvidar su actitud frente a mí) (Caroline Bourland to María de Maeztu, Santander, 15 August [1932], caja 9/3/68, ARS).

¹⁷ Sheila Jeffreys, "Does It Matter if They Did It?," in *Not a Passing Phase: Reclaiming Lesbians in History 1840–1985*, ed. Lesbian History Group (London: Women's Press, 1989), 19–28.

¹⁸ I am very much aware that it could be considered anachronistic to say that Moreno's letter mentions "lesbian desire." Referring to the United States in the 1920s, Lillian Faderman has explained: "Since 'homosexual' was in the process of becoming an identity, one now might feel forced to choose either to accept or reject that label. But an erotic interest in another female, and even sex with another female, was not necessarily sufficient to make a woman a lesbian. She might consider her experiences simple bisexual experimentation, which was even encouraged in certain milieus. One had to *see* oneself as a lesbian to be a lesbian. But despite the apparent sexual liberalism of many in the 1920s, the era was not far removed in time from the Victorian age, and to admit to an aberrant sexual identity must not yet have been easy for any but the most brave, unconventional, committed, or desperate" (*Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, 67). I also concur with Vicinus, who after many years of research and engagement with the theoretical debate, states: "In researching some one hundred and fifty years of same-sex relations among women [1778–1928], I am convinced that all categories and definitions must remain provisional" (*Intimate Friends*, xxiii). All this accepted, and acknowledging the importance of the philosophical debate, this study takes an empirical approach to history. The methodology is based on philological, rather than theoretical, analysis. For the sake of simplicity, I therefore use the perhaps not entirely appropriate term "lesbian desire."

from history" in early twentieth-century Spain, the historical value of this letter is extraordinary. A more detailed linguistic analysis of Moreno's letter reveals its various forms of sexual innuendo, thus highlighting its broader significance.

The young Spanish woman creates some intentional mystery about Bourland's attentions in the very first passage of her letter, stating that the professor "is still as delightfully charming as on the first day." She gives the impression of a sweet and subtly amorous relationship and declares herself to be "both startled and disconcerted by [Bourland's] friendly overtures." She therefore hints that she had become the object of Bourland's affection by consciously creating ambiguity. The ambiguity arises from the precise choice of words, since the plural for "friendly overtures," *amabilidades*, refers to actions, while the singular, *amabilidad*, would have had the implication of the "quality of being kind."¹⁹ While brief, this allusion to actions is an overt reference to sexual desire. As Newman argues, "The notion of 'fact' or evidence is an issue that is fraught with theoretical and definitional uncertainty in lesbian historiography." "What is desire, and how do we recognize its textual traces?" she asks. "Is it possible to 'prove' lesbian existence, desire, or behavior through archival material, and what will count as 'evidence' in this form of historical research?" Faced with this uncertainty about "what constitutes proof of a physical relationship," we must read these texts with an eye to their contextually and culturally specific allusions.²⁰

From this perspective, Moreno talking about legs must be interpreted as an overt reference to sexual desire. Allusions to the erotic connotations of a glimpse of a woman's foot or leg abounded in the popular culture of the day and in classical Spanish literature, starting with the famous example of Dorotea seen bathing her feet in *Don Quixote* (part I, chapter 28).²¹ No educated Spaniard (and Maeztu was highly educated) would have missed Moreno's erotic connotations. Indeed, the "fetishizing of the female leg" and sexualized allusions to the female foot and "its social covering, the shoe," are common tropes in Western literature, as Mario Vargas Llosa's brilliant study of the erotic symbolism in Gustave Flaubert's novel *Madame Bovary* convincingly demonstrates.²² Relying upon her reader's knowledge of this literature, Moreno's wordplay switches constantly between the literal meaning of the expression "enseñar la pata" (to show one's leg) to the metaphorical (to reveal one's secret intentions). Given that Moreno refers to other Spanish teaching fellows at Smith, mentions salaries, and obviously has the Smith-Residencia agreement in mind, we can speculate

¹⁹ Real Academia Española, *Diccionario*.

²⁰ Newman, "The Archival Traces," 53, 60.

²¹ Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quijote*, ed. Luis A. Murillo (Madrid: Editorial Castalia, 1978), 1:345.

²² Mario Vargas Llosa, *La orgía perpetua: Flaubert y "Madame Bovary"* (Barcelona: Editorial Seix Barral, 1975), 36–41.

that Bourland's "secret intentions" could have been to try to keep Moreno employed at Smith. But Bourland's intentions are ultimately less interesting than Moreno's innuendos.

In the same letter, Moreno jokes about volunteering to preside over mating rabbits at the Residencia de Señoritas. In this same tongue-in-cheek tone, she indulges in verbal gymnastics around women's legs. The student seems aware of the implications of focusing sexual attention upon one part of the body—what we may call today fetishization. Her frankness extends beyond merely referring to the skirts of young American women, which afforded glimpses of their *patas*. This could be understood as simply a humorous response to the cultural differences that the young Spanish woman is observing in the United States, one of the main topics of the letter. But soon after this, Moreno writes that if she sees Bourland's leg for a third time, she is likely to become intrigued (does she mean aroused?), and she hints that she might even want to give the leg a slap: "I am not saying anything to her now, because if I see her leg [*patita*] for a third time, I may be seized by curiosity to know what it is like, and I may have to get angry." Once again there is a shift from the metaphorical meaning of the phrase to the literal one. She not only presents herself as being subject to the sexual attentions of another woman but also refers to the possibility of becoming interested in the professor's leg herself, albeit with the irony implied in the statement "I may have to get angry." Despite the wry humor, it must be stressed that there is no rejection of same-sex desire. Moreno might not be very happy with Bourland's "secret intentions," but she does not intend to discredit her. This is certainly remarkable, since we cannot forget that "by the 1920s, charges of lesbianism had become a common way to discredit female professionals, reformers, and educators along with the political, social, and educational institutions they had founded."²³

Certain biographical details about Juana Moreno might account for the naturalness and spontaneity of the sexual innuendo evident in her letter. She was a woman of very liberal views, including regarding sexuality. After her time at Smith in the 1920s, she took courses on genetics, psychology, and pedagogy in Paris, Geneva, and Berlin. This was an unusually international education for a Spanish woman of the time, which suggests open-mindedness and enthusiasm for new and different experiences. She began living with her life companion, the German painter Albert Ziegler, in the 1920s. The couple married only in a civil ceremony and not in a church—evidence perhaps of a liberal understanding of heterosexuality that was not consistent with the values of traditional Catholic Spanish society.

²³ Smith-Rosenberg, "Discourses," 272. On the negative stereotype that emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century of the female professor sexually harassing women students, see Vicinus, *Intimate Friends*, 202–15. On the cliché spinster/lesbian at this time, see Trisha Franzen, *Spinsters and Lesbians: Independent Womanhood in the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 1–24.

She also demonstrated her liberal attitudes to sexuality through her relationship to Thomas Mann, whom she met in Munich in 1928. The German author granted Moreno permission to translate all his works into Spanish, including the novel *Death in Venice* (1912), the central theme of which was homosexual desire.²⁴

Moreno's comfort with discussing homoerotic desire suggests that she had probably witnessed, or at least heard about, romantic female friendships or about women who were erotically attracted to other women. Perhaps she had even heard about sexual activity between women at Smith College. We know that college administrators were very concerned about the development of same-sex romantic relationships on campus. As Helen L. Horowitz has pointed out, concerns about sexual impropriety had even influenced the construction of the college, which was envisioned as a conscious break from the model of Mount Holyoke Seminary. Instead of one large building, several cottages on the Northampton campus served as student residences. The goal was to create a family lifestyle, foster interaction with the town, and “prevent the great harm of the seminary—the creation of a separate women’s culture with its dangerous emotional attachments” (emphasis added).²⁵

Despite the design of the campus, “emotional attachments” among women were indeed common at Smith. Juana Moreno must have owned a copy of the *Smith College Student’s Hand-Book, 1920–1921*, which provided such “hints for the freshmen” as “Don’t play with one girl exclusively. There are 2,000 in college” and “Don’t get a ‘crush.’ It’s the surest way to lose a friend.”²⁶ Romantic passions were known to flourish at all-women dances and other social gatherings organized at female colleges. According to Faderman, “Such courting often led to ‘love making,’ both in the sense of the nineteenth-century sentimental usage of that term and the way we use it today.”²⁷ Moreno’s language, with its sexual connotations and hints at seduction, corroborates Faderman’s statement, revealing the student’s awareness of the sexual nature of some intimate female friendships. Certainly, the Spanish student’s joke about the possibility of physical contact with

²⁴ On Juana Moreno as translator of Thomas Mann, see Santiago López-Ríos and Arno Gimber, “Juana Moreno, traductora de Thomas Mann,” in *Fräulein in Madrid, Señoritas en Berlín (1918–1939)*, ed. Gabriele Beck-Busse, Arno Gimber, and Santiago López-Ríos (Berlin: Henrich & Henrich, 2014), 93–115.

²⁵ Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Alma Mater: Design and Experience in the Women’s Colleges from Their Nineteenth-Century Beginnings to the 1930s* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993), 75.

²⁶ *Student’s Hand-Book, Smith College, 1920–1921* (Northampton, MA: Smith College Association for Christian Work, 1920), 98. For a specific study of “crushes” at Smith, see Sally Newman, “Traces of Desire: Reading the Lesbian Archive” (PhD diss., Monash University, 2007), 124–73. On “mashes, smashes, crushes, and raves” mainly in college fiction but with a reference to social reality, see Sherrie A. Inness, *Intimate Communities: Representation and Social Transformation in Women’s College Fiction, 1895–1910* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1995), 45–67.

²⁷ Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, 20.

Bourland's leg shows that "the pleasures of touching were well known," as Martha Vicinus indicates.²⁸

However, the real value of this Spanish source is not that it sheds light on female passionate friendships or lesbian desire at Smith College or other American female colleges. This is a subject about which a great deal is known and that has already produced a considerable bibliography. The question instead is: Do the words of its author (who was, after all, a future translator of Thomas Mann with considerable literary talents) echo an awareness of similar emotional attachments and same-sex desire at the Residencia de Señoritas? This is an area that has apparently not yet been explored.

At the end of her letter, Moreno sends her regards to her companions at the Residencia, including Julia Iruretagoyena, who would later live with Victoria Kent in a relationship reminiscent of a "Boston marriage."²⁹ Victoria Kent was a Spanish feminist politician. After the Spanish Civil War, she was exiled to the United States, where she lived for many years with her companion, Louise Crane, previously the partner of poet Elizabeth Bishop. Shirley Mangini posits that Kent might have been aware of her own homosexuality during her stay at the Residencia, where she lived during the same period that Juana Moreno was there.³⁰ Recalling these youthful experiences in Madrid, Kent confessed that "the atmosphere was fraternal," or, as we might say, an atmosphere of sisterhood prevailed.³¹ As for María de Maeztu, Mangini has even suggested that she was the lover of Chilean poet and Nobel laureate Gabriela Mistral (1889–1957). However, there has been no further research into this.³²

I am entirely in agreement with Angie Simonis in her assertion that lesbianism in Spain still requires considerable study.³³ In the context of the first two decades of the twentieth century, of which we know very little, Juana Moreno's letter reveals an ease with mentioning the unspeakable, albeit in passing. This suggests that it is of the utmost importance to reassess the atmosphere of sisterhood at the Residencia de Señoritas through the (re)examination of archival materials preserved both in Spain and in the United States. There are indications that both intimate friendships and even lesbian desire, something much more difficult to trace, flourished among

²⁸ Vicinus, *Intimate Friends*, 230. There is a considerable bibliography about the "sex / no sex debate" in romantic female friendships in the aforementioned studies on lesbian history.

²⁹ For a description of the kind of relationship Victoria and Julia had, see Miguel Ángel Villena, *Victoria Kent: Una pasión republicana* (Madrid: Debate, 2007), 65.

³⁰ Shirley Mangini, *Las modernas de Madrid: Las grandes intelectuales españolas de la vanguardia* (Barcelona: Península, 2001), 203.

³¹ Victoria Kent, "Sobre la Residencia de Señoritas," n.d., box 29, Uncat ZA MS 637, Louise Crane Papers, Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

³² Shirley Mangini, "El Lyceum Club de Madrid: Un refugio feminista en una capital hostil," *Asparkía* 17 (2006): 125–40, 128n5. Magini's footnote is not referenced.

³³ Simonis, *Yo no soy esa*, 20.

these women just as it did in American women's colleges.³⁴ In the case of the latter institutions, Faderman and others have insisted that "more than any other phenomenon, education may be said to have been responsible for the spread among middle-class women of what eventually came to be called lesbianism."³⁵ More research might well reveal that a similar process of identity formation occurred in Spain.

I concur with Faderman's argument about our responsibility to unearth "any original source material that is available" for lesbian history (emphasis added) and with Alison J. Laurie's insistence that "it is important to collect and combine *whatever* disparate materials exist" (emphasis added).³⁶ The recovery of Moreno's letter demonstrates that the paucity of evidence is not insurmountable. As the British Lesbian History Group observed long ago, this "problem of sources is [often unjustifiably] magnified a thousandfold."³⁷ We cannot use this excuse to avoid the painstaking hard work of searching for private papers and subjecting them to careful analysis. Given the international connections of the Residencia de Señoritas, a transatlantic perspective has much to contribute, as is demonstrated by the consideration of Juana Moreno's stay at Smith College in this article. Even with all of Newman's theoretical caveats taken into consideration, in-depth archival research should always be a sine qua non in gay and lesbian history as it is in history as a whole. Newman's most important argument in this regard is that we should "pursue specific genres of evidence (such as the 'love letter') [not just] because we assume they have stronger evidentiary power than any other."³⁸ As this essay demonstrates, a few lines from an apparently insignificant letter, if interpreted correctly through philological analysis and proper contextualization, could be of great significance for the study not only of women's sexuality but also of society, education, culture, and language in Spain at a crucial moment in its history.

³⁴ For an account of the passion felt by María de Maeztu for Argentine intellectual Victoria Ocampo and her jealousy of Victoria Kent within the milieu of the Residencia de Señoritas, see Santiago López-Ríos, "'These Ladies Out-Radical the Radicals': María de Maeztu, Victoria Kent and Victoria Ocampo," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 90, no. 3 (2013): 331–46.

³⁵ Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers*, 13.

³⁶ Faderman, "Who Hid Lesbian History?," 154; Laurie, "Introduction," 355. See also Mangini's discussion of the importance of close readings of correspondence and other archival sources in reconstructing the private lives of *las modernas*, that elite group of progressive intellectual women at the forefront of social change in 1920s Spain to which both María de Maeztu and Juana Moreno belonged. As Mangini argues, "If we do not investigate the inner life of *las modernas*, we will not be able to understand their existential experience and its effect on their works" (*Las modernas de Madrid*, 79).

³⁷ Lesbian History Group, *Not a Passing Phase*, 3.

³⁸ Newman, "The Archival Traces," 54.

APPENDIX³⁹

U.S.A. Northampton, Mass.

Smith College, Baldwin.

Febrero 28- 1921

Mi querida María:

Su carta me ha dado la alegría natural de las cosas que se desean y se hacen esperar mucho tiempo.

Como Vd. me decía, he sonsacado a Milagros [de Alda] y de ello resulta que: un trabajo como el del Instituto-Escuela le da miedo. Milagros está enferma casi todo el tiempo y no se atreve con mucho trabajo. Además, parece que enseñar a los niños no le interesa mucho. En cambio, se siente más inclinada a la Residencia; le interesan las cosas de la vida social entre las muchachas mayores. Cualquier clase de trabajo en la Residencia, mientras no fuera secretaría ni administración, le gustaría. Muestra particular interés en el funcionamiento de bibliotecas, sobre todo en las de los niños. Antes tenía intención de volver aquí, pero por lo que le he oído, ha cambiado de parecer. Le entusiasmaría una escuela en Siete Picos o en Los Cotos. Supongo que esto sería con la intención de dar clases de astronomía o sobre el movimiento de los glaciares a los excursionistas. Yo creo que ahora Milagros está muy cansada y enferma, cuando haya descansado dos meses en España variarán sus gustos también, sobre todo en lo que se refiere a las escuelas en las alturas. Eso lo dice ahora porque está harta de las amabilidades, dulzura, convites y recepciones de esta gente. Se ha olvidado de que en España no son precisamente amables con las gentes. Por mi parte creo que me moriría de *amabilitis, dulzuritis o recepcionitis* si me quedase un año más aquí.

Miss Bourland continúa tan deliciosamente encantadora como el primer día. Yo me asombro y me confundo ante sus amabilidades. Pero eso no quita para que dos veces me haya enseñado las patitas. Yo me he hecho la distraída; estoy dispuesta a no ver más patas que las que obligan a ver las faldas de las jóvenes americanas, de ningún modo las de la Facultad. Por el amor de Dios, María, que Miss Bourland se pone muy nerviosa cuando recibe cartas sobre la becaria (lo de las patitas no tiene nada que ver con esto).

Están Vds. sufriendo ahí con las criadas porque son Vds. demasiado rebeldes. Aquí han resuelto el problema haciéndose los criados de los criados. La señora aquí trata con toda clase de respetos a la criada. ¡Qué remedio!

³⁹ The original of this letter, preserved at the Archivo de la Residencia de Señoritas (Fundación José Ortega y Gasset, Madrid, Spain), is missing (last verified November 2013). This transcription is based on a photocopy very generously provided by Raquel Vázquez Ramil, who saw the original some time ago when doing research for her doctoral dissertation. Reproduced by permission of Mrs. Cristina Moreno Castilla. A new photocopy of the Spanish document has been deposited at Smith College Archives (Juana Moreno's folder) and can be used by any scholar.

Volvíamos Milagros y yo de paseo y, como el cuarto de ella es muy frío, iba pensando en pedir que le subiesen leña para la chimenea. Llegamos, y nos encontramos a la criada tocando el piano admirablemente. Nosotras claro, oímos religiosamente el concierto y no nos quitamos los abrigos. Hay cocinera que amablemente alquila su automóvil a la señora. ¡Vamos que cuándo Carmen o Pepa le presten el automóvil! Yo les llevaré las muestras de [illegible] y si quiere Vd., de menú americano.

No es lo malo que la comida aquí no haga más que entretener el estómago, sino que con ello se le proporciona una mala compañía. Vd. se muere si pasa un año entero aquí, porque siquiera a mí me gustan las ensaladas. Me gustan, pero no me sirven para nada.

Como el Sr. Castillejo no me ha comunicado aún si ha decidido o no mandarme el dinero para Teachers College, yo he decidido pedir el barco para salir de aquí el nueve de junio. Como no tengo dinero, lo he pedido prestado. Espero que el del viaje llegará pronto para que pueda devolverlo. Yo por Teachers College no tengo otro interés que el que Vds. parecían tener cuando me hablaron de ello en Madrid. Yo tengo el catálogo y sé que lo que hacen son conferencias sobre educación y métodos de enseñanza. También visitan y hacen prácticas en algunas escuelas. Si esto no lo hacen a estilo americano, será interesante, pero, si es como todo lo suyo en Pedagogía, será antipedagógico. El otro día fui a una conferencia de una maestra de New York, muy célebre (25 años de práctica), pero que no dijo más que majaderías. Dijo muchas más que D^a Matilde García del Real en aquella conferencia sobre las escuelas belgas en que nos habló del número de peldaños que tenían las escaleras. De todos modos, aunque no creo en la existencia de la Pedagogía en esta tierra, hubiese ido con gusto a Teachers College para satisfacer su interés y el del Sr. Castillejo; pero no puedo esperar más tiempo la respuesta y quedarme sin barco y sin novio.

Mis clases, las que recibo, me interesan cada día más. La de Genética sobre todo me gusta muchísimo. Tengo botellas llenas de moscas para hacer experimentos. Cuando vuelva los haré con conejos y si Vd. me cede un cuarto para criarlos, cuando haya visto lo que quiera ver, se los regalaré para que los coman. Si fuesen tan deprisa como las moscas, comerían de balde. Le advierto que estos experimentos son muy limpios, sólo hay que cruzarlos y ver qué color de pelo o de ojos o qué tamaño heredan los padres, es todo.

¿Ha puesto, Vd., arroz con almejas en el menú? Por [lacuna in the text], póngalo si ya no está; tengo unas ganas grandísimas de comerlo. Aquí hacen el arroz muy mal y además no es como el de España; tiene los granos gigantescos.

Me han ofrecido una plaza de 1.600\$ para empezar. Pero, si acepto y me quedo, me muero de *dollaritis*. No estoy acostumbrada a tantos *dollars*. Eso recibe mucha gente en España, en pesetas. Antes de irme, se lo tengo que decir a Miss Bourland. Ella cree que los 1.300\$ que Smith daba a Enriqueta

[Martín] y da a Milagros son una cosa llovida del cielo para una española. Ahora no se lo digo, pues si veo la patita por tercera vez, me puede entrar curiosidad por saber cómo es, y a lo mejor tengo que enfadarme.

También me ofrecieron una plaza para la Escuela de Verano de Cleveland, pero, como creí que iría a Columbia, dije que no. Además, estoy cansada y no me gusta ni poco ni mucho enseñar español. Es aburridísimo oír tartamudear su idioma. Los exámenes de español de mis chicas han sido buenos. Miss Bourland me dijo que podía estar satisfecha del resultado de mi trabajo.

Tengo la pena de decirle que todos los comités que intentamos en la Residencia, fracasarán. Somos demasiado listas para que resulten bien. Es lástima, pero es así. Aquí, naturalmente, me ha interesado estudiar ese aspecto de las chicas. Créame; para que las cosas organizadas prosperen al estilo americano, hay que ser tontos de la cabeza. ¿Vd. sabe que estas chicas tienen un consejo y un cuerpo de representativos en el que entran las presidentes de todas las casas? Estas dos entidades se han pasado el invierno discutiendo para llegar a estas dos magnas decisiones: 1^a se ha de llevar sombrero desde la tercera tienda de Main Street. 2^a jurar por escrito en los exámenes que no se ha recibido ayuda de nadie. Vd. comprenderá que el que tiene maldad bastante para engañar, la tiene para jurar en falso. Es suponer loca a una persona si se cree que va a decir que ha engañado dos minutos después de hacerlo. El arrepentimiento no llega tan rápidamente.

Los diferentes clubs están en manos de los profesores y las chicas casi no se atreven a respirar. La Asociación de Antiguas Alumnas me es muy simpática. Su papel se reduce a ayudar al Colegio. Este año ha organizado la mar de cosas para conseguir dinero para el fondo Smith. Nosotras vamos siendo ya un gran número de antiguas. Tal vez pudiéramos también tener nuestro fondo, no para ayudar a la Residencia, precisamente, pero para ayudarnos a nosotras mismas. No se me borra que, cuando María Carrascosa nos visitó este verano, nos dijo que el único traje que en dos años pudo comprarse había sido con el dinero que le mandamos nosotras; eso quiere decir, además, que en dos años apenas había comido. Si entonces hubiésemos estado preparadas con un fondo, le hubiésemos podido ayudar más y humillar menos, porque en vez de darle una limosna, le hubiésemos podido prestar dinero, por un tiempo indefinido, para defenderse hasta encontrar colocación. Por la tragedia de María Carrascosa pasan muchas. Hay muchachas que retrasan su carrera o la dejan porque no tienen con qué pagar una matrícula y no se atreven a pedir treinta duros prestados. Sabiendo que existe algo para resolver esos apuros sería otra cosa. Me parece que eso de representar una pieza de teatro para recoger dinero no está en nuestro espíritu; pero sí está el hacer cada una un pequeño sacrificio de dinero para reunirlo. No digo que está en todas, pero esto se contagia.

Los clubs: creo que realmente las españolas seríamos capaces de hacerlos más interesantes. Aquello de buscar conferenciantes y organizar excursiones no iba mal. Aquí lo mejor que hacen es cerrar la sesión con *ice-cream*. En

el español, moriré de miedo. En cuanto a los comités, creo que sería bueno hallar el término medio entre la tontería de estas chicas y nuestras posiciones extremas del año pasado.

Tenemos un invierno delicioso. Nieva lo bastante para poder patinar y no hace nada de frío. Nunca, en este respecto, he pasado un invierno mejor. Ahora me voy a unas montañas, de juguete, para patinar hasta la hora de comer. Hay que aprovechar los días de trabajo, porque los domingos es un pecado, no sé si contra la ley de Dios o contra la de los hombres; creo que contra el qué dirán.

Muchos recuerdos a Rafaela [Ortega], Julia [Iruretagoyena] y a todas las muchachas. Milagros [de Alda] le escribió hace unos días. Realmente, es Vd. venturosa de recibir una carta de ella, pues a su casa creo que no ha mandado más que un cablegrama por Navidad diciendo que vivía.

Le abraza cariñosamente su buena amiga,
Juana

U.S.A. Northampton, Mass.
Smith College, Baldwin.
28 February 1921

My dear María,

Your letter brought me all the pleasure one would expect from something so longed for and so slow to arrive.

As you instructed me, I have coaxed the truth out of Milagros [de Alda]. It turns out that a job like that at the Instituto-Escuela scares her. Milagros is ill almost all the time and cannot face doing much work. Also, it seems that teaching children does not interest her much. On the other hand, she feels more comfortable at the Residencia. She is interested in the affairs of social life among the older girls. She would like any type of job at the Residencia, as long as it is not secretarial or administrative. She shows a particular interest in the management of libraries, especially children's libraries. She had been intending to return here but, from what I have heard, she has changed her mind. She would be in her element in a school in Siete Picos or Los Cotos. I can imagine her wanting to give classes to tourists in astronomy or on the movement of glaciers. I think that Milagros is now very tired and unwell. When she has rested a couple of months in Spain, her preferences will also change, especially with regard to schools at high altitudes. She is saying it now because she is tired of the friendly overtures, the sweetness, the get-togethers, and the receptions of these people. She has forgotten that, in Spain, charm is sometimes in rather short supply. Speaking for myself, I would die of *friendlyitis*, *sweetitis*, or *receptionitis* if I stayed here another year.

Miss Bourland is still as delightfully charming as on the first day. I am both startled and disconcerted by her friendly overtures. And this is to say nothing of the fact that she has shown me her legs on two occasions. I pretended not to notice. I have no desire to see any more leg than the skirts of these young Americans oblige one to see, especially not from members of the Faculty. Goodness me, María! How agitated Miss Bourland becomes when she receives letters about the teaching fellowship (the legs affair has got nothing to do with this).

You are having problems in Madrid with the maids because you are all too unruly. Here they have solved the problem by becoming the servants of the servants. Here, the lady of the house treats the maid with every manner of courtesy. What else can they do? Milagros and I were coming back from a walk, and as her bedroom is very cold, we were thinking of asking them to bring her some wood for the stove. We arrived and found the maid playing the piano magnificently. Obviously we listened reverently to the recital and kept our coats on. There is a cook who kindly rents her car to the lady of the house. Can you imagine Carmen or Pepa lending their car? I shall bring them a sample of [illegible] and, if you wish, an American menu. The problem is not that the food here is a mere distraction for the stomach, rather that it is a very bad influence on it. You would not survive an entire year here. Even I do not like the salads. Well, I do like them, but they do not do me any good.

Mr. Castillejo has still not told me whether or not he has decided to send me the money for Teachers College, so I have decided to request a passage to leave here on 9 June. As I do not have any money, I have borrowed some. I hope that the fare will arrive soon so that I can pay it back. I have no interest in Teachers College beyond that which you seemed to have when you talked to me about it in Madrid. I have the program, and I know that they hold lectures about education and teaching methods. They also conduct visits and practical experience in certain schools. Provided that it is not done in the American way, it will be interesting. However, if it is like their usual style in pedagogy, it will be counterpedagogical. The other day I went to a lecture by a teacher from New York, very famous (25 years of experience), but all she did was talk nonsense. She talked even more nonsense than Doña Matilde García del Real at that lecture on Belgian schools when she informed us of the number of steps in the staircases. Anyway, even though I do not believe in the existence of pedagogy in this country, I would have gone to a Teachers College with pleasure in order to satisfy the interest that you and Mr. Castillejo have in it. However, I cannot wait any longer for the reply and could end up missing the boat altogether.

I find my classes, the ones in which I am the student, more interesting by the day. Genetics particularly I like very much. I have jars full of flies for doing experiments. On my return, I shall do them with rabbits, and if you

give me a room for breeding them, when I have seen what I wanted to see, I shall donate them to be eaten. If they go at it as quickly as flies do, there will be free food. I am telling you, these experiments are nice and clean. It is just a case of getting them to mate and seeing what color fur and eyes and what size their parents pass on to them, that is all.

Have you put rice with clams on the menu? For [lacuna in the text], put it on if it is not there already. I am dying to eat it. Here they do rice very badly, and another thing, it is not like rice in Spain. The grains are enormous.

I have been offered a position with a starting salary of \$1,600. But if I accept it and stay here, I shall die of *dollaritis*. I am not accustomed to so many *dollars*. This is what many ordinary people in Spain earn in pesetas. Before I leave, I shall have to tell Miss Bourland. She thinks that the \$1,300 which Smith gave to Enriqueta and is giving to Milagros are gifts from heaven for a Spanish woman. I am not saying anything to her now, because if I see her leg for a third time, I may be seized by curiosity to know what it is like, and I may have to get angry.

They also offered me a place at the Cleveland Summer School, but because I thought I was going to Columbia, I said no. In addition, I am tired and do not really care for teaching Spanish. It is terribly dull listening to stuttering in your own language. My students' Spanish exams were good. Miss Bourland told me that she was satisfied with the outcome of my work.

I am sorry to tell you that all the committees that we set up in the Residencia will fail. We are too clever for them to turn out well. It is a pity, but that is how it is. Here, naturally, I was very interested to observe this business among the young women. Believe me, if matters of organization are to be successful according to the American way, it is necessary to be a blockhead. Did you know that these young women have a council and a representative committee on which the presidents of all the houses sit? These two bodies spent the winter in discussions only to reach these two monumental decisions: First, hats must be worn from the third shop on Main Street and beyond. Second, students must testify in writing that they did not receive any help in exams. You will understand that anyone who is wicked enough to cheat would also be capable of swearing falsely. This assumes that a person would be mad enough to admit to cheating two minutes after she has done it. Repentance does not occur so quickly.

The various clubs are in the hands of the teachers, and the students hardly dare to breathe. I like the Association of Alumnae very much. Its role is specifically to help the College. This year, they have organized all kinds of things to raise money for the Smith fund. The numbers of our alumnae are growing. Perhaps we could also have a fund of our own not to help the Residencia exactly but to help ourselves. I cannot forget that when María Carrascosa visited us this summer she told us that the only set of clothes she had been able to buy in two years had been with the money that we sent her, which also means that in two years she had scarcely eaten.

If we had been ready with a fund at that time, we would have been able to give her more assistance with less embarrassment. Instead of giving her a handout, we could have lent her money for as long as necessary to give her something to live on until she finds a position. Many women experience the same tragedy as María Carrascosa. There are young women who put off their studies or drop them because they do not have the money for matriculation, and they do not dare to ask for a loan of 150 pesetas. Knowing that something was in place to deal with these hardships would really make a difference. I do not think this idea of putting on a play in order to raise money is the sort of thing we would do. However, everyone forgoing a small amount of money for a collection certainly is. I am not saying that everyone would want to, but such ideas do gain their own momentum.

Clubs: I truly believe that we Spanish women would be capable of making them more interesting. What we did with finding speakers and organizing excursions, that was quite successful. Here, the best they can do is to end the meetings with *ice cream*. Thinking about the Spanish club scares me to death. As for the committees, I think it would be good to strike a balance between the nonsense of these young women and our hard-line positions of last year.

We are having a glorious winter. It is snowing enough to be able to skate and is not cold at all. In this regard, I have never had a better winter. I am going to those baby mountains now to skate until dinnertime. We have to take advantage of the working days, because on Sundays [working] is a sin, whether against the law of God or man, I do not know. I think it is a question of what the neighbors would say.

Send my regards to Rafaela [Ortega], Julia [Iruretagoyena], and all the girls. Milagros [de Alda] wrote to you a few days ago. Really, you are privileged to receive a letter from her, because I do not think that she has sent anything home except a cablegram for Christmas telling them that she was still alive.

Fondest regards from your dear friend,
Juana

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

SANTIAGO LÓPEZ-RÍOS (MA, the Warburg Institute, University of London, and PhD, Complutense University of Madrid) is *profesor titular* of Spanish literature at the Complutense University of Madrid. Besides books and articles on late medieval Spanish literature, he is the author of several studies on early twentieth-century Spanish culture, including an important collective work, coedited with Juan Antonio González Cáceres, entitled *La Facultad de Filosofía y Letras de Madrid en la Segunda República: Arquitectura y universidad durante los años 30* (2008). E-mail: slrios@filol.ucm.es.