

WOMEN WRITERS IN THE ROMANTIC AGE



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Cover image: the Brontë sisters (Anne, Emily and Charlotte) by Patrick Branwell Brontë, oil on canvas, ca. 1834. ©National Portrait Gallery, London

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2. Writers from France

France in the period 1776–1848 experienced three revolutions, three monarchies (Old Regime, Restoration, and July Monarchy), a first and second republic, and a first empire. Not only was the region constitutionally in flux, its borders in 1810 briefly extended from Rome, the Empire’s second city, to Lübeck on the Baltic. Napoleon’s troops were on their way to Moscow. Our focus however is the emergent national tradition, and I have identified forty-six French women writers for the period, more than for any tradition outside the English-speaking world.

France (46 writers)

George Sand, *Indiana* (1832)

PREMIÈRE PARTIE.

I.

Par une soirée d’automne pluvieuse et fraîche, trois personnes rêveuses étaient gravement occupées, au fond d’un petit castel de la Brie, à regarder brûler les tisons du foyer et cheminer lentement l’aiguille de la pendule. Deux de ces hôtes silencieux semblaient s’abandonner en toute soumission au vague ennui qui pesait sur eux ; mais le troisième donnait des marques de rébellion ouverte ; il s’agitait sur son siège, étouffait à demi haut quelques bâillements mélancoliques, et frappait la pincette sur les bûches pétillantes, avec l’intention marquée de lutter contre l’ennemi commun.

Ce personnage, beaucoup plus âgé que les deux autres, était le maître de la maison, le colonel Delmare, vieille bravoure en demi-solde, homme jadis beau, maintenant épais, au front chauve, à la moustache grise, à l’œil terrible ; excellent maître devant qui tout tremblait, femme, serviteurs, chevaux et chiens.

Il quitta enfin sa chaise, évidemment impatienté de ne savoir

comment rompre le silence, et se prit à marcher pesamment dans toute la longueur du salon, sans perdre un instant la roideur convenable à tous les mouvements d'un ancien militaire, s'appuyant sur les reins et se tournant tout d'une pièce, avec ce contentement perpétuel de soi-même qui caractérise l'homme de parade et l'officier-modèle.¹

PART 1

I.

On a chilly wet autumn evening, in a little manor house in Brie, three people, lost in thought, were solemnly watching the embers burn in the fireplace and the hands make their way slowly round the clock. Two of these silent individuals seemed submissively resigned to the vague boredom that oppressed them. But the third showed signs of open rebellion: he moved about restlessly in his chair, half stifled a few melancholy yawns, and struck the crackling logs with the tongs, obviously trying to fight against the common enemy.

This person, who was much older than the other two, was the master of the house, Colonel Delmare, a retired army officer, who had once been handsome but now was heavy and bald with a grey moustache and a fierce look; he was an excellent master who made everyone tremble, wife, servants, horses, and dogs.

At last he left his chair, having obviously lost his patience at not knowing how to break the silence, and began to tramp up and down the room. But he did not for a moment relax the stiff movements of an old soldier, keeping his back straight, turning in one movement with the permanent smugness typical of the parade officer on duty.²

After Sand's author's prefaces of 1832, 1842, and 1852, readers come to this scene of domestic life. The scene would likely have been impossible a half-century earlier. At least four relatively fashionable Romantic tropes appear: Rousseau's reverie, Chateaubriand's the vague, Senancour's ennui, and Staël's melancholy. But there is more to it than that. This is a leisurely opening, and that leisure depends on nothing happening: three protagonists in a salon do nothing much for the opening half a page. Just as epic poets were for centuries taught to begin *in medias res*, in the middle of things, so novels prior to the Romantic period, both epistolary and narrative, tend to move quickly into plot: one thinks of Voltaire or Fielding, or indeed of Victor Hugo's 1831 *Notre Dame de Paris*, which opens with the bells of Paris ringing. Even Laurence Sterne, that

1 In George Sand, *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Béatrice Didier, 1832 (Paris: Champion, 2008), *Indiana*, ed. Brigitte Diaz, pp. 87–88.

2 George Sand, *Indiana*, tr. Sylvia Raphaël (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 15.

trailblazer for digression, opens *Tristram Shandy* in 1759 with his hero's conception. Sand here ignores that novelistic imperative.

Sand instead does two things: she gives us setting, rather as Honoré de Balzac gives us the Pension Vauquer to open 1835's *Le Père Goriot*—she creates a mood; and she gives us character. Mood is in a sense the opposite of plot: the one is static, the other dynamic. As the Impressionists in the 1860s found beauty and meaning in the commonplace and the everyday, so Sand finds it in an autumn evening with a fire in the grate; as Claude Monet saw that Rouen cathedral at dawn was unlike Rouen cathedral in the afternoon, so Sand saw that the mood of a rainy autumn evening is unique and particular and worthy of expression. As for character, Sand further saw that properly defined, character is plot's creation: her retired colonel is who he is because of his past military service, which in the France of 1832 at once suggests France's Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. Just as Balzac's Colonel Chabert of 1832 is out of place in Restoration France, so Sand's Colonel Delmare by the fire gives marks of "rébellion ouverte," a term charged with meaning after 1789 and another commonplace Romantic trope. It is no coincidence that Sand opened her novel thus as the dust of 1830's July Revolution settled—France's second revolution in forty years.

Indiana, it turns out, is the wife of the older Colonel Delmare, trapped in a loveless marriage. As the plot progresses, her search for love leads her to their neighbor Raymon, who has already seduced her servant, Noun. Pregnant and now abandoned, Noun drowns herself. The novel travels between France and Réunion, then the Île Bourbon, returning to witness the Revolution of 1830, then departing again for Réunion, where Indiana and her cousin Ralph—the third person in the opening scene—plan a *Liebestod*. The conclusion shows them instead living on that island in the manner of Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's best-selling *Paul et Virginie*, 1783.

Marie Catherine Sophie de Flavigny, Comtesse d'Agoult [or **Daniel Stern**] (31 December 1805–5 March 1876), born in Frankfurt-am-Main to a French émigré father and a German Jewish convert mother, was bilingual, meeting Goethe as a child. In 1827, d'Agoult married Charles Louis Constant, Comte d'Agoult. Her salon drew writers and musicians from Vigny to Chopin to Heine. In 1833, d'Agoult began her liaison with Franz Liszt; her novel *Nélida*, 1846, is an anagram of their third

child's name, Daniel. Their daughter Cosima married Richard Wagner. D'Agoult's 1850 *Histoire de la Révolution de 1848* remains a reference point.³

Hortense Thérèse Sigismonde Sophie Alexandrine Allart de Méritens [or **Prudence de Saman L'Esbatax**], known as **Hortense Allart** (7 September 1801–28 February 1879), born in Milan, lost her father at sixteen, her mother at twenty. Allart was the niece of Sophie Gay and cousin of Delphine de Girardin. She found work as a governess but was there impregnated and abandoned by the Comte de Sampayo. In 1824, she published letters on Staël. *Gertrude* followed in 1828, then books on history, politics, and philosophy. Allart had liaisons with Sand, Chateaubriand, Sainte-Beuve, and others; in 1843, she married Napoléon Louis Frédéric Corneille de Méritens de Malvézie.⁴

Virginie Ancelot, née Marguerite Louise Virginie Chardon (15 March 1792–20 March 1875), born in Dijon, debuted as a painter in the Salon of 1814. Around 1819, she married Jacques-François Ancelot. He lost his post in 1830, and Ancelot collaborated in his vaudevilles and memoirs between 1832–1835. Ancelot's own plays, mostly in prose, were staged in Paris from 1835–1848 and collected in 1848; she also published several novels from 1839–1866, and salon memoirs. From 1824, Ancelot hosted Lacretelle, Hugo, Sophie Gay, Delphine de Girardin, Rachel, Juliette Récamier, Guizot, Saint-Simon, Musset, Stendhal, Chateaubriand, Vigny, Lamartine, Mérimée, and Delacroix in one of Paris's last great literary salons.⁵

Sophie d'Arbouville, née Sophie Lecat de Bazancourt (28 October 1810–22 March 1850), born in Paris, was the granddaughter of Sophie d'Houdetot. Aged twenty-two, she married François d'Arbouville, a general she accompanied on campaigns. She published her poems anonymously; her short stories in *La Revue des deux mondes* appeared without her permission. Sainte-Beuve frequented her Paris salon, alongside Mérimée and Chateaubriand. Her *Poésies et nouvelles* appeared posthumously in 1855.⁶

3 Charles Dupêchez, *Marie d'Agoult, 1805–1876* (Paris: Plon, 1994).

4 Helynné Hollstein Hansen, *Hortense Allart: The Woman and the Novelist* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1998).

5 Sophie Marchal, *Virginie Ancelot, femme de lettres au xixe siècle* (Lille: ANRT, Université de Lille III, 1998).

6 Léon Séché, *Muses romantiques: Madame d'Arbouville d'après ses lettres à Sainte-Beuve*:

Angélique Arnaud [or **Marie Angélique Bassin**] (23 December 1797–9 April 1884), born in Gannat, married Louis Arnaud in 1820. Arnaud began publishing republican articles in periodicals after 1833—*L'Avenir des femmes*, *Droit des femmes*, *La Femme*, *La Solidarité*. Feminist, socialist, and Saint-Simonian, her novels met with some success and with an admirer in George Sand.⁷

Félicie Marie Émilie d'Ayzac (1801–26 March 1881), born in Paris, became a teacher at sixteen and taught for thirty-five years. She translated Horace in 1822, winning a prize in 1823 from the Académie des jeux floraux; in 1833, she published *Soupirs poétiques*, whose second edition was crowned by the Académie française in 1842. D'Ayzac also studied medieval statuary, winning more prizes with her work on Chartres in 1849 and Saint-Denis in 1860–1867.⁸

Marguerite Victoire Babois (6 October 1760–18 March 1839), born in Versailles, lost her mother at fifteen and was placed in a convent, leaving in 1780 to marry Jacques-Nicolas Gosset. She obtained a divorce in 1793. In 1806, Babois met the painter Jean-Jacques Karpff [or Casimir de Colmar], living with him until his death in 1829. Her uncle Ducis encouraged her to publish; her *Élégie sur la mort de sa fille âgée de cinq ans* had nine editions between 1804–1815. Babois also published a volume of *Élégies nationales* and some volumes in other poetic genres; she influenced Desbordes-Valmore, Hugo, and Lamartine.⁹

Sophie, Baronne de Bawr, née Alexandrine-Sophie Goury de Champgrand (8 October 1773–31 December 1860), illegitimate daughter of a marquis and an opera singer, studied music with Grétry and Boieldieu. During the Terror, Bawr married Jules de Rohan-Rochefort; he was guillotined soon after. In 1801, she married Claude-Henri de Saint-Simon, and after a divorce, the Baron de Bawr, though again widowed. She supported herself by writing songs, novels, plays, and

1846–1850: *documents inédits, portraits, vues et autographe* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1909).

7 Alexandra K. Wettlaufer, *Portraits of the Artist as a Young Woman: Painting and the Novel in France and Britain 1800–1860* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2011).

8 Axel Duboul, *Les Deux Siècles de l'Académie des Jeux floraux*, 2 vols (Toulouse: Édouard Privat, 1901).

9 Domenico Gabrielli, *Dictionnaire historique du Père-Lachaise: xviiie et xixe siècles* (Paris: Amateur, 2002).

musical theater; her *Suite d'un bal masqué* had 246 performances between 1813 and 1869. Bawr published her *Souvenirs* in 1853.¹⁰

Fanny de Beauharnais, née **Marie-Anne-Françoise Mouchard** (4 October 1737–2 July 1813), married Count Claude de Beauharnais in 1753 and later became godmother to their great-niece Joséphine. After separating from her husband, Beauharnais hosted a salon and devoted herself to literature. Her works—poetry, long poems, novels, from her *Mélanges de poésies fugitives et de prose sans conséquence* in 1772 to her *Le Voyage de Zizi et d'Azor* in 1811—were sometimes attributed to Dorat and other male friends.¹¹

Louise Swanton Belloc, née **Anne-Louise Chassériau Swanton** (1 October 1796–6 November 1881), born in La Rochelle, published her first translation in 1818 and began writing for the *Revue encyclopédique*. She married Jean-Hilaire Belloc in 1821; the poet Hilaire Belloc was her grandson. Belloc knew Hugo, Stendhal, and Lamartine, but also Dickens, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and Maria Edgeworth; sadly, her correspondence was later destroyed. She translated Dickens, Gaskell, Scott, Moore, Goldsmith, Byron, Edgeworth, and Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, herself authoring over forty books including a life of Byron. Belloc often collaborated with her close friend Adélaïde de Montgolfier, alongside whom she is buried.¹²

Louise-Angélique Bertin (15 January 1805–26 April 1877) was born in Roches, daughter of Louis François Bertin, owner of the *Journal des Débats*. She studied counterpoint with the teacher of Berlioz and Liszt. Her works included an opéra-comique in 1827, *Le Loup-garou*, and the opera *Fausto* in 1831. In 1836, the Paris Opéra staged her *La Esmeralda*, with libretto by Victor Hugo, performed for only six nights due to rowdy audiences. Critics were condescending to this polio survivor, but Berlioz dedicated to her the first version of his *Les Nuits d'été*. Bertin also left twelve cantatas, some instrumental work, five chamber symphonies, and two volumes of poetry, the first of them being awarded a prize by

10 Jacqueline Letzter and Robert Adelson, *Women Writing Opera: Creativity and Controversy in the Age of the French Revolution* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001).

11 Erick Noël, *Les Beauharnais, une fortune antillaise, 1756–1796* (Genève: Droz, 2003).

12 Gustave Vapereau, *Dictionnaire universel des contemporains [...]*, 2nd edition (Paris: Hachette et Cie, 1861).

the Académie française.¹³

Adélaïde Charlotte Louise Éléonore, Comtesse de Boigne, known as **Adélaïde de Boigne** (19 February 1781–10 May 1866), born in Versailles, was the playmate of the first *dauphin*. In England in 1798, she married Benoît, Comte de Boigne, separating in 1802. She returned to France in 1804, with ties to Staël and Juliette Récamier. After 1814, her salon united the old nobility with the worlds of politics, diplomacy, and literature. The July Monarchy saw her salon grow more political; Rémusat, visiting in 1832, noted Broglie, Guizot, and Thiers alongside Mérimée. It took ten years for her memoirs to come out unexpurgated, with several aristocratic families attempting to censor them. Boigne was the author of two novels, which appeared posthumously.¹⁴

Amélie-Julie [or **Émilie**] **Candeille** (30/31 July 1767–4 February 1834), born in Paris, performed before the king at the age of seven. She joined a Masonic lodge in 1781, meeting Olympe de Gouges, and debuted at the Académie royale de musique in 1782 as Iphigénie in Gluck's opera. In 1785, she debuted at the Comédie-Française; Talma became a friend. After 1789, Candeille frequented the salons of Mme de Lameth, Helvétius, and Condorcet. She married Jean Simons in 1798 but grew close to the painter Girodet from 1800 until his death in 1824, managing his career. She also published historical novels and contributed to the *Annales de la Littérature et des arts*. She married the painter Antoine-Hilaire-Henri Périé in 1823.¹⁵

Suzanne Rosette [or **Rosine**] **de Chabaud-Latour** (15 September 1794– 28 May 1860), born in Nîmes, was the governess of François Guizot's children. She published an English language manual and translated several works of John Newton, abolitionist author of the hymn "Amazing Grace." After 1830, she became active in the evangelical chapel on rue Taitbout in Paris, frequented by Protestant society including Staël's daughter Albertine, whose husband the Duc de Broglie worked for abolition under the July Monarchy.¹⁶

Louise-Marie-Victoire "Victorine" de Chastenay (11 April 1771–9 May 1855), born in Paris, studied the sciences and Latin, German,

13 Grove Music Online.

14 Françoise Wagnier, *La Comtesse de Boigne 1781–1866* (Paris: Flammarion, 1998).

15 Grove Music Online; Jacqueline Letzter et al., *Women Writing Opera* (2001).

16 Daniel Robert, *Textes et documents relatifs à l'histoire des Eglises réformées en France Période 1800–1830* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1962).

English, Spanish, Italian, and music as a child. She became abbess of Épinal in 1785, though she took no vows; the abbey was dissolved in 1789. As the Revolution became violent, the family fled Paris to Burgundy, where Chastenay's father was denounced in 1794, though acquitted at trial. Chastenay began translating in 1797—Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*, Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho*—publishing her own works from 1802–1816: *Le Calendrier de Flore*; *Du Génie des peuples anciens*; *Les Chevaliers normands en Italie et en Sicile*. *De l'Asie ou considérations religieuses, philosophiques et littéraires sur l'Asie* followed in 1832, and lastly her memoirs for 1771–1815 in 1896. These had seen twenty-four editions by 1987. Unmarried, Chastenay lived in relative isolation after 1816.¹⁷

Louise Colet, née Revoil de Servannes (15 August 1810–9 March 1876), born in Aix-en-Provence, married Mouriès Hippolyte Raymond Colet, a professor at the Paris Conservatoire de musique, in 1834. In 1835, Colet published her first book of poems, winning a prize from the Académie française and going on to win three further prizes from that institution. Her salon was frequented by Hugo, Musset, Vigny, Baudelaire, and other painters and politicians. In 1846, she met Gustave Flaubert, a young unknown, in the sculptor James Pradier's studio. The liaison did not last, though Colet left her husband in 1847. She also wrote prose. Flaubert later attacked her work, unlike Hugo who admired it.¹⁸

Marie Louise Sophie de Grouchy [or de Condorcet] (8 April 1764–8 September 1822), born in Meulan, married Marie Jean Antoine Nicolas de Caritat, Marquis de Condorcet in 1786. Condorcet started a salon attended by Turgot, Beaumarchais, Gouges, and Staël alongside visitors such as Jefferson, Beccaria, and perhaps Adam Smith. The Cercle Social, committed to equal rights for women, met at her house. When her husband went into hiding, Condorcet encouraged him to write and edited his *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain*, 1795. Condorcet's most important publication is her *Lettres sur la sympathie*, added in 1798 to her translation of Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* and then neglected. She later edited her husband's complete

17 Olivier Grandjean, *Quelques femmes célèbres de Bourgogne. Victorine de Chastenay, érudite et mémorialiste sous la Révolution et l'Empire* (Vievy: Editions de l'escargot savant, 2010).

18 Francine du Plessix Gray, *Rage and Fire: Life of Louise Colet - Pioneer Feminist, Literary Star, Flaubert's Muse* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994).

works.¹⁹

Marie Sophie Risteanu Cottin (22 March 1770–25 August 1807), born in Paris, married Jean Paul Marie Cottin in 1789. Denounced as an aristocrat in 1793, he was found lifeless in his bed; his widow paid a large part of their fortune to Fouquier-Tinville in a vain attempt to save two family members. Cottin wrote *Claire d'Albe*, 1799, in two weeks, published anonymously, and gave a friend the proceeds; the success of *Malvina*, 1800, and *Amélie Mansfield*, 1802, revealed her identity. Cottin declined to publish her poetry; her poem *La Prise de Jéricho* with its Jewish heroine was published posthumously. Other novels preceded her early death.²⁰

Marie de Vichy-Chamrond, Marquise du Deffand (25 September 1696–23 August 1780), born in the family château in Burgundy, married the Marquis du Deffand at twenty-two. In Regency Paris, she frequented libertine circles and met Voltaire. In 1742 she began her correspondence with the great names of the age: Voltaire, Walpole, d'Alembert, Lespinasse, the Duchesse de Luynes. She opened her salon in 1749 to Voltaire, d'Alembert, Fontenelle, Marivaux, Helvétius, to painters, sculptors, and architects. Losing her sight at fifty-six, du Deffand took her niece Julie de Lespinasse as a reader, separating from her vehemently after discovering that Lespinasse was meeting salon guests independently.²¹

Jeanne Deroin (31 December 1805–2 April 1894), born in Paris, married Antoine Ulysse Desroches in 1832 but refused to take his name. In 1848, she and Désirée Gay co-founded *La Politique des Femmes* (later *L'Opinion des femmes*), a journal for women by a society of workers. In 1849, Deroin became the first woman to campaign in a French legislative election. Proudhon thought her eccentric, and even Sand and d'Agoult found her initiative misplaced. That year, Deroin was elected to the central committee of an organization linking over a hundred workers' associations. A police raid in 1850 put Deroin in prison until 1851. She left for England after the 1851 *coup d'État*, dying in poverty despite a

19 Thierry Boissel. *Sophie de Condorcet, femme des Lumières, 1764–1822* (Paris: Presses de la Renaissance, 1988).

20 Silvia Lorusso, *Le Charme sans la beauté, vie de Sophie Cottin* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2018).

21 Inès Murat, *Madame du Deffand, 1696–1780: la lettre et l'esprit* (Paris: Perrin, 2003).

government pension after 1871.²²

Marceline Félicité Josèphe Desbordes-Valmore (20 June 1786–23 July 1859), born in Douai, set out for Guadeloupe in 1801 with her mother, who died in 1803. Desbordes returned to Douai, becoming an actress at the age of sixteen. She met Talma, Marie Dorval, and Mademoiselle Mars. From 1808–1812, Desbordes was engaged, but the fiancé's family refused a marriage to a former actress. Desbordes resumed acting. In 1817, she married Prosper Lanchantin, known as Valmore. In 1819 Desbordes-Valmore published *Élégies et Romances*. Several more volumes of poetry followed. Her works earned her a royal pension and several academic distinctions. Her admirers include Sainte-Beuve, Balzac, Baudelaire, Verlaine, and Aragon.²³

Julienne Joséphine Gauvin [or **Juliette Drouet**] (10 April 1806–11 May 1883), born in Fougères, lost her mother at birth, her father in 1807, and was placed with a wet-nurse, then in a convent, before being raised by an uncle. Around 1825, she became the mistress of the sculptor James Pradier. He encouraged her to act, and she began in 1828, taking her uncle's name. Though booed in *Marie Tudor*, 1833, Drouet was extremely beautiful; Victor Hugo fell in love. She abandoned acting and devoted herself to him. In 1852, having organized his flight from the Second Empire, Drouet accompanied Hugo to exile. He rented a house for her within eyesight, though later cheating on her with her chambermaid. She wrote him over 22,000 letters during the fifty years of their liaison. He did not attend her funeral.²⁴

Claire Louisa Rose Bonne, Duchesse de Duras, née de Coëtnempren de Kersaint, known as **Claire de Duras** (27 February 1777–16 January 1828), born in Brest, left France for Martinique at her father's death in 1793, then the United States, Switzerland, and London where she married Amédée Bretagne Malo de Durfort, Duc de Duras in 1797, returning to Paris in 1800. During the Restoration, she furthered Chateaubriand's political career, while her salon became a center for Parisian literary and social life. At Chateaubriand's insistence, Duras published *Ourika* anonymously in 1823, about an African heroine, one of the three novels

22 Didier, Béatrice, Antoinette Fouque, and Mireille Calle-Gruber, eds. *Dictionnaire universel des créatrices*, 3 vols (Paris: Éditions des femmes, 2013).

23 Aimée Boutin, *Maternal Echoes: The Poetry of Marceline Desbordes-Valmore and Alphonse de Lamartine* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2001).

24 Henri Troyat, *Juliette Drouet: La prisonnière sur parole* (Paris: Flammarion, 1997).

she wrote, along with *Édouard*, 1825, and the unpublished *Olivier ou le Secret*, written in 1822.²⁵

Alexandrine des Écherolles, née **Alexandrine Giraud des Écherolles** (26 September 1779–11 April 1850), born in Moulins, became lady in waiting to the Wurtemberg children from 1807 until her death. She published her memoirs of the Terror, *Quelques années de ma vie*, in 1843.²⁶

Louise Florence Pétronille Tardieu d'Esclavelles d'Épinay, known as **Louise d'Épinay** (11 March 1726–17 April 1783) was the daughter of the Baron d'Esclavelles. Épinay was put in a convent awaiting marriage, then married off at nineteen to the Marquis d'Épinay; his prodigality and adultery led to a separation of property in 1749. Around 1747, she met Rousseau, for whom she prepared the little house known as *l'Hermitage*. The prickly Rousseau moved out in 1757, but the two had a marked influence on each other. Soon after, d'Épinay retired from public life, remaining at home for a select company: Grimm, Diderot, d'Alembert, Marivaux, Marmontel, Saint-Lambert, Suard, Raynal, d'Holbach, Galiani. Voltaire was another friend. She took over Grimm's *Correspondance littéraire* during his absence.²⁷

Jeanne-Justine Fouqueau de Pussy (27 September 1786–1863), founder of the girls' magazine *Journal des Demoiselles*, edited the magazine from 1833–1852. She also wrote children's literature.²⁸

Sophie Gay, née **Marie Françoise Sophie Nichault de la Valette** (1 July 1776–5 March 1852), born in Paris, was presented aged two to Voltaire. In 1793, she married Gaspard Liottier, divorcing in 1799 to marry Jean Sigismond Gay, Baron de Lupigny. Her revolutionary salon drew Benjamin Constant, Chateaubriand, Talma, Juliette Récamier, and the Marquise de Custine. In 1802, Gay published her novel *Laure d'Estell* anonymously, also composing songs and verse romances. In 1813, she published *Léonie de Montbreuse*, then novels, five-act comedies, dramas, and opera librettos. Her restoration salon featured Hugo, Soumet, Lamartine, Vigny, Soulié, Sue,

25 Chantal Bertrand-Jennings, *D'un siècle l'autre: romans de Claire de Duras* (Jaigues: Chasse au Snark, 2001).

26 Germain Sicard, *Justice et politique: la Terreur dans la Révolution française* (Toulouse: Presses de l'Université Toulouse 1 Capitole, 1997).

27 Élisabeth Badinter, *Mme du Châtelet, Mme d'Épinay: ou l'ambition féminine au xviii^e siècle* (Paris: Flammarion, 2006).

28 Wendelin Guentner, *Women Art Critics in Nineteenth-Century France: Vanishing Acts* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2013).

Balzac, Janin, and Dumas; also, the painters Gérard, Girodet-Trioson, Isabey, and Horace Vernet. After 1830, she published several historical novels.²⁹

Anne-Hyacinthe Geille de Saint-Léger [or **Anne-Hyacinthe de Colleville**] (26 March 1761–18 September 1824), born in Paris, published her first novel in 1781. She knew the dramatist La Harpe through her father, a fellow freemason. Colleville also published poems in periodicals and wrote two one-act comedies in prose, 1783–1788, for the boulevard theaters. She published three more novels between 1802–1806.³⁰

Stéphanie Félicité, Marquise de Sillery, Comtesse de Genlis, known as **Félicité de Genlis** (21 January 1746–31 December 1830) married Charles Alexis Brûlart, Marquis de Sillery, Comte de Genlis, in 1763. Genlis joined the Orléans household as a companion to the Duchesse de Chartres, with whose husband she seems to have begun an affair almost at once. She also educated the future King Louis Philippe. Genlis met Rousseau and Voltaire and was the friend of Buffon, Marmontel, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, Talleyrand, and Juliette Récamier; she hosted a salon in 1788–1791. During the Terror, her husband and lover were both guillotined; emigration made writing her primary source of income. Genlis returned to France in 1801, spying for Bonaparte. Her works extend to 140 volumes.³¹

Delphine Gay de Girardin [or **Vicomte de Launay**] (24 January 1804–29 June 1855), daughter of Sophie Gay, born in Aix-la-Chapelle (Aachen), met Nodier, Vigny, Latouche, Soumet, and Deschamps by the age of sixteen, publishing volumes of poetry in 1824 and 1825. She married Émile Delamothe, known as Émile de Girardin, in 1831, abandoning poetry for her dazzling chronicles in the newspaper *La Presse*, 1836–1848. Girardin wrote works of fiction including *La Canne de Monsieur de Balzac*, 1836, prose and verse dramas, and one-act comedies like *La joie fait peur*, 1854. Her salon was frequented by Gautier, Balzac, Musset, Hugo, Desbordes-Valmore, Lamartine, Liszt, Dumas père, and George Sand.³²

29 Henri Malo, *Une muse et sa mère: Delphine Gay de Girardin* (Paris: Émile-Paul Frères, 1924).

30 Claire Buck, ed. *Bloomsbury Guide to Women's Literature* (1992).

31 Bonnie Arden Robb, *Félicité de Genlis: Motherhood in the Margins* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1995).

32 Madeleine Lassere, *Delphine de Girardin: journaliste et femme de lettres au temps du*

Marie Olympe Gouze [or **Olympe de Gouges**] (7 May 1748–3 November 1793), born in Montauban, married a man thirty years her elder in 1765, Louis Yves Aubry. He died in 1766. Gouges reached Paris in the early 1770s and took the name ‘Olympe de Gouges.’ Here, she founded a small troupe of actors, sold in 1787. Her 1784 play *Zamore et Mirza* was staged in 1789 under the title *L’Esclavage des Noirs*. A second abolitionist play and treatise followed. In 1788–1789, Gouges declared herself a monarchist, becoming a republican after 1792. Almost all her writings, notably her 1791 *Déclaration des droits de la femme et de la citoyenne*, call for women to participate in public debate. Gouges also called for the right to divorce and for freedom from religious vows. She was guillotined in 1793.³³

Anne-Marie Lacroix, née **Anne-Marie Allotte de Chancelay** (1732–1802), who was possibly born in 1736, married Théodore Lacroix in 1757. In 1802 she published the anonymous novel *Constantine, ou le danger des préventions maternelles*.³⁴

Henriette Lucy Dillon, Marquise de La Tour-du-Pin Gouvernet (25 February 1770–2 April 1853), born in Paris, married Frédéric Séraphin, Comte de Gouvernet, later Marquis de La Tour-du-Pin, in 1787. Gouvernet was lady-in-waiting to Marie-Antoinette from 1787–1789, witnessing the Estates General, the Women’s March on Versailles, and the *Grande Peur*. During the Terror, she emigrated to New York. She was close to Talleyrand during his exile, returning with her husband in 1796. Bonaparte’s Brumaire coup allowed her husband to resume his diplomatic career, until their son was involved in the Duchesse de Berry’s anti-Orléanist plot of 1831. Following her husband’s death in 1837, Gouvernet moved to Italy. Her memoir was written at fifty and not published until 1906.³⁵

Julie Jeanne Éléonore de Lespinasse (9 November 1732–23 May 1776), born in Lyon, was the natural child of the Comtesse d’Albon and possibly the Comte de Vichy-Chamron. Her alleged father then married the comtesse’s daughter, and Julie was raised as governess

romantisme (Paris: Perrin, 2003).

33 Annie K. Smart, *Citoyennes: Women and the Ideal of Citizenship in Eighteenth-Century France* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware, 2011).

34 Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of Pastellists Before 1800* (London: Unicorn Press, 2006).

35 Caroline Moorehead, *Dancing to the Precipice: The Life of Lucie de la Tour du Pin, Eyewitness to an Era* (New York: HarperCollins, 2009).

to her nephews and nieces, who may also have been her half-siblings. Her aunt, du Deffand, appointed her as reader in her salon when her sight began to fail, an arrangement lasting from 1754–1763, when du Deffand discovered that Lespinasse was receiving salon guests early. Lespinasse opened her own salon in 1764, receiving her aunt's regular guests alongside Condillac, Condorcet, Diderot, Turgot, and others. She inspired lifelong passion in d'Alembert.³⁶

Constance Marie Pipelet or Constance, Princesse de Salm (7 September 1767–13 April 1845), born in Nantes, married Jean-Baptiste Pipelet de Leury in 1789 and settled in Paris, publishing poetry in periodicals. In 1794, her *Sapho, tragédie mêlée de chants* was staged in Paris. In 1795, Pipelet was the first woman admitted to the Lycée des arts, participating in the 1797 *Querelle des femmes auteurs*. She divorced in 1799. Pipelet published epistles, cantatas, and ballads. In 1803, she married Joseph, Count zu Salm-Reifferscheidt-Dyck, who took the title of prince in 1816; she published thereafter as the Princesse de Salm. The couple lived in Germany and in Paris, where Salm held a salon featuring Dumas, Stendhal, and others.³⁷

Marie-Françoise Raoul [or Fanny Raoul] (19 December 1771–9 December 1833), born in Saint-Pol-de Léon, lost her mother in childbirth. Moving to Paris as a young woman, she frequented the salons of Thérèse Tallien, Juliette Récamier, and Germaine de Staël. With the support of Constance de Salm, she published *Opinion d'une femme sur les femmes* in 1801. In 1813, Raoul published the novel *Flaminie ou les erreurs d'une femme sensible* and her *Fragments philosophiques et littéraires*. Three brochures followed, including one on the *Charte constitutionnelle* in 1814. In 1814–1815, Raoul edited and published a liberal periodical, *Le Vénidique*, which she may have largely written herself.³⁸

Claire Élisabeth Jeanne de Vergennes, Comtesse de Rémusat, known as **Claire de Rémusat** (5 January 1780–16 December 1821), daughter of a director of taxes, lost father and grandfather to the guillotine on the same day. In 1796, she married Auguste Laurent de Rémusat, a family friend and widower. In 1802, aged twenty-two, she was chosen by Madame

36 Pierre E. Richard, *Lettres et papiers de famille: Madame du Deffand, Julie de Lespinasse* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2022).

37 Béatrice Didier et al., eds. *Dictionnaire universel des créatrices* (2013).

38 Geneviève Fraisse, *Muse de la raison: la démocratie exclusive et la différence des sexes* (Aix-en-Provence: Alinéa, 1989).

Bonaparte, wife of the First Consul, as lady of honor at the Tuileries. Her husband was named a prefect of the palace. Both rose at court over the years, and the couple hosted a successful salon. Talleyrand penned her portrait in 1811. Rémusat left memoirs and an important correspondence, notably with her husband and with her son Charles.³⁹

Marie-Jeanne Riccoboni, née **Laboras de Mézières** (25 October 1713–7 December 1792) was born in Paris. Her father abandoned them. Housed in a convent and destined to stay there, Marie-Jeanne persuaded her mother to take her back at fourteen. In 1734, she married Antoine François Riccoboni, son of the director of the Comédie italienne. They separated in 1761. Riccoboni first performed in the Comédie italienne in 1734. She frequented the salon of d'Holbach and possibly of Helvétius, befriending Marivaux, Adam Smith, and David Hume, but later withdrew from salon life. After 1757, Riccoboni wrote ten novels. She translated five English plays and wrote one herself. She died in poverty in 1792.⁴⁰

Antoinette Henriette Clémence Robert (6 December 1797–1 December 1872), born in Mâcon, published her first poem, on the birth of the Duc de Bordeaux, in 1820. Robert moved to Paris at her father's death in 1830. Here, from 1844–1864, she published popular historical novels influenced by Eugène Sue on republican and socialist themes; in 1860, she also co-edited the memoirs of Giuseppe Garibaldi.⁴¹

Marie Jeanne 'Manon' Roland de la Platière, née **Phlipon** (17 March 1754–8 November 1793), born in Paris, was placed with a wet nurse until the age of two. At eleven, she was put in a convent. She met the economist Jean Marie Roland de La Platière in 1776, and they married in 1780. Roland joined the Club des Jacobins in 1791; her salon welcomed Brissot, Pétion, Robespierre, and others. Jean Marie became Minister of the Interior in 1792, and Roland played a major role in his ministry. Attacks from the Montagne led her husband to resign. At the arrest of the Girondins, Roland was arrested and imprisoned; she appeared before the Tribunal six days after Gouges. Her husband learned of her

39 Paul de Rémusat, ed. *Mémoires de Madame de Rémusat, 1802–1808*, 3 vols (Paris: Calmann Levy, 1880).

40 Jan Herman, Kris Peeters, and Paul Pelckmans, eds. *Mme Riccoboni, romancière, épistolière, traductrice* (Louvain: Éditions Peeters, 2007).

41 Laure Adler, *À l'aube du féminisme: les premières journalistes (1830–1850)* (Paris: Payot, 1979)

death two days later and committed suicide.⁴²

Amantine Lucile Aurore Dupin de Francueil, Baronne Dudevant [or **George Sand**] (1 July 1804–8 June 1876), born in Paris, wrote over seventy novels and fifty volumes of tales, plays, and political tracts. In 1822, she married François Casimir Dudevant. She moved to Paris in 1831, where she caused scandal: masculine dress, a male pseudonym. Famous by 1832, Sand began a liaison with Mérimée. In 1833, she met Marie Dorval and Musset. Her liaison with Chopin began in 1838; it lasted ten years. At Nohant, she welcomed Liszt, Chopin, d'Agoult, Balzac, Flaubert, and Delacroix. Lamennais, Pierre Leroux, and Louis Blanc helped shape her move toward socialism; Sand inspired Ledru-Rollin and helped found three newspapers. She also wrote autobiography—*Histoire de ma vie*, 1855.⁴³

Virginie de Senancour, née Agathe Eulalie Ursule Pivert de Sénancourt (8 September 1791–11 March 1876), born in Fribourg, began her writing career in 1814 with articles in the *Mercure de France*. She contributed to the *Gazette de France*, the *Diable boiteux*, the *Bonhomme Richard*, and other periodicals, in 1820–1835. Senancour also published short stories and novels from 1820–1827, largely comic and satirical, and the *Réplique à un mal avisé* in 1858.⁴⁴

Adélaïde-Émilie [or **Émilie-Adélaïde**] **Filleul, Marquise de Souza-Botelho** (14 May 1761–19 April 1836), born in Paris, was perhaps the daughter of Louis XV. When her mother died in 1767, Adélaïde was put in a convent, leaving it in 1779 to marry Charles François, Comte de Flahaut de la Billarderie. Talleyrand presided at her salon from 1783–1792; they had a son in 1785. The salon drew Gouverneur Morris, Lavoisier, Condorcet, d'Holbach, Suard, and Marmontel. During the Terror, Flahaut left her husband for London. He was guillotined that year. In 1794, she published *Adèle de Sénange*. In Hamburg, she met Dom José Maria de Sousa Botelho Mourão e Vasconcelos. De Souza returned to France in 1797, publishing *Émilie et Alphonse* in 1799 and *Charles et Marie* in 1802, the year she

42 Siân Reynolds, *Marriage & Revolution. Monsieur and Madame Roland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

43 Elizabeth Harlan, *George Sand* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004).

44 Philippe Gariel, *Deux Études chinoises: Senancour et sa fille Eulalie; Les leçons du voyage extraordinaire d'un jeune Chinois* (Fribourg: Imprimerie de l'Œuvre de Saint-Paul, 1933).

remarried.⁴⁵

Anne-Louise-Germaine Necker, Baronne de Staël-Holstein, known as **Germaine de Staël** (22 April 1766–14 July 1817) was born in Paris, daughter of Jacques Necker, minister of Finance for Louis XVI, and Suzanne Necker, in whose salon she met Buffon, Grimm, Gibbon, and Raynal. In 1786, she married Erik Magnus, Baron Staël von Holstein. Staël found fame with her *Lettres sur les ouvrages et le caractère de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, 1788. Her lover Narbonne was Minister for War in 1791–1792. She left Paris in 1792, returning as a republican in 1795. Exiled by Bonaparte in 1803, Staël continued to publish with European success: the novels *Delphine*, 1802, and *Corinne ou l'Italie*, 1807, and the treatise *De l'Allemagne*, 1810/1813. Her home became a meeting-place for Europe's Romantics, from A.W. Schlegel to Byron, and her great love, Benjamin Constant. Staël also wrote a history of the French Revolution, 1818.⁴⁶

Flore Célestine Thérèse Henriette Tristán y Moscoso [or **Flora Tristan**] (7 April 1803–14 November 1844), born in Paris, was the daughter of a Peruvian aristocrat who died in 1807; the family's home was seized by the state. Hardship helped precipitate Flora's own marriage at seventeen to André Chazal, a mediocre and violent man. Flora escaped in 1825 while pregnant with Aline, future mother of Paul Gauguin. When her family sided with Chazal, Flora left for Peru, where her uncle granted her one fifth of the estate. Flora published *Pérégrinations d'une paria* in 1838. Meanwhile, Chazal abducted Aline. Released from prison, he punctured Flora's lung with a pistol shot and returned to prison for twenty years. Flora committed herself to organizing the working classes, publishing *L'Union ouvrière* in 1843.⁴⁷

Marie Louise Élisabeth Vigée Le Brun (16 April 1755–30 March 1842), born in Paris, was given to a wet nurse until she was six, then put in a convent until 1766. In 1776, she married Jean Baptiste Pierre Lebrun and was admitted to paint for the court of Louis XVI. Her portraits sold

45 André de Maricourt, *Madame de Souza et sa famille. Les Marigny, les Flahaut, Auguste de Morny (1761–1836)* (Paris: Émile-Paul, 1907).

46 John Claiborne Isbell, *Staël, Romanticism and Revolution. The Life and Times of the First European* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023).

47 Stéphane Michaud, *Flora Tristan: La paria et son rêve* (Paris: Sorbonne nouvelle, 2003).

for 12,000 francs, of which she saw just six, the rest pocketed by her husband. Vigée Le Brun painted mainly portraits. In 1789, a *sans-culotte* crowd sacked her home; Vigée Le Brun fled the capital with twenty francs, leaving a million to her husband. She toured Europe's absolutist courts in triumph. Finding Napoleonic France unpleasant, Vigée Le Brun went to England for three years, meeting Byron, Benjamin West, and Lady Hamilton.⁴⁸

48 François Pitt-Rivers, *Madame Vigée Le Brun* (Paris: Gallimard, 2001).