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To Live, To Love, To Labor: Challenging the Rigidity of the Public and Private Spheres

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TO LIVE, TO LOVE, TO LABOR: CHALLENGING THE RIGIDITY OF THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPHERES

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate School of
Clemson University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
History

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Accepted by:
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ABSTRACT

Jürgen Habermas’s bourgeois public sphere theory led many historians to adopt new categories of social divisions. More specifically, gender historians utilized the theory in order to explain the exclusion of women from the political realm. Imparting male and female classifications onto the public and private spheres, in turn, led to the claim of complete social immobility for women. In the 1990s and 2000s, however, gender historians began to question the rigidity of the gendered spheres. This study adopts this line of argument by looking at the lives of Madame de Staël, George Sand, and Lucie Aubrac. These women present three different instances of female participation in the political realm.

Women greatly impacted French history throughout the centuries. The French Revolution gave birth to radicals and conservatives alike, but it also provided the perfect backdrop for a woman to implant herself in the public sphere. Anne Louise Germaine de Staël was such a woman. Before and during the French Revolution, she used the men in her life to participate in politics. Always on the cusp of revolution, the country once again went into upheaval in 1848. George Sand was there, and she both immersed herself in passion and dedicated herself to political thought. Nearly a century later, in yet another revolutionary time in French history, Lucie Aubrac joined the Resistance under Vichy. A schoolteacher, a wife, and mother, she actively thwarted the social system in order to counter oppressive control. Studying these women shows how some women were capable of navigating the tentative relationship between the public and private spheres.
DEDICATION

To mom and dad,

for telling me I make your hearts happy.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Graduate school has been a journey, and many people helped me along the way.

To Dr. P. C. Anderson, thank you for your invaluable words of wisdom. I wish to someday inspire others in the same way you have inspired me.

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I have the best family; of this I am absolutely sure. My sister and brother-in-law are two of my greatest champions. Thank you, Ashley and Shane, for never doubting me. Last, but in no way least, I want to thank my parents, Kenneth and Melinda Neil. Thank you for encouraging me to read, to write, to try. I have made it this far because of you.
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INTRODUCTION

THE SEPARATION OF SPHERES

The term “other” is fascinating. It does not mean “the same” or “similar to.” It does not try to show comparison. Grand meta-narratives spanning long time periods or sweeping landscapes avoid the discussion of the word, but it constantly attracts historians. In fact, this five-letter word connotes a whole field of history dedicated to the research and analysis of what society deems “different.” With the introduction of post-modernism, history of the “other” grew into a rejection of the consensus history accepted by a portion of the historical community. When applied to historiography, the “other” opens up the fields of post-colonialism, race, and even gender.

Social interaction between “others” and the dominant groups does not occur by itself. Instead, it takes a combination of individuals, social structures, and governments. Their relationship to one another creates a larger social discourse. Post-modernists and cultural historians are not the only groups to analyze the organization of culture. In using political and economic theory, Jürgen Habermas researched and wrote on the creation and transformation of the bourgeois public sphere. Habermas argued that with the introduction of a more politically cognizant population, some power transferred from the government to the people. This created a sector of society dedicated to political and social discourse: the public sphere. At the same time, a private sphere within the household also developed. On its own, this theory may seem irrelevant to any other type
of history besides political. Its application, however, stretches across many genres of history, finding utility amongst gender historians.

With the introduction of post-modernism and “other” history, gender historians attempted to find ways in which to enhance their scholarship. Feminists in the field found relevancy in Habermas. In discussing the role of women in society, gender historians adopted the bourgeois public sphere theory in order to explain the separation of genders. The combination of the second wave of feminism with Habermas created a whole school of thought. The gendered public and private spheres grew to be one of the dominant approaches within the French historiographical community of the 1980s and 1990s. Recently, however, other historians have called into question the rigidity of the gender divide. Exploring the lives of Madame de Staël, George Sand, and Lucie Aubrac shows how women were capable of maneuvering between the public and private spheres.

Jürgen Habermas and the Bourgeois Public Sphere

Jürgen Habermas spent his life trying to understand systems of power. He attended the Universities of Göttingen and Bonn, followed by the Institute for Social Research, where he studied philosophy and sociology under Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno.¹ Perhaps the impact of his childhood can best be seen through his decision to join the Frankfurt School of thought, which “views contemporary Western society as maintaining a problematic conception of rationality inherently destructive in its

¹ “Jürgen Habermas Biography,” The European Graduate School: Graduate and Postgraduate Studies http://www.egs.edu/library/juergen-habermas/biography/.
impulse towards domination.”

Living under a totalitarian dictatorship spurred Habermas in joining the school that strove to show how technology and economic progress changed, and possibly threatened, the formation of society.

Imbued with Marxist theory, the Frankfurt school criticized both capitalism and Soviet socialism, and thus tried to create a new pattern of social evolution. This approach could be seen throughout Habermas’s work until he decided to distance himself from the Frankfurt School. A propensity for writing political theory developed. In critiquing bourgeois democracy, Habermas aimed to show the decline of politics. He wanted to explain the modern society, and how it reached its current state. The Frankfurt School, Habermas believed, needed to reevaluate its radical social theory. Since it did not seem to be doing so, he took it upon himself to develop new concepts.

As David Held explains, Habermas wanted to develop a theory that showed the “self-emancipation of people from domination.” In other words, Habermas desired to explain the transition from a powerful ruler controlling the state to a more democratic polity. He tried, and some would consider succeeded, to explain the changes of power in political and economic structures and how those changes in turn created new social strata. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* revolves around the construction

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2 “Jürgen Habermas Biography.”
5 Ibid., 3.
6 Held, 250.
(and ultimate disintegration) of the public sphere as it coincided with the rise of bourgeois society.\(^7\)

In showing the rise of the bourgeois state, Habermas claimed that the growing middle classes replaced the old practices of absolutist regimes. Instead of singular control and representation, the bourgeoisie created a public sphere “in which state authority was publicly monitored through informed and critical discourse by the people.”\(^8\) For Habermas, the construction of the public sphere always revolved around the growth and changes in economics and politics. The rise of an open market created the necessity for a more open discourse in which the government took people’s needs into account. Moreover, the new public sphere appeared whenever a group of private people came together in a public setting. Habermas explains:

> The bourgeois public sphere may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people coming together as a public; they soon claimed the public sphere regulated from above against the public authorities themselves, to engage them in a debate over the general rules governing relations in the basically privatized but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labor.\(^9\)

Individuals not only gathered, they openly discussed the government, the economy, and the social realm as a whole.

Habermas’s discussion of the public sphere explored concurrently the development of the private sphere. In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, the private sphere began as an attachment to the house. Instead of wealth or

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\(^7\) Burger, Thomas, translator’s note to *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* by Jürgen Habermas (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), xi.

\(^8\) Ibid.

power, control over one’s household was the top priority.\(^\text{10}\) Where the public realm referred to the government, the private indicated exclusion from state affairs. “The public was the ‘public authority,’” Habermas explains, “in contrast to everything ‘private.’”\(^\text{11}\) Despite the relationship, the private sphere evolved on its own. It did not emerge as a reactionary entity to balance the public sphere. The private sphere held more independence than that. As Dena Goodman explains, it did not “simply emerge from the rib of Adam.”\(^\text{12}\) Even with the development of the bourgeois sphere, the distinction between public and private remained. An individual might leave his home to partake in the public discourse, but the separation of spheres remained clear.\(^\text{13}\)

European countries throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had words for the private sphere. Even before the period of the bourgeoisie, \textit{privat}, \textit{privé}, and \textit{private} all referred to anyone “not holding public office or an official position.”\(^\text{14}\) Above all, the term “private” referred to the household and anything attached to it. This characteristic became even more vital once the realm of work moved into the public sphere. Once categorized as private, the work place and social organization grew more public under the bourgeois state.\(^\text{15}\) With this evolution, men frequently found themselves outside of the house. The women, however, remained at home. As a result, the household and the female population became the main components of the private sphere.

\(^{10}\) Habermas, 3.
\(^{11}\) Ibid., 11.
\(^{13}\) Habermas, 45.
\(^{14}\) Ibid., 11.
\(^{15}\) Ibid., 152.
Strong supporters of the public and private sphere criticize Habermas. Historian Joan Landes claims Habermas limited himself in his discussion of the creation of the public and private. Habermas, according to Landes, “fails to account for the ways in which a system of [Western] cultural representation eclipsed women’s interests in the private domain and aligned femininity with particularity, interest, and partiality.” In short, Habermas failed to take gender into account. He focused solely on politics and economics, and Landes says further exploration needs to be taken. Whether he is criticized or praised, Habermas provided a framework on which different groups, such as gender historians, could develop their own histories.

Using Habermas to Endorse the Gendered Public and Private Spheres

The propensity of gender historians to use Habermas in their analysis is one of the most intriguing results of the public sphere. With the rise of the New Left and postmodernist theory, a growing desire to write history about the “other” led to a more diverse field of monographs. Especially for feminists, Habermas’s theory created a new opportunity for historical analysis of culture and society. This was not a discussion of how politics or economics formed society, but instead of how gender roles ultimately defined (and were defined by) the new social structure. The distinction went beyond the household and public discourse. Feminist historians claimed the public and private spheres related directly to the definitions of masculinity and femininity.

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In the introduction to her anthology *Feminism: the Public and Private*, Joan Landes readily admits “feminists did not invent the vocabulary of public and private.” She goes further to claim that “Jürgen Habermas’s theory of the public sphere has been an especially fruitful point of departure for many feminists.” Landes acknowledges that gender historians did not coin the terms “public” and “private.” They simply utilize the concepts of Habermas in order to explain the dynamics between men and women. Moreover, the terms “public” and “private” mean something different for gender historians than, suppose, economists or political scientists. They mean the subjugation of one gender at the hands of the other. In more simplistic terms: the power held over women by men.

Before this discussion progresses further, one must understand what is meant by the term “gender” and how it applies to history. To start, it means the social construction of sexual identity. Rather than based on biology, perceptions and communal interactions determine one’s gender. Historians often qualify it as a distinguishing social factor by which individuals define themselves against other people. On a much broader note, in the book *Gender and Class in Modern Europe* Laura L. Frader and Sonya O. Rose write that gender “refers to both historically and socially constituted relationships and to a tool of analysis that historians can use to understand how social relationships and cultural categories are connected.” With this interpretation, gender evolves into not simply a mode of social distinction but also into a realm of historical interpretation.

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17 Landes, *Feminism, the Public and Private*, 1.
18 Ibid., 2.
One of the most famous proponents of using gender in historical analysis is Joan Wallach Scott. She distinguishes between sex and gender, with the former being a physical attribute and the latter a social construction.\textsuperscript{20} In her study \textit{Gender and the Politics of History}, Scott addresses the topic of gender and its utility in historiography. The rise of feminism in history led to a surge of new theories dedicated to the subject of women. Not all approaches coincide, but Scott finds this useful in the historiographical field. There are discussions of patriarchy, Marxism, and the production of identities.\textsuperscript{21} According to the author, contradictions and differing viewpoints allow for a more open and lively discourse. However, in order to promote said discourse, historians must abide by three terms: “woman as a subject, gender, and politics.”\textsuperscript{22} As those guidelines and topics are upheld, a healthy debate happens naturally.

Scott’s discussion of the different approaches sheds light on the complexity of gender history. For this analysis, it is important to focus on her explanation of Carroll Smith-Rosenberg and the subject of women’s experiences as shaped by men. Of this topic Scott writes:

The central aspect of this approach is the exclusive focus on female agency, on the casual role played by women in their history, and on the qualities of women’s experience that sharply distinguish it from men’s experience. Evidence consists of women’s expressions, ideas, and actions. Explanation and interpretation are framed within the terms of the female sphere: by examinations of personal experience, familial and domestic structures, collective (female) reinterpretations of social definitions of women’s role, and networks of female friendship that provided emotional as well as physical sustenance.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 33.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 24.
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid, 20.
Following this explanation, gender can be used as an analysis on the creation of women’s identities in relation to other men.

It is these differences that drove historians to analyze the experiences of men and women. Their interactions between and against one another formed certain types of identities. Additionally the role men and women played in society moved to the forefront of discussion. The gender norms, according to Mary Louise Roberts’ *Disruptive Acts*, created the spheres of society that in turn manipulated the economic system. With this type of logic, many feminist historians found it difficult to discuss the roles of men and women without utilizing the concept of the public and private spheres.

In practice, historians use the separate spheres to discuss multiple eras in a country’s history. In terms of French history, the time period right before the French Revolution up until Vichy France provide a tumultuous backdrop on which to explore the dichotomy of gender and social structures. Joan Landes’ book *Women in the Public Sphere: In the Age of the French Revolution* explores the transformation of women’s role from the Old Regime to the new order during the French Revolution. One might suspect that the Revolution brought about new and universal liberties for all French citizens. However, this was not the case for everyone, particularly the elite. In fact, under the absolutist Old Regime, women in the upper strata of society held more power and influence than in subsequent decades. They oftentimes took part in political discussion.

When women were left out, the universal nature of exclusion made such occurrences less

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“exceptional.”26 Citizens viewed it as a common occurrence, not something to be sensationalized or discussed.

The French Revolution changed the dynamic between men and women in society. While women held some credence in the Old Regime, the revolutionary government reversed any forward progress. Instead of being allowed in the public sphere, the revolutionaries wanted to relegate women to the home, where they possessed few rights. Landes analyzes this evolution by looking to the bourgeois public sphere in the Republic. She explores the role virtues and the body played in the construction and maintenance of the separate spheres. Through Landes’ monograph, the fear men held comes through. Some women spoke for the rights of their gender, but the politicians refused to listen. In her conclusion, Landes begins by writing, “This book has arrived at an introduction, not a conclusion.”27 She feels her discussion shows the framework, and possible beginnings, of modern feminism.28 With the reconstruction of society came the reconstruction of gender, and women, it seemed, failed to gain more independence.29

Joan Kelly gives several other reasons why women lost social influence. With the revolution came the end of the “military, juridical, and political powers of the aristocratic families” and the introduction of the “patriarchal household as the basic social unit.”30 The destruction of the aristocracy created a social void that needed to be filled. Where once an elaborate network of families and privileges defined society, the family unit grew to be ultimate social entity. The singular family structure allowed for the men to be

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26 Landes, Women and the Public Sphere, 2.
27 Ibid., 201.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid., 203.
30 Ibid., 22.
heads of the household and the women to be the heart of the home. In this, Kelly emphasizes that the public and private sphere became more defined and even more polarized.

Nineteenth-century France provides historians with the opportunity to analyze a more established social structure. During the years of the French Revolution, the cultural and political systems constantly evolved. Dena Goodman expounds,

The eighteenth century was the historical moment in which public and private spheres were in the process of articulation, such that no stable distinction can or could be made between them- a moment in which individuals needed to negotiate their actions, discursive and otherwise, across constantly shifting boundaries between ambiguously defined realms of experience.\(^{31}\)

The constant changes in authority and social unrest prohibited the strict public and private spheres from completely solidifying their divisions of society. Individuals tried to define themselves in the time of turmoil, but this made negotiating the public and private realms difficult. Despite the upheavals, the demarcation of stricter social boundaries continued.

People living in the nineteenth-century saw a continuation of gender separation. The growth in modernity also led to the growth of the family unit. Nature, it seemed, gifted women with the perfect attributes for living in the private sphere. Because of this, historians discuss the division of society based on gender “norms.” According to Mary Louise Roberts, the “regulatory norms of gender” dictated the roles of women as “wives and mothers.”\(^{32}\) As a result, women acted as the moral compass of society. They

\(^{31}\) Goodman, 14.
possessed a maternal nature that made them perfect for raising a family, but hindered them from being able to perform in any type of public capacity.33

The biological nature of women provided men an opportunity to justify the removal of women from politics. A woman’s femininity gave her a wide range of emotions. From the highest of highs to the lowest of lows, the psychological range varied greatly depending on a woman’s mood or her surroundings. Because of this, men believed women incapable of making hard decisions with haste. Additionally, if they allowed women into the public realm of politics, then who was to be at home raising the children? Oftentimes with gender history, historians must explain the creation of one identity in relation to another. Masculinity defined itself in opposition to femininity. As a result, men excluded women in order to maintain their position as males. It is through these facts and distinctions that many gender historians analyze the public and private spheres of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Following the nineteenth-century, World War II provides another area of discussion in the relationship between gender and social divisions in France. Desolation both on and off the battlefield made World War II seemingly inevitable. When Germany invaded France at the beginning of World War II, the French government signed an agreement. It allowed for German troops to occupy half of the country while a provisional French government (still under strong German influence) held control over the southern portion. Known as Vichy, this period marks another era in which gender historians analyze the relationship between gender and social divisions in France.

As often happens in times of war, the women of France found themselves alone on the home front. With the responsibilities of men and women, the female citizens struggled to create an identity under the wartime circumstances. This proved difficult, however. Women struggled to maintain control under a government desperate to promote a thriving France. Instead of focusing solely on the women, gender historians also discuss role the government played in the creation of a new social order.

In her monograph *Reign of Virtue: Mobilizing Gender in Vichy France*, Miranda Pollard addresses the role the government played in creating personal social identities. Pollard believes:

Women were key actors. They had to be addressed in ways that circumscribed and delimited their action and their active participation. Women had to be redefined, imagined, organized, or located appropriately in social space, according to the needs of the National Revolution. ‘Returning women to the home’ or rendering women ‘barefoot and pregnant’ was not a self-evident element of the *Travail, Famille, Patrie* agenda, but one that had to be thought out, organized, and implemented.\(^3^4\)

The public and private sphere grew into something more than a simple division of space within society. Instead, some gender historians claim it became a means of organization and control for the Vichy government. Kristen Childers discusses the role of identities within gender historiography. She writes:

Scholars have consistently demonstrated the decisive role of gender in defining public discourse and policy on fundamental concerns of social reform and national identity. This approach has been particularly salient in historiography of the Third Republic and the Vichy regime, where links between gender identities and the public good were at the forefront of French debates on national decline, war, population growth, and social citizenship. Much of the literature on gender in modern France has, quite

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appropriately, focused on representation of women and their relationship to the nation as mothers and producers of future generations. While gender historiography focuses heavily on women, a few different approaches do exist. Women were not the only citizens expected to play their part within the spheres of society. Vichy and the proceeding government also expected the few remaining men to maintain a firm presence both at home and in the public.

According to Childers, men actively participated in society, both willingly and unwillingly. The author takes an interesting approach to researching gender in Vichy. Her focus, unlike many, is not on women. Men saw their paternity as “a national duty eminently worth of recognition.” Ideally, men acted as representations of the government within the home. For Childers, the public sphere existed within the private because men became extensions of the political realm. The relationship, however, did not go both ways.

Through the historical analysis of Childers and other gender historians, the role of the public and private sphere imbeded itself within gender historiography. Historians like Joan Landes, Mary Louise Roberts, and Kristen Childers, (along with countless others) helped the establishment and growth of French historiography. The use of Habermas’s public and private spheres allowed for the inquiry into aspects of cultural and “other” history. Male and female interaction made up an important part of social dynamics of the past. This being the case, other historians began to question the strict divisions of the spheres. Instead, they promoted a type of fluidity between public and private.

36 Ibid., 8.
37 Ibid., 84.
Disputing the Gendering of the Bourgeois Public Sphere

With the evolution of the field came a new wave of historians that countered the separate spheres theory. Amanda Vickery argues the use of the public and private spheres in analyzing history to be irrelevant. Historians, she asserts, transitioned from looking at women as passive participants to seeing them as capable of controlling their own lives.\(^{38}\) In asserting this, the gendered spheres became trivial, a not very useful concept. She remarks:

As a conceptual device, separate spheres has also proved inadequate. The economic chronologies upon which the accounts of women's exclusion from work and their incarceration in domesticity depend are deeply flawed. At a very general level, eighteenth and early nineteenth-century women were associated with home and children, while men controlled public institutions, but then this rough division could be applied to almost any century or any culture - a fact which robs the distinction of analytical purchase. If, loosely speaking, there have always been separate spheres of gender power, and perhaps there still are, then 'separate spheres' cannot be used to explain social and political developments in a particular century, least of all to account for Victorian class formation.\(^{39}\)

Vickery argues the gendered spheres’ universality and constant presences discredits their use in historiography. Other historians agree with this notion on a variety of different levels.

The book *France After Revolution: Urban Life, Gender and the New Social Order* takes a different stance from Joan Landes in the discussion of the public and private spheres in French historiography. Instead of following the model of the exclusion of women in politics, Denise Davidson argues the public sphere always included women.


\(^{39}\) Ibid., 413.
Not only were women present, they also played a vital role in maintaining a working society. Davidson explains:

Mixed-sex sociability went hand in hand with the desire to build a new social and political order, and it helps to explain why women’s participation in public life was essential: this heteronormative function could not have operated without women. Confusion about gender, class, and sexuality, as well as the political and social significance of the family, reverberated through French society in the wake of the Revolution. As a result, men and women from across the social spectrum struggled to comprehend these notions in print and in their everyday interchanges. It was desirable, even necessary, for women to appear in public along with men so that all could act out and observe—and through these mechanisms, construct—new post-revolutionary social norms.  

After the French Revolution, a new social system came into place. Men and women had to work together to negotiate the overwhelming changes. Females became a necessary component of the public sphere.

Davidson’s resistance to gendered definitions of the public and private sphere makes her argument intriguing. She does not completely deny the presence of a public and private sphere, but instead promotes the idea of women’s mobility between the two. In spite of this fact, the inclusion of women in the public sphere did not mean complete equality. According to Davidson, the women’s presence in the public sphere allowed men to enforce their own masculine identity. Furthermore, some clubs prohibited female admittance. This occurred in limited circumstances. Once the social order solidified in some regards, women even obtained jobs in the cafés—the main location of public discourse exchange.  

41 Ibid., 137-138.  
42 Ibid., 154.
In her introduction, Davidson also presents other historians’ rejection of the separation of gender in the French public and private spheres. To start, Mona Ozouf believes in “French singularity.” For her, French men and women spent their extracurricular time together, thus explaining their connectedness and lack of a strong feminist movement. The presences of some women in politics quelled the passionate demands for women’s rights. Ozouf’s argument rests on the notion that men and women continued to participate together in both spheres throughout French history.

In addition to Ozouf, Elizabeth Colwill explored the concept of the acceptance of women in the public sphere and their admittance into the world of labor. Colwill argues La Décade Philosophique, Littérare et Politique, brought the phrase “empire of woman” back into use. As the phrase suggests, women became a defining part of society. La Décade “reemerged as the centerpiece of a positive, and purportedly universal, notion of woman.” Colwill denies the existence of gendered spheres because of the men’s tolerance of women. This tolerance, however, did not mean complete acceptance.

This dichotomy between exclusion and acceptance seems to imbed itself within the work of historians refuting the influence of gender in the public and private spheres. Both Davidson and Colwill ascertain the notion that while women existed within the public sphere, men still considered themselves superior. For them, society excluded the divisions physically, but the gender divide still existed psychologically.

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43 Davidson, 3.
45 Ibid.
46 Ibid., 282.
Many gender historians today support this notion of female mobility between the public and private spheres. Some women were able to participate in politics. According to Joseph Bradley, “Thus disenfranchised individuals could appear in public, represent themselves and their projects before their peers, frame public opinion, organize meetings, and hold public authority accountable, they could even assert a claim to represent others.” Perhaps this was not the case for everyone, for there are still instances in history of women’s exclusion. Nevertheless, there were cases of women involving themselves in the public realm.

Three different case studies provide a backdrop in which to analyze how women negated this established stereotype of the gendered spheres. Periods of crisis dominate the historical and cultural fabric of France. Politics, class struggles, patriotic fervor: all play a part in the development of a diverse and intricate history. From the French Revolution to the present day, individuals interacted within the larger framework of uprisings. Outside circumstances dictated a large portion of an individual’s life. This oftentimes inspired extraordinary action that went beyond the established social norms.

Germaine de Staël, George Sand, and Lucie Aubrac are three such women who lived during periods of unrest in France. The interplay between their private and public lives provides a window into the evolution of life for French women. These three women managed to make a mark in a society that stifled women’s activism. Whether through political involvement or secretive insubordination, they interacted with their contemporary circumstances in significant ways.

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For Madame de Staël, her devotion to her father and loyalty to her lovers spurred her political interactions. Her dominant nature oftentimes dictated her personal and public relationships. On the other hand, George Sand’s private beliefs did not reflect her public actions. While she herself partook in political discussions surrounding the 1830 and 1848 revolutions, she did not believe in universal suffrage for women. Under the Vichy regime, Lucie Aubrac partook in the clandestine assignments of the Resistance, while also acting as both a loving wife and mother. The dangers of the environments in which they lived did not deter these women from loving fully and partaking in the government that failed to grant them equality.

French history shows attempts to avoid such involvement by containing females to the private sphere. Through laws, social structures, and unspoken understandings, divisions limited women’s public activity. The enforcement of these divisions oftentimes depended on the ideals of the woman’s husband or lover. Germaine de Staël, George Sand, and Lucie Aubrac had private relationships that spilled over into their public lives. In spite of the limitations put towards their gender, these three women proactively engaged with their social and political structures in crisis. They lived during tumultuous times. They loved with their hearts. They labored for political change.

The following chapters will discuss Madame de Staël, George Sand, and Lucie Aubrac in relation to their environments, relationships, and political activities. Each aspect of their lives intertwined with the other, creating an extraordinary personal and social dynamic. In addition, there will be a closer examination of the modes in which Madame de Staël, George Sand, and Lucie Aubrac contradicted the stereotypical reality
of the public and private spheres. Every period of crisis in France brought its own set of challenges and obstacles to face. These three women made their mark, and they did so in their own ways.
As an intellectual woman living in a time of crisis, Germaine de Staël managed an extraordinary feat. The attack on women’s sensibilities and physiologies threatened their participation in the public sphere. Madame de Staël, however, contradicted the social stereotypes. She did so, not to bring more rights to her gender, but because she had such a capable mind. Furthermore, Madame de Staël’s relationships and political activities co-existed in a singular realm. She did not abandon her private life at home while participating in public activities. Instead, Madame de Staël used her relationship and her men to navigate the volatile world of politics in Revolutionary France.

Born in 1766, Germaine de Staël\footnote{Born Anne Louise Germaine Necker} was immersed in the chaotic world of the French Revolution. She grew up in a politically active family; her father Jacques Necker’s tumultuous career as the Finance Minister of France before and in the early stages of the Revolution ensured her exposure to politics. With her father serving in Louis XVI’s government and her mother in charge of a prominent salon, politics presented itself often to the precocious adolescent. She became a sort of novelty for those intellectuals who noticed her in her mother’s establishment. Issues arose, however, when as an adult Germaine wanted to be publically active in a revolutionary society that opposed and was not congenial to elite female involvement. Furthermore, Germaine
experienced several revolutionary events directly. This greatly impacted both her public and personal lives.

In regards to her private life, Madame de Staël’s relationships played a vital role in her development. She felt different types of love for the myriad men with whom she associated. Each played a certain role, depending on the stage of her life. Despite her privileged upbringing, her tumultuous marriage, and her many lovers, Germaine was skeptical of passion. Passion led to suffering and disappointment. Nevertheless, she pursued relationships against the backdrop of the Revolution and its aftermath.

Among all the other men in Germaine’s life, one could not be surpassed. That was her father Jacques Necker, who possessed the key to her endearing love and constant devotion. From the beginning, she was his cherished “Minette,” on whom he doted and thoroughly spoiled. Germaine believed her father to be a magnanimous man. This love caused a strain within the family, for her mother grew jealous of the attention that the two paid to one another. The affection Germaine displayed towards her father did not wane in Germaine’s adulthood.

Throughout Madame de Staël’s maturity, she wrote letters to her father, in which she referred to him affectionately. And when Necker’s health started to deteriorate, Germaine became even more solicitous and implored her father to take care of his health. She writes to him:

These separations rend my heart, and are not such great sorrows a warning from heaven that we should not separate? You who read so well the

bottom of hearts, you ought to see that, more than ever, my life depends on yours. I implore by this life of mine to preserve my children, to take minute care of your health. I feel one would detach oneself from life were it for oneself alone, but when one must think of an entire family, preserve it, my angel, and tremble at the thought of what you poor daughter would suffer should she fear for you.\textsuperscript{51}

Necker became the model by which Germaine measured all other men. While historians often try to construe the relationship as “romantic,” it seems to have been a strong father/daughter connection based on mutual respect and admiration. She attempted to recreate in others the complete understanding felt between she and her father. Germaine would never be fully satisfied, however, and neither her husband nor her lovers met all of her expectations.

During this period, marriage was a paradox for women. It allowed for freedom from their childhood homes, but it also put them under the authority of their husband. They had few rights as wives, but they would have had even fewer as unmarried women. Any rights they possessed focused on education rather than legal rights. Olympe de Gouges states the dilemma facing women in the Declaration of the Rights of Women:

\begin{quote}
Marriage is the tomb of trust and love. The married woman can with impunity give bastards to her husband, and also give them the wealth which does not belong to them. The woman who is unmarried has only one feeble right; ancient and inhuman laws refuse to her for her children the right to the name and the wealth of their father. No new laws have been made in this matter.\textsuperscript{52}
\end{quote}

The inability to inherit her family’s wealth left Germaine in a predicament. She needed to marry, and she wanted to marry someone of high position. If she was to be bound by

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{51} Madame de Staël to Jacques Necker, Coppet, September 16, 1803, in Madame de Staël: Selected Correspondence, ed. Kathleen Jameson-Cooper (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000), 148. \\
\end{flushleft}
vows, she desired a title to accompany them. She, as it turns out, was as ambitious as her father, the successful Protestant Swiss Banker who had a scheme for saving France from bankruptcy and who became (in fact if not in name) the Controller General of France.

One man proved to be a viable option for matrimony. Originally from Sweden, Erik Magnus Staël von Holstein was an official to the French court. The possibility also existed that King Gustav III of Sweden would give him the role of Ambassador to France. This made him appealing to Germaine and her parents. The family imposed several conditions upon the nuptials:

1. The ambassadorship must be guaranteed to Monsieur de Staël for life;
2. If any unforeseen circumstances should terminate his ambassadorship, he was to receive a pension of 20,000 French pounds per annum;
3. Staël had to be raised to the rank of count;
4. Staël had to give the solemn promise never to force his wife to reside in Sweden;
5. Gustavus had to confer upon Staël the Order of the Polar Star;
6. The marriage contract had to be approved and signed by Marie Antoinette.53

Gustav III rejected giving Holstein the Order of the Polar Star and the title of count, but he agreed to all of the other conditions. This appeased Germaine, for she mainly wanted to be the wife of an Ambassador, which meant having access to the French Court and all its luxuries.

The two married on January 14, 1786. Five days later, Germaine wrote in a letter to her mother, “At this moment as that of my death, all my actions are presented before me, and I fear not to leave in your soul the regret of which I am in need.” 54 The newly titled Madame de Staël felt her marriage a type of “death.” It was the death of her old

53 Herold, 61.
life: a comfortable life with her parents whom she loved. There is sadness in her tone, especially if one realizes Germaine married more out of convenience than love. However, in the first years of the marriage, she and her husband both tried to maintain a charade of mutual affection. This façade soon crumbled, however.

Madame de Staël’s marriage shows how her actions both enforced and rejected the limitations of her gender. On the one hand, she wanted to love and be loved in marriage. On the other, she understood hers was a union of political convenience, not love. She often refused her husband the physical intimacy of marriage. Germaine understood the role of sex in a relationship, but she cherished love and friendship more. Sex, she believed, was the physical manifestation of a spiritual connection. Her husband inspired none of these feelings in her.

The correspondence between Monsieur and Madame de Staël exposes the underlying tensions of their relationship. In response to her husband’s suspicions regarding a letter exchange between herself and a Monsieur de Guilbert, Germaine writes:

Do you think that anyone, after the wrong you have done me, and even without that wrong, would have received from me a justification of this length? You are already telling yourself that it is my duty. I could go without lacking it, remain offended and prove that there is nothing for which I should be reproached, but my desire was to persuade and, above all, console you. Happy if I have succeeded in doing so, happy in you know the pride of my character sufficiently well to realize what price I must attach to your happiness to sacrifice for it the most just resentment.

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55 Herold, 63
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.
Her tone is disapproving, almost as if addressing a child. Furthermore, Germaine writes to appease her husband’s desire for an apology. She does not feel guilt for her correspondence, but instead a jaded sense of obligation towards her husband.

Their sorrow over the death of their first child failed to unite the couple. Tensions grew, as it remained evident Germaine would never be the devoted wife M. de Staël wanted. Nor would he ever be the man she desired. As Maria Fairweather describes, “She had cherished the ideal of an all-consuming passion and a union of minds: he was too cold and too conventional to inspire any such feelings in her or to respond to her with anything more than formal gallantry.” Yet they remained together, each one unhappy while tied to the other.

While the de Staël’s marriage crumbled, France found itself undergoing a complete and total transformation as a result of the French Revolution. The government was not the only entity altered by the outbreak of 1789. Along with political reorganization, social and cultural upheaval molded the environment in which Germaine de Staël and her contemporaries lived. These changes in turn inspired her vibrant political career.

The social structure of the Three Estates system, until the French Revolution, confined individuals to their born status within an inherent hierarchy. The minority of the population held the majority of the power, leaving the Third Estate to the mercy of the elite. Comprising the membership of the First Estate, the clergy possessed significant power due to the Catholic Church’s dominance within France. The nobility also

59 Their daughter’s name was Gustava Sofia Magdalena. Born in 1787, she died while still in infancy.
60 Fairweather, 75.
possessed significant influence, as they were exempt from paying most taxes. This laid the tax burden to the last estate, the Third Estate, and caused a boiling contention that soon spilled over into the country.

There is one fact that must be stressed, and it is the following: not everyone in the Third Estate was poor. The absence of nobility did not equate to poverty. Like with the other estates, a multitude of levels existed. The bourgeoisie included lawyers, bankers, doctors, merchants, or people of similar occupations. These were individuals who made a respectable living, but who lacked the prospect of social mobility. This is not to say that poverty did not exist within the Third Estate. On the contrary, the peasant population struggled to survive in deplorable conditions on a scant amount of money. Compounded with the burden of exuberant taxation, life for members of this social class proved difficult.

In order to resolve the financial issues, Louis XVI called for a meeting of the Estates General. The representative body convened on May 5, 1789, after much fanfare over the logistics of the proceedings. Despite the difficulties in its execution, the gathering of the Estates General amazed Germaine de Staël. She remembered:

I will never forget the moment when we saw the twelve hundred deputies of France march solemnly to church for mass, the night before the opening of the Estates General. It was a most impressive spectacle, and new to the French: every inhabitant of the city of Versailles had turned out to stare at the procession, joined by some curious Parisians. The nature and strength of this new kind of authority within the state were still unknown, and its very existence was a shock to nearly everyone who had not been thinking about the rights of nations.

61 The Estates General had not convened since 1614. As a result, officials were unclear as to the order of the proceedings.
For a moment, it seemed this representative body presented a new way for France. The concept of rights of the people, the rights of the nation, became an interesting possibility. This optimism would not last, however. Issues arose in the system of voting.\textsuperscript{63} The Third Estate refused to cooperate due to the lack of influence. The proceedings became not a discussion of taxes, but instead a discussion amidst the individual Estates regarding ineffectiveness of the legislature. In an attempt to quell the unrest, Louis XVI locked the Third Estate’s representatives out of their meeting hall. Refusing to be deterred, they instead met on the tennis court. On June 17, 1789, the Third Estate declared in the aptly named Tennis Court Oath that, “nothing may prevent it from continuing its deliberations in any place it is forced to establish itself; and, finally, the National Assembly exists wherever its members are gathered.\textsuperscript{64} It felt itself the true representation of the people, a new voice for a new era of France. The embers of the French Revolution began to flame.

Not surprisingly, the king responded negatively towards the creation of this new political body. Louis XVI disparaged the event in the Royal Session of June 23, 1789. In declaring the National Assembly’s actions as “illegal” and “unconstitutional,” the king

\textsuperscript{63} The number of representatives for each estate was proportional in size to its population. As a result, the Third Estate had more representation than the First or Second. This would have been beneficial had voting been done by head, but it was not. Instead, the members of each estate would vote amongst themselves and the majority ruling would be the vote it cast. [1 vote from the First + 1 vote from the Second + 1 vote from the Third= Ruling.] This meant that each estate would give one vote. The Third Estate’s representatives found this unfair, as the First and Second would vote in tandem, rendering their vote pointless. [1 nay+ 1 nay+ 1 yay= nay, 1 yay + 1 yay + 1 nay= yay]

hoped to suppress any more action. The members of the new governmental body, nevertheless, refused to be deterred. From their actions spawned such events as the storming of the Bastille on July 14, 1789, and the subsequent march on Versailles. The Revolution became a movement that a scolding from the monarch could not contain.

With the outbreak of the French Revolution came a reorganization of the social order. A turn towards secularization and governmental representation rendered the First and Second Estates obsolete. Louis XVI refused to recognize the changes, however. Angered by the king’s flippant disregard of the Revolution, French citizens forcibly removed the family from Versailles to Paris in the October Days of 1789. In reality, Louis XVI was king in name only under the restraints of a constitutional monarchy. The National Assembly held the governmental power.

Fissures of discontent deepened amongst the emerging political factions when the royal family attempted to flee France on June 21, 1791. In the Flight to Varennes, Louis XVI hoped to flee to Belgium with his family. They were recognized on their journey and reported to the authorities. Detained in Paris, the royal family awaited their fates. During this time, the country found itself on the cusps of reformation. In

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66 Also known as the Women’s March on Versailles, this event marks a pivotal point in the French Revolution. It is at this point when the people directly address the king. Led by women, the masses marched to Versailles to riot against the growing food shortages. The march turned violent as the French men and women stormed the palace, captured the royal family, and forced them to return to Paris—where they would henceforth remain.

67 The two dominant political factions, or clubs, were the Jacobins and the Girondins. The Jacobins were the more radical of the two groups and would be the major proponents of the Reign of Terror during the radical phrase of the Revolution.
September of 1792, while the king was imprisoned, the newly elected National Convention declared France a republic.

Death shrouded the beginnings of the new government. The debate between the Jacobins and the Girondins revolved around the fate of Louis XVI and his family. They all agreed on his guilt, but the issue came with deciding sentencing. The Jacobins called for execution, while the Girondins believed in a more merciful sentence, such as exile. Ultimately, the king was publically executed at the start of 1793, with Marie Antoinette’s death to follow later that year.

During her trial, Marie Antoinette became fodder for her most vicious critics. Pamphlets and cartoons overtly sexualized the fallen monarch. According to historian Lynn Hunt, these depictions of the queen speak volumes towards her contemporary culture. The opponents of the monarchy felt uneasy towards Marie’s foreignness and femininity. As a woman:

it was presumed that she could achieve her perfidious aims only through the agency of men such as the king’s brothers and Lafayette. Most threatening, of course, was her influence on the king; she was charged not only with the crime of having had perverse ministers named to office but more significantly and generally with having taught the king how to dissimulate- that is, how to promise one thing in public and plan another in the shadows of the court.68

French society claimed Marie Antoinette used her feminine wiles to influence and corrupt powerful politicians. This played into the greater fear of women being involved in and taking over political decisions.

The purge of the old for the new greatly impacted the role women played in society and government. Men looked at women negatively, for they saw their opposite sex as a factor in the degradation of the once powerful monarchy. As they believed with Marie Antoinette, elite women lured men of influence into their bedrooms to sway important decisions. These *boudoir politics* created a stigma for the Old Regime.\(^6^9\) One factor in the failure of the past government, it was believed, was that men allowed elite women to overpower their sense of reason.

Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette’s executions demonstrated the fervor surrounding the Revolution. This fanaticism coincided with a desire to reform French society. The revolutionaries dreamed of a France where social mobility and equality became a possibility. This aspiration, unfortunately, did not apply to everyone. In the creation of the new order, the republic, the revolutionaries wanted to rid France of any remnants of the Old Regime.

To take the power back, the revolutionaries thought it necessary to remove women from the realm of politics. Dorinda Outram explains this development in saying:

Thus, in the rhetoric of the Revolution, the entire struggle for the achievement of legitimacy, for the creation of a new legitimate public embodiment by the Revolutionary governing class, was predicted not on an inclusion of the female, but on its exclusion. The production of male political embodiment cannot be understood as a self-standing development; it has also to be read as a process of exclusion, and differentiation.\(^7^0\)


\(^7^0\) Ibid., 126.
Revolutionaries also rooted their exclusionary desires in the foundation of gender identities. Most men believed emotions drove women to dramatic, spontaneous action. This rendered them incapable of making pragmatic and rational decisions. Furthermore, men associated women with sexuality, a trait that deserved no place in the public arena.\(^7^1\)

The Enlightenment had reinforced the idea of separation of duties for men and women. While the intellectual movement promoted human rights, it oftentimes did so at the expense of promoting female subjugation and marginalization.\(^7^2\) For the social elite, a sense of “difference” emerged: a mode of distinguishing males from females.\(^7^3\) Additionally, the Enlightenment brought focus to the differences in male and female physiology. Julien-Joseph Virey, a proponent of medical discussion in the Enlightenment, claimed that women’s reproductive organs predisposed them to increasing the population and dedicating themselves to the home.\(^7^4\) The distinctions allowed for a “strong vs. weak” mentality to form, an “us vs. them.” Men belonged in politics, women belonged in the home.

Although many revolutionaries wanted these divisions implemented throughout society, they only became actualized in the elite levels of society. The women of the popular classes, out of both necessity and desire, participated in the Revolution. Some cut their hair short and dressed in the popular tricolor.\(^7^5\) Moreover, their family ties drove them to political action. Dominique Godineau writes, “Working-class women did

\(^7^2\) Ibid., 23.
\(^7^3\) Ibid., 5.
not figure on the public scene as puppets, as articulate but soulless figures. They were stirred by all their human richness and complexity, their dreams and their sounds in which family relations often held a large place. This passion and dedication towards the family led to protests, violence, and petitions in attempts to bring about a better society.

These women were not attacking gender norms. Instead, lower-class women wanted to improve the quality of life for them and their families. When they did address gender, it was not a discussion of extreme changes. Prior to the Revolution, the Petition of Women of the Third Estate stated:

The women of the Third Estate are almost all born without fortune; their education is very neglected or very defective: it consists in their being sent to schools at the house of a teacher who himself does not know the first word of the language he is teaching…Today, when the difficulty of subsisting forces thousands of them to put themselves up for auction, when men find it easier to buy them for a spell than to win them over forever, those whom a happy penchant inclines to virtue, who are consumed by the desire to learn, who feel themselves led by natural taste, who have overcome without having learned anything, those, to conclude, whom a haughty soul, a noble heart, a pride of sentiment cause to be called prudish, are forced to throw themselves into cloisters where only a modest dowry is required, or forced to hire themselves out when they do not have enough courage, enough heroism, to share the generous devotion of the daughters of Vincent de Paul.

This document emphasizes education, not complete social equality. Proper education for girls, the authors believed, would provide an escape from an unsatisfactory life or, in more extreme cases, prostitution. For women of the lower classes, equality of the mind was crucial.

76 Godineau, 16.
From the start of the Estates General, women spoke out against the gender roles to which society confined them. A Madame B*** B*** vehemently writes, “What else is needed to prove that we have a right to complain about the education we are given, about the prejudices that make us slaves, and about the injustice with which we are plucked at birth (at least in some provinces) of the goods that nature and equity should assure us.”

This woman wanted change, but not necessarily universal suffrage: a common sentiment of the time. Most women held no expectations of complete equality, but they did want more representation and more rights. The persistence of exclusion, however, impeded progress towards this reality.

The National Assembly first drafted the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen* on August 26, 1789. The document, aimed at declaring universal rights to citizens, failed to include large portions of the population of France. Article six pertaining to government participation states:

> The law is the expression of the general will. All citizens have the right to take part, in person or by their representatives, in its formation. It must be the same for everyone whether it protects or penalizes. All citizens being equal in its eyes are equally admissible to all public dignities, offices, and employments, according to their ability, and with no other distinction than that of their virtues and talents.

At first glance, it seemed that the Assembly wanted to include *all* members of the population. This was not the case. While they did say “all citizens,” the document does not specify who exactly qualifies as a citizen.

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79 Records are unclear as to the woman’s actual name or identity; Madame B*** B***, “A Woman’s Cahier,” *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*, George Mason University, http://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/d/630/.

A month after the *Declaration of the Rights of Man*’s creation, the National Assembly sought to define those eligible for direct participation. In a report for the National Assembly in September 1789, Jacques-Guillaume Thouret suggested the requirements for citizenship:

The number of individuals in France is about 26 million; but according to calculations that seem to be very definite, the number of active citizens, with deductions made for women, minors, and all those who are deprived of political rights for legitimate reasons, is reduced to one-sixth of the total population. One must only count therefore about 4,400,000 citizens qualifying to vote in the primary assemblies of their canton [local administrative unit] . . . . The Committee proposes that the necessary qualifications for the title of active citizen in the primary assembly of the canton be: (1) to be French or to have become French; (2) to have reached one's majority [be a legal adult; the age was set at 25]; (3) to have resided in the canton for at least one year; (4) to pay direct taxes at a rate equal to the local value of three days of work, a value that will be assessed in monetary terms by the provincial assemblies; (5) to not be at the moment a servant, that is to say, in personal relationships that are all too incompatible with the independence necessary to the exercise of political rights.  

Using these criteria, only 16% of the population qualified for active participation. “Legitimate reasons” excluded women, Jews, and slaves. It also limited the men eligible to partake in governmental proceedings. The second draft of the *Declaration* written in 1793, after the fall of the monarchy and the establishment of the Republic, also failed to include women in the establishment of voting rights. While more radical than the first, the new draft of the document still referred to “citizens” without any direct specifications. Tensions emerged when these elite women tried to involve themselves in revolutionary politics. Following the publication of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man*

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and Citizen in 1789, playwright Olympe de Gouges wrote a document in response. She deemed the revolutionaries’ document unsuitable, for it neglected a large portion of the French population. Written in 1791, the Declaration of the Rights of Women and the Female Citizen addressed, as the title suggests, the rights of women. Despite the fact she was a woman, the radicals arrested and executed Olympe de Gouges during the Reign of Terror. The same fate befell Charlotte Corday, the woman who consciously decided to murder the Jacobin Marat in the summer of 1793. These women disregarded expectations and actively participated in the new French order.

As a guest of the king and queen, Madame de Staël witnessed first-hand the masses marching to the Versailles during the October Days of 1789. A point must be emphasized in regards to these events. With their passionate anger towards the monarchy, a majority of lower-class women, not men, led the protest against bread prices and the subsequent march on the palace. The bloody scene included the mob breaking into the palace and carrying the guards’ heads on pikes.

Her less traumatic moments took place while attending sessions of the National Assembly. According to Maria Fairweather, “she would often send up notes of congratulations to the deputies,” following speeches or presentations that she particularly approved. Germaine also took more direct action against the injustices imposed on her friends and acquaintances. In the year 1792, as a wife and soon to be mother, Madame de

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82 Fairweather, 98.
Staël helped her lover and friends escape death at the hands of the revolutionaries by smuggling them out of the country.\textsuperscript{83}

Through her actions and writings, Madame de Staël made clear her thoughts and opinions of the French Revolution. The Revolution created a France in which she thrived. Madame de Staël did not reject the revolutionaries’ aims. On the contrary, she believed that a true struggle existed between the masses and the nobility.\textsuperscript{84} She reasoned that the Revolution had based itself on social equality and representation over born privilege, or in other words, democracy over aristocracy.\textsuperscript{85}

Madame de Staël knew no one could contain the French Revolution. It was in France’s best interest, she believed, to support the new government at all costs. Dissent within France only allowed room for radicals to strangle the revolution.\textsuperscript{86} Her fears became reality with the Reign of Terror.\textsuperscript{87} The fanatical movement caused fervor and bloodshed throughout both the public and private spheres. Maximilien Robespierre and his followers held power by inspiring terror and paranoia amongst the French. The common people lived with the possibility of being betrayed by strangers and acquaintances alike.\textsuperscript{88}

While Germaine accepted the causes of the revolutionaries, she detested the effects the Terror had on the country and its population. Excessive zeal and paranoia

\textsuperscript{83} Fairweather, 134.
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{86} Fairweather, 123.
\textsuperscript{87} The Reign of Terror occurred from September 5, 1793- July 28, 1794. It was a period of mass bloodshed and violence, sparked by the antagonism between the Girondins and Jacobins. Robespierre took charge, and set out to stifle all of the enemies of the Revolution. The task turned violent. Mass executions took place. It was during the Terror in which the guillotine earned its infamy.
\textsuperscript{88} “Considerations on the Main Events of the French Revolution,” in Folkenflik, 362.
threatened to destroy any remnants of the new republic the National Assembly established. Her opinion was confirmed when, in the final stages of the Terror, the Committee for Public Safety exiled Germaine from France. But soon thereafter, the government once again changed. The National Convention and the new Constitution of 1795 created the Directory. 89 Madame de Staël still had to leave the country, but she remained hopeful.

In *The Influences of the Passions on the Happiness of Individuals and Nations*, written in 1796, Germaine encourages her readers that “hope for the future may be reconcilable with hatred for the past.” 90 In reconciling the past with the future, she believed, one could come to the terms with the present turmoil. This was a personal realization for Madame de Staël, for she looked to the future and believed in the politics of France. For Germaine, believing in politics meant believing in the idea that a constitutional monarchy would return. She felt, for as long as before Louis XVI’s execution, that the monarchy would return after the fervor in France diminished.

Madame de Staël believed in the Revolution because, to her, it was inevitable. If done correctly, however, it would lead to a constitutional monarchy. The restoration of the monarchy drove Madame de Staël to political involvement. If the political fanatics threatened her desired reality, then she would try to influence the opinions of the populace with her political manipulation and discourse.

89 Formed on November 5, 1795, the Directory called for a bicameral legislative body, consisting of the Council of Five Hundred and the Council of Ancients. There was also to be five executives, chosen by the legislative bodies.

If love drove the decisions of her personal life, then liberty motivated her public one. Madame de Staël wanted to help usher in the new government era while maintaining, above all, liberty. A political ideal meant a government where a monarch and a representative body coexisted. This type of government, she believed, posed the greatest opportunity for maintaining people’s rights.

Madame de Staël decided liberty had a greater meaning as well. To her, “liberty was essential to progress itself.” Progress, in turn, would lead to a more fruitful and dynamic future, a constitutional monarchy. Germaine attached herself to pursuing the betterment of the country, at least as she saw it and in so doing for many helped define the liberal creed. In this way, her ideology focused on the evolution of France’s government. The Revolution was part of the progress, but the Terror and its fanaticism was not.

The French Revolution produced a social and political environment in which Madame de Staël determined to participate. More specifically, she focused upon the developing fanaticism which she hoped to end. In a work published posthumously, Considerations on the Principal Events of the French Revolution, Madame de Staël vehemently detests the political fanaticism that wracked France during the Reign of Terror. She writes:

It is to this state of things, more or less strongly marked, more or less softened by morals, manners, and intelligence, that the political fanaticism must be ascribed, of which we have been witnesses in France. A sort of frenzy seized the poor in the presence of the rich; the distinctions of nobility adding to the jealousy which property inspires, the people were

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proud of their multitude; and all that constitutes the power and splendour of the few, appeared to them usurpation. The germs of this sentiment have existed at all times; but never was human society felt to tremble at its foundations, till the era of terror in France: we need not be surprised, it this hateful scourge has left deep traces in men’s minds; and the only reflection in which we can indulge, and which the remainder of this work will, I hope, confirm, is, that the remedy for popular passions is to be found, not in despotism, but in the sovereignty of law.\footnote{Anne-Louise-Germaine de Staël, \textit{Considerations of the Main Events of the French Revolution}, vol. II, (London: Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1818), 113-114.}

Germaine wanted to show French citizens how fervor disrupted the course of progress in France. Through her discussion, she also desired to convince people of the importance and stability of the law. The Terror and its ensuing atrocities threatened, she believed, the pursuit of liberty, and through the use her lovers she hoped to be able to prevent the further deterioration of France.

Madame de Staël’s personal relationships played a vital role in her political activities and protected her from execution. The men in her life were pieces in the greater game of the public realm, one Germaine mastered the art of playing. This explains in many ways the reason that she pursued political careers for the men in her life. They were the conduits through which she exercised influence in the revolutionary and post-revolutionary governments. The connection between the two parts of her life, her public and private life, her politics and her love affairs, seemed natural for Germaine. J. Christopher Herold attests that Germaine’s “personal relationships and politics” or “love and friendship” existed as one reality.\footnote{Herold, 99.} Her private and public life merged together in tandem with her ever-growing love of her \textit{amours} and of France.
One of her private relationships which extended into the public sphere was with Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord. This was not a romantic relationship, although Madame de Staël at times wished that it was. Germaine felt romantic passion towards the diplomat and former bishop. Talleyrand, however, saw in her a political ally.\textsuperscript{94}

Madame de Staël assisted in having Talleyrand appointed Foreign Minister. A warrant for Talleyrand’s arrest had been issued in 1792 while he was in England. He then went to live in America. While there, Madame de Staël appealed to the National Convention on his behalf, which they accepted, and he returned to France in 1796. Without her help, Talleyrand would have remained in exile, and he was aware of this fact. Having Talleyrand appointed Foreign Minister showed Germaine had influence, but such political participation depended on her romantic relationships with men.

To find personal fulfillment, Germaine found love and affection outside her marriage. In 1788, Madame de Staël became embroiled in her first all-consuming love affair: Louis Marie Jacques Amalric, comte de Narbonne-Lara. Believed to be the illegitimate son on Louis XV and Duchesse de Narbonne-Lara, he grew up at court and pursued a military career. Madame de Staël’s mother felt leery of the young man, warning her daughter of the damage to her reputation if she associated with him.\textsuperscript{95}

This did not deter Germaine from pursuing a relationship, and soon the two immersed themselves in passion. She showered Narbonne with the emotional fervor she refused to give to her husband. The intensity of their love can been seen in the exchange of letters. In December of 1792, Madame de Staël wrote:

\textsuperscript{94} Herold, 99.
\textsuperscript{95} Fairweather, 101.
The moment has come for me to choose between you and the rest of the universe, and it is to you my whole heart is driven. May the gift of my life embellish yours, may I not be lowered, in your eyes, through the same sacrifices which I made to my passion for you; may you, should they ever alter my reputation, still value someone who recognizes as law only her love for you.  

In the letter, Germaine fully recognizes the potential for ruining her reputation. Despite this, her feelings remained ardent towards Narbonne. This devotion proved beneficial for both parties involved, for in the world of politics, Madame de Staël used her ever-expanding connections to enforce and expand Narbonne’s presence in the public arena. 

After assisting Talleyrand in becoming Foreign Minister, Madame de Staël set out to propel Narbonne’s career. The French Revolution created a void within the government. Germaine believed such conditions created the perfect opportunity to gain political influence. This was an opportunity once again to merge her private and public life into one symbiotic entity. The man in her life provided the conduit in which to participate in governmental affairs. 

Following the establishment of the Constitution of 1791, she conceived the notion of having Narbonne put in office. She believed, while not perfect, the Constitution provided France its greatest opportunity of freedom, and the best bulwark against radicalization. Narbonne in office could lead France to its new and hopeful future and help avoid a terrible demise. With this is mind, she set out to have him appointed Minister of War. He became so in 1791 but only held the position for one year. Louis XVI replaced Narbonne with Monsieur Pierre Marie de Grave.

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97 Fairweather, 177. 
98 Herold, 105.
Narbonne’s political career was near an end. After the dismissal from his position, authorities suspected him of disloyalty. He needed, therefore, to flee France, and he needed to do so quickly. The authorities came to Germaine’s house in an attempt to arrest the suspect. However she was not intimidated. She hid her lover under her wedding altar, and protested the legality of the officers’ actions “on the sanctity of international law, the inviolability of embassies, and the extraterritoriality of their occupants.” 99 Thanks to Germaine’s perseverance and connections throughout Switzerland and France, Narbonne fled to London.

The same passion she showed in her amorous relationships spilled forth into the public realm. For Germaine, the two did not have to be mutually exclusive. She writes in 1796 *The Influences of the Passions of the Happiness of Individuals and Nations*:

> I do not know why it should be more difficult to be impartial about politics than about morality; the passions certainly have as much influence on life’s outcome as politics, but nevertheless in the quiet of retreat people talk reasonably about the feelings they have experienced. I would think it should be no more painful to talk philosophically about the advantages and disadvantages of republics and monarchies than to analyze precisely ambition, love, or any other passion which has determined your existence. 100

Impartiality, in Madame de Staël’s opinion, did not exist naturally in regards to politics. This sentiment reflects her life. With her private and public life so entwined, one can imagine that the passions she felt for her lovers could match, or perhaps even be surpassed, by the passion she felt towards her country.

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99 Herold, 116.
100 “The Influences of the Passions of the Happiness of Individuals and Nations,” in Folkenflik, 153.
Madame de Staël was selfish with regards to her husband and lover. While she loved Narbonne, not M. de Staël, she refused to leave her husband. Furthermore, for a woman to divorce her husband during this period was nearly impossible. Her title came from him, after all. She wanted to utilize her husband’s diplomatic status. In addition to trying to maintain her status at court, Germaine lived with the possibility of Narbonne leaving her at any time. A divorce removed her security. The Comtesse de Laval once swayed Germaine’s lover away from his relationship with her, an incident that almost destroyed her.\textsuperscript{101}

Though she wooed Narbonne back from the other woman, her happiness did not last. A passionate affair such as their almost guaranteed a disastrous ending. Despite the birth of an illegitimate heir, Ludvig August, Narbonne eventually left Madame de Staël. This did not occur without great emotional upheaval, for this was a woman who responded dramatically to situations of the heart. Once, in fact, when she had not heard from Narbonne for some time, she wrote in anger, “If I get no news from you, I shall put an end to it. You are the most cruel, the most ungrateful, the most barbarous of men.”\textsuperscript{102} She did not remain alone forever, however. Eventually her heart healed, and she eventually found comfort from the other great man of her life: Benjamin Constant.

Henri-Benjamin Constant de Rebecque and Germaine de Staël ran in similar social circles. Germaine unknowingly orbited the outskirts of Constant’s family when she befriended Constance Cazenove d’Arlens and Rosalie de Constant, first cousins of

\textsuperscript{101} Herold, 100.
\textsuperscript{102} Madame de Staël to Narbonne, Coppet, September 19, 1792, in Madame de Staël: Selected Correspondence, ed. Kathleen Jameson-Cemper (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000), 36.
the writer and intellectual. Despite their proximity to one other, the two did not meet until the fall of 1793. In 1787, Constant began a relationship with Isabelle de Zuylen, known to her friends as Belle, with whom he remained for several years, until the magnetism of Madame de Staël lured him away.

The attraction between Benjamin and Germaine evolved over time. At first, Constant felt disdain towards Madame de Staël’s notoriety, a result of her relationship with Narbonne. As they did Marie Antoinette, the French attacked Germaine. The rumors “were not merely political but sexual, varying from innuendo to the downright pornographic. Both were portrayed as immoral and promiscuous.” Constant heard stories of the then infamous woman, and held no desire to pursue a relationship with her.

Following their first encounter in the fall of 1794, however, Benjamin’s opinion of Germaine grew more positive. He fell victim to her allure, although their relationship remained platonic- and largely intellectual and political- throughout 1794 and 1795. While Germaine did not find him extraordinarily attractive, she thought his intellect “so remarkable that she fully expected him to be a great liberal philosopher, a second Montesquieu, a talent capable of producing a work akin to The Spirit of Laws.”

Towards the end of 1795, the dynamics between the two began to change. While she did not feel all-consuming passion that she had for Narbonne, Germaine showed great

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103 Renee Winegarten, Germaine de Staël and Benjamin Constant: A Dual Biography (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 7.
104 Fairweather, 115.
105 Winegarten, 13.
affection towards Constant. He touched her gently, and she spoke admiringly of him. So much so that it quickly became gossip among their circle.

But throughout their relationship Benjamin Constant loved Madame de Staël more than she loved him. Constant divorced his wife on November 18, 1795, not long after he and Germaine began their romantic relationship. She did not reciprocate his actions with a similar marital breach. Instead, she remained lawfully bound to M. de Staël. Again, it was her desire for security and a title that dictated her actions; she was a passionate woman, but also practical.

Nonetheless, Constant maintained his devotion. At the beginning of the relationship, he committed himself to Germaine as a husband would to wife. In a letter to Madame de Staël he proclaimed:

We promise to consecrate our lives to each other. We declare that we consider ourselves indissolubly linked, that our destiny, under all circumstances, if forever mutual, that we will never contract any other tie, and that we will tighten those which unite us, as soon as we are able. I declare that it is from the bottom of my heart that I contract this commitment, that I know nothing on earth as amiable as Madame de Staël, that I have been the happiest of men during the four months I have spent with her, and I consider it the greatest happiness of my life to be able to make her youth a happy one, to peacefully grow old with her and to come to terms with the soul which understands me, and without which there would be no longer any interest for me on this earth.

His words illuminate the intensity of his feelings. Furthermore, this letter showcases the loyalty Germaine expected, even demanded, from her paramours. Her ability to inspire this kind of love without divorcing her husband is significant, for it says much about her

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106 Winegarten, 21.
character as does her emotional needs. In every one of her relationships, Madame de Staël expected a steadfastness from her lovers that she was not willing to reciprocate.

Intellectual ambition, more than love, drove every aspect of Madame de Staël’s life, and this was certainly the case with Benjamin Constant. The political dynamic between Madame de Staël and Benjamin Constant differed from that of Narbonne. Where Narbonne allowed Germaine to control his career, she and Constant had more of a partnership. During the Directory, they wrote political pamphlets discussing the French Revolution and the creation of the Republic. More specifically, they denounced the past events of the Terror and its fanaticism.

Constant and de Staël believed that the French Revolution occurred for a reason: and that reason was progress. They wanted the citizens to support the present government and turn away from any remnants of the atrocities of the past. This, according to Constant and Madame de Staël, would bring finally bring stability to the country and lead it to their ultimate goal. They also criticized the conservative notion of returning to the “old ways” of France. Benjamin Constant shared Madame de Staël’s desire for a constitutional monarchy. They saw the success of Britain and believed a constitutional monarchy in congruence with a legislative body- not a republic- was the best form of government for France.

The affair suffered from the unbalanced ardor. Constant often needed to compete for Germaine’s attention. In 1800, the pair returned to Switzerland in order to distance themselves from Napoleon. They two entertained guests at Madame de Staël’s home in

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108 Fairweather, 219.
Coppet, and while there, visitors took note of the tumultuous relationship. The Comtesse de Boigne recalls in her memoirs such occurrences:

The long-standing relations between Mme. De Staël and Benjamin Constant are perfectly well known. Mme. De Staël retained a keen liking for his intellect, but she had other temporary affections which frequently gained the upper hand. On these occasions Benjamin attempted to begin a quarrel; she then clung to him more completely than ever, and after fearful scenes they made their peace. In the attempt to describe this position, he said that he was tired of being always necessary and never adequate to her needs. For a long time he had cherished hopes of marrying Mme. De Staël. Vanity and interest were motives at least as powerful as his affection for her, but she persistently refused. She desired to keep in harness to her own chariot, but not herself to submit to the yoke of Benjamin. Moreover, she attached too much importance to social distinctions to exchange the name of Staël-Holstein for that of Constant.\(^{109}\)

The Comtesse notes that a push-and-pull effect defined their attraction. Benjamin ignored Germaine, and she in turn struggled to regain his attention. She also remarks on Madame de Staël’s refusal to divorce her husband noting that the surname of Constant held less esteem than the one she already possessed.

Eventually, Constant grew tired of Madame de Staël. His ardent desire to marry was rejected by Madame de Staël, and the two began spending less and less time with each other. In 1803, Constant began to ponder ways in which to separate himself from Germaine.\(^{110}\) The two both possessed wandering eyes. For Benjamin, it was Amélie Fabri who threatened his fidelity. For Germaine, a Scottish doctor by the name of Robert Robertson caught her eye.\(^{111}\) Their affection towards one another transformed from


\(^{110}\) Winegarten, 159

\(^{111}\) Ibid.
romantic to intellectual. Constant wanted to be tied to Madame de Staël’s mind, not her heart. Over the course of 1804, their romantic relationship slowly faded into nothingness.

At first, Benjamin Constant and Madame de Staël supported Napoleon. This soon changed, however. Napoleon went from being a member of the Directory, to Consulate, to ultimately declaring himself Emperor of France in 1804. As Napoleon’s power grew, the pair spoke out against Napoleon’s empire. In their opinion, the tyrant scared the French into following him. Constant believed, “If in the heart of man there is nothing but interest, tyranny has only to frighten or to seduce him in order to dominate him.” In order to save themselves from political retribution, citizens proclaimed loyalty towards the emperor. Napoleon, they asserted, did not deserve such devotion.

Their distaste for his dictatorship attracted Napoleon’s attention. He vocally denounced the two, removing Constant from his position as Tribune. The Emperor, for his part, feared Madame de Staël, for in her, he found a formidable opponent capable of causing him significant difficulty. To quell the threat, he exiled Germaine from Paris, and later from Coppet, her Swiss residence. This was a fate almost greater than death for Germaine. Combined with the waning affections between Constant and herself, Germaine lost both passions of her life, her beloved city and her beloved political partner, and neither was now within her grasp.

Constant met and fell in love with Charlotte von Hardenberg, and they secretly wed in 1808. He and Madame de Staël continued to strongly regard each other in the realm of politics. Instead of passion, their intellectual bond connected them to one

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another. Throughout all of her relationships, Madame de Staël exhibited both strong emotion and political prowess. France, its people and its politics, inspired Madame de Staël’s greatest devotion. Her pursuit of liberty oftentimes drove her romantic connections. Each of her men existed not only to bring her pleasure and love, but also to connect her to the world of politics she so ardently wanted experience.

Despite Madame de Staël’s absence from France during her exile, others took up the cause of the establishment of a constitutional monarchy. The War of the Sixth Coalition led to the defeat of Napoleon in 1814. In place of the empire came the Bourbon Restoration. With Louis XVIII in power, groups such as the Doctrinaires wanted to make sure the current government to resolve itself with the Revolution, not forget it. Similarly, Germaine feared the Revolution would be relegated to “one long crime.” As she wrote twenty-years earlier, the French need to reconcile the past with the present in order to have a hopeful and prosperous future.

Madame de Staël died on July 14, 1817. As a woman so entrenched in the politics of the French Revolution, it seems fitting that her death occurred on the anniversary of the Storming of the Bastille. For Germaine, her life and activities were not meant to be a statement in favor of gender equality. She was born and grew into an intellectual person who desired to be involved in governmental proceedings. In order to do so, she molded and utilized the men in her life as tools in which to wield her own goals. Madame de Staël’s public and private life converged. Doing so allowed her

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113 The war in which the United Kingdom, Austria, Russia, Prussia Portugal, Sweden, Spain, and several German states set out to end France’s empire. Napoleon was defeated and sentenced to exile in Elba. He would return to France to rule during what is known as the Hundred Days. He was defeated once again and exiled to the island of Saint Helena, where he died.

114 Winegarten, 243.
access to people and positions of power. With her relationships, Madame de Staël made her mark on the ever-evolving world around her. The world took notice, and she became a notable woman of France.
CHAPTER TWO
GEORGE SAND
THE COEXISTENCE OF REALMS

Like Germaine de Staël, George Sand reconciled her private and public life into coexistence, each realm closely tied to the other. And like Madame de Staël, George Sand lived in a world where a restored monarchical government tried to reconcile itself with the past, while also attempting to thwart, adjust to, or modify the revolutionary tradition created by the French Revolution. Madame Sand looked back to the French Revolution of 1789, albeit with a Romantic sensibility. She saw the fervor of past events as natural, for “how could passion have been cut off from action and how could impartiality have handed down tranquil edicts?”¹¹⁵ Humans were passionate beings, and the Revolution had taken its natural course. George Sand bore witness to several revolutions throughout her life.

With these connections in mind, let us turn towards a discussion of George Sand’s romantic relationships, for such analysis elucidates the interplay between Sand’s public and private life. Born on July 1, 1804, Sand, born Amantine Lucile Aurore Dupin¹¹⁶ grew up in a broken home. The death of Sand’s father and her abandonment by her mother led her paternal grandmother to raise her. She spent most of this time, however, living in a convent, coming close to committing herself to the church.

¹¹⁶ Aurore Dupin did not adopt the name of George Sand until she began her writing career. However, for the purposes of continuity and clarification, this thesis will refer to her as George Sand.
After the death of her grandmother, Sand went to stay with the Monsieur and Madame de Plessi, family friends of the Dupins. It was here she met her future husband, Casimir Dudevant. Their relationship began as friendship. He was 27, she was 18. Out of this connection spawned, not an all-consuming love, but instead a mutual understanding of the benefits of marriage. This was the type of relationship Sand needed, for years in the convent had instilled innocence. In her autobiography *Story of My Life*, George Sand recalls:

> I think that at that time in my life, just as I was emerging from such great indecision between the convent and family life, a suitor’s sudden passion would have terrified me. I would not have understood it; it would have seemed feigned or ridiculous, as had that of the first suitor who had made an offer at Le Plessis. My heart had never outstripped my naïveté; no stirrings within my being could have clouded my reasoning or lulled my mistrust.\(^{117}\)

The two reciprocally believed marriage was the best option. For Casimir, it provided him a wife, which he greatly desired; for Sand, it offered her the chance of security.

One of George Sand’s first biographers, Bertha Thomas, took note of the interesting dynamic between her and Casimir. Thomas writes:

> It was not a *mariage de convenance*; the young people had chosen freely. Still less was it a love match. Romantic sentiment- counted out of place in such arrangements by the society they belonged to- seems not to have been dreamed of on either side. But they had arranged for it themselves, which to Aurore would naturally seem, as indeed it was, an improvement on the usual mode of procedure, according to which the burden of choice would have rested with her guardians. It was a *mariage de raison* founded, as she and he believed, on mutual friendliness; in reality on total and fatal ignorance of each other’s characters, and probably, on Aurore’s side, of her own as well. She was only just eighteen and had a wretched home.\(^{118}\)

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\(^{117}\) Sand, *Story of My Life*, 831.

The fact that romance played a miniscule role in the relationship did not bother Sand. Instead, as previously stated, marriage gave her the opportunity to start a new life separated from the loss of her grandmother and the sporadic visits from her mother.

On September 17, 1822, George Sand married Casimir Dudevant. The first few years of their marriage were uneventful. Mostly, they spent their time living in the countryside of Nohant. Sand found housework tolerable, even somewhat enjoyable, if it helped to please her husband. She recalls in her autobiography,

> These romantic ideas were followed, in the early stages of my marriage, by the will to please my husband and be the woman of the house that he wanted me to be. Domestic cares have never annoyed me, and I am not one of those lofty beings who cannot come down from the clouds. I live in the clouds a lot, certainly, which is one more reason I often feel the need to descend.\(^{119}\)

This reality created a sense of balance within their relationship, but the tranquility would not last. For with the birth of their son Maurice in the summer of 1823, Sand’s love and affection gravitated towards the new addition in the family.\(^ {120}\) Her son provided an escape from the lack of amorous affection she received from her husband.

The couple traveled for a time, ultimately returning to Nohant in the summer of 1826. Although George Sand lived in near isolation for the next four years, she read constantly and grew into a budding intellectual.\(^ {121}\) Casimir refused to acknowledge his wife’s burgeoning intelligence and literary ambitions. The combination of these two factors, her obvious intellect and his denial of it, led to their growing estrangement.\(^ {122}\)


\(^{120}\) Thomas, 36.

\(^{121}\) Ibid., 37.

\(^{122}\) Ibid., 39.
They had another daughter in 1828, but this failed to rectify the deteriorating relationship. By the fall of 1830, any semblance of affection towards each other had vanished. It was only the love for their children that bound them together.123

From that point forward, the husband and wife lived separate lives, each having little to do with the other. George Sand reconciled herself easily to this kind of relationship. In a letter to her mother, she writes:

I have my failings; my husband his. Were I to tell you that our home is a model of a home, that there has never been a cloud between us, you would not credit my assertion. Like that of everybody else, my position has its advantages and disadvantages. The fact is, that my husband does as he pleases; he drinks Muscat wine or pure water if it suits him; he hoards or spends his money, builds, plants, exchanges, buys, sells, governs his estates and his house as he thinks fit; I have nothing to do with any of it.124

There is a sense of bitterness in her words, a tone of resignation. But in truth, she was glad to be separated from her husband. She had always been a person who enjoyed affection; it was one of the reasons she almost joined the church. A loveless marriage provided her no sense of satisfaction, and thus even before the couple separated, Sand would look outside of her vows for affection. Sexual satisfaction, however, did not play a role in her first extra-marital love. Instead, for Sand, it was a coming together of souls.

Before the discussion of George Sand’s various affairs develops further, it would be beneficial to look at her understanding of friendships and relationships more closely. Sand believed that it was problematic to always expect romantic feelings to evolve out of friendship. She explains in her autobiography:

123 Thomas, 45-46.
It is very rare that between a man and a woman some livelier thought than befits the fraternal bond does not come along to trouble the relationship, and often the faithful friendship of a mature man is only the generosity of a passion conquered in the past. A woman of integrity, however, can escape the sexual trap, and the man who does not forgive her for not having shared his secret agitations is not worth the benefit of friendship. I must say that, in general, I have been fortunate in this respect and that, for the most part, in spite of my romantic trust, which people have often teased me about, I have had the instinct to discover beautiful souls and preserve their affection. I must also say that, not being at all coquette and even having a sort of horror of that strange habit of provocation which not all honest women deny themselves, I have rarely had to struggle against love in friendship. Also, when it was there to be discovered, I never found it offensive, because it was serious and respectful.\textsuperscript{125}

In this sense, Sand considered friendship and mutual respect more important than an intimate relationship based on physical interaction. She also believed it to be within a woman’s right to deny a man sexual satisfaction if she held no romantic feelings towards him. Even if there was reciprocated attraction, the friendship, above anything else, needed to be maintained.

With this in mind, let us look at her first relationship outside the bonds of matrimony. This was with Aurélien de Sèze. George Sand met Aurélien de Sèze in 1825 while she and her husband were traveling throughout the country. Their introduction came by means of a mutual acquaintance, Zoé Leroy. At the time, Aurélien was a successful magistrate in Bordeaux.\textsuperscript{126} He immediately attracted Sand’s attention. In many respects, he was the opposite of her husband, for Sèze’s wit and intellect provided for stimulating conversation on literature, philosophy, and politics.

\textsuperscript{125} Sand, \textit{Story of My Life}, 898.
\textsuperscript{126} Curtis Cate, \textit{George Sand: A Biography} (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1975), 103-104.
The relationship between Sand and Sèze never became intimate. This was not due to a lack of emotion on Sand’s part. It was instead a case of unbalanced love. In other words, “Aurélien had not loved her the way she loved him.”\textsuperscript{127} The two had made a vow of friendship, but while Sand was willing to forget the pledge, Aurélien remained staunchly devoted to it.\textsuperscript{128} Nevertheless, Sand maintained the platonic ties with Sèze.

Sand’s husband was not impervious to his wife’s growing interest and attachment to this new man. He attempted to end the friendship, but she staunchly refused to sever all ties. In a gesture of conciliation, she drafted a set of rules that would define her relationship with both her husband and her friend:

1. They would not go to Bordeaux that winter, the recently opened wounds being still too fresh.
2. She promised never again to write secretly to Aurélien, but she would be allowed to write to him occasionally, on the understanding that Casimir would see all the letters she sent and received.
3. She would be allowed to write frequently to Zoé, with the same stipulations.
4. If they spent winter in Paris, Casimir would undertake to improve his education.
5. If they spent winter in Nohant, he would read the library books with which he was unfamiliar and they would discuss them together.
6. Casimir would put an end to his fits of rage, just as she would give up her spells of moodiness, and together they would learn to view the past with equanimity.
7. With the passage of time she would be allowed occasionally to speak to him about Aurélien and Zoé without his losing his temper at the mere mention of these two names.\textsuperscript{129}

These rules show initiative on Sand’s part. She was unwilling to bow to her husband’s demands; therefore, she made a list of demands herself. And so, the husband and wife

\textsuperscript{127} Cate, 211.
\textsuperscript{128} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., 123.
tentatively balanced their marriage vows and her platonic interactions. Aurélien and Sand stayed in contact over the course of five years, but by the time she separated from her husband in 1830, their relationship had faded into non-existence.

After Sand and Aurélien ended their association, Sand’s extramarital affairs developed in both the romantic and physical sense. Society took notice of this evolution, and gossip began to spread. In recalling George Sand’s life after her death, the *Times* read, “As she scandalized society, so she sinned with open eyes and, it may almost be said, with a perfectly pure conscience. And men who stood far above all social reproach recognized the sincerity of her convictions by admitting her to their intimacy and encouraging her confidences.” Sand engaged in multiple affairs, and she did so without remorse. While Sand desired the vitality of friendship, she also believed in the importance of love. This led her to pursue the realm where these two realities intertwined.

During this early part of her romantic life, Sand did not live in a vacuum. Her surrounding political environment underwent drastic changes. The French empire fell in 1814 when the major powers of Europe finally defeated Napoleon. On April 6, 1814, the day of Napoleon’s abdication and exile, Louis XVIII took power, thus restoring France to a constitutional monarchy. From September of 1814 until June of 1815, the Congress of Vienna met to determine the political environment in a post-Napoleonic Europe. Those attending the congress wanted, it seemed, to return Europe to its pre-

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130 The *Times* [London], July 23, 1886.
131 These powers included the United Kingdom, Austria, Prussia, Russia, Sweden, Portugal, Spain, and many of the German states.
132 Louis XVIII was the brother of Louis XVI.
Revolutionary state. This was impossible, however. The French Revolution had occurred. It had made its mark on every level of society and government. Their goal, then, was to promote the reestablishment and balance of a monarchical power and a conservative order throughout the continent.

After Napoleon’s failed attempt of recapturing power during the One Hundred Days, Louis XVIII returned to France on July 8, 1815. He ran the government with the help of a council while also appointing the moderate Talleyrand as his Prime Minister. Talleyrand did not remain in power for long, however, for the voting for the Chamber of Deputies resulted in an ultra-royalist majority that opposed the politician.¹³³ Talleyrand stepped down in September 1815, and Armand du Plessis, the Duc de Richelieu, replaced him. The ultra-royalists continued to impose their authority over the Chamber of Deputies.

The monarch, wiser than the political forces pressing him, therefore spent his reign in constant action and reaction to the ultra-royalist members. During the White Terror, Louis XVIII deplored the mass violence taken against people who had been Napoleonic officials. He did, however, have Michel Ney, a former military official who had gone over to Napoleon, killed for treason in December 1815. While his government did execute some former officials, the king’s unwillingness to support copious amounts of bloodshed angered the ultras. Louis XVIII, they believed, did not, would not, go far enough for the greater good of France. To them, he was weak.

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¹³³ The ultra-royalist believed in returning the monarchy to that of the ancien régime. They staunchly opposed the constitutional monarchy, for it limited the power of the king. They were the leading political party during the Restoration.
The tensions continued. Louis XVIII suffered a personal tragedy when his nephew, the Duc de Berry, was assassinated on February 14, 1820. This greatly affected the monarch. Louis XVIII lived only four more years, his failing health leading to his death on September 16, 1824. With this death, the hope for moderation disappeared.  

The different political parties also accounted for the political discord. The Doctrinaires wanted a more moderate monarchy, an idea they shared with Madame de Staël. On the other side, the Republicans wanted greater equality among the masses, especially in regards to taxation. While other groups existed, such as the Bonapartists and the Legitimists, one of the most dominant parties of the time was the previously mentioned ultra-royalists. Their extreme conservatism imagined a France with strongly demarcated social lines between peasants and nobles. Furthermore, their emphasis on paternalism made them a dominant voice in gender discourse.

Under these tumultuous circumstances, the role of women resembled the ideals set forth in 1789. The French Revolution reinstated in France the desire of separating women from the realm of government. One of the main points of reasoning for denying women’s political role revolved around the internal instability of women, a sentiment which had been presented previously. Where men were stoic, rational beings capable of making dispassionate and discerning decisions, women were seen as fragile, as creatures ruled by their emotions, their whims, and their sexuality.

In the early part of the 19th century in France, the gender stereotypes remained staunchly in place. Napoleon’s Civil Code of 1804 allowed women some leeway within

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their marriages, but it maintained inequality. The Code enforced the husband’s domination over his wife and family. Furthermore, it made divorce possible for only the man, no matter the cause a woman might have for leaving her husband.

For ultra-royalists such as Louis de Bonald and Joseph de Maistre, a post-Revolutionary France depended on men’s control over women.\textsuperscript{135} A paternal dialogue lent justification of women’s exclusion, for the family was at the heart of bourgeois ideology.\textsuperscript{136} Both Bonald and de Maistre discussed the nature of women as it related to their designated roles: i.e., wives and mothers. A “cult of domesticity” formed, with the belief that a woman belonged in the home.\textsuperscript{137} These discussions coincided with the introduction of a new monarch and the instigation of a revolution.

Charles Philippe, the brother of Louis XVIII, succeeded him as Charles X of France. From the start of his reign, Charles X showed a proclivity towards the nobility, as was evident in his indemnities for confiscated land during the Revolution. As a result, the general population grew critical of the restored Bourbon monarchy, notwithstanding its “concessions” to the Revolution with its Charter, a constitution of sorts and limited parliamentary politics. Favoritism on the part of the monarchy threatened the social dynamic between the nobility and the bourgeoisie.

Charles X’s popularity continued to decline dramatically from 1825-1827. The king set forth on July 25\textsuperscript{th} the July Ordinances, which established a drastic set of

\textsuperscript{137} McMillan, 48.
The two main components of the document censored the press, dissolved the current Chamber of Deputies, and modified electoral policies, all of which amounted to a royal revolution.

By July 26th the remnant of liberals gathered together in protest. The king had directly shown his support towards the reactionary ultra movement, and this enraged the opposition. The following day, internal grumbling turned into external demonstrations. Citizens took to their streets in anger and protest. The army was called to action, and by nightfall the skirmishes turned violent. The unrest continued into the morning. On Wednesday, July 28th, the king ordered the authorities to end the fray. Major-General Maréchal Auguste Marmont attempted to have the Royal Guard enter Paris, but the troops were ill equipped. While the army failed in its attempts, those leading the revolt petitioned against the officials in the government.

On July 29th, the scene is Paris became dramatic. Barricades blocked the streets, ordinary objects were used for extraordinary means. The tri-color flag of the French Revolution flew above the angered mob, evoking a sense of the revolutionary ideal then engrained in the fabric of society. The government’s attempts at halting the insurrection failed and fervor and passion spread throughout the city of Paris. The people, it seemed, would not stop until changes— a regime especially— were made.

The revolution succeeded. By the night of the third day of fighting, the Tuileries fell. The revolutionaries achieved more than anyone thought possible. It became necessary to form a provisional government. Known as the July Days, these events

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138 Also known as the Four Ordinances of Saint-Cloud
called for a stronger constitutional monarchy. Charles X, refusing to give up power, abdicated the throne and Louis-Philippe, the cousin of the former king and an Orléan, replaced him.

Although not in Paris at the time, George Sand emotionally invested in what was to become known as the Three Glorious Days. In a letter to M. Jules Bouicoiran, dated July 31, 1830, she wrote: “Three days ago we should have been stunned at hearing of the death of a friend; to-day we might learn that twenty of them had been killed, perhaps on the same day, and yet could not weep over them. On such occasions the blood runs feverishly, and the heart is too much oppressed to express its feelings.”

She was fully aware of the dangers that had occurred in the capital of France. It would be several years before she had a more positive opinion of revolutions. At this point in her life, Sand rejected revolutions. They brought too much danger and bloodshed with ineffective results. Nevertheless, it was time to welcome a new government.

The July Monarchy greatly differed from the government of its predecessor. It provided, many believed, an opportunity for a true constitutional monarchy. In a speech given on February 20, 1831, François Guizot, an influential political figure of the time, declared:

The Empire fell in its turn, to be succeeded by the Restoration. What did the Restoration promise? It promised to resolve the problem, to reconcile order with liberty. It was under this banner that the character was granted. It had accepted principles of liberty in the charter; it had promised to establish them, but it made this promise under the cloak of the ancien régime, on which there had been written for so many centuries: Divine Right. It was unable to solve the problem. It died in the process,

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overwhelmed by the burden. It is on us, on the Revolution of July, that this job has been imposed; it is our duty and responsibility to establish definitively, not order alone, not liberty alone, but order and liberty at the same time. The general thought, the hope of France, has been order and liberty reuniting under the constitutional monarchy. There is the true promise of the Revolution of July.\textsuperscript{140}

Louis-Philippe leaned towards the liberal side, associating with merchants, lawyers, bankers, etc. Also known as the Bourgeois Monarchy, his government established as elite system based on wealth and education not birth.\textsuperscript{141} This greatly upset the balance of the nobility who found themselves displaced by an alliance or amalgamation of the liberal aristocracy and new money, the grands notables as they came to be called.

The grands notables, instead, held the titles. They assumed great influence throughout society. Society looked to the families of the notables for trends in decorum and fashion. There was reason for this, specifically in regards to the types of individuals belonging to this level of society. This group consisted mostly of professionals, as well as the landed interest, but above all learned men of means. They possessed a strong sense of intellectualism. Especially on the lower levels, citizens in the rural areas looked to their local grands notables as their only source of social information.\textsuperscript{142}

Under the Restoration and July Monarchy, women’s political involvement occurred amongst elite. Many women in the higher circles chose promising male candidates to groom and shape them into appropriate politicians.\textsuperscript{143} This involvement was rare, however. Under the Orleanist government, proponents for women’s exclusion

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{141} Foley, 110.
\textsuperscript{143} Cate, 113.
\end{footnotes}
based their argument on differences between the sexes. According to Susan K. Foley, the government “shared a commitment to a limited form of representative government based on individual ‘capacity.’”\textsuperscript{144} The political body needed to be composed of rational beings, something women supposedly were not.\textsuperscript{145} With the many political groups in existence, the monarchists, the Bonapartists, the republicans, it was the ultra royalists who most strongly adopted this ideology.

The introduction of socialism factored into the gender discussion as well. Where the general population often reaffirmed the exclusion of women, socialists “regarded a significant sex as a significant marker of talent and potential, but they valued feminine qualities and assigned great significance to the ‘liberty’ of women.”\textsuperscript{146} They showed more appreciation towards the female population, and promoted the liberation of the opposite sex.

A distinction must be made. Not all socialists regarded women in the same way. Saint-Simonians believed that man and woman made up a single cohesive unit. With this idea, they believed that “all social functions should be performed by a couple, thus combining male reason with female emotion and maximizing human potential.”\textsuperscript{147} However, Saint-Simonians also believed in the conservative notion of differences between the sexes. Charles Fourier, on the other hand, linked “masculinity with activity, rationality, and strength, and femininity with passivity, sensuality, and weakness,” but he

\textsuperscript{144} Foley, 111.
\textsuperscript{145} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{146} Ibid., 117.
\textsuperscript{147} Ibid.
differentiated between sex and gender.\textsuperscript{148} Masculine and feminine did not necessarily mean male and female, or a man could posses feminine qualities and vice versa.\textsuperscript{149} This fed into the justification for some female participation in mid-nineteenth century France.

This reality did provide some leeway in female involvement. With suffrage defined by land ownership, governmental exclusion occurred more along familial lines instead of gender lines. Women of elite families could conceivably be active in politics, albeit in an indirect way. Women of the general population, along with their male counterparts were more limited.\textsuperscript{150}

To ease the popular dissonance, the government tried in some ways to appease its citizens. The Charter of 1830 limited the king’s power and revoked the edict that made the Catholic Church the official church of France. Louis-Philippe, furthermore, reestablished the National Guard and the regime adopted the Tricolor flag, the flag of the French Revolution. External factors threatened the influence of the \textit{grands notables}. Beginning in the 1830s, France experienced urban growth, which led to a “redistribution of population.”\textsuperscript{151} This coincided with the development of more centralized commerce with the evolution of communication and transportation. The rise of accessible wealth challenged wealth acquired by land ownership. As a result, the \textit{notables’} power gradually weakened.\textsuperscript{152}

George Sand experienced these years of struggle and strife. She did not idly stand by, unaware of the goings-on around her. On the contrary, she was a woman of strong

\textsuperscript{148} Foley, 117.
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{150} Ibid., 106.
\textsuperscript{151} Pinkney, 55-56.
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid., 61.
political thought and opinion. Moreover, she used her connections in the intellectual world to make an impression on society. She also utilized her own career in fame in the social world to impart her stance in regards to the public political realm. In letters to friends and confidants, in local and foreign newspapers, George Sand made known her ideology. And because of who she was, people listened.

Through her discourse, it is evident George Sand detested the violence which broke out following the installation of Louis-Philippe to power. Specifically, she reacted to the general riots in June 1831 in which the National Guard severely quelled a mob with force. Sand wrote to her son’s tutor M. Jules Boucoiran in July 1831:

I am sorry for your political optimism, but your infamous Government is cruelly provoking respectable people. Were I a man, it is hard to tell what excesses I might resort to, in certain fits of indignation, which every well thinking person must feel at the atrocities which are daily perpetrated here. It is really a civil war which Ministers kindle and keep up for their own advantage. Infamous! The national colors are proscribed. It is sufficient to wear them to be cut down, in odious cold blood, by cowardly armed men, who are not ashamed to kill small groups defenseless children. The fine institution of National Guards has become a leaven of blood and discord. The police resort to means worthy of the worst times of Carrier (of Nantes). It seems as if Philippe wanted to ape Napoleon. But that is a part which a Bourbon can never play. His efforts will delay his fall, but it will be all the more tragical, and then the people will surely not be culpable, even though they should commit all sorts of excesses. As for myself, I hate all men, kings and nations alike. At times I feel as though I could enjoy doing them some harm. My only rest is when forgetting about them!  

This letter is telling on several accounts. Sand began “were I a man,” and thus proceeded to question what she might have done had she a member of the opposite sex. This shows her understanding on the limits of her as a woman. An understanding of the divisions

along sex and gender within society, and an understanding of the limitations put upon her because she was a woman.

In the letter, George Sand also directly denounced the actions of the National Guard that attempted to quell the rioters, so much so that she proscribed the name of “cowardly armed men” to them. Sand’s anger did not end with the military action. She criticized the highest level of authority. Furthermore, she despised Louis-Philippe. She was a Republican, and, although a constitutional monarch, Louis-Philippe held too much power. Her distaste of the present government, however, could have clouded her judgment of the events. She was staunchly on the side of the rioters, which colors her opinions and account of events.

But, perhaps the most interesting part of the letter is her dismissal of “men, kings, and nations alike.” This highlights George Sand’s approach to politics. Her involvement with the public realm strongly related to her private feelings and emotions. With this letter, she speaks in a passionate tone. It is not a calculated response, since it is a private rather than a public statement, but rather one of anger and conviction. The riots were still fresh in her mind. This, combined with her obvious disapproval of Louis-Philippe, culminated in a loss of faith in the current government.

In concurrence with the development of her political mind, Sand partook in yet another amorous relationship. In the summer of 1833, she attended a dinner hosted by Florestan Bonnaire. As the only woman in attendance and as a woman of growing notoriety, she attracted the attention of the poet Alfred de Musset.\footnote{“Musset and George Sand,” \textit{The New York Times}, May 13, 1877.} Introductions were
made, and the two soon grew extraordinarily close.\textsuperscript{155} This was not the innocent relationship between two friends. Instead, the two artists began a passionate affair.

Musset and Sand, it seemed, possessed similar qualities. They both loved and criticized the arts; she excelled in musical knowledge and he critiqued the Romantics.\textsuperscript{156} Two such passionate people together, however, led to a tumultuous relationship. Eventually, their distinct personalities put a strain on the relationship. Bertha Thomas explains:

But her reason made him unreasonable; the indefatigability of her pen irritated his nerves, and made him idle out of contradiction; her homilies provoked only fresh imprudences- as though he wanted to make proof of his independence whilst secretly feeling her dominion- a phenomenon which highly nervous people will sympathize not a little, but which was perfectly inexplicable to George Sand.\textsuperscript{157}

Musset’s personality complicated the relationship. He attempted to both separate himself from and attach himself to Sand. George’s personality only added to the unhealthy situation.

It is important to also note Sand’s penchant to play the “redeemer” role in her relationships. Beginning with her years in the religious order, Sand developed a desire to “fix” individuals. This resulted in the pursuit of men who were “broken” in some way. In regards to her relationship with de Musset, she wanted to be more than his lover. Curtis Cate states, “Not content to be Musset’s mistress…she wanted to be his savior… and to cure the schizophrenic poet of his chronic relapses into debauchery and

\textsuperscript{156} Cate, 261.
\textsuperscript{157} Thomas, 85.
Thus, Musset’s temperament proved the perfect focus for Sand. Combined with her penchant towards loyal friendship, this desire to rehabilitate the men she was with often hindered her from ending relationships at the appropriate time.

In 1834, the two lovers embarked on a trip to Italy. The trip proved to be not a romantic or intellectual holiday. Instead, the ailing health, both mentally and physically, of both Sand and Musset strained their relationship to its breaking point. He acted out against her affection, and she stayed with him, not out of love but merely out of compassion.

While in Italy, George had an affair with Musset’s doctor. This proved to be an action unforgivable to the unstable poet, and the two agreed to part once they departed from Italy. What seemed to be an assertion of freedom for Sand proved to be her emotional undoing. She wrote in a journal pleading letters to Musset: letters she never sent to him. One of these entries shows her desperation:

> Sometimes I am tempted to go to his house and pull on his door bell until the cord breaks. Sometimes I imagine myself lying down outside his door waiting for him to come out. I would like to fall at his feet- no, not at his feet, that would be madness- but I would like to throw myself into his arms and cry out, “Why do you deny your love for me? You do love me!” Yes, you still love me, but you are ashamed of it. You love me and it makes you suffer. You pity me too much not to love me. Alfred, you know that I love you, that I cannot love anyone but you. Kiss me, do not argue, say sweet things to me, caress me, because you do find me attractive, in spite of my short hair, in spite of the wrinkles that have come on my cheek during those last few days.

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158 Cate, xx.
159 Thomas, 84-85.
The passage proves Sand’s emotional nature. She had grown tired, even somewhat afraid, of Musset. Musset, however, would not be Sand’s last love. She would soon come to be associated with such acclaimed men as the musical composer Chopin. But maybe even more importantly, the Revolution of 1848 would come along to sweep Sand up into the realm of government and political involvement, replacing politics for passion.

Louis-Philippe’s government harmed its popular image with the passing of an act in 1835 that prohibited public assemblies and meetings. To counteract this law, the Campagne de Banquets took place starting in July 1847. Individuals held “banquets” for their leaders in order to circumvent the ban. By the end of 1847, the king and government officials were quite aware of the growing opposition. François Guizot outwardly condemned the left-wing gatherings shrouding themselves in the cloak of a banquet. In February of the following year, the king extended the ban on public gatherings to include these banquets. The public was outraged. In the tradition of France, they decided to revolt.

February 22, 1848, marks the day on which citizens took to the streets of Paris in protest against a government that had itself been a product of revolution. The scene resembled the revolution that had taken place nearly two decades earlier. Barricades lined the streets, violent outbursts resulted in bloodshed, and once again the king fled and the protesters ended by overthrowing the existing government. A pamphlet entitled “The Overthrow of the Orléanist Monarchy” described the events in saying, “A reactionary and oligarchical government has just been overthrown by the heroism of the people of Paris. That government has fled, leaving behind it a trail of blood that forbids it ever retrace its
steps.” King Louis-Philippe abdicated the throne on February 24, and France again found itself in the midst of a messy revolution, a revolutionary situation even more confused than earlier ones.

As a result of un-sequestered pressure from the mob, the Chamber of Deputies established a republican Provisional Government with Alphonse de Lamartine instated as president. The National Assembly would be formed in the spring. The desire was to prevent another dynastical regime from taking control, hence Lamartine’s fateful proclamation of a republic, thereby cutting short efforts to substitute Louis-Philippe’s grandson for the king. The *Proclamation of the Second Republic* stated “The provisional government has taken all the measures necessary to render impossible the return of the former dynasty or the advent of a new dynasty.” Furthermore, the Provisional Government was responsible for key legislation, and with workers controlling the streets of Paris, it bowed to radical republican pressure. To start, it suspended the laws restricting the press, reduced punishment for debt, and abolished slavery in the colonies. The Provisional Government also implemented universal manhood suffrage throughout the country and appointed Louis Blanc, the socialist proponent of material workshops, to the government.

The adoption of universal male suffrage expanded the voting pool from 250,000 to 9 million citizens. Exclusions still remained, however. To start, women remained

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ineligible. Proponents of women’s rights used the opportunity to promote their cause. Some French women wanted political involvement. Other supporters of women’s rights, however, did not want complete equality. Instead, they simply wanted greater educational rights. Some women argued that a better education would allow them to teach the values of the republic to their children.

In May of 1848, the Constituent Assembly was formed, which later became the National Assembly. It was not a smooth transition. Demonstrations followed the elections of the Constituent Assembly and the rejection of Louis-Blanc in the legislature. On May 14, a flag ceremony had been planned, but the workers refused to participate. They decided to demonstrate, and on May 15, the crowd entered the Palais Bourbon while the Assembly met. The demonstrations did not last long, however, and the mob was sequestered.

Furthermore demonstrations occurred. On June 23, the government motioned to close the National Workshops. This greatly angered the workers, as these were a staple in their public lives. In the following days, citizens erected barricades throughout Paris. Fighting ensued until June 26th. The June Days brought an extremely fragile peace to the country.

The legislative body created a constitution in November of the same year, officially declaring the establishment of the Second Republic. Elections needed to be held, and one inspired loyalty simply with his name. As the nephew of the former emperor, Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte promised the people of France:

If elected president, I shall shrink from no danger, from no sacrifice, in the defense of society, which has been so outrageously assailed. I shall devote
myself wholly and without reservation to the consolidation of the republic, so that it may be wise in its laws, honest in its aims, great and strong in its deeds. My greatest honor would be to hand on to my successor, after four years of office, the public power consolidated, its liberties intact, and a genuine progress assured.¹⁶⁴

These promises compounded with his lineage caused Louis-Napoleon to win by a vast majority in the elections in December 1848. He beat the democratic republican’s candidate Ledru-Rollin, and politician with whom George Sand greatly involved herself. Louis-Napoleon thus became Napoleon III, the first elected president of France’s Second Republic.

George Sand’s tone dramatically changed regarding the Revolution of 1848. She praised the removal of the Bourbon government in France. She addressed the people of France, evoking elements of the past, the present, and the future. With the past, she spoke of the government that fell at the hands of the revolutionaries:

> We might perhaps have lived on for ten, twenty, a hundred years in this state of false peace, which was nothing but a hideous war between the heart and the intelligence, without making one step further on the way of progress. The calm and repose which is of death produces nothing, and your rulers were losing themselves more and more in their miserable systems of government and political economy.¹⁶⁵

Sand believed the Orleanist’s government went against Republican ideology. Under the mask of a constitutional monarchy, Louis-Philippe refused to give up his acquired control. The revolution, in Sand’s opinion, brought about the end of misery and “false peace” in France. Louis-Philippe’s government did not deserve to rule over the citizens of France, for his regime led to their deterioration and destruction.

¹⁶⁵ “George Sand’s Address to the People of France,” *The Times* [London], March 16, 1848.
In the same address, Sand looked to the present state of affairs. She showed her support of the new government. To the French people, she wrote:

The ‘present’ is found in the Republican form of Government, the source of all freedom and all rights, and that especially which ‘no form of monarchy can consecrate,’ the ‘right of existence.’ The Republic is the only means of drawing classes together, and working ‘that miracle of fraternal union which will destroy- all false distinctions, and erase the word class itself from the book of regenerated humanity.’

In this, Sand advocated a republican form of government and denounced monarchy. The representational form of government brought with it a renewed sense of freedom and liberties. Furthermore, a republic was the only way to unite the divided classes and erase social divisions. This was a Romantic notion, for that movement believed in a society of equality. This ideal, however, was not realized.

With the future, Sand wanted the people of France to avoid becoming tyrants themselves. She emulated Madame de Staël’s emphasis on progress. In the final parts of her address to the French, Sand explained:

This progress, which would have advanced with the step of man in each century with the systems of yesterday, will proceed with the step of a giant in every year of the system of to-day. Aid us, O people, to secure that equality of which we all have need; for the tyrant is as miserable as the slave, and the operation of the régime that has vanished had made most of us tyrants in spite of ourselves.

The progress of which she spoke relates back to her earlier discussion on the dissolution of classes. Whereas progress for Madame de Staël meant the installation of a constitutional monarchy, for George Sand, progress in France meant greater social and economic equality amongst its citizens.

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166 “George Sand’s Address to the People of France,” The Times [London], March 16, 1848.
167 Ibid.
With the revolution of 1848, Sand developed a desire to involve herself indirectly with politics. This meant involving herself with men like Alexandre Auguste Ledru-Rollin, a republican politician who strongly opposed Louis-Philippe’s monarchy. He spoke out against the inequality which he believed characterized society, but especially the “bourgeois” monarchy. In a speech in 1841, he stated:

Sovereignty of the people—that is the great principle which our fathers proclaimed nearly fifty years ago. Yet what has happened to it? Relegated to the phrases of a constitution, this sovereignty has disappeared in the domain of reality. For our fathers, the people meant the whole nation, in which each man had an equal share in political rights, just as God has given him an equal share in the air and sunlight. Today, ‘the people’ means a herd led by a few privileged persons like you and me, gentlemen, who are called electors, and then by some even more privileged persons who are dignified with the title of deputies…

The inequality amongst the classes troubled Ledru-Rollin and was a sentiment he shared with George Sand. As a result, he brought her on as a political writer and commentator.

Theirs, however, was not a romantic relationship. This is a point where Madame de Staël and George Sand differ. Madame de Staël used her romantic relationships in order to merge her public and private life. Sand’s public and private lives remained separated, but they co-existed in a way that contradicted the stereotype of the separate spheres. Her professional career and celebrity catapulted her into the realm of political discourse. Sand’s personal notoriety made her a public figure, lending credence and clout to her political thoughts and ideology. This did not negate the importance of her romantic relations, for her profession as a writer relied so heavily on her personal

connections. It was a complicated triangle of politics, profession, and paramours that bound George Sand’s worlds together in harmony.

In speaking out against the current government, Ledru-Rollin participated in the banquets that sparked the 1848 revolution. Following the defeat of the monarchy, he served as the Minister of the Interior for the provisional government. George Sand boldly decided to use her literary prowess to bolster the newly formed government.

Bertha Thomas explains:

Night and day her pen was occupied, now drawing up circulars for the administration, now lecturing the people in political pamphlets addressed to them. To the Bulletin de la République, a Government journal started with the laudable purpose of preserving a clear understanding between the mass of the people in the provinces and the central government, she became a leading contributor.¹⁶⁹

As a devoted republican, Sand felt no reservations in both praising and criticizing the new provisional government. The people had the right to know the truth about the authority that governed over their lives. She wanted to keep individuals informed, and she did so in the bulletin.

Those in charge of the Bulletin de La République, put out by the Ministry of Interior under Ledru-Rollin, set out to connect the French people to the goings-on in their new government. While Sand edited the articles, Ledru-Rollins used his connections to obtain permission for the bulletin’s posting through France.¹⁷⁰ The Ministry of the Interior distributed these documents. Between March 13 and May 6 twenty-five bulletins were published, ranging in topics from laudatory pronouncements about the Republic,

¹⁶⁹ Thomas, 160.
speeches given by Ledru-Rollin, and appeals specifically to the working class of France.\textsuperscript{171} Controversy arose for and within the government with the publication of the sixteenth bulletin on April 15, 1848.

The 16\textsuperscript{th} critically spoke out against the deputies of the Provisional Government. More specifically, it stated,

\begin{quote}
We could not pass in a day from the regime of corruption to the regime of the right... If social truth does not triumph in the elections, if the interests of the class prevail... the elections, which should be the safeguard of the republic, would undoubtedly be its destruction. \textit{There would then be only one path of safety for the people who erected the barricades; that would be to manifest once more its wish to postpone the decision made by the unrepresentative deputies.}\textsuperscript{172}
\end{quote}

The unidentified author of the bulletin spoke out as if the elections being held for the deputies of Constituent Assembly were corrupt, and that it was within the rights of the French people to stand up and revolt.\textsuperscript{173} Everyone wondered who had been the author of such discourse. It was, in fact, George Sand, although she took no responsibility for the article, claiming that it was the duty of Elias Regnault (the man in charge of the manuscripts) to dictate what was and was not appropriate for publication.\textsuperscript{174} As a private citizen, she did not hold herself accountable. This emphasizes the indirectness of Sand’s involvement in Ledru-Rollin’s government. She considered herself to be using her \textit{literary} abilities, not her political ones.\textsuperscript{175}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{171} Calman, 143. \\
\textsuperscript{172} Ibid., 144. \\
\textsuperscript{173} This “Revolution Myth” was a by-product of the French Revolution of 1789. It was believed that when people were oppressed, or when conditions were deplorable, citizens had a right to fight back through revolution. \\
\textsuperscript{174} Calman, 145. \\
\textsuperscript{175} Ibid.
\end{flushright}
This situation left Ledru-Rollin embarrassed and somewhat suspicious of George Sand, but he allowed her to remain at her position. The public, meanwhile, continued to focus on her identification as a woman. With this in mind, it is interesting to look at the miniscule role sex and gender actually played in Sand’s involvement in politics. While she understood the differences between the sexes, she did not allow it to halt her participation. Because she was an intellectual, Sand found her place amongst Ledru-Rollin’s socialist ideology. He maintained an open mind about having Sand involved in his affairs.

Sand’s admiration for Ledru-Rollin faltered following the demonstrations of May 15, 1848. Siding with the government and not the workers, Ledru-Rollin upset Madame Sand. She criticized him in the newspapers, and she did so without remorse. In fact, she wrote a letter to Ledru-Rollin, imploring him to respect her opinions, no matter what they might be.176

George Sand, nonetheless, remained a member of Ledru-Rollin’s circle. Their relationship, however, sparked gossip and widespread criticism. In the fall of 1848, Ledru-Rollin became the Socialist candidate for President. The campaign did not go well for him. His opponents specifically emphasized his connection to George Sand, as if he did not have enough problems after the June Days and then of revolutionary violence from the workers. A hand-colored lithograph by the satirist Aubert depicts Ledru-Rollin being supported by Sand.177

176 Letters of George Sand, vol 2, 36-38.
177 See Appendix A
women. The text at the bottom of the image suggests that Ledru-Rollin would be the candidate for whom all the women would vote.

This lithograph is telling in several regards. To start, Sand’s association with Ledru-Rollin both helped and hindered his campaign. While some portions of society viewed her as an intellectual, capable of political thoughts and ideas, the large majority still considered her to be a woman meddling in men’s affairs. Because of Ledru-Rollin’s association with the polarizing figure, he therefore received this negative press.

Gender is also a mode in which the artist criticized the politician. The physical depiction of Ledru-Rollin holds slightly feminine qualities. His face, smooth and creamy, has slight shades of rouge and blush, similar to a woman. In fact, his facial coloring strongly resembles that of George Sand. This would be considered a slight towards Ledru-Rollin, for femininity went against the masculine categorization of government and politics. Assigning him womanly features attacks his capabilities in the public sphere.

The image of Madame Sand is significant as well. More specifically, the color of her dress plays into the depiction of the authoress. Red is the color of strength and power, of passion and desire. In putting her in a dress of this shade, Aubert promotes two ideas. First, he re-emphasizes the fact that it is a woman who was behind the politics of Ledru-Rollin. The politician had been swayed and influenced by Sand. Indeed, the lithograph makes it seem as if Ledru-Rollin was little more than Sand’s puppet in the larger political game.
The color red also reminds people that George Sand was in fact a woman. France and Europe associated women with sexuality; they gave into their inner passions and tempted men to do the same. So, not only is Sand in this image a figure of power, she is also a figure of temptation. If her feminine wiles got her in control of Ledru-Rollin, it seems to imply, perhaps she was capable of even more ambitious goals.

Surprisingly, Sand had no political aspirations for herself. In fact, her growing popularity had culminated back in April 1848, before the events of May, when a group of women nominated George Sand for the National Assembly.\textsuperscript{178} She was indignant and did not appreciate the recognition. The women who nominated her wanted \textit{universal suffrage}, an ideal in which George Sand herself did not believe, and she wanted no part in their efforts. Harlan elaborates:

Sand didn’t sympathize with their concern that ‘universal’ suffrage excluded women; she believed that given the vote, wives would figure merely as their husbands’ rubber stamps. Before political emancipation, the more pressing problem of women’s civil rights within marriage and the sticky business of property rights had to be resolved, issues that had poisoned her own marriage and engendered a lengthy legal battle won only after years of embittered struggle.\textsuperscript{179}

Sand believed women needed rights in the private realm before they had the right to vote. They needed, she felt, protection as wives and mothers.

Their representation as citizens needed to wait. Until they were free from the ties that their relationships created, the political power needed to remain with the male population. In the private realm, male dominance oftentimes posed a threat towards


\textsuperscript{179} Harlan, 243.
women. They were neglected and not respected as individuals. Furthermore, women tended to be harsh and judgmental towards their own sex.

Sand is an intriguing study regarding to female participation in the public sphere in the mid nineteenth century. Her ideology was of a dual nature. While she thought herself capable of intelligent and rational discussion, she did not so believe this was true for the rest of her gender. In fact, she believed in the distinctions between men and women. She wrote in her autobiography:

That woman may differ from man, that the heart and mind answer to a sex, I do not doubt. Equality will always be an exception. But even supposing that woman’s education should make the necessary progress…woman will always be more artistic and poetic in her life; man will always be more so in his work. But must this difference, essential for the harmony of things and noblest enticements of love, constitute a moral inferiority?  

The above passage presents several key components in considering Sand’s ideology. The text shows Sand’s opinions on men and women. Unlike her feminist counterparts, Sand believed in the differentiation between the sexes. This factored into her lack of support towards the “anti-masculine crusade.”

This would be a mentality she carried throughout her life. The variances in nature led Sand to prefer the company of men to women. She found her sex’s company unpleasant. Sand explained:

With very few exceptions, I do not long endure the company of women. Not that I feel them inferior to me in intelligence; I consume so few of them in the habitual commerce of my life…that everyone has more of the around than I. But women, generally speaking, are nervous, anxious beings who, my reluctance notwithstanding, communicate their eternal disquiet to me apropos of everything. I begin by listening to them with

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181 Cate, xxx.
regret, then I let myself be caught up in a natural interest for what they are saying, only to perceive that there was really nothing to get worked up about to their puerile agitations...

The female penchant for gossip and long-enduring conversation left George feeling unsatisfied. As a result, she surrounded herself with men, both romantically and intellectually.

Despite the tempestuous period, many historians believe that George Sand was born at the right time. She and her contemporaries were on the cusps of a new era of literature, thought, and seemingly, political action. Curtis Cate, one of her biographers, claims:

She was twenty-six years old and in the full springtime of creativity when the reactionary Bourbons were finally overthrown in 1830 and a new, relatively liberal regime inaugurated with the stoutly middle-class Louis-Philippe....George Sand’s contemporaries...thus shared the exhilarating feeling of having a clean field before them, one calling for ‘renovation’ of the arts and a radial break with the pompous academicism of the Napoleonic era and its conservative aftermath.

The idea of revolution brought about new modes of thought and creativity. For Sand, this new proclivity for “renovation” spilled over into her personal life. Like Madame de Staël, she used love and loyalty to labor both artistically and politically.

Understanding George Sand’s sentimentality in her private relationships, therefore, is crucial in understanding the importance of her participation in the public realm. Sand’s relationships with both Sèze and Musset showcased her emotional nature. These relationships would make her, it seemed, the perfect example of a woman incapable of participating in politics. She was spontaneous, passionate, and utterly

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182 Cate, 224.
183 Ibid., xi.
devoted to the men in her personal life—surely she could not know anything regarding the
government.

Sand saw herself more as a literary intellectual commentating on the political
sphere and, in a rare instance, participating in events. Naturally she had political
opinions, for she believed in a France void of class distinctions and hierarchical divisions.
Within Ledru-Rollin’s political career, Sand became involved indirectly in the public
sphere. Where Madame de Staël openly showed her political prowess through combining
her public and private life, Sand maintained the distinctive realms and made them into a
cohesive duality. Her private life interacted with her public life, but they did not become
one.

With her relationships, George Sand showed the possibility of women countering
the public and private sphere. She did so, not by ignoring her gender, but by embracing
it. In other words, she, to some extent, played into the stereotypes of the time. Her
passionate disposition, her volatile relationships, and her fiery personality reflected the
notion of women’s irrationality. Sand, however, was able to balance her personal
exploits with her public, or political, ideology. Friendship, love, and government
participation coexisted together. George Sand proved that women were capable of both
passion and politics, of romance and rationality.
The experiences of Lucie Aubrac present another instance of a woman going against the gendered public and private spheres. Her case differs from those of Germaine de Staël and George Sand. Whereas de Staël and Sand proved to be extraordinary cases of female intellectuals involving themselves in the public sphere, Lucie Aubrac exemplifies the widespread reality of women’s involvement during World War II. During the war, it was a more common occurrence for females to exist outside the home. Their environment required it, much to the dismay of the French government. What made Lucie Aubrac more unique than most women was her involvement in the Resistance movement. Lucie both exemplified and countered gendered stereotypes. She was a loving wife and mother, but she used this familial façade to take part in clandestine activities with her husband and other résistants. This was a redefining of the female French identity, a process happening for nearly two centuries- but one that really took root in the aftermath of World War I.

During the 1920s, many French women lived a somewhat free and liberating existence. With her short hair, short skirts, and intellectual and sexual liberation, the modern woman went against the traditional mother figure. Even the single women who refrained from sexual expression countered the French ideal by not having a family

or raising children to be better French citizens.\(^\text{185}\) In order to return society back to “normal,” the 1930s in France endeavored to promote policies that would reestablish the ways of previous generations.

With women’s declining desire to have children, the government implemented legislation prohibiting contraception of any kind.\(^\text{186}\) The French government wanted to promote motherhood and the family above all else. Nothing could really be done on the women’s side because they lacked the power to vote—making them almost second-class citizens. As Eugen Weber so aptly explains: “So nothing is univocal, nothing is clear, except that women are not as good as men: second-class workers, second-class citizens. Recourse against that sentence was difficult since women had no vote, hence no access to political power, at least in its formal and most obvious form.”\(^\text{187}\) The idea was to bring women back to the home. In short, the newly liberated females needed to be contained.

It was the twentieth century, but the ideals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries still existed in France. Even for women in the work force, it was important to portray them as the feminine ideal. An article in The Times described French women as the ultimate group of wives and mothers:

Nothing could be more false than the impression of Frenchwomen conveyed by a certain class of literature designed for the foreign visitor. Frenchwomen are the best housewives in the world, thrifty, hard-working, and for the greater part superb cooks...They form, too, an industrial host 8,000,000 strong, of vital importance to their country, was their distribution clearly shows...France thus has at her disposal a veritable army of able, courageous and disciplined workers who not only fulfill

\(^{185}\) Roberts, ix.
\(^{187}\) Ibid., 84.
their duties as wives and mothers but also bring vigour and substance to the national economy.\textsuperscript{188}

No matter what, the French female needed to maintain an air of loving maternity and spousal responsibility. World War I broke the country, and the women needed to help it rebuild. Promoting a masculine French identity to the world seemed especially important with another probable war on its way. The situation heightened France’s concerns regarding the decline in birth rates and the perceptions of other European powers. In order to convey a stronger image, the country needed to be growing in population and masculinity.

Morality also came into question in this concern about women’s roles. With World War II looming, many, including women, contended that the French were partaking in somewhat questionable activities. Mary Louise Roberts, for example, explains in her book \textit{Civilizations without Sexes} that: “Postwar hedonism provided an escape from a world where the war was both everywhere and nowhere: everywhere inasmuch as it informed so many of the political, social, and economic issues with which legislators had to grapple, but also nowhere in the sense that some of the most fundamental questions concerning it were often evaded.”\textsuperscript{189} Giving into pleasures and decadence, seemed a way to forget the turmoil and struggles possibly ahead.\textsuperscript{190} This forgetfulness, however, did not prevent the war from coming. It instead helped to bring about its outcome.

\textsuperscript{188} “Women in France: An Army of Disciplined Workers,” \textit{The Times} [London], July 19, 1938.
\textsuperscript{189} Roberts, 1.
\textsuperscript{190} Ibid., 2.
At the start of 1938 the fragile peace began to slip away and the French people sensed the war drawing near. Families came together under the sense of foreboding that permeated the country. In her memoir, *A Life of Her Own*, Emilie Carles explains:

In 1938, after those few years of happiness, clouds began to gather over our heads. The Popular Front was fluttering its wings like a wounded bird, civil war was raging in Spain and we were helping the refugees as best we could. We collected old clothes for the Loyalist children already flocking to southern France. The war craze had overtaken all Europe; in Germany Hitler and his triumphant Nazis became more threatening with each passing day, and in Italy the Fascist order knew no limits. For pacifists like us, it was hard.  

This sense of pacifism on both the left and the right was crucial in the ultimate defeat of France in World War II. This widespread pacifism contradicted the militarism that had existed throughout France’s history. Nevertheless, after the devastation and psychological wrenching of World War I, the French found themselves unwilling to fight. This resistance to fight, a sentiment particularly strong amongst the women, left the country unable to defend itself fully once the conflict began as so many viewed the battlefield as “vain, not glorious.”  

On September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland. Two days later, on September 3, the United Kingdom and France declared war on Germany. France mobilized its troops, as Germany consolidated its position in the East, there was no action in the West, in what was termed a “phony war” with Germany. This meant Germany refrained from attacking France while France failed to take the offensive position. And when the

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German army in May 1940 launched its offensive, the French army and the French resistance quickly collapsed.

With this situation in mind, let us turn one woman who embodies the merging of public and private life during World War II. Lucie Aubrac did not begin her life knowing that she, like many French people, would be called upon to perform heroic, dangerous acts to liberate her country. Born on June 29, 1912, she grew up in the Mâcon area of Burgundy. Her father fought in World War I, where he was injured. This had a great impact on Lucie’s childhood. Like many French citizens, she grew to dislike violence and war. She remarks, “I became a passionate pacifist in my youth.” These sentiments evolved with her introduction into adulthood and her exposure to the European political environment of the period.

In the late 1930s, Lucie worked as a history teacher at an all girl’s school. Being a teacher allowed her to participate in a discourse with her students about the war. In her memoir Outwitting the Gestapo, Aubrac explains her own and her students’ awareness of the nature of the conflict: “On the other side of the Rhine was Hitler, backed by a fanaticized nation. We knew that leftists and German Jews were being rounded up and thrown into camps, guarded by the SS and the police. We already called them ‘concentration camps.’” This notion supports the idea that World War II made many French women more politically conscious, as they needed, they wanted, to know the reality of their situation as well as the goings-on in the rest of Europe.

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196 Ibid.
Another important component of Lucie’s life was her private romantic relationship. During the 1938-1939 school year she met Raymond Samuel, the man who became her husband. He was a young engineer then doing his military service in the Engineer Corps. The two grew close, as she was planning to study in America and he had recently returned from there. Their friendship was at first platonic, but then it became romantic. The two promised each other they would marry when she came home. But the outbreak of the war halted her travels, and she and Raymond married on December 14, 1939.

Lucie’s marriage differs greatly from Madame de Staël’s and George Sand’s in that it was based on a mutual love. There were no ulterior motives to be had other than their union with each other. The war made their union stronger. Where de Staël and Sand married out of convenience and personal gain, she and Raymond were deliriously happy with one another. “How I love him and how he stirs my sense! I feel our two bodies as strongly united as when we make love. I couldn’t stand losing him,” she writes. The couple always tried to be together on May 14th to celebrate the anniversary of the day they fell in love. And throughout the course of their relationship, there was no adultery, no affairs that shrouded Lucie’s romantic life.

The only other male in her life whom Lucie also loved unconditionally was her son Jean-Pierre, known to those in the Résistance as BouBou. Jean-Pierre provided so much joy, particularly during the days of Raymond’s absence. He was always in her

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197 Aubrac, Outwitting the Gestapo, 3.
198 Ibid.
199 Ibid., 38.
200 Ibid., 19.
201 Ibid., 47.
thoughts. She thought him precious, and thus was always worried about his safety. Her one thought throughout the war was the safety of her husband and her son. For them she was willing to fight, to go to any length to keep them safe from harm.

On May 10, 1940, Germany invaded Belgium, thus marking the start of the Battle of France. The Germans quickly outflanked the Maginot Line on June 5\textsuperscript{th} and pushed through into France. The resulting French defeat led to an armistice in June with Germany, an agreement that divided France. The areas of Alsace and Moselle were annexed to Germany. Furthermore, the German army would occupy the north while the south remained under French administration.\footnote{Robert Paxton, \textit{Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944} (New York: Columbia University Press), 11.} Robert Paxton explains the armistice meant two things: “the war was over, and Germany had won.”\footnote{Raymond Aubrac, \textit{The French Resistance: 1940-1944}, trans. Louise Guiney (Paris: Éditions Hazan, 1997), 9.} The Franco-German Armistice outlined the parameters of the German occupation of France. It allowed France to have a government, but Germany still held ultimate control. Article III stated, “In the occupied parts of France the German Reich exercises all rights of an occupying power. The French Government obligates itself to support with every means the regulations resulting from the exercise of these rights and to carry them out with the aid of French administration.”\footnote{“Franco-German Armistice: June 25, 1940,” \textit{The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History, and Diplomacy}, Yale Law School, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/wwii/frgearm.asp.} In short, this creation of a new government, the Vichy regime, headed by Marshal Pétain, the hero of Verdun, would find itself in a tenuous relationship with the victorious Germans.
Some spoke out against peace with Germany. General Charles de Gaulle formed the Free France movement, and in a speech that fall declared:

The enemy’s trickery and the lies of his accomplices led our country into signing detestable armistices. The enemy and his accomplices were able to create such a pernicious atmosphere that they anaesthetized France. They had been enabled to make many people think that capitulation was necessary because all was lost. They had been enabled to spread the illusion that the presence of a very old Marshal and of defeated old generals, defeated by their own fault, would suffice to neutralize the hatred and covetousness of our conquerors. They had gone so far as to talk of the reconstruction of France beneath the yoke of our conquerors.²⁰⁵

Not everyone viewed the Vichy regime with the same disdain as de Gaulle, however. While his critics mocked his age and his presumption to speak for France, many saw Pétain as a father figure who would save France from a dismal fate.²⁰⁶ The regime, they believed, “acted as a partial screen between the French in the occupied zone and the Germans.”²⁰⁷ The reality was far less respectable, for Pétain and the Vichy government collaborated closely with the Nazis and did not in fact act as a barrier between France and Germany or protect French citizens.

The armistice did not, for example, release the large number of French soldiers held as prisoners-of-war. These men remained separated from their families, and their wives and loved ones had to survive without them. This was a harrowing experience for most and an inconvenient situation for all. The Vichy government realized the problem; however, it did not seem to have a suitable solution. Marshal Pétain remarked, “My attention falls first on the destiny of the prisoners. I am thinking of them…because they

²⁰⁵ “The Old Men of Vichy,” The Times [London], August 13, 1940.
²⁰⁷ Ibid.
fought to the extreme limit of their strength… I want their mothers, their wives, their sons to know that my thoughts never leave them, that they too are my children.”  

The government’s thoughts were with the POWs and their families, but their focus and actions remained elsewhere. This resulted in families of the absent soldiers not receiving adequate financial compensation. An ideal situation would have been a government that greatly supported the wives and families left behind: the reality was a stark contrast.

In 1940, 1.58 million men were held captive in Germany, or 4% of the population. Out of that number, 57% of those men were married and 39% of them had children. With the men away, the women had to take charge of their families and assume responsibilities they would not otherwise had to bear. In her book We Will Wait: Wives of French Prisoners of War, 1940-1945, Sarah Fishman explains how French women, during their husbands’ absences, had to be both the man and woman of the household, which contradicted society’s expectations. Taking care of the mundane house chores wore on Janet Teissier du Cros, a wife of a POW. She recalls:

My breakfast was no longer brought up to me in bed; when guests came no secret message told me waffles were being made; no one sang hymns, no one mended my sheets. I had all the housework to do myself, and in very difficult circumstances as I soon discovered….There was cooking to do, there were dishes to wash, and only a wood fire to heat the water. There was the wood to fetch and carry. Worst of all, since sleep was my only respite, the children woke me up with the lark.

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210 Fishman, xii.
Janet’s thoughts show the growing frustration and exhaustion. She wanted her husband back- and soon. POWs’ wives felt isolated, frustrated, often overwhelmed in performing the household duties alone during those tumultuous years, especially as the rigors of Occupation increased and shortages of food became more prevalent. They also felt extremely alone.

Popular culture echoed the plight of the French women. One famous song of the period, *J’attendrai*, expresses the feelings of sadness and longing these wives experienced. Recorded by Rina Kety, the song’s first verse reads: “I shall wait day and night/ I shall wait for your return/ I shall wait because the bird that flees comes/ back to find lost memories in its nest/ Time passes and runs, beating sadly in my heart so heavy/ And yet I shall wait for your return.”

The women needed, and most wanted, to wait for their husbands.

The Vichy regime expected much from the women left at home. For one, Vichy expected them to maintain moral purity and a domestic demeanor while their husbands were away. With their return, their husbands should want for nothing. Somewhat in contradiction to this the government, and some facets of French society, also felt it was the woman’s duty to provide the country with babies. How were they to do this while their husbands were away while also maintaining their sexual purity? For this, Vichy did not have an answer.

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213 Fishman, 127-128.
Furthermore, Pétain blamed the troubles of society, such as the poor finances and living conditions, on the absence of men. To the French people he said, “Our domestic difficulties have sprung above all from troubled minds, from lack of men and from scarcity of products.”215 The only way to solve these problems meant that women had to perform masculine duties while also maintaining their feminine nature. The POWs’ wives, it seemed, lived in a paradox.

This reality is crucial in understanding the social dynamics for French women during the war. The absence of such a large portion of the male population undermined any semblance of gendered public and private spheres. France, in fact, obviously could not survive—just as families could not survive—if women stayed at home, only performing their domestic duties. This absence marks a difference between this period and those of the French Revolution and the revolutions of 1830 and 1848.

In those cases, France found itself in an internal struggle between French citizens. This meant the men were present in daily lives. They were able to support or enforce gender roles. During the first phases of World War II, it was first the French against foreign invasion. This led to soldiers leaving for the front while their families dealt with their absence. Then, France partook in a tenuous relationship with its foreign occupiers. This did not relieve the struggles for the women left at home. Instead, for many women, the forced absence continued while their loved ones became POWs. This created a situation different from that of the revolutions of the past. The public and private spheres disintegrated out of circumstance and necessity.

Women, therefore, had to live with the forced absence of their loved ones. For apart from the POW’s the Germans also took husbands, brothers, and sons as guest workers in Germany or detained and imprisoned them. This became the situation for Lucie Aubrac, as her husband first became a POW and then a political prisoner. But still, she needed to provide for her son. Her situation was a common occurrence for French women during the war. The result was that gendered public and private spheres gave way to the reality of survival.

These daily struggles involved food rationing, the difficulty of shopping, and frequent interactions with the police. Moreover, living in Paris, which was occupied by German troops and surveilled by the Gestapo and SS could be a harrowing experience. Obtaining food meant standing in long lines, often only to receive small portions of meals. Historian Ian Ousby points out the rationings of food, particularly meat, got so low in Paris that people claimed that the amount of meat they received was the mere size of a Metro card. Women endured all this out of necessity, however, for they needed to provide for their families no matter the cost.

During the war, one of the growing enterprises was the black market. The rationing system was insufficient, so people turned towards illicit exchanges. Janet Teissier du Cros partook in these prohibited activities, explaining her actions—along with her guilt—this way:

We were all of us driven to some form of dishonest practice. It was no small hardship having to throw our moral scruples to the winds and settle

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216 Diamond, 53
down to a dishonest way of life, in full view of the children and in
contradiction to all we were striving to teach them. Not but what my
practical Scotch mind made a clear distinction between what is immoral
and what is merely illegal; but such distinctions are not easy to explain to
a child. Besides, there was a haunting feeling that this was the thin end of
a wedge and, as such, not a good thing for the nation.  

Desperation overshadowed remorse, necessity outweighed illegality. French women had
to ignore their conscience and moral fortitude in order to survive.

Difficult, dangerous situations occurred with the German troops. Living in the
occupied zone meant you would had to have some interaction with Germans. These
contacts were not always dramatic or violent. In fact, regular German soldiers endured
many of the same shortages as the French. Simone de Beauvoir, for one, did not think
that all the Germans were as bad as they were portrayed because:

The Germans did not cut off children’s hands; they paid for their drinks
and the eggs they bought on the farms, and spoke politely; all the
shopkeepers smiled at them invitingly. They started in on their
propaganda straight away. As I was reading in a field two soldiers
approached me. They spoke little clumsy French, and assured me of their
friendly feelings toward the French people: it was the English and the
Jews who had brought us to this sorry pass. This little conversation did
not surprise me; what was disconcerting was to pass these green-
uniformed men in the street and find them just like soldiers anywhere the
world over.

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218 Teissier Du Cros, 241.
219 Interactions also occurred in the southern zone, for troops entered the south in 1942. After the Allies
invaded North Africa on November 8, 1942, the Germans and Italians occupied the southern zone of
France. The occupation would continue until France’s liberation.
220 Richard Vinen, The Unfree French: Life Under the Occupation (New Haven: Yale University Press,
2006), 111.
1976), 353-54.
Even while she was in the country, de Beauvoir was disconcerted by the fact that the Germans could pass for any other group of soldiers. This made it difficult for some to classify them as the enemy.

This does not mean all French were happy about the contact they had with their occupiers. Many French women saw the Germans as an opposing force. Additionally, the police created great fear amongst the citizens, even in the Unoccupied Zones. Lucie Aubrac remarks:

The police- so many different kinds! Everyone is afraid of them, from the male nurse at the Antiquaille hospital to the travelers on the train. Everybody is subjected to their presence and fears their huge power. Whether they’re in uniform or not, nobody challenges the order ‘Police. Your papers!’ Ah, to be safely in order- but who can every boast that they are completely? Fortunately, people develop a sense of community, and they are shrewd. This train trip marks one more victory, although we don’t know for what, or for how long.222

This sense of unease drove French women in a myriad of directions. Some went about their lives trying not to draw the attention to themselves or their families. Others interacted with the German forces, subjecting themselves to suspicion and criticism. Others decided to fight back against the Germans and the Vichy regime.

Defining “resistance” has been a subject of considerable debate and often disagreement. Historian Henri Michel defines it as “any action or writing in violation of the conventions of the armistice between France and Germany signed on June 22, 1940, on in opposition to the applications of these conventions- no matter where the place or who the author.”223 This definition, therefore, includes any activity big or small, in

222 Aubrac, Outwitting the Gestapo, 35.
223 In Weitz, 8.
writing or in action. Furthermore, this encompasses those who worked against the
Germans but did not consider themselves part of the greater coalition of Resistance
agents.

The organized Resistance movement arose in the summer and fall of 1940. Acts
of opposition were smaller in scale during this preliminary period and did not become
serious until 1941. Raymond Aubrac explains what he considers resistance actions:

Resistance was expressed through isolated gestures- severing telephone
lines, sabotaging shipments of goods destined for Germany, assisting
escaped prisoners-of-war to flee. In the northern zone, the target was the
German army of occupation; in the southern zone, the Vichy regime.
Opposition frequently took the form of graffiti painted on public walls or
leaflets distributed clandestinely. Newspapers and radio broadcasts were
strictly censored in both zones, and people thirsting for reliable
information were eager for anything other than the official posters
plastering the walls and the strident sloganeering filling the airwaves.
This was a tentative period for the organization that was later to become
the French Resistance Movement.224

Those taking part in such acts made up a small portion of the population. Many came
from the middle class, but there was some diversity in this regard.

Lucie’s third love, following her husband and son, was France itself.
Commitment to her country drove her to action. This was the motivation of many or
most of the men and women in the movement. Historian and résistant Marie Granet
explains:

The majority of the French Resistance members were like that. We had a
passionate love for our country. This passion cannot be explained.
Accepting the German occupation meant accepting subjugation. Then
there was the passion for liberty. Some people knew what the Nazis were
like- at least they had some idea of what Nazism represented. One had to

224 Aubrac, The French Resistance, 11-12
resists such tyranny, such enslavement. That was the reason why some people did a great deal in the Resistance.\textsuperscript{225}

Love of country and a refusal to bow to Nazi control inspired a selective few to act out against the regime. Through their involvement, they risked their lives for their family, their friends, and their country.

This was an individual decision; many struggled with choosing to act against Vichy and the Germans or not. It was not a simple decision nor a choice between being pro-German or pro-French. One had to analyze every aspect of his or her beliefs and the risks involved in order to decide whether to take action or not. For some, this meant remaining in the background, simply living a life day after day. For others, it meant fighting back.

On August 13, 1940, Charles de Gaulle announced himself as the head of the Free French movement. In his speech he declared,

My aim, my sole aim, is to act so that in spite of momentary desertion, France does not stop fighting, and that France shall be present at the victory. That is why I have recently signed a very important agreement with the British Government. By virtue of this agreement, I, who am at present the leader of the Free Frenchmen, undertake to organize a French force to fight side by side with our Allies. On their side the British Government undertake completely to restore the independence and greatness of France after victory has been achieved. That is what I have done, and that is what I have set out to do. I am responsible to the French nation in whose service I have placed myself, once for all. The enemy and his Vichy accomplices tax my conduct, and that of the good Frenchmen who have joined me to fight, with treason. Nothing could encourage us more. For nothing shows more clearly that our path is the right one.\textsuperscript{226}

\textsuperscript{225} Weitz, 93.
\textsuperscript{226} The Times [London], August 13, 1940.
From that point onwards, the Free French movement became a thread, albeit a small one, that wove itself throughout French society. This did not mean the common French citizen understood what the movement was, as many remained ignorant of the actual Resistance until the fall of 1941.227

A growing awareness of its activities followed Marshal Pétain’s “Address to the French People,” given in August 1941. While Pétain did not recognize the Free French by name, he alluded to and spoke against their illegal activities:

In an atmosphere of false rumors and intrigues, the forces of reconstruction are growing discouraged. Others are trying to take their place without their nobleness or disinterestedness. My sponsorship is too often involved, even against the government, to justify self-styled undertakings of salvation which, in fact, amount to nothing more than appeals for indiscipline.228

Pétain’s tone underscored the portrayal of him as a father figure of France. His words resembled those of a father scolding his child. In collaboration with the Nazi government, Pétain wanted to dissuade the French from any further acts of resistance. He belittled any action against Vichy or Germans. These individuals, he indicated, would not bring salvation to France, they would bring retribution from the German army.

Despite the constant threat of retaliation, French citizens continued their clandestine acts. It was not just men who joined the Resistance. Women were involved as well. Making up 7-12% of all résistants, their reasons for joining varied. For some, it provided a sense of usefulness and purpose in their lives. Lucienne Guezezzoccex remarked,

228 “Marshal Pétain’s Address to the French People.”
“I felt like a new Joan of Arc. At last I could do something.” Part participation also meant living double lives. Thus, in one realm they were résistants, but in the other they had to be wives, daughters, and mothers.

Lucie’s involvement in the Resistance was not inevitable. She and Raymond had the opportunity to flee from danger. At the start of 1940, they even contemplated leaving France. Because of Raymond’s Jewish heritage it made sense for them to leave Europe while they still had the chance. However, emotional ties bound them to their homeland. Lucie explains:

Raymond Samuel was of Jewish origins: his ancestors had come from Poland at the beginning of the eighteenth century. After the collapse of the French army in 1940, and following his own escape from a prisoner-of-war camp, his professors in Boston offered him a job as an assistant. I still had my fellowship, so in September 1940 we applied for American visas in order to go to the United States. But then we changed our minds; could we really leave our families and our friends behind, while our country was occupied by the Germans?

Their loyalties thus proved stronger than any desire for safety, and from this moment in 1940 they dedicated themselves to the Resistance movement of Lyon.

One particular matter must be broached in regards to Lucie’s perception of her and Raymond’s lives in the Resistance. She believed her two lives to be parallel. But in their situation, distance was an impossibility. The term parallel denotes two lines which rune beside each other, always equidistant apart, never connecting. Lucie and Raymond were fellow résistants as well as husband and wife. No matter the covers they crafted or missions they went on, this was always the reality. They had a personal bond,

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229 In Weitz, 2-3.
230 Aubrac, Outwitting the Gestapo, 4.
231 Ibid.

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a love for each other which inspired just as much action as their patriotic love for France. No matter hard they may have tried, that underlying devotion remained. A false name, a violent act, a classified location did not make them new people impervious to each other. Furthermore, their fellow résistants knew, loved, and were concerned about little Jean-Pierre. They asked about him during meetings and found joy in hearing stories about his life. Lucie explains:

After all, our little man in the only child in our group of résistants. None of us are used to the rigors and cautious discipline of the Communist groups, and hence everybody knows everybody. Raymond and I live our everyday lives with our actual identities, and for many people our home, first the one on rue Pierre Corneille and now on the avenue Esquirol, is a place to stop for a quick meal or to spend a night. Our friends who live solitary lives far from their families like to come and share our life as a couple and as parents, just for a moment.\(^\text{232}\)

Lucie and Raymond were the exception, not the rule. Being a married couple with a child made them a rarity in the Resistance. Their son became a topic of interest and affection. He was an innocent in a situation of incredible risk and danger. With these connections, it is difficult to classify Lucie’s personal and clandestine lives as parallel, as she wanted to in her memories. Their fellow résistants’ awareness of and interest in Jean-Pierre connected the two realities, just as the marital bond between Raymond and Lucie existed in both realms.

Lucie Aubrac felt this burden. As a wife and mother, she often bore the sole responsibility of living two lives. In the spring of 1943 she contemplated: “Outside the underground life of the Resistance, with its more or less dangerous activity, daily life must be confronted- for a woman more than a man: a household to take care of, a

\(^{232}\) Aubrac, Outwitting the Gestapo, 47.
husband and child to feed, clothes to be washed." Life did not stop because one decided to take part in the Resistance, particularly for a mother. Women instead learned to combine their two realities, each one intertwined with the other.

This reality was crucial in two regards. First, women’s private lives influenced the types of activities in which they took part. Ironically, they could undertake dangerous assignments as women, as wives, as mothers because they were less suspicious to the enemy. Thus, they incorporated their Resistance life into their domestic one. Their work “became an extension of what they were doing anyway to keep the home running, procuring food and providing shelter.” This can be seen in an exchange between Claire Chevrillon and the man in charge of her assignments:

In the course of time I learned that he was working directly under General de Gualle’s personal representatives in France, Jean Moulin. Moulin had assigned him the job of finding and landing fields for air operations around Paris. Gautier was to recruit teams which, by the light of the moon, would receive parachuted arms, explosives, radios, money, and, last but not least, BCRA agents like himself, trained to sabotage the German occupation of France…

“And I,” I said, “What can I do?”

“Very simple,” he said, “You will be my cover.”

“What?” I said, “I thought I was going to be your mailbox.”

He burst out laughing. “It’s the same thing! You’ll be my smoke screen, if you prefer.” He explained that all I would have to do was receive his mail, his phone calls, packages, and messages, and give them to him. This wouldn’t take much time and wouldn’t interfere with my professional or family life.

The melding of private and public life occurred for countless women throughout France during this period, but women in the Resistance lived this reality in a magnified sense.

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234 Diamond, 100.
These female résistants balanced the danger of clandestine actions with the reality of being a French woman under Vichy and German occupation.

Secondly, the relationship between the two aspects of life, while it made them useful to send messages and for some high-risk assignments, posed dangers for women. They feared for themselves, and even more they feared for the safety of their families. They also dreaded the possibility of their loved ones being used by the authorities to garner information. Genevieve de Gaulle, Charles de Gaulle’s niece, admits:

> What we in the Resistance had not foreseen- none of us- was the full implication of our commitment. We were aware that we could be arrested, that we could be tortured. That was not a reassuring perspective at all. You never know if you will resist under torture. I could never had predicted my response. You can stand up to some things but you have no idea of your limits. If one of my children or grandchildren had been tortured in front of me, I do not know what I would have done.  

Having a private life posed therefore many complications, but it did not stop either men or women from participating.

The stereotypes of women oftentimes made female résistants invisible to the authorities. The Germans did not suspect women capable of such calculated and illegal activities. As a result, as indicated above, they could go out on missions and not be noticed. This changed as the war went on and Resistance actions became more widely known. However, in 1940 and 1941 it proved to be quite effective.

For the Aubrac family, the real dangers came later in the war, particularly in 1943. This would be the year which challenged Lucie the most. On March 15, 1943, Raymond walked into a trap and was arrested. The authorities found the apartment

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235 In Weitz, 58.
236 Weitz, 85.
Raymond had rented for purposes of the group’s covert meetings. They ransacked the place and then chased down Raymond. As Raymond recounted his experience to Lucie, she shuddered at the thought his capture was the result of collaboration by the French. In her memoir she says:

I shiver. Knowing about the collusion between the Vichy government and Hitler is one thing; to be confronted with the reality is another matter. I swear to remember this after the war: these were French policemen, real government employees, not just fascist rabble like the Milice, obeying German orders as a matter of routine! They had agreed to hand over to the Gestapo some Frenchmen whom themselves had arrested and whose cases were being investigated by French judicial authorities. It was inconceivable!

Lucie found it deplorable that her own countrymen proactively interacted with the German troops in this way. Nor would this be the last time the Aubracs encountered German soldiers, for after Germany entered the unoccupied zone, it became a more common occurrence.

In the incident above Raymond, though questioned, was released. Despite his release, the couple participated in an attempt to rescue three of his group members being held at the Antiquaille hospital. Here, personal feelings countered professional obligations. Lucie feared for her husband, explaining, “I don’t doubt for an instant that we will succeed, but I am anxious about letting Raymond participate in the operation. Out of solidarity with his three comrades who were still locked up, he was determined to be in on the venture.” Raymond and Lucie both assisted in rescuing the résistants on May 17, 1943. Throughout Lucie’s memoir, these competing loyalties create an

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237 Aubrac, Outwitting the Gestapo, 14-15.
238 Ibid., 18.
239 Ibid., 30.
interesting internal dynamic for her. For what she relates is how she continuously tries to balance her passionate love for her husband with her patriotic duty to her country.

In an attempt to balance the two aspects of their lives, Lucie and Raymond decided to take their son on vacation to the south coast of France. It was during this trip that the duality of Lucie’s convictions once again become apparent. One afternoon, the Italian soldiers at the beach send over food for Jean-Pierre. Lucie accepts the gesture, but Raymond is appalled:

“What!” says Raymond, furious. “You’re accepting, and on top of that you thank them?”
I always justify myself: “It isn’t for us. It’s good for the baby, and don’t forget, Italy is not Nazi.”
“No, except Mussolini started it all, ten years before Hitler.” Raymond replies
“But think, those guys aren’t so bad. They’ve been mobilized. They’re occupying force and it seems to me they’d rather be ignored since they can’t be loved.”
“We’d like them a lot better at a distance,” Raymond persists. I can’t help thinking about the centuries of civilization behind them. After all, it’s the same civilization that we inherited. But only one argument carries any weight with Raymond: “For our own security we have to be a little friendly.”
While I talk I am conscious that my little boy is getting his stomach filled with good food. Still, I know I wouldn’t have accepted anything at all from German officers. Would they even have thought of offering anything?240

Politically, she did not view the Italians to be as deplorable as the Nazis. She made this distinction in order to justify her actions. But also, her maternal nature superseded her political convictions. If accepting food from opposing soldiers meant her son ate a hearty meal, then that was what she would do. This is, unless they were Germans, for then the moral lines for her began to blur.

240 Aubrac, Outwitting the Gestapo, 40.
Her hatred of the Germans drove her political involvement in the movement. She held them responsible for the dangers she and others faced. But equally her countrymen were also a danger for the Resistance. For French citizens often rejected and disavowed the underground network out of fear of retribution, especially since the Germans often punished average individuals in retaliation for the Resistance’s actions. Moreover, the army’s presence created a constant hindrance. With curfews, censorship, and informers, they controlled “everything.” The authorities also infiltrated the network, gaining information from members “persuaded” to give up information.

Lucie proved herself vital to the cause in many ways, particularly because of her job as a convenient decoy. This was another instance in which she fit into the common role of women in the Resistance. As her husband spoke with Jean Moulin, a Resistance leader who united the various underground movements under the code name Max, she walked ahead with her son. She asks herself:

A mother with her child, what could be more transparently innocent in a public park on a Sunday afternoon? I’m happy to provide some slight cover for this meeting between these two résistants. And I’m all the happier because Max, the accomplished diplomat, has indicated that I have a place alongside them. He knows that our commitment to the cause is inseparable from our agreement as a couple.

The significance here is twofold. Lucie readily admits she was the distraction while the two male résistants conversed and planned. More than that, she was “happy” to do so. Moreover, Jean’s recognition of her and her husband’s dedication to each other and to the movement emphasizes their dual, but not parallel, lives.

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242 Ibid., 64.
Her joy did not last. On June 13, 1943, a captured résistant betrayed Raymond, which led to his arrest. Lucie, therefore, had to endure the forced absence of her husband and cope with her fear for his life, as well as worry about the safety of herself and her family. Despite this, she persevered in trying to free her husband; and, as it turned out, being a wife motivated her to save Raymond.

Lucie’s actions in the Resistance during this time revolved around her attempts to save Raymond. Every move she made was a step towards having him freed. In order to contact him, she tried to set up a connection through a doctor known for helping résistants. Despite the danger in trying to reach Raymond, she could not stop. Lucie knew her actions interfered with her role in the movement. She admits, “Until Raymond is rescued, I’ve got better things to do with my freedom and my resourcefulness. But I know full well that at the next opportunity I’ll do it again.”

Here, her love for her husband superseded her love for her country. This determination took her all the way to Switzerland, where she purchased gun silencers from a customs officer in the train station.

While in the train station, Lucie was surrounded by German officers. She oddly does not seem terrified by this. Instead, she approached several of the gendarmes, perhaps to seem nonchalant, and struck a conversation with them:

“Surely nobody’s likely to risk slipping into Switzerland these days, in this area, with all that surveillance?”

“You think not?” one of them answers. “In fact, nobody goes by road now; all attempts are made from the train. Whenever it slows down, people jump off and get to the other side. We’ll stay on the train as far as

244 Ibid., 147.
Saint-Julien. We go back and forth here, so we know every yard of the trip and nobody can jump off because we’re blocking the doors.”
I say that it takes courage to jump from a moving train.
“Yeah, some get killed. And once on the ground, they still have to cross the road; sometimes they run right into the patrol.”  

This conversation is telling, both in Lucie’s willingness to risk her safety to speak to these officers and the fact that the officers did not suspect her of anything. This time she did not act as a distraction or decoy, as she had for her husband and his cohorts, but rather came across to the officers simply as a curious woman asking questions about the terrorists striking Vichy and Germany.

The officers remained unaware of her mission, and she made it back to France safely. The plan to rescue Raymond and the others was thus set in motion. On October 21, 1943, she and other members of the group ambushed a transport carrying the prisoners. Raymond was accidentally shot, but his wound was not serious. It is important to note that Lucie herself took part in the rescue mission. Hers was not a passive role, rather she evolved into an active participant in the group. After Raymond’s rescue, Lucie and Raymond went into hiding in northern France. There, they awaited the radio message that told them how to escape. On February 8, 1944, they received coded instructions on where to meet the rescue plane, and Raymond and a very pregnant Lucie flew to England.

For Lucie Aubrac, life under German occupation became synonymous with waiting: waiting for both the mundane and the clandestine. She contemplates:

Years later, when I tell my children about the German occupation and the Resistance, my most tenacious memory will be that impression of having

\[245\] Aubrac, Outwitting the Gestapo, 148.
spent my life waiting: for the end of the curfew in the morning, to have coupons stamped for food distribution, to exchange one’s ration cars every month, for a pass—everything means waiting. On the sidewalk in front of the stores, at the trolley stop, on station platforms, at town hall desks. In addition, for us, in our clandestine lives, there are other long waits: for a liaison agent, for a friend coming from afar, for the arrival of illegal newspapers, for the start of a military action— the fabric of daily life riddled with dangers.²⁴⁶

Like the woman in J’attendrai waiting for her husband to return from war, Lucie waited for her ordinary life to begin again. It would, and it did. For after the war, both she and Raymond became figures in Charles de Gaulle’s new government.

In March 1944, Charles de Gaulle declared France liberated. His declaration had real effect once the Allies entered France on August 25, 1944, and eventually the city of Paris itself. According to historian Pieter Lagrou, the new regime was to be a republic, but not one in any way associated with the Third Republic, for it was seen as responsible for France’s defeat.²⁴⁷

Lucie herself served on the tribunal that tried and sentenced Pétain. This was unique in the fact that many, if not most, female résistants did not receive such recognition in the post-war period. The organization that prided itself on female inclusion failed to grant them sufficient representation in the newly formed government. Thereafter Lucie’s post-war experience revolved around spreading the “truth” about the Resistance.²⁴⁸ She died on March 14, 2007, leaving only her memories, in her memoir Outwitting the Gestapo, as testament of her life and experiences.

²⁴⁶ Aubrac, Outwitting the Gestapo, 131.
²⁴⁸ The German officer, known as the Butcher of Lyon, was put on trial in 1984. During the proceedings, he threatened to discredit Raymond Aubrac’s participation in the Resistance. After his death, a slanderous
Living as a wife, mother and résistant made Lucie Aubrac’s experiences of the war both ordinary and exceptional. Ordinary in the fact her concern remained focused on her son and her husband; exceptional in that she passionately and bravely participated in actions against the German Occupiers and the Vichy government. Some may argue that her actions do not quantify as real political involvement, for she acted under the cloak of her role as a wife and mother. However, as a member of the Communist party, her convictions were not only politically driven, but also replicated her rejection of Pétain and his collaborationist regime.

Women résistants defied expectations of women’s proper role in society. As Hanna Diamond explains, these women, by resisting, transgressed not just official laws of the day but also the tacit laws of a how a woman should behave. In reality, a large portion of the French female population of the time went against the established gender stereotypes. They took on both parental roles; they by necessity broke the law and bought goods from the black markets; they did what they thought they needed to in order to survive. This was true of French women generally, even those who did not, like Lucie Aubrac, go to the extreme point of resistance.

This is what makes Lucie Aubrac both an exception and the norm. She led dual lives, but they were so closely intertwined that there was no of a separation of her private and public life. She worked with her husband in the field; and after his capture, though she acted on her own, he continued to inspire her every action. Her son Jean-Pierre

publication came out that made the claim Raymond was not faithful to the Resistance. Raymond and Lucie won a libel suit against the publication.

249 Diamond, 102.
caused her to accept food from the enemy, and her concern for him kept her focused in
the darkest days of the Occupation. No, she did not live in parallel worlds. Lucie Aubrac
lived in the France of World War II, and she and her family, thanks to her efforts,
survived. She did everything to make sure of that.
CONCLUSION

“There is in every true woman’s heart, a spark of heavenly fire, which lies dormant in the broad daylight of prosperity, but which kindles up and beams and blazes in the dark hour of adversity.”

-Washington Irving

While women in France did not receive the right to vote until 1944, they still became participants in the public discourse. The introduction of Jürgen Habermas’s bourgeois public sphere theory caused gender historians to challenge this point, however. It was often argued that women remained in the home with no presence in politics. Research shows, however, that while government participation was not a reality for all, it was surely more than an impossibility.

With the introduction of the bourgeoisie, there existed a dynamic between the public and private spheres. The creation of divisions played a vital role in the development and understanding of French society since the French Revolution. This thesis argues that, while the separates spheres possessed gendered qualities, the boundaries between the two were malleable, even non-existent, for Madame de Staël, George Sand, and Lucie Aubrac. Moreover, these women transcended the public and private, not as a conscious challenge to gender roles, but instead in response to the upheavals of their political environments.

Madame de Staël presents a case of the merger of public and private life. The discussion of her relationships and emotions exists for two reasons: 1. To firmly establish that she possessed the stereotypical characteristics of a woman. She fell deeply
in love; and furthermore, her emotions, on many occasions, inspired her actions. This seemingly reinforced the reasoning behind excluding women from politics, but the reality was quite different. This leads to the second reason: 2. To show how Madame de Staël *utilized* her personal connections, her love, and her emotions. She did not have to disavow her femininity in order to pursue a public career. Instead, her romantic liaisons proved a vital channel through which she exported her political ideology and desire for the emergence of a constitutional monarchy.

George Sand lived a more conservative existence between her personal and political spheres. Instead of a merger, her public and private lives remained separate, and she constantly alternated between the two. Sand dedicated herself wholly to her romantic relationships, to the point of overwhelming passion. Similar to Madame de Staël, Sand met many of the characteristics assigned to women of her time—such as intense emotions and irrationality. While these traits were deemed unsuitable for government, Sand’s political career benefited from her passion. It led her to Ledru-Rollin and his political realm, and it sparked her interest in the ongoing upheavals and revolutions.

Lucie Aubrac lived in a politically and physically divided France. Devastated by war, the social structure disintegrated into a world of survival. With the love of her husband, her son, and her country, she participated in the clandestine actions of the Resistance. Lucie’s reality relates to that of Madame de Staël, in that her two spheres intertwined. Her personal feelings and relationships motivated her political actions. She did so to assert her dedication to her family and to the freedom of France.
Understanding the environments in which they lived is crucial in considering these three women and their dealings with the public and private spheres. The periods of upheaval and crisis inspired mass political involvement throughout France. Madame de Staël, George Sand and Lucie Aubrac wanted to participate in their surroundings. In the case of the revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the government reorganizations provided lines of discourse for Germaine de Staël and George Sand. Madame de Staël discussed the establishment of a constitutional monarchy after the Bourbon’s removal from power while Sand promoted complete social equality amidst the Bourgeois Monarchy. The German occupation forced Lucie on missions in which she otherwise would not have experienced. They were acting as intellectuals and politically conscious individuals who wanted to interact within the public sphere.

A final point must be made in regards to this discussion: Madame de Staël, George Sand, and Lucie Aubrac do not represent the entirety of their gender, nor are they meant to in this thesis. Instead, these three women are used to present three micro-cases in a larger discourse. It is in following in the argument presented by Denise Davidson that I wish to both acknowledge the presence and question the rigidity of gendered spheres. Madame de Staël, George Sand, and Lucie Aubrac burned bright in the public realm during their eras of adversity.
APPENDIX
Appendix A

Ce beau candidat

Figure A-1: © Trustees of the British Museum
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