

# Women in French Newsletter

Volume 28, Number 2

Fall 2014

## President's Letter

Mary Anne Garnett

University of Arkansas, Little Rock

Dear Colleagues,

As autumn casts its glow, I find myself still basking in the warm camaraderie and intellectual stimulation of our spring conference at Guelph. The quality of the papers, the excellence of the guest speakers, the friendly atmosphere, and the presence of so many participants from Canadian universities made this conference a truly memorable experience for all involved. My deepest thanks go to the organizers, Dawn Cornelio and Karin Schwerdtner, and to all to those who made this conference so successful.

Since my letter in Spring 2014, we have had some changes in leadership positions within WIF. Having served as our Secretary for five years, Marijn Kaplin stepped down and has been replaced by Theresa Kennedy. I offer my heartfelt thanks to Marijn for her hard work and my congratulations to Theresa on her election by the WIF Executive Committee. Also, after many years of dedicated service to *WIF Studies*, Dawn Cornelio and Valérie Dusailant-Fernandes decided it was time to leave their respective positions as Executive Editor and Production Editor. I'm sure that you all join me in thanking them for the superb job that they have done with the journal. The *WIF Studies* Board has elected Juliette Rogers as the new Executive Editor and Marijn Kaplan

as Production Editor. I look forward to working with them in their new positions.

In December we will hold elections for representatives from three regions as well as Graduate Student Representative. Electronic voting will take place from December 1 to December 31, 2014. Members will receive an email reminder to vote both from the WIF listserv and by a message and link generated by the website VotingPlace.net. The email address that you have provided on your membership form will be used to identify you as a registered voter. I wish to thank our Nominating Committee, Annabelle Rea and Colette Trout, as well as all those who have volunteered to run for these offices. I would also like to encourage our members to volunteer for the various positions within WIF as opportunities present themselves. The role of the Nominating Committee is to coordinate the selection process; they only actively seek nominees in the absence of volunteers.

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All positions are open to anyone and our elections are held by secret ballot using VotingPlace.net to ensure fairness.

As part of our December elections, we will also be voting on a topic for our guaranteed session at the MLA in Austin in 2016. Please submit your proposal (200-250 words) to me ([magarnett@ualr.edu](mailto:magarnett@ualr.edu)) by **Saturday November 15, 2014**. Normally, the person who proposes the session also chairs the session. Once the topic is chosen, all members have the opportunity to submit abstracts to the session organizer who makes the selection.

At our Executive Committee meeting in Guelph, we also approved a number of changes to the bylaws to be submitted for vote at the annual MLA conference in January 2015. The principal changes include four additions to the Executive Committee (WIF Studies Editor, Newsletter Editor, Website Manager, and Listserv Manager) and descriptions of the duties of secretary and treasurer that better conform to how their responsibilities have evolved over the past years. The bylaws provide for the submission of absentee ballots; they will therefore be included as part of the December online vote. The complete bylaws, suggested revisions and rationale for the revisions are on pages 5-7 in this newsletter.

The initiative undertaken in fall 2013 to provide mock online job interviews for graduate students (also junior faculty seeking new employment) was very successful. Nine individuals took advantage of this opportunity last year and thirteen members volunteered to serve as mentors/interviewers. We shall be offering this service again in November; please consider volunteering your expertise as a mentor/interviewer.

I hope to see many of you at the MLA convention in Vancouver in January 2015.

Our guaranteed session, “Female-Authored Life Writing and Scandal,” is scheduled for 1:45-3:00 p.m. on Saturday, January 12. We were disappointed that the MLA Program Committee did not accept our joint session proposal with the Nineteenth-Century French Literature division. However, Michèle Schaal, our web manager, will be representing WIF at a roundtable organized by the Women’s Caucus for Modern Languages, “Negotiating Past and Future: Feminist Activism in Language and Literature Workplaces.” The WCML session will be held from 3:30-4:45 on Saturday, January 12, that is, directly following our WIF session. The roundtable includes leaders from the Women’s Caucus for the Modern Languages, the Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession, Feministas Unidas, Women in French, and Women in German. Topics include the need for feminist activism, feminization of the profession, contingent labor, and gendered labor in higher education. As was the case last year, WIF will be a co-sponsor of the cash bar organized by the Women’s Caucus; as of now the time and place have not yet been announced. We will, of course, be holding our annual business meeting at MLA. It will also take place on January 12. We do not as yet have a definite time or location but I will inform all members via the listserv as soon as these can be determined. Those attending the business meeting will be asked to approve revisions to the by-laws that were proposed at our Executive Committee meeting in Guelph and that are printed in this newsletter. These include revisions that will better define the duties of secretary now that membership renewal and the directory are done electronically. Most importantly, we propose that four new positions be added to the WIF Executive Board, namely those of *WIF Studies* and *WIF Newsletter* editors, as well as our website and listserv managers. Those who hold these important – and time-consuming –

positions are included in Executive Committee discussions but have not had voting rights.

Finally, I wish to congratulate our regional representatives on the fine job they are doing to ensure a strong WIF participation in the regional MLAs. For the first time, WIF has also had a session, "La femme, la fuite," accepted for the Nineteenth-Century French Studies Conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico. If anyone is interested in proposing a WIF session for other conferences, please contact me. This is an excellent way of increasing our visibility and attracting new members.

My best wishes to all for a productive academic year.

Mary Anne

## WIF Business and News

## MLA WIF 2015 MEETINGS

### **Cash Bar Reception and Business Meeting Arranged by the Women's Caucus for the Modern Languages, Feministas Unidas, Women in French, Women in German, and the GL/Q Caucus**

Thursday, 8 January 8:45-10:00 p.m., 110, VCC West (Vancouver Convention Centre).

### **Cash Bar and Business Meeting Arranged by Women in French**

Saturday, 10 January, 8:45-10:00 p.m., 218, VCC West (Vancouver Convention Centre)

## FALL 2014 WIF ELECTIONS

You will find below the candidate statements for the 2014 elections. Electronic voting will take place from December 1 to December 31, 2014. Members will receive an email reminder to vote from the WIF Listserv and also a message and link generated by the website VotingPlace.net. The email address that you provided on your membership form will be used to identify you as a registered voter. All members may vote for the Graduate Student Representative; only those residing in the region in question may vote for a Regional Representative.

### **Great Lakes Representative**

1. **Névine El Nossery:** I am an associate professor of Francophone Studies at UW-Madison and my areas of research and teaching include North African and French Canadian literatures, historiography, phototextuality, trauma fiction, and Middle-Eastern literature and culture. As a regional representative, I will be very eager to promote WIF in all its particularities and many great opportunities (graduate student travel award, essay prize, graduate representative, WIF Studies). Recruiting new members in the Great Lakes region and beyond, as well as generating a vibrant network of scholars interested in women's creativity would be my main target, while continuing to find and explore new venues for collaboration and growth.

2. **Sage Goellner:** I am an Assistant Professor of French in Continuing Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. My research focuses on nineteenth-century orientalist literature and colonial Algeria. I have published articles on Assia Djebar and Colette, and am currently working on an article about Isabelle Eberhardt. I am committed to maintaining and strengthening Women in

French. The supportive environment, community, and advocacy of WIF are more important than ever to foster in times of precarity. If elected, I will devote my energies to promoting our association at regional MLAs, recruiting and welcoming new members, and mentoring emerging scholars.

### **New England and Eastern Canada Representative**

1. **Anne Martine Parent** est professeure de littérature à l'Université du Québec à Chicoutimi. Elle a participé à tous les colloques du WIF depuis qu'elle est devenue membre en 2006. Elle mène des recherches sur la littérature contemporaine des femmes. En tant que représentante régionale pour la Nouvelle-Angleterre et l'est du Canada (New England and Eastern Canada), elle s'engage à soutenir le WIF afin de contribuer à sa visibilité et à encourager les chercheur-e-s, et en particulier les jeunes chercheur-e-s, à participer à ses activités. Elle aimerait aussi, d'ici quelques années, organiser un colloque WIF au Québec.

2. **Anna Rocca**: I have been an active WIF member since 2006 and WIF conferences have often inspired my research. My 2013 edited collection—*Women Taking Risks in Contemporary Autobiographical Narratives*—would not have been possible without the cultural and literary debate that arose during the 2012 WIF Conference. If elected, I would be honored to help as liaison with the Regional MLAs—I currently serve as the French and Francophone Literatures Director at NeMLA—and to also reach a broader representation of women, particularly those in developing countries, who would enrich WIF and our reciprocal understanding of the forms in which feminism manifests itself.

### **New York State Representative**

**Eileen Angelini**: Serving as the New York State Representative for the past three years has been tremendously rewarding and I would very much like to continue in this role. Along with advising colleagues on preparations for conferences and their teaching and research goals, I have enjoyed working with WIF members at regional meetings, participating in board discussions, and preparing for the Seventh International WIF 2014 Conference at the University of Guelph (having served on the Student Travel Grant Committee). My goal is to build upon the experience that I have gained so as to contribute as much as possible to WIF.

### **Graduate Student Representative**

1. **Sabina Carp**: At the recent WIF conference in Guelph, I had the opportunity to present some of my dissertation research on the development of politically engaged feminine subjectivities in the work of Fatou Diome. The experience of the conference solidified my admiration for the organization and its members. WIF has been an inspirational force in my academic life. As the graduate student representative, I would strive to represent and promote WIF to fellow graduate students as an invaluable, vibrant intellectual community and space of solidarity, brimming with unique opportunities and resources tailored to promote the success of women academics in French. Sabina Carp was nominated by Karen McPherson of the U of Oregon.

2. **MélissaJane Gauthier** est doctorante à l'Université du Québec à Chicoutimi en cotutelle avec l'Université Lille 3 sous la direction d'Anne Martine Parent et d'Yves Baudelle. Elle s'intéresse aux pratiques autobiographiques contemporaines, à l'écriture des femmes ainsi qu'aux questions de l'aveu et de la mémoire. Bien qu'elle soit devenue membre du WIF récemment, son attachement à

cette organisation est déjà profond. En posant sa candidature au poste de « Graduate Student Representative », elle souhaite cultiver ce sentiment d'appartenance chez les jeunes chercheurs.euses en plus de promouvoir et de faire rayonner le WIF au sein du milieu universitaire. MélissaJane Gauthier a été nommée par Dawn Cornelio de l'U de Guelph et Adrien Rannaud de l'U Laval.

\* \* \*

## BY-LAW EMENDATIONS

The Executive Committee has approved the following revisions to the bylaws to be submitted for a vote at the annual conference of the MLA in January 2015 in accordance with Article VIII (below).

Rationale for revisions:

Article II. Statement required by IRS for exempt status as a non-profit.

Article V. Section 1 and Section 2 A. Four additions to the Executive Committee reflect the importance of these positions to the current functioning of the organization in the electronic age. The addition of the WIF Studies Editor will provide for better liaison between the WIF Studies Board and the WIF Executive Committee. Adding all the positions to Section 1 also resolves a previous contradiction that Section 1 did not include all the positions (President, Vice-President, Immediate Past President, Secretary, Treasurer) listed in Section 2 A.

Article V. Section 2 B. Revision reflects change in date of annual MLA conferences and need to provide for a designee if the President is unable to attend it.

Article V. Section 2 C. Clarifies that in order for the Vice-President to become President,

she or he must be elected and that automatic succession to the position only occurs if the President is unable to complete the term.

Article V. Section 2 D and E. Revisions reflect what the duties of the Secretary and Treasurer actually are now that subscriptions are done online and provides for a designee to take minutes when the secretary is unavailable.

Article VIII. Includes date of last previous revision.

## Women in French Bylaws

**Article I.** The name of the organization shall be Women in French.

**Article II.** Purpose: **Women in French is an organization organized exclusively for educational purposes under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or any corresponding section of any future tax code.** Women in French is a voluntary organization of individuals who wish to promote research on women writing in French, on women in literature and culture of French expression, and other domains of feminist literary criticism. An additional purpose of the organization is to share information and concerns about the status of women in higher education in the United States.

**Article III.** Membership: Anyone who is currently teaching or who has taught French language or Francophone literature (at any level) or who has an advanced degree (M.A., Ph.D.) or equivalent achievement in French language or Francophone literature or who is working on such a degree is eligible to become a member of Women in French. A special membership category is available for practicing artists.

**Article IV.** Dues: Dues shall be set by the Executive Committee and payable to the

treasurer. They shall include a subscription to the Women in French Newsletter and to WIF Studies. (See articles V and VI.)

**Article V. Governance.**

Section 1. The organization shall have an executive committee composed of one representative from each MLA region, a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, immediate Past President, Editor of *Women in French Studies*, Editor of the *Women in French Newsletter*, Manager of the *Women in French Website*, Manager of the Listserv and one graduate student representative.

Section 2. Duties of the Officers.

A. The Executive Committee shall be composed of seven regional representatives elected for three-year terms, one graduate student representative elected for a two-year term, and a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer elected for two-year terms, the Editor of *Women in French Studies*, the Editor of the *Women in French Newsletter*, the Manager of the *Women in French Website*, and the Manager of the Listserv. The past President will continue to serve on the Executive Committee for two years following the conclusion of her/his mandate. The terms of the representatives will be staggered so that approximately one third will change each year. These officers and representatives will be elected by mail-in ballot (or e-mail), published in the Fall Newsletter. All members will be eligible to vote for the officers and the graduate student representative; regional representatives will be chosen only by the members of

their respective regions. The President and Vice-President may be candidates for a second term, but may not continue beyond four consecutive years in the same office. The graduate student representative may not continue beyond the year of completion of the terminal degree.

- B. The President or designee shall preside over the annual meeting which will coincide with the MLA Annual Conference meeting in December January. The President will correspond with the members of the Executive Committee during the year about items of business.
- C. ~~Should the President be unable to fulfill the duties of the office, the Vice-President will complete the term. The Vice-President will normally succeed the President when s/he has completed the term of office.~~
- D. The Secretary or designee will take minutes at the annual meeting, publish them in the first Newsletter following the meeting, and deal with routine correspondence such as sending annual dues notices to lapsed members. She/he shall keep the President informed of the membership rolls and co-ordinate subscriptions to the *Women in French Newsletter* and *WIF Studies*.
- E. The Treasurer will work closely with the Secretary. He/she shall collect the dues, maintain a bank account, keep the books, and prepare a treasurer's report for the annual MLA convention. ~~She/he shall keep the President~~

~~informed of the membership rolls and co-ordinate subscriptions to the *Women in French Newsletter* and *WIF Studies*.~~

**Article VI.** The official organ of the organization will be the Women in French Newsletter. All official notices will be published in this newsletter.

**Article VII.** Committees: The Executive Committee shall appoint any committees that it deems necessary to carry out its work.

**Article VIII.** Amendments: The by-laws may be amended at any annual meeting of WIF by a two-thirds vote provided that written notice of any proposed change is distributed by mail to all members at least thirty days prior to the meeting and that absentee ballots are accepted.

These by-laws were approved at the MLA Convention in New York, December 27, 1983. They were amended at the MLA Convention in San Francisco, December 29, 1987; at the MLA Conventions: Chicago, December 29, 1990; New York, December 29, 1992; and December 1995; Washington, December 29, 1996; Toronto, December 29, 1998, Chicago, December 28, 1999, in 2004 and in 2007 by paper ballot.

ONLINE WIF BIBLIOGRAPHY  
PROJECT

CALL FOR PAST BIBLIOGRAPHIES!

We seek past Newsletter bibliographies to publish as an archive on the WIF website. We hope that authors will send to Cheryl Morgan (cmorgan@hamilton.edu) a Word file of their original or updated bibliography along with their consent to publish online. If you do not wish your bibliography to appear online, please let Cheryl Morgan know. We have a number of bibliographies dating back some years, but hope to hear from as many past authors as possible.

CONFERENCE REPORTS AND  
NEWS

2015 WIF Sessions at MLA  
Vancouver, BC Canada  
January 8-11 2015

**544. Female-Authored Life Writing and Scandal**

*Saturday, 10 January, 1:45–3:00 p.m., 7, VCC East*

**Program arranged by Women in French**

*Presiding:* Natalie Edwards, Univ. of Adelaide

1. "Scandalous Memory: Terrorism Testimonial from the Algerian War," **Amy L. Hubbell**, Univ. of Queensland

2. "Questioning Accountability in Contemporary Writing: Marcela Iacub's Investigative Journalism and Its Backlash," Eftihia Mihelakis, Université de Montréal; **Ania Wroblewski**, Université du Québec à Montréal

3. "Risques et récompenses: Camille Laurens, Chantal Chawaf," **Karin Schwerdtner**, Univ. of Western Ontario

For abstracts, visit [www.womeninfrench.org](http://www.womeninfrench.org).

**601. Negotiating Past and Future: Feminist Activism in Language and Literature Workplaces**

*Saturday, 10 January, 3:30–4:45 p.m., 210, VCC West*

**Program arranged by the Women's Caucus for the Modern Languages**

*Presiding:* Teresa Mangum, Univ. of Iowa

*Speakers:* Hester Baer, Univ. of Maryland, College Park; Michelle A. Massé, Louisiana State Univ., Baton Rouge; Rebecka Rutledge

Fisher, Univ. of North Carolina, Chapel Hill;  
**Michèle Schaal, Iowa State Univ.**; Rebecca J.  
Ulland, Northern Michigan Univ.

*Session Description:*

A roundtable by leaders from the Women's  
Caucus for the Modern Languages, the  
Committee on the Status of Women in the  
Profession, Feministas Unidas, **Women in  
French**, and Women in German. Topics  
include the need for feminist activism,  
feminization of the profession, contingent  
labor, and gendered labor in higher education.

**Stage Presence:  
Marguerite Duras and the Theatre  
University College Cork  
21-22 November 2014**

«La salle est pleine. On s'empêche de mourir  
par politesse. La salle attend. On lui doit le  
spectacle.» – Savannah Bay

**Keynote speakers :**

Michelle Porte, whose film Savannah Bay,  
c'est toi documents the rehearsals process for  
Savannah Bay, directed by Duras at the  
Théâtre du Rond-Point, Paris, in 1983, with  
Madeleine Renaud and Bulle Ogier ;

Joelle Pagès-Pindon, Duras scholar and co-  
editor of Volumes III and IV of the Pléiade  
edition of the complete works of Marguerite  
Duras ;

Professor Lib Taylor, Department of Film,  
Theatre and Television, University of Reading,  
who has created mises en scène for both  
L'Éden Cinéma and Savannah Bay, and who  
has published ground-breaking work on  
Duras's theatre.

This conference will celebrate the centenary of  
the birth of Marguerite Duras (1914-1996).  
While Duras's extensive output in fiction and  
cinema has been much examined since her

death, there has been little focus on her theatre.  
Over two days, scholars from France, Ireland,  
the United Kingdom and the United States will  
bring into relief Duras's radical contribution to  
the development of the languages of the stage.

**17th Annual Comparative Literature  
Conference  
University of South Carolina  
Women and the Holocaust:  
Cultural Productions and Interpretations  
March 1-3, 2015**

The University of South Carolina is pleased to  
announce its 17th Annual Comparative  
Literature Conference, which will be held at  
our university campus in Columbia, SC, on  
March 1-3, 2015.

The theme of this upcoming conference is  
Women and the Holocaust. This forum invites  
us to elaborate new analytical perspectives on  
the experiences of Jewish women during the  
Holocaust as well as on women's cultural and  
academic contributions to a deeper  
understanding of the events and their effects on  
contemporary socio-political and intellectual  
discourses. We encourage scholars from a  
broad range of academic disciplines and  
interests to join us and share their research on  
topics that include but are not limited to:  
Jewish women's experiences during the  
Holocaust as reflected in journals, memoirs,  
fictions, films, and others (as resisters, victims,  
activists, intellectuals, artists, wives, mothers,  
daughters, and so on); comparative analyses of  
Holocaust-related writings and other cultural  
productions by women either during or after  
the war; the contribution of Feminism to the  
discipline of Holocaust Studies; feminist  
readings of the historical events and the  
cultural representations they produced.

We encourage cross-cultural and  
interdisciplinary approaches, and welcome a  
variety of media and genres.

As part of this conference, we plan to include a special tribute to the intellectual legacy of French philosopher, writer and Shoah survivor Sarah Kofman. Therefore, we also encourage interested people to send proposals for panels or other contributions in her

Email abstracts for papers or panel proposals to [HolocaustForum@sc.edu](mailto:HolocaustForum@sc.edu) by October 16, 2014 (flexible).

Abstracts for papers (300 words). Presenters must time their papers to fit a 20-minute maximum limit.

Panel proposals (800 words). Panels should have three presenters and a chairperson (the chairperson can also be one of the presenters). Panel proposals should give an overview of the panel and include descriptions of the three papers.

For questions and communications, contact: [HolocaustForum@sc.edu](mailto:HolocaustForum@sc.edu)

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## WIF Member Publications

**Cecilia Beach** contributed four articles to a volume dedicated to the life and works of André Léo entitled *Les Vies d'André Léo* (Rennes : PUF, forthcoming 2014) : "L'Élan d'un trajectoire" (co-authored with Louis Vibrac), "Liberté, Égalité, Sororité dans Marianne," "André Léo : Feuilletoniste," and "Les Romains Italiens." She also coordinated and contributed to a collaborative annotated bibliography published in this volume as well as on-line: [http://www.andreleo.com/IMG/pdf/BibliographieAndreLeo\\_30\\_dec\\_2013\\_2.pdf](http://www.andreleo.com/IMG/pdf/BibliographieAndreLeo_30_dec_2013_2.pdf).

[www.andreleo.com/IMG/pdf/BibliographieAndreLeo\\_30\\_dec\\_2013\\_2.pdf](http://www.andreleo.com/IMG/pdf/BibliographieAndreLeo_30_dec_2013_2.pdf).

**Lesley S. Curtis** is pleased to announce her introduction to and edition of four short novels by 19th-century author Fanny Reybaud: *Quatre nouvelles antillaises* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2014). These novels are of particular interest to anyone studying gender, colonialism, or the Caribbean. The introduction provides an historical overview of French anti-slavery writing. Reybaud writes about French women in positions of power in the French colonies of the Caribbean. The novella "Les Epaves" is, in particular, excellent for advanced intermediate undergraduates - it tells the story of a woman who saves a man from slavery by marrying him. It provides a counter to many nineteenth-century texts equating marriage to slavery. The edition also provides insight into a certain French reaction to Haitian independence and French recognition of that independence.

<http://www.harmattan.fr/index.asp?navig=catalogue&obj=livre&isbn=9782336335391>

**Nancy Sloan Goldberg**, "The Radicalization of Louise Michel," *Prison Writing from Boethius to Zana*. ed. Philip Phillips, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014 and "Qui donc fermera la porte entr'ouverte?": the Home and the Nation in Women's War Poetry." in *Essays in French Literature and Culture*, (2014).

**Marie-Christine W. Koop** now serves as Assistant Editor for *The French Review*.

**Le Hir, Marie-Pierre.** *The National Habitus. Ways of Feeling French, 1789-1870*. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2014. <<http://www.degruyter.com/view/product/429214>>

Stories about border crossers, illegal aliens, refugees that regularly appear in the press everywhere point to the crucial role national identity plays in human beings' lives today.

*The National Habitus* seeks to understand how and why national belonging became so central to a person's identity and sense of identity. Centered on the acquisition of the national habitus, the process that transforms subjects into citizens when a state becomes a nation-state, the book examines this transformation at the individual level in the case of nineteenth century France. Literary texts serve as primary material in this study of national belonging, because, as Germaine de Staël pointed out long ago, literature has the unique ability to provide access to "inner feelings." The term "habitus," in the title of this book, signals a departure from traditional approaches to nationalism, a break with the criteria of language, race, and ethnicity typically used to examine it. It is grounded instead in a sociology that deals with the subjective dimension of life and is best exemplified by the works of Norbert Elias (1897-1990) and Pierre Bourdieu (1931-2002), two sociologists who approach belief systems like nationalism from a historical, instead of an ethical vantage point.

By distinguishing between two groups of major French writers, three who experienced the 1789 Revolution firsthand as adults (Olympe de Gouges, François René de Chateaubriand and Germaine de Staël) and three who did not (Stendhal, Prosper Mérimée, and George Sand), the book captures evolving understandings of the nation, as well as thoughts and emotions associated with national belonging over time. *Le Hir* shows that although none of these writers is typically associated with nationalism, all of them were actually affected by the process of nationalization of feelings, thoughts, and habits, irrespective of aesthetic preferences, social class, or political views. By the end of the nineteenth century, they had learned to feel and view themselves as French nationals; they all exhibited the characteristic features of the national habitus: love of their own nation, distrust and/or hatred of other nations. By

underscoring the dual contradictory nature of the national habitus, the book highlights the limitations nation-based identities impose on the prospect for peace.

**Morgan, Cheryl.** "Writing on Writing: Alida de Savignac, Eccentric Critic" *George Sand Studies* 31 (2102): 63-82 (published 2014). Morgan also published a review of Rachel Mesch, *Having it All in the Belle Epoque. How French Women's Magazines Invented the Modern Woman*, Stanford: Stanford UP, 2013 for H-France (April 2014).

**Mary Noonan** has published *Echo's Voice: The Theatres of Sarraute, Duras, Cixous and Renaude*, Legenda (Oxford) Research Monographs in French Studies 36

Hélène Cixous (1937-), distinguished not least as a playwright herself, told *Le Monde* in 1977 that she no longer went to the theatre: it presented women only as reflections of men, used for their visual effect. The theatre she wanted would stress the auditory, giving voice to ways of being that had previously been silenced. She was by no means alone in this. Cixous's plays, along with those of Nathalie Sarraute (1900-99), Marguerite Duras (1914-96), and Noëlle Renaude (1949-), among others, have proved potent in drawing participants into a dynamic 'space of the voice'. If, as psychoanalysis suggests, voice represents a transitional condition between body and language, such plays may draw their audiences in to understandings previously never spoken. In this ground-breaking study, Noonan explores the rich possibilities of this new audio-vocal form of theatre, and what it can reveal of the auditory self.

July 2014 ISBN 978 1 907975 50 9

<http://www.legendabooks.com/titles/isbn/9781907975509.html>

**Nesci, Catherine** and Olivier Bara, co-eds; Anne Marcoline and **Annabelle Rea**, Associate Editors. *Ecriture, performance et théâtralité dans l'œuvre de George Sand*. Grenoble: ELLUG, 2014. Collection Bibliothèque stendhalienne et romantique. ISBN 978-2-84310-269-1. 530 pp. 27 euros.

George Sand inscrit la théâtralité au cœur de son œuvre. Elle explore les limites du théâtre et du roman comme elle interroge les frontières de l'être et du paraître. La théâtralisation de l'existence est chez elle l'obstacle à la rencontre sincère entre les êtres autant que le moyen d'inventer de nouvelles relations humaines. Si les travestissements vestimentaires de Sand ont pu évoquer une performance féministe avant l'heure, l'écrivaine a su créer des personnages chargés d'explorer tous les possibles du corps et de la voix, le plus souvent dans la pudeur et l'idéalisation, mais aussi dans le souci d'une critique sociale et d'un renouvellement des formes littéraires et artistiques. Le concept de performance permet d'interroger les stratégies esthétiques et les facettes dérangementantes des écritures sandiennes, dans leurs rapports au corps, au temps et à l'espace.

## Sommaire

**Catherine Nesci, Olivier Bara** – Introduction

## Première partie – La théâtralisation des écritures

**Annabelle M. Rea** – Introduction

**Agathe Novak-Lechevalier** – George Sand: une théâtralité singulière ? *Indiana* et *Mauprat* au regard des romans de Stendhal et de Balzac

**Romira M. Worvill** – L'ombre de Diderot dans *Le Château des Désertes*

**Rachel Corkle** – Roman dialogué ou dialogue philosophique? La formation du lecteur herméneute dans *Le Diable aux champs*

**Manon Mathias** – Mise en scène et visualisation dans les romans de George Sand

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**Laura Colombo** – Histoires littéraires. Genre, écriture et postures sandiennes au XIXe siècle.

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**Christine McCall Probes**, co-editor. *The Art of Persuasion: Emblems and Propaganda*. Glasgow, Scotland: Glasgow Emblem Studies, 2014. Distributed by Droz, Geneva. Examining emblems of propaganda from Renaissance texts and images to 20th and 21st century mass media and slogans related to political ideologies, this collection brings together innovative interdisciplinary studies by scholars

from Europe and North America. Providing new dimensions to the scholarly discussion on the interplay between aesthetic forms and persuasion, the essays demonstrate how propaganda, the dissemination or promoting of an idea or practice, promulgates zealously knowledge and principles, often transculturally and across generations. Applying methodologies such as comparative analysis, semiotics, rhetorical criticism, reception theory, and visual anthropology, *The Art of Persuasion: Emblems and Propaganda* will be of interest to students and scholars of history, art history, the history of the book, political thought, communication, the art of war, and religion.

**Gill Rye** announces *Aventures et expériences littéraires: écritures des femmes en France au début du vingt-et-unième siècle*, ed. Amaleena Damlé, with Gill Rye (Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi, 2014)

Ce livre identifie et explore les mouvements clés de l'écriture des femmes au cours de la première décennie du 21ème siècle, regardant en arrière afin de remarquer l'évolution des thèmes féminins et féministes précédents, et s'ouvrant à de nouveaux horizons et à 'l'encore à venir'. Les aventures et expériences des femmes sont explorées ainsi que les parcours littéraires suivis par des écrivaines reconnues telles que Christine Angot, Nina Bouraoui, Virginie Despentes, Régine Detambel, Annie Ernaux et Marie NDiaye au côté de nouvelles voix comme Gwenaëlle Aubry, Chloé Delaume ou Sumana Sinha

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**Virginie Ancelot**

Joyce Johnston, Stephen F. Austin  
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*Editor's note: footnotes appear at the very end of the newsletter.*

A talented playwright, artist, novelist, and memorialist, Virginie Ancelot (1792-1875) offered keen observations of the French literary and cultural scene throughout the nineteenth century while contributing to its very fabric. From 1824 to 1875, she hosted one of Paris's most influential literary salons hosting writers and artists such as Victor Hugo, Stendhal, Prosper Mérimée, Alfred Vigny, Honoré de Balzac, Eugène Delacroix, Hector Berlioz, and Franz Liszt. From the late 1820s through the 1840s, Ancelot produced an impressive corpus of plays, twenty-one of which were staged at Paris's premier theaters, making her the most prolific woman dramatist of her time. Her influence on the Paris theater industry extended beyond her contributions as a writer in that from 1842 to 1846, in collaboration with her husband, she managed the Théâtre du Vaudeville. Ancelot also penned popular novels and memoirs, published a column in the *Gazette des femmes* in 1845,

and was an accomplished artist, creating her own engravings for the plays included in her 1848 *Théâtre Complet*. Despite the diversity and quality of her work, the bulk of her literary production remains overlooked by today's scholars. Her plays, novels, and memoirs focus on everyday, bourgeois women and bring to light the tribulations they endured. Images of the inequities that women faced within a society that failed to acknowledge their contributions permeate Ancelot's varied corpus.

Virginie Ancelot's upbringing certainly influenced her willingness to brave the Paris literary scene as well as her political views. Her mother Barbe-Edmée Vermissy cast her noble origins aside to marry a "petit bourgeois" businessman, Thomas Chardon. Virginie Ancelot's works offered harsh criticisms of those who seek to limit women's choices regarding marriage. Despite the tumultuous events of the Revolution, Virginie's parents provided her a stable childhood as she spent her younger years in Dijon mingling with her mother's noble friends at the popular salon she hosted there. Although her father was often away on business, Virginie learned much from her mother's reception and treatment of those who frequented her salon. Barbe-Edmée, herself a talented painter, welcomed both nobles and bourgeois intellectuals to her salon, and also offered a safe haven to those in need during France's time of political upheaval. These egalitarian principles influenced Virginie who developed a strong distaste for class segregation and whose own salon years later emphasized talent over wealth or pedigree. Virginie also frequented the salons of the Duchesse de Duras and the Marquise de Montcalm and thus developed a respect for these patronesses of the arts. Later, her education at the hands of the Ursulines, an order protected by Napoléon's mother herself, furthered her knowledge of arts and literature.

Like her mother, Virginie married for love. Jacques Ancelot, two years her younger, would also make his mark on French literature as a member of the Académie Française and as a playwright whose monarchist leanings were evident in his theater. Virginie Ancelot's politics very often mirrored those of her husband although her mother's year-long imprisonment during the Reign of Terror no doubt also contributed to her legitimist politics during her early adulthood. Her writings often reveal scorn for those who capitalized upon the Revolution for financial gain. While she supported the Restoration, Ancelot's salon, represented a sort of political neutral ground for all of its attendees. Much like Delphine Gay de Girardin, Virginie Ancelot welcomed political rivals to her salon and managed to foster an atmosphere of respect. Her salon accentuated political, social, and moral progress in a new political era while also attempting to revive the glory associated with the Ancien Régime. During the July Monarchy, Ancelot, within her salon, redoubled her efforts to reclaim some of the lost grandeur and noble aura she felt had disappeared under the new bourgeois king. Significantly, Ancelot fashioned her salon as a vehicle for education for women within a terrain where intellectual equality rather than gender or wealth reigned. Virginie Ancelot was also a gifted painter and the salon provided her a venue to display her works.

#### **THEATRICAL WORKS:**

Virginie Ancelot selected theater as her first literary venue, a bold move considering that the field did not always welcome women dramatists. Described in the *Gazette des femmes* in 1844 as "la seule femme qui soit bien en possession de la scène française et qui mérite, au XIXe siècle, le titre d'auteur dramatique,"<sup>1</sup> Ancelot posited women as central characters and typically depicted a female protagonist facing an obstacle widely

encountered by women of Ancelot's day. Whether the heroine triumphs over adversity or not, in all cases, what unfolded on stage prompted audiences to rethink what it meant to be a woman and demonstrated that women's tribulations deserved to be taken as seriously as those encountered by politicians or businessmen. She presents her femino-centric goals in writing for the theater in the introduction to her *Théâtre complet* as follows:

Mes réflexions se sont naturellement portées sur la situation des femmes. C'est particulièrement ce qui les regarde, leurs caractères, leurs idées, leurs impressions dans les différentes circonstances de leur existence, que je me suis plu à retracer dans mes comédies. (I : 5)

In an era of constantly shifting tastes and aesthetics, Ancelot offered theater that specifically deviated from the norm by painting women as in-depth characters while male characters generally serve only to highlight the predicaments of female protagonists.

Despite her bold aim to call attention to women's concerns within an industry dominated by men, Virginie Ancelot began her theatrical career with much trepidation. So great was her fear of criticism in the press, Virginie Ancelot staged all of her plays until 1836 under her husband's name. Her debut work was, unfortunately, a commercial and critical flop. *Un Divorce* (1831), a one-act *drame* performed at the Théâtre du Vaudeville, presented a woman's ruin as a result of divorce. The protagonist, Émeline realizes that she abandoned a good husband for a poor one as her second husband abandons her for the army. With no man to offer financial security, Émeline suffers a dismal fate facing a most uncertain future. Ancelot demonstrates that women who divorce risk utter ruin. However, as Alison Finch points out, through English characters such as Émeline's kind-hearted first husband, Lord Clifford, Ancelot points to

England – where divorce is legal - as offering a preferable treatment of women (220).

1835 marked an upturn in Ancelot's theatrical career when she staged *Reine, cardinal et page* at the Théâtre du Vaudeville and the very funny *Un Mariage raisonnable* at the Théâtre Français, both still under husband's name. *Reine, cardinal et page*, described in *Le Corsaire* as “Une comédie fort bien faite, fort bien écrite, fort bien jouée ; un ouvrage d'un homme d'un grand talent”<sup>ii</sup> focuses on the intelligence and restraint of Anne d'Autriche who, while infatuated with the Duke of Buckingham, remains faithful to her husband and manages to outwit the Cardinal Richelieu who attempts to disgrace her before the king. Notably, Ancelot's recounting of this love triangle was staged nine years prior to Alexandre Dumas's publication of *Les Trois Mousquetaires* in 1844. An exceptionally clever woman again takes center stage in *Un Mariage raisonnable* in which Ancelot's splendid use of humor to highlight the feminine condition truly shines. Lady Nelmoor, a widow whose first husband left her in bleak financial straits, is engaged to the stodgy Baron de Normont, who prefers a sensible bride to a pretty one. Determined to secure her financial future, Lady Nelmoor resorts to drastic – and comical – measures to conceal her beauty from her fiancé, staging a sort of “anti-toilette”. In reality she is in love with Arthur de la Vilette who admires both her intelligence and her beauty. The mechanical baron offers many laughs and eventually love conquers all as Lady Nelmoor agrees to marry Arthur. Although these plays were still staged under Jacques Ancelot's name, audiences began to perceive the woman behind the mask.

Ancelot knew her greatest success in 1836 with *Marie ou trois époques*. Due to the success of this three act comedy, Ancelot was no longer able to conceal her authorship. *Marie* received rave reviews and was a hit among theatergoers. Each act of *Marie* depicts a different stage in the eponymous heroine's

life in which she is forced to make a sacrifice. The nobility of a woman's actions for the good of her family guides the play as each of the three acts in turn demonstrates Marie's devotion as daughter, wife and mother. Ancelot bestows her heroine a happy ending yet problematizes it: In the third and final act a widowed Marie calls off her marriage to a man she has loved for decades when she discovers that her daughter is in love with the same man. She will spare her daughter the sorrow she endured when she married only to save her father from financial ruin, but she herself will be deprived of any personal happiness.

Ancelot staged two more plays at the Théâtre Français, *Le Château de ma nièce* (1837) and *Isabelle ou deux jours d'expérience* (1838). *Le Château de ma nièce* owes its success to a finely constructed comedic plot involving mistaken identity. The play is a fine example of how Ancelot constructs intelligent women such as the widow, la Présidente de Lamornière, who takes control of chaos and ensures that all characters in the play, both men and women, receive happy endings.

Following production squabbles over *Isabelle*, Ancelot ceased to seek her works' performance at the Théâtre Français. However, in 1842, she and her husband purchased the Théâtre du Vaudeville and for a period her works were intertwined with the success of the venue. Ancelot's *L'Hôtel de Rambouillet* heralded a new beginning for the theater that same year. The play focuses on the intellectual superiority of Catherine de Vivonne who, through her perseverance and impeccable moral character, single-handedly revives French culture and literature through her patronage. The Marquise de Rambouillet bears an uncanny resemblance to Virginie Ancelot herself who sought to do the same in her own century.

The remainder of her theatrical corpus, like *Un Mariage raisonnable* and *Le Château de ma nièce*, very often demonstrates Ancelot's talent as a humorist. *Folette* (1844), a wildly

funny one-act play capitalizes upon mistaken identity to create laughs as a bold bride-to-be undermines the power of her idiotic brother-in-law. Ancelot possessed a keen ability to create humorous spectacles which effectively transmitted subversive messages of female empowerment.

When Ancelot was not displaying her gift for comedy, she nonetheless still focused on the situation of women. The historical drama *Madame Roland* premiered 1843 to mixed reviews yet paid tribute to an exceptional French woman through a quite somber plot. Virginie also staged a series of plays which showcased male protagonists yet never abandoned her goal of creating theater focused on women. In *Georges ou le même homme* (1840<sup>iii</sup>), *Pierre le millionnaire* (1844), and *Une année à Paris* (1847), the virtually flawless and intelligent heroine is replaced by morally ambiguous men who teeter on the brink of destruction as a result of their own selfish and foolish decisions. Notably, in all three theatrical works the male protagonist avoids utter chaos after heeding wise counsel from female characters. These plays aside, Ancelot's theatrical corpus generally displays exceptional women who are completely underestimated by the men around them.

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#### NOVELS AND NOVELLAS:

Until 1851, Ancelot's primary field of literary production was the theater. However, she also produced successful novels from 1839-1843 and from 1853 until a few years before her death. Her novels resemble her theater in that they take as their focus women's lives, showcasing their often overlooked intelligence and perseverance. The bulk of her novels, aptly described by Yves Olivier-Martin as "grave et psychologique" (137), much like her theater cast men into secondary roles, as antagonists or obstacles to the heroine's happiness. Her effective use of *coups de théâtre* adds interest to plots which revolve around mistaken identity, long lost relatives, and unlikely disappearances. Her first novel, 1839's *Gabrielle* published with Ambroise Dupont was a great success, and was continually translated and republished until 1872 including in the format of a *roman feuilleton* in 1857. It opens with an aged marquise proclaiming: "Il n'y a plus de femmes...". a commentary on the changing roles of women in society. The plot itself recalls her play *Clémence ou la fille de l'avocat* from the same year in which a low-born but virtuous and intelligent young woman secretly marries the noble man she loves. Eventually the young woman – Gabrielle or Clémence – is recognized by the family as worthy of marriage to the young man in question.

In her novels Ancelot often wove two plotlines together, such as in 1843's *Médérine* which displays two letters from two different individuals, both sent the same day, both offering different views of interlinked events. Similarly *La Nièce du banquier* (1853) offers two stories of young lovers, Métella and Émilien, who discover their true identities and previously unknown, noble family origins.

After her husband Jacques's death in 1854, Virginie Ancelot, having abandoned her theatrical pursuits, returned to writing novels largely for financial survival. In this second phase, her novels often reveal the plight of women of lower classes within *romans de mœurs* which also at times offer poignant arguments for women's education and work. Her penultimate novel demonstrates increasingly progressive, quite feminist views of women in society. *Antonia Vernon ou les jeunes filles pauvres* tells the story of a handful of women, young and old, but all once beautiful, who fail to survive within *le monde* through no fault of their own. Talented women artists are restricted from making a living because of their gender and young girls, deprived of both education and dowry, find themselves pursuing lives as courtesans knowing that their comfortable lifestyle will last only as long as their beauty. Much as she did in her plays in which men make selfish and foolish choices, men in this novel, through their constant seductions and abandonments, serve as obstacles to the women's simple attempts to make a living. It seems that at the end of her long life, Ancelot more boldly asserted messages of gender equality, ideals she had hinted at in her theater years prior. If her first work *Un Divorce* painted a grave picture of what a divorced woman suffered, in her later years, Ancelot accentuates the importance of women's education so that women may marry, divorce, or remain single, yet still be able to make a living.

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#### **OTHER WORKS :**

In addition to her theater and novels, Ancelot penned two perceptive memoirs, *Salons de Paris: Foyers éteints* (1858) and *Un Salon de Paris* (1866). In the former Ancelot describes the salons of Madame Lebrun, Baron Gérard, the Duchess d'Abrantes, Charles Nodier, M. de Lancy, Madame Récamier, the Viscount d'Arlincourt, and the Marquise de Custine, lauding these individuals for their contributions to the preservation and promotion of the French arts. She laments that

refined salon culture is vanishing before her very eyes and recalls the specifically French distinction and sophistication these entities fostered with great fondness. *Un Salon de Paris* offers reflections upon her own salon. Perhaps more interesting than her anecdotal presentations involving Parisian elite are her proclamations within regarding women and their participation in theater and other arts. Although during the time she wrote for the theater she did not overtly protest the inherent gender inequity, here, years after abandoning her theatrical pursuits, she published the following observation regarding gender constraints and a career as a playwright:

Qu'un homme montre son intelligence dans des œuvres de théâtre, comme dans autre chose, toutes les routes sont ouvertes à ses désirs : l'Institut, la Chambre des députés, le Sénat, etc., etc. ... peuvent lui donner l'occasion d'émettre des idées utiles, et de servir son pays dans les meilleures et les plus honorables conditions. Tous les avantages de ce monde sont à la disposition des hommes d'esprit, mais à eux seuls, et les femmes ne peuvent donc pas mettre une grande importance à ce qu'elles font... (*Un Salon de Paris* 156)

Whether carefully staging the plight of everyday women in her theater or making a bold case for women's equality in her novels and memoirs, Ancelot's works depict a variety of women in a sympathetic light as she highlights injustices they suffer. What may trouble the modern reader – particularly with her theater – is that in doing so she limits herself to creating heroines who are models of moral perfection associated with patriarchal values of the period. Nonetheless, Virginia Ancelot successfully capitalized upon her talents as a writer and salon hostess to suggest that doors be open for women where they had traditionally been closed.

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## ABOUT VIRGINIE ANCELOT:

Although only a limited number of scholarly publications exist which seriously treat Virginie Ancelot's work, Sophie Marchal's meticulously researched doctoral dissertation *Virginie Ancelot, femme de lettres au XIXe siècle* is essential for anyone seeking in-depth knowledge of Ancelot's life and career. Below I offer sources useful to those who would undertake further exploration of this important writer.

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<sup>i</sup> *Gazette des femmes*. nouvelle série, 26 Oct. 1844.

<sup>ii</sup> “*Reine, cardinal et page*.” Rev. of *Reine, cardinal et page* by Virginie Ancelot. *Le Corsaire*. 8 Dec. 1832:

2. Italics are mine.

<sup>iii</sup> Performed under title *Les Honneurs et les mœurs ou le Même homme*.

<sup>iv</sup> Co-authored by Michel Delaporte.

<sup>v</sup> Under name of Charles Lafont, her son-in-law.

<sup>vi</sup> Under name of Michel Delaporte.

<sup>vii</sup> Works published under husband’s name indicated with \*.