POSITIVELY ENGAGING: WOMEN INTELLECTUALS AND COMTEAN POSITIVISM CIRCA 1850

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For his central role in formulating modern *positivist* philosophy, scholars have rightfully inducted Auguste Comte into the overwhelmingly male pantheon of 19th century intellectuals. Conspicuously absent from the purview of scholarship, however, has been any reasonable examination of how women intellectuals have influenced and adapted Comtean positivism to promote changes in the legal and moral codes that could lead to a more just social experience for women. My dissertation, *Positively Engaging*, examines literary and philosophical works of Clotilde de Vaux, Clémence Royer and Louise Ackermann, who were familiar to their contemporary public, yet have been neglected by modern scholars. Collectively, the works of these women manifestly extend the intellectual reach of positivism. A copious correspondence between de Vaux and Comte, that proves both vibrant and stimulating on multiple levels, reveals how her ideas, initially somewhat discordant with Comte's own, become integral to his later philosophy. De Vaux's *feuilleton, Lucie* and Royer's philosophical novel, *Les Jumeaux d'Hellas*, represent the first two examples of positivist reasoning in fiction to advocate for social progress for women. Royer's novel, following her translation of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* reflects the author's own theory of how positivism should evolve. Ackermann's poetry also uses logical reasoning to re-formulate the female role in society as well as to confront the metaphysical void that inexorably surfaces amid the growing application of science-based thinking. The remarkable women writers surveyed in my dissertation use Comtean positivism to

construct a cohesive school of female thought, paving the way for the rapprochement of feminism and scientific thought that marked the 20th century.

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Introduction

Contemporary scholars agree that the French literary canon has woefully prioritized the works of French male authors over those of their female counterparts. This prioritization is particularly apparent in the nineteenth-century canon, despite the existence of a rich contingent of female French writers at this time. In neglecting the works of these women writers, literary historians have constructed not just an incomplete picture of French literary history, but of nineteenth-century French society itself.[i]

In addressing the dearth of critical review centering on the works of female French authors, contemporary scholars have revealed that the source of problem is not a scarcity of such literary work; rather, they have uncovered a longstanding tradition of robust and puissant literary production by French women writers. It is simply that the work has been suppressed, and thus that it has (sadly) gone largely unnoticed to date. Louise Read notes that the presence of female writers in every century in France, beginning with Marie de France in the twelfth century, is unparalled elsewhere in Europe (5). Catriona Seth states that the preceding, eighteenth century is noted for the profusion of fiction by women authors. Her empirical research on fiction published in the year 1800 shows that of the 118 novels published that year, 23 were by women authors, virtually all of which were critically reviewed (205, 213). Fortuné Briquet, in the dedication of her *Dictionnaire historique des Françaises connues par leurs écrits* (1804) states, "Aucun siècle n'a commencé avec un aussi grand nombre de femmes de lettres." While it is generally accepted today that female literary production in the nineteenth century was prolific, most of these works have yet to be critically evaluated by modern scholars. To determine how they fit into a contemporary view of the French literary canon, it is imperative that such critical analyses continue to gain traction.

Conducting critical analyses of works by authors of both genders, not restricted to the few women traditionally selected, will help re-align a sorely skewed perspective in this arena. Catherine Mariette-Clos states that, as a first step toward establishing a canon of nineteenth-century literature that includes contributions by authors of both genders, a more complete corpus of women writers of the period must be brought into the public consciousness (8).

In Positively Engaging, by considering the powerful, but marginalized, literary contributions of three French women authors circa 1850, I endeavor (with a nod to Mariette-Clos' injunction) to take one of hopefully many important steps toward raising the public's consciousness of this cadre of deserving female writers.

Clotilde de Vaux, Clémence Royer and Louise Ackermann are authors whose works incorporate and build upon the scientific discoveries of their era. While some scholarship does exist on these women, it examines them primarily as proto-feminist figures; scholarship examining their works for literary or scientific merit is limited.[ii] Scholarship examining the three of them together, as belonging to a corpus of positivist women writers circa 1850, is nonexistent. The works of the three women manifest the same overarching theme: that scientific reasoning offers the best possibility for constructing a social model that meets the material and/or spiritual needs of the greatest number of people. In *Positively Engaging,* I examine the manner in which their collective literary production reflects the positivist reasoning that dominated intellectual thought from the July Monarchy through the Second Empire.

The positivism of Auguste Comte, both his well-respected *Cours de philosophie positive* (hereafter *Course*), and his more controversial *Système de politique positive* (hereafter *System*), had a significant impact on nineteenth century thought. He claims that the optimal political system could never emanate from one of the ruling classes. Clinging to religious dogma and aristocratic privilege perpetuates the same social inequality that led to the Revolution and can

thus never result in “une véritable rénovation” (*Système* 3). Comte is saying that iterative reformulations of pre-revolutionary institutions, whose existence is based on force and religious authority, are unsupported by science.[iii]

In developing his philosophy, Comte participated in a trend by French intellectuals, such as Henri de Saint-Simon and Victor Cousin, to develop a stable social structure to replace the upheaval still in evidence following the French Revolution (hereafter Revolution). The violent social rupture had eviscerated the *ancien régime* but had failed to replace it with a “viable” alternative (W. M. Simon, 45). Saint-Simon and Comte (Saint-Simon’s former disciple) agreed on the necessity of establishing a social order based on scientific principles, yet they disagreed on the optimal method of implementation. While Saint-Simon emphasized the initial role that industrialists would play, Comte prioritized the role of scientists. Comte posits that appropriate social institutions cannot be established before society reaches a positive state, after which point it will happen naturally (qtd. in Pickering, *Saint-Simonians,* 213). Cousin and Comte shared a belief in the innate spirituality of man; however, where Cousin advocated a spirituality based on Nature, Comte constructed one that celebrated scientific advances (Simon, 46).[iv]

In an era dominated by the Industrial Revolution, Comte believed that scientific specialization was the primary obstacle to restoring social order. He states in his *Course* that, “. . . la grande crise politique et morale des sociétés actuelles tient . . . à l’anarchie intellectuelle.” Comte’s philosophy of positivism combats this turmoil with the study of the *généralités des sciences*, identifying a limited number of universal scientific laws and uniting the intellectual elite “dans une même communion de principes.” He also introduces the study of social evolution, a field that he calls *sociology*, from which all other sciences descend. Armed with education in the generalities, specialization by scientists is desirable, but in the consciousness that the sciences are interdependent. Comte states, “. . . la division du travail intellectuel, perfectionnée de plus en

plus, est un des attributs caractéristiques les plus importants de la philosophie positive." He adds that a uniformity of ideology, combined with education in the *généralités,* would lead naturally to the establishment of suitable social institutions, le plus grand désordre étant déjà dissipé par ce seul fait" (*Cours*, 39, 19, 31, 38).

Comte's *Course*, delivered between 1830 and 1842, identifies three states in the development of humanity: theological, metaphysical and positive, or scientific. Knowedge in every domain progresses through the same stages, although at different times and rates. Comte promoted the hierarchical classification of sciences and the study of the general history of sciences. Herbert Spencer, Joseph Fourier, François Arago, Alexandre von Humboldt and Henri de Blainville were among those who attended Comte's lectures (Tresch, 259).[v] The lectures were also favorably regarded by John Stuart Mill, with whom Comte maintained a lively correspondence for many years.

In his *Course,* Comte first discredits theological and metaphysical states of explaining observable phenomena by professing that advances in scientific knowledge have moved civilization beyond those states. He writes that the theological state reached its pinnacle, "quand il a substitué l'action providentielle d'un être unique au jeu varié des nombreuses divinités indépendantes qui avaient été imaginées primitivement" and that metaphysical thought attained its zenith when it adopted belief in, "une seule grande entité générale, la nature, envisagée comme la source unique de tous les phénomènes." He then presents the ultimate point of the positive state, not yet achieved, as "se représenter tous les divers phénomènes observables comme des cas particuliers d'un seul fait général." Comte expounds on the history of the sciences, in order to illustrate the social benefit of sharing knowledge across the disciplines.[vi] In addition to the invaluable discoveries that specialists within each field contribute, Comte argues that another class of intellectuals, philosophers who study the progress of all of the sciences over

time, can synthesize the knowledge gained. Developing an overview of scientific developments leads to identifying laws that transcend any one particular domain. The top of the scientific hierarchy is *sociology*, a new science that Comte establishes, encompassing the study of man and societies (*Cours*, 1: 4, 18).[vii] Comte thus makes the point that a general understanding of the developments in all of the sciences, including sociology, will lead to the discovery of inviolable laws governing society and will support the ultimate goal of positivism: social progress.[viii]

Comte's *System*, published between 1851 and 1854, which established a secular *Religion of Humanity*, was more controversial. Michel Bourdeau says that, with his *Religion,* Comte succeeded in "uniting both believers and non-believers against him" (*Auguste*). Seeing a need for active participation of the masses in order to implement his new social architecture, Comte sought to attract the proletariat and women. He announced that "les prolétaires et les femmes constituent nécessairement les auxiliaires essentiels de la nouvelle doctrine générale," although it was designed for all social classes. The motto of his new *Système* was, "L'amour pour principe, l'ordre pour base, et le progrès pour but" (4, 321). The influence of Comtian positivism on society is pervasive in scientific and literary works produced from the July Monarchy through the end of the Second Republic (1830-1870).

Into this theater enter Clotilde de Vaux, Clémence Royer and Louise Ackermann, circa 1850, whose memory has been virtually erased by literary historians. Despite the contemporary renown these women enjoyed, posterity has minimized their contributions to society and literature. De Vaux is remembered principally as the muse of Auguste Comte, Clémence Royer as the first translator of Darwin's *On the Origin of the Species* into French, and Ackermann as a female poet; yet, as this dissertation illustrates, all three authored works that attest to deep engagement with the positivism of the time. De Vaux's novel, *Lucie*, argues overtly for rechoreographed social institutions and her intellectual contribution is clearly in evidence in

Comte's later work. Royer's 2-volume novel, *Les Jumeaux d'Hellas,* displays the influence of Comte's early positivism, yet also reveals a penetration that challenges and expands on Comte's theories. Ackermann's collection of poems, *Poésies philosophiques,* addresses the existential implications of a godless, positivist society. Her poems examine the metaphysical void that positivism uncovers and offers a philosophy with which to confront temporality.

In considering the contributions of these women to the literary and scientific ideas of the mid-nineteenth century, the manner in which their works relate to those of other significant contemporary figures, and the ways in which they challenge or complement the dominant nineteenth century literary, scientific and social conventions, I demonstrate that de Vaux, Royer and Ackermann merit a place in the collective literary history.

In spite of a high level of current interest in the area of 19th century Women's Studies, there is still much to be learned about female influence on, and experience in, society during this period. Fortuntately, exponential growth is happening in smaller, focused areas within this larger context. *Positively Engaging* contributes to this scholarship by looking at women writers who use Comtean positivism to help shape consciousness in a secular society.

1 Chapter 1 - Clotilde de Vaux: Positively Independent

> Tous deux nous traitons, quoique sous des faces très différentes, le même sujet fondamental, la nature et l'existence humaines . . . ." —Auguste Comte, *Correspondance Générale.*

1.1 Introduction

Clotilde de Vaux (1815-1846) had just begun a promising career as a novelist, when her life was cut short by tuberculosis. Her first novel, *Lucie,* appears in the newspaper *Le National* on June 20 and 21, 1845. The *feuilleton* has fallen into obscurity, the author remembered by

posterity solely as the muse who inspires Auguste Comte to establish his *Religion of Humanity*. Currently, *Lucie* is available to modern readers only as a preface or post-word to publications by Comte. Yet, both male and female contemporary readers had a lively interest in the social topics broached in the *feuilleton*. The name of the *feuilleton, Lucie*, which means "light," links the work with Enlightenment thinking. In the first half of the 19th century, leaders still struggle to implement a form of government that reflects ideals emerging from the revolution of 1789. De Vaux uses positivist reasoning in fiction to portray post-revolutionary institutions that deny women equal justice under the law. Equally as significant as the *feuilleton* is a prolific correspondence that de Vaux conducted with Auguste Comte, the *father of positivism,* during a period the philosopher calls *l'année sans pareille*. He calls the collection the *correspondance sacrée* (Appendix 1). De Vaux and Comte bond over her thirst for cerebral exchange and his fondness for providing instruction, but the relationship develops into a platform for a mutual exchange of ideas.

Closer examination of the seemingly innocuous publication details of *Lucie* reveals them to be fraught with historical and political significance. 1845 falls during the first constitutional monarchy (1830-1848), an era when the women's movement, in hibernation since 1792, once again raises its public voice. Additionally, the newspaper in which de Vaux publishes her piece, *Le National,* is neither a feminist nor feminine publication, but rather the preeminent opposition newspaper of the era. *Feuilletons* are front page items at this time and comprise an important source of entertainment for an increasingly literate public.[ix] The focal point of de Vaux's *feuilleton* is the polemical law prohibiting divorce, reinstated during the Bourbon Restauration (1814-1830), and legislation against which people of every social class and both genders protest vociferously. A dossier at the Ministère de la justice containing 164 divorce petitions to the king, Louis Philippe, emanating from every social class, testifies to the virulent public sentiment

against this edict ("Quand"). Both the *feuilleton* and the correspondence with Comte show de Vaux to be not only a student of Comtean positivism as presented in his *Course*, but also an intellectual interlocutor to the philosopher as he composes his philosophical *System.* The influence of Comte's *Course* is recognizable in the scientific structure of *Lucie,* while many of the notions presented therein become central to the *System,* which Comte publishes after her death. Thoughts on platonic love, morality and the importance of charitable work, all central to the later philosophical writings of Comte, originate with de Vaux.

Like most women of her time, de Vaux espouses the contemporary notion, forged during the revolutionary period, of what constitutes femininity. Her writing echoes the dis*Cours*e, identified by Claire Moses, that women, as morally superior to men, are responsible for upholding Republican values in the home and that the most rewarding role of women is to inspire the men in their lives (6). Both women who challenge the established order as well as those who espouse tradition embrace the new view of the Republic that "privileged fraternity and domesticated women" (Joan Landes 168). The notion that men are better suited than women to operate in the public sphere is generally accepted. Notwithstanding, de Vaux advances mainstream contemporary feminist ideals through her writing: the laws should protect all people equally and social institutions for indigent women need to be established.[x] Her *feuilleton* focuses primarily on the deleterious impact of the divorce laws on women.

As de Vaux is virtually unknown by literary scholars, I first present biographical details that reveal her intellectual, independent spirit and strong sense of justice and compassion. I also include several appendices that help to bring this fascinating and influential woman into modern consciousness. Following synopses of the *Correspondance sacrée* and *Lucie,* I provide background on the contemporary history of the press and feminism to place de Vaux's work in its sociohistorical context. Finally, I reveal how de Vaux advances beyond protofeminist figures

such as Olympe de Gouges, to initiate a literary, feminist school of thought based on positivist reasoning. De Vaux's initiative is continued in the fiction of Clémence Royer and the poetry of Louise Ackermann and serves as a model for 20th century women authors such as Simone de Beauvoir.

1.2 Becoming Mme Clotilde

De Vaux and her two younger brothers grow up in a family all living just above the poverty level. Their parents represent an interesting juxtaposition of petit bourgeois financial struggles and an aristocratic sentiment of privilege. Their father, Joseph Marie, has difficulty finding employment, following his military service, but their mother, Henriette, is able to use her noble connections to get him a low-paying post as a tax-collector in a small commune near Paris.[xi] In contrast to her modest home life, de Vaux is exposed to a privileged lifestyle during summers spent at the home of an aristocratic, maternal aunt. Experience of both economic hardship and entitlement contributes to de Vaux being accustomed both to the notion of working to support oneself, as well as the expectation of being treated with respect.

De Vaux has exposure to strong, female role models on the maternal side. Her mother writes several tracts on methods to alleviate poverty, for one of which she receives congratulations from the queen (de Rouvre 51).[xii] Another aunt with whom de Vaux spends significant time during the summer is an abbess, whose position would have entitled her to deference. School records, her marriage and her insistence on maintaining her independence are evidence that de Vaux exhibits the self-confidence that she would have seen modeled by these women.

Because of her father's military service, de Vaux qualifies for education at one of the *Maisons de la Légion d'Honneur,* established by the emperor Napoleon Bonaparte in 1805. In the nineteenth century, it is common for middle-class families to educate their daughters for a

few years at either a *pensionnat* or at a *Maison*, to prepare them for marriage. Daughters from affluent families study at the private *pensionnats*, generally leaving after 2 years, while girls from low-income families stay at the *Maisons* for over 7 years on the average (Rebecca Rogers, *Demoiselles* 122). The opportunity for a free education is an example of one social benefit that some middle-class women receive, post-revolution. It is a dubious blessing, however, given the objective of reinforcing the subservient relationship of women to men. In creating these institutions, Napoleon emphasizes his goal of forming wives for "poor and humble homes." Napoleon sums up his initiative saying; "What we ask of education is not that girls should think, but that they should believe." (Napoleon I and James MatthewThompson 194, 196).[xiii] De Vaux attends a *Maison* from 1825 to 1833.

Empirical data reveals that the majority of female students do not excel academically in the *Maisons* and de Vaux is among that number. This is likely due to the nature of the instruction and expectations for behavior. One of her report cards contains the comment that de Vaux is "pas assez soumise" (Appendix 2). In 1828, during de Vaux's tenure, 12 of 19 students in the blue class are held back and over two-thirds of students repeat at least four semesters during their tenure. Rogers observes that this is not surprising, given that marriage and motherhood are the only incentives offered these adolescents, roles that they will fulfill with or without an education (Rogers, *Demoiselles*, 125). De Vaux is one of those students who repeats a year, evidencing autonomy in refusing to enthusiastically embrace a program that seems irrelevant.

Although the primary objective of female education is to turn out Republican wives and mothers, learning in a group setting and living together lead to an outcome that Napoleon had not anticipated. The students have the opportunity for self-determination and participation in activities not limited to the private sphere (Rogers, *Salon*, 4, 11). De Vaux's less-than-excellent performance in the *Maison* indicates individualism, rather than a lack of intelligence.

Shortly after leaving school, de Vaux marries Amédée de Vaux, a man disapproved of by her parents (de Rouvre 89). As her parents are poor and cannot provide a dowry and Amédée has no income of his own, de Vaux's father cedes his post as tax collector to her husband. The marriage is congenial at first, but a secret vice of Amédée soon comes to light, shattering the relationship. Amassing large gambling debts, he embezzles funds, burns tax records in his office, and then absconds to Belgium, deserting his wife. De Vaux is transformed from a woman with a certain, albeit middling, social status, to a woman on the margins of society (de Rouvre 67).

Impoverished, de Vaux returns to live with her parents in Paris, until income provided by her uncle allows the abandoned wife to establish her own residence. Although the funds are intended for de Vaux, her mother, Henriette, takes controls of them. She personally pays de Vaux's rent and deducts a fee for taking meals at the home of her brother, before issuing a pittance to de Vaux for personal use. Throughout de Vaux's adult life, Henriette uses money as a means of trying to control de Vaux's behavior, which causes their relationship to be tense. The desire for freedom from parental control makes de Vaux determined to earn her own income and motivates her to become a writer.

De Vaux crosses paths with Comte at the home of her brother, Maximilien Marie, one evening in early 1844. Marie is a colleague and former tutee of Comte and the two meet regularly to discuss mathematics. De Vaux and Comte establish a comaraderie. This leads Comte to appreciate her intellect, which he calls her "rare penetration," as much as her physical attributes (*Correspondence* 28). The association provides de Vaux with an important outlet for intellectual development and self-determination not experienced during her school years and discouraged in her family circle. Furthermore, in contrast with her mother, who tries repeatedly to force de Vaux to abandon her fight for financial independence, Comte supports and

encourages her literary efforts.[xiv] Based on the positive public reception of *Lucie,* Comte expects her to emerge as an author who stands as a standard for other women writers. The philosopher respects her writing because she shares his preoccupation with social progress (*Correspondance* 92, 129).

One year after meeting de Vaux, Comte addresses the first of 95 letters that comprise their correspondence. The initial impression that these letters create is of Comte alternately using long-winded rationales and appeals to pity in attempts to secure a sexual liaison and of de Vaux steadfastly rebuffing the entreaties. This ebb and flow of overture and rejection appear to be the dominant themes of the collection. Yet, the collection also contains discussions of positive philosophy and of the burgeoning writing career of de Vaux. The content of her letters, as well as Comte's processing of her ideas, reveal de Vaux as an independent thinker of strong resolve.

Self-determination shows itself repeatedly throughout the adult life of de Vaux. One instance is when de Vaux marries against the wishes of her parents. Another is when she becomes a writer over the reticence of her family: "Personne ne l'encouragea . . . . Sa mère craignait . . . le métier de femme de lettres . . . . Ses frères se contentaient de sourire" (de Rouvre 89). A third sign of autonomy is when she ignores the counsel of Comte, to change the message of her *feuilleton*. He intones, "laissez à la tourbe écrivante la trop facile démolition passagère d'une frêle morale publique au seul profit de quelques affections privées" (*Correspondance* 38: 6 June 1845). Comte initially believed that de Vaux's argument for legalizing divorce was motivated purely by her own history. He later came to realize that the topic was of universal interest and that her arguments had merit (*Correspondance* 40: 23 June 1845). A fourth example of de Vaux's fierce individualism is when she desperately expresses a desire to find work, in order to support herself without any family assistance. She writes to Comte that finding a secretarial position would enable her to escape from her "fossé" (*Correspondance* 154: 16 Oct.

1845). De Vaux resolutely holds to her own code of ethics, depite continuous pressure from her family as well as from Comte, to conform to their ideas of behavior. This determination is clearly visible in her correspondence with the philosopher, as well as in the character of her heroine, Lucie.

1.3 Synopsis of the *Correspondance sacrée* and *Lucie*

1.3.1 The *Correspondance sacrée*

The letters exchanged between de Vaux and Comte during the first few months of their correspondence show a young woman eager for the intellectual tutelage that the prominent philosopher offers. In addition to suggesting literature for her to read and taking her to cultural events, Comte imparts his positive philosophy. De Vaux, a budding author, is keen to increase her understanding of positive ideology, as her words make clear. In one of her letters she writes, "J'aurai grand plaisir à tenter de m'initier peu à peu à la philosophie positive " (86). Comte also offers advice on her family relationships and on her career opportunities, which she politely refuses. For example, when de Vaux receives an offer to provide regular literary reviews for *Le National*, Comte strongly encourages her to decline (*Correspondance* 69: 20 July 1845; 71: 22 July 1845).[xv]

As the year progresses, the balance of power shifts, and de Vaux offers as much tutelage as she receives. She encourages Comte to examine the nature and origin of his emotions and he comes to consider *sentiment,* or *affection,* as offering the moral guidance necessary to complete his philosophy.[xvi] The letters reveal that, throughout the entire relationship, de Vaux and Comte maintain a deep affection for one another and an appreciation for the emotional support that they mutually provide.

1.3.2 Lucie

Lucie is the tragic tale of a woman unable to marry the man she loves. Lucie has previously been abandoned by her husband, a scoundrel who is both an embezzler and a murderer. The *feuilleton* traces the heroine as she attempts to find happiness and financial security in a society that prohibits divorce, while failing to offer institutional support for indigent women. Lucie and her paramour, Maurice, optimistically initiate a legal proceeding to obtain divorce based on extenuating circumstances. Devastated when confronted by an inflexible legal system, the heroine becomes ill and dies and her paramour ends his own life.

The story is recounted in epistolary format, with most of the letters sent from Lucie to her confidant or from Maurice to his friend. In the final letter, from Lucie's doctor to a colleague, he mourns the inability of reason to lead to positive social change in "cette société en désordre, où rien de ce qui est noble et grand ne peut plus se faire jour." Having just discovered the demise of Lucie and witnessed the suicide of Maurice, the doctor bemoans "le peu de pouvoir qui est donné à l'homme de réparer le mal qu'il cause" (437,438). *Lucie* illustrates how revolutionary institutions continue to deny social justice to women, while they champion liberty, equality and fraternity for men.

1.4 Sociohistorical Context of *Lucie*

The intellectuals of the July Monarchy, like those of the Restoration, manifest originality of thought following a paradigmatic shift. In trying to reimagine "la politique et l'histoire," they try to move past the conservatism of the *ancien régime,* to combine "le libéralisme et la démocratie." They strive to find a way to allow individualism, while at the same time building a society based on common principles (Rosanvallon 13, 14). The newspaper *Le National* maintains its strong political voice throughout multiple regime changes, as censorship laws are periodically lifted,

then reimplemented.[xvii] In order to work around censorship restrictions, the newspaper uses various techniques, such as political cartoons and *feuilletons* to communicate its political messages.

The attempt to mix individualism with Republican values is also evident in *Lucie.* The heroine expresses support for the legal system, but at the same time raises her voice to expose weaknesses in the system. In speaking out against the inflexibility of the patriarchal structure, de Vaux takes advantage of an ingenious tool developed by the feminist movement: publishing under the first name only, to sidestep laws designed to silence the female voice.

1.4.1 Le National

"Every great crisis in French national life has been accompanied by a 'press revolution' intended to transform this medium of communication into both a symbol of and a means for the construction of a regenerated society" (Jeremy Popkin 16). The newspaper in which *Lucie* appears, *Le National,* is an opposition periodical, initially established to compel Charles X to create a constitutional monarchy. The founders of the paper instigate the overthrow of the Bourbon dynasty and the establishment of the July Monarchy in 1830. Subsequently, as disillusion increases with Louis Philippe, *Le National* argues that an elected monarchy is no better than a legitimist monarchy (Jeremy Jennings 504, 498). The paper's editor, Armand Carrel says that the only just government is that "of the nation by the nation," which is a *republic.* (qtd. in Jennings 511). In 1832 Carrel writes an article entitled, "La révolution de 1830 est-elle totalement détruite?". With that article, the paper becomes a voice of opposition to the constitutional monarchy, pushing for class equality (Jennings 513). Censorship of the press is reinstituted in 1835, however, so the resistance must be subtle.

One issue that *Le National* sees as a violation of personal freedom is the law banning divorce. People had expected the law to be overturned with the advent of the constitutional monarchy and disillusionment is widespread. The following passage, from one of the letters addressed to Louis-Philippe, illustrates the expectation, soon crushed, that the monarch will repeal this ordinance. The petitioner writes, "Une nouvelle ère renaît pour la France, et avec elle l'espoir de tems [sic] plus prospères; parmi les bienfaits que nous devons en attendre, le rétablissement du Divorce est un de ceux dont le besoin se fait le plus impérieusement sentir. Révoqué par suite d'un zèle hypocrite et le *Système* de bigoterie, il doit être un des premiers fruits du rappel de règne de la raison et des lumières" (Chabaneau) (Appendix 3).

Le National, with its reputation for a moral and positivist tone, makes political statements with the *feuilletons* selected for publication. In 1848, a critic for *Le Journalisme et les journaux,* using the pseudonym Cléobule Liaboure, notes the morality, "austère comme celle des anciens Romains, chez qui Salluste lui-même flétrissait publiquement le vice." Liaboure goes on to contrast the *feuilletons* in *Le National* with the "dissolus" serials found in other periodicals, saying, "il n'a pas voulu souiller ses feuilles pour de l'or" (70).[xviii] Serials published in *Le National* would have reached a wide readership, both male and female, for several reasons. First is the increase in literacy, following the Guizot Law of 1833, which gives all males access to elementary education. Second is industrial advances in printing, and third is increased access to reading material, through *cabinets de lecture,* where the public can read current periodicals for a small fee. In Paris, in 1844, there are 215 *cabinets*, up from 23 in 1819 (Adamowicz-Hariasz 161-162).[xix] Fourth is the visibility of the *feuilletons*, which feature prominently on the front page of the newspaper (Appendix 4).

Lucie contains precisely the type of message that *Le National* seeks to propagate.

As a short work of romantic fiction by a woman, it appears completely innocuous. Nonetheless, the argument for divorce is presented with straightforward scientific reasoning. De Vaux boasts to Comte, in her letter of June 23, 1845, "*Le National* m'a beaucoup blâmée d'avoir traité si rapidement le grand sujet en question . . ."

1.4.2 The Rebirth of French Feminism

The year of publication of *Lucie* (1845) is significant, because it situates de Vaux within a tradition of women shaping thought in the public sphere during a unique, historical era: the rebirth of the feminist movement in France. The earliest example of a feminist movement in Western civilization begins triumphantly in France, during the Revolution. Because of severe repression between 1793 and 1830, however, it progresses ultimately more slowly in France than elsewhere (Ute Gerhart 251). Moses defines early French feminism as a common awareness that women are victims of "male-defined values and male-controlled institutions of social, political, cultural, and familial power" (7).

Numerous political and civic newspapers form part of the feminine press during the Revolutionary period, reflecting how Enlightenment thought inspires women to voice their views on social change. Following legislation favorable to women, such as the repeal of the antidivorce law, a series of repressive laws are passed in the 1790s to prevent women from having any public voice (145-146).[xx] Revolutionary leaders, recognizing that women expect to play a role in the new social model, yet determined to keep them in a position of subservience, promote the ideal of woman as responsible for maintaining a household dedicated to the welfare of the republic. The *feuille de salut publique* of November 11, 1793 exhorts women to teach their husbands and children to exercise their rights, to dress modestly, to be assiduous housekeepers and to avoid participating in political assemblies ("Aux Républicaines"). This admonition appears

immediately following the execution of Olympe de Gouges on November 3, 1793, and of Madame Roland on November 8, 1793, and it initiates a forty-year period of suppression, known as the *missing history of feminism*.[xxi]

The women's movement regains momentum in 1830, with the coronation of Louis-Philippe as *roi des Français*, rather than *roi de France,* and amid a general sense that this leader will execute the will of the people. Although women no longer fear the violent Revolution-era repercussions for speaking-out publicly, legislation exists to inhibit their access to the public sphere. The law recognizes that female genius, like that of men, originates with the author; however, the man is still the head of the household. He thus retains the right to permit or forbid publication of works by his wife. Literary production by a woman belongs to her until she wishes to publish, at which time it becomes *community property* to which man controls the rights.[xxii]

Independent women devise some creative methods of circumnavigating this decree: a woman who remains unmarried until the age of 25 comes into majority, and may act autonomously; likewise, a widow has the right to dispose of her property as she chooses.[xxiii] A third option, adopted by Aurore Dupin and the Comtesse d'Angoult, is to use a pseudonym. Thus, writing as George Sand and Daniel Stern, respectively, they control the rights to their intellectual property (Hesse 64, 75). Utopian feminists, rejecting patrilineage, institute a fourth means of publishing without the permission of a spouse: omission of the last name (Eichner 664). Jeanne Désirée writes on November 4, 1832, ". . . si nous continuons à prendre des noms d'hommes . . . nous serons esclaves à notre insu des principes qu'ils ont enfantés et sur lesquels ils exercent une sorte de paternité . . . " (qtd. In Moses 65). The newspaper, *La Femme Nouvelle: La Tribune des femmes,* publishes articles signed only by first name, such as Suzanne, Victoire, Jeanne Désirée and Christine Sophie. De Vaux does not publish *Lucie* in one of the feminist

newspapers, but she does adopt this fourth technique of indicating autonomy. She signs the first installment of her *feuilleton Mme Clotilde* and the second, *Clotilde…* [sic] (Appendix 5). Unstated, but evident from her adoption of the anti-patriarchal claim of authorship, is de Vaux's belief in the self-determination of women and the right of women to express their voice.

1.5 How *Lucie* Reflects Comtean Positivism

Using examples from contemporary life, de Vaux is an example of the modern novelist, according to a definition by the brothers Goncourt. The Goncourt journal of 1864 defines the modern novelist as a historian, using documents to bring an epoch to life. In the nineteenth century, documents extend beyond their traditional use as legal documents, to recount history (Dominique Pety 97). Unlike written documents consulted by traditional historians, however, the novelist uses documents "racontés ou relevés d'après nature," or scenes from everyday life. Modern novelists are, according to the *Journal de Goncourt*, "raconteurs du présent" (229: 24 Oct. 1864). As with the realism of Honoré de Balzac and Emile Zola, they consider their work to have scientific value. Their work documents history and society but also, like in *Lucie,* gathers evidence to make a case that highlights social problems. De Vaux is unique in her time period for using positivist reasoning in fiction to express her feminine perspective.

De Vaux exploits the new field of sociology in her *feuilleton*, using the scientific method as promoted in Comte's *Course*. She uses the laboratory of modern society to design a social experiment, taking evidence derived from contemporary life and translating it into practical arguments. The problem is the inability of married women without financial support to escape from their penury without compromising their morals. The hypothesis is that the government, upon receiving compelling evidence, will take action to rectify the situation. The experiment is the actual presentation of the evidence to the tribunal and the result is a failed hypothesis.

Maurice loses his petition because he does not recognize that a social hierarchy still exists that does not obey modern scientific principles. Men in his position need the support of a sponsor and by failing to secure this, he has insulted the men he petitions. Maurice recounts the admission made to him by "an influential man" that, "La justice et la raison sont pour vous . . . pourtant . . . il y cent à parier contre un que vous ne l'obtiendra pas" and clarifies, "Un héros à quinze mille livres de rente n'est pas assez robuste pour marcher seul." He continues on to say that, in betraying social conventions, Maurice assured the failure of his own petition. His economic status is not sufficiently elevated for him to act independently. His mistake had been to "vouloir jouer au géant, mépriser follement la hiérarchie, lui refuser la déférence . . ." (436). The experiment ends tragically, as the heroine and hero realize that society has not yet reached the positive state and still prefers tradition to logic. Despite the pessimistic tone of the *feuilleton,* the overall effect is constructive. Using a logical argument, the author presents a weakness in the contemporary social structure, which she hopes will lead to institutional changes.

Although de Vaux is a proponent of social reform, she is essentially conservative; many of her social views are in line with the dominant social thought. This is seen in her respect for social mores, her support of the traditional family model and the belief that women should not intervene in politics. As Maurice and Lucie observe a country wedding, she tells Maurice that the couple is happy because they are not transgressing social laws; "leur bonheur n'afflige et n'offense personne." She follows this comment with the statement that it would be wrong of them to defy convention and act "contre la société," because "ses institutions sont grandes et respectables comme le labeur des temps." If she were allowed to divorce her absent husband and remarry, De Vaux's heroine would remain in the home, supporting her new husband and raising her children. She proclaims, "Quels plaisirs brillants n'aurais-je pas sacrifiés avec joie aux devoirs et au bonheur de la famille." Lucie speaks disparagingly of women with political

aspirations: “ces femmes qui trépignent à l’idée de n’être jamais député” (432, 429, 433). Echoing positivist ideals, de Vaux supports the notion of a strong government with strict social mores and holds the conviction that science provides the tools to construct an equable social structure. Lucie is a heroine who (predominately) refuses to deviate from societal norms, although they condemn her to a life of emotional and financial paucity.

The traditional views expressed in *Lucie* are also notions advanced by Comte. De Vaux shows the influence of Comtean positivism in reflecting these traditional views. Comte describes the Enlightenment as *negative*, not because it is pessimistic, but because it encompasses the necessary destruction of long-held ideologies. He points out that the Enlightenment thinkers were unsuccessful in establishing a stable social model to replace the *ancien régime* because they had no foundation on which to build. He calls the Enlightenment a “period of reflection” (*Système* 60). The architecture he constructs builds on scientific theory, observation and empirical data.[xxiv] In the preface to volume 1 of his *System*, Comte explains his social project as a two-step process: creating a ruling body that uses science as the basis for all knowledge, then engaging women to model morality and the working class to implement the principles. De Vaux engages the working class and women in positive ideology, using logical reasoning in fiction to bring to light social inequities that the *Enlightenment* failed to surmount.

1.6 How de Vaux Extends Comtean Positivism

The relationship between de Vaux and Comte benefits each of them, intellectually. Comte introduces de Vaux to the works of noted authors, encourages her to participate in cultural events, supports her writing and shares his ideology with her. De Vaux consistently demonstrates a warm friendship for Comte, while putting forth ideas that cause him to reflect on the nature of sentiment. As this gradually brings a sense of fulfillment, Comte comes to see sentiment as a

universal truth. During her lifetime, de Vaux contributes thoughts on sentiment that daily influence the life of her friend, illustrating to him, personally, the importance of platonic love. Even during her lifetime, Comte begins a daily order of worship, which includes kneeling before de Vaux's chair (which he refers to as her *altar)* and reading lines from her correspondence that he treasures particularly. After her death, as Comte completes his *System*, he integrates sentiment into his *Religion of Humanity*, detailing a daily worship routine appropriate for society in general. This is the element that had been missing from his *Course*: formalized veneration of a higher entity that reminds man of his altruistic goals.[xxv] The passing of de Vaux, while tragic for Comte, does not lessen the benefits he derives from loving her, but rather provides the insight he needs to complete his new opus. She becomes the figurehead of the *Religion of Humanity*. This is how history remembers de Vaux. During her lifetime, however, she models the feminism of the era.

1.6.1 Influence on the *Système* from Lucie

A point of ideological difference between de Vaux and her tutor is the notion of indissoluble marriage. Comte believes marriage to be a cornerstone of a stable society, despite being separated from his own wife. The primary argument that de Vaux puts forth in *Lucie* is that, in certain situations, divorce is the optimal moral path. The argument is pertinent to contemporary readers because divorce, which had been legalized in the early days of the Revolution, once again became illegal in the *Code civil.* Lucie, using Maurice as her voice, reasons that a woman who no longer receives support from her husband should be able to seek protection and financial security honorably in a second legal union. Divorce in certain situations allows women to uphold the Republican ideal of womanhood, fulfilling their role as moral

guides for their household. It nullifies the need to either enter the workforce or conduct a relationship that will lead to social ostracization in order to survive.

During the period when Comte believes that de Vaux is simply using the *feuilleton* as a platform to express her own unhappiness, he uses several arguments based on Republicanism and positivism to influence the author. He identifies marriage as one of "les variées notions fondamentales de l'ordre domestique." Comte pleads with de Vaux to alter her message for the greater good writing, "L'humanité est en grand travail de régénération totale: ayez la noble ambition de l'y seconder dignement, au lieu de l'y troubler aveuglement." Appealing to de Vaux's honor, he assures the author that, "Il y aurait…plus d'honneur…à fortifier les vraies notions fondamentales de l'ordre domestique . . ." (*Correspondance* 37-38: 6 June 1845).

In response, de Vaux submits her work for publication without permitting Comte to review it again. On June 23, having read *Lucie* in *Le National,* Comte chides de Vaux for not having shared the final draft with him. He refers to the *feuilleton* as, "la charmante nouvelle dont je vous ai reproché de ne m'avoir pas gratifié avant le public." He reads *Lucie* multiple times over the next year, appreciating the philosophical arguments more with each perusal. While he had taken exception to the argument in *Lucie* on June 6, he later says that it illustrates an important precept of positivism. While it is important to adhere to laws governing society (which he calls *la verité)*, certain exceptional cases (which he calls *mensonges determinés)* render deviation from them preferable. Comte is open to expanding the scope of his doctrine, and does so, upon considering the content of the work. On June 25 he writes:

> Je me réserve de vous exprimer . . . les félicitations spéciales que mérite la phrase vraiment admirable où vous avez si dignement caractérisé la vraie condition sociale des femmes, suivant le principe philosophique que mon ouvrage avait établi à votre insu, quoique je n'eusse pas eu l'occasion de le manifester aussi nettement. (43)

Here, he unambiguously credits de Vaux with making him consider social issues pertaining to women.

Comte had not considered real-life situations prior to reflecting on the message in *Lucie*. The notion of a man leaving his wife destitute is something he had not considered as he, personally, provides his wife, Caroline née Massin, with an income throughout his lifetime. Now however, Comte recants, praising the argument that de Vaux puts forth and dubiously attributing it to her understanding of his teachings. On June 23, 1845, he lauds her "respect continu des vrais principes sociaux . . . ." and goes on to say,

> Vous commencez à connaître assez l'esprit toujours sagement relative de ma philosophie, et la répugnance radicale du positivisme à toute règle strictement absolue, pour sentir déjà que, malgré ma réprobation raisonnée du divorce, je ne saurais étendre nullement l'indissolubilité régulière du mariage jusqu'au cas extrême que vous avez si bien caractérisé . . . (40)

Prior to his critical review of *Lucie*, Comte himself does not consider that his philosophy can adapt in response to moral injustice, while still retaining "la juste rigidité de ses règles habituelles." Sociology, similar to the scientific domains that precede it in his hierarchy, exhibits certain repeatable phenomena. Observation of these phenomena reveals universal truths, or scientific laws (John Tresch 263, 264). Comte considers indissoluble marriage to be one of these truths, and as such a scientific state that must be respected. De Vaux's account of divorce opens Comte's eyes to the negative repercussions for women of an absolute prohibition of divorce. Her reasoning persuades him that morality is sometimes separate from the law, and he liberalizes his description of positive philosophy. After reading the *feuilleton*, Comte declares that adherence to the *truth* "n'empêche aucunement la saine morale d'excuser, ou même de louer, par exception, certains mensonges déterminés. " In other words, positive philosophy eclipses the theology of the

ancien régime, the *morale théologique*, because it permits deviation from its stringent rules in exceptional cases. This revelation comes early in the relationship between de Vaux and Comte and marks the first time that her thought leads him to reformulate his thinking. Comte begins to see positivism as similar to the Catholicism practiced in the Middle Ages, a period where the church sanctions divorce in specific situations (41). This is a critical shift in his thinking, and marks the point where Comte begins to contemplate the role of sentiment in his program. He is in the embryonic stages of forming his new *System*.

Lucie is a significant historical document for two key reasons: the *feuilleton* provides inspiration to an eminent philosopher and expresses a widespread disillusionment with the fallout from the *Enlightenment*. The serial touches on two concepts central to the *System*: service to mankind and woman as a model for moral conduct, while expanding on a third, the importance of sentiment. Lucie suffers financially and physically herself; still, "on la rencontrait souvent dans les mansards . . . ." This charitable work is a notion seconded by Comte's admonition to "vivre pour autrui." The second element is evident as Lucie observes that "le cercle de la famille peut se modeler . . . sur les cercles du monde; et n'est-ce pas la femme qui en fait les honneurs?" (*Correspondence* 428, 434). This is a striking passage, when considered with Comte's *System*. He states, "Le point de vue féminin permet seul à la philosophie positive d'embrasser le véritable ensemble de l'existence humain . . . " (*Système* 428, 4).

The importance of sentiment manifests itself in the *feuilleton* in that, inasmuch as de Vaux's heroine, Lucie, respects the legal and moral code of society, she is restricted to a life of emotional paucity. Lucie confesses her love of Maurice to her friend, saying, "l'amour d'un homme pur et délicat est un sentiment plein de puissance." She expands on this theme adding, "toi qui vis calme et heureuse auprès de l'homme de ton choix . . ." (432). Her friend has the luxury of cohabitating legally with the man she loves. Although longing for an intimate

relationship, Lucie refuses to defy convention declaring, “Maurice, c'est en vain que notre malheur nous pousserait à nous élever contre la société . . . il est indigne des grands cœurs de répandre le trouble qu'ils ressentent” (432). In his *System*, Comte teaches that platonic love keeps man true to his obligations to humanity. He says that while, in his *Course*, the goal had been to establish the precedence of science over theology, a natural progression in the *System* is to focus on moral concerns. He assures that, “. . . l’amour constitue naturellement le seul principe universel” (*Préface* 3-4).

In addition to the above positivist concepts, de Vaux condemns the hypocrisy of the *Enlightenment* and its failure to establish a government that treats men and women equally and proposes new social institutions, positions consistent with Comte’s ideology. Furthermore, she implements the scientific method as Maurice pleads his case before the administration. Of the *Enlightenment*, Maurice observes, “On maudirait volontiers la civilisation et les lumières, quand on voit le petit nombre d’esprits justes et de cœurs droits qu’il y a dans le monde . . . tout l’honneur reste à ces corrupteurs de morale, qui se dressent orgueilleusement sur leurs monceaux de sophismes. Il semble, en vérité, que le succès n’accompagne que les guerres honteuses” (*Lucie* 430). This is echoed in Comte’s *System*, when he proclaims that,

> . . . ne saurait aujourd’hui, sauf de précieuses exceptions individuelles, émaner d’aucune des classes dirigeantes, qui, toutes plus ou moins dominées par l’empirisme métaphysique et l’égoïsme aristocratique, ne peuvent tendre dans leur aveugle agitation politique qu’à prolonger indéfiniment la situation révolutionnaire, en se disputant toujours les vains débris du régime théologique et militaire, sans conduire jamais à une véritable rénovation. (4)

The most sustained social critique in *Lucie* concerns divorce. Maurice writes, “Qu’appelle-t-on mort civile? Est-ce un simulacre? Dans quel but la société laisse-t-elle une

épouse à l'homme qui ne peut plus donner le jour qu'à des bâtards? De quel droit imposerait-elle l'isolement et le célibat à l'un de ces membres? Pour quelle fin le pousserait-elle au désordre?" The scientific method--observation, theorization and experimentation--is evident in the scene where Lucie's degenerate husband is recaptured and her admirer prepares to plead her cause for divorce. Among the points Maurice raises are the following facts: the husband is civilly dead; Lucie has sole possession of his fortune; and she is not free to remarry. Thus, she must choose between celibacy and "désordre." When Lucie's husband is sent to prison for financial crimes, Maurice confides to his friend Roger his conviction that Reason will prevail and Lucie will be granted a divorce. He states, "Non, je le sens, les lois ne peuvent pas être volontairement immorales et absurdes" (434).

In another letter to Roger, Maurice imagines an ideal society, where the government would provide jobs for women forced to enter the workforce to support themselves and their children. This would be in the form of "des établissements pour les réunir et utiliser leurs talents divers." He further stipulates that these institutions would provide a safe environment, which would protect them from "tous les maux qui les menacent en dehors de la vie de communauté" (435). A similar sentiment is found in Comte's *System* when he says that positivism will not attain its fullest potential until it is able to "améliorer la condition social des femmes" (4). The writing style of de Vaux, with its mixture of sentiment and logic recalls similar characteristics in the *System* of Comte. In this manner she demonstrates both the influence of Comte's earlier *Course* on her literary production and her input on his later *System.*

De Vaux paints a heroine who, given economic feasibility, would elect to remain in the private sphere, supporting her husband and raising her children. She proclaims, "Quels succès ne m'auraient paru fades auprès des caresses de mes enfants! O mon amie, la maternité . . . ." De Vaux expresses her Republican ideology through her heroine, who speaks disparagingly of "ces

femmes . . . qui montent à cheval pour démontrer qu'elles seraient au besoin d'excellents colonels de dragons" (432, 429, 433).

1.6.2 Influence on the *System* from the *Correspondance*

> Si nous étions tous les deux calmes, je vous prouverais que l'amitié sait être tendre et brave . . . . —Clotilde de Vaux (*Correspondance* 352)

> Directement consacré désormais à la reconstruction sociale fondée sur ma rénovation philosophique, j'y retirerai une utilité plus étendue et plus immédiate du tardif complément d'éducation morale que je dois à toi seule . . . . Ton éminente pénétration avait déjà saisi la tendance naturelle du positivisme à développer, …le culte habituel de la femme . . . . —Auguste Comte (*Système*
> "Dédicace" xix)

The emphasis on *sentiment* in Comte's *System* and his *Religion of Humanity* develop as a result of his unrequited passion for de Vaux. While it is not necessary to dwell too much on the sexual frustration that Comte experiences for the duration of their association, it is important to understand that it is the context for his transformation of thought. At the start of his relationship with de Vaux, Comte is clearly seeking to add a physical dimension to their friendship, describing his attraction to her as a physiological phenomenon. His letter of May 17 contains a succinct expression of the feelings that Comte continues to intersperse throughout their correspondence. He first mentions that the moral focus of his life has been "comprimée extérieurement," intimating that a sexual relationship is a natural extension of his philosophy. He contrasts the nobility of an "heureuse connexité entre l'essor mental et l'essor affectif," which is the intimacy he seeks, with the "sotte austérité" of thinkers who question the morality of extramarital relations. The "froids pédants" cannot see that for a relationship based on mutual affection, physical intimacy is a natural component, that "s'applique . . . à tous les grands travaux quelconques." Comte says that, while meditating on "les grands sentiments d'amour universel" is

rewarding with regard to his philosophizing, the abstract notion is "loin de suffire à mes [ses] vrais besoins d'affection!" He refers to physical intimacy as a "juste satisfaction du cœur," and expresses the hope that "la pureté, la profondeur et la constance" of his attachment to de Vaux will allow them to "atténuer graduellement cet obstacle radical," which is her unwillingness to engage in the type of relationship he desires (*Correspondance* 12-13: 17 May 1845).

De Vaux writes a letter to Comte on May 29, 1845, that sets the tone for the metamorphosis of his thought. She asks Comte to avoid "les causeries embarrassantes," and requests further, "ne parlons donc que de nos têtes et tâchons d'y mettre le plus de gaité que nous pourrons." She describes lust as one of "de gros ulcers au fond de chaque sac humain," and advises that the key is to "savoir les cacher." After assuring Comte that he deserves affection, de Vaux says, "Je voudrais vous voir dominer tous ceux qui ont tenté et qui tentent de vous nuire," referring to the ulcers. She adds encouragingly, "vous portez en vous les plus belles armes, ne vous retirez pas du combat." (*Correspondance* 23-24). The two letters cited above announce the roles that Comte and de Vaux will play in the reshaping of his thought. As de Vaux offers insights into the benefits of platonic love, Comte processes the ideas, seeing the undertaking as an opportunity for him to perfect his moral self.

Comte continues to profess his love for de Vaux throughout the *année sans pareille*; however, he increasingly emphasizes the value of platonic love, a development that he attributes to the nobility of spirit of de Vaux. The element that is missing in Comtean scholarship, however, is the active role that de Vaux plays in this transformation. It is not simply his own musings that lead him to value platonic love. The intellectual exchange relating to sentiment that de Vaux and Comte execute during the *année sans pareille* provides the impetus for his reflections. Scrutiny of their correspondence shows that she offers insights that he treasures and contemplates, incorporating passages from her letters into the daily devotions of the *Religion of*

Humanity.

Over the *Cours*e of their association, the sentiments of de Vaux remain virtually unchanged and she attempts to persuade Comte that friendship between a man and a woman, without physical intimacy, can be rewarding. She respects the philosopher and feels a deep affection for him, expressing in the *correspondence sacrée* the value she places on their platonic association. On May 7, 1845, she writes, "Les hommes comme vous sont bien rares dans notre temps, et ils ne furent jamais plus nécessaires" (86). De Vaux reminds Comte of the importance of his philosophical mission. She praises him again on September 30, 1845, saying, "Je n'ai encore rencontré qu'en vous l'équité unie à d'amples besoins du cœur" (139). De Vaux sees the potential for great platonic love in Comte, long before he realizes the quality in himself.

De Vaux repeatedly, and in different wording, extols the benefits of companionable affection. She chastens the philosopher saying, "Vous vous trompez quand vous dites que l'amitié n'aime pas . . . ." (352). Comte continuously reflects on his emotions, attempting to learn from the experience and to cull from it something useful for his *System*. He eventually accepts the idea that she will never love him in the same way he loves her, developing this into the veneration of female moral purity central to his *System.* He says, "le point de vue féminin permet seul à la philosophie positive d'embrasser le veritable ensemble de l'existence humaine, à la fois individuelle et collective" (*Système* 4). He is echoing and supporting the contemporary conception of female moral superiority.

While the ostensible purpose of the association is for de Vaux to benefit from the vast base of intellectual knowledge Comte has to impart, the one-sided passion he feels for his pupil quickly adds an unintended and surprising dimension to the partnership. De Vaux consistently promotes the idea that love is not self-serving, but rather altruistic and infinitely fulfilling. This is

a central concept in the *Système de philosophie positive*, (1852) the subjective portion of his positive social model.

In the latter months of their correspondence, shortly before de Vaux's death, Comte begins to formulate a moral generality around *sentiment* that de Vaux has been describing. Certain passages from their later correspondence illustrate that Comte incorporates her rational feedback into his thought process. De Vaux laments the emotional toll of his unrequited passion on Comte when she responds to the above communiqué. She writes:

> Cher ami, votre attachement me rend bien heureuse, et souvent bien penseuse: je me demande si quelque jour vous ne me demanderez pas compte de ces distractions violentes jetées au milieu de votre vie publique; d'un lien qui devait être tout douceur, vous faites une sorte d'astringent pimenté qui dissipe votre temps, votre pensée, et qui ne réagit que sur moi . . . . (352)

She is proffering her vision of what their friendship should be. While Comte is unsuccessful in transforming his feelings into the comradely fondness that de Vaux has for him, he finally has an epiphany, realizing that his passion adds to his authority as a philosopher, writing, ". . . pour devenir un parfait philosophe, il me manquait surtout une passion à la fois profonde et pure, qui me fît assez apprécier le côté affectif de l'humanité" (354). He continues on to say that sentiment is what had been missing from his *Course*, explaining, "Sa considération explicite, qui n'avait dû être qu'accessoire dans mon premier grand ouvrage, doit, au contraire, dominer maintenant le second. Cette évolution finale m'était encore plus indispensable aujourd'hui que ne le fut, il y a huit ou dix ans, l'essor décisif de tous mes goûts esthétiques" (355).

As early as May 24, 1845, Comte recognizes the moral change he is experiencing through the sagacious words with which de Vaux rebuffs him. He touts the value of unrequited love and expresses his debt to de Vaux. Comte says, "l'indispensable transformation que vous avez dû

prescrire à mes sentiments est . . . douloureuse . . . . ” He adds the caveat, “L’actif sentiment de la perfection morale, un moment altéré chez moi par une charmante passion, vient enfin d’être dignement réveillé” (20). He is stating that the disappointing failure of his romantic overtures is helping him to understand true strength of character. On August 5, 1845, Comte explains to de Vaux his new conviction that, to successfully market his philosophy to a wide public, he must first personally experience the full range of sentiments. He writes, “. . . on ne peut agir profondément sur les sentiments des autres qu’en y participant soi-même. . . .” And on August 26, 1845 he summarizes his new project saying:

> M'étant enfin dégagé de cet état discordant, pourquoi une heureuse réaction personnelle n'en résulterait-elle pas, comme récompense naturelle et directe du service que je rends ainsi au public en le poussant hors de l'ornière révolutionnaire? Ce premier acte, ou plutôt cette ouverture, qui va donner le ton à tout mon immense opéra, vient de consister surtout à représenter ‘amour universel . . . . (*Correspondance Générale* 97)

While the *Course* offers an objective analysis of the history of the sciences to the intellectual elite, the *System* is a guide to a moral life, directed toward the masses. To be efficacious, the author, in the manner of “tous les régénérateurs de l’Humanité,” must necessarily experience the full range of human sentiments (83-84.)

On September 14, 1845, de Vaux tries using a personal anecdote to help the philosopher understand the type of affection that she values. De Vaux writes; “Je ne demanderai jamais mieux que de vous faire plaisir, et de vous témoigner l’attachement que vous m’avez inspiré. Quelles que soient mes perturbations morales, j’espère conserver toujours la faculté d’apprécier le bien dans les autres; et, à ce titre, je vous fais large part dans mon cœur” (127). In this missive, de Vaux reveals to Comte her ill-fated and unconsummated relationship with a married man.

Similar to the purity that Comte uses to describe his association with her, this connection offered her an opportunity for a "bonheur le plus pur et le plus vif" possible. This man, too, pressured her to abandon her principles, promising to dedicate himself to her "éternellement" and, in this case, the passion was mutual. Nonetheless, de Vaux's moral code prevented her from entering into an extramarital affair. She explains; "J'ai compris mieux que personne la faiblesse de notre nature quand elle n'est pas dirigée vers un but élevé et inaccessible aux passions." She further references the evil that comes from "*le désordre, même le plus légitime et le plus honorable dans ses causes"* (her emphasis) (127-128). In mentioning disorder, de Vaux is referencing one of the key social ills that positivism aims to overcome. In his response of June 16, Comte acknowledges the righteousness of her observation. He again credits de Vaux with his moral progress as he writes, "J'aimerais à rapporter à toi, ma Clotilde, tout mon progrès privé, en vertu comme en bonheur" (127, 128, 129). Through her intellectual contributions de Vaux helps Comte put into practice the positive principles that he promotes.

Comte exults about the advances he has made in the past year in scientifically categorizing humanity from its origins, calling it "mon principal but philosophique, la systématisation finale de toute l'existence humaine autour de son vrai centre universel: l'affection!" (354). He attributes the progress to his "fièvre d'amour " for de Vaux: "la chaste adoration journalière d'une éminente nature" (355). On March 18, 1846, Comte further clarifies the concept that he has concretized through intellectual exchanges with de Vaux. He says, ". . . l'essentiel pour le bonheur, c'est toujours d'avoir le cœur dignement rempli." Affection between a man and a woman, when only one of them is attracted physically, offers the only possibility for true love. Friendship between members of the same sex will always be competitive on some level, and a mutual heterosexual passion will expire; it "ne saurait durer." He concludes, "Toutefois, pour compléter cette appréciation de la diversité du sexe comme première condition

indispensable de la parfaite amitié, il y faut joindre, je crois l'existence, chez l'un d'eux d'un véritable amour, approuvé, sans être partagé, par l'autre" (351).

Throughout his correspondence with de Vaux, Comte is forced to examine his own emotions and motivations. This process leads him to formulate the conceptions of love which he promotes in the *System.* His personal journey moves from arguments designed to inspire a like sentiment in de Vaux, to a struggle to replicate the familial fondness that she has for him and finally, to appreciation of a love that is passionate on one side and compassionate on the other. This final stage represents for him a universal truth; love is the elemental principle of existence. He affixes the motto, "L'amour pour principe, l'ordre pour base, et le progrès pour but" (*Système* 1: 321).

From his earliest work in the 1820s, Comte has asserted that society needs the moral oversight provided by belief in a spiritual power. This authority provides a uniform base from which social behaviors can be evaluated. Without belief in a higher authority, the potential exists for governments to seek their own good over that of the people (Pickering, *Auguste,* 344, 346). Until his relationship with de Vaux, however, Comte does not have a clear idea of what constitutes the higher authority. Over the *Course* of their intellectual collaboration, Comte comes to see platonic love as the elemental universal truth. Love is directed toward humanity, through a unified order of secular worship. He organizes these thoughts into a religion, in an adapted form of primitive fetishism. After de Vaux's death, Comte follows a daily routine of visiting her grave and kneeling before the chair in which she sat in his apartments, meditating on his love for her. This is more than a simple grieving ritual. It represents a "technical application of his science of sociology" (Tresch 256) and is a 19th century adaptation of the attribution of inherent powers to inanimate objects.

In the Religion of Humanity "inert objects have moral and spiritual powers." So, when Comte worships before de Vaux's chair, he is appreciating the synergy that it emits. Venerating personal items attached to de Vaux is a personal fetish for Comte, but he also identifies a universal fetish, which is the *Être supreme,* or Humanity. Tresch says that worshipping humanity is a way of "humanizing science and unifying society." Comte understands primitive fetishism to be a spiritual center around which society can unify (Tresch 13, 275). To form a comprehensive social system, positivism adopts "l'Humanité" as its "centre unique," the focal point of worship, which incorporates "le sentiment, la raison et l'activité." The moral guides in Comte's social model are women, who are symbolized by the figure of de Vaux. Women fulfill the "fonctions consultatives," because of their "nature éminemment affective" and their "situation passive" (*Système* 1: 329, 325).

Through his association with de Vaux, Comte develops the notion that scientific knowledge, alone, does not provide a sufficient basis for society. De Vaux's philosophy of love, expressed in reasoned observations, reveals to Comte that love has a social purpose that goes beyond sexual fulfillment. It encourages people to strive for moral perfection. Comte constructs his *System* while de Vaux helps him attain a higher level of morality, which leads him to formulate his new religion.

1.7 How de Vaux advances the feminist movement

Lucie is a keystone literary work that moves feminism significantly forward from the early days of Olympe de Gouges. De Vaux is the first woman to see de Gouges as radical in refashioning the *Déclaration des droits de l'homme* into the *Déclaration des droits de la femme et de la citoyenne.* De Gouges is insisting that women are as much citizens as men and deserve

equal recognition under the law. De Gouges does not have access to positivist reasoning, however, as it has not yet been developed. Rather, she is expanding existing ideology to include women. In contrast, de Vaux develops a new philosophy, which is continued and expanded by Clémence Royer and Louise Ackermann. The three writers together express visions of a social model that respects mainstream Republican values, such as the moral superiority of women and the role of men to participate in politics, while using positivist reasoning to show ways in which social institutions should be restructured, to ensure that women receive equal justice.

1.8 Conclusion

The July Monarchy is a time when women seize new opportunities to express their ideas in the public sphere. Published in the middle of this regime, *Lucie,* when considered in context, paints a picture of one woman among many attempting to change the mentality of a post-revolutionary society whose laws fail to protect women from civil injustice. The melding of positivist reasoning in fiction to promote social justice for women reveals a budding feminist philosophy that will be extended by Royer and

Ackermann.

2 Chapter 2: Clémence Royer - Positively Indomitable

2.1 Introduction

> A moi maintenant, forces de la matière et forces de l'intelligence, images des choses et conceptions de l'esprit, réalités et théories, créations de la nature et de l'humanité, choses inertes et vivantes, vie passive et activité libre, agrégations d'astres et sociétés d'êtres, mondes éternels et cités passagères . . . je vous évoque, je vous appelle. Je veux être le foyer puissant où convergeront vos échos, vos rayonnements, vos vibrations, vos bruissements. Puisse ce foyer, où vous serez venus vous répercuter, s'illuminer de votre lumière, s'échauffer de votre chaleur, retentir de votre voix . . . . Je veux pouvoir crier un jour au monde: Voilà le vrai, tel du moins qu'aujourd'hui l'homme peut le connaître.
>
> —Mattéo Mondoni in *Jumeaux d'Hellas* (202)

Clémence Royer, a respected scientific mind of her day, is the author of two works of fiction that remain virtually unnoticed by modern literary scholars: *Les Jumeaux d'Hellas,* an epic saga, and *La Jeunesse d'un révolté*, a *feuilleton*. Royer composes *Jumeaux* and *Jeunesse* early in her career and they remain her only works of fiction. As with Clotilde de Vaux, scholarship on the fiction of Royer is limited, suppressing the historical value of the two works. The sociohistorical context surrounding their publication has not yet been considered, nor have they been examined for literary merit.

Jeunesse appears in the newspaper *Le Citoyen* over a span of about seven weeks. This narrative follows the academic, familial and romantic experiences of a young, provincial man, who comes to Paris to study medicine. Eventually, he becomes a political voice for the working class, helping to organize and participate in the June Days Uprising of 1848.[xxvi] The *feuilleton* provides a good overview of the participants and mechanics of the revolt. Unfortunately, the

newspaper shuts down before the tale concludes and the readers are left not knowing the fate of the hero.

Jumeaux is situated in a near future, the action unfolding in and around the kingdom of Naples.[xxvii] The novel depicts the personal and political repercussions of the actions that Queen Amalia takes to negotiate love and motherhood within a patriarchal society. Peopled with fictional characters, the symbolism nonetheless clearly evokes Napoleon III and the France of the Second Empire. The tale philosophizes about familial and romantic love, civil rights and the consequences of intertwining politics and religion. The dénouement of the epic adventure chronicles a revolution, the development of a new government and constitution and the ultimate rejection of these radical changes by the populace. Because the tale is considered subversive, it is prohibited in France until 1870, a period when the French are losing the Franco-Prussian war and hence more concerned with utilitarian news than philosophical and scientific ideas (Royer *Autobiographie* 39). *Jumeaux* is thus virtually unknown to modern scholars.[xxviii]

The above synopsis to the short story, *Jeunesse*, provides adequate background for this exposé. *Jumeaux*, however, is a work of over 1,000 pages in two volumes and is the main source for passages supporting the arguments in this paper. For this reason, the synopsis is more detailed.[xxix] Since Royer is almost completely unknown outside of scientific circles, the next section will provide biographical data. Some of Royer's theories are now considered *outré*, which contributes to her impact on the intellectual dialogue of her era being underrated. Abundant observations from contemporary figures show, however, that her scientific and philosophical thoughts stimulate public dialogue. The synopses of volumes 1 and 2 follow the biography. Next, I examine the social context within which she produces her fiction, analyzing how political unrest and censorship laws restrict the circulation and impact of *Jumeaux.* After looking at the sociopolitical context, I present evidence from Royer's fiction, and other written

works, that illustrate ways in which she reflects Comtean positivism and ways in which she expands on the philosophy. The analyses also bring to light her feminist message, showing how Royer echoes certain accepted views of Republican womanhood, while strongly contesting others. Royer's writing style further develops the style that originates with de Vaux, blending positivist reasoning with fiction to propose social change.

2.2 Who is Clémence Royer?

Academic interest in Royer, which wanes beginning in the 1930s, rekindles in the 1970s, as the field of *Women's Studies* begins to expand (Aline Demars 14). Several comprehensive biographies furnish general biographical information on Royer, eliminating the need to include them here. These works detail her happy childhood, her miserable experience in a convent school and her decision, as a young adult, to develop her intellectual capacities, rather than marry.[xxx]

Royer is mainly remembered for introducing the Darwinian *theory of evolution* to the French intellectual community, a theory that challenges the mainstream French preference for the theory of Georges Cuvier claiming a fixity of species.[xxxi] Unfortunately, the polemic that Royer inspires with the preface to her first translation, in 1862, overshadows all of her other achievements (La Guerre). Mary Ellen Waithe notes that referring to her work as a translation obscures the "fact" of the annotations and philosophical observations on "the theory of natural selection and its implications for moral theory" (255). Modern scholars are only just beginning to fully appreciate the role that Clémence Royer plays in 19th century intellectual circles.[xxxii]

While the translation of Darwin guarantees Royer a place in history, it also minimizes the impact she has on the contemporary, intellectual community. In addition to making accessible the theory of the survival of the fittest, Royer proposes an extension of Darwin's theory to

encompass the evolution of societies. This theory, published in *L'Origine de l'homme et des sociétés* (1870), later becomes known as *social Darwinism*. In an 1899 article in *Popular Science Monthly*, Jacques Boyer calls this "her greatest work." He notes that, in her use of the scientific method in studying the link between humanity and the rest of creation over time, Royer "forecasts its future" (692). In 1895, the publication *La science française* calls her, "un des esprits les plus vigoureux, les plus virils et les plus originaux de la seconde moitié de ce siècle" (Anonymous). The British *Agnostic Journal and Eclectic Review* (1886) calls her, "one of the most remarkable, if not perhaps the most eminent, of living French women," and calls her work in mathematics, biology and geology "attainments . . . of the highest order" (Antonio 182). Dr. Verneau, a colleague from the Société d'Anthropologie, declares in a commemorative journal article that Royer "possédait non seulement une vaste érudition, mais des connaissances extrêmement solides." He refers to her body of knowledge as "presque encyclopédique," noting that she is "à tour naturaliste, mathématicienne, philosophe, linguiste" and "sociologiste" (2).

Royer first becomes a public figure when she gives a popular series of lectures on logic for women, *Introduction à la philosophie des femmes*, to a strictly female audience in Lucerne, Switzerland in 1858. Boyer says that these lectures "attracted much notice" and that they "brought most flattering praise . . . from contemporary students" (691). She moves on to live and lecture in Italy, where journalist Auguste Desarmière gives a glowing review of her lectures on Darwin. He notes the "si nombreux auditoire" and says that, while he disagrees with her philosophy, he cannot deny that "il y a chez elle des facultés du premier ordre" (230, 231). Following three years of lecturing in Italy, Royer moves to Paris, where she lectures on the boulevard des Capucines. Women have less access to public life in France, and she is obliged to seek authorization for the lectures at the prefecture of police (Fraisse, *Clémence* 15). The police

sometimes do not grant this request, as evidenced by a "unanimous refusal to permit her to use the salle Gerson for a *Cours*e in 1880" (Demars 12).

In addition to lecturing, Royer adds to her income by writing books, submitting papers to contests, and contributing regularly to numerous periodicals. In 1862, she becomes known outside of Switzerland, following the publication of her book, *Théorie de l'impôt ou la dîme social*, which discusses, among other issues, the benefits of establishing a progressive income tax. This book is awarded a "wreath of honor" from the State Council of the Canton of Vand, in Switzerland (Antonio 182). Royer solidifies her celebrity with her 1862 translation of *Origin*, introducing the theory of evolution to French society and, in 1900, is awarded the Legion of Honor. Royer completes 6 books over her lifetime, the most well-known of which are: the *Théorie de l'impôt ou la dime social* (1862), which wins a monetary prize in Switzerland; *L'Origine de l'homme et des sociétés* (1869), where she introduces a theory that is hers, but that comes to be known as "Social Darwinism" and *Le Bien et la loi morale: éthique et téléologie* (1881). Her last two books, *La Constitution du monde, dynamique des atomes, nouveaux principes de pholosophie naturelle* (1900) and *Histoire du ciel* (1901), published shortly before her death in 1902, are rarely mentioned, except in lists of her publications. Royer also writes multiple entries for two encyclopedias and one dictionary and produces articles for over 20 reviews and journals. These include: *La Philosophie positive*; *Bulletins de la Société d'anthropologie de Paris*; *La Science française*; *La Revue scientifique*; *L'Economiste français*; *Le Journal des économistes* and and several feminist publications, including *Le Journal des femmes, La Bulletin de l'Union universelle des femmes* and *La Fronde.* In addition, she submits numerous manuscripts for competition (Genvième Fraisse 167-185). She continues to contribute to the scientific community until 1901, the year before her death. Over a career of forty-three years, Royer's contributions to society and literature are extensive.

Despite maintaining some views complementary to the accepted Republican feminine ideal, Royer's participation in the social, literary and scientific communities of the mid-19th century provides evidence of confrontational behaviors. In society, adhering to convention is not important to Royer. In disregard for public opinion, she raises a son with her lover, Pierre Duprat, with whom she lives from 1859 until his death in 1885. Royer maintains her independent spirit, nonetheless and earns her own income (Fraisse, *Clémence* 15). This is a necessity, as most of Duprat's income goes to his wife (Harvey, *Strangers* 156). In a distinctly unfeminine manner, Royer consistently challenges the scientific thought of her peers in the public sphere. Joy Harvey hypothesizes that one contributing factor to the controversial reception of Royer's introduction to Darwin is that she transgresses the traditional female role of passive translator (67). Royer adds extensive, interpretative notes, tacitly elevating herself to the level of subjective peer. As a woman, she faces perpetual obstacles in her determination to express her voice.

Throughout her life, Royer helps to support her household through her lectures, books and articles. Following the death of Duprat, Royer has difficulty bringing in enough money to live above the poverty line. Nonetheless, she does manage to subsist on her writing, before finally accepting a room in the Maison Galignani. The Maison is an institution whose website states that they offer free board to "des savants désignés par la Société de se*Cours* des amis des sciences." For a woman without family money, eking out a living writing and lecturing is an impressive achievement, even though she spends her last years in extreme poverty.

Two artistic representations of Royer stand as symbols of the respect in which she is held by her contemporaries. Firstly, Royer features prominently in her pink hat, in a painting that hangs in the *grand salon* of the Sorbonne (Appendix 6).[xxxiii] Demars remarks that Royer is "fameuse dans le monde des savants du monde entier, des anthropologues, des scientifiques et

des philosophes" (11,12). Secondly, Royer adorns the cover of the journal, *Les Hommes d'aujourd'hui* in 1880. Each issue of this publication features an illustration of a prominent figure from "the world of arts, literature or science," accompanied by a three-page description of the person. It is significant that this periodical, which is often satirical and can be "playful, written in jest and . . . composed of . . . fantastic elements," treats Royer with respect. Although intellectual women are frequently depicted as lacking in feminine qualities in caricature, the caricature or Royer is not defamatory (Appendix 7). The journalists, Pierre and Paul, observe that, "elle a devancé Haeckel et dévéloppé avant Ch. Darwin lui-même, les conséquences de la théorie de sélection relativement à l'homme et ses faculté mentales" (no page no.). Royer's efforts to popularize scientific knowledge and her broad scholarship on the history of sciences are consistent with the dominant positivist philosophy of the mid-19th century. Royer is undeniably known and respected by contemporary intellectuals both in France and beyond its borders.

2.3 Synopsis of Jumeaux d'Hellas

> D'ici l'an 2000, l'homme pourra défaire et refaire ce qu'il a déjà fait et défait tant de fois, sans en être plus heureux. Il aura tourné deux ou trois fois de plus dans le cercle fatal de la démocratie, de l'aristocratie, de la monarchie et de la théocratie. Il aura changé la forme de son esclavage; mais les lois constitutives des sociétés resteront identiques et tout effort pour les violer ou les modifier n'engendrera que de plus grandes misères. — Royer (Royer and Milice 223)

This epic adventure highlights the difficulty of concurrently honoring love, law and duty. In a wider context, it examines the difficulties encountered in trying to establish an entirely new social architecture following a revolutionary period. The story chronicles twin brothers, Stéfano

and Mattéo, as they seek the truth about their mysterious parentage and encounter mortal danger in the process.[xxxiv] Volume 1 establishes the backstory for the action in volume 2, introducing the characters and their motivations and situating them in the allegorical kingdom of Naples. Volume two follows the characters as the actions set in motion in volume one progress toward their conclusion.

2.3.1 Synopsis of Volume 1

As the novel opens, twins, Stéfano and Mattéo, well-to-do men in their twenties, discuss an unexpected party invitation from Amalia, Queen of Naples, received after they exchange glances with her through a haze of incense in a Neapolitan church. Stéfano, a practicing Catholic, recognizes her as the woman who has been visiting him in dreams but is confused by his feelings for her. In contrast Mattéo, a noted womanizer who rejects his Catholic upbringing, is certain that Amalia has a romantic interest in one of them. The difference of opinion leads to the first of several philosophical discussions, this one concerning their opposing views on love. For Mattéo love is carnal; he moves from one lover to another, careful to maintain his independence. For Stéfano, on the other hand, love is spiritual. He idealizes the two women in his life: the woman of his dreams and Amalia, whom he had espied in the church. This discussion evolves into a discussion of women as mothers and the possible motivation and culpability of the mother who deserted them, and from there to a debate between monism and dualism. Does their mother have two separate beings: one spiritual, that loves them, and one carnal, that rejects them; or one being in whom morality and actions are linked? Mattéo believes their mother deliberately and selfishly chose to abandon her children. Stéfano, on the other hand, is convinced that his mother realized that she was acting contrary to Christian precepts but was helpless to deny her sinful impulse. At

the end of this opening chapter, the brothers express mutual regret at not knowing the identity of their mother, while disagreeing about whether or not she merits their love.

The twins had been raised in Switzerland by a “vieille fille” and taught by the priest, Father Ricci. Mattéo suspects the priest of having manipulated them throughout their childhood, for some unscrupulous reason. Mattéo believes that Ricci adapted his approach to appeal to the unique character of each boy, to urge them both into the priesthood. He did this by ensuring that neither twin found an enduring relationship with a woman. Ricci discouraged Stéfano from pursuing a romantic relationship, saying that God would provide the right woman. When Stéfano meets Lucie, the priest portrays her as sinful, which leads the young man to initially reject his feelings for her. Despairing of ever finding love, he leans toward the priesthood and the spiritual life.

In contrast, Ricci has counseled Mattéo to pursue one liaison after another. His first romantic attachment having broken his heart, he is determined never to be vulnerable again. Mattéo has recently abandoned his latest lover, Léona, despite respecting her many excellent qualities. Tiring of his lifestyle, Mattéo, too considers a monastic life, but in order to purge the church of false teachings. It appears that Ricci has well-executed his plan, but Mattéo suspects that Ricci may be promoting the interests of a third party.

Between the first and final chapters, a series of letters exchanged amongst various characters further clarify their intertwined history. Johanna and her sister, Amalia, both princesses, had fallen in love with, respectively, Count Orlowski and Othon Hellas, their tutors. Because of this, Johanna refuses the marriage arranged by her father, to the king of Naples. She escapes the oppression of her father and leads a happy life with the man she loves. Amalia, who is more timid, agrees to marry the king. She has three children with him, after giving birth to the twins she had conceived with Hellas. The king is unconcerned about his wife having had a lover,

prior to their marriage. The babies, however, bring to light two laws that raise the potential for a crisis of succession. The first law stipulates that any children born to a married couple are the legal offspring of the husband, regardless of the identity of their biological father. The second law requires that the crown pass to the first-born child. This means that Stéfano and Mattéo would be first and second in line to the throne, even though they are not the biological progeny of the king. The king, accordingly, had determined to have the boys killed. Amalia persuaded her husband to spare the lives of her infant sons, promising never to see them again, and they were raised in a distant country. The drama unfolds after Amalia, espying the men in a church in Naples, invites them to a ball. Although Amalia does not reveal to them their parentage, her closest acquaintances as well as the king and his minions remain poised to react quickly, should she change her mind. Her friends plan to whisk the men away to safety, while attendants of the king plot to kill them.

Additional characters join the cast, who play key roles in volume 2: Léona, an actress and courtesan and a former lover of Mattéo; Lucie, the daughter of Johanna; Mathilde (Lady Howard, wife of an English Ambassador and close confidante of the queen); Lord Howard, her unscrupulous husband; the cardinal, Barbeschi, who currently follows the orders of the king, but will later revert to his innate goodness; Gassi, doctor and advisor to the king, who facilitates his evil machinations and an ascetic, Giaochino, who will intercede multiple times and in creative guises to aid Stéfano and Mattéo. The reader also gathers supplemental data about the character of Mattéo. For example, although he has decided never to commit to one woman, he admires Léona enormously. It also transpires that Mattéo raped Lucie long ago, to retaliate for a suspected betrayal of his love for her. Lucie feels unworthy of love, because she has been defiled.

Also in volume 1, Lady Howard spirits the desperately ill Stéfano away to safety, following an attempt by Gassi to poison him. With the help of Lucie, she nurses him back to health and the two young people begin to fall in love. Out of loyalty to Amalia, Mathilde keeps the parentage of Stéfano a secret, with the result that people imagine him to be her lover. This gives Lord Howard an excuse to divorce Lady Howard and marry Princess Christina, the daughter of the king of Naples and Queen Amalia.

While Stéfano recovers in Switzerland, Mattéo undertakes a journey of reflection. He records his philosophical musings in a chapter entitled *L'album du voyageur*. This trip, which begins in Naples and ends in Rome, gives Mattéo the opportunity to meditate on several abstract topics, such as his personal evolution into a more compassionate being. The odyssey is a time for Mattéo to organize his thoughts on dogma, freedom and morality.

The traveler considers the negative effect of religion on free thought, finding it ironic that temptation apparently exists purely to impede the ascension of man to a heavenly afterlife. He concludes that the most honorable path for man is to revolt against the God who creates eternal life. Mattéo also ponders the preoccupation with *liberty* in the Occident, perplexed at the "complaisance" of the people of Naples. He implies that enlightenment is not yet achieved, because of a lack of social progress. An indication of social stagnation is the ongoing injustice and suffering faced by an indigent, female population.

Mattéo hypothesizes about which segment of the population will eventually demand change. It is not enough for intellectuals to uncover abuse. In order for the people to rise up against a repressive regime, widespread discontent is requisite. He first discounts the working class, saying, that it will endure inequality, as long as it has the minimum necessary to subsist. Mattéo also discards the possibility of political activism by the aristocracy. He observes that with increased distance from the Revolution, Enlightenment ideals progressively disappear, and

aristocrats gladly reclaim their old privilege. As analysis will show, symbolism throughout the novel establishes that Royer is criticizing the shortcomings of a succession of post-Revolutionary regimes, notably including the Second Empire of Napoleon III.

The volume ends with Mattéo returning to the *Holy City* and pondering its past, its present and the imminent decline that he anticipates. He wanders around the entire city, from the *Champ de Mars*, to the *cirque Agonal*, from the *théâtre de Pompée* to the *Septa Julia* and eventually the forum.[xxxv] This peregrination leads the twin to consider the perennial processes of civilization. Mattéo believes that civilization would have progressed more smoothly, had Rome never dominated the Western world.

From the Forum, Mattéo proceeds to the Coliseum, where he is approached by a young man who says he has been waiting for him there for many days. The man explains that they are actually cousins and discloses that Mattéo issues from the family of *Hellas*, rather than *Mondoni,* as he had always believed. The speaker adds that he, like Mattéo, is an orphan and asks Mattéo to treat him as a disciple and younger brother. This Greek, who goes by the name of Chrysès, is actually the former lover of Mattéo, Léona, but he does not recognize her, and she keeps her identity hidden.[xxxvi]

Chrysès provides Mattéo with details about his parents and the danger that he and Stéfano face, should the knowledge become public. The two decide to join Stéfano, who is being hidden in England by Mathilde. As they make these plans in the forum, they espy a man in black surreptitiously observing them. Suspecting the man to be Ricci, and fearing that he means them harm, they resolve to quickly leave Rome. This is the end of volume 1.

2.3.2 Synopsis of Volume 2

Volume 2 follows the events set in motion when Chrysès (Léona) reveals to Mattéo the identity of his mother at the forum. The king swiftly has the two arrested, intending to use the imprisonment of Mattéo as incentive for Amalia to maintain silence about his parentage. He also redoubles his efforts to take Stéfano into custody. Simultaneously, Lord Howard initiates plans to divorce and dishonor his wife in order to marry someone of higher social status. The justification for divorce is the rumor that Mathilde has taken Stéfano as a lover. Each of these trajectories sparks a number of subplots. Amalia works through a crisis of conscience because of the unjust defamation of Mathilde, the king becomes the victim of two blackmail plots, a mysterious stranger helps to free Chrysès from prison, and Stéfano and Lucie fall in love.

When the news breaks that Lord Howard intends to divorce his wife, Johanna writes to Amalia, demanding that she come to the aid of her loyal friend. Amalia demurs, responding that she has an obligation to her legitimate children and, furthermore, that the idea of publicizing her affair is overwhelming. After a great moral struggle, however, she resolves to exculpate her friend. Amalia attempts to correct the misconception by writing to Lord Howard, explaining that Mathilde is acting as a friend, protecting the son of the queen.

The results of this confession are disappointing. Mathilde is dismayed to learn of the disclosure, while Lord Howard is jubilant. Mathilde writes that public approbation is a small price to pay in order to live a life free of mistreatment. Lord Howard claims that the public insult to his name demands restitution before the court, while Mathilde explains that his real motivation is to be free to marry someone of higher social standing. In evidence of this, Lord Howard addresses a letter of blackmail to the cardinal, Barbeschi, putting forth his demands: he will

maintain silence about the confession of the queen, as long as she keeps silent about the innocence of Mathilde and the king facilitates his marriage to the princess Christine.

An additional threat to the king comes from his doctor and advisor, Gassi. Gassi, who has a history of underhanded deeds committed at the direction of the king, now demands that his son be named a duke.[xxxvii] Gassi cautions the king against harming him saying that he has documented each crime committed. Defenseless, the king accepts the conditions of both Gassi and Lord
Howard.

Meanwhile, Mattéo languishes in the dungeon of a remote castle, having been transported by carriage from his urban prison. By mistake, Chrysès has been rescued by the hermit, Giaochino. The goal had been to free Mattéo; however, Giaochino confused the two identical transports and waylaid the wrong one. Chrysès vows to liberate Mattéo, with the help of the hermit and the cardinal, who is a friend of Léona. Gaining access to Mattéo, disguised as a priest and escorted by Barbeschi, Chrysès trades places with the twin. He thinks it more likely that his release can be obtained than that of Mattéo.

Stéfano and Mattéo make their way to England and finagle their way into the courtroom, where Mathilde is being tried for adultery. The public learns that the brothers are the sons of the queen of Naples and, thus, legal heirs to the throne of that country. The court exonerates Mathilde and the group return to Italy to reunite with Chrysès, Johanna and Lucie. Following an interlude where Stéfano and Barbeschi are imprisoned and Stéfano is tortured, Mattéo joins Giaochino and his band of resistance fighters. These working-class men are dissatisfied with the injustice rampant in the current regime and have prepared to attack. Giaochino adds that they

have hesitated to act because they need a leader. Mattéo accepts this role and joins in the popular uprising.

Once victory is achieved, and the rebels liberate Stéfano and Barbeschi, the three address the populace to generate support for a democratic form of government, similar to that of the ancient Greeks. This stage of reconstruction reveals the difficulty of establishing a form of government acceptable to the entire population. Several factions disagree with aspects of the new constitution. Notably, bourgeois men are dismayed by the laws protecting women. When armies from throughout Europe descend on the republic of Naples, determined to quash this Republican movement, the Neapolitans join their ranks, chase their liberators from the city and reinstate the deposed king. An earthquake opens a gaping hole in the earth, swallowing the entire city of Naples, including the king and his biological sons. The six main characters, the Mondoni twins, the cardinal, Johanna and her daughter and Léona, who had already escaped from the city, embark for a distant island, where they plan to establish a democratic society.[xxxviii]

2.4 *Jeunesse and Jumeaux*: Critical Reception, Censorship Sociopolitical Commentary

Royer makes her positivist and feminist philosophies accessible to a lay population in *Jumeaux* and *Jeunesse*; yet, due to a combination of bad luck, a repressive government and war, contemporary circulation is restricted. This could also explain why the works are almost entirely unknown to modern readers, despite several of her non-fiction publications enjoying renown in the intellectual community. The newspaper in which the *feuilleton* is published, *Le Citoyen*, closes its doors before the tale is completed. As mentioned earlier, the subversive nature of *Jumeaux* leads to it being banned in France.[xxxix] Journalist La Guerre notes, in the commemorative issue of *La Fronde*,[xl] that this “vaste composition d’allure historique” finally

appears in France in 1870, after the fall of the Second Empire (1). That moment is inauspicious for sales, however, as the public is more concerned with political news immediately following the war with Prussia.

2.4.1 Public Reception of *Jumeaux*

During the war, England had replaced France as the Occidental hub of scientific development. (Lawrence Badash 51).[xli] An article in the British publication, *Nature*, in January 1871 bemoans the loss that science has seen, resulting from the war between France and Germany. The columnist J.P.E. observes that, "all the resources of Science" have been used by each country to "inflict as much injury as possible on the other." The article adds that, during the *Cours*e of the conflict, workshops and laboratories have been shuttered and schools have faced a dearth of both students and professors (182).

Reduced emphasis on scientific progress in the intellectual community, combined with the traumatic aftermath of the war lead to less public interest in scientific advances. Royer, who enjoys a certain prominence early in her career, sees her celebrity fade at this same time. In her autobiography, Royer decries the changing public taste in 1870 saying that, after. . . l'année terrible . . . . La France, absorbée par la politique, ne lisait plus que des Journaux. . . . " (384). Royer further bemoans that, ". . . pour la génération nouvelle, Clémence Royer n'était plus que la traductrice de Darwin" (*Autobiographie* 39). Her reputation alone is no longer sufficient to generate book sales.

While *Jumeaux* enjoys little commercial success in France, a scathing review in *The Westminster and International Review* reveals a significant detail; in 1864, the same year that it is published in French, it is also translated into English and distributed through a "first-class

London bookstore" (Jay Chapman 255).[xlii] To date, I have been unable to locate English translations of *Jumeaux* or additional reviews in British publications. Desarmière also makes reference to *Jumeaux* in his review of her Italian lectures on Darwin (232). This indicates that a certain amount of interest in the opus exists. One possible explanation for this is that Royer is known to the British public, following her translation of *Origin* two years earlier. Since the translation was into French, however, that argument is weak. Another possibility is that the Belgian publisher, Librairie Internationale, considers her marketable. As noted earlier, Royer is a public figure, delivering scientific and philosophical lectures throughout the continent, including in Belgium and producing abundant scientific and philosophical texts. This theory is more likely. A third alternative also ties to Librairie Internationale; it is building a reputation publishing books by exiled French authors, such as Victor Hugo (Nina Martyris).[xliii] Further investigation is required to adequately answer the question of how *Jumeaux* comes to England. In any event, it clearly indicates some level of contemporary readership outside of France.

2.4.2 Censorship in the Second Empire

In 19th century France, steadily increasing numbers of people demand expanded civic and political liberty, while the authoritarian administrations up to 1880 attempt to quell political dissent through controlling popular thought, notes Robert Justin Goldstein, a specialist on censorship in European and American history (785). Except for the brief periods between 1830 and 1835 and again in 1848,[xliv] the 19th century is notorious for strict censorship of the press in France (Elizabeth Childs 44, 63). Scholarship on this topic supports the extensive efforts to control the press and the severe penalties for publishing subversive material, but legal descriptions of specifically what constitutes a subversive message are vague (Goldstein, "Fighting" 790). What is known is that, with the Law of January 5, 1810, Napoleon reinstates the

censorship of the press that had been abolished during the Revolution. This law stipulates that printers must be licensed and strictly limits the number of licenses granted. From that time on, each successive authoritarian regime increases those original restrictions, although it appears to be somewhat up to the individual censors to interpret the regulations. In addition to censorship laws, printers and publishers are liable for the content they produce. They are frequently prosecuted, fined and/or imprisoned, which encourages self-censorship (Thomas J. Cragin 60, 59, 57). Because the rules are unclear, it is difficult for a publisher to predict which works will be censored and which will not; the threat of prosecution, however, creates a tendency on the part of printers and publishers to be over-cautious.

Despite the nebulous nature of censorship, there is an identifiable trend in themes, and "rares étaient, avant 1881, les hommes de presse qui n'avaient pas eu…des comptes à rendre devant un tribunal" remarks Vincent Robert (qtd. in Vantine 48). Childs notes that the emperor "constructed a public image of himself that drew on the myths of glory associated with his illustrious uncle, Napoléon I [sic]" (69). Mocking the head of state and "outrage à la morale publique" are the primary reasons for censorship (Goldstein, *Debate* 10; Vantine 48).[xlv] Napoleon III takes extra precautions with the press to prevent an uprising similar to the Revolution of

1848, observes Christine Haynes (8). Roger Price, in *Documents on the Second French Empire, 1852-1870*, cites the decree of February 17, 1852, requiring pre-authorization for any newspaper as evidence of this move to "limit political debate" (Chapter 5).[xlvi] This leads to widespread suppression of ideas in France, with the result that many authors write from exile, including: Victor Hugo, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Edgar Quinet, Emile de Girardin and Alexandre Dumas (Haynes 13-14). In being censored, Royer is certainly in good company.

2.4.3 Social and Political Critique in *Jumeaux*

Jumeaux highlights the weaknesses and foretells the demise of an empire readily recognizable as that of Napoleon III. Mattéo cautions, “Rome, enfante vite et fais ton testament, car les temps sont venus où une nouvelle étoile paraîtra vers l’Orient” (1: 448). The words tell of a future, in which science will replace religion as the social foundation. *Jumeaux* attacks the establishment on several different fronts: the clergy, the status of women, and most notably a government that represses free thought. In his soliloquy, Mattéo intones how the entire Christian era has “retardé de deux mille ans la marche de l’humanité” (1: 448). He scoffs at the religious education offered to girls of working-class families saying, “Croire n'est-il pas plus important que savoir, quand il ne faut qu'obéir?” He observes that they leave the convent with, “une provision d'oraisons jaculatoires pour le saint cœur de Jésus, de Marie et de Joseph, et un respect sans bornes pour leur confesseur,” rather than any increased capacity for creative thought (1: 225). His brother, Stéfano, questions the Catholic view on women when he says to Lucie, “Cette moitié de l'humanité à laquelle vous appartenez me semble avoir gardé plus que nous un rayon…de la pureté originelle…” and he continues that this observation has made him, “douter parfois de la vérité de ce dogme fondamental de notre foi qui nous la montre comme la cause première du péché, du mal, de la dégradation de l'humanité entière et de sa déchéance” (2: 110). The musings of Mattéo continue as he wonders, “Le monde devait-il …être mieux éclairé, quand la lumière ne lui viendrait plus que d’un seul point de la terre, et rayonnerait du centre même de la corruption césarienne?” (1: 449). These last lines underline the stagnation that occurs, when the monarch controls the flow of ideas. During his cathartic journey to Rome, Mattéo asks if, aside from the diligent working class, “ne saurait-on donc trouver à Naples rien de sérieux, rien de solide, le noyau d'un vrai peuple, la base d'une société libre et puissante?” Of the intellectual class he wonders, “ Ne peut-on compter quelques hommes qui pensent et jugent, en attendant du

moins la liberté ou le pouvoir d'agir, et qui peut-être souffrent de l'asservissement de la patrie qui les condamne à l'inactivité?" (1: 224). He is confused at the placidity of men in a position to challenge the negative actions of the government. The following passage, "Que la Grèce, au lieu de Rome eût pris le gouvernement du monde . . . et l'univers entier . . . aurait vu le libre génie partout enfanter . . . de nouvelles sciences . . . " expresses his conviction that, had intellectuals been in power, rather than the church, humanity would have made much greater progress (1: 449). The subversive tone is palpable, and the allegories rapidly accumulate.

The Neapolitan society is comprised of bellicose, Roman conquerors and the vanquished Greeks, whose creativity and intellect are subject to stifling restrictions. The city of Rome, in its many incarnations is representative of Catholic France and the Greeks are the scientific intellectuals,[xlvii] whose ideas for establishing a progressive society are continuously thwarted by the government. It is easy to recognize the similarity between *Naples* and *Napoleon* and the allegory of that city for Napoleonic France. In a cynical tone, Mattéo regrets that, "L'ombre des géants couvre celle des pygmées sur la terre où tous sont tombés; mais ces pygmées . . . leur rendaient dédain pour dédain." Use of the term *pygmy* conjures both the lack of vision of nonintellectuals and the image of Napoleon I, with his diminutive stature. Mattéo then explains how military might is able to triumph over reason complaining, "Targuant leur science de folie, ils demeuraient vainqueurs par leur nombre de la sagesse et de la raison de leur temps, dépensée en vain dans cette œuvre de Sisyphe qui s'appelle la réforme humaine" (1: 226). Sisyphus was a cunning king, whom Zeus condemned to spend eternity pushing an enormous boulder up a hill. Each time he reached the peak, the boulder would roll back to the bottom, and Sisyphus would have to begin his task again. In referring to the Greek mythological figure, Mattéo is saying that throughout history, military might thwarts the attempts of intellectuals to implement social improvements. Symbolically, the passage suggests that efforts by Enlightenment thinkers and the

French Revolution to establish a civil structure beneficial to the entire population were predestined to fail.

Another link with post-Revolutionary France emerges once the rebels depose the monarch and the two triumvirates of the Mondoni twins and Barbeschi, with their secretary, Chrysès and Johanna, Lucie and Mathilde. The role of the women in the new administration is confusing to the people and causes suspicion. Some believe that they "retenaient l'initiative" of the male triumvirate, while others hold that they "la précipitaient." More importantly, men do not want to be, "gourvernés par des femmes" and women find the public presence to be an "inconvenance" and a "scandale." The narrator states that each citizen "attribuait ce qui lui déplaisait le plus dans la marche du gouvernement" to the influence of the female triumvirate (2: 514).

The fictional past is additionally linked with the contemporary present by a play on words, as innocent, political prisoners are incarcerated in the château de l'Oeuf. The parallel with *Le Comte de Monte Cristo*, which appears in 1844, well after the fall of the First Empire (1814), is striking. Edmond Dantès, the hero of the Alexandre Dumas novel is the innocent victim imprisoned in the château d'If. Further links with the Second Empire are seen in the admonitions and forewarnings that Mattéo repeatedly addresses to Rome. In his soliloquy,
Mattéo addresses remarks to ". . . Rome seconde," distinguishing this administration from the First Empire of Napoleon Bonaparte (*Jumeaux* 1: 448). The following passages, where Mattéo chides the city, expresses the disappointing outcome of the recent Revolutions: "Tu as refusé d'être reine; tu seras courtisane et servant . . . ." This is addressed to the intellectuals who, in the aftermath of the revolution, forego the opportunity to establish a distinctly new form of government, choosing rather to serve under a new type of tyrant. He then says, "Tu le salues impérator [sic] . . . . Il commande et tu obéis, avec joie d'abord, le lendemain avec crainte." This

reflects how the people initially welcome Napoleon III as a savior, only to discover that he is just as dictatorial as the previous emperor. He finishes this chastening by warning Rome: this "second hymen" will "consommer ta ruine" (445). By this, he means that allowing a second empire to flourish will effectively prevent the forming of a positive administration, based on reason. While the tale references various regimes, the above passages make clear that the empire of Napoleon III is one of this cohort.

Once this becomes clear, it is easy to understand how additional references in the novel are considered threatening to the regime. References to military campaigns, combined with comments about subjugation of the Greeks bring to mind the contrast between those seeking a return to monarchist ideals and those in favor of an administration based on scientific principles. Mattéo describes the seemingly limitless quest for power on the part of Rome intoning, "L'Italie ne te suffit plus. . . ." Ton empire envahit celui de Cyrus jusqu'à l'Euphrate; le pays des Pharaons t'es soumis; l'Espagne va t'obéir ; et déjà tes légions ont passé les Alpes et paru dans les plaines gauloises" (*Jumeaux* 1: 445, 443). These words clearly conjure the military exploits of Napoleon Bonaparte, who adopted symbolism reminiscent of the Roman empire. The actions of Johanna juxtapose the fight to establish a just society through the French Revolution and the subsequent succession of authoritarian regimes that continue to control the flow of ideas.

Johanna recounts to Lucie how her lover, Hellas, ". . . venait. . . plaider près de l'empereur pour. . . Grèce, sa patrie, ressuscitée avec tant de peine, et libre comme un chien qu'on traîne en laisse et qu'on ne lâche qu'à la condition de revenir au sifflet" (*Jumeaux* 2: 136). Comparing Greece under Roman rule to "a dog on a leash" alludes to the hypocrisy of post-revolutionary French governments that purport to represent the people, while maintaining the same privileges as and enforcing similar laws to those of the regimes they destroyed. Mattéo reflects, "Les anciens dictateurs venant de sauver la patrie se contentaient d'une couronne de feuillage; il fallait

des couronnes d'or et des monuments de marbre aux Césars. . . . " The statement is an intimation that pagan regimes celebrate the resultant, positive outgrowth of events with an organic symbol, whereas a Christian, authoritarian regime glorifies itself with a static memorial. This passage alludes to the incongruity between the goals of the French Revolution and the post-revolutionary regimes. The many war memorials that Napoleon Bonaparte commissions and the reconstruction of Paris in the neoclassical style that occurs during the tenure of Napoleon III idolize a monarchical past. This is counter to the aims of the Enlightenment thinkers, whose ideas led to the French Revolution.[xlviii] Positivism, emanating from the Revolution, seeks to integrate the advances of industrialization, constructing a more equable and efficient social model. Mattéo then issues a cautionary message saying, "Prends garde, ô prends garde! ton [sic] heure est venue d'être faible . . . ." His tone becomes more ominous as he explains, "Les peuples te subissent sans t'aimer, toi qui prétend [sic] surtout régner par l'amour" (*Jumeaux* 1: 440, 445, 448). Whether official or preemptive, censorship *of Jumeaux* is not surprising, given its derogatory depiction of Napoleon III and the Second Empire and the strong support for a government built on scientific reasoning.

2.5 How Royer Reflects Comtean Positivism

> Dans cette association de l'homme avec ses esclaves, les parts ne sont-elles pas trop inégales? Et si la vie sociale avait pour résultat d'adoucir le sort des êtres qui nous sont subordonnés, ne serait-ce pas un évident progrès vers un ordre général meilleur qu'une diminution de souffrance, une augmentation de bonheur dans cette grande et perpétuelle lutte que se livrent sur la terre la mort et la vie, le mal et le bien ? —Mattéo Mondoni, *Jumeaux* 1: 334

Royer insists that she is not a positivist. In fact, she claims not to adhere to any particular school of thought, but rather to be an independent thinker. Her biographer, Albert Milice, relates a conversation with her:

> Un jour au *Cours* d'une causerie familière, je lui demandais:
>
> -Mais enfin êtes-vous socialiste?
>
> -Non, me répondit-elle sans hésiter.
>
> -Et positiviste?
>
> -Pas davantage.
>
> -Mais alors?
>
> -Tenez, je ne me laisserai pas mettre en bouteille, je ferai sauter le bouchon.
>
> -Mais encore?
>
> -Je suis une indépendante.
>
> Milice 15

Royer has solid justification for stressing the originality of her ideas. Her educational journey was a distinctly feminine experience and she is determined that her female perspective be recognized (Demars 268). Nonetheless, thought does not emerge from a vacuum. The autodidactic education that Royer conducts consists primarily of studying the works of great minds, including those of Comte and her writings provide abundant examples of Comtean positivist thought.

Characters in *Jeunesse* model this in their scientific approach to problem-solving. In the *feuilleton*, the narrator notes that young men arriving from the provinces fervently want to participate in establishing a new order based on logical principles. "Tous savaient vouloir surtout ce que leur raison, éclairée d'un jour nouveau, leur montrait comme la vérité et la justice." At the

same time, they are limited by their traditional education. The narrator continues, “Cette ignorance du présent, mise en regard de la science exclusive et incomplète du passé, pouvait faire craindre que cette génération ne renouvelât encore ces ridicules et faux pastiches de l’antiquité que déjà les révolutionnaires du siècle dernier avaient tenté d’accommoder à nos mœurs et à nos instincts modernes” (March 6). This is in contrast to the Napoleonic model, which simply reimagines the old order. The Napoleonic years maintain the privilege central to the old order, but accord it to those who serve the state, rather than to those with inherited titles (Ambrogio Caiani 447). Restricting education to the study of the past, disregarding contemporary philosophies, will lead to repetition of the same mistakes made by the revolutionaries of the previous century.

The narrator of *Jeunesse* reiterates this saying that, “l’accord harmonieux et logique avec les temps et les lieux” must be incorporated into contemporary education (March 6). She is saying that new theories based on the scientific method are an important aspect of creating a positive society. Both Madame Morel and Marcel turn to this process as they formulate opinions on others. Marcel attends a soirée at the home of Madame Verdier, “pour étudier, en philosophe observateur, le bon et le mauvais côté de ce qu'il regardait, d'après les récits de son ami, comme l'expérimentation d'un progrès et presque d'une institution sociale” (March 7). Madame Morel, for her part, “résolut d’observer” in order to establish the motives of the young man, after Marcel escorts Louise home for the first time (March 10). Both characters illustrate the new, observation-based reasoning that is beginning to permeate society.

Comte expresses a similar sentiment in his *Course* when he says that the educational system, which is “essentiellement théologique, métaphysique et littéraire” needs to be replaced with a positive education, “adaptée aux besoins de la civilization moderne” (*Cours*, 1: 33-34). In the positive rebuilding of society, following the negativism wherein the revolutionaries destroyed

the *ancien regime*, leaders must begin with a *tabula rasa*, rather than trying to modify longstanding ideals (Comte, *Système* 2). Part of this new model is building knowledge based on the *scientific method*, or hypothesis, observation, experimentation and theorization. While Comte recognizes the benefits of scientific specialization, he sees benefits to society of synthesizing the discoveries. The philosopher says, ". . . la division du travail intellectuel, perfectionnée de plus en plus, est un des attributs caractéristiques les plus importants de la philosophie positive," but also warns that ignorance of advances in other disciplines admits the potential for theological and metaphysical explanations. To avoid this pitfall, he advocates identifying ways in which disciplines influence each other and relating this in "un moindre nombre de principes communs." (*Cours*, 1: 22, 24).

Royer and Comte agree that positive precepts should drive both personal and public decision-making. Administrative decisions should be made by "le petit nombre d'esprits d'élite qui . . . sont en quête de tout rayon nouveau qui peut jeter une idée et une forme de plus dans le capital intellectuel de l'humanité et lui indiquer un progrès possible" says Royer, in the *Preface* to *Jumeaux*. With this statement, the author echoes the belief of Comte, that natural philosophers should provide the ethical inspiration for the new order. While all of the main characters in *Jumeaux* are introspective and committed to arriving at their own understanding of life, Mattéo extends this study beyond his personal experience and that of those who surround him. Using the scientific method, he uses data, based on observation and theorizes about ways to establish a society that serves the needs. When the rebels overthrow the monarchy, they, with Mattéo agree on a governing committee, comprised of the two brothers and Barbeschi, the rehabilitated priest. This decision is made quickly, as the overthrow of the monarchy happens precipitously; nonetheless, the process simulates a democratic decision. During the negotiation about who should replace the king, Mattéo declares to the insurgents that Stéfano, as well as he, "professe le

respect du droit de tous aux mêmes libertés, et à une juste répartition des charges et des bénéfices de l'état social. Il reconnaît . . . dans l'élection libre, la seule source légale et équitable de toute autorité politique" (2: 470). This assertion is another connection with Comte, who says that his new moral doctrine, "ne saurait aujourd'hui . . . émaner d'aucune des classes dirigeantes . . . toutes plus ou moins dominées par l'empirisme métaphysique et l'égoïsme aristocratique" but should originate from "une coalition . . . entre les philosophes et les prolétaires" (*Système* "Préambule" 3, 4).[xlix] The intellectuals who use the scientific method: observation; hypothesis and experimentation to study society are the logical choice to develop a new social model.

Royer explains that, "Il est temps maintenant de commencer un cycle nouveau, et de faire sortir de ce qui est ce qui doit être" (*Préface*). In this statement, "ce qui est" refers to the existing social order and "ce qui doit être" refers to an improved model, based on science. This is a restatement of the Comtean declaration that positivism illuminates the path to a more equable society by uncovering demonstrable, scientific laws governing civilization. He says, in the *Préambule* to his *System* that it will cause to "spontanément surgir dans tout l'Occident une nouvelle autorité morale . . . " (3). While Royer claims not to be a positivist and does, in fact, extend significantly beyond Comtean ideology, the two philosophies have marked overlap. Three additional elements of Comtean positivism that feature in the philosophy of Royer are: the law of three states; the conception of God; and the link between art and religion.

2.5.1 The Law of Three States

Royer makes frequent allusion to fundamental changes in belief structure. In the preface to *Jumeaux,* she explains that her characters are "des personnages de transition" and that while none of them currently has "la verité morale," they are "plus ou moins en marche pour l'atteindre

. . . ” (“Préface” ii). In calling her characters transitional, the author means that they are introspective. Amalia begins to question the ethics of acting without considering the moral implications of her decisions. Johanna, although justifiably furious with Mattéo for desecrating her daughter, finds it more just to forgive him. Léona, finally given the opportunity to adopt a traditional social role, refuses to marry Mattéo. Lucie accepts that she bears no shame for having been raped and agrees to marry Stéfano. Mattéo determines to continue working for the greater good, rather than seek only his own pleasure. Each of these characters has used logical reasoning to initiate a new set of behaviors. Mattéo verbalizes the forward-looking nature of the characters saying, “les choses qui finissent ne sont que des commencements . . . . ” He further elaborates noting, “A mesure . . . que le monde avance, le symbole plus transparent cède place aux préceptes, [sic] et la loi morale peu à peu se dégage des images dont l’enveloppait autrefois la raison humaine.” This statement means that, as positivist reasoning gains acceptance, society will tend to act according to scientific laws, rather than merely following tradition. Mattéo goes on to evoke the transition to successive stages of evolution asking of humanity, “A quoi attribuer son commencement, sinon à quelque utilité inconnue, à quelque instinct, à quelque besoin de la nature humaine qui veut être satisfait et qui ne peut abandonner une foi, une croyance, un symbole religieux que pour s’en inventer un autre?” Noting that humanity finally arrives at positive state Mattéo queries, “n’est-ce pas plutôt la loi morale, seule réalité cachée sous tant de symboles divers? Une pensée, une loi commune, de communs principes que tous reconnaissent . . .” (*Jumeaux* 1: 442). His question recalls the Comtean *Law of Three Stages*, whereby humanity advances from the theological, to the metaphysical and finally to the positive stage of understanding. According to Comte, the progression to successive stages applies to all scientific disciplines, as well as to religion. *Jumeaux* portrays the Comtean notion as it applies to religion and society.

Numerous additional passages further support the notion of a continuous process of development from primitive beliefs, to speculative theorization and finally to demonstrable understanding. In a discussion with Stéfano, Mattéo asserts that, "Les divinités les plus redoutables ont toujours été faites par l'homme lui-même, selon ses besoins et ses passions" (*Jumeaux* 1: 10). This passage calls to mind the embryonic, theological juncture, where man creates gods to explain phenomena he does not comprehend. The pinnacle of this stage is monotheism, the assignation of "l'action providentielle d'un être unique" to replace the "nombreuses divinités indépendantes qui avaient été imagines primitivement" as Comte explains (*Cours*, 1: 4). *Jumeaux* then evokes the transition from the intermediate, metaphysical stage, to the positive stage as Mattéo broods, "Si Rome moderne tombe, c'est devant une loi morale nouvelle mieux dégagée de la forme symbolique" (*Jumeaux* 1: 443). Comte describes the metaphysical stage as a "simple modification générale" of the preceding one, wherein "des agents surnaturels" are reconceived as "des forces abstraites . . . capables d'engendrer par elles-mêmes tous les phénomènes observés." The stage reaches its highest potential when the belief in a different force for each phenomenon matures to a conception of "une seule grande entité générale, la *nature.*" The subsequent and final positive stage is attained when man, rather than continue a futile search for primitive causes, determines to concentrate on the "relations invariables de succession et de similitude" to explain natural phenomena (*Cours*, *3,* 4). In other words, humanity will have reached its ultimate potential, once administrations are organized according to demonstrated, universal truths.

Contemplating the fictive kingdom of Naples Mattéo asks, "Ce qui est insensé ou inutile est-il donc plus durable que les institutions de la raison ou de la nécessité?" These passages presage a dynamic intellectual force, ready to replace the social model based on tradition with one established on scientific values. He hypothesizes further about the changes that could

develop, “Le jour où la vérité, la justice, la raison, la loi éternellement créatrice…seraient les seules divinités invoquées par les peuples européens . . .” (*Jumeaux* 1: 441). They illustrate what Comte describes as society reaching the *positive* stage when he explains his philosophy on religion. He states that, to be useful, social mores need to be objective. The philosopher compares the “volontés plus ou moin arbitraires” of the metaphysical religious stage with the practice of “les concevoir assujettis à des lois invariables” of positive religion (*Système* 10).

2.5.2 Conception of God:

The meditations on the nature of God expressed by Mattéo recall ideas promoted by Comte in his *System*, making them accessible to a wider, reading public. There are three ideological notions from Comtean theological thought that Mattéo voices strongly in his discussions and musings. The first thought is that an intangible god is by definition a human conception. The second is that a belief-structure based on reason offers a practical, demonstrable alternative to Christianity and the third is that Christian beliefs place man in a passive role, where the good and the bad that he experiences during his lifetime are acts of God, against which he has no control.

Mattéo queries, “Le dieu de l'humanité, le dieu du bien, le vrai dieu, l'ordonnateur, le démi-ourgos, n'est-ce pas la propre intelligence de l'homme?” To this he adds, “Jésus . . . s’il survit quelque part dans l’espace éternel, ne doit-il pas s’étonner . . . d’entendre qu’on lui attribue l’institution de la papauté, qu’en son nom on a renversé l’empire de César, fait les croisades et massacré les Albigeois et les huguenots moins hérétiques que leurs orthodoxes persécuteurs!” (1: 21, 22). These passages intimate that Christianity uses the notion of God as a political tool, manipulated to meet administrative goals. A being whose existence cannot be

definitively verified through observation exists purely in the mind of man. Notions of Comte on the nature of God are analogous. The "coordination purement subjective," or abstract, of the Catholic belief structure is in conflict with scientific reliance on demonstrable laws. The emerging, positive stage, however, when man progresses from worship of an abstract God, what Comte calls "la religion révélée," to appreciation of human achievements, "la religion démontrée," does provide a means for achieving this end. This final stage is scientific because humanity is a concrete entity that man can observe, rather than a theoretical concept. With "L'amour pour principe, l'ordre pour base, et le progrès pour but" as a motto, this doctrine "nous oblige à étudier l'ordre naturel…afin de mieux appliquer nos forces…individuelles ou collectives, à son amélioration artificielle" (*Système* 1: 10, 402, 321, 323). Deity is still an intellectual concept. Positivism, however, in offering *humanity* as the object of worship, gives man something that he can see. Worshiping humanity offers man the possibility for understanding, rather than faith, as he can observe trends, identify laws of behavior and apply this understanding to improve his experience on earth.

"Pourquoi . . . ne pas faire usage de cette liberté d'action que nous sentons en nous, de ce jugement qui approuve ou blâme, pour remettre toutes choses dans le meilleur ordre possible autour de nous et en nous?" asks Mattéo. In an argument with his brother, he laments that, "à vous, chrétiens, qui partez du principe que la raison est folie, et que la folie seule est sagesse . . . pour vous prouver qu'il y ait contradiction, il faudrait recourir à cette même autorité de la raison que vous récusez" (1: 20, 14). This sentiment is reiterated in *Jumeaux*, in the memoires of the tutor of Caesar that Mattéo and Stéfano find in a tomb. The inscription reads, " . . . comment professer la sagesse, quand on fait de la folie même le fondement de son dis*Cours* et de sa doctrine?" (2: 284). These passages highlight the difficulty of conducting an objective

discussion on religion with those of strong Christian faith. Faith and reason being antitheses, logic is powerless to sway the opinion of a believer. Mattéo articulates how the positive dogma provides an option for worship that is also a path to social progress. He counters, “Pour nous, enfants du siècle, au contraire, nous sommes tenus à être logiques . . .” (1: 14). Mattéo is using a term popularized in *Les Confessions d’un enfant du siècle*, by Alfred de Musset (1845).[1] The twin means that he and other *enfants du siècle* are forced to be logical, rather than idealistic. They have seen that dreams of national grandeur, such as those promised by the Revolution and the First Empire, do not have the scientific foundation to endure. The *enfants du siècle* live in a time where *reason,* rather than military might, is the foundation of the new social order. Man could gain understanding of life through, “l’éducation, la science et la révision constante de ses instincts et de ses sentiments” and use this knowledge to actively improve the *Cours*e of civilization. Mattéo anticipates the day when, “la vérité, la justice, la raison, la loi éternellement créatrice et conservatrice seraient les seules divinités invoquées par les peuples européens” (*Jumeaux* 1: 20, 443).

Comtean ideas that complement Mattéo’s view on the importance of education are in his *System*. Comte declares, “Cette révolution générale de l'esprit humain est aujourd'hui presque entièrement accomplie: il ne reste plus . . . qu'à compléter la philosophie positive en y comprenant l'étude des phénomènes sociaux, et ensuite à la résumer en un seul corps de doctrine homogène.” Understanding of the scientific laws that drive society should provide the impetus for establishing societal mores. He continues, “la réorganisation politique se présente de plus en plus comme nécessairement impossible sans la reconstruction préalable des opinions et des mœurs.” Comte is intimating that, to form a radically new form of government, leaders must replace the former code of morals, based on religious precepts, with one that relies on reason, “C'est ainsi que le mouvement intellectuel et l'ébranlement social . . . conduisent désormais l'élite

de l'humanité à l'avénement [sic] décisif d'un véritable pouvoir spirituel, à la fois plus consistant et plus progressif que celui dont le moyen âge tenta prématurément l'admirable ébauche" (*Système* 1: 42, 2, 3). Hence, the importance of education. Additionally, a positive religion will provide a basis for governing that is predictable and logical, rather than arbitrary.

In both *Jumeaux* and *Jeunesse* Royer presents the Christian doctrine as one that leaves man defenseless before supernatural events, providing only the resources with which to patiently endure. Mattéo observes to Stéfano in the opening chapter of *Jumeaux*, "S'il est créateur unique, il a fait le mal comme le bien, et nous lui devons autant de haine pour l'un que de reconnaissance pour l'autre" (1: 20). Animosity toward God is as reasonable as adoration under this credo. In *Jeunesse*, Marcel reflects on religious education, and how it trains students to merely replicate established behaviors, rather than encouraging them to create their own experience. During his "séjour chez les jésuites," he "semblait devenu incapable de rechercher pour lui-même les plaisirs qui complaisent . . . aux jeunes gens de son âge" (March 7). This cultivated incapacity for independent thought and the resultant acceptance of life as beyond human control is as frustrating as it is unnecessary. The narrator of *Jeunesse* declares, "En vain, notre raison civilisée réagit contre ces passions spontanées qui nous entraînent à notre insu, et en cherche inutilement le pourquoi; elle se tait et cède devant quelque chose de plus puissant qu'elle et qu'on ne saurait nommer d'un autre nom que celui de l'habitude fixée dans la race depuis un nombre incalculable de générations" (March 8). The tendency to passively accept fate exists because of tradition.

The idea of mutely accepting fate expands on a notion expressed by Comte when he says about monotheistic reasoning: "la vie active lui échappa" (*Système* "Discours préliminaire" 9). Comte points out that a doctrine that portrays all phenomena as, "régis par des volontés plus ou moins arbitraires" does not provide the support necessary to impact life on earth; it has an "impuissance radicale à embrasser réellement la vie active." According to the philosopher,

religious doctrine, or “la systématisation théologique” up to this point has been insufficient. From “l’âge polythéique” or the first stage to the “époque de son plus grand essor mental et social,” which is the metaphysical stage, religion has attempted to comfort, but has been unable to offer a path to social progress (*Système* 1: 10, 9). It merely counsels man to patiently endure whatever befalls him.

2.5.3 The Link between Art and Religion

Christian art testifies to the fatalism of its doctrine, according to the writings of Royer and Comte, who agree that the intellectual tone of each era is manifested in its artistic productions.[li] Recounting the lessons she learned from Orlowski, Johanna says to Lucie, “Les peintres français de la régence me firent toucher du doigt l’immoralité légère, préparant la catastrophe qui devait renouveler l’Europe” (2: 134). While her comment recognizes the decadence of her specific period, a broader thought from Comte is that, “L'art consiste toujours en une représentation idéale de ce qui est, destinée à cultiver notre instinct de la perfection” (*Système* 1: 282). Comte means that art provides a visual interpretation of philosophical thought, which facilitates its refinement. Preferred themes come from the Greek and Roman classical period for Royer and from the early and high Middle Ages for Comte, rather than from the contemporary Christian experience. Royer intimates, through the words of Mattéo, that the transition from pagan to Christian Rome demarcates vibrant and somber schools of art.[lii] Entering the Eternal City, he remarks, “Il y a deux villes à Rome, l’une vivante, l’autre morte.” He explains, “Du haut du Capitole, Jupiter regardait . . . vers le midi la Rome des consuls . . . et les conquêtes de la république. Maintenant le Capitole regarde vers le nord . . . vers la ville des papes enfin, et vers cette Europe, la conquête des empereurs, qu’ils ont envahie de leur influence.” The twin contrasts the artwork of the former period where, “Dans le chef-d’oeuvre du génie antique

rayonne la force, la jeunesse, la puissance, l'idéale beauté triomphante, lumineuse, éclatante d'immortalité" and the latter, of which he says, "le chef d'œuvre du génie chrétien ne présente à l'œil blessé qu'une charpente humaine insuffisamment revêtue d'une chair étique, des os souffrant [sic] des muscles relâchés, amaigris, une vieillesse hâtive, la mort, la décomposition même, le triomphe de la laideur, du mal et de la destruction, sur la vie, le bien et la beauté"(1: 433, 436). For Comte, this scission lies between the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance. He says, "l'institution du catholicisme a essentiellement réalisé, au moyen âge, autant que le permettait alors l'état mental de l'humanité, ce qu'il y avait, au fond, de pleinement utile et à la fois vraiment praticable dans l'ensemble des conceptions politiques des diverses écoles philosophiques" (*Cours*, 5: 242). While thought in the Middle Ages had not reached the positive stage, it nonetheless provided practical precepts. Although their opinions differ on which era represents the pinnacle of art, Royer and Comte agree that modern Catholic philosophy lacks a utility that is evident in visual representation.

Royer and Comte evaluate the creative force of an artistic period based on both the events commemorated and on the depictions of its sacred figures. The philosophers both interpret the tendency of Christian-era art to reproduce the works of earlier schools as a lack of direction.[liii] In addition, they note that sacred subjects, such as the Madonna, the saints and Christ are represented as subdued, suffering or dying, in contrast to the vibrant gods of earlier eras. Both philosophers find that positive art provides a canvas for intellectual development, while Christian art promotes resignation. Furthermore, they agree that, to successfully promote philosophical ideals, artists should adhere to a common school.

The next section examines how Royer represents the static nature of Christian art and the role of art in intellectual growth, two areas in which her notions coincide with those of Comtean positivism.

2.5.3.1 The Static Nature of Christian Art

Mattéo questions what the Christian era has actually accomplished that is worthy of commemoration.[liv] To develop his query, he compares the art of pagan Rome with the art of Christian Rome, observing that the greatest works of artists of the Christian era, such as Michaelangelo, Poussin and Raphael, depict the rulers and gods of the classical era.[lv] He wonders, "La Rome des papes, l'ère moderne, le monde chrétien tout entier n'a-t-il produit que des artistes et pas de grands hommes?" He notes the majesty of antique subjects saying, "Dans le chefd'œuvre du génie antique rayonne la force, la jeunesse, la puissance, l'idéale beauté triomphante, lumineuse, éclatante d'immortalité." In contrast to this lofty legacy, the Christian artist, "ne présente à l'œil blessé qu'une charpente humaine insuffisamment revêtue d'une chair étique des os souffrant . . . la mort, la décomposition." Mattéo is intimating that Christian-era artists, either recreating the works of the past or capturing biblical figures in moments of distress, represent a civilization that has ceased to advance (1: 435, 436).

The Church encourages adherents to resign themselves to a lifetime of suffering, in the hope of being accorded eternal life. The teachings use fear of eternal damnation as the primary motivational force. The dogma conflicts with artistic vision, which inspires through beauty. The resigned demeanor expressed in representations of Christian heroes compares unfavorably with the grand carriage of pagan subjects. In the mind of Mattéo, Christian art signals "le triomphe de la laideur, du mal et de la destruction" over "la vie, le bien et la beauté." To have any hope of inspiring viewers, Christian artists are constrained to adopt a practice of pagan artists, which is to

portray admirable qualities. As traits such as strength triumph and joy are not primary traits of Christian heroes, Mattéo considers their integration to be a capitulation. He says that Christianity is unable to generate visual representations of its "vision apocalyptique" except by "l'abâtardissant par une forme et une beauté contraires à sa nature." An example is the virgin mother, whose face casts "une expression double de crainte et de triomphe, de joie et de douleur." Mattéo muses, "Le problème insoluble pour la pensée, l'est aussi pour l'imagination" and observes that even Michelangelo, "le peintre et le sculpteur de l'impossible" fails to make his religious figures equal in esthetic value to his profane subjects. Mattéo compares his sculptures of Mary, "ces raides figurines gothiques" with those of Polymnie wondering, "qui oserait les comparer . . . à la Polymnie, si belle encore sous les molles draperies qui l'enveloppe, mais sans la vêtir?" (1: 436, 435).[lvi] The narrator characterizes authentic Christian art as the "spectacle de ses martyrs" painted on "ses toiles sanglantes, couvertes de cadavres dégurés." Christian ideals alone, containing no intrinsic beauty and promising a miserable earthly experience, cannot inspire viewers. The art of Christian Rome does achieve some level of passion, but this is due to the inclusion of elements characteristic of pagan art. Mattéo determines, "Elle consume sa force acquise, comme ces vieillards qui restent mourants, sans pourtant achever de vivre" (2: 454, 435). Christian art fails to truly inspire, because the message it has to convey does not contribute to the progress of society.

Comte identifies a similar stagnation of artistic expression, although for him the decline initiates in the Later Middle Ages. Where Mattéo appreciates the quality of life in ancient Greece and Rome, Comte lauds the Early and High Middle Ages. He finds them to be an era when life "avait acquis une haute moralité, très-favorable à la poésie." Comte says that a "nouveau sentiment de la dignité personnelle," combined with "le dévouement social," created the perfect atmosphere for "l'entière idéalisation de l'existence individuelle." Accordingly, art during this

period displays a “libre essor esthétique,” superior to the esthetic of any previous period. The creative epoch ends, however, because the Middle Ages undergo “une immense transition” in the balance of social and economic power.[lvii] Comte recognizes a dissolution of morals, a “movement négatif” in the Later Middle Ages, which art is obliged to portray. He states: “L'art dut ainsi idéaliser des croyances et des mœurs dont le déclin senti interdisait au poëte [sic] et au public les intimes convictions qu'exige toute grande impression esthétique.” This occurs because the “situation catholicféodale” finds itself “radicalement altérée.” The Church begins to promote earthly suffering as the way to avoid eternal damnation, a negative attitude that is reflected in its artwork. Calling the situation “anti-esthétique,” Comte explains that art is forced to “s'ouvrir une issue factice,” in other words, to find an artificial source of inspiration.

Artists appropriate the “moeurs fixes et prononcées” missing from contemporary society in “les souvenirs du type antique.” For several centuries, Comte says, classical models provide the only inspiration for the fine arts. Art, “depuis la fin du moyen âge, cherche . . . vainement une direction générale et une haute destination.” Because inspiration springs from the past, modern artwork lacks “l'originalité et la popularité qui le caractérisaient au moyen âge” (*Système* 1: 297, 294). Comte and Mattéo share the opinion that the impact of modern art is hampered by not being associated with a progressive philosophy.

Mattéo reprises elements of Comtean positivism as he notes the stagnant nature of Christian-era art. Emphasis on the glories of past civilizations highlights the failure of the Christian experience to inspire, while the representations of dismal sacred figures advance an ideal of misery. It is a school that does not instill hope. While *Jumeaux* situates the pinnacle of pre-Revolutionary art in pagan Rome and Comte in the Middle Ages, the message is the same: modern Christian dogma has failed to elevate the senses.

2.5.3.2 The Role of Art in Intellectual Growth

Critics accuse positivism of manifesting a constrained vision, similar to that which Comte disparages in the art of the post-medieval Christian era. The charge could be considered justified, if the complete doctrine of Comtean positivism were contained in the *Course*. The *Course,* with its multi-volume scientific exposé, is directed at intellectuals who are needed to help design the new, scientific-social model. The *System* is aimed at the general population and provides the moral foundation for society. While the new morality is scientifically determined, the nature of morality necessarily links it to sentiment. Sentiment is best communicated through the arts. (*Système* 1: 275).

In the *System,* Comte expounds at length on the crucial link between art and philosophy. He says that traditionally, great artists have sought to enrich society with beauty and imagination, "mais sans devoir jamais la diriger." Art has been strictly subjective and "Aucun esprit normal ne pouvait . . . directement supposer que la suprématie intellectuelle appartint jamais à l'imagination." To do so would infer a preeminence of subjectivity over objectivity. Positive art is objective, seeking to influence by emotionally depicting inviolable laws of humanity. He says, "L'office final de l'élément esthétique sera d'ailleurs inauguré déjà par sa participation actuelle à l'impulsion régénératric . . . . " In addition to scientific laws, humans need an esthetic sense of an "autorité morale," which can replace theology. He calls the new authority a "pouvoir spirituel," because it addresses the human desire for worship, but declares it to be "plus consistant et plus progressif," in other words, more scientific than medieval Christianity (*Système* 1: 2, 277). The narrator in *Jumeaux* expresses a similar evaluation of art saying;

> Laissons . . . l'art national nous peindre ces éternelles batailles, boucheries de chevaux et d'hommes . . . pages lugubres de l'histoire . . . . Laissons . . . l'art chrétien se repaître du spectacle de ses martyrs, et nous étaler ses toiles sanglantes, couvertes de cadavres

> défigurés. Et revenons aux splendeurs plus sereines de l'art antique, véritablement idéal, qui choisissait au moins, au milieu des douleurs attachées à la conditioin humaine, celles qu'il pouvait le mieux représenter, sans blesser les répugnances des sens et les délicatesses de l'âme (2:
>
> 454)

National and Christian art create emotion without trying to incite to action. Antique art, like positive art for Comte, represents an ideal, which the public can aspire to imitate.

Both Royer and Comte see that the combination of nineteenth century, scientific reasoning with aesthetic sense returns a vibrant quality to art that has been missing from the heavily Christian productions. The two philosophers depict the positive period as a reincarnation and extension of an earlier, exemplary stage. While this previous time differs for Royer and Comte, they agree that positivism mimics them in encouraging the development of utopian ideals. Comte says of medieval Catholicism, "l'institution du catholicisme a essentiellement réalisé, au moyen âge, autant que le permettait alors l'état mental de l'humanité, ce qu'il y avait, au fond, de pleinement utile et à la fois vraiment praticable dans l'ensemble des conceptions politiques des diverses écoles philosophiques" (*Cours*, 5: 242). One aspect of medieval Christianity that Comte particularly admires is the tradition of commemorating "la mémoire de nos dignes prédécesseurs" for the purpose of encouraging "l'imitation continue" (*Correspondence* June 2, 1845). In addition, he admires the social organization that Catholicism provides, although without the foundation of positive dogma. He says that positivist principles "conduisent désormais l'élite de l'humanité à l'avénement [sic] décisif d'un véritable pouvoir spirituel, à la fois plus consistant et plus progressif que celui dont le moyen âge tenta prématurément l'admirable ébauche" (*Système* 1: 2). Art of the positive era improves on medieval art because the spiritual basis from which inspiration arises is scientific.

Speaking of her painting lessons with Orlowski, Johanna says to Lucie, “les modernes étalèrent devant mes yeux . . . la puissance intellectuelle de notre époque” (2: 134). She is acknowledging that contemporary art attests to the scientific advances of her era. Comte, in a parallel statement declares that “le positivisme . . . obtiendra un ascendant décisif” over Christianity, “aussitôt qu’on y reconnaîtra son aptitude nécessaire à mieux remplir que le catholicisme toutes les condition [sic] qui caractérisaient le régime du moyen âge” (*Cours*, 1: 270-71).

Increasing understanding positively impacts artistic output, according to Johanna. She says to Lucie, “Orlowski ne m’instruisit qu’à demi de toutes ces choses ; mais ce qu’il me disait suffisait à me donner un ardent désir d’apprendre, de savoir. Il jetait des rayons épars dans ma pensée, et je m’efforçais ensuite de compléter la lumière entrevue” (2: 124). After ingesting the lessons of Orlowski, Johanna was impelled to translate the ideas into a visual representation. Johanna’s philosophy of art is not identical to Comte’s, but it is close. In teaching Johanna to paint, Orlowski concentrates more on the ideas behind the creation than on artistic technique. He encourages her to produce an idea in artistic form.

The relationship between the count and his student is similar to the collaboration between the philosopher and the artist described by Comte. He describes a symbiotic relationship between reason and sentiment when he says, “La raison ne doit pas seulement se subordonner au sentiment pour l'aider à diriger l'activité; il faut aussi que, sans se laisser dominer par l'imagination, elle la stimule en la réglant.” He continues, “Les philosophes ne sont impropres qu'à l'action, mais la consultation leur convient.” The labor of the philosopher is to provide ideas, which the poet translates into visual form. Comte declares “Idéaliser et stimuler, tel est leur double office naturel” (*Système* 1: 274, 279). The role of the philosopher is to open logic to new possibilities, while the task of the poet is to inspire sentiment with a utilitarian goal.

While individuals may hold varying opinions on exactly what makes a certain work flawless, their criteria will have been developed through their experience of living in society. The artist is inspired by contemporary reality, which he depicts in its optimal form. Comte identifies positivism as a natural vehicle for this task saying, “il faut caractériser directement l'aptitude esthétique du positivisme, en indiquant . . . comment il construit naturellement la vraie théorie générale de l'art.” He argues that his philosophy contains the three main elements required to create a societal esthetic baseline. Positivism and art have a symbiotic relationship that consists “du principe subjectif, du dogme objectif, et du but actif.” Comte furthermore states that art is an essential tool for promoting positivism as he writes, “les fonctions esthétiques ont trop d'importance pour être négligées dans le régime final de l'humanité, et par conséquent dans la systématisation qui doit le construire” (*Système* 1: 282, 274). He is saying that art, in suggesting new ideals, fulfills a function essential to the advancement of society.

2.6 How Royer Extends Positivism

In her article, "Philosophie Positive" for Léon Say’s *Nouveau Dictionnaire d’économie politique,* Royer corroborates Comte’s philosophy concerning the natural and physical sciences. She disagrees with his theory of the search for origin, however, saying that there is no "unknowable," but rather a "non-existent." (Royer, *L’Inconnaissable* 3, 6). This is due, in her mind, to the nature of “eternity.” (Boyer 697). Eternity implies no beginning and no end: thus, it is known, and negates the possibility of a source.

The presence of Comtean positivism in the fiction of Royer is incontrovertible. Equally undeniable, however, are ways in which Royer broadens the scope of this philosophy. Royer uses a positive framework to express her divergent views on science, religion and feminism in *Jumeaux* and *Jeunesse*.

2.6.1 Science

Royer uses anthropological arguments to support matrilineage as a law of humanity.[lviii] In the *Introduction à la philosophie des femmes*, Royer lays out her hierarchy of the sciences, the pinnacle of which is anthropology. She says that, after botany, zoology and paleontology, "arrive le dernier et le plus bel anneau de cette chaîne, l'anthropologie" and describes it as, "la science de l'humanité, l'histoire de son développement à travers les temps, celle de ses transformations, de son progrès toujours lent mais perpétuel . . ." (33). With its incorporation of archaeology, biology, cultural studies and linguistics, anthropology complements Comtean sociology. It does so by offering additional data points for the study of societies. Both deal with the study of man and societies with a goal of creating a society more beneficial to a greater number of people. Comte states, in his *Course*, "Cette révolution . . . de l'esprit humain est . . . . Presque entièrement accomplie: il ne reste plus . . . qu'à compléter la philosophie positive en y comprenant l'étude des phénomènes sociaux, et ensuite à la résumer en un seul corps de doctrine homogène. Quand ce double travail sera suffisamment avancé, le triomphe . . . de la philosophie positive . . . rétablira l'ordre dans la société" (1: 42).

When Johanna says to Lucie, "nos enfants . . . ne relèvent que de nous, et . . . nous devons être les défenseurs courageux, quand la volonté paternelle prétend peser sur eux comme une tyrannie," she alludes to the *biological* fact that progeny are brought into the world by the mother. She is saying that, since it is the woman who gives birth to children, it is logical for her to have authority over them. Mattéo conjures a *cultural* precedent in *Jumeaux* when he recalls that, "au temps des Césars . . . la législation prétorienne . . . rendait à l'épouse la gestion de ses biens," referring to her offspring (*Jumeaux* 1: 196, 218). It thus follows logically that the constitution of the new Republic of Naples bases "L'hérédité civile . . . en ligne maternelle" (2:

506). In following this process, she is using positivism to advocate for the advancement of society, and in particular, for women. Her message exceeds the project of Comte, who designs a complete social model that places women on a pedestal but does little to improve their civic status. In Comtean positivism, women are tasked with instilling Republican values in their husbands and children.

As an anthropologist, Royer respects general Comtean positivist concepts, such as basing knowledge on observation, hypothesis, experimentation and theorization. Nonetheless, as Comte is deceased by the time anthropology becomes recognized as a formal science, her scientific observations on humanity provide a more comprehensive perspective. Claude Blanckaert says that anthropology begins to gain momentum as a discipline early in the July Monarchy, although the term at that time is synonymous with *l'histoire naturelle de l'homme* and *ethnologie* (31). Elizabeth Williams extends this notion, saying that the field lacks cohesive vision until Paul Broca[lix] founds the *Société d'anthropologie* in 1859, which postdates the death of Comte in 1857.[lx]At that time, anthropology declares itself dedicated to "'positive' investigations into human anatomy, the variety of human physical types, and 'man's place in nature'."[lxi] In 1864, it is declared to have "public utility" (Williams 331, 336). Using anthropology to study humanity is one way in which the philosophy of Royer differs from Comtean positivism, and which is particularly evident in the existential reflection of Mattéo in Rome. Another way, which grows out of this new field is the use of the term *unknown* instead of the Comtean *unknowable.* For Comte, who writes during a time when evolutionary theory is still hotly contested, science offers no feasible way to examine the origins and ultimate fate of man beyond the grave. For Royer, who strongly supports Darwinian and Lamarckian theories of evolution, science provides evidence showing that man evolves from earlier species. The implication is that, as science continues to evolve, new discoveries will come to light that offer methods for answering

additional questions that Comte considers *unknowable.* For Royer they are merely *unknown* at the current time.

2.6.1.1 Anthropology

The ruins in Rome appear to Mattéo like a living organism. “Chacune avait quelque chose à lui dire du passé.” He marvels, “Quel magnifique organisme!” and thinks, “Ces voies, ces routes qui couraient en se ramifiant d'un membre à un autre membre, étaient comme autant d'artères, par où circulait la force, la séve [sic], la vie.” He has an archaeological appreciation for the infrastructure, but also a cultural respect for the succession of human participants in the system, “Ces colonies, ces camps placés de distance en distance étaient les articulations mobiles sur lesquelles s'attachaient des muscles, des bras prêts à saisir, frapper, étreindre, dominer, châtier.” The early communities are succeeded by, “les prêteurs, les proconsuls, les préfets, une hiérarchie immense, comme un réseau de fibres nerveuses,” which “animait d'un même souffle et d'une même pensée, tous ces éléments agrégés et subordonnés.” He then adds a biological observation advising, “te voilà grande et forte, Rome jeune fille, Rome libre, Rome vierge de toute autre tyrannie que de la tienne . . . . Cédez la loi des générations qui veut que les vieilles choses meurent.” The desire for social advancement emerges as the narrator informs that, “il leur demandait plus.” His quest is for “le mot de l'énigme du présent et la révélation de l'avenir,” which he believes he can find through an anthropological analysis. The narrator affirms the goal-oriented nature of these musings saying, “Ce n'était pas une leçon d'histoire qu'il venait chercher dans la vieille Rome, c'était comme un oracle qu'il la venait consulter” (*Jumeaux* 1: 437, 444, 445, 437). A desire for the betterment of mankind also appears in the words that Johanna utters to her daughter: “j'ai suivi l'impulsion de la nature qui veut que ce flambeau de l'existence passe de génération en génération,” adding that the impulsion to procreate “amène à la surface de ce monde des êtres de plus en plus parfaits.” The statement offers a hopeful view of the future, as

Johanna assures, “Aucun mal dans le monde n'y existe fatalement et de manière à ne pouvoir être détruit par des êtres conscients d'un bien supérieur, plus intelligents de leur loi, et plus courageux à défendre leurs vrais droits comme à remplir leurs vrais devoirs” (*Jumeaux* 2: 169).

2.6.1.2 Unknown versus unknowable

Much overlap exists between Comtean positivism and Royerian philosophy; however, a key area of difference is the limits they see on inductive reasoning. Inductive reasoning offers many more possibilities for knowledge about the universe for Royer, than it does for Comte, because of their differing views on the state of scientific knowledge. Comte uses inductive reasoning to explain the “general phenomena of the universe,” by extending Isaac Newton’s law of gravity. Because we can observe the effects of gravitation on earthly bodies, and because earth is one among many celestial bodies, it is reasonable to extend the law of gravity to explain celestial orbitation, although we do not know the precise nature of gravity. Comte extends his inductive reasoning further to theorize that “all the molecules of our world gravitate around one another, in proportion of their masses and inversely as the squares of their distances” (qtd. in Vincent Guillin 21, 25). Comte sees limits to the possibilities for knowledge of inductive reasoning, however. He says that inductive reasoning is “admissible” only in cases that apply to “the laws of phenomena,” which can be corroborated by observation. The process is not scientific, when applied to the study of causes, “whether primary or final,” of phenomena (Vincent Guillin 21-22, 26).

In the preface to her book, *La Constitution du monde*, Royer expresses her opinion that Comte designates concepts *unknowable* based on “tout ce qu’il n’a pas connu,” including “même des choses que de son temps on pouvait connaître” (I). To support her asssertion, Royer signals two mysteries of the cosmos that Comte considers unknowable: firstly, the make-up of the stars

and secondly, the origin of man. She cites the research of contemporaries of Comte: astronomers, who "reconnaissaient l'identité de nature des étoiles les plus lointaines et de notre soleil" and adds that, "Aujourd'hui . . . nous pouvons dire quelle est la constitution chimique de leur enveloppe lumineuse et son état physique, solide ou gazeux" (*Préface* I-II). She also recalls a contemporary of Comte, Lamarck, of whom, "Darwin n'a fait que confirmer la théorie evolutive" (*Préface* II). With these statements, Royer demonstrates that, in some cases, solutions that Comte holds to be unattainable already exist.

While Comte sees science as complete, advances in the field of anthropology are evidence to Royer that science itself is an expanding field. For notions that remain elusive, Royer rejects the status of "insolubles, comme d'aucuns le disent" because "quelque découverte nouvelle ou . . . une hypothèse plus ingénieuse, plus compréhensive et plus féconde" could be discovered "dans un siècle, dans dix ans" or "demain" could allow the solution to be revealed ("Les Lacunes" 49). Because of the organic nature of science, things that are *unknown* in one era may become *known* in another; enigmas that Comte declares to be *unknowable* are merely *unknown* at the present time. Future advances in knowledge may be able to corroborate the hypotheses of the moment.

In an article entitled, *Les Lacunes de la science française*, Royer states that intellectuals "chaque jour, dans leurs observations ou leurs explications . . . viennent aboutir et se heurter à quelque énigme imprévue" or "à des inconnues encore irrésolues." Yet, rather than abandon the quest for understanding, they continue their research, confident that tools for problem-solving will emerge over time. To support this assertion, Royer cites hypotheses of the Ancient World, that modern science finally disproves. In the preface of her book, *La Constitution du monde*, Royer says, "tous les progrès de la science modern ont consisté à retourner des hypothèses anciennes." These earlier hypotheses were tainted, not by false observation, but by contemporary

understanding. She says, “Nos sensations, sources de nos concepts, ne nous trompent point, elles sont . . . toujours vraies” but the problem arises because, “Leur complexité défie l’analyse du jugement.” As an example, she cites the pre-Darwinian belief in the “fixité des races végétales et animals,” which developed from the observation that, “tous les êtres vivants procréaient leurs semblables.” The “courte expérience de chaque génération” prevents men from observing the “évolution des formes organiques,” revealing only “des types relativement constants” (XVI, XVII).

The idea of certain phenomena being beyond comprehension at a given time only temporarily is brought out in the following passage from *L’Album du voyageur*. Mattéo reflects:

> J'ai dérangé tels ou tels atomes de poussière, qui, soulevés par mon pied, ont été se perdre dans l'air, et s'agréger au loin à de nouveaux atomes. J'ai imprimé à l'air lui-même un mouvement qui s'est répercuté dans une sphère immense, et je puis dire que chacun de mes pas, de vibrations en vibrations de plus en plus faibles, à [sic] éveillé un écho dans l'atmosphère tout entière du globe, peut-être dans l'infini (*Jumeaux* 1: 237)

The phenomenon that he evokes is attributed to Henri Poincaré in 1889. Edward N. Lorenz calls it the *butterfly effect* when he applies it to meteorological prediction in 1972. James A. York illustrates mathematically in 1975, calling it *Chaos theory* (Marianne; Peter Smith 254; Christian Oestreicher 283). The phenomenon is that, “the smallest variation in . . . initial values . . .” can gradually grow into “huge discrepancies” (Marianne). In the philosophy of Royer, this phenomenon suggests that measurable data exist that could fill in gaps in knowledge. The problem arises when contemporary tools for measuring these data are not sufficiently advanced. The *butterfly effect,* as portrayed in *Jumeaux* and expanded on in *La Constitution* can be summarized thus: “chaos chance probability emerges because of the enormity of the facts pertaining to a phenomenon.” Traditional methods of measurement lead to faulty conclusions

due to what economist Elias Khalil calls, “imperfect information because of the shortcomings of the observer.” He implies that advances in data collection techniques can resolve this issue (30). The above points support the declaration of the author in the preface to *La Constitution* that, “Il n’y a d’inconnaissable pour *la raison* que ce qui n’existe pas” (V).

Royer theorizes about a primary creative organism in *La Constitution du monde*, providing an example of how the idea that Mattéo ponders in *Jumeaux* can offer the possibility of solving the complex problem of the *origin of man*.[lxii] Citing Schopenhauer, who calls the world, “une volonté d’être,” Royer proposes that this organism eventually becomes two distinct types of *atoms*: solid, which she calls *matière* and gaseous, which she calls *éther*. These atoms mutate differently, depending on numerous variables: greater or lesser physical or psychic activity; more or less energetic dynamic reactions; more advanced or primitive sensibility; and a clearer or more vague sense of their “états successifs et de ses motifs d’action” (*Constitution,* 756). This large number of variables renders impossible the consistent prediction of future results, which supports the Comtean notion of *unknowable.*

The preceding notions challenge Comtean positivist dogma, which does not admit speculative hypotheses that cannot be proven through direct observation. Comte says that in the *positive* state of society, “l’esprit humain . . . renonce à chercher l’origine et la destination de l’univers, et à connaître les causes intimes des phénomènes, pour s’attacher uniquement à découvrir, par l’usage bien combiné du raisonnement et de l’observation, leurs lois effectives.” He says furthermore that, at least since the time of Bacon, “il n’y a de connaissances réelles que celles qui reposent sur des faits observés.” He adds the proviso that, “si . . . toute théorie positive doit nécessairement être fondée sur des observations, il est également sensible, . . . que . . . pour se livrer à l’observation, notre esprit a besoin d’une théorie quelconque” (*Cours*, 1: 4, 6-7).

2.6.2 Religion

The significant points of disagreement between the scientific philosophies of Royer and Comte are also reflected in their divergent philosophies of religion. This philosophy of the *unknown*, rather than the *unknowable* forms the foundation of Royerian religious theory, as well. Like Comte, Royer argues that religious belief is not a "caractère distinctif de l'humanité," but is rather a "phase transitoire" in the "évolution de ses facultés mentales." She asserts, as does Comte, that this state begins when man, "ne sachant rien . . . aspire à connaître" (*Origine de l'homme,* 86).

While both Royer and Comte consider the theological stage to be transitory, they disagree on the nature and timing of the subsequent state. Comtean positivism holds that man progresses beyond the *theological* state as detailed in the preceding paragraph and exits the *metaphysical* state once he realizes that science can explain all phenomena that impact his life. He says that in the positive state, the human spirit understands that certain elements of existence cannot be explained (*Cours*, 1: 4). At this point, he focuses on using positive reasoning to construct a more equable society and ceases searching for answers to *unknowable* questions, such as that which precedes and follows human existence. This era has arrived, following the destruction of the *ancien régime*.

In Royerian philosophy, man remains in the *theological* state until "le jour, encore éloigné peut-être, où il pourra dire: je sais," a day which materializes owing to advances in scientific understanding (*Origine de l'homme,* 86). Royer specifically rejects any enigma related to existence as eternally beyond the scope of human understanding, believing that science will eventually be able to resolve them all. Mattéo expresses this notion when he addresses his

"conscience," also known as his "raison" or his "jugement" commanding, "Prouve toi." He adds "Peut-être arriverai-je ainsi à savoir au lieu de croire" (*Jumeaux,* 1: 243). According to Royer's criteria, society remains in the *theological* state. Royer expands on this exhortation in *La Constitution,* where she says that these problems, "seront résolus comme les autres . . . . et pour la confusion des positivistes, la solution sera simple, accessible à toutes les intelligences." She predicts that even "des écoliers de dix ans" will "bien rire de la naïveté de leurs pères, qui . . . ont déclaré le mystère insondable" (Préface, XIV). The dogma of Royer extends that of Comte in the following ways, as well: her perception of the impact of *Catholic doctrine* on society; her interpretation of *the nature of religion;* and her identification of the *creative force* behind existence.

2.6.2.1 The Impact of Catholic Doctrine on Society

In *Jumeaux* Mattéo addresses a *higher authority* supplicating, "puisses-tu régner sur le monde et en chasser enfin cet esprit de ténèbres et de foi qui ne peut, avec l'obéissance et la passivité qu'éteindre dans l'humanité le mouvement et la vie!" The negative spirit to which he refers is Catholic dogma. He goes on to justify his plea saying that all evil that befalls "l'être libre" can only originate "d'une erreur." "L'instinct de la brute suffit à lui révéler sa loi" he says, while "l'intelligence de l'homme a besoin de la chercher pour la connaître." This means that experience alone is enough to teach cause and effect to non-human animal life, while man insists on examining situations logically, prior to reaching a decision on the most beneficial *Cours*e of action. Faulty reasoning is responsible for any resultant misfortunes. He says, "Tant d'autres . . . ont pris leur foi pour une connaissance . . . la fantaisie de leur imagination pour l'ordre de leur raison" and "le cri de leurs instincts pour le cri de leur conscience" (1: 266, 234, 243). In this

passage, Mattéo is willing to excuse the behavior that religious figures exhibit, as they may be merely confused, rather than malevolent.

Several objections to the influence of the Catholic church appear in *Jumeaux*. The novel depicts the church as: extreme; unscientific; and reactionary. Johanna describes to Amalia the need Stéfano has for "la direction d'une raison tempérée, sage et douce" that Lucie offers (2: 15). His religious faith has left him confused and distraught, particularly about love. Feelings of passion, he believes to be "une tentation de l'esprit du mal," which God allows, and which is "souvent envoyée à ses élus comme une épreuve." At the same time, a part of him is convinced that passion that is able to reach "toutes les facultés, et envahir l'être moral tout entière" is surely "un sentiment innocent et louable." The confusion increases when he ponders the "actes naturels de l'amour," at the thoughts of which he "rougissait d'une honte secrète," and he thinks of marriage as "une loi brutale et dégradante, que l'homme ne subissait que comme une suite de sa chute originelle" (1: 160-61). These feelings become acute, as his affection for Lucie increases. The narrator implicitly characterizes Catholicism as the uncompromising origin of this condition saying, "L'exaltation mystique a fait bien du mal au pauvre enfant." Johanna disparages the instinctive nature of the Church when she tells Lucie, "Je fus nourrie de tous les préjugés actuels de caste, de religion, de bienséance, d'usage." Her husband introduces her to "toutes les ressources d'une organisation souple et forte" with which she escapes from "les fers de la coutume, ceux de l'opinion, et ce réseau de fils invisibles et douloureux dont nous enveloppent ce qu'on appelle les convenances." She is saying that her religious upbringing was based, not on empirical logic, but on tradition and primitive impulses. The narrator then cites the "institutions usées et condamnées par l'expérience," the destruction of which "tous les vrais amis du progrès" welcome with "immenses applaudissements et . . . bruyants hourras" (2: 15, 129, 508). While the passage does not specifically name the Catholic church, it clearly refers to the abolition of the

ancien régime. Gemma Betros underscores the dominant place that the Catholic church holds in pre-Revolutionary French society, with its "schools, hospitals and other institutions" in addition to "abbeys, churches, monasteries and convents." Furthermore, the church is allowed to collect tithes and is exempt from taxation, which is immensely unpopular with the Third Estate (17). The pejorative description in the above passage evokes an image in opposition to the aims of progressive 19th century intellectuals, who find the excessive power of the church to be incompatible with a scientific society.

Despite rejecting worship of a God, who cannot be proven to exist, Comte, in contrast, appreciates the structure that Catholicism offers. He says, "l'institution du catholicisme a essentiellement réalisé . . . ce qu'il y avait, au fond, de pleinement utile et à la fois vraiment praticable dans l'ensemble des conceptions politiques des diverses écoles philosophiques" (*Cours*5: 242).

2.6.2.2 Nature of religion

Religion, as veneration of a creative force, is virtually synonymous with *philosophy* in both Comtean positivism and Royerian thought, because *immutable laws* of science replace "des agents surnaturels" or "des forces abstraites" in all domains relating to existence (*Cours*3). Comtean positivism strives to bring an end to the political and social chaos resulting from the Revolution of the preceding century, "la grande revolution dont elle vient diriger la terminaison organique" (*Système*1: Préambule, 3). The ultimate aims of the Royerian model, however, exceed the stated goal of Comtean positivism.

Where the Comtean positivism has a goal of establishing a peaceful society, and specifically, that of Western European civilization, the Royerian model validates the earthly experience of all animal life. Comte says that, in order to be effective, his positive philosophy

should be applied uniquely to "une série sociale," which he identifies as, "la majeure partie de la race blanche ou les nations européennes" and even more explicitly, "aux peuples de l'Europe occidentale." He says that this population represents "l'élite de l'avant-garde de l'humanité" (*Cours*, 5: 3). This delimitation of positivist principles is logical, because only Western European societies have achieved a positive state. Royer also takes Eurocentric view of society, notes Patrick Tort (qtd. In Geneviève Fraisse, *Lecture* 93). Nonetheless, Royerian dogma encourages benevolence toward all living creatures. In *La Constitution* she urges the ethical treatment of non-human animal life writing, "Pas de torture de chaque instant subie par l'animal entravé, emprisonné, pas de mutilation barbare, pas de privation d'air, de lumière, de movement, et de ce besoin intense … que l'amour fait ressentir à tous les êtres animés" (336).

While Royer does consider man to be the highest biological life form, the "sommet de la création terrestre," she challenges what other intellectuals have cited as distinguishing man from other species: an instinct toward industrialization and human intelligence (*L'Origine de l'homme* Préface viii). Should an ant colony, for example, happen to face a cataclysmic disaster, "toutes s'entendent sur les résolutions à prendre, soit pour en réparer la ruine, soit pour transporter la cité en quelque autre lieu" (*L'Origine de l'homme* 79). Their reactions indicate an effective form of communication. With regard to attributing non-human actions to instinct, but human actions to intelligence, she queries, "Avons-nous appris le langage des oiseaux ou la parole antennale des fourmis? avons-nous [sic] pénétré la pensée des poissons, des chevaux, des abeilles, des singes, pour décider des lois de leur logique, de leur morale et de leur métaphysique, moins folle que la nôtre peut-être?" (*L'Origine de l'homme* 82). She is suggesting that arrogance and a desire to prove supremacy over other species leads to erroneous reasoning.

Royer also argues, "Loin . . . que la croyance à l'immortalité de l'âme soit l'expression d'une faculté supérieure propre à l'homme, c'est au contraire une preuve d'impuissance de

l'intelligence humaine." It is evidence that this faculty remains "assujettie à l'instinct dominateur de conservation" which, rather than distinguishing man from beast, is something "essentiellement animal et dont tout animal est doué." She assures the reader that, were one able to "pénétrer la pensée d'un oiseau, d'un poisson, d'un mollusque, nous le verrions . . . absolument incapable de concevoir qu'étant, il puisse cesser d'être et d'être tel qu'il est." The experience of death, "pour tout être vivant, y compris l'homme . . . est toujours une première expérience dont l'idée, conséquemment, ne peut jamais arriver à se transmettre héréditairement." The notion that one would cease to exist, in other words, the notion of an immortal soul, is not unique to man. For Royer, it is "une difference de proportion, de quantité, et non de qualité et de nature" that separates man from other species (*L'Origine de l'homme* 85, 81).

2.6.2.3 The Creative Force Behind Existence

Another conviction that Royer and Comte share, is the societal need for belief in a *higher entity*, although the precise nature and implications of this are not the same. Comte admires the organizational aspect of Catholicism, finding it to be a necessary component to a peaceful, orderly societal model. He creates a similar structure for his *Religion of Humanity*, complete with daily devotions and a calendar containing a significant historical figure to commemorate each day.[lxiii] In place of God, veneration of whom he cannot condone, because empirical evidence proving His existence is lacking, Comte designates *Humanity.* This is a logical choice for him, as humanity is both a concept and an undeniable phenomenon.

Royerian thought uses positivist reasoning to argue for notions that surpass those of the *father of positivism*. It says that, in order for philosophy to exist, it is necessary that one be convinced of the existence of God. Mattéo, thinking of himself and other philosophers, expresses this idea, musing, "de quelle fièvre sommes-nous saisis dans la poursuite d'une idée entrevue,

d'une théorie ébauchée?" (*Jumeaux* 1: 266). Philosophers, synonymous with intellectuals, have developed and disproven theories about the nature of the *Almighty* as long as philosophy has existed. Royer also details the importance of the female perspective to religious theory and designates a divine, creative force, based on logical reasoning.

2.6.2.4 The Need for a Belief in God

In the lecture, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Women*, Royer says of the reasoned quest for truth, "plus que toute chose elle doit être morale et religieuse." She explains why, then reveals the loving nature associated with the Royerian divinity. Belief in God is essential for philosohers because, "La science et la sagesse sont les attributs les plus essentiels de Dieu, ne peuvent exister sans Dieu, puisque sans Dieu il n'y aurait dans la nature que hasard et fatalité, c'est-à-dire la négation même de cet ordre qui seul rend la sagesse et la science possibles" (25). This means that *Science* and morality give meaning and order to the universe. In other words, science and divinity are indistinguishable from one another. Mattéo says, "Quand nous cherchons la verité, que nous la servons, que nous nous dévouons à elle, nous sentons que ce ne peut être par crainte, car elle ne châtiera pas nos négligences." He expresses the concept of a loving, non-judgmental god when he explains that the search for origins is gratifying, even for theories "aboutissant à l'erreur." He continues, "Si nous la cherchons, c'est . . . par amour seulement" (*Jumeaux* 1: 266). The important distinction between serving the Christian God and serving *Science* is that the motivation is love, not fear.

2.6.2.5 The Need for a Demonstrable Divinity

Royerian philosophy recognizes a primary, creative force that is spiritual, rather than material in form. The metaphysical entity is *Science.* The two concepts, which appear to be in opposition to each other, actually illustrate a central theme of Royerian thought: monism.[lxiv]

Matter and its scientific explanation are different faces of the same entity. On his existential journey, Mattéo exhorts, “Savoir, ô savoir, passion créatrice, réformatrice et libératrice, souffle vraiment inspirateur, esprit vraiment divin, puisses-tu régner sur le monde et en chasser enfin cet esprit de ténèbres et de foi qui ne peut, avec l'obéissance et la passivité qu'éteindre dans l'humanité le mouvement et la vie!” (*Jumeaux* 1: 266). Royer expands on the idea of knowledge as the divine creator in her *Introduction* stating, “La philosophie que je vous propose . . . affirme comme substance réelle tout ce qui agit, tout ce qui se manifeste comme force virtuelle ou actuelle en l’homme ou hors de l’homme” (26). The implication of this affirmation is that, given the indisputable existence of a creative force, God is necessarily substance. She qualifies the term *substance*, however, adding that her philosophy, “spiritualise jusqu’à la matière trop longtemps méconnue.” Royer means that everything that exists is essentially spiritual in nature, created by a divinity that is at the same time spiritual and scientific. Since the spirituality is *Science,* all phenomena and entities can be expressed scientifically, if not now, then in the future. Science is the creator, and knowledge will continue to advance, until the origin can be firmly established. Royer’s spiritual ideology surpasses Comtean religious doctrine by assigning a solvable element to spirituality.

2.7 Royer’s Feminism

> . . . une suite de générations de femmes, prémunies dès l’enfance contre les luttes que la vie actuelle leur réserve, pourra seule transformer l’état social et épargner les mêmes maux aux femmes de l’avenir. —*Jumeaux* 2: 169

The Comtean ideal woman is a mild, compassionate, moral figurehead, who remains sheltered in the home. Like Comte, Royer designates the wife and mother of the family as responsible for instilling ethics in the household, but she goes much further with her vision. The

Royerian woman makes her own history. Numerous passages provide examples of her independent spirit. A letter from Orlowski to Johanna, which she reads to Lucie, disparages those who "ne savent rêver l'idéal de la femme qu'en le diminuant jusqu'à l'impuissance d'être." Léona, masquerading as Chrysès trades clothing with Mattéo to liberate him from the Chateau de l'Oeuf. Later, still in disguise, she, Lucie and Mathilde each act fearlessly to defend those they love during the battle in the fortress. Léona insinuates herself between Mattéo and the pistol of "un . . . adversaire," and "détournant le coup," she is wounded and nearly dies. Mathilde throws herself on top of Stéfano, still weak from being tortured and "reçoit la décharge" of Ricci "en pleine poitrine," following which she does die. In revenge, Lucie seizes a sword and "plonge le fer tout entier dans le corps du prêtre assassin" (*Jumeaux* 2: 152, 517, 518). The feminism of Royer expands on Comtean positivism in the role of women in society and in views on marriage and maternity.

2.7.1 The Role of Women in Society

Royerian and Comtean philosophies of spirituality resemble each other, in that both designate an alternative creative force to replace the supernatural divinity of traditional religion. Also similar, is the prominent female presence. The philosophies diverge, however, in the expectations that the philosophers have of women. The *Religion of Humanity* worships the concept of *Woman* as a moral exemplar, while Royerian philosophy expects women to actively seek their own intellectual advancement, in order to complement the male philosophical perspective.

As the *creative force* in Royerian thought inspires love, rather than fear, it also values women and men equally. This notion uncovers a discrepancy with the God portrayed in Christianity and other philosophical schools. In her fiction and other writings, the philosopher

replaces the passive role assigned to women in the *Religion of Humanity* with a central, active function. She does this firstly, by critiquing the historical image of the Divine, secondly by revealing the importance of women in the Christian faith and thirdly, by detailing the female role in Royerian philosophy.

Given that philosophers acknowledge, “dans tous les temps . . . que la moralité est audessus du savoir,” and that “le bien-vivre . . . a toujours été la fin de toute philosophie,” she finds it surprising that they “n’aient jamais reporté en Dieu même l’idéal de la vertu suprême, ou tout au moins qu’ils n’aient jamais réussi à présenter l’idéal divin dans toute sa perfection morale” (*Introduction* 24). Royer explains that, because these schools of thought “l’ont fait à leur image, à l’image de l’homme,” rather than the other way around, the divine creator is always depicted as: “fort, puissant, immense, irresistible, victorieux, redoutable, infiniment savant, éternellement heureux,” stereotypically male attributes. This results in an *Almighty* who fails to consistently prioritize ethics. Johanna echoes this thought to her sister, Amalia mourning, “ce Dieu tel que le monde l'adore avec crainte, c'est qu'il est fou, ou s'il n'est pas fou, il se rit alors méchamment des idées de justice que nous, pauvres mortels, lui prêtons avec amour pour nous y fier ensuite” (*Jumeaux* 2: 183).

The exception to this intimidating portrayal is Christianity, which gives Christ “des vertus qui distinguent plus spécialement la femme . . . de l’infinie mansuétude, de la bonté gratuite, de l’amour immense qui s’immole soi-même et se donne sans retour dans un ineffable sacrifice.” Royer explains that this metamorphosis of religion, giving female characteristics a place of honor, indicates that women made a significant contribution to the transition to Christianity. In her *Introduction* Royer declares, “Tout est bien et bon dans les œuvres du Créateur; en blâmer quelqu’une comme essentiellement viciée, c’est s’élever contre Dieu même.” Catholic teaching, insisting that woman is responsible for the *original sin,* contrasts with

the prominence of female attributes in the Christ ideal. The juxtaposition of infinitely good creation and sinful woman is clear, and is an injustice that Royer argues against. In consideration of this she wonders, “N’avons-nous été pour rien dans cette transformation de l’idée divine?” Furthermore, having “en effet participé, ne sommes-nous pas appelées à agir un jour prochain peut-être sur la philosophie, comme nous avons agi, il y a deux mille ans, sur la religion?” (*Introduction* 24-25, 26).

Royer states that Christianity sets a standard for female influence on philosophy. Her own credo assigns women an even more pronounced voice. Royer says firstly, that women are capable of understanding erudite topics; secondly, that their point of view is an important addition to the intellectual community as well as to education in the home; and thirdly, that women should not attempt to imitate men.

The *Introduction* urges women to venture beyond the traditional role of moral guide for the household, and to pursue their own education. Royer declares that, owing to different educational experiences, “Les deux moitiés de l’humanité . . . parlent deux dialectes différents.” The education imposed on females represses independent thought. Johanna expresses this notion to Lucie when she ruminates, “on me donnait mes pensées toutes faites, sans m'accoutumer à les chercher moi-même. Lorsqu'on m'enseignait l'histoire, chaque nom était invariablement accompagné d'une épithète qui devait m'inspirer du héros l'opinion qu'il fallait que j'en eusse” (*Jumeaux* 2: 130-31). The nature of female education leads them to “ne pouvoir que difficilement s’entendre sur certains sujets et sur les sujets mêmes les plus importants.” Yet, Royer insists, in order for women to attain equal civil status, they must be able to communicate intelligently with men about intellectual topics. “La différence du langage, des idées, des opinions, entre les deux sexes, les rend en quelque sorte étrangers l’un à l’autre, les divise, les désunit.”[lxv] She says furthermore that, given the proper tools, they will enjoy the experience. Royer assures women

that, “il suffirait d’un petit dictionnaire étymologique composé de deux ou trois cents racines latines ou grecques pour nous mettre à même de prendre part à toutes les conversations et d’aborder toutes les lectures.” “Il est fort à souhaiter que les femmes s’adonnent à la science . . . par Plaisir . . . avec amour” (*Introduction* 11, 9-10, 11). The narrator in *Jeunesse* mentions this intellectual capacity in Louise saying, “C'était plus que de la mémoire, plus que de l'esprit qu'il constatait; c'était du génie” (March 12).

Lucie says to Johanna, in *Jumeaux*, “il faudrait que toutes les mères vous ressemblassent,” to teach their daughters “les mêmes règles de sagesse, de vertu, de domination de soi même [sic].” Instilling these qualities in the girls would prepare them to exercise “la raison et la justice, plutôt que cette flexibilité de caractère, qui leur donne l'habitude d'une obéissance passive et irraisonnée, et cette impersonnalité d'opinion qui les livre à l'influence des conseils dangereux, aussi bien que des ordres justes.” Mothers should also give young men skills for “les arrêter dans leurs passions” and instruct them to “considerer comme la plus honteuse des lâchetés l’abus violent de la force contre la faiblesse, et comme le premier devoir le respect du droit et de la liberté d’autrui, sans exception injuste et déplorable à l’égard du droit et de la liberté de la femme” (2: 172). These passages give specific examples of the active role of woman in the moral education of children.

Royer contends that women also contribute an important perspective on religion. This idea emerges in the confession of Stéfano to Lucie. He reveals, “J’avais pensé . . . que la rébellion à l’autorité de l’Église tuait l’âme ; que la négation des dogmes chrétiens conduisait fatalement à l’égoïsme . . . à la négation du bien lui-même.” During his time with Lucie, however, she has opened his eyes to another possibility. Explaining his new-found understanding Stéfano admits, “Depuis que je suis ici, j’ai appris de vous que l’on peut nier ce que je crois et comprendre le devoir; que la conscience ne meurt pas parce qu’on la laisse s’éclairer du jour de

la raison et de la science, mais qu'elle devient, au contraire, plus forte et plus ferme." In helping the older twin realize that science and religion can coexist, Lucie suggests a resolution to the spiritual uncertainty he has been experiencing as he examines his faith. Stéfano lauds the inspirational philosophical teaching of Lucie saying, "La nature me parle auprès de vous un autre langage. Je la comprends mieux. Entre elle et moi il manquait un interprète, et c'est vous qui m'en servez" (*Jumeaux* 2: 96, 109).

Royerian philosophy uses a female viewpoint to examine science and religion, which are identical for her. She states, "Ce n'est donc pas une science nouvelle qu'il me faut chercher; la science pour le fond est une comme la vérité qu'elle poursuit: elle ne saurait différer d'elle-même. Ce que je dois trouver, c'est une forme, une expression féminine de la science."[lxvi] Vis-à-vis science in general, Royer declares that, without the female perspective, "la verité n'a été qu'un marbre beau de proportion et de forme, mais glacé et inanimé." Her intent is to "la faire parler . . . un langage intelligible à tous" (*Introduction* 5). This is what Lucie accomplishes in *Jumeaux*. Stéfano intones, "Peut-être ferez-vous briller une lueur dans l'ombre qui croît en moi . . . et qui commence à m'envelopper" (2: 97). Her point of view helps him to consider philosophy in a more practicable way.

In presenting knowledge as accessible to both men and women equally, Royer asserts that women should maintain their femininity: "en tout ce que fait une femme, elle doit rester elle-même." She finds any form of mimicry distasteful, and she considers it "servile" for women to imitate men. Furthermore, women have a useful "genie particulier," which they need to "developer . . . dans ses tendances originales, bien loin de chercher à . . . l'effacer." The impact of female input to intellectual pursuits arises from the difference between the sexes. She says, "C'est un registre de plus dans le grand orgue des harmonies de la nature. Pour qu'il demeure d'accord avec le concert universel, il doit conserver en tout son intonation et son timbre." The

tendency of female philosophy is to incite to action. Royer says, “Il faut . . . que notre philosophie rassemble tout ce que la science possède d’évidence, et qu’entre les probabilités opposées, nous nous déterminions pour la plus probable, afin d’en faire le soutien de notre vie . . . car toute pensée chez nous conclut à l’action.” This is in contrast to that of men. “Aussi lents à affirmer que nous y sommes promptes,” she says, “tandis qu’ils demeurent suspendus dans leurs incertitudes sceptiques, ils se laissent entraîner sans direction.” Royer suggests to women, “Peut-être rencontrerons-nous des solutions nouvelles et plus heureuses pour tant de problèmes ardus . . . dans le domaine de la théorie, comme dans celui de la philosophie pratique, c’est-à-dire de la morale et du droit.” Royer then assures, “toutes les absurdités . . . ont été inventées . . . par des hommes. Si nous ne faisons mieux, il est impossible du moins que nous fassions pis” (*Introduction* 4, 17, 18).

The goal for women in scientific circles is “être en toutes choses un être égal et analogue à l’homme, sans jamais tendre à lui devenir pareil, identique” (*Introduction* 4). Louise demonstrates this feminist ideology a few times in *Jeunesse*. The first is when Marcel asks why she hadn’t shared her feelings with him. She responds, “Il était de mon devoir et de ma dignité de femme d'attendre que vous me l'apprissiez vous-même” (March 18). The second is when she declares her wish to share both good and bad fortune with Marcel. She chides, “Si je veux être ta compagne, ce n'est pas seulement pour jouir, mais pour souffrir avec toi s'il le faut . . . . Deux existences, se soutenant l’une l’autre, voient se multiplier leur puissance pour la résistance ou l’action” (March 19). Louise is very feminine, and this allows them to better face difficulties as a couple. Beyond conceiving of woman as a conceptual ideal, Royer understands her to be a dynamic, invaluable, equal partner to man in society.

2.7.2 Marriage

> . . . ils s'envolaient enthousiastes vers l'idéal; évoquant la splendide vision d'un monde régénéré de liberté, de justice, de vertu vraie où tout cœur oserait aimer sincèrement, parce que nul amour n'y serait vendu ou acheté forcé ou intéressé, mais gagné obtenu, mérité par le plus digne, comme autrefois la gloire était la récompense de plus sanglants combats. —*Jeunesse* March 18

Comtean positivism studies societies in order to identify immutable laws of social behavior. Royer uses the process to challenge the institution of marriage on three fronts. As a biological argument Royer reasons, “Si c’est une loi de la nature, comment est-il si naturel de la violer?” and, “si c’est une loi de l’instinct, comment l’instinct, qui la dicte, ne la respecte-t-il pas?” To the religious position she asks, “Si c’est une loi de Dieu, comment se plaît-il à la rendre obligatoire et en même temps si lourde et si difficile à observer?” The social science query she makes is, “Si c’est une loi de l’homme, pourquoi l’homme se contraint-il lui-même en dépit de passions qu’il subit fatalement?” (*Jumeaux* 1: 216). With these four points, Royer executes a positivist refutation of the tradition. The opinion on the institution of marriage that Royer articulates in *Jumeaux* and *Jeunesse* is that it represents a form of slavery for the wife. Three injustices she notes are: the perception of woman as a commodity; the right of man to repudiate children he fathers outside of marriage; and the hypocrisy of a marriage without mutual affection. Furthermore, she uses a sociological approach to show the illogic of indissoluble marriage as a practice and proposes an alternative.

Royer depicts the custom of marriage as something fashioned by man over time to “dominer la femme” and to “s’approprier ses enfants” as though they were “autant de serviteurs, ou plutôt . . . les premiers de ses esclaves.” Man then attempts to justify this control by claiming that it provides protection to the dominated. He seeks, gradually, to “se légitimer devant la

conscience humaine" and to substantiate that marriage, "au lieu d'être institué contre la femme et l'enfant," offers them "une protection" (*Jumeaux* 1: 216). The narrator in *Jeunesse* makes a similar observation about M. and Mme. Gérard calling him, "son mari," then adding, "disons mieux, son acquéreur" (March 7). In *Jumeaux*, Lady Howard prefers public humiliation and divorce to her demeaning conjugal arrangement. She is, "Lasse de dix années d'un esclavage, sans compensation, sans joies, sans espoir" (2: 86).

Both the *feuilleton* and the novel express the idea that a marriage should signify the union of two beings who love and respect each other, and that in the absence of either love or respect, the union is hypocritical. " . . . tout homme n'épouse pas la femme qu'il aime;" observes the narrator in *Jeunesse*, "mais rien n'est plus fréquent que d'en voir épouser des femmes qu'ils n'aiment pas, qu'ils détestent," but in addition to men, "réciproquement des femmes se marient non par amour, mais contre l'amour" (March 10). Marcel thinks of the commitment "comme une alliance sacrée, austère, de deux êtres nés l'un pour l'autre et dévoués l'un à l'autre" (*Jeunesse* March 7). The new constitution in *Jumeaux* declares, "La volonté constante et libre des deux conjoints" to be "indipensable à la validité et à la constitutionnalité du mariage" (2: 504). The narrator says of the husband of Mme. Gérard, that he "l'avait épousée parce qu'il l'aimait." The narrator continues in an outraged tone, "On peut donc épouser une femme pour quelque autre motif!" and wonders, "Comment se fait-il que nos mœurs soient telles qu'on puisse écrire une pareille phrase sans être accusé de faire ce que les Anglais appellent un *truism* Mariage!" In the opinion of the narrator, the above utterance should be as redundant as saying, "le soleil attire la terre, parce qu'il est doué d'une force attractive" (*Jeunesse* March 10).

During his voyage of self-reflection, Mattéo theorizes that, should there one day be "quelque secousse sociale," wherein "la femme réclamerait dans le mariage la réciprocité des droits et des devoirs, avec une égalité de sanction pénale," marriage would become less appealing to men. He

speculates, “l’homme serait le premier à se refuser au mariage . . . et à repousser une institution qu'il jugerait inutile, dès qu'elle ne serait plus la légalisation injuste de son despotisme” (*Jumeaux* 1: 217). The vision Marcel has of marriage is related, and one “fondé sur le dévouement mutuel, sur l’accord harmonieux des volontés.” Absent from this is “l’égoïsme étroit et l’autorité de la violence” on the part of the man. The woman is an equal partner in this construction, sharing in all of the vicissitudes of life. Louise informs him, “Si je veux être ta compagne, ce n'est pas seulement pour jouir, mais pour souffrir avec toi s'il le faut.” She adds, “Unis tous les deux dans la vie, nous serons forts pour lutter contre elle” (*Jeunesse* March 31, 19). In this union built on affection, neither a civil, nor a religious ceremony is requisite. Johanna describes to Lucie the promise she exchanged with Orlowski saying, “Ce qui lie le cœur, ce ne sont point les vaines formalités humaines, c'est l'aveu, c'est la promesse, c'est la parole donnée, c'est plus encore, la première caresse d'amour cueillie sur le front et sur les lèvres d'une amante.” She explains how she is empowered by their private, intimate committment continuing, “j'étais libre, j'avais conquis mon droit de femme, mon droit d'aimer” and adds, “Je devins épouse sans qu'aucune bouche de prêtre eût prononcé sur moi, suivant un rite plus ou moins théàtral, de formules sans valeur réelle.” Johanna contends that a simple, earnest exchange of vows is more organic than the artificial rites created by men as she concludes, “notre hymen n'en fut pas moins béni pour s'être accompli suivant les simples lois de la nature” (2: 139, 162). The notion is echoed in *Jeunesse* as Louise commits her life to that of Marcel with a kiss. “ . . . les deux lèvres de la jeune fille s'imprimaient lentement, profondément sur son front, comme l'onction d'un sacre.” He responds, “A moi! Maintenant, et pour toujours” (March 19).

The Royerian family model recognizes marriage as a contract that does not necessarily last *pour toujours*. It holds, in addition, that an indissoluble marriage is contrary to the positive principle of social progress. Mattéo muses, on his journey from Naples to Rome that, “Ceux qui

partent du principe de progrès constant dans l'humanité" must recognize this "joug importun, et vainement imposé par la foi chrétienne" as merely a transitional phase between "le despotisme tyrannique de l'ancienne polygamie barbare . . . et l'union libre, exclusive, mais dissoluble, de l'homme et de la femme dans un mutuel amour" (*Jumeaux* 1: 218). Accordingly, the constitution of the new republic of Naples decrees, "La volonté constante et libre des deux conjoints étant indispensable à la validité et à la constitutionnalité du mariage . . . il suffit du retrait de l'une des deux volontés pour le rompre." A desire to dissolve the union is the only requirement and divorce is granted, "sans exposé de motifs, sur la demande constante et trois fois renouvelée pendant neuf mois d'un des époux." Once divorced, the former partners are "libres de convoler à d'autres noces" (*Jumeaux* 2: 218, 504).

2.7.3 Maternity

Children also benefit in Royer's family model, especially those born outside of marriage. The benefit is accomplished by removing the possibility of illegitimacy. Mattéo conceives of a society where the mother, rather than the father, has "la possession légitime de ses enfants" and thus, "Toute maternité serait légitime et glorieuse" (*Jumeaux* 1: 218-19). In addition, the family name assigned to offspring is that of the mother. The constitution created by the male triumvirate in *Jumeaux* decrees, "C'est … le nom de leur mère seulement qu'ils recevaient pour le transmettre à leur tour" (2: 505). This removes the civil distinction between legitimate and disavowed children. Shame would only be attached to the "père assez infâme pour renier l'enfant engendrer de son sang, et la femme qu'il a rendue mère" (1: 219).

Illegitimate children, as well as their mothers experience injustice due to custom and the *Code civil* in the two fictional works of Royer. The Mondoni twins are doubly disadvantaged, as a result of the laws of heredity. To avoid public shame as well as to save their lives, Amalia consents to have them raised in ignorance of their parentage. Once they discover that they are

illegitimate, Mattéo relates the effect of the knowledge on his psyche saying, "L'orphelin qui perd à sa naissance la mère qui l'a conçu, le père qui l'a engendré, retrouve du moins leurs noms sur les lèvres de sa nourrice … il sait quel a été leur visage et leur vie par les portraits qu'on lui montre, les récits qu'on lui fait." The situation of an illegitimate child, however, is worse. He adds, "le bâtard, l'enfant abandonné n'a rien de tout cela" (1: 461). In *Jumeaux*, Royer brings into consciousness the ostracization suffered by women who bear children outside of marriage, whether through choice or inadvertently. Lucie establishes a foundation to provide shelter and employment to "malheureuses femmes sans asile et sans secours" whom "une première faute contre les mœurs du temps" has left "le rebut et les victimes de l'opinion" (2: 175). Through these words of Mattéo, Royer underlines the injustice of a man who refuses to "aimer la femme qui avait appartenu à d'autres," all the while enjoying a succession of mistresses. He asks, " . . . avons-nous le droit…d'exiger plus que nous ne donnons?" (*Jumeaux* 1: 13). The narrator in *Jeunesse* observes that, in learning to love, every woman "apprend . . . un peu de ruse" then defends the declaration adding, "il serait aisé d'en trouver la raison dans les dures lois" against "cette moitié de l'espèce humaine" (March 10). This means that women often enter into a loveless union in order to be protected under the law.

2.8 Conclusion

Royer refuses to have her voice silenced. Her entire adult life is dedicated to increasing her own understanding in all areas of knowledge and stimulating a love of learning in other women. Despite laws and social conventions designed to limit female participation in intellectual conversations, Royer delivers public lectures, is an active member of a French scientific society and supports herself financially with virtually innumerable scientific and philosophical books and articles. While she is remembered primarily as the translator of Darwin, the 60-page

introduction, containing interpretive notes is characteristic of her insistence on engaging with contemporary intellectual dialogues.

Royer's novel *Jumeaux,* is encyclopedic in the themes covered, and the writing style continues the positivist fiction that de Vaux first introduces in *Lucie.* Using reasoned arguments, Royer expresses thoughts in line with Comtean positivism, such as the notion of thought progressing through three stages, the societal need for belief in a higher, creative force and the importance of the arts in presenting ideology in a format accessible to non-intellectuals. Royer significantly broadens the application of positivist reasoning to develop her own arguments. Where Comte places the field of sociology at the top of the hierarchy of sciences, Royer substitutes anthropology. Both fields study the *Cours*e of humanity; however, anthropology incorporates a more evolutionary approach, while sociology focuses more on observable behaviors. A believer in evolutionary theory, Royer applies positivist reasoning to the study of origins, made possible by advances in anthropology. This uncovers the distinction between the Comtean *unknowable* and the Royerian *unknown.* Comte, believing that science has reached the positive state, sees questions of origin as forever beyond human understanding. Royer, who sees science as still evolving, believes that the positive state will not be reached until all phenomena are explained by science, at some future date. She also uses positivist reasoning to support her feminist views on religion, marriage and motherhood. Where the Comtean woman passively models Republican values, the Royerian woman does so actively. Royer believes that society would benefit in moving from patrilinity to matrilinity, and in moving to marriage dissoluble at will.

3 Chapter 3: Louise Ackermann – Positively Pragmatic

3.1 Introduction

In stark contrast to de Vaux and Royer, Louise Ackermann (1813-1890) bursts onto the literary scene later in life. Her collection of verse, *Poésies philosophiques*, becomes an instant sensation in 1874, owing to a highly favorable review by Elmé Caro in the *Revue des deux mondes*.[lxvii] Caro says, "Sous la pression ou la menace des événements intellectuels qui se préparent, il n'est pas possible que les esprits demeurent en repos, et que la paix même des antiques croyances ne soit pas profondément troublée" (16). The observation reflects the conflict between Catholic beliefs, which offer a promise of life-after-death, and evolutionary theory, which shows man to be evolved from earlier species.

In the first half of the 19th century, when Comte published his *Cours*intellectuals were in heated debate over Cuvierian *fixism* versus Lamarckian *transformism*. This was essentially a discussion about whether or not man was descended from "une forme inférieure et ancienne." The *transformism* of Jean-Baptiste Lamarck and Etienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire is considered marginal and the *fixism* of Georges Cuvier is the most highly regarded theory.[lxviii]

Comtean positivism places emphasis on "empirical methodology rather than interest in 'origins'" (Henry G. Freeman 297). Pondering existential issues that cannot be subjected to scientific observation is not consistent with his ideology, which seeks to build a social structure based on provable laws of humanity. Disregarding evolutionary theory places questions of origin and destination beyond the scope of scientific study.

Poésies is alternately considered *positivist* or *scientific*, terms which can be used more-or less interchangeably in the nineteenth century (Karl Lorenz 1). Nineteenth century scientific poetry is its own, unique genre, although critics often describe it as belonging to the *Parnassian*

school. The Parnassians prioritize technical detail over content, where positivist poets emphasize the artistic construction of knowledge, using the scientific method of hypothesis and observation (Caroline de Mulder 336). The underlying preoccupation of positive poets is the opposition between theology and science. Casimir Fusil informs that a positivist poet examines the "travaux des savants . . . leurs vues . . . leurs hypothèses," and from there, to "en déduit les conséquences morales et sentimentales . . ." (25).[lxix] Mulder's scholarship on this genre reveals the existence of numerous scientific poets who have fallen into "oublie," the exception being Sully Prudhomme.

Scientific poetry, originally intended to "instruire, glorifier et rendre la science aimable," emerges as a genre during the Enlightenment (Muriel Louâpre par. 2). In the nineteenth century, as scientific and technological advances become popularized, the genre evolves to become a contemplation of the existential implications of positivism. As Emile Zola is virtually synonymous with *Naturalism,* so Prudhomme is with scientific poetry.[lxx] And yet, Prudhomme did not invent the genre. Fusil writes that Ackermann was not "loin d'inaugurer l'élégie scientifique, où . . . sort une courte méditation sur l'homme, sur le monde et sur leur destinée." Fusil qualifies the positive poems of Prudhomme as the "travail définitif" that validate scientific poetry, tacitly acknowledging that it is Ackermann who first initiates the genre (171). Louise Read notes that Prudhomme regularly participates in the literary salon that Ackermann holds in her Parisian home circa 1870.[lxxi] The reunions take place well before the publication of his positivist poems, *La Justice* (1877) and *Le Bonheur* (1878). The comments of Fusil, together with confirmation of the friendship between the two poets, establishes that Prudhomme draws inspiration from Ackermann, rather than the other way around. Jeanine Moulin calls Ackermann the first 19th century poet to "exprimer avec art la philosophie et la science de son temps"

(286).[lxxii] While Prudhomme may be considered the *father* of positive poetry, Ackermann is the *mother*.

In his review of *Poésies*, Caro comments on the inevitability of positivism transcending the borders of the scientific community to enter the domain of art. The mingling of art and scientific thought is not merely inescapable but is an integral part of Comtean positivism. Another aspect of positivism, manifested in *Poésies*, is the functionality of the work. I also show ways in which Ackermann expands positivist thinking to provide a philosophy for confronting the existential angst of post-Darwinian existence. Paliyenko has dedicated a chapter of her book, *Genius Envy* to analysis of the link between science and poetry in the work of Ackermann. I extend her research by closely comparing and contrasting *Poésies philosophiques* with Comtean positivism Additionally, I highlight examples of Ackermann's feminist message in *Poésies*.

3.2 Becoming "un monstre" and "un prodige"

Gabriel d'Haussonville charaterizes Ackermann's poems as "quelques-uns des plus beaux vers du siècle." He develops the observation, saying that the beauty arises from her themes, which depict "les ravages que produisent dans une âme . . . l'incrédulité et ses révoltes," or the metaphysical repercussions of rejecting centuries of traditional belief (4). The aftermath encompasses both the turn away from Catholicism and the inability of science to provide resolution to existential questions. Ackermann startles many critics with her remorseless poems. Their reaction is intensified because of her gender.[lxxiii] The public expects women poets, and women authors in general, to express sentiments that are "vertueux, ou édifiants, ou 'bienpensants'" (Roger Bellet 3). Her verses lead Barbey d'Aurévilly to deem Ackermann, "un prodige par le talent et un monstre par la pensée" (165). A glimpse into the life experience of the poet will show the forces that contributed to the development of her striking intellect.

The parents of Ackermann provide an environment that fosters both traditional values and intellectual curiosity. Before learning to read, Ackermann listened, as her parents read aloud from Molière, La Fontaine, Racine and Corneille. Her mother ensured that she received the Catholic education considered appropriate for females, beginning with preparation for her first communion at a nearby parish school. Her father, shocked by the impact of the religious training on his daughter, encourages Ackermann to read works by the liberal thinkers, Voltaire, Plato and Buffon. Persuaded by a trusted relative that her intelligence should be nurtured, Ackermann's mother sends her to a prestigious pension in Paris, to complete her education. At this pension, she receives a solid education in literature and develops her talent for composing poetry. Her instructor shares some of her verses with Victor Hugo, who "n'a pas dédaigné de donner des conseils sur le rythme" (*Ma Vie* viii).

Ackermann enthusiastically embraces the works by Shakespeare and Byron that her literature instructor provides but ignores the theological tracts lent to her by the priest associated with the pension. She later says, "ces dogmes . . . m'apparurent tout à coup dans leur monstrueuse absurdité." Reading the works of independent thinkers nurtures her inherent inclination to examine issues from multiple perspectives and arrive at her own understanding. Ackermann uses her own initiative to learn to read in several other languages.[lxxiv] As an adult, Ackermann associates with noted German philosophers, such as Alexander von Humboldt, both before and during her marriage to Paul Ackermann (*Ma Vie* ix, xvi). Following the death of her husband, Ackermann retreats to the south of France, where she avidly follows reports of scientific findings. She notes, "Les théories de l'évolution et de la transformation des forces étaient en parfait accord avec les tendances panthéistes de mon esprit" (*Ma Vie* xix). Ackermann being intelligent and well-read, logical reasoning is a natural part of her thought process.

Comtean positivism has become widespread in France by the second half of the 19th century (Lorenz 1).[lxxv] Ackermann composes her positive poems between 1860 and 1870, publishing several of them individually in various newspapers, but they attract scant attention.[lxxvi] The lukewarm reception of *Contes,* (1855), and *Contes et poésies,* (1862), leads Ackermann to withdraw from the public sphere and to share her later verses only with close friends.[lxxvii] She says, "le poète qu'on n'écoute pas finit par se taire" (*Ma Vie* xx).[lxxviii] Although Ackermann keeps her artistic creations private, inspiration continues to flow. She later observes, "Il y a chez chacun de nous, surtout dans la jeunesse, quelque chose qui chante. La plupart des hommes ne se rendent pas compte de cette musique vague et fugitive; le poète seul arrête au passage les divins accents" (*Pensées* 4-5).

Ackermann has always had "une grande tendresse pour tout ce qui a vie," from the smallest insects to humanity itself (*Ma Vie* iv). The war with Prussia provides the impetus that Ackermann needs to once again share her reflections with the public. Unable to "rester à l'abri de l'invasion," she leaves her home in Nice and goes to live in "Paris assiégé" in 1871. She does this in the "utopique et naïve espérance" that her acquaintance with the queen of Prussia, Augusta, may render her of "quelque utilité à son pays."[lxxix] Louise Read does not elaborate on the precise nature of the contribution that Ackermann envisions making; nonetheless, the act of deliberately moving into a combat zone, with a desire to help is a clear indication of compassion.

There is no evidence of Ackermann playing any type of political role in the conflict; however, she does make a different contribution to society. Friends convince Ackermann that the ideas expressed in her *Poésies philosophiques* can help a secular society process the *angst* arising from a century of recurring, political upheaval (Read 266, 267).[lxxx] The poem, *Mon livre,* expresses the intent of the volume. In addition, the stanzas present themes that the poet will develop throughout *Poésies*:

Je ne vous offre plus pour toutes mélodies Que des cris de révolte et des rimes hardies.

Oui! Mais en m'écoutant si vous alliez pâlir?

Si, surpris des éclats de ma verve imprudente,

Vous maudissez la voix énergique et stridente

Qui vous aura fait tressaillir? (par. 1)

Comment? la Liberté déchaîne ses colères;

Partout, contre l'effort des erreurs séculaires;

La Vérité combat pour s'ouvrir un chemin;

Et je ne prendrais pas parti de ce grand drame?

Quoi ! ce cœur qui bat là, pour être un cœur de femme,

En est-il moins un cœur humain? (par. 3)

Est-ce ma faute à moi si dans ces jours de fièvre D'ardentes questions se pressent sur ma lèvre?

Si votre Dieu surtout m'inspire des soupçons?

Si la Nature aussi prend des teintes funèbres,

Et si j'ai de mon temps, le long de mes vertèbres,

Senti courir tous les frissons? (par. 4)

Jouet depuis longtemps des vents et de la houle, Mon bâtiment fait eau de toutes parts; il coule.

La foudre seule encore à ses signaux répond.

Le voyant en péril et loin de toute escale,

Au lieu de m'enfermer tremblante à fond de cale,

J’ai voulu monter sur le pont. (par. 5)

À l’écart, mais debout, là, dans leur lit immense J’ai contemplé le jeu des vagues en démence.
Puis, prévoyant bientôt le naufrage et la mort,
Au risque d’encourir l’anathème ou le blâme,
À deux mains j’ai saisi ce livre de mon âme,
Et j’ai lancé par-dessus bord. (par. 6)

Barbey d’Aurévilly writes a laudatory review of the 1871 edition of *Poésies.* He declares the verses to be “les plus belles horreurs littéraires . . . depuis les *Fleurs du mal* de Baudelaire” (158-159). Yet, the critic also expresses surprise that such a strong “voice” could spring from the hand of a woman. He writes, “ . . . c’est une femme, une faible femme, qui a eu le triste Coeur d’écrire, avec une préméditation inouïe et l’intensité d’une rage froide, ces magnifiques blasphèmes contre la Vérité et contre Dieu!” (158). The 1874 edition is dedicated to him and signed, “Un monstre reconnaissant” (Read 268).

Mon livre is an apostrophe, addressed to Barbey d’Aurévilly which defends her attack of themes traditionally left to men. In paragraph 1, describing her collection as melodies “de révolte” and “des rimes hardies,” the poet concedes that her message is uncompromising and agrees that her tone “énergique et stridente” is unexpected, coming from a woman. At the same time, she intones, “Si, surpris des éclats de ma verve imprudente, / Vous maudissez la voix énergique et stridente / Qui vous aura fait tressaillir?” The poet suggests that it is as much the ideas expressed in her poems as the gender of the poet that shock the critic.

Paragraph 3 contains the central message of the poem. The poet first highlights two conflicts facing society: war, when "la Liberté déchaîne ses colères," and the inability of science to fill the metaphysical gap in human understanding, "l'effort des erreurs séculaire." A more comprehensive truth is making its voice heard; "La Vérité combat pour s'ouvrir un chemin" and the poet declares that any reasoning human being is justified in taking part in the discussion: "Et je ne prendrais pas parti dans ce grand drame?" She rebukes the reader for suggesting that women are less-aware of the world around them than men asking, "Et je ne prendrais pas parti de ce grand drame? / Quoi! ce cœur qui bat là, pour être un cœur de femme, / En est-il moins un cœur humain?" While the poet claims in other writings to embrace traditional views of gender roles, she believes that it is her right as a member of society to express her views.

Paragraph 4 implies the positivist perspective in *Poésies* when the poet announces a rejection of both Christianity and pantheism; "Est-ce ma faute à moi si dans ces jours de fièvre // Si votre Dieu surtout m'inspire des soupçons? / Si la Nature aussi prend des teintes funèbres" (sic)? Can the poet be blamed for finding both schools of thought illogical? Ackermann asks if it is reproachable, ". . . si j'ai de mon temps, le long de mes vertèbres, / Senti courir tous les frissons?"

Paragraph 5 provides the emotional impetus for *Poésise,* evoking the ongoing institutional chaos through the imagery of a ship at sea in a storm. The poet sees her country still engaged in civil unrest; "Jouet depuis longtemps des vents et de la houle." The wind symbolizes revolutionary thoughts and the ocean swells symbolize the uprising of the masses. The poet agonizes, "Mon bâtiment fait eau de toutes parts; il coule." The "bâtiment," or ship, is her country, whose institutions weaken as they are attacked on numerous fronts. The poet continues, "La foudre seule encore à ses signaux répond." War, symbolized by lightening, is the result of the confusion, as it has been since the French Revolution. "Au lieu de m'enfermer tremblante à

fond de cale, / J'ai voulu monter sur le pont." Rather than fearfully observing the destruction from a distance, in the hold of the ship, the poet chooses to participate; "J'ai voulu monter sur le pont."

In paragraph 6, the poet anticipates destruction and death, "le naufrage et la mort." Despite the possibility of incurring censure for her actions, "Au risque d'encourir l'anathème ou le blâme," the poet casts her work into the fray, "par-dessus bord." Throwing the book into the sea is symbolic of offering it to the public. Both the anti-religious sentiments expressed in the verses and her gender make the poet a likely target for negative criticism.

Mon livre serves as a fairly comprehensive introduction to *Poésies.* The poet explains her purpose in making her volume public, offers her ideological views and defends the right of women to participate in social dialogues. One detail that is missing from the poem, but which comes out in other poems, is that by contributing a philosophy, Ackermann proposes a method for finding fortitude in a world of suffering. She expands on Comtean positivism to address questions made accessible to investigation because of advances in scientific thought.

3.3 An Overview of the Ackermannian Corpus

During her career, Ackermann produces two volumes of verse: *Contes et poésies* (1862) and *Poésies* (1871).[lxxxi] In addition, at the age of 90, she publishes *Les Pensées d'une solitaire,* which provides additional insight into her views on life and society. Turn-of-the-century scholar Marc Citoleux publishes Ackermann's journal in 1927. Her collections of poetry are published multiple times, each subsequent edition containing a more complete representation of her works. The work for which Ackermann is celebrated, *Poésies,* presents metaphysical musings that apply to humanity as a whole and thus resonate with a wide public. Ackermann firmly believes that poetry should not be subjective. She writes in her journal, "C'est au nom de la nature, c'est

surtout au nom de l'humanité qu'il ous faut élever la voix" (Citoleux 566). Her poems highlight the void that is created when humanity rejects theology and embraces scientific reasoning. The following poem, *Le Positivism,* encapsulates the problem: Il s'ouvre par delà [sic] toute science humaine Un vide dont la Foi fut prompte à s'emparer.

De cet abîme obscur elle a fait son domaine;
En s'y précipitant elle a cru l'éclairer.
Eh bien! nous t'expulsons de tes divins royaumes,
Dominatrice ardente, et l'instant est venu: Tu ne vas plus savoir où loger tes fantômes;
Nous fermons l'Inconnu.

Mais ton triomphateur expiera ta défaite. L'homme déjà se trouble, et, vainqueur éperdu,
Il se sent ruiné par sa propre conquête:
En te dépossédant nous avons tout perdu.
Nous restons sans espoir, sans re(*Cours*, sans asile,
Tandis qu'obstinément le Désir qu'on exile
Revient errer autour du gouffre défendu. (91-92)

The first stanza provides the context. The word "science," in the first line, means "knowledge of something" (*Dictionnaires*).[lxxxii] As long as humans have been able to think, they have sought to understand the "vide," or the "abîme obscur," which is death. Theology, "la Foi," provided supernatural explanations, the "fantômes." Positivist thinkers reject theological teachings saying, ". . . nous t'expulsons de tes divins royaumes." The Comtean precept of refusing to consider questions of origin and finitude is expressed in the line, "Nous fermons l'Inconnu."

The second stanza declares that Faith is somewhat vindicated, as positivism reopens the void that theology had filled: ". . . ton triomphateur expiera ta défaite. / L'homme, déjà se trouble . . .

." Humanity accepts that religion cannot be supported by scientific evidence; at the same time, science leaves a gaping hole by refusing to examine the human condition. Although positivism offers a logical argument for not pursuing solutions to metaphysical problems, humanity cannot extinguish the yearning to understand: ". . . obstinément le Désir qu'on exile / Revient errer autour du gouffre défendu."

3.4 Comtean Positivism and Beyond in Ackermann's *Poésies*.

In this section, I discuss aspects of Comtean thought that are either reflected or broadened in Ackermann's *Poésies.* Notions on which the two intellectuals align are: the link between poetry and philosophy; the belief that science, not theology, contains the explanations for earthly phenomena; and a conviction that love is an essential component of a successful existence. Points where Ackermann expands Comtean dogma begin with the integration of evolutionary theory, then expand to include an examination of metaphysical questions and a feminist view of nature that challenges the Comtean association of sentiment with femininity.
Ackermann discusses her thoughts on poetry quite a bit in her journal and in her *Pensées.* Her views on contributing to social progress and the utility of love are brought out in her poems, which I analyze in section 5.

3.4.1 How Ackermann Reflects Comtean Positivism

The corpus of Auguste Comte is a manual for attacking a complex social problem: ongoing political instability that negatively impacts the industrial economy (Yves Breton 251). Comte says that post-revolutionary regimes have been inadequate to permanently end violent conflict because of a failure to account for the inviolable laws of society. The laws to which he refers are contained within his law of three states.[lxxxiii] Comte focuses on the issue that institutions formed in the manner of the *ancien régime,* favoring a strong military and elite social

classes, have not been efficiently restructured to address the end of the feudalism economy. In the age of industrialization, progress is directly tied to a robust national economy, the health of which depends on means of production, rather than on military might (Patrick Verley par. 2).[lxxxiv] The historical method of political economy relies on universal "principles" rather than laws. In other words, it looks to preserve the social order of the *ancien régime*. Breton says that proponents of classical political economy maintain an "espoir insensé" that a working class, conscious of the "lois naturelles" regulating salaries would be content with their "conditions d'existence." The problem he identifies with these economists is that their expertise comes from reading classical texts, rather than using the scientific method (250, 251).

This is in direct conflict with positivism, which advocates using the scientific method to determine the optimal economic institutions. (Christophe Salvat 156). [lxxxv] Andrea Cavazzini explains it thus: "il s'agit de prendre acte de l'insuffisance, révélée par la révolution du 1848, du régime parlementaire à exprimer et gérer les formes propres des conditions modernes d'existence" (par. 8). In his post-de Vaux *System,* Comte says that a new social structure can only be successful if it germinates from the bottom, i.e. beginning with women and the proletariat and grows upward (*Système* 1: 4). The notion of attracting marginalized populations to positivism parallels Comtean thought on synthetic scientific study, wherein each successive domain depends on knowledge gained from the field preceding it in the hierarchy.[lxxxvi] Comtean positivism, by using logical reasoning based on observation, represents a "doctrine destinée à terminer l'immense révolution occidentale" (*Système* Préface 2). The philosopher optimistically believes that stability can be sustained, and prosperity nurtured, through the application of positivist principles.

Writing a decade after the death of Comte, Ackermann has witnessed a society that continuously fails to establish his peaceful model.[lxxxvii] The poet, who concentrates her thought

on the existential repercussions of life in a positive society, perceives the future of humanity differently than does Comte. Ackermann takes a more pragmatic view and applies positive reasoning to the problem of how to survive a terrestrial existence devoid of peace and replete with abundant suffering. In the following stanza from *La Guerre,* she expresses her disillusion with the promise of positivism:

L'heure semblait propice, et le penseur candide

Croyait, dans le lointain d'une aurore splendide, Voir de la Paix déjà poindre le front tremblant.

On respirait. Soudain, la trompette à la bouche,

Guerre, tu reparais, plus âpre, plus farouche,

Écrasant le progrès sous ton talon sanglant. (Part II: 124)

The first three lines evoke the optimism of intellectuals, believing that a lasting peace might at last be in sight. The magnificent dawn is easily recognized as a symbol for the Enlightenment, while placing the "thinker" at a distance from the movement attaches him to a later intellectual movement. The dominance of scientific thought at the time the poem is created identifies the voice as a positivist one. The following three lines describe the reappearance of war, which negates the advances that society has made. The trumpet is a traditional symbol of war *Dictionnaires*). The poet portrays the negative impact of war in an unexpected manner. While she does allude to death, with the "talon sanglant," the primary negative impact she mentions is the erasure of "le progrès." Use of this word, which is closely linked with Comtean positivism, further supports that Ackermann is bringing out the failure of science and reason to bring about harmony.

Affaiblis et ployant sous la tâche infinie,

Recommence, Travail! rallume-toi, Génie!

Le fruit de vos labeurs est broyé, dispersé.

Mais quoi! tous ces trésors ne formaient qu'un domaine; C'était le bien commun de la famille humaine.

Se ruiner soi-même, ah! c'est être insensé! (Part II: 125)

This stanza intimates that, while positivism failed to achieve its initial goal, there is still a humanitarian purpose for scientific thought. The poet cries, "Recommence, Travail! Rallume-toi, génie!" Although progress made to this point has been "broyé" and "disperse," it was only directed toward one aspect of existence, "un domaine," which was temporal: "le bien commun de la famille humaine." The act of choosing to destroy itself, "se ruiner soi-même" identifies humanity as instinctive, rather than thinking; "c'est être insensé." Classifying the task of improving the common good as "qu'un domaine" implies that positivist reasoning can be applied to another area. By extension, this can be considered metaphysical.

Sous des vapeurs de poudre et de sang, quand les astres

Pâlissent indignés parmi tant de désastres,

Moi-même à la fureur me laissant emporter,

Je ne distingue plus les bourreaux des victimes;

Mon âme se soulève, et devant de tels crimes

Je voudrais être foudre et pouvoir éclater. (Part III: 127)

Du moins te poursuivant jusqu'en pleine victoire,

A travers tes lauriers, dans les bras de l'Histoire

Qui, séduite, pourrait t'absoudre et te sacrer,

O Guerre, Guerre impie, assassin qu'on encense,

Je resterai, navrée et dans mon impuissance,

Bouche pour te maudire, et cœur pour t'exécrer! (Part III: 127)

When the poet proclaims, in the first stanza of Part III, that she no longer sees "les bourreaux des victims," she is saying that she is rising above the personal loss she has experienced.[lxxxviii] Describing the loss of life as "de tels crimes" makes her message a general observation on the evils of war. Evoking the indignation of the stars differentiates her thought from subjective reflection. To further portray the universal nature of her commentary, the poet unites her thought with that of the stars, as her soul "se soulève."

In the next stanza, the poet announces her determination to contradict the historical record of the conflict. Although Ackermann is powerless against forces that would "absoudre" and "sacrer" war, she makes her stand as a voice of protest. With her words, the poet brings into public consciousness the truth of war that rhetoric attempts to conceal. Ackermann writes, "c'est au nom de l'homme collectif que j'ai élevé la voix; je crus même faire œuvre de poète en lui prêtant des accents en accord avec les horreurs de sa destinée" (*Ma Vie* xxii). Despite their differing conceptions of life, Ackermann and Comte share the belief that positivism offers a way to negotiate the realities of existence.

3.4.1.1 Art and Philosophy: Linked at the Hip

The notion of poetry disseminating a philosophical message is characteristic of poetry throughout history. Throughout history, poetry has entertained and inspired readers. Poets, from "Homère jusqu'à Corneille," improved the human condition through the beauty of their creation. The ideas they expressed, however, were subjective. Comte says that positive poetry distinguishes itself from previous genres, because of its objectivity. The ideas that serve as its inspiration are not those of each individual poet but are scientifically determined laws of

humanity (*Système*1: 277). Sentiment is the ingredient that changes "philosophie" into "politique," or in other words, ideas into actions.[lxxxix] Comte believes that the way to infuse facts with emotion is through the arts. Comte says that poetry "exerce spécialement l'action la plus difficile et la plus décisive, pour exciter ou calmer nos passions, non pas à son gré, mais suivant leurs lois naturelles" (*Système* 1: 286). It expresses natural laws that are not formalized or understood by non-intellectuals.

Comte considers poets as essential intermediaries in the vulgarization of philosophical thought.[xc] Philosophy proclaims the fundamental concepts of positivism, or "la réalité," while poetry performs "l'exagération" of this truth, in order to push humanity to "l'améliorer" (*Système* 1: 284). Translating complex thoughts into emotions, poetry accomplishes the task that philosophy cannot: incitement to action. Encouraging both passion and thought, positive poetry stimulates the masses to "chercher leur vrai bonheur dans l'essor habituel de leurs facultés affectives et spéculatives" (*Système* 1: 276).[xci]

As stated earlier, Comte believes that the support of women and the working class is necessary to the establishment of positive government institutions (Rose 14). Their input is invaluable, because they know best the measures necessary to protect them from "l'oppression temporelle" (*Système* 1: 4). The difficulty to overcome in gaining the support of this population is the complexity of Comtean philosophy. The philosopher believes that realizing his ideology as a political institution requires popularization of the precepts. He states, "Les degrés supérieures du beau ne pourraient être vraiment appréciés par des âmes insensibles à ce degré initial" (*Système* 1: 283). Intellectual thought needs to be restated in terms that a non-intellectual readership can understand. Poetry is the ideal form for accomplishing the transmission.

Ackermann observes, "Le don du poète, c'est d'éveiller par un simple accord dans les autres âmes des vibrations poétiques qui se prolongent à l'infini." Her statement shows that

Ackermann shares the Comtean view of poetry as a means of inciting emotion. In addition to sharing Comte's understanding of the basic intent of the genre, the poet holds a similar view on objectivity versus subjectivity. In *Pensées,* she writes that composing subjective poetry is "un signe d'étroiesse intellectuelle." Instead, "c'est . . . au nom de l'Humanité qu'il faut élever la voix" (Citoleux and Ackermann 24). She reiterates the same notion in a journal entry, writing, "Le paysage tout pur ne vaut rien en poésie, il ne s'anime que lorsqu'il sert de cadre à une action humaine." (Citoleux and Ackermann 539). While she does not specifically state that poetry should comunicate natural laws, the emphasis on serving humanity infers a preference for objective thought. Moreover, Ackermann believes, like Comte, that poetry and science are intrinsically related. She says, "Par ses révélations, la science venait de créer un nouvel état d'âme et d'ouvrir à l'esprit des perspectives où la poésie avait évidemment beau jeu" (*Ma Vie* xix).

Ackermann appears not to recognize intellectual agency in herself, but she does have the quality. She writes of her verses, "Mon soin unique, c'est de bien choisir mes sujets . . . . Un peu de choix et d'arrangement est la seule part qui me revient dans l'exécution de mes petites œuvres." The line that lies between the two sentences above, however, reveals the reflection that takes place in her thought; "Je ne fais plus ensuite que les laisser parler, qu'écouter ce qu'ils me disent" (Citoleux and Ackermann 542). Giving voice to the ideas she develops, Ackermann advances beyond interpreting and disseminating positivism, to consider the moral repercussions of the dogma. Comte and Ackermann do not have identical interpretations of the bond between poetry and science: he sees the genre as a translator of his own positive philosophy, while Ackermann uses poetry as a workspace for processing her own thoughts. Nonetheless, the philosopher and the poet both believe that poetry plays a crucial role in moving scientific principles outside of academia and into the consciousness of the general population.

3.4.1.2 Science, not Theology, as the Source of Truth

Comtean positivism, essentially synonymous with scientific thought, is fundamental in establishing *science* rather than *theology* as the basis for post-Revolutionary public administration (Lorenz 1: Salvat 159). Comte says that if phenomena couldn't be explained by science, people would naturally revert to metaphysical or theological beliefs (*Cours* 1: 52-53). The philosopher states that scientific study has a practical application: the anticipation of physical phenomena and development of ways to mitigate negative effects from them: "l'étude de la nature comme servant de base rationnelle à l'action sur la nature" (*Cours*, 2: 54). His theory is that a synthetic system of knowledge will reveal natural laws of humanity and that structuring society in accordance with these laws will lead to establishing a peaceful, productive society (*Cours*, 5: 621).[xcii]

Like Comte, the poet understands science to hold the answers to questions of worldly phenomena. Ackermann does not specifically discuss the role of science in her poetry, but a few notations in her journal, as well as her verses themselves, attest to the prominent place that scientific thought has come to play in contemporary society. She writes, "Je ne me figure pas qu'un astronome puisse jamais être un croyant." Gazing upon "l'infini," he would immediately realize that humanity is too insiginificant to be of concern to the creator of the cosmos (Citoleux and Ackermann 546-547). Ackermann also notes, "La science dans ses recherches ne se laisse arrêter par aucune considération humaine ni divine. La vérité est son but, elle y marche intrépidement, sans songer à la faveur dans ce monde ni à son salut dans l'autre. Elle n'est d'ailleurs ni ambitieuse ni dévote. La faveur ne la touche pas et pourvu qu'elle ait atteint la vérité elle a fait son salut" (Citoleux and Ackermann 551).

Both the structure of her poems and the symbolism testify to the expanding influence of Comtean positivism. Ackermann uses the scientific method to support the arguments in her

verses, and several of her poems take their symbolism either from the study of science in general or from the field of astronomy. Ackermann's *Poésies* illustrate that Comte's goal of instituting a common, secular education, based on science is becoming a reality.

3.4.1.3 Love as Sustenance in a Secular Society

Both Comte and Ackermann, through their theorization and observation of humanity, reach the conclusion that science, alone does not meet every societal need because it is indifferent. For Comte, the missing element is empirical; he states that, while science serves as the basis for establishing institutions, it does not provide moral guidance. As stated earlier, Ackermann is writing at a time when evolution has become largely accepted as fact. Advances in thought have made it possible to scientifically study and theorize about the origins of man, and to confirm his temporality. The deficiency that Ackermann sees in science is metaphysical; it does not provide a way to overcome the human condition, nor do any of its laws offer comfort in the face of impermanence. The philosopher and the poet each arrive at the determination that *love* is a human trait that provides the solution to the problem.

As stated in chapter 1, sentiment takes a preeminent place in the Comtean *Religion of Humanity*. Unable to achieve a degree of intimacy commensurate with the depth of his feeling for de Vaux, Comte personally confronts the need to turn to a notion that exceeds materiality in order to find solace. The philosopher determines that the intense affection that he feels for de Vaux can be redirected into charitable work that benefits society as a whole. This subjective love then evolves into an objective principle applicable to all of mankind.[xciii] Michel Bourdeau explains that,"au centre de la nouvelle dogmatique, que le positivisme est ainsi amené à développer se trouve . . . l'humanité: connaître l'humanité, afin de mieux l'aimer et de mieux la servir" (17).[xciv]

After establishing the superiority of science over theology, the necessity of focusing on moral concerns becomes evident. The static acquisition of knowledge in the *Course* becomes in the *System* a manual for the dynamic application of this learning for the advancement of civilization. Institutions are formed and individual actions are taken based on a new code of conduct, "la reconstruction préalable des opinions et des moeurs" (*Système* 1: 2). Love is the guiding principle in this new morality. Comte explains how sentiment fits into a positive society, referring to "la vie affective" as "la partie vraiment prépondérante de toute existence humaine" (*Système* 1: 12). Furthermore, he sees love as the only truly universal principle (*Système* Préface: 4). His *Religion of Humanity* adopts as its fundamental idea: *L'amour pour principe, l'ordre pour base et le progrès pour but* ("Love as the principle, order as the basis and progress as the goal"; my trans. *Système* 1: 321).

Ackermann asserts that scientific understanding does not eliminate the existential fear that man experiences when pondering existence. *Poésies* portrays *love* as one of two human faculties that make man superior to either a vengeful God or an indifferent Nature.[xcv] As with science, the other writings of Ackermann do not discuss love as central to her poetry. The sentiment and the practical utility of love that Ackermann uncovers in her verses emerge through her artistic process.

3.4.2 How Ackermann Extends Comtean Positivism

The study of evolution and finitude that Ackermann conducts does not conflict with Comtean positivist principles, because the field of anthropology has advanced. Skeletal human remains contradict the notion of humans rising from the dead.[xcvi] She builds her hypotheses and tests them, based on contemporary scientific understanding. She extends Comtean positivism by aligning its concepts with new discoveries. Her project is also metaphysical, however, in the

sense that man naturally yearns to understand his purpose and destiny. The line between scientific and metaphysical, in this instance, has become blurred. With her volume of verse, Ackermann performs the Comtean tenet: *science, d'où prévoyance; prévoyance d'où action* (*Cours*, 1: 52). She consecrates her volume of scientific poetry to using reason to express the human condition and the existential implications of this condition, and then to elucidate a *Cours*e of action.

The poet and the philosopher differ on the specific element that is lacking in society. Comte determines that, while science stands as a just foundation for institutional organization, it does not provide moral guidance. He designs the secular *Religion of Humanity* to fulfill this function. Ackermann is against any type of religion, saying, ". . . qu'on ne me parle pas des religions. Elles imposent des croyances arrêtées et exclusives . . ." (*Pensées* 10-11). The shortcoming that the poet sees in science is the existential emptiness that it reveals. Her contribution to mankind is a scientific volume of verse to help process the *angst* associated with this void. Additionally, it is to help mankind find the determination to persevere. Her method processes the notions of evolution and finitude, then highlights the power of human sentience.

3.4.2.1 Evolutionary Theory and the Cosmos

The study of finitude is consistent with positivist reasoning in the late 1860s and 1870s, because French intellectuals have begun to generally accept *evolution* as scientifically sound (qtd. in Camille Hémon 13).[xcvii] Clémence Royer introduces the French intellectual community to her translation of *On the Origin of Species,* by Charles Darwin, in 1864, an event that precipitates the rehabilitation of Lamarck and Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire and increases public awareness of evolutionary theory (Goulven Laurent 109, 108).[xcviii]

Evolution brings out the stark contrast between the ephemeral nature of humans and the cyclical nature of the cosmos. Ackermann extends Comtean positive philosophy to include consideration of the human condition. Gabriel d'Haussonville captures the descriptive essence of *Poésies* saying; "L'éternel devenir, l'universel phénoménisme, la fluidité perpétuelle des formes et des êtres, toute cette conception de l'univers . . . se retrouve . . . ennoblie par les poésies et virilement envisagée dans ses conséquences" (55).[xcix] His summation acknowledges Ackermann's skill in probing the implications for humanity of consciousness of evolution. Ackermann's poetry highlights the angst that man experiences upon realizing that he is just another link in the evolutionary chain. Using scientific reasoning, she unfolds a philosophy that fills the existential void. Her philosophy is to confront the scientific evidence of mortality.

3.4.2.2 Metaphysical Direction

Comtean positivism, with its dismissal of religious dogma and lack of consideration of evolutionary theory, presents man with two existential problems. The first is that humans, who are no longer expected to spend their entire lives atoning for sins, in the quest for everlasting life, have no clear purpose. The second is not knowing where to turn for solace, if not to a supernatural entity. Ackermann explores these problems in her *Poésies philosophiques.*

Comte places positivism in a material context, emphasizing the inability of the postrevolutionary administrations, all of which represent variations on the monarchy of the *ancien régime*, to institute a stable government (Mary Pickering *Auguste* 14).[c] Comte says that, after graduating from the theological to the metaphysical state, man conceives of *Nature*, rather than God, as the creator. In the positive state, where the only knowledge is that which can be scientifically proven, Comte never proposes an alternative creative force.[ci] He believes that man should focus on organizing his earthly existence, rather than on establishing his origin and

destiny (*Cours*, 1: 4). Comte acknowledges that humanity is fascinated by the human condition; at the same time, the philosopher attempts to persuade his readership of the futility of the study. He muses, “Il est bien remarquable . . . que les questions les plus radicalement inaccessibles à nos moyens, la nature intime des êtres, l'origine et la fin de tous les phénomènes, soient précisément celles que notre intelligence se propose par-dessus tout dans cet état primitif” (*Cours*, 1: 8). Without scientific evidence, speculating on origins cannot credibly contribute to the construction of a positive society.

Ackermann, as stated previously, does examine those issues, applying positive reasoning to the notion of *Nature* as architect. Nature for the poet is not sentient, as in the metaphysical state, but scientific. Following inviolable laws, nature unfolds life systematically. Adhering to scientific precepts and abandoning faith in a supernatural power is consistent with Comtean positivism. Ackermann’s thought also culls principles from Spinozan pantheism. It is not surprising that the poet would incorporate an additional philosophy, since the father of positivism did not provide the necessary tools for her purpose.[cii] Pantheism says that God is one with the cosmos. Diversity comes from different amalgamations of a single substance. Spinoza calls these variations *modes.* Pantheism solves the disparity between the eternal universe and temporal lifeforms by designating substances as *thinking* or *extended* (temporal or eternal).

3.4.3 An Evolutionary Spin on Comtean Femininity

In Comte’s *System,* he separates the essential participants in his “constitution morale” into three groups: philosophers, who provide reason; “l’élément populaire,” which contributes “l’activité”; and women, who emanate regulatory sentiment (*Système* 204, 207). Women are charged with “le besoin de rétablir la subordination systématique de la politique à la morale,” through “le culte de la femme” (*Système* 207). Women are the ideal force to inspire philosophers

and the proletariat because they naturally seek the betterment of society and because they are impulsive and spontaneous (*Système* 1: 207).[ciii] The power of passion to incite to action is not limited to positivist poetry; it also exists in the female psyche. Comte believes that emotion, or sentiment, is a uniquely feminine quality (*Correspondence* Oct. 31, 1845).

Ackermann claims to adhere to a Republican ideal of womanhood. She expresses deep gratitude to her mother for preventing her from becoming a woman *de lettres* (*Ma Vie* xiii). She disapproves of women writers and believes that a woman should dedicate her life to providing a family and "foyer" for her husband (Citoleux and Ackermann 530).

Despite her attestations of conservatism, Ackermann's powerful verses provide evidence that she does not fit the Comtean feminine mold. The poet writes in her journal, "Notre esprit est plein d'embryons de pensées dont quelques-unes auraient chance de vivre si nous les mettions au monde. La seule manière d'arriver à une heureuse délivrance, c'est de les écrire. Dégagées alors de leurs enveloppements, elles se laisseraient voir et juger." (*Pensées* 22). This passage, with its imagery of giving birth, challenges the Comtean notion of women as unthinking, emotional beings. Ackermann not only implies that women are rational, she gives evidence of female thought in her *Poésies.*

3.5 Analysis of Poems

3.5.1 Science, Theology and Nothingness in *Pascal*

In *Pensées,* Ackermann writes of Pascal, "Nul certitude, et pourtant il faut croire: contradiction terrible où il s'est enfermé. Il s'y agite et s'y meurtrit. Son seul re*Cours* fut d'accabler la raison. Elle terrassée, voyez comme il triomphe! Plus de justice, plus de pitié; damnation d'un bout à l'autre de la création!" (30). Her observation reflects the negative effects of rejecting reason in favor of Christianity. I show that both Ackermann and Comte consider

science to provide answers to earthly phenomena that contradict theological arguments. Comte, as the father of positivism, foresees a time in the near future, when scientific explanations of physical phenomena will render Christianity obsolete.

It is impossible to overemphasize the impact of evolutionary theory on thought in the latter 19th century. Ackermann, writing from a space where the place of humanity in the chain of existence has been proven by science, theorizes about how scientific advances might lead humans to return to religious dogma: fear of the known. Although the poet's opinion on the effect of science on society diverges from that of the philosopher, she still shares his conviction that science reveals the truth.

Ackermann's insistence on science as a basis for humanity is evident in the poem *Pascal.* The poem was written in Nice in 1871, which would have been during the war with Prussia, but before her move to Paris. The horrors of the war lead the poet to question both God and science. Neither provides a logical justification for the violence; however, the poet prefers the impassivity of science to the capricious cruelty of the Christian God. She cloaks her argument in the intellectual journey of Blaise Pascal, following him from his early commitment to seeking truth, through a mysterious materialistic period, and finally to his rejection of reason and rededication to theology.[civ] She concludes the poem with a defiant declaration to Pascal that humanity in the positive state challenges his vengeful God to destroy mankind once and for all.

The respect that the intellectual community has for scientific reasoning is established in Part I.

> Lorsque Pascal, rempli de puissance et d'audace,
> Jusque devant le Sphinx par sa fougue entraîné,
> S'écriait, lui jetant sa réponse à la face:
> "Il est vaincu, j'ai deviné!"

Il le voyait déjà, son horrible adversaire,

Couché dans la poussière, au moment d'expirer.

En effet, du rocher dont il faisait son aire

Le monstre vint tomber aux pieds du téméraire, Mais c'était pour le dévorer.

Au tour du Sphinx alors de manquer sa victime.

Dans ce pâle chrétien qu'il croyait sous sa dent

Il trouvait un athlète héroïque, sublime, Et qui le menaçait tout en se défendant.

Au lieu de reculer, regardez! il assaille.

. . . . . .

Nous les avons toujours dans l'âme et dans l'oreille

Ces cris et ces défis du jeune audacieux. (Part I: *Le Sphynx*)

The first two stanzas recount Pascal using his reason to advance understanding of the unknown. The figure of the sphynx symbolizes the unknown. Describing Pascal's discoveries as "audace" reveals that the unknown is God. Christian dogma considers it blasphemous for mankind to attempt to attain understanding of the divine purpose. The second stanza, presenting an "horrible adversaire," depicts the Christian God as vicious. Pascal believes he is achieving enlightenment, as he sees his opponent "Couché dans la poussière, au moment d'expirer;" however, it is a false sentiment. The struggle for power, in the form of knowledge, is merely beginning. The sphynx prepares to devour the seeker. The third stanza celebrates the determination of Pascal who, like an "athlète héroïque," repels the attempts of the unknown to withhold understanding. "Au lieu de reculer . . . il assaille." When the poet says that the cries and challenges of Pascal still ring in the ears of "nous," she is expressing the admiration that the

intellectual community still holds for him. The implication is that attempting to explain earthly phenomena through logical reasoning is praiseworthy.

Part IV, "L'Inconnu," is quite extensive, and I analyze selected sections in two parts. The following lines express the specific truth that eludes Pascal and that consumes humanity: the human condition. The lines depict three different stages of human thought: theological, positive and positive post-evolutionary theory.

Tu nous en fait l'aveu: si quelque chose au monde (1)
T'a jamais irrité, Pascal, et confondu,
C'est que l'on pût dormir en une paix profonde,
Lorsque sur un abîme on se sait suspendu; (4)
C'est un monstre pour toi que cette indifférence. (5)
Quoi! ne point s'enquérir du suprême secret
Qui doit remplir nos cœurs d'horreur ou d'espérance;
Rester dans l'insouci du suprême intérêt;
Aux choses d'ici-bas restreindre notre envi;
Sur des spectacles vains tenant fixés nos yeux,
Passer sans demander autre chose à la vie
Que son voile d'un jour pour nous cacher les cieux! (12)
Tu voulais que la peur, l'espoir, l'inquiétude, (13)
Nous enfonçât dans l'âme un aiguillon puissant,
Que notre éternité fût notre unique étude
Et que, dans les tourments d'un désir incessant,
L'homme, s'il ignorait, cherchât en gémissant. (17)

Lines 1-4 conjure the great mystery that consumes humanity throughout existence: what lies in wait beyond the grave, “Lorsque sur un abîme on se sait suspendu.” The word “abîme,” Christian symbolism evoking hell, locates the context in the theological stage of thought. Lines 5-11 connote thought during pre-evolutionary Comtean positivism. The phrases, “ne point s’enquérir du suprême secret” and “Rester dans l’insouci du suprême intérêt” allude to the period when questions of origin are considered non-scientific. Lines 9-10 detail subjects that science considers valid: “choses d’ici-bas” and “des spectacles vains.” Lines 11-12, characterizing the preoccupations of Comtean philosophy as a “voile d’un jour,” insert the poet’s opinion that neglecting to consider the implications of man’s demonstrated ephemeral nature serves merely to “nous cacher les cieux.”

The second section of “L’Inconnu” that I will analyze below, develops Ackermann’s extended positivism.

Nous voulons avant tout, pour la nacelle humaine, (1)
Un pilote plus sûr que le mensonge saint,
Et nous repousserons toute chimère vaine
Qui, comme rive ou port, nous offrirait son sein;
Car nous avons élu pour objet de conquête, Non une illusion, mais la réalité.
Entre un gouffre et le ciel après avoir flotté,
Rencontrant un mirage on s’abuse, on s’arrête.
Nous, nous voulons aller jusqu’à la Vérité: (9)
Prêts à tout affronter, nous marchons droit sur elle. (10)
A notre appel ardent, s’empressant d’accourir,
La Science nous ouvre une route nouvelle,
Et du voile jeté sur la face éternelle

Sa main lève les plis. Qu'allons-nous découvrir?

Lines 1-9 reiterate the resolve of the post-evolutionary positivist intellectual to reject any unsubstantiated assertion, an "illusion" or a "mirage," and to conduct a scientific investigation. The poet says, "Nous, nous voulons aller jusqu'à la Vérité." Lines 10-14 note advances in scientific thought, "une route nouvelle," that will raise the "voile." The final question, "Qu'allons-nous découvrir?" presents the notion of science as still evolving.[cv]

3.5.2 Evolution and Feminism in *La Nature à L'homme*

Dans tout l'enivrement d'un orgueil sans mesure,

Ébloui des lueurs de ton esprit borné,

Homme, tu m'as crié: "Repose-toi, Nature! Ton œuvre est close: je suis né!" (par. 1)

Quoi! lorsqu'elle a l'espace et le temps devant elle,

Quand la matière est là sous son doigt créateur,

Elle s'arrêterait, l'ouvrière immortelle,

Dans l'ivresse de son labeur? (par. 2)

Et c'est toi qui serais mes limites dernières?

L'atome humain pourrait entraver mon essor?

C'est à cet abrégé de toutes les misères

Qu'aurait tendu mon long effort? (par. 3)

Non, tu n'es pas mon but, non, tu n'es pas ma borne

A te franchir déjà je songe en te créant;

Je ne viens pas du fond de l'éternité morne.

Pour n'aboutir qu'à ton néant. (par. 4)

The above section homes in on the implications of evolution on human consciousness. The first two stanzas use imagery of industrial production to introduce the notion of man as coming into being through a process. The poet describes humans as an "oeuvre," which Nature, the "ouvrière," fabricates from "la matière." The construction mechanism is described as a "labeur." Using imagery from the life experience of the working class suggests that it is a target readership. As Ackermann has announced the desire to help her fellow man comprehend and confront the suffering that is life, it is not unexpected that she would attempt to reach this enormous population. Rather than use symbolism to describe humanity in stanza three, the poet uses the term "atome humain." That word choice is an example of creating art through science: in this case, physics. The description denies any extraordinary status to the human race, instead stating that it is made from the same elemental material as the rest of the universe. In stanza two, Nature, the "ouvrière" goes on to ridicule the notion that her work would be complete after producing mortal man, given that all the tools of creation still exist. In stanza three, Nature ridicules the notion that man would cease to evolve, given his imperfect attributes; "Et c'est toi qui serais mes limites dernières?" For emphasis she adds, "C'est à cet abrégé de toutes les misères / Qu'aurait tendu mon long effort?" In the stanzas below, the poet incorporates additional terms from physics and astronomy to awaken a sense of the mechanism of the cosmos.

J'aspire! C'est mon cri, fatal, irrésistible.

Pour créer l'univers je n'eus qu'à le jeter;

L’atome s’en émut dans sa sphère invisible, L’astre se mit à graviter. (par. 7)

L’éternel mouvement n’est que l’élan des choses

Vers l’idéal sacré qu’entrevoit mon désir;

Dans le *Cours* ascendant de mes métamorphoses Je le poursuis sans le saisir; (par. 8)

Paragraph 7 portrays the uniformity of the universe, from the smallest atom, which “s’émut dans son sphere invisible” to the distant star, which “se mit à graviter.” Depicting the entire cosmos as proceeding from the same elemental material supports the poet’s argument that each successive product is but a new attempt to attain perfection.[cvi] “L’éternel movement n’est que l’élan des choses / Vers l’idéal sacré qu’entrevoit mon désir.” Because nature chases the ideal “sans le saisir,” evolution continues. The above stanzas are evidence that awareness of the sciences has entered the public consciousness. We know that public education has adopted a science-based education and we know also, from Ackermann’s own reading, that news of scientific advances is available to the reading public.

Point d’arrêt à mes pas, point de trêve à ma tâche!

Toujours recommencer et toujours repartir.

Mais je n’engendre pas sans fin et sans relâche

Pour le plaisir d’anéantir. (par. 11)

J’ai déjà trop longtemps fait œuvre de marâtre,

J’ai trop enseveli, j’ai trop exterminé,

Moi qui ne suis au fond que la mère idolâtre

D'un seul enfant qui n'est pas né. (par. 12)

Quand donc pourrai-je enfin, émue et palpitante,

Après tant de travaux et tant d'essais ingrats,

A ce fils de mes vœux et de ma longue attente

Ouvrir éperdument les bras? (par. 13)

De toute éternité, certitude sublime!

Il est conçu; mes flancs l'ont senti s'agiter.

L'amour qui couve en moi, l'amour que je comprime

N'attend que Lui pour éclater. (par.14)

The above section uses imagery of birth to further portray evolution, but also to put forth a radical view of femininity. The biological function of women is to give birth, but the poet refers to the evolutionary process that discards one creation after another as an "oeuvre de marâtre".[cvii] Nature as the mother of the universe is loving; the fourth stanza describes "L'amour qui couve en moi, / l'amour que je comprime." Bestowing this love is not instinctive, however. The "tant de travaux" and "tant d'essairs ingrats" that are born and die are not objects of her affection. The vehicle for issuing new life professes that her love will be reserved for an eventual "fils de . . . [ses] voeux." Women are thoughtful beings, who make a conscious choice to love.

Where Comte considers sentiment, in this case love, to be an innate quality of women, Ackermann shows women as beings who reason, choosing whom and when to love.

3.5.3 Feminism and Love in *L'Amour et la mort*

This poem uses the theme of lovers declaring undying devotion, even as they move toward oblivion to transmit three key notions. The first is another affirmation of the place of man in the evolutionary chain. The second notion is the impassivity of the creative force toward humanity and the third is the empowerment that *love* gives to humans in the face of their temporality. It is indisputable that humans will die. Rather than provide supernatural comfort, by suggesting that life will continue in another realm, Ackermann shows how the destiny of man aligns with the process of evolution. Consciousness of one's mortality does not alleviate metaphysical concerns, however. Instead, it raises the question of the purpose of humanity. Ackermann argues that the capacity to love actually makes humans superior to nature. At the end of their life cycle, they can feel a sense of accomplishment, if they have loved.

Part I.

Amants, autour de vous une voix inflexible
Crie à tout ce qui naît: "Aime et meurs ici-bas!"
La mort est implacable et le ciel insensible;
Vous n'échapperez pas. (par. 3)

Eh bien! puisqu'il le faut, sans trouble et sans murmure,
Forts de ce même amour dont vous vous enivrez
Et perdus dans le sein de l'immense Nature,
Aimez donc, et mourez! (par. 4)

Part I introduces the lovers, then forewarns them of their inevitable demise. The poet portrays the indifference of scientific processes, calling death “implacable,” and characterizing “le ciel,” which symbolizes the creative force, as “insensible.” The poet provides an initial word of encouragement, even as the lovers face their destiny writing, “Forts de ce même amour dont vous vous enivrez / . . . / Aimez donc, et mourez!” Love strengthens them.

In Part II, the lovers dispute the evidence of science, claiming to have immortal souls. This section goes through the debate of how a loving God can cause earthly suffering, only to promise joy on another plane of existence. The debate between theology and positivism has been discussed in *La Nature,* so I will not revisit the theme here.

Part III

Eternité de l’homme, illusion! chimère!
Mensonge de l’amour et de l’orgueil humain!
Il n’a point eu d’hier, ce fantôme éphémère,
Il lui faut un demain! (par. 1)
Pour cet éclair de vie et pour cette étincelle
Qui brûle une minute en vos coeurs étonnés,
Vous oubliez soudain la fange maternelle
Et vos destins bornés. (par. 2)

. . . . . .

Heureux, vous aspirez la grande âme invisible Qui remplit tout, les bois, les champs de ses ardeurs;
La Nature sourit, mais elle est insensible:

Que lui font vos bonheurs? (par. 6)

Elle n’a qu’un désir, la marâtre immortelle,

C’est d’enfanter toujours, sans fin, sans trêve, encor.

Mère avide, elle a pris l’éternité pour elle,

Et vous laisse la mort. (par. 7)

. . . . . .

Ces délires sacrés, ces désirs sans mesure

Déchaînés dans vos flancs comme d’ardents essaims,

Ces transports, c’est déjà l’Humanité future

Qui s’agite en vos seins. (par. 11)

Elle se dissoudra, cette argile légère

Qu’ont émue un instant la joie et la douleur;

Les vents vont disperser cette noble poussière

Qui fut jadis un coeur. (par. 12)

Mais d’autres coeurs naîtront qui renoueront la trame

De vos espoirs brisés, de vos amours éteints,

Perpétuant vos pleurs, vos rêves, votre flamme,

Dans les âges lointains. (par. 13)

Tous les êtres, formant une chaîne éternelle,

Se passent, en courant, le flambeau de l’amour.

Chacun rapidement prend la torche immortelle

Et la rend à son tour. (par. 14)

. . . . . .

Du moins vous aurez vu luire un éclair sublime;

Il aura sillonné votre vie un moment;

En tombant vous pourrez emporter dans l'abîme

Votre éblouissement. (par. 16)

. . . . . .

Sur le bord de la tombe, et sous ce regard même,

Qu'un mouvement d'amour soit encor votre adieu!

Oui, faites voir combien l'homme est grand lorsqu'il aime,

Et pardonnez à Dieu! (par. 18)

In Part III, the lovers arrive at the conclusion that, within the cosmos, the notion of eternal life is a is an "illusion" and a "chimère," created to fill a human need. The first stanza explains that, not knowing the origin of humanity, the "hier," the "orgueil" and the "amour" that humans possess, demand that they identify a future: "un demain." Ackermann reinforces the idea that ignorance does not meet societal needs.

Stanza 3 uses the term "fange maternelle" to symbolize the secular nature of creation. In Ackermann's poems, motherhood is depicted as an emotionless, biological process. In stanza six, the poet notes that the beauty of nature's creation can lead to the misconception that she is a benevolent force. This is not scientific, however. Nature is "insensible," and unconcerned with

human sentiments. This interpretation of motherhood is removed from the Comtean vision, which portrays women as icons of purity and sentiment. The imagery of creation as a birthing process begins in stanza 7. Nature, the "Mère avide," continues to generate new life "sans trêve," discarding her offspring as soon as they emerge.

Stanzas 11-18 offer the lovers and the reader a solace for their human condition. Stanza 11 assures that the passion experienced by the lovers is a sign of their contribution to society. They are preparing "l'Humanité future." Stanzas 12 and 13 reveal that, although the lovers will disappear, "d'autres coeurs naîtront" to carry the sadness and loss, but also the "rêves" and the "flamme" into the future. Stanza 14 enfolds love into the evolutionary process, calling the emotion a "torche immortelle" that one being passes to another, in a "chaîne éternelle."

Stanzas 16 and 18 disclose the revelation that Ackermann has had, which makes sense of human existence. Despite the sorrow experienced during one's life, and the certainty of life ending in death, at least humans will have seen "luir un éclair sublime." The poet encourages humanity to love, even at the point of death saying, "Qu'un movement d'amour soit encore votre adieu!" The capacity to love shows "combien l'homme est grand." When the poet says, "Et pardonnez à Dieu," she means that love brings purpose to an otherwise absurd existence.

3.6 Conclusion

On the surface, *Poésies philosophiques* may appear pessimistic, as Ackermann examines finitude from religious, scientific and existential perspectives, bluntly reminding the reader that it is inescapable. A deeper look at the verses, however, reveals unique capacities that she recognizes in man: love and consciousness of his own destiny. These traits allow him to find purpose in an apparently pointless existence. The specific aims of Comte and Ackermann differ,

with Ackermann addressing existential concerns and Comte addressing morality and public administration. Nonetheless, both intellectuals base their thought on positivist principles and act from a common desire to serve humanity. Three notions present in *Poésies philosophiques* that align with Comtean positivism are: the supremacy of science over theology as a source of knowledge; the role of art in vulgarizing philosophical thought; and the power of love to fulfill secular, spiritual needs.

Ackermann's *Poésies* are somber verses that do not offer a palliative for the human condition. The poet uses the theory of evolution to counter the notion that man is the pinnacle of creation. Leaning further on scientific evidence of the existence of earlier species, Ackermann assures the reader that death is the ultimate fate of all living organisms. Where Comtean positivism in the first half of the century anticipates the establishment of a peaceful, just society, based on scientific laws of humanity, the goal of positivism is redirected in the work of Ackermann. In the second half of the century, it appears evident that a positive social construct as Comte envisioned it will not become a reality. Institutions continue to rise and fall, and war seems to be an occurrence on which humans can rely. Amidst the ongoing strife, Ackermann continues to endorse science as the source of truth. However, she adds the caveat that the answers it offers can be uncompromising and difficult to accept. Science reveals to humans what their destiny is, twhile religion provides a supernatural framework that allows them to avoid confronting
their fate.

Like Comte, Ackermann also sees limits to the functionality of science. Where Comte notes a need for a moral foundation, Ackermann sees a need to confront the human condition. Both philosopher and poet recognize love as the missing element. Writing at a time when science has confirmed the descendance of man from earlier species, she is able to examine the fate of

man in a positive fashion. Furthermore, the advances made in scientific disciplines emphasize that man is an insignificant part of the greater universe. The poet determines that Nature is a perpetual creative force, but one that acts unemotionally. The supremacy of humanity comes from the fact that humans have consciousness. They love and they understand their place in the cosmos, two traits which give them the intrepidity with which to face existence. With *Poésies,* Ackermann communicates this truth to contemporary society.

4 Conclusion

The works examined in *Positively Engaging* are exciting, both because they are virtually unknown to modern scholars and because of their importance as historical documents. With *Lucie, Les Jumeaux d'Hellas* and *Poésies philosophiques,* Clotilde de Vaux, Clémence Royer and Louise Ackermann form a literary school that reflects the influence of Comtean positivism and the social concerns of women, circa 1850. Each of the women both draws on and advances the positivist philosophy of Auguste Comte to transmit her message. Additionally, as de Vaux, Royer and Ackermann produce their works at different times chronologically, they give evidence of the spread of positivist thought in 19th century French society.

De Vaux writes during the July Monarchy, a period when French feminism is just regaining momentum, following 50 years of repressive legislation. She provides the first example of fiction that uses the scientific method and positive principles in fiction to express the social concerns of women. Familiarity with Comte's positivist philosophy is largely limited to intellectual circles during her year of close friendship with the philosopher, so she is one of the first writers to popularize his ideology. Additionally, their correspondence reveals that thoughts on platonic love, altruistic practices and improved social institutions for women, featured prominently in his *System,* originate with de Vaux.

Royer writes *Jumeaux* in 1864, two years after introducing the French intellectual community to Darwin's *On the Origin of Species.* Her novel and other writings support some of Comte's notions, such as the supremacy of science over theology and the need for a spiritual consciousness, while using his positivist method to challenge others. She uses logical, positive reasoning to argue for legalized divorce, matrilinity and equal social status for women. As evolutionary theory has become more mainstream by the time Royer writes, she argues that the

search for origins is a legitimate, scientific endeavor. In addition, Royer gives a nod to topics such as chaos theory and LUCA, which are of interest to scientists today.

When Ackermann publishes her *Poésies* in 1871, positivism is the dominant thought in France. Her work reflects both a conviction that science offers truthful answers to phenomena that theology does not, and an awareness of the existential emptiness that accompanies a godless society. Ackermann's poems reflect the influence of evolutionary theory on consciousness. Like de Vaux and Royer, Ackermann uses the scientific method to develop her arguments, concluding that Nature, as a source of creation, is impassive, but consciousness of man's capacity for love makes sense of the human condition.

All three women embrace the Republican ideal of femininity; however, because they advocate for equable treatment in society, they may be considered feminist. In using Comtean positivism thought to develop and communicate their feminist messages, the three women found a school of thought that expands on the work begun by the women's movement during the Revolution. Advancing beyond adaptation of laws governing men in society to serve women equally, de Vaux, Royer and Ackermann introduce a philosophy for women in a positive society. Their groundbreaking works, although still overly-shrowded in obscurity, did offer a model for, and serve to influence, the 20th-century writing of more-celebrated French women writers like Simone de Beauvoir. Among other things, it is hoped that *Positively Engaging* will represent a positive step forward in catalyzing that process.

Notes

[i] Martine Reid expresses the impact of the deficiency of women writers well when she says that, in restricting the memory of female writers to a few who exhibit literary qualities considered to be inherently masculine, literary history has neglected to represent "un ensemble important d'auteures et de publications de toutes sortes" (6).

[ii] See Jo Burr Margadant, *The New Biography: Performing Femininity in Nineteenth-Century France* for more on de Vaux. See Florence Rochefort, "Politiques féministes du nom (France, xixe-xxie siècle)," Joy Harvey, "A Focal Point for Feminism, Politics, and Science in France: The Clémence Royer Centennial Celebration of 1930" for more on Royer. See Wendy Greenberg, "Mentoring in Four Nineteenth-Century Women Poets," Deborah Jenson, "Gender and the Aesthetic of 'le Mal': Louise Ackermann's 'Poésies philosohiques', 1871" and Adrianna Paliyenko, "Is a Woman Poet Born or Made? Discourse of Maternity in Louisa Siefert and Louise Ackermann" for more on Ackermann.

[iii] Pre-revolutionary in this dissertation means prior to the revolution of 1789.

[iv] See John Tresch for more on Comte's positivist calendar.

[v] See Thomas Dixon, "La science du cerveau et la religion de l'Humanité: Auguste Comte et l'altruisme dans l'Angleterre victorienne" for more on the influence of Comtean positivism on the thought of John Stuart Mill, John Henry Bridges, Henry Sidgwick and Herbert Spencer. See Henry Eisen, "Herbert Spencer and the Spectre of Comte" for a comparison of two philosophers.

[vi] See *Cours* 1: 37-39.

[vii] Comte writes, "Maintenant que l'esprit humain a fondé la physique céleste, la physique terrestre . . . La physique organique . . . Il lui reste à terminer le système des sciences d'observation en fondant la physique social."

[viii] He says, “Tant que les intelligences individuelles n'auront pas adhéré par un assentiment unanime à un certain nombre d'idées générales capables de former une doctrine sociale commune, on ne peut se dissimuler que l'état des nations restera . . . essentiellement révolutionnaire, malgré tous les palliatifs politiques qui pourront être adoptés, et ne comportera réellement que des institutions provisoires. Il est également certain que si cette réunion des esprits dans une même communion de principes peut une fois être obtenu, les institutions convenables en découleront . . . le plus grand désordre étant déjà dissipé par ce seul fait.” He also says, “. . . il ne reste plus . . . qu’à compléter la philosophie positive en y comprenant l’étude des phénomènes sociaux, et ensuite à la résumer en un seul corps de doctrine homogène” (Cours, 1: 40, 42).

[ix] The Guizot Law of 1833, which makes access to elementary schooling mandatory for all males, leads to a significant increase in the literacy rate (Adamowicz-Hariasz 161-162).

[x] See Moses for more on the hardships faced by poor women.

[xi] Henriette, de Vaux’s mother, comes from a ducal family dating back to the fourteenth century. See Charles de Rouvre for de Vaux’s complete genealogy. DeVaux’s father was a low-level officer in Napleon’s army.

[xii] The wife of Louis-Phillippe is Amélie. Claire Moses provides insight on bourgeois women as social critics, highlighting the terrible effects of patriarchal society on poor women in their tracts (37).

[xiii] Thompson’s work gives a precise list of academic topics that should be taught and how they train young women to reflect Republican notions of femininity. The primary emphasis is on laundry, mending clothes, embroidery and cleaning.

[xiv] Based on Comte's initial comments to de Vaux on *Lucie,* Mary Pickering speculates that he is opposed to de Vaux's writing ("Clotilde" 157). Subsequent correspondence shows that he supports her efforts, once he realizes that she shares his positive convictions.

[xv] Comte's suggestion is that de Vaux insist on contributing *feuilletons* on a regular basis, rather than critiquing the work of others. No matter what the merit of his counsel, de Vaux always makes her own decisions.

[xvi] The 16th definition in the *Dictionnaires d'autrefois,* "Des affections, des passions, et de tous les mouvements de l'âme," is the most closely related to Comte's use of *sentiment.* The philosopher uses *sentiment* interchangeably with *affection* and *passion.* English translations of the Comtean corpus generally translate the French word *sentiment* as *feelings,* but it can also mean *emotion.* In this context, *sentiment"* is a synonym for *emotion.* The sentiments, feelings or emotions are always positive.

[xvii] See Maria Adamowicz-Hariaz for details on the repeal and reimplementation of censorship laws related to regime changes.

[xviii] Joseph Marie Quénard in his book, *Les supercheries littéraires dévoilées, Galerie des auteurs apocryphes, supposés, déguisés, plagiaires et des éditeurs infidèles de la littérature française pendant les quatre derniers siècles* identifies Cléobule Liabour as a pseudonym (261). For more on censorship in the 19th century, see Goldstein, "Fighting," Childs and Thomas J. Cragin.

[xix] The invention of the roller press, improved inks and a means of producing larger sheets of paper lead newspapers to shift from a strictly political model to a profit model (Adamowicz-Hariasz 160-161).

[xx] Laws were enacted to bar women from the galleries of the Convention, holding senior teaching positions (qtd. In Landes 145), serving as civil witnesses, pleading in their own behalf in court or owning property without the concent of their husband (Landes 145).

[xxi] Claire Goldberg Moses gives an in-depth look at the history of feminism, from the French Revolution through the early 20th century.

[xxii] See Carla Hesse for more on women authors and intellectual property laws.

[xxiii] Claire Moses notes an increasing tendency of French women to remain single during the 19th century. In 1881, 60% of French women were still single at age 25, 32% at age thirty and 13% at age fifty (23).

[xxiv] Positivist intellectuals as a group, such Henri de Saint-Simon, Barthélemy-Prosper Enfantin and others, promote paradigms based on scientific facts. Comte's scientific credentials are more impressive, because of his association with the Ecole Polytechnique.

[xxv] See Tresch for an explanation of Comte's adaptation of primitive fetishism into the Religion of Humanity.

[xxvi] In June 1848, approximately 12,000 artisans and laborers revolt against the closing of National Workshops, which have been established to counteract unemployment. This revolt, which lasts less than a week, occurs during the period between the establishment of the 2nd Republic, in 1848 and the 2nd Empire in 1851 (Horne 67, 73).

[xxvii] The kingdom of Naples exists in southern Italy from medieval times to1860. Three uprisings occur in the 19th century: in 1820, when a constitution is established; 1848, when Sicily vies for independence and 1860, when Garibaldi invades. During the latter skirmish, both Sicily and Naples elect to unite with northern Italy (Britannica).

[xxviii] Demars offers a 3-page analysis of *Jumeaux* in her biography of Royer.

[xxix] Volume 1 of *Jumeaux* exists as a hard copy in only two libraries worldwide; the Library of Congress and the Bibliothèque nationale de France and a copy is now also available at Norlin Library at the University of Colorado, Boulder. Volume 2 is available as an ebook on googlebooks. *La Jeunesse* exists on microfilm at the Library of Congress.

[xxx] See Demars; Fraisse; Harvey and Milice and Bernard.

[xxxi] Yvette Conry discusses the multi-faceted controversy over Darwinism in France, prior to 1900 (qtd. in Fraisse *Lecture* 88). See John Tresch for more on the debate between Cuvier and the Etienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire over a fixed versus progressive nature.

[xxxii] See Joy Harvey and Sara Joan Miles for exposés on Royerian contributions to science and feminism in the nineteenth century. See Aline DeMars and Geneviève Fraisse for modern biographies of Royer.

[xxxiii] Aline Demars observes that *La Leçon d'astronomie de François Arago à l'Observatoire*, by Théobald Chartran, is more notable for including Royer, than for the quality of the artwork.

[xxxiv] For a more detailed synopsis and analysis of philosophical themes addressed in more detail in future, non-fiction works by Royer, see Milice, Albert, and Jean Bernard. *Clemence Royere et sa doctrine de la vie*. Peyronnet, 1926. *Gallica*, gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k9763726r.texteImage.

[xxxv] The narrator refers to this as the *forum républicain*, emphasizing the important role it plays in Roman politics.

[xxxvi] The author uses the pronoun *il* to refer to Chrysès, although this character is Léona, in disguise.

[xxxvii] Bourgeois acquiring noble titles face derision from hereditary nobility. Thus, it is important that Gassi be able to trace his lineage back several generations.

[xxxviii] The ending of *Jumeaux* brings to mind the passage from *Les Confessions d'un enfant du siècle*; " . . . derrière eux un passé à jamais détruit, s'agitant encore sur ses ruines, avec tous les fossiles des siècles de l'absolutisme ; devant eux l'aurore d'un immense horizon, les premières clartés de l'avenir ; et entre ces deux mondes . . . [sic] quelque chose de semblable à l'Océan qui sépare le vieux continent de la jeune Amérique . . . (7-8).

[xxxix] Literary censorship is enacted by Napoleon Bonaparte in the *brevet* of February 5, 1810. This law, in effect until 1870, limits the number of both printers and booksellers and requires that they hold a "certificat de bonne vie et mœurs." It also requires that they declare "attachement à la patrie et au souverain" (Eve Natchine).

[xl] *La Fronde* is the preeminent feminist magazine in France, founded by Marguerite Durand in 1897. This issue, published in 1930, commemorates the centennial of the birth of Royer.

[xli] Badash actually says that "interest in science has waned" because of a widespread belief that science had progressed as far as it ever would. He also notes Comte, who said that science had reached the "positive" state (49, 50). Maurice Crosland says that scientific study slowed considerably between 1870 and 1871 (188).

[xlii] Neither the English edition of *Jumeaux* nor any additional reviews in English publications have been located, as of this moment. This offers the potential for additional scholarship.

[xliii] The publishing house is founded in 1861, when Albert Lacroix borrows funds to publish *Les Misérables*, by the exiled Victor Hugo. Jean-Yves Mollier, professor emeritus of the Université de Versailles-Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines and specialist in the history of publishing notes that Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and Edgar Quinet also circumvent French censorship laws by publishing in Belgium (332).

[xliv] The early days of the July Monarchy and the period immediately following the Revolution of 1848.

[xlv] See Childs on Napoleon III and the Belgian publication, *Le Charivari*.

[xlvi] It is common practice for novels to appear in serial form in the press, prior to publication as a complete book. In his review of Gretchen van Slyke's book, The Occult History of Humanity, Peter Fritzche notes that Consuelo and The Countess of Rudolstadt, by George Sand, were both initially published as serials (par. 1).

[xlvii] The term *scientist* is not yet in common usage. The term *intellectuals* includes scientific thinkers (David Cahan).

[xlviii] The French Revolution, in 1789, liberates the people from centuries of unjust subjugation to the nobility and the clergy (William Bristow).

[xlix] See discussion in John Tresch of integration of Spinozan conception of God in the philosophies of Victor Cousin and Henri de Saint-Simon. See Mary Pickering for exposé of points of difference between Comtean and Saint-Simonian doctrine.

[l] Musset says that his generation feels lost, following the fall of Napoleon. Where his contemporaries once anticipated the "great and splendid future" that the emperor promised, they now have no direction. Their daily experience contains only the "*ossements* and debris of the past" (Grimsley 127).

[li] The term *art* includes painting, sculpture, literature and music.

[lii] This transition happens under the Emperor Constantine, in the fourth century.

[liii] Royer identifies *music* as an exception to this mimesis.

[liv] It is important to clarify the terms *Christian* and *Catholic* in the context of 19th century France. According to the "Nouveau dictionnaire universel des arts et des sciences, françois, latin et anglois," the term *chrétien* means, "Qui appartient à Jésus-Christ ou à la Religion qu'il a établie," while *catholique* is "le titre qui distingue l'Eglise Romaine des autres Eglises" (223, 198). Thus, *catholique* is a subset of *chrétien*. There is significant discussion about Protestantism in the rest of the Western world and the inroads it is making in France at this time, rendering the distinction between the two words substantial. At the same time, a more heated debate exists between Catholicism and "toute nouvelle religion ridicule" (qtd in De Laveley 810). Writers still refer to France as a *Catholic* nation in the nineteenth century, when the overarching religious discussion concerns *Christianity* versus *secular religion*. Addtiionally, Royer, who is raised Catholic and educated in a convent school, abandons Catholic beliefs and spends many years in Switzerland, which is a Protestant country. Based on the above reasoning, this paper will use the term *Christian* except when the distinction is necessary.

[lv] Michael Angeleo, Poussin and Raphael also produced abundant Christian art. Mattéo must have the opinion that the sacred art of the artists has lesser impact than their secular art.

[lvi] Polymnia, one of the nine muses, is the patron of dance and geometry (*Britannica*).

[lvii] See Pelz on how the Plague leads to increased economic power among the peasantry and corruption in the Catholic Church.

[lviii] The field of anthropology incorporates the study of archaeology, biology, culture and linguistics to discover "what makes us human" (*What*).

[lix] Broca is a noted medical doctor and surgeon in addition to being an anthropologist. He contests the Darwinian theory of evolution (Portraits).

[lx] *Sociétés savantes,* such as this one, are bourgeois institutions of specialized study that replace the aristocratic academies of the 18th century. Two other popular organizations of scientific study are those belonging to the university and private research and training institutions. Universities do not encourage or support innovative research. With a membership of almost 300, primarily academic men, this institution is more prestigious than the competing *Société d'ethnographie* with its wealthy, non-academic, male membership (Elizabeth Williams 332, 333).

[lxi] Throughout the rest of the nineteenth century, the field of anthropology is closely associated with Broca, who defines precise goals of study. Gradually, the related term *ethnology* disappears from usage. (Williams 331).

[lxii] The search for the "last universal common ancestor" or LUCA, a current topic of biological research, is discussed in the 2016 book, *A Brief History of Creation*, Bill Mesler and H. James Cleaves II.

[lxiii] See Tresch for details on the calendar.

[lxiv] The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines *monism* as "The belief that only one being (or only one kind of being) exists, *esp.* the doctrine that all living things are elements of a universal being."

[lxv] See Fraisse, "Lecture*"* for a comprehensive study of the contemporary reception of Royer by her colleagues.

[lxvi] Hélène Cixous expresses a similar idea about feminine writing saying; "Woman must write her self . . . . Woman must put herself into the text—as into the world and into history—by her own movement (875).

[lxvii] Elme Caro is a noted literary critic for the *Revue des deux mondes* (Christophe Charle 41). Christine Planté says that the public reception of Ackermann's *Poésies philosophiques* "n'a . . . pas d'équivalent au XIXe siècle" (*Barbey* 164).

[lxviii] Comte continues to refine his theory and give lectures on his *Course* throughout the 1830s, when Cuvier publicly debates Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire and his theory of *transformism.* Over the following two decades, Geoffroy Saint-Hilarian *transformism,* which rehabilitates Lamarckian *transformism,* gradually gains in prominence. For more on the relationship between the theories of Lamarck, Cuvier, Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire and Darwin, see John Tresch, Goulven Laurent and Roger Somerset for details on transformism and fixism.

[lxix] Casimir Fusil is a turn-of-the-century author and critic.

[lxx] Camille Hémon calls Prudhomme "le créateur et vraiment . . . le seul représentant" of *la poésie scientifique* (12).

[lxxi] Louise Read is a lifelong friend of Ackermann and secretary to Jules Barbey d'Aurévilly.

[lxxii] Janine Moulin is a twentieth-century literary scholar.

[lxxiii] Planté mentions the "excès d'honneur" as well as the "indignité" with which the volume is received (*Barbey* 164).

[lxxiv] Daniel Stern, having visited Ackermann in her home, notes that her library contains a Bible in Hebrew, as well as books in Chinese, Russian and German (June 8).

[lxxv] Lorenz says that, in 1890, Benjamin Constant restructures secondary education in France to reflect the Comtean hierarchy of sciences. In addition to creating the chair of Astronomy and Mechanics, he adds the study of Calculus and Sociology and his syllabi reference positivist textbooks. While the educational program officially changes in 1890, it would have been gradually incorporating science as positivism gained credibility.

[lxxvi] See Adriana Paliyenko, *Genius Envy,* "Louise Ackermann's Turn to Science" for more biographical information as well as details on critical reception of her *Poésies philosophiques*.

[lxxvii] *Contes* presents translations into verse of world folk tales and *Contes et poésies* expands to include her early poems.

[lxxviii] While the volumes sell few copies, several intellectuals, including Barbey d'Aurévilly and Daniel Stern publish glowing reviews. Théophile Gautier includes her *Contes et poésies* in his 1866 "Rapport sur le progrès de la poésie" and calls her one the "grands désespérés . . . ces génies éternellement tristes et souffrant du mal de vivre, qui ont pris pour inspiratrice la mélancolie" (See Paliyenko).

[lxxix] Ackermann had made the acquaintance of then Princess Augusta while living in Germany with her husband, Paul Ackermann. In a letter informing Baron Alexander von

Humboldt of the death of Paul, Ackermann asks him to share the "triste nouvelle" with the princess, who had shown her husband "un intérêt auquel son coeur était bien sensible" (Ackermann, *Korrespondenz* 1-3).

[lxxx] The French Revolution of 1789, the Napoleonic Wars of 1803 - 1815, the July Revolution of 1830, the Revolution if 1848, the Crimean War of 1854, the Prussian War of 1870 (*Britannica*).

[lxxxi] *Contes*, her translations into French alexandrine of international folktales, is published alone in 1855.

[lxxxii] The first definition of science in the sixth edition of the Dictionnaire de l'académie française, (1835) defines the term as: "Connaissance qu'on a de quelque chose."

[lxxxiii] Comte says in his *Cours* that human thought in all domains passes through the theological and metaphysical states, prior to reaching the positive, or scientific state.

[lxxxiv] Social progress is the end goal of the positive state.

[lxxxv] Christophe Salvat's article, *French Political Economy and Positivism* gives background on the efforts of 19th century political economists to be considered legitimate. It includes a resume of the 1860 discussion between the economist Jules Dupuit and Senator André Dupin about political economy not being considered a science.

[lxxxvi] The hierarchy of natural sciences is astronomy, physics, chemistry, physiology and social physics. He later adds mathematics. Comte inserts mathematics ahead of astronomy, later (Cours, 1: 58).

[lxxxvii] *Poésies philosophiques* is first published in 1871: however, the poems are created mainly during the 1860s.

[lxxxviii] Ackermann dedicates the poem to her nephew, who died in the conflict.

[lxxxix] The 16th definition in the Dictionnaires d'autrefois, "Des affections, des passions, et de tous les mouvements de l'âme," is the most closely related to Comte's use of sentiment. The philosopher uses sentiment interchangeably with affection and passion. English translations of the Comtean corpus consistently translate the French word sentiment as feelings. In this context, however, sentiment" is a synonym for emotion. Ackermann does not use the word sentiment in her Poésies, but it appears numerous times in her journal. The 13th definition, "La faculté que nous avons de connaître, de comprendre, d'apprécier certaines choses sans le secours du raisonnement, de l'observation ou de l'expérience, et qui est en nous comme une sorte de tact ou d'instinct naturel," is the closest definition of her use of the word. For Ackermann, sentiment most often has the meaning of sense.

[xc] According to Comte, the task of poets is to "idéaliser et stimuler," according to "une sévère education systématique" (*Système* 1: 279). See Mike Gane for detail on Comte's plan for scientific education for the working classes (84).

[xci] The definition of "speculative" is the "Partie théorique, dans chaque science" (*Dictionnaires*).

[xcii] Comte says that his philosophy is the "seule base réelle aujourd'hui d'une vraie réorganisation sociale . . . en tant que seule susceptible de satisfaire simultanément aux besoins opposés d'ordre et de progrès . . ."

[xciii] Comte thanks de Vaux for the "chasteté volontaire" that she has imposed, signaling the "efficacité physique, intellectuelle, et morale" that he has gained from thdir platonic relationship. In a later communiqué he expresses his sollicitude for her as a general guiding

principle saying, “Vous savoir . . . tranquille et heureuse, constitue de plus en plus ma principale satisfaction . . . Ce que la mysticité théologique relégua confusément au ciel, l’Humanité parviendra . . . à le réaliser dignement” (*Correspondance* 335, 338-339).

[xciv] Comte’s new program of worship does not conflict with his claim that recognizing *Nature* as the supreme creator belongs to the *metaphysical* state of philosophy, as some of his detractors claim. In establishing *Humanity* as the object of worship for his religion, he is not proposing yet another theory of origin. Rather, he is celebrating the observable and positive contribution of *man* to the world. A key difference between his *Course* and his *System* is a shift in focus between objective and subjective thought. There is a path to follow that justifies of Comte’s assertion that his new religion is consistent with his positive philosophy, but it is not necessary for establishing his links with Ackermann.

[xcv] The second faculty is *human consciousness* (*Pensées* 45).

[xcvi] Ackermann does not directly confront the question of whether or not humans have a soul, but her poems do contain elements of Spinozan pantheism.

[xcvii] Prudhomme marvels to a friend, “Combien l’hypothèse récente de l’évolution et les découvertes de la géologie reculent les limites que nous assignions à l’ancienneté de la vie terrestre et agrandissent l’horizon du passé!” (Hémon 13).

[xcviii] As noted in Chapter 2, Clémence Royer’s translation caused considerable public debate.

[xcix] Haussonville derives his insights from previously unseen personal correspondence of Ackermann, which he obtains from Ackermann’s nephew.

[c] The First Empire (Comte writes this before the Second Empire appears), The Bourbon Restoration and the July Monarchy, each one overthrown by violent conflict.

[ci] In the *Religion of Humanity*, Comte establishes *Humanity* as an object of veneration, but not as a creative force. To do so would be contrary to his assertion that it is not scientifically possible to identify a source of origin.

[cii] The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy says that there is no one coherent definition of *pantheism.* In my work, the word pantheism will imply Spinozan concepts.

[ciii] Comte says that, during the Revolution, women's passions were directed toward the common good. They led to violence, however, because they did not have an "adhésion collective" (*Système* 1: 206).

[civ] Pascal was a brilliant mathematician, physicist and philosopher. Following a mystical experience, Pascal abandons the intellectual life and adopts Jansenist theology (L. A. Triebel). In *Pascal,* Ackermann interprets the mystical event as a mysterious, platonic love affair, leading Pascal to believe his profane love was a betrayal of his devotion to God.

[cv] Ackermann's question places her in the 19th century debate over the completeness of science. See Lawrence Badash for more on the debate that begins in the 19th century but continues on today.

[cvi] This is the Spinozan concept of the universe consisting of a single substance.

[cvii] The term *marâtre*, in this context means *bad mother* (*Dictionnaires*).

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Figure 1: Photo of the *Correspondance sacrée* exchanged between de Vaux and Comte during the *année sans pareille* (Maison d'Auguste Comte website).

Appendix 2

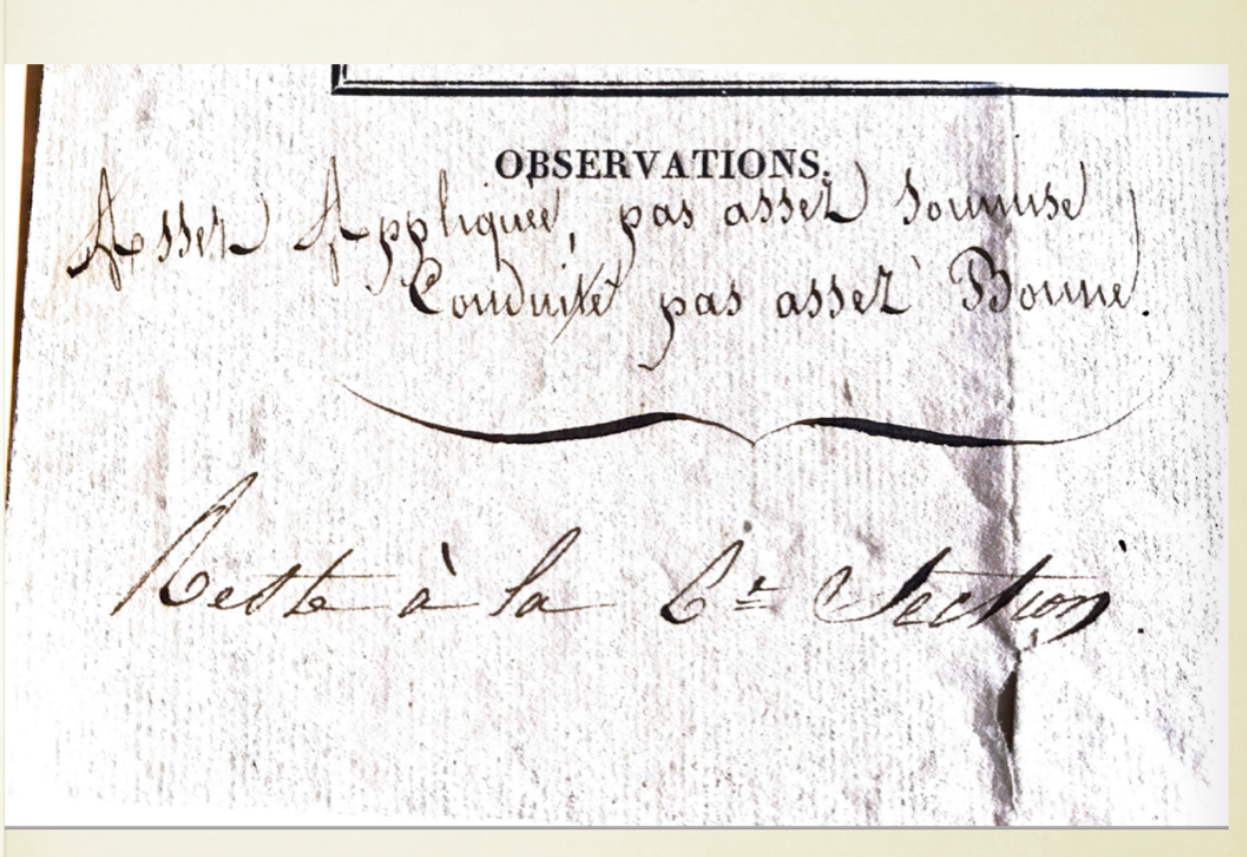
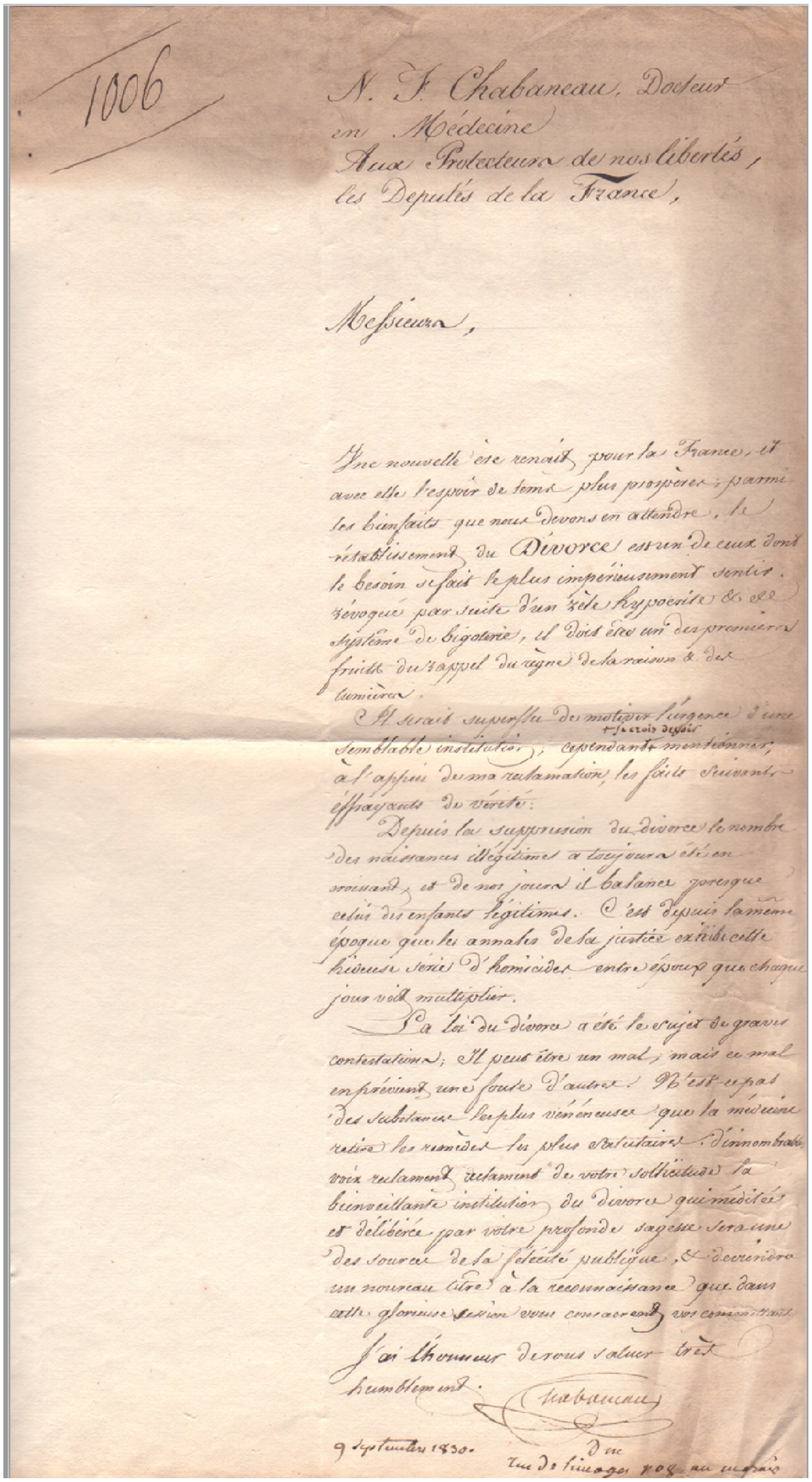


Figure 2: Note from report card noting Clotilde (Marie) de Vaux's poor conduct. (Maison d'Auguste Comte archive 2019).

Appendix 3



1006

N. F. Chabaneau, Docteur
en Médecine
Aux Protecteurs de nos libertés,
les Deputés de la France,

Messieurs,

Une nouvelle ère renait pour la France, et
avec elle l'espoir de tems plus prospères; parmi
les bienfaits que nous devons en attendre, le
rétablissement du Divorce est un de ceux dont
le besoin se fait le plus impérieusement sentir.
Révoqué par suite d'un zèle hypocrite & de
système de bigoterie, il doit être un des premiers
fruits du rappel du règne de la raison & des
lumières.

Il serait superflu de motiver l'urgence d'une
semblable institution; cependant + je crois devoir mentionner,
à l'appui de ma réclamation, les faits suivants
effrayants de vérité:

Depuis la suppression du divorce le nombre
des naissances illégitimes a toujours été en
croissant, et de nos jours il balance presque
celui des enfants légitimes. C'est depuis la même
époque que les annales de la justice exhibe cette
hideuse série d'homicides entre époux que chaque
jour voit multiplier.

La loi du divorce a été le sujet de graves
contestations; Il peut être un mal, mais ce mal
en prévient une foule d'autres. N'est-ce pas
des substances les plus vénéneuses que la médecine
retire les remèdes les plus salutaires. D'innombrables
voix réclament réclament de votre sollicitude la
bienveillante institution du divorce qui méditée
et délibérée par votre profonde sagesse sera une
des sources de la félicité publique, & deviendra
un nouveau titre à la reconnaissance que dans
cette glorieuse session vous consacreront vos commettans.

J'ai l'honneur de vous saluer très
humblement.

Chabaneau

9 septembre 1830.

[illegible]
rue de Limoges 108 au [illegible]

Figure 3: Petition for divorce addressed to Louis Phillipe (Ministère de la justice).

Appendix 4

Vendredi, 20 Juin 1845. 60 FRANCS PAR AN. Édition de Paris.

PRIX DE L'ABONNEMENT :

	Paris et départ.	Étranger.
Pour un an.....	60 f.	76 f.
—— six mois....	32	40
—— trois mois...	16	20

LE NATIONAL

DE 1834.

BUREAUX A PARIS : Rue Lepelletier, numéro 3.

PRIX DES INSERTIONS :. 1 f. 25 c. la ligne en nonpareille, sur 6 colon. 2 f. 50 c. la ligne en mignonne, sur 3 colonn.

FRANCE.

PARIS, 19 JUIN.

BUDGET DE LA MARINE.—RAPPORT DE M. BIGNON.

La France est la seule nation maritime qui, soit par ses ressources, soit en se mettant à la tête des marines secondaires, puisse défendre avec succès le principe de la liberté des mers et opposer des obstacles sérieux au système d'envahissement poursuivi avec persévérance depuis un siècle et demi par le gouvernement anglais. D'un autre côté, c'est l'Angleterre qui a toujours été l'âme des coalitions de l'Europe contre la France, qui les a entretenues de son or et appuyées de ses flottes; on peut même ajouter que, sans le concours de l'Angleterre, les coalitions du continent ne suffiraient pas à mettre en péril l'indépendance de notre pays. Cette double considération devrait toujours faire placer au premier rang, parmi les préoccupations les plus constantes de la France, l'entretien et le développement de sa puissance navale.

Cependant, dans quel état de délabrement et de faiblesse les partisans de l'alliance anglaise n'ont-ils pas laissé tomber notre marine! On n'a pas oublié les révélations accablantes que publia, il y a quelque temps, l'un de nos amiraux, et la position de l'auteur de cette note ne permet pas d'attribuer ces révélations à un esprit d'hostilité et de dénigrement contre la dynastie. Voici comment il s'exprimait à l'égard de notre marine à voiles : « Malgré toutes les illusions dont nous aimons à nous satisfaire, malgré tous les faits avancés, tous les chiffres alignés, nous n'avons, disait-il, qu'une force impuissante, *une force dont l'existence, purement nominale, n'est que sur le papier.* » Et ailleurs, en parlant de notre marine à vapeur : « Si je trace ici le tableau réel de notre marine à vapeur, si je dis à que sur les quarante-trois navires à flot que comporte le budget, il n'y en a pas dix qui puissent soutenir la comparaison avec les navires anglais, on ne me croirait pas, et je n'aurais pourtant avancé que la stricte vérité. » Et certains épisodes de la courte et facile campagne sur les côtes du Maroc, en 1844, n'ont que trop bien justifié le mauvais état de nos bâtimens, l'insuffisance de nos forces et la pénurie de nos arsenaux.

Ce n'est pas tout; chaque année, le rapport du budget vient dilater aux yeux de la France les misères de notre état maritime, sans qu'on songe sérieusement à changer une situation aussi compromettante pour notre avenir. Cette année encore, M. Bignon, dont le témoignage ne peut assurément être suspect en ce point, fait le tableau le plus triste du matériel de notre flotte. La constitution normale de notre force navale au pied de paix procède, pour les bâtimens à voiles, de l'ordonnance du 1er février 1837 : et pour les bâtimens à vapeur, de l'ordonnance du 4 mars 1842. Notre effectif à voiles est fixé à 40 vaisseaux de ligne, dont 20 à flot et 20 sur les chantiers à 22/24 d'avancement; 50 frégates, dont 25 à flot et 25 à 22/24; 30 corvettes, 50 bricks, 50 canonnières, et 50 gabares de charge. L'ordonnance prescrit de plus une réserve sur chantier de 13 vaisseaux et de 16 frégates. Notre effectif à vapeur est fixé à 5 frégates de 540 chevaux, 15 de 450, 30 corvettes de 320, à 220, et 8 bâtimens de 160 et au-dessous. Nous pourrions dire que les deux ordonnances dont nous venons de parler n'ont pas fixé un état de paix qui soit en rapport avec les ressources de la France et lui permette de conserver son rang et sa prépondérance en Europe; mais le gouvernement, dominé sans doute par une déplorable politique dont les motifs intéressés n'échappent à personne aujourd'hui, n'a pas même voulu porter notre effectif au chiffre insuffisant des ordonnances. Ainsi, notre effectif réel à voiles et à flot est de 23 vaisseaux de tous rangs, mais dont un grand nombre hors de service ou près d'être mis hors de service; de 30 frégates, 22 corvettes de guerre, 47 bricks, 56 canonnières, 54 gabares; à voiles et sur le chantier, de 23 vaisseaux à 16,78/24, de 20 frégates à 13,47/24, 3 corvettes à 3,33/24, 2 goélettes à 18/24. Pour les bâtimens à vapeur, notre effectif réel à flot est de 4 frégates dont une de 540 et 3 de 450, 8 corvettes de 320 et 7 de 220; sur chantier, de 4 frégates dont une de 640, une de 540, 2 de 450, le tout à 10,62/24 seulement; 10 corvettes, dont 5 de 320 et 5 de 220, à 4,60/24, et 8 bâtimens de 160 et au-dessous, à 4,25/24.

Or, voici les réflexions que cette situation inspire à la commission du budget : « En mettant sous vos yeux, dit M. le rapporteur, cette situation comparée de l'effectif réglementaire et de l'effectif réel dans les deux situations des bâtimens à flot et sur les chantiers, n'êtes-vous pas frappés comme nous de l'état de nos faibles ressources pour l'avenir, c'est à dire de nos bâtimens en chantier, de leur peu d'avancement, de l'absence de cette réserve qui avait été prévue par l'ordonnance. Que serait-ce donc si nous tradusions en chiffres la valeur réelle de nos bâtimens à flot, sur le nombre desquels peut-être on voudrait s'appuyer pour démontrer qu'on est en ce point au-dessus des prévisions de l'ordonnance. C'est bien ici plus que jamais l'occasion de dire que ce n'est pas la quantité, mais bien la qualité qu'il faut rechercher. Nous ne nous donnerons pas le triste plaisir d'exposer nos misères; nous en appelons à M. le ministre, et nous le conjurons de hâter, par ses propositions, le moment où il nous sera donné d'atteindre, pour les bâtimens à voile et à vapeur, la situation normale du pied de paix constituée par les deux actes que nous venons de rappeler, s'il est vrai que la décision du 4 mars 1842 soit l'expression des besoins de la flotte pour les bâtimens à vapeur. »

Ainsi, la commission du budget a vu et signalé les périls de notre situation navale; mais, au lieu de demander un compte sévère aux ministres qui ont laissé tomber notre marine en décadence, au lieu de prendre une initiative vigoureuse qui aurait trouvé de l'écho dans le pays, elle préfère se jeter, avec une confiance tout à fait débonnaire, dans les bras de M. de Mackau et le supplier, de la façon la plus touchante, de se conformer aux ordonnances. Or, l'administration de M. de Mackau est l'administration la plus déplorable qui ait peut-être pesé sur la marine en France. N'est-ce pas, en effet, sous ce ministre que notre glorieux pavillon a été honteusement abandonné aux insultes des orgueilleux dominateurs de la mer, et qu'un trop fameux désaveu a frappé de braves officiers qui avaient noblement soutenu l'honneur de la France? N'est-ce pas sous ce ministre que notre flotte a été condamnée à une stérile promenade sur les côtes du Maroc, et a dû s'arrêter devant les injonctions de l'Angleterre? M. de Mackau n'a-t-il pas d'ailleurs déjà donné des marques non équivoques de son mauvais vouloir pour le développement de nos forces navales. Dans la session de 1840-41, la chambre des députés, émue par la gravité des circonstances, vota des subsides pour maintenir un certain nombre de bâtimens en commission de rade; le ministre ne tint aucun compte de la décision de la chambre, et ne fit aucun emploi des fonds votés. On ne peut pas même compter sur l'exécution des demandes faites par le ministre lui-même. Ainsi, dans le budget de 1844, il demanda les fonds nécessaires pour exécuter 3/24 pour les vaisseaux à 3 ponts, il n'en exécuta aucun; 8/24 pour les vaisseaux de 3e rang, il n'en exécuta qu'un seul; 6/24 pour les frégates de 1er rang, on n'en exécuta aucun. Voilà dans quelles indignes mains est tombée l'administration de la marine dans notre pays, et voilà l'homme auquel on fait un appel débonnaire pour réparer le mal auquel il a si malheureusement et si puissamment contribué!

M. de Mackau n'est, du reste, que le très humble serviteur du système qui nous a dit un jour, avec une effrayante franchise, que l'entente cordiale, l'alliance intime avec l'Angleterre est un principe fondamental de son existence et de sa durée. Or, nous savons, par une triste expérience, à quel prix l'Angleterre vend ses alliances. Au lieu de suivre les traditions généreuses et nationales de Colbert, qui, en créant une marine redoutable, contribua si puissamment à la grandeur de dépendance américaine, il faut se traîner péniblement dans la France sous Louis XIV; et de Choiseul, qui, en relevant notre puissance navale, prépara les triomphes de la guerre de l'indépendance, il faut se traîner péniblement dans la France sous Louis XIV; et de Choiseul, qui, en relevant notre puissance navale, prépara les triomphes de la guerre de l'Inles hontes et les périls de la politique dynastique du régent, qui, après avoir exposé la France à tant d'humiliations durant la paix, causa les désastres maritimes de tout le règne de Louis XV et prépara la perte de l'Inde et du Canada. Cela est convenu; mais par quelle fatalité l'opposition voit-elle avec autant de sang-froid cet abandon de notre puissance navale et les catastrophes qu'il doit appeler tôt ou tard sur la France? Nous avons, grâce à Dieu, des députés indépendans, qui, dans certaines occasions, se consacrent avec courage et avec intelligence à la défense de notre considération extérieure, de nos libertés civiles ou de notre crédit national, comment donc ne prennent-ils pas plus à cœur la question maritime, et n'appellent-ils pas avec une patriotique persévérance l'attention de la chambre et du pays sur la nécessité de relever notre puissance navale, sans laquelle notre prépondérance continentale elle-même ne tarderait pas à être compromise!

Nous prévenons charitablement notre confrère le *Journal des Débats* que Mme Mugnos est assez mécontente de ses correspondances, de ses extraits, et de ses derniers articles sur l'Espagne. Le chargé d'affaires a été s'en plaindre, *par ordre*, à M. Guizot; et celui-ci a paru fort surpris de la démarche. L'ordre était venu de Barcelonne, sans doute; mais de Madrid, il était arrivé des inspirations bien différentes. Marie-Christine veut mettre les ministres actuels hors du cabinet; mais quelques ministres ont très sérieusement le désir de remettre Marie-Christine hors de l'Espagne. Voilà comment s'explique la double intrigue. Mme Mugnos est fort gênante, et les mêmes ministres ne se sont pas gênés pour le faire savoir et au dehors et au dedans. Ils ont employé, d'ailleurs, un moyen assez ingénieux pour rendre la mère suspecte à la fille. En général, l'une et l'autre sont devenues si impopulaires que le peuple de Madrid, quand elles sortaient, gardait un silence profond. On s'est emparé du fait, et quand les deux femmes sortir seule, on prenait d'avance des précautions faciles pour que sa voiture fût saluée au passage de quelques cris!... Quant sa mère l'accompagnait, au contraire, on laissait les choses suivre leur cours, et l'on faisait adroitement remarquer à la jeune fille le dédain sympathique de la foule populaire. Mme Mugnos s'en est aperçue, et elle s'est doutée aussi que le ton singulier des *Débats* partait de la même source. Le chargé d'affaires a eu ordre de s'en plaindre, et il ne lui a pas été difficile de connaître la vérité... Du reste, pour être prête sans doute à tout événement, Mme Mugnos envoie son mari à Paris et celui-ci, qui arrive demain, pourra la venir au courant de ce qui la regarde. Il s'installera sans doute à la Malmaison, et il n'est pas impossible que Mme Mugnos ne vienne bientôt, en fidèle épouse, réintégrer le domicile conjugal! Les *Débats* y seront peut-être pour quelque chose; mais

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FEUILLETON DU NATIONAL DU 20 JUIN 1845.

LUCIE.

Il y a quelques années, un crime compliqué des circonstances les plus extraordinaires vint frapper de stupeur les habitans de la petite ville de ***.

Un jeune homme appartenant à une famille distinguée avait disparu sous le coup d'une prévention terrible : il était accusé d'avoir assassiné un banquier auquel il était associé, et d'avoir soustrait de chez lui des valeurs considérables. On attribua à la funeste passion du jeu ce double forfait. Le coupable abandonnait, en outre, après huit jours de mariage, une jeune femme douée d'une grande beauté et des qualités les plus éminentes. Elle était orpheline, et elle restait, à vingt ans, livrée à l'isolement, à la misère et à une position sans espérance.

Les lois lui accordèrent la séparation de corps et de bien, c'est-à-dire de tout ce qui lui échappait. La famille de son mari lui prêta un abri et une paire de souliers; et, comme elle était généralement admirée, des protections puissantes l'environnèrent de toutes parts.

C'était heureusement une de ces nobles femmes à qui il est plus facile d'accepter le malheur qu'aucune transaction honteuse : son intelligence lui montra sans voile sa situation; elle comprit qu'elle ne devrait l'appui et l'intérêt des hommes qu'à sa beauté; elle pressentit les périls que couvrent de douces sympathies, et ne voulut devoir qu'à elle tout espoir d'adoucissement à son sort. Cette courageuse résolution prise, la noble jeune femme ne songea plus qu'aux moyens de l'exécuter. Elle possédait un talent remarquable : elle se rendit à Paris pour tenter d'en tirer parti; et, après quelques épreuves, elle fut admise en qualité d'institutrice dans la maison de l'Abbaye-aux-Bois, où elle trouva un asile honorable.

Pendant ce temps, la justice suivait son cours; des démarches actives étaient faites de toutes parts pour retrouver la trace du fugitif. Déjà les créanciers irrités s'étaient partagé la dépouille de sa malheureuse victime : ses vêtemens, ses bijoux, et jusqu'à ses petits trésors de jeune fille avaient été vendus à la criée. L'intérêt qu'elle inspirait était si grand que quelques personnes rachetèrent différens objets qui lui avaient appartenu, et les lui renvoyèrent.

Une jeune fille voulut avoir un petit médaillon qui renfermait le portrait de l'héroïne, et le curé du lieu acheta sa robe et sa couronne de mariée pour en parer l'autel de la vierge.

Ces détails touchèrent vivement l'infortunée jeune femme; le sentiment d'une noble fierté se joignait dans son cœur à une sensibilité profonde; elle se sentit soutenue par les témoignages d'intérêt qu'elle recueillait de toutes parts. Remplie d'effroi au souvenir de son premier amour elle n'envisagea sa chaîne que comme une barrière qu'elle eût elle-même posée entre les hommes et elle. L'horreur et les périls de sa situation échappèrent ainsi à ses regards, et elle accepta sans révolte l'arrêt injuste des lois.

Un sentiment indestructible, une douce et sainte amitié d'enfance sauva d'abord à ce noble cœur les amères douleurs de l'isolement; la philosophie si mesquine et si aride dans les âmes égoïstes développa toutes les ressources d'une âme généreuse; elle s'éleva au-dessus des petites passions qui agitent le monde, et, dédaignant les misérables intrigues dont elle était entourée, elle ne vit plus que le but auquel elle devait atteindre, et ne songea qu'à le poursuivre.

Deux années s'écoulèrent sans qu'aucun événement vînt changer cette situation étrange et malheureuse. Le temps, qui ne fait qu'accroître les grandes douleurs, avait miné peu à peu l'organisation brillante de l'orpheline. A son courage héroïque, à ses efforts persévérans pour rester dans le rude chemin qui lui était tracé, commençait à succéder un abattement profond. Quelques lettres qui sont tombées entre mes mains peindront mieux que moi les douleurs de ce cœur malade. Je demande à mes lecteurs la permission de les reproduire et de terminer ainsi cette histoire :

DE LUCIE A Mme M.

Je t'écris de Malzéville, où je vais passer quelques mois, ma bien aimée. Ma poitrine avait besoin d'air et de lait; nos dignes amis ont saisi ce prétexte pour m'offrir de partager leur jolie solitude. Combien j'aime ces excellentes gens! Que ne puis-je leur ressembler ou faire passer dans mon cœur un peu de la paix qui règne au fond des leurs. Je ne sens pourtant mieux ici : rien n'est sain comme le spectacle d'une belle nature et de cette vie laborieuse et uniforme qui force l'esprit à se régler.

Le général attend prochainement l'arrivée de son voisin, qui passe pour le bienfaiteur de toute cette petite contrée. C'est un jeune homme de 26 ans, propriétaire d'une belle fortune et disciple sincère des idées libérales. Il a avec lui sa mère, qu'il adore, et dont on dit aussi beaucoup de bien.

Tu m'engages à entretenir des fleurs et à me serrer un peu de musique et de lecture. Hélas! ma bien aimée, ne sont-ce pas là les seuls plaisirs qui me restent? Quand j'ai payé mon faible tribut à l'amitié, que je viens de lire au général quelques passages de ses Mémoires, que nous avons évoqué ensemble de grands et sévères souvenirs, on que j'ai partagé avec notre amie les petits soins d'intérieur auxquels elle aime à se livrer, je me trouve de nouveau en proie à ce besoin de sentir et de penser qui est devenu comme le grand ressort de mon existence, et pourtant nulle femme plus que moi n'a aimé la vie paisible et simple. Quels plaisirs brillans n'aurais-je pas sacrifiés avec joie aux devoirs et au bonheur de la famille; quels succès ne m'auraient pas fades auprès des caresses de mes enfans! O mon amie, la maternité, c'est là le sentiment dont la faiblesse se dresse, si jeune et si impétueux, dans mon cœur. Cet amour, qui servit à tous les autres, Dieu ne l'avait-il pas donné à la femme pour se régénérer dans ses douleurs.

DE MAURICE A ROGER.

Roger, j'ai enfin vu cette femme si grande et si malheureuse dont tu me parlais avec orgueil. Ne va pas dire que le sort en est jeté si je t'avoue l'impression profonde que j'ai ressentie à l'aspect de cette jeune et belle victime des injustices sociale. Les touchantes vertus de Lucie, son esprit, ses grâces, tout en elle porte à jamais l'empreinte d'un profond chagrin et l'on sent trop on la voyant qu'elle aura besoin de générosité pour aimer; pourtant n'est-elle pas libre devant l'honneur et la raison? par quel étonnante imprévoyance des lois l'être pur et respecté peut-il se trouver enchaîné par la société même à l'être flétri qu'elle repousse de son sein?

Qu'appelle-t-on mort civile? est-ce un simulacre? Dans quel but la société laisse-t-elle une épouse à l'homme qui ne peut plus donner le jour qu'à des enfans bâtards?

De quel droit imposerait-elle l'isolement et le célibat à l'un de ses membres? on pour quelle fin le pousserait-elle au désordre?

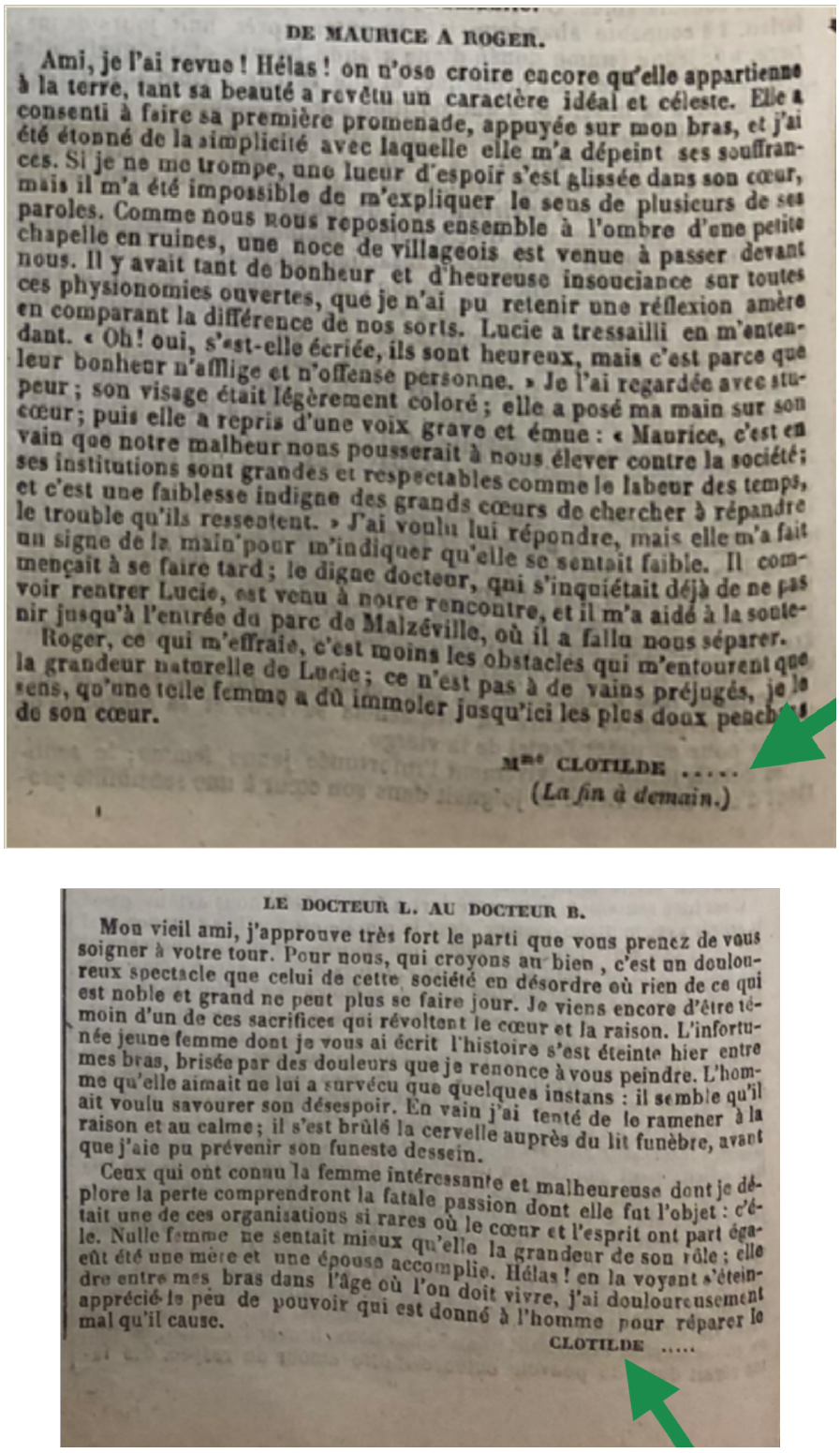
Mais j'ai l'air d'être devant des juges. Roger mon sang est près de s'allumer dans mes veines quand je vois comme l'apathie des hommes enfante souvent le malheur et l'oppression.

Je viens de faire construire un belvédère en vue de Malzéville; de là, avec une lunette d'approche, je découvre entièrement la jolie maison du général. Hier, j'ai aperçu Lucie qui était assise au bord de la pièce d'eau. Son attitude était mélancolique et accablée. Te le dirai-je, il me semble que ses regards se dirigeaient souvent vers le sud. Hélas! en la voyant si gracieuse et si brisée, je me demandais avec dégoût le secret de certaines influences sur le cœur de l'homme. Pourquoi voit-on des femmes vulgaires fasciner des intelligences supérieures et devenir l'objet d'un véritable culte? Comment arrive-t-il aussi que la générosité et la noblesse de certaines femmes se voient si souvent aux prises avec l'égoïsme et la grossièreté? Il faut renoncer à expliquer cette énigme.

Puisque tu veux une description nouvelle d'Oueil, je te dirai, mon cher Roger, que j'en ai fait une des plus jolies propriétés du département. On me racontait ces jours-ci qu'il venait d'y avoir contestation à propos d'un sujet entre les habitans de la commune voisine et un vieux gentilhomme ruiné; il ne s'agissait rien moins que de décider si l'on devait le château à Oneil et la première morceau de pain bénit à son propriétaire. J'ai tranché la question en n'allant pas à la messe et en appelant tout le pays ma vallée.

Figure 4: Front page of *Le National* showing *Lucie,* de Vaux's *feuilleton.* (Library of Congress).

Appendix 5



DE MAURICE A ROGER.

Ami, je l'ai revue ! Hélas ! on n'ose croire encore qu'elle appartienne à la terre, tant sa beauté a revêtu un caractère idéal et céleste. Elle a consenti à faire sa première promenade, appuyée sur mon bras, et j'ai été étonné de la simplicité avec laquelle elle m'a dépeint ses souffrances. Si je ne me trompe, une lueur d'espoir s'est glissée dans son cœur, mais il m'a été impossible de m'expliquer le sens de plusieurs de ses paroles. Comme nous nous reposions ensemble à l'ombre d'une petite chapelle en ruines, une noce de villageois est venue à passer devant nous. Il y avait tant de bonheur et d'heureuse insouciance sur toutes ces physionomies ouvertes, que je n'ai pu retenir une réflexion amère en comparant la différence de nos sorts. Lucie a tressailli en m'entendant. « Oh! oui, s'est-elle écriée, ils sont heureux, mais c'est parce que leur bonheur n'afflige et n'offense personne. » Je l'ai regardée avec stupeur ; son visage était légèrement coloré ; elle a posé ma main sur son cœur ; puis elle a repris d'une voix grave et émue : « Maurice, c'est en vain que notre malheur nous pousserait à nous élever contre la société ; ses institutions sont grandes et respectables comme le labeur des temps, et c'est une faiblesse indigne des grands cœurs de chercher à répandre le trouble qu'ils ressentent. » J'ai voulu lui répondre, mais elle m'a fait un signe de la main pour m'indiquer qu'elle se sentait faible. Il commençait à se faire tard ; le digne docteur, qui s'inquiétait déjà de ne pas voir rentrer Lucie, est venu à notre rencontre, et il m'a aidé à la soutenir jusqu'à l'entrée du parc de Malzéville, où il a fallu nous séparer.

Roger, ce qui m'effraie, c'est moins les obstacles qui m'entourent que la grandeur naturelle de Lucie ; ce n'est pas à de vains préjugés, je le sens, qu'une telle femme a dû immoler jusqu'ici les plus doux penchants de son cœur.

Mme CLOTILDE .....

(*La fin à demain.*)

LE DOCTEUR L. AU DOCTEUR B.

Mon vieil ami, j'approuve très fort le parti que vous prenez de vous soigner à votre tour. Pour nous, qui croyons au bien, c'est un douloureux spectacle que celui de cette société en désordre où rien de ce qui est noble et grand ne peut plus se faire jour. Je viens encore d'être témoin d'un de ces sacrifices qui révoltent le cœur et la raison. L'infortunée jeune femme dont je vous ai écrit l'histoire s'est éteinte hier entre mes bras, brisée par des douleurs que je renonce à vous peindre. L'homme qu'elle aimait ne lui a survécu que quelques instans : il semble qu'il ait voulu savourer son désespoir. En vain j'ai tenté de le ramener à la raison et au calme ; il s'est brûlé la cervelle auprès du lit funèbre, avant que j'aie pu prévenir son funeste dessein.

Ceux qui ont connu la femme intéressante et malheureuse dont je déplore la perte comprendront la fatale passion dont elle fut l'objet : c'était une de ces organisations si rares où le cœur et l'esprit ont part égale. Nulle femme ne sentait mieux qu'elle la grandeur de son rôle ; elle eût été une mère et une épouse accomplie. Hélas ! en la voyant s'éteindre entre mes bras dans l'âge où l'on doit vivre, j'ai douloureusement apprécié le peu de pouvoir qui est donné à l'homme pour réparer le mal qu'il cause.

CLOTILDE .....

Figure 5: Pages from *Le National* showing de Vaux's signature (Library of Congress).

Appendix 6

Figure 6: François Arago at the Royal Observatory of Paris. Painting by Théobald Chartran. Photo by Josse/Leemage (Corbis Historical Collection).

Appendix 7

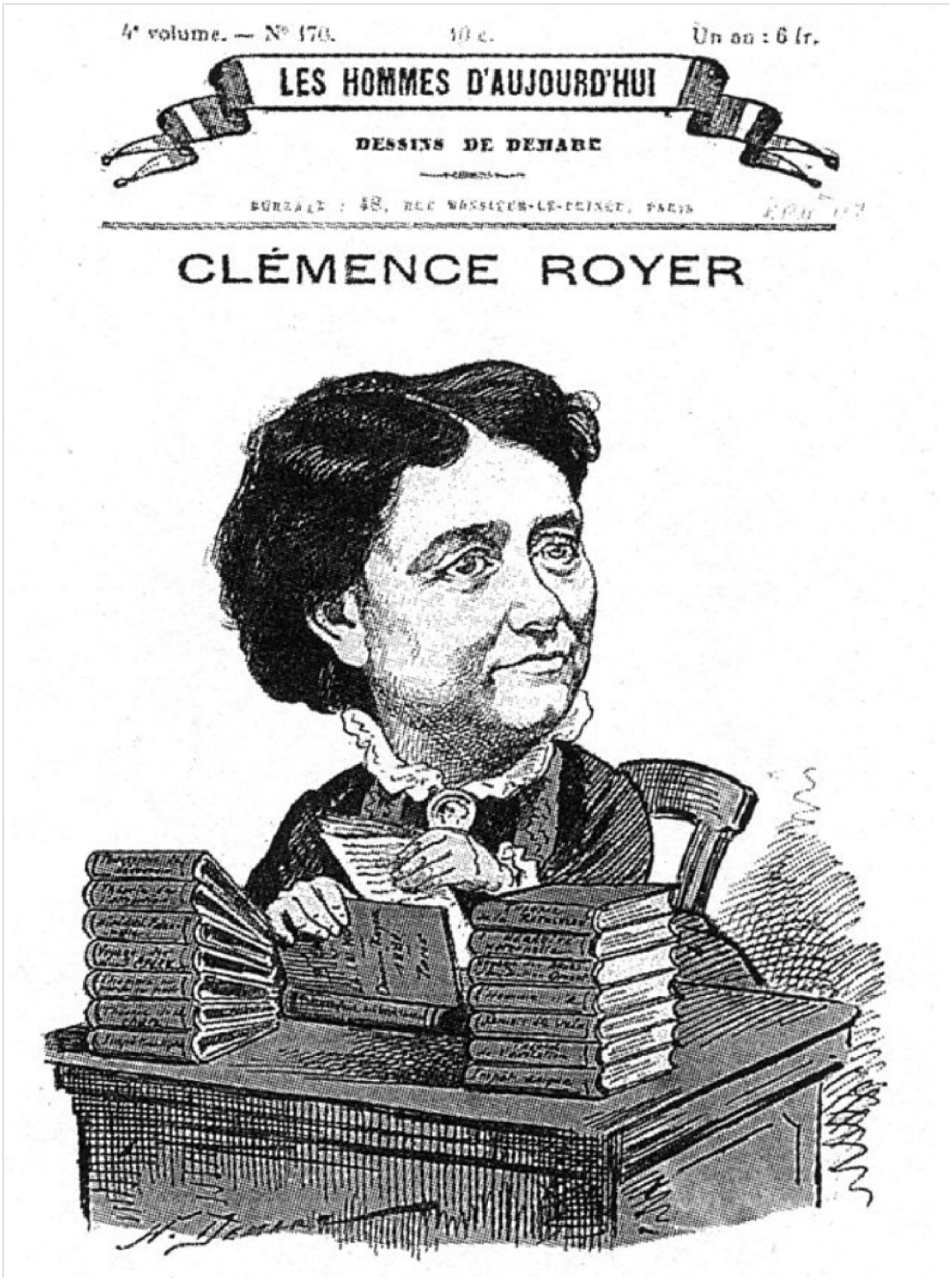


Figure 7: Front page of "Les Hommes d'aujourd'hui" (Library of Congress).