A PATH TOWARD EQUALITY IN GEORGE SAND’S *HORACE, MAUPRAT, AND “LAVINIA”*

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ABSTRACT

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Although women’s rights and liberation in France would not be gained until the 20th century, the battle for sexual equality actually began in the 19th century. George Sand stands among the women that fought to transform women’s role in society. However, certain factors have caused her idealistic vision to be overlooked. In this study, I will illustrate, through the analysis of the male and female characters in *Horace, Mauprat*, and “Lavinia”, how George Sand envisions a pathway toward forming the ideal society based on equality. In the first part of this study, I will demonstrate how Sand liberates the female character within a historically accurate 19th century context in *Horace*. I will then analyze how Sand implements what I call a gender power role reversal in order to educate her male and female characters. Finally, I will indicate how George Sand introduces three ideal couple models that aim to transform society’s narrow vision of the traditional couple into a one based on sexual equality. These three aspects come together to demonstrate Sand’s vision of establishing a society based on equality through the ideal couple, making her a precursor to the feminist movement of the 20th century.
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INTRODUCTION

The notion of feminism is a phenomenon that developed in France during the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. Much emphasis has been placed on the study of the women's movement during this time period, on the writers and activists who worked to achieve social and political conditions that were equal to those of men, such as the right to work, to vote, and to legally exist separate from one’s husband. However, there was a minority of women during the 19\textsuperscript{th} century who also fought for the attainment of equal rights for women who are frequently overlooked and given little credit for their influence on the advancement of women’s conditions in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. George Sand stands among these women, communicating her political ideas to a large audience through newspapers and novels, which span from 1832 until her death in 1876 (Walton 146). George Sand was able to establish herself as a successful female novelist during a time when women were defined by their fathers and husbands. The role of women was merely to support their husbands and bear their children. It is no surprise that the difficulties she faced as a woman trying to find success as a novelist in a male-dominated society influenced the subjects she treated in her writing. Through the analysis of *Horace*, *Mauprat*, and “Lavinia”, I will demonstrate the way that Sand creates a society that enables her female characters to liberate themselves from the male characters in order to become equals. The depictions of these female characters demonstrate for her readers how she envisions women can transform their social conditions. It is in this way that Sand contributes to the feminist cause.

In order to fully grasp the significance of Sand’s writing, one must understand the social and political situation of 19\textsuperscript{th}-century France. During this time period the social and governmental structures in France were very unstable. Following the Revolution of 1789,
France struggled to establish a new type government as the fall of the monarchy introduced the need to redefine the political structures. The subjects of the former king had quickly evolved into citizens, and therefore, became active participants in the new government. This transformation of government required a new landscaping of the philosophies and ideologies that would guide the beliefs of the new society. This situation included the necessity to define the new public and private spheres of social life after the abolition of the Old Regime, as well as the notion of *citoyen* and to whom this title would pertain. What role would women play in the political forum, if any at all? Would they be considered *citoyennes*? After the role many women had played during the Revolution, there was a strong desire by women to obtain a political voice equal to that of their male counterparts. Nonetheless, men did not intend to allow women to enter into the public sphere. This viewpoint was widely accepted, and great lengths were taken to prevent women from obtaining rights equal to those of men. In *Women in France Since 1789*, Susan K. Foley asserts that the Napoleonic Code, established in 1804, legally declared women unequal to men (1). The oppression of women thus continued to be a real and legal aspect of French society, while men were granted greater liberty and political status.

This transitional period also required the French people to redefine social life. New rules and expectations had to be established that would correspond to the beliefs of the new society. Michelle Perrot explains that “[t]he French Revolution had attempted to subvert the boundary between public and private” (99). The dissolution of this boundary allowed for the state to dictate the rules and regulations pertaining not only to the public sphere but to the private sphere as well. One aspect of private life that attracted a great deal of interest by the state was the family unit, which had come to be viewed as the central
element of 19th-century society. Prior to the 19th century, the country was united through the presence of the monarchy, under the king who ruled over his subjects. The fall of the monarchy required that a new sense of unity be established. Suddenly the people were transformed into individuals who possessed individual rights. According to Foley, “Old Regime society was a ‘corporatist’ society in which people’s place and entitlements were shaped by their membership of different groups, not by their personal qualities as individuals” (2-3). Obtaining the status of individuals who have an individual voice in society, rather than subjects that answer to a king, introduces the notion of every man for himself. It was thought, however, that the family structure could reinstate a sense of unity. Hegel, one of the principle philosophers during the 19th century, explains in *Philosophy of Right*, “The ethical substance, as the union of self-consciousness with its conception, is the actual spirit of a family and a nation.” (138). The family, therefore, embodies the unity and strength of the nation through its ethical nature. If the family failed, the moral and ethical nature of the young government would fail. This theoretical notion that the family could originates from the need to redefine the political structure. If women were granted an equal status to men, the fear was that they might choose to exercise their personal rights to disengage from the proposed familial structure.

Hegel’s philosophies had a great deal of influence on defining the social and political expectations of the family structure. He believed that morality and social order originated from within the structure of the family unit. According to him, marriage was defined as “legal ethical love” that bound the family unit together (Hegel 140). The two people must sacrifice their individuality to the singularity of the family unit (Hegel 140). By his definition, the 19th-century family was organized according to gender roles that were
thought to complement the innate characteristics that corresponded with each sex. The man’s role as head of family was to deal with the social duties of the outside world, which included working to provide for his family and fighting to defend his country. The woman’s role, on the contrary, was confined to the interior of the home (Hegel 144). This ideology maintained that the family was at the center of the social and moral wellbeing of the state and consequently required women to serve the needs of the family. The mother, alone, was the central focus of the family, responsible for the rearing of good future wives and strong future heads of the family. Michelle Perrot explains that “[t]he legal status of the woman was contradictory: as an individual she enjoyed individual rights, but as a member of a family she was subject to the law of the family, in essence monarchical.” (102). That is to say that the husband, as head of the family, served as the social and political representative for the family, and therefore his wife was expected to obey his decisions. Nineteenth-century women thus found themselves in a constant struggle between their personal will and their familial duties and obligations.

The expectation that women’s domain was inside the home restricted them physically from the outside world. Foley asserts, “[The woman] was to inhabit a ‘private’ sphere created specifically to contain her” (2). Women were an essential part of the family, charged with caring for their husband and children, and therefore had to be sheltered from all outside influences that could put the family unit at risk, threatening the stability of morality and social order within the society (Foley 45). Susan Merrill Squier explains in the introduction of Women Writers and the City that women were excluded from the urban culture in which only men were privileged to take part (4). Annabelle M. Rea further illustrates this concept in her article “La Femme dans la ville sandienne”: “C’est l’homme
Michelle Perrot also describes how sewing rooms, churches and washhouses often tended to serve as meeting places for women since the public domain was forbidden to them (341). These meeting places were deemed acceptable to women as they were considered domains that corresponded with their household duties. Women who did venture out into the city without the accompaniment of a man risked being labeled promiscuous and therefore tarnishing their wholesome, innocent reputation.

It is this extreme isolation and oppression of women in contrast with the increased liberty of men in society that would evoke a desire in certain women to fight for their place within the new society. Among these women, George Sand actively worked to dissolve these gender-specific social constraints through her numerous political writings that denounce society for its legalized prejudices against women as well as through her idealistic fiction. Although, as Naomi Schor indicates in George Sand and Idealism, her idealism is primarily what invites her critics to discredit her writing ability (27), it is also what allows her to present her “revolutionary” vision to her readers (51). One way she articulates her revolutionary vision is through her idealism, which aims to deconstruct the rigid patriarchal order and conceptualize a new society in which women participate. She essentially creates a new ideal society within the context of her fiction by establishing equality between her male and female characters. Through the analysis of Horace, Mauprat and “Lavinia”, I will show how Sand emancipates the female character from male oppression, reverses the gender roles of the male and female characters in order to cultivate ideal male and female characters who embrace the principles of sexual equality, and illustrates to her readers her vision of the ideal couple founded on equality. Sand
thereby provides a logical passage from the oppression of the female character to the foundation of the ideal couple, in which the male and female characters are presented as equal partners.

These three works, which were published during the first decade in which she struggled to penetrate the male-dominated public sphere, represent the early stages of Sand’s career as a novelist. It is at this time that Sand is first confronted with the prejudices of her society regarding women. These three works are symbolic of her personal critique of her society as well as the early development of her vision to transform it. Sand portrays female characters that are able to liberate themselves from their submissive obligations to the male characters. These female characters strive to emancipate themselves, seeking independence from male domination. This claim of independence by the female characters, in turn, alters the dynamics of the male and female characters’ relationships in such a way that requires a redefinition of their roles within the couple, ultimately underlining the social changes that are crucial to establishing a society based on equality.

According to my research, the ingenious process through which Sand proposes a path toward the emancipation of women and the establishment of equality between the sexes in these three works has gone unrecognized. While others have referred to the establishment of equality in some of her other works, little emphasis has been put on the revolutionary nature of her establishment of the ideal couple, which embodies the principles of gender equality, and the influence it has on her reader at the subconscious level. One reason her ability to deconstruct the patriarchal society and envision an egalitarian society in her writing has received little attention may be that she was frequently criticized for her massive production of literary works that is said to have
trivialized the quality of her writing, although many of her male counterparts were also known to produce an overwhelming amount of works. Béatrice Didier expands upon this notion by explaining that many continue to say “qu’elle écrit trop vite, que ça coule, que c’est une logorrhée, qu’elle tombe dans la fameuse facilité féminine” (2). The overwhelming amount of her writings caused her to be cast aside and overshadowed the sensational accomplishments of her literary vision. Schor attributes Sand’s decanonization to the triumph of realism over idealism, asserting, “Sand’s spectacular aesthetic devaluation cannot be ascribed in any simple terms to her gender; it is not because Sand was a woman but rather because (like so many other woman authors) she is associated with a discredited and discarded representational mode [idealism] that she is no longer ranked among the canonical authors” (31). Schor explains, “Idealism for Sand is [...] the only alternative representational mode available to those who do not enjoy the privileges of subjecthood in the real. [...] To recanonize Sand thus requires nothing less than a reconsideration of realism as it constructs and supports the phallo- and ethnocentric social order we so often confuse with reality” (54). Schor’s interpretation as to why George Sand has been undervalued by the literary community illustrates the sexual divide that existed during the 19th century. Sand is discredited for imagining a world in which women could engage and participate as human beings that was in contrast with the very reality in which she, and 19th-century women, lived.

Through an in-depth examination of these texts, I will illustrate how George Sand expresses her discontent with the oppression of women in the 19th century and her vision to establish equality in the male-female relationships of her characters in an effort to emphasize her role in the pre-feminist movement. Through the examination of these
works, I will demonstrate how Sand deconstructs patriarchal society through the evolution and education of her male and female characters in order to establish her vision of the ideal couple.

In chapter one, I will illustrate the manner in which Sand envisions the emancipation of her female character in *Horace*. In this work, Sand transforms her female character from a naïve and fragile young woman to a strong, independent young woman who is self-educated through reading and life-lessons all within the context of the 19th century. I will underline the essential steps that Sand lays out for the female character to be liberated from the tyrannical male characters that caused her oppression. The emancipation of the female character is thus the first step in Sand’s vision of creating the ideal couple.

In chapter two, I will then examine how Sand changes the dynamics of power within the couple in what I call a gender power role-reversal, where the female characters assume dominant roles over the male characters. Sand employs this role-reversal as a mechanism to redefine the gender roles of the male and female characters in *Mauprat* and “Lavinia”. Following the theoretical framework of Jessica Benjamin, a renowned feminist theorist and psychoanalyst, I will demonstrate how the role-reversal serves to educate the male and female characters on the situation of the other in an effort to achieve a level of mutual recognition between the characters. The role-reversal marks the second stage of Sand’s vision of creating the ideal couple, as it shapes her male and female characters into ideal characters that can form relationships based on sexual equality.

Finally, in chapter three, I will discuss three ideal character relationship models that Sand offers to her reader. In the foreground, these three models demonstrate that the ideal
couple, according to Sand, is versatile rather than one stock model. The characteristics of this multifaceted vision of the ideal couple identify social changes that Sand views as key to forming the ideal couple in society, such as women’s rights within the relationship and society, her education and the gender roles that define the family. These changes for a correlation to be made between Sand’s vision to the form of the ideal couple and its relation to her vision to transform her society.

The representation of Sand’s ideal characters and relationships warrant her to be credited for her influence on changing women’s conditions. Although these changes regarding the definition of women’s rights may not have really started to take effect until the 20th century, Sand’s portrayal of her female characters models many of the characteristics that women fought for in the following century. It is for this reason that Sand should be recognized for her role in the battle for women’s rights, as one can presume that her writing had some sort of influence on her readers. Moreover, her writing introduces the necessity of establishing women’s rights into the discussion by imagining a life different than the one traditionally accorded to women; one that granted them greater recognition and liberty within the family and an existence outside of the family. Sand therefore deserves to be recognized as a precursor to the 20th-century feminist movement.
CHAPTER 1:
EMANCIPATING THE FEMALE CHARACTER IN *HORACE*

“La tendresse du cœur [...] est fondée sur un sentiment d’égalité qui nous fait chercher dans un ami un semblable, un homme sujet aux mêmes passions, aux mêmes faiblesses que nous” (*Horace* 27). This opening statement that alludes to the search for the ideal, expressed by the narrator of George Sand’s *Horace*, evokes the notion that Sand was advocating change, specifically sexual equality. In the novel, Sand illustrates many of the societal conditions of the time, such as the increasing importance of education, the waning power of the nobility and the traditional expectations of men and women. *Horace* has thus come to be known as a historic novel, remaining faithful to the historical events that took place during the early 1830’s, such as the establishment of the July Monarchy of 1830 (*Courrier* 18). Through her portrayal of the evolving 19th-century society during the early 1830’s, Sand critiques the patriarchal nature of society, suggesting certain changes that need to occur in order to achieve her vision of true equality between men and women. The emancipation of women is the first step toward equality. It is in this way that Sand demonstrates one of her roles in the pre-feminist movement by illustrating her vision of women’s emancipation. Through an in-depth analysis of key chapters of the novel, I will illustrate the intricate and evolution of the female character as she moves toward emancipation.

Published in 1842, the novel illustrates the struggles of a small group of Parisian students and their entourage as they attempt to find their place in French society. Marthe is a naive, timid, young woman who struggles to achieve independence from her male tyrant lovers throughout the novel. Paul Arsène, a painter turned revolutionary, sacrifices his
career as a painter in an attempt to save Marthe from tyranny and eventually gain her love and respect through friendship. Despite Paul Arsène’s efforts, Marthe falls for Horace, a 19th-century dandy who becomes another one of Marthe’s tyrant lovers. Eugénie, a *grisette* belonging to the Saint-Simonian community, becomes Marthe’s mentor, teaching her to live and work in society. Her husband, Théophile, is a medical student who assumes the role of narrator, often serving as the voice of reason. These five characters play an essential role in Sand’s vision to deconstruct 19th-century patriarchal society through the liberation of the female character.

George Sand demonstrates the evolution of the female character from submission to emancipation through Marthe. This evolution occurs throughout the novel as a result of her numerous attempts at liberation. However, prior to liberating the female character, Sand must initially justify a need for changing the female character’s social situation. Realizing that liberation does not transpire overnight, Sand establishes a community of friends within the framework of the novel with the objective of stimulating Marthe’s personal growth and evolution. Marthe engages in numerous experiences that serve as life lessons, such as escaping M. Poisson (a former tyrant lover), walking through Paris alone at night, and chasing after Horace. These lessons represent the necessary steps to emancipating the female character from her original state of submission to male characters. Sand essentially demonstrates that liberation cannot be accomplished until Marthe has gained the strength and knowledge necessary to face the world on her own, therefore establishing that emancipation is a process requiring many stages of evolution.

Sand thus inspires the reader to identify with Marthe emotionally and encourage her escape from tyranny to a more safe and secure social situation, rather than judge her
for defying the social expectations of a young 19th-century woman. By portraying Marthe as a victim of tyranny, Sand justifies the character’s desire for independence, a justification that would have been necessary for her 19th-century readers. Sand validates this act of independence by emphasizing the virtuous and religious aspects of Marthe’s character, “Je n’ai pas d’amant, Monsieur; je vous jure devant Dieu, qui veille sur moi, puisqu’il vous a envoyé vers moi en ce moment, que je n’en ai pas et n’en veux pas avoir.” (75). With this declaration, Marthe maintains the reader’s confidence in her by directly addressing her negligence of societal expectations. She affirms that she does not intend to engage in promiscuous activities, referencing God as her witness. She insinuates that God condones this preliminary act of emancipation, advocating that it was He who sent Laravinière, another male character in *Horace*, to serve as her protector and ensure her safe arrival to the home of Théophile and Eugénie.

Marthe’s first venture across the night streets of Paris symbolizes her initial steps toward independence. Fleeing M. Poisson, Marthe traverses Paris at night, originally under the protection of Paul Arsène. However, after leaving the home of her lover, they see M. Poisson. Marthe sends Paul Arsène away in order to protect him from M. Poisson. The dismissal of her protector, Paul Arsène, represents an act of independence by Marthe, due to the fact that she assumes the role of protector over Paul Arsène in lieu of his serving as her protector. Marthe therefore assumes the responsibility of facing the night streets of Paris alone: “Alors Marthe [...] a forcé Paul Arsène de rentrer et s’est mise à descendre à toutes jambes la rue de Tournon [...]” (84). Nevertheless, it quickly becomes evident that Marthe is not yet ready to establish her independence. This notion is supported by the arrival of Laravinière, who discovers her walking alone at night and safely escorts her to
her destination. Laravinière assumes the role of temporary protector because she has not gained the confidence and strength to face the dangers of the city alone.

The request made by Marthe to Laravinière to keep her journey a secret also reinforces the illegitimate nature of her first city excursion. Catherine Nesci emphasizes that the secrecy of Marthe's first trajet introduces the notion of “forbidden” (72), stating that “[...] le trajet de Marthe est lié à la transgression d’une règle sociale ou morale [...]” (72). In requesting secrecy, Marthe acknowledges the inappropriate nature of her choice to break the social regulations to which 19th-century women were subjected by embarking on a nighttime journey across Paris. This recognition by Marthe confirms that she willingly chooses to defy the social and moral regulations set forth by society, therefore communicating her disagreement with the current social order.

The initial act of emancipation underway, Sand offers Marthe a new community. Théophile and Eugénie subscribe to the Saint-Simonian belief system. Saint-Simonianism was a French religious socialist group known for promoting women’s emancipation. According to Claire Goldberg Moses, Saint-Simonians encouraged “new and peaceful methods to achieve social change” (Moses 45). They desired to establish a utopian social order and campaigned for equality. Barthélemy Prosper Enfantin, leader of the Saint-Simonian community, proclaimed that “[women], rather than men, should define the appropriate relationship of the sexes” (Moses 51), thus influencing women to take part in the establishment of their new social order, viewing men and women as complimentary to each other. Though the term complimentary still insinuated the existence of a sexual inequality, the incorporation of women in public life was revolutionary. For the Saint-Simonians, as Moses explains, men exemplified “reflection” while women embodied
“sentiment” (Moses 46). Men were still viewed as the dominant sex; however, women were perceived as a necessary counterpart to the male sex. This community quickly attracted the attention of 19th-century women desiring social recognition.

Théophile and Eugénie’s marriage reflects their Saint-Simonian beliefs and is recognized only by the Saint-Simonian community and not by the legal government. Théophile, through his role as the narrator, provides several ideological discussions about his beliefs, which correspond with Saint-Simonian ideology. For example, Théophile gives his opinion on who is able to know love in all of its glory: “À celui qui est pénétré de la sainteté des engagements réciproques, de l’égalité des sexes devant Dieu, des injustices de l’ordre social et de l’opinion vulgaire à cet égard, l’amour peut se révéler dans toute sa grandeur et dans toute sa beauté” (103). In addition to promoting the sanctity of sexual equality, Théophile criticizes the endorsement of the inferiority of women. The narrator thus takes a clear stance that he supports a new order with a new system of beliefs different from the dominant beliefs of the 19th century. Using Genette’s terminology, this ideological narrative function indicates to the reader that Sand establishes a new community for the female character in the novel. Sand thus places Marthe under the influence, guidance and protection of Théophile and Eugénie in an attempt to stimulate her individual growth and development, permitting her to continue on her path toward independence.

Sand demonstrates that friendship is an essential component of the establishment of a new community and the emancipation of the female character. Marthe attests to her need for friendship in declaring that she dreamed of independence and “[...] sans l’amitié, les conseils et l’aide d’Arsène [...]” it would not have been possible (94). Marthe reinforces this
idea when she adds, “Il me fallait plus qu’un amant, il me fallait un ami” (94). Friendship is an interesting concept because it introduces a different relationship dynamic. Friendship is often perceived as a relationship free from the rampage of passion as well as gender discrimination. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy defines friendship as “a distinctively personal relationship that is grounded in a concern each has for the other” (Helm). Bennett Helm continues to emphasize that the love that one has for a friend must be for the sake of the friend and not for his or her own personal benefit. Marthe realizes the need for a relationship based on reciprocal affection in stating that she needed a friend more than a lover, thereby identifying a deficiency of romantic relationships. In order to gain independence, she needs loving support and advice from a friend who cares about her personal needs. The fact that she seeks the friendship of a man, Paul Arsène, introduces, primarily, the notion of a mutual relationship. Moreover, it also symbolizes Marthe’s ongoing need for a male protector. She is still too young and naïve to achieve complete independence.

Eugénie assumes the role of protector for Marthe in an attempt to prevent her from returning to a life under male tyranny. Eugénie acts on behalf of Marthe to deter her from falling for Horace and encourage her to choose Paul Arsène. Horace symbolizes the hopeless romantic and speaks instinctually “le langage de la passion” (106). The narrator explains that “[c]’était la première fois que Marthe entendait ce langage” (106) indicating that she was quickly falling under his spell. Unfortunately, as Eugénie indicates, “Horace n’a pour Marthe qu’une fantaisie” (107). Eugénie therefore requests that Théophile introduce Horace to the aristocratic circle in order to distract him from taking interest in Marthe, declaring, “je crois que plus je dis de mal de [Horace], plus elle en pense de bien” (107).
Eugénie is therefore attempting to manipulate Marthe’s destiny in a similar manner to that of a mother who fears for her daughter’s wellbeing. While Eugénie is not enabling Marthe’s independence, assuming the role of protector inspires Marthe to act in rebellion. Annabelle Rea states Marthe lacks “l’instruction nécessaire pour avoir confiance en elle-même” (57). This observation reinforces the importance of Eugénie for Marthe. Sand’s choice to have Eugénie serve as protector, rather than a male character, saves Marthe from the scrutiny of male judgment. By having a female as her protector, the relationship becomes more instructive rather than judgmental. Eugénie thus acts as a mother figure thereby allowing Marthe the freedom to make and learn from her own choices regardless of how poor they may be. These choices become the lessons that permit her to gain the confidence necessary to achieve independence. Eugénie is ultimately her faithful and devoted friend (151).

Marthe admits to Eugénie that she realizes that “[Horace] n’est pas bon, il n’est pas généreux, je ne devrais pas l’aimer!” (145). This proclamation demonstrates Marthe’s growth. She now recognizes her weakness but it is still “plus fort [qu’elle]” (145). Marthe must learn for herself.

Marthe’s second trajet across the streets of Paris symbolizes the increased strength and independence demonstrated by the female character. Marthe pursues Horace across Paris, defying Eugénie, in an effort to ensure his continuing love for her, showing that Marthe has gained the strength to rebel against her mother-protector in order to satisfy her own ambitions no matter what the risk. However, this act equally reveals Marthe’s inability to make good, responsible decisions that maintain her honor and virtue. Upon reaching Horace, Marthe worries that either Eugénie or Paul Arsène may have followed her, revealing to her the gravity of her pursuit of Horace, having put her honor at risk. She
learns through her mistake that an honorable lady should not be seen alone on the streets of Paris, nor stay the night alone with her lover. Marthe quickly desires to undo her choice, requesting that Horace take her back to the home of Eugénie and Théophile in order to preserve her honor: “Laisse-moi partir […], tu m’aimes toujours! Allons-nous-en, reconduis-moi.” (146). Nevertheless, Marthe stays the night with Horace. The following morning she attempts to discretely leave his apartment alone, but she is still “faible et brisée” (148). She is not ready to make the trajet alone. Sand employs a deus ex machina effect, having Paul Arsène appear as if from nowhere in order to accompany her home. She was able to cross Paris in pursuit of Horace in a state of emotion, but when in a calmer state of mind she remains unready to face the scrutiny of the unforgiving public domain of Paris alone.

Nonetheless, Marthe demonstrates that she is still lacking a strong sense of self by choosing to continue her tumultuous relationship with Horace, despite the sacrifices she is required to make. The reckless nature of their passion proves to be extremely demanding of Marthe. Horace’s multiple insecurities compel Marthe to make choices that eventually isolate her from her safe community. The first of these isolating decisions is represented through her request for Paul Arsène to refrain from further engagement in their friendship due to the extreme jealousy expressed by Horace. This choice is very telling of her increased maturity, as Marthe had stated previously that she could only achieve independence from M. Poisson through the assistance of her friend, Paul Arsène (94). Marthe is no longer dependent on their friendship. She, now, chooses to do what is necessary for the health of her new relationship: “Épuisée de cette lutte odieuse,” Marthe asks that Paul Arsène tell her “un éternel adieu” (162). This decision alone does not,
however, prove to be sufficient to satisfying Horace’s jealousy. Having been informed by Horace that Paul Arsène was responsible for her financial stability during her stay with Théophile and Eugénie, Marthe dissolves her living arrangement with the generous couple by letter. She indicates that, due to this newfound knowledge, “je n’en peux plus profiter” (162). Both of these choices are made in an effort to minimize the jealous accusations of her lover.

Though this decision to leave her community of friends in order to pursue a relationship with Horace appears to be a step backward, Sand’s choice to remove Marthe from the community she had initially established for her represents that Marthe is in fact ready to take the next step toward her emancipation. Marthe remains naïve in her decision to be involved with Horace, but she must learn that for herself. In order to do so, she must isolate herself from her circle of friends, who would stand in the way of her suffering and ultimately prevent her from learning to make responsible decisions. Marthe is ready to leave her home in order to learn the difficulties one encounters in the world in the same way that a child must do in order to achieve complete independence.

Following her departure from Théophile and Eugénie, Marthe moves in with Horace, further distancing herself from Théophile and Eugénie. Having, at one time, shared with them all of her grievances regarding Horace, henceforth “elle voulait [leur] faire croire […] à son bonheur” (163). The termination of this friendship creates a sense of dramatic irony. Though the reader is inclined to perceive this as a poor decision, it serves as a reminder that Marthe is not yet mature enough to achieve that level of understanding. She is, in that moment, incapable of comprehending that her lover of choice should not isolate her from her community. She genuinely believes that this isolation will diminish Horace's
overwhelming jealousy. Marthe is therefore willing to stand by her choice in a desperate attempt to salvage her relationship. This choice, on one level, demonstrates that Marthe is no longer looking for someone to save her, accepting to deal with her distress on her own. But, on another level, it also reveals the childish behavior ever-present in her character. She accepts the consequences of the decision she has made, and wants others to accept her choice as well. Fighting for her relationship and insisting on her independence, Marthe refuses any money offered by Théophile and Eugénie. The narrator criticizes this act by stating that Marthe did so “avec une sorte de hauteur qu’elle ne nous avait jamais témoignée” (163). This statement made by the narrator demonstrates Marthe’s childish, rebellious behavior. She is standing behind her decision to pursue Horace despite the thoughts and assistance of others. She is making the statement that she believes in her choice and she intends to carry it out no matter the consequences, therefore taking responsibility for her decisions.

Marthe rediscovers tyranny in her cohabitation with Horace. The reader learns this initially through the omniscient narrator who recounts the living situation of the couple from a past tense, third person perspective. This distance from Marthe represents in part her emancipation from the community. However, it also demonstrates a regression of Marthe’s character to a submissive and tyrannical situation: “elle, croyant calmer cette âme inquiète en lui faisant sacrifice sur sacrifice, et donnant par là chaque jour plus d’extension à sa douleureuse tyrannie” (167). Horace attempts to mold Marthe into the aristocratic woman that she is not, the same way he desires the aristocratic lifestyle that he does not have the means to live. He insists that she “ne s’occu[p[e] que de lecture et de toilette” because, from his perspective, “la beauté [perd] de son prix et de son lustre en remplissant
les conditions d'une vie naïve et simple" (168). Horace could not allow Marthe to resemble a *grisette*. These details are presented to the reader in the form of ulterior narration, referencing Genette’s terminology. This type of narration creates distance between the reader and Marthe because her voice has ceded to that of the narrator’s. The fact that the details of Marthe’s lifestyle while living with Horace are presented in such a distant manner strengthens the argument that Marthe had returned to a tyrannical situation, her voice having been suppressed from the dialogue.

This situation, nevertheless, begins to unravel when Horace reveals to Marthe the gravity of their financial situation. It is at this time that Marthe’s character resurfaces, returning to the dialogue in an effort to regain some independence: “laissez-moi travailler [...] laissez-moi vivre comme je l’entend” (170). It is true that Marthe is asking permission, but this is the first time that she is requesting her lover to allow her to live the way she desires rather than flee. She affirms that “le travail [...] rendra ma vie plus douce et mon coeur plus gai.” She is therefore fighting to reestablish her initial desire to “vivre de mon travail” (76). It should be noted as well that Marthe is now speaking formally to Horace, signifying the increased distance between the two lovers, as he speaks to her informally.

Marthe demonstrates to the reader her increased maturity and knowledge of society after moving in with Horace. This is first revealed to the reader when Marthe suggests she go to Mont-de-Piété to sell some of her luxurious gifts from Horace in an attempt to rectify their financial troubles. When Horace criticizes this suggestion, calling it a place “avec les femmes les plus viles, avec les filles perdues!” (171), Marthe defends her suggestion by critiquing society: “C’est une ressource dont toute honte est pour la société” (171). She explains that these women represent mothers selling their last luxury, instead of selling
themselves, in order to feed their family. This critique exhibits a new Marthe, capable of defending herself to her lover as well as thinking for herself rather than following the preconceived notions of society. Marthe also discloses that she obtained the idea from a scene she had read in the *Mémoires de la Contemporaine* (171), a scandalous autobiographical novel, published in 1827 by Ida Sainte-Elme, recounting her life experiences under the Republic, the Consulate, and the Empire. This statement serves as evidence that it is through reading, which Horace insisted upon, that Marthe has gained this knowledge and confidence to formulate her own opinions. Sand thus divulges her reasoning for placing Marthe with Horace despite his faults. He unwittingly plays a key role in her progression toward liberation. Horace later reinforces this concept when Théophile shares that he believes Marthe to be pregnant. Horace asserts that Marthe is reading *Emile* and that she intends to raise the child with “une éducation à la Jean-Jacques” (211). Marthe has evidently become well read during her stay with Horace. She has matured and developed an *esprit*, giving her the tools necessary to function on her own as an individual in society.

The fact that Marthe gained knowledge from her readings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau indicates that, according to Sand, reading is an essential tool for women’s emancipation. Sand's direct reference to Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Emile* (Horace 211) strongly supports this concept, as it is a novel that discusses education. Emile’s education, throughout the book, is an evolutionary process requiring many stages, much like Sand’s depiction of Marthe’s emancipation in *Horace*. At one point in the novel, Emile’s tutor, Jean-Jacques, describes his distaste for books declaring: “ils n’apprennent qu’à parler de ce qu’on ne sait pas” (Rousseau 3543). However, this statement reinforces the idea that books are in fact
tools, as they allow us to gain knowledge and perspective on matters with which we are unfamiliar, such as the liberation of women in 19th-century France. They spark curiosity within the imagination. This makes Sand’s reference to *Mémoires de la Contemporaine* (Horace 171) all the more relevant. In reading this novel, Marthe begins to have ideas about how she, too, can ensure her survival during trying times. Rousseau also states in his preface to *Julie ou la nouvelle Héloïse* that the novel corresponds better with women and could be useful for those who maintain a love for honesty but find themselves in a dysfunctional lifestyle or situation (4). In referencing the utility of the novel, he strengthens the argument that reading is in fact an educational and inspirational tool. It is also relevant to note that this is a novel geared to the education of Julie. However, Rousseau also warns that a virtuous girl should never read novels if she is to maintain her virtue. This statement suggests that a novel may give young girls ideas that society does not want them to have. In applying these two declarations to Marthe, we can see that she is mature and able enough to use the novel as a tool to her advantage. One could even say that reading had inspired the very dangers that society had feared, as it inspired her to stand up against a man. While Sand approved, disobeying a man was against society’s norms. Thus, Rousseau’s presence in Sand’s novel is not without significance. On several occasions he suggests that reading is a powerful tool that can lead to enlightenment or destruction. In this case, Sand proves that reading is what leads Marthe toward education and liberation.

Marthe, thus, resolves to liberate herself from her tyrannical relationship with Horace. As previously stated, it is Théophile who shares with Horace, as well as the reader, that Marthe is pregnant. During their last encounter, Marthe confesses to Théophile that she blames society for her problems with Horace declaring, “l’opinion implacable flétrit à
jamais la femme tombée, et lui defend de se relever" (210). This confession exemplifies Marthe’s newfound ability to think critically. She is finally able to recognize her situation and the difficulties she faces regarding society’s judgment. It is also significant that Théophile indicates that Marthe speaks to him briefly on the subject of religion and the concept of resignation. The mention of religion reminds the reader of the Saint-Simonian beliefs, which consider women to hold a certain value in society, which Marthe had acquired from Eugénie. The concept of resignation is equally important. At first glance, this concept seems to suggest Marthe’s submission to both the views of society and her unfortunate situation with Horace. However, Marthe’s voluntary resignation also demonstrates her ultimate growth and maturity. At last, she realizes the impossibility of a relationship with Horace, who remains too immature for the responsibility that Marthe now bears. Though she appears to blame herself for not being able to inspire “un véritable amour” (210), she has reached a level of maturity that permits her to leave Horace and face society alone. In fact, her belief that she is incapable of inspiring true love actually provides her with the mentality necessary to branch out on her own, if for no other reason, for the safety and protection of her unborn child.

Marthe’s statement of farewell symbolizes the achievement of her emancipation. The letter in which Marthe bids farewell to Horace demonstrates the remarkable growth and evolution of Marthe’s character:

Rassurez-vous, cher Horace, je m’étais trompée. Vous n’aurez pas les charges et les ennuis de la paternité; mais après tout ce que vous m’avez dit depuis quinze jours, j’ai compris que notre union ne pouvait pas durer sans faire votre malheur et ma honte. Il y a longtemps que nous avons dû nous préparer mutuellement à cette
séparation, qui vous affligera, j’en suis sure, mais à laquelle vous vous résignerez, en songeant que nous nous devions mutuellement cet acte de courage et de raison.
Adieu pour toujours. Ne me cherchez pas, ce serait inutile. Ne vous inquiétez pas de moi, je suis forte et calme désormais. Je quitte Paris; j’irai peut-être dans mon pays.
Je n’ai besoin de rien, je ne vous reproche rien. Ne gardez pas de moi un souvenir amer. Je pars en appelant sur vous la benédiction du ciel. (213)

At the beginning of the passage, Marthe lies to Horace, suggesting that she is not actually pregnant, severing all ties between the two characters. She then admits her newfound understanding that the continuation of their relationship would result in his misfortune and her shame, assuring that he, too, eventually come to this resolution. The new awareness that Marthe exhibits throughout this passage demonstrates the strength and resolve of her character. The once naïve and weak Marthe, who fled from and chased after tyrannical men, is now taking charge of her own life. This passage models the character’s ability to reflect on, analyze and rectify her situation, a quality not commonly attributed to women of the 19th century. She acknowledges her ability to be, henceforth, self-sufficient through her declaration that she no longer needs anyone, and searching for her would be ineffective. The choice made by Sand, subsequently, to remove Marthe from the action for several chapters indicates her intention to demonstrate to the reader that Marthe was in fact emancipated, leaving the reader wondering about Marthe’s whereabouts and wellbeing. Upon Marthe’s return to the plot, the reader discovers that Marthe is alive, surviving on her own and caring for her child.

When Sand reintroduces Marthe to the action of the novel, the reader discovers that she is persevering for the sake of her child through the misery and poverty in which she
finds herself. She is, nonetheless, making it on her own. However, it is worth investigating Sand’s choice to reinstate her character. Marthe’s re-entry indicates that her pathway toward emancipation, in Sand’s mind, is not yet complete. It is not sufficient that Marthe remain “[u]ne femme pâle, maigre, et misérablement vêtue, assise sur son grabat et tenant dans ses bras un enfant nouveau-né” (253). It therefore seems relevant to mention that Marthe is reintroduced to the novel through Paul Arsène who, fleeing from the battle of June 5, 1832 and on the verge of dying, jumps through the window of Marthe’s “mansarde” (252). The statement made by the narrator at the opening of the chapter reinforces the significance of this event, announcing “j’interromprai le récit des bonnes fortunes d’Horace pour suivre Arsène et Laravinière” (251). This rupture in the narrative is symbolic of Sand’s desire to break with the societal norms of the time. The fact that Marthe reunites with Paul Arsène on June 5, 1832, the date of the attempted overthrow of the July monarchy, reinforces Sand’s attempt at separation from the current 19th-century social order. Laravinière, also on the verge of dying, urges Paul Arsène to “sauver ta vie pour elle” (252). Sand thus creates an illusion of fate that brings Paul Arsène back to Marthe, although, this time, Paul Arsène’s arrival is joyous for the reader, as if Marthe had earned the right to be happy with “son meilleur ami” (253).

The couple thus embarks on the journey together in an attempt to gain a sustainable living for the family, despite the fact that both struggle to obtain meaningful employment. Paul Arsène, who “avait épousé Marthe dans son coeur, et adopté le fils d’Horace devant Dieu” (275), ultimately encourages Marthe to pursue a role as leading actress at the théâtre de Belleville, where she had been working as a dresser. Agreeing to audition for the prosperity of her family, she welcomes “un succès éclatant” (276). Marthe, at last, is able to
earn a living for herself and her family: “[…] elle éprouvait un doux orgueil, et relevait sa tête longtemps courbée et humiliée sous la domination de l'homme” (278). Sand’s decision to bring Marthe back to the forefront of the plot demonstrates her intention to model, through Marthe’s character, that emancipation, liberation and success are attainable for women. Sand develops a pathway toward this emancipation that is long, laborious and not without flaws. Her realistic depiction of Marthe’s journey forces the reader to grow, learn and evolve with Marthe, allowing the reader to grasp Sand’s vision that, even in the context of 19th-century France, emancipation of women was possible. Women must first be able to exist independently before they can establish relationships with men in which they would be recognized as an equal. The evolution of Marthe’s character, through many trials and tribulations, ultimately provides her with the education necessary to becoming an active member of society, as well as in her relationship with Paul Arsène. Marthe’s original lack of interest in forming a relationship Paul Arsène permits them to form a meaningful friendship. For Sand, in order for a couple to be truly equal, they must establish a friendship where each person values the other’s best interest. A romantic relationship may lead to inequality because each person values his/her personal feelings over those of his/her partner.

The evolution of the female character symbolizes Sand’s vision and desire for sexual equality in 19th-century society. Sand evokes compassion and understanding from her reader in an effort to prove that women can remain honorable and achieve success. As observed through Marthe’s many difficulties encountered on this journey, Sand admits that this evolution does not come quickly or easily, but it is attainable nonetheless. Though often critiqued for her idealism, after closer analysis, one observes that this utopian
approach represents Sand’s attempt to demonstrate that equality is attainable. She critiques society for relentlessly forcing women into submissive roles under patriarchal order. In the novel, Marthe gains an education through her community of friends, making poor choices, learning life lessons and reading. This education leads to her evolution, permitting her to become a liberated woman of talent and worth in the eyes of the readers, who may also be influenced by their reading of the emancipation of Sand’s female character to act on their own behalf. Marthe’s journey toward emancipation therefore symbolizes Sand’s attempt to deconstruct the strict patriarchal norms that prevent women from having rights equal to men in society.
CHAPTER 2:

CULTIVATING IDEAL CHARACTERS BY MEANS OF A GENDER POWER ROLE-REVERSAL IN

MAUPRAT AND “LAVINIA”

What emerges from Sand’s attempt to deconstruct the patriarchal norms that prevent women from having equal right to men by liberating the female character, which we saw in the previous chapter through Marthe, is the development of a strong and perseverant female character capable, ready and willing to challenge the male character’s extensive reign over her. In demonstrating how Sand envisions the evolution and empowerment of the female character, the readers are prepared for Sand’s next upheaval in characterization by imposing a gender power role-reversal of her male and female characters. In this gender power role-reversal the female characters assume, at times, a role of domination, which forces the submission of the male characters. Reversing the power dynamics between the male and female characters symbolizes Sand’s effort to transform the conditions of women by imagining a world where women are in the dominant position over their male counterparts. Jessica Benjamin is a noted feminist theorist and psychoanalyst who is best known for her thorough analysis of relationships of domination and submission and the manner in which these types of relationships affect social conditions. Her explanation of the dynamics that feed these relationships will provide a framework for my analysis of how George Sand alters the power distribution between her male and female characters in an effort to move toward gender equality. In conducting a detailed analysis of the power role-reversal dynamic presented in “Lavinia” and Mauprat, I will, first, reveal how Sand implements a role-reversal between her male and female characters. Once the gender power role-reversal is established, I will
demonstrate how Sand justifies the necessity and utility of this role-reversal in order to prepare the male and female characters to be able to establish sexual equality. Throughout this chapter, I will demonstrate how this reversal of the gender power dynamics provides an education for the male and female characters that is essential to cultivating ideal characters capable of forming an ideal couple based on gender equality in *Mauprat* and “Lavinia”.

“Lavinia” is a short story whose plot revolves around providing closure to an old love affair between Lady Lavinia and Lionel. The action is instigated, at Lady Lavinia’s request, when she sends a *Billet* asking that they each return their old love letters and photos on the eve of his marriage to Miss Ellis. This request re-opens a closed chapter in both characters’ lives, provoking jealousy and confusion in the male character and requiring the female character to make tough decisions. The reader quickly gains the impression that the tables have been turned. The action seems to revolve around Lady Lavinia’s will and desires which, as the reader discovers later, was not the case during their love affair ten years prior. Each attempt by Lionel to gain the upper hand on the situation unravels before his eyes. He remains dominated by his jealousy and his emotions. Lady Lavinia, on the other hand, is able to maintain her resolve and composure. She repeatedly appears to be in control of herself and the situation, causing Lionel to become more and more distraught.

*Mauprat* is a novel about a brute, savage man, Bernard, who was raised by his grandfather and uncles to be violent and barbaric. He agrees to save his cousin, Edmée, from his uncles, who intend to rape her, provided that she agrees to marry him. However, after their escape it becomes clear that she will not make good on her promise until he
elevates himself to her status through a rigorous education. Although the reader is initially under the impression that Bernard is in the position of power, after some exposition the reader observes that it is Edmée who is in control of the situation. This allows the reader to witness the gender power role-reversal being put into effect. In this way the reader is able to observe the reactions of both characters as they both rise and fall from power.

Jessica Benjamin explains in *The Bonds of Love*, that domination is a process that requires the participation of both the person exercising the power and the person who opts to submit to that power (5). Benjamin analyzes what makes the submissive person choose to submit to his or her oppressors as she “seeks to understand how domination is anchored in the hearts of the dominated” (5). The idea that relationships of domination are two-sided inspires a closer examination of the shifts in power from the male characters to the female characters in Sand’s works. Following Benjamin’s theoretical framework, I will expose the underlying implications of Sand’s choice to shift the power dynamics within the couple in order to educate her male and female characters in an effort to move closer toward forming the ideal couple.

Sand stages a battle of the sexes between her male and female characters in order to demonstrate that, contrary to popular 19th-century belief, the female character can perform in a position of power. The empowerment of the female character is initially emphasized through the title, “Lavinia”, the name of the female protagonist. “Lavinia” is one of four short stories, all displaying female characters as titles and protagonists, published between 1832 and 1835 and gathered into a small collection (Reid, *Préface* 12). Originally entitled, *Une vieille histoire*, Sand opted to change it to “Lavinia” for the 1834 edition (Reid, *Notes sur les textes* 301). Entitling the text with a female character’s name attracts the reader’s
attention and thereby emphasizes the importance of the female character. Having gained
the reader's focus, Sand describes for the reader the mental and physical challenges of the
female character regarding society and marriage, as those are the interconnected themes
apparent in the collection (Reid, *Préface* 12). Sand has thus identified these texts as
important to the articulation of women's social situation for her reader. By inviting the
reader to this forum, where the female character offers her perspective on her
relationships with the male characters and thus imposes her thoughts and beliefs on them,
the gender power role-reversal appears in “Lavinia” as a step toward establishing equality
between men and women. Sand provides a disclaimer in the *Préface de 1861*, which states,
“Il n'y a jamais eu de système chez l'auteur de ces nouvelles, à propos de la priorité d'un
sexe sur l'autre. Il a toujours cru à une parfaite égalité naturelle [...]” (Sand, *Préface de
1861*). This statement reinforces the notion that Sand's ultimate goal is sexual equality, as
she believes that no being is naturally superior or inferior to the other. The inclusion of
such a statement in the preface suggests that she has been criticized for seemingly favoring
one sex over the other. By reiterating that she truly envisions sexual equality as her goal,
one can interpret that Sand alters the gender power dynamics in the relationship in an
effort to establish an even platform for the male and female characters, and thus a
necessary step in the process of establishing sexual equality.

The power struggle is first evident during the opening sequence of “Lavinia”. A
simple request turns into an unintentional battle to determine who is the dominant sex
when Lady Lavinia requests that she and Lionel exchange their old love letters. In addition
to issuing the request, it is Lady Lavinia who defines the terms of the exchange in
demanding that Lionel travel from Bagnères to Saint-Sauveur. Lionel responds by
criticizing her request to have him deliver the letters in person only to leave them with a third party, refusing him the opportunity for a personal encounter. This reaction demonstrates an attempt by the male character to take control of the situation by changing the terms of the exchange when he suggests entrusting the letters to a messenger who would deliver them to Saint-Sauveur. He then patronizes her authority stating, “J’attends vos ordres à cet égard; quel qu’ils soient, madame, je m’y soumettrai aveuglément” (“Lavinia” 78). This closing statement made by Lionel resonates of sarcasm. The undertone of such a declaration of submission suggests that Lionel actually expects Lady Lavinia to adhere to his alterations to her proposed arrangement. Lady Lavinia, on the contrary, responds to this challenge of her authority with dignity, addressing Lionel’s every concern. She explains to him the necessity of delivering the letters himself, as the exposure of such letters would provoke a scandal and there are many thieves known to lurk in the mountains. She equally informs him that she had not offered him a personal encounter in order to prevent making him uncomfortable. However, since he insists on seeing her, she sets a date and time when he may come to Saint-Sauveur and return the letters. Lady Lavinia thus maintains control, having the final word. This exchange at the beginning of the story sets the scene for change. Lady Lavinia takes charge and exercises her authority over the situation by explaining the logic in her original request, while standing her ground by granting him a meeting on her own terms. The female character has thus taken a firm stance that, if the meeting and the exchange of letters is to take place, it will be on her terms, thereby assuming the dominant position over the male character. Lionel can do nothing but submit to her wishes. The reader witnesses the repercussions of this gender
power role-reversal throughout the story, observing Lionel question his desires as Lady Lavinia discovers her own.

A similar situation presents itself in *Mauprat* when Edmée takes charge of her own safety, convincing Bernard to save her from his barbaric uncles. Edmée seizes her opportunity during a moment of weakness when Bernard, overcome by his sexual desire, falls to his knees before Edmée: “Elle prit ma tête dans ses deux belles mains [...]” (*Mauprat* 80). The image Sand creates in this passage places the female character in the dominant position and the male character in the submissive position, kneeling before Edmée. The role-reversal is reinforced when Edmée refers to Bernard as “mon cher enfant” (80). However, similar to the gender battle that takes place in “Lavinia”, Bernard quickly rebels against the female character: “[...] vous jouez-vous de moi? ne savez-vous pas où vous êtes” (80). This reaction serves as a reminder to Edmée, as well as to the reader, that she is acting unconventionally, disrespecting him, the master, in his own home. Edmée’s response clarifies for the reader that she is well aware of her position and her actions: “Je sais que je suis à la Roche-Mauprat [...] et que je vais être outragée et assassinée dans deux heures si d’ici là je n’ai pas réussi à vous inspirer quelque pitié. Mais j’y réussirai [...]” (80). She takes a definitive stance against the male character, exuding a clear confidence in her persuasive abilities. Edmée eventually succeeds in convincing Bernard to flee with her from his home in order to save her from being killed by his uncles by appealing to his exposed weakness, his desire for her. She vows to be his after he saves her. They continue their manipulative power tricks, the upper hand toggling back and forth between the two characters until the moment that she finally manages to uncover his guarded sensitivity by asking, “Et vous,
m’aimez-vous?” (81). Edmée thus successfully gains control of the situation; by reversing the question, she inspires Bernard to confess his love to her.

In both episodes, the female characters triumph, demanding the recognition of their authority by the male characters. The male characters, despite their efforts, find themselves defeated at their own game of domination and have no choice but to relinquish their control of the situation to the female characters. Sand ensures this conclusion in articulating their individual reactions to having lost to the female characters. Lionel was “désagréablement frappé” by the arrival of the second billet (“Lavinia” 79), insinuating that he anticipated no such demand from Lady Lavinia, but rather expected her to concede to his suggestion to employ a messenger to deliver the letters. Bernard, likewise admits defeat by, first, acknowledging he was being manipulated, attesting that Edmée deemed him to be an imbecile who is easily manipulated, then stating, “De ce moment la victoire fut à elle” once she asked for his love in return (Mauprat 82). The recognition of the female character’s triumph symbolizes his realization that Edmée has out-maneuvered him, thus forcing him to assume the submissive position in the gender power role-reversal.

Exploring Benjamin’s theories can help to better understand the significance of the gender power role-reversal realized by Sand. With polarized gender roles being analogous to the Master-Slave relation, Hegel explains in his discussion of “the independence and dependence of self-consciousness” that, in order for self-consciousness to exist it must be recognized by another self-consciousness. Therefore, in order for a master and a slave to exist, one must recognize the other as such (Hegel 64-69). Jessica Benjamin elaborates on this concept, applying it to the paradox of the parent-child relationship: “[...] the child not only needs to achieve independence, but he must be recognized as independent – by the
very people on whom he has been most dependent” (Benjamin 52). This paradox of the parent-child relationship seems applicable to the gender power role-reversal imposed by Sand. These two episodes in which the male and female characters battle for recognition of their position and power from the other mimic the paradox of the parent-child relationship. The male characters typically view themselves as the manipulators of the situation, considering the female characters to be little more than puppets. Benjamin explains, “Domination begins with the attempt to deny dependency” (52). Domination thus stems from a situation where the child refuses to acknowledge his/her dependency on the mother during childhood, thereby commanding his/her own independence. In the context of Sand’s texts, the female characters threaten the male characters’ conceived reality when they challenge the male characters’ authority, refusing to recognize their power. In this way the female characters reject their traditional dependency on the male characters and the male characters are forced to acknowledge their dependency on the female characters. The female characters are, however, striving to be recognized by the male characters as independent beings possessing their own free will.

This is the framework of the perpetual trap of the master-slave relationship as Benjamin describes it. While Benjamin discusses the master-slave dynamic as it relates to the sado-masochistic relationship that is described in Pauline Réage’s Story of O, any relationship of domination and submission mimics the dynamics of the master-slave relationship. Although the male and female relationships presented in Sand’s works are far less extreme, Benjamin’s theories on domination and submission are still applicable. Benjamin specifies that “[t]rue independence means sustaining the essential tension of [...] both asserting the self and recognizing the other. Domination is the consequence of
refusing this condition” (53). It could be argued that maintaining such a tension is improbable. But if it were to be accomplished, one must first determine what would be the necessary conditions to initially create this tension between assertion and recognition. In order to escape from the realm of domination the power dynamics must be altered. The dominant must become submissive and the submissive become dominant. Although this reversal does not put an end to a dynamic based on domination, it allows the male and female characters to discover the other position, which could lead to creating type of necessary tension Benjamin deems essential to escaping domination (48). Reversing the power dynamic between the male and female characters, as Sand does in “Lavinia” and Mauprat, changes the stakes of the relationship. Typically the dominant are always dominant while the submissive always submit. The reversal of the gender power dynamics demonstrates what can happen when one experiences the other.

Sand imposes a gender power role-reversal in an attempt to transform the master-slave relationship into a teaching tool, inspiring the reader to question what would happen if the dominant were to submit and the submissive to dominate. At first glance, it appears that little change would take place apart from reversing the gender roles. However, using Benjamin’s terminology, in the dynamic Sand develops in “Lavinia” and Mauprat, the master-turned-slave must learn the desire to submit and suppress his will to dominate while the slave-turned-master must learn to exert her power and suppress her tendency to submit. Benjamin, nonetheless, specifies that a mere role-reversal is not sufficient to unravel the perpetual process of domination. Sand appears to employ the gender power role-reversal as a mechanism to bring to the forefront the need to educate the other in order to eventually achieve what Benjamin calls mutual recognition. This reversal of power
allows for an education on the experience of the other. This could create the tension that Benjamin describes as necessary to achieving mutual recognition.

The initial implementation of this gender power role-reversal changes the dynamic of what I will call the dominant-submissive relationship, which forces both the male and female characters to reevaluate their roles. The instability of the male character’s power is first represented through Lionel’s evident anger and frustration as he scrambles to adhere to Lady Lavinia’s demands, which disrupt his personal life. Lionel outlines his predicament, “il faut que je me décide entre Luchon et Saint-Sauveur, entre une femme à conquérir et une femme à consoler” (83). Here, Lionel strives to regain his control over the situation by distorting the facts, suggesting that it is his obligation to decide between two women that he must either conquer or console. An attentive reader observes that the need to make such a decision was actually imposed by Lady Lavinia, who beat him at his own game. This is further supported in the text when Lionel quarrels with Henry, his friend and Lady Lavinia’s cousin, as Lionel is convinced that she continues to pine over their old romance: “pourrez-vous m’expliquer l’étrange fantaisie qui porte Lady Lavinia à m’imposer un rendez-vous?” (83). Henry promptly reminds Lionel, “c’est votre faute [...] vous ne pouvez pas resister à l’envie de faire des phrases” (83, 84). It becomes increasingly evident that Sand is faulting and reprimanding the male character for his arrogant desire to dominate the situation. If he had merely conceded to Lady Lavinia’s original request to deliver the letters to her servant at his leisure, he would have only been mildly inconvenienced. His arrogance got the best of him, thereby placing him in the predicament of choosing between maintaining his current love interest and submitting to Lady Lavinia’s orders, as he
sarcastically stated previously that he would be more than willing to do. The male character is thus destabilized by the sudden assertion of control by the female character.

As in “Lavinia”, throughout *Mauprat*, the increasing instability of the male character is demonstrated through a perpetual state of powerlessness in relation to the female character. Bernard, accustomed to commanding and obtaining all that he desires through sheer brute strength, now appears powerless to force Edmée to comply with their agreement that he would save her only if she would, subsequently, marry him and become his. Bernard’s powerlessness to handle the situation becomes initially evident in a short conversation between the two, where Edmée asks him, “ferez-vous toutes mes volontés?” (95). He scoffs at the idea, asking why he would even consider such a request. She responds, “[p]arce que c’est ainsi qu’on prouve aux femmes qu’on les aime” (95). This conversation makes it undeniably clear who is in control, placing Bernard in a constant state of frustration due to his powerlessness to take by force that which he desires. There is irony in the image of this physically savage and powerful man who is incapable of gaining the upper hand in the situation against this meek young woman. The irony of not being able to take what he believes to be rightfully his taunts Bernard repeatedly, which captures the sentiment of the reader and invites the reader into the inner struggle that his character must undergo. The irony is elevated when, in a conversation with her father, Bernard learns that, if they had been raised together, he would have most certainly become her husband but, “[i]l faut que vous commenciez votre éducation, et la sienne s’achève” (99). Not only can he not forcefully seize what he believes to belong to him (Edmée) but also he learns that, if circumstances had been different, she would have decidedly been his. The reader is, however, finally informed as to why this union is, at present, impossible. It is
education that places Edmée at a level that is superior to Bernard. Martine Reid affirms this superiority in her article, “Mauprat: mariage et maternité chez Sand”, by describing Edmée as a self-made woman who manages a small masculine society (52). Edmée is, in this way, portrayed as the puppet-master of this society of men. She is not only capable of controlling Bernard, but all of the male characters who surround her.

In both scenarios, the reader is able to observe an alteration in the confidence of the male character. They no longer appear to be in control of the situation, which exposes certain vulnerabilities in their characters. These vulnerabilities weaken their stance and propel the plot forward. They struggle to manage this sudden lack of control that is very unfamiliar to them. In Lionel’s case, he attempts to blame others in order to justify his inability to control the situation. Bernard frequently speaks of an uneasiness that he feels as he finds himself out of his element: “la transition de mes habitudes actives à cette molle captivité me causa un ennui dont rien ne saurait rendre les angoisses” (Mauprat 100). Both male characters are thus introduced to new aspects of their personalities that are very unfamiliar and provoke erratic behavior that is uncharacteristic of the classically dominant male character.

In “Lavinia”, when the two former lovers meet for the first time in ten years, the reader is able to witness the gender power role-reversal firsthand. The narrator describes Lady Lavinia’s instinctual reaction to seeing Lionel, the man she had once loved desperately, as “douce, calme, indifférente [...]” (101). On the contrary, Lionel is described as being paralyzed at the sight of her, not having anticipated her present beauty. Comparing these initial reactions from the two characters, they appear to be the opposite of what one typically would anticipate from the male and female characters. Lady Lavinia,
having once believed she would die from the pain and anger of seeing her former lover, now assumes the more masculine stance, appearing cool, calm and collected. Lionel assumes the more feminine attribute of being overcome with emotion to the point of being speechless, paralyzing his masculinity. Both characters are surprised by their reactions, which emphasize for the reader the unprecedented effects of the gender power role-reversal, as it has inspired the two characters to react in ways that are typically uncharacteristic of their gender.

Likewise, in *Mauprat*, Bernard has an encounter with Edmée that fully establishes the gender power role-reversal and lays out the terms of their agreement. Bernard reminds Edmée of her promise to belong to him and states, “Je sais bien que vous avez dit cela parce que vous aviez peur de ma force; et ici je sais bien que vous me fuyez parce que vous avez peur de mon droit” (122). Edmée promptly rebuts this declaration: “Je ne vous appartiendrai jamais [...] si vous ne changez pas de langage, de manières et de sentiments. [...] Corrigez-vous, instruisez-vous, et nous verrons” (123). In this passage, the reader observes a more clearly defined example of the gender power role-reversal where Edmée prescribes the terms of their relationship to which Bernard must adhere. Bernard had previously acknowledged that Edmée and her entourage spoke a language that he understood, but could not speak. This language was described to be one of “politesse” (101), whereas Bernard was only familiar with the barbaric language of domination. He now finds himself in a situation where kindness and compassion dominate over animal instincts and he has no other option but to submit himself to the new order if he wants to gain the affection of the female character.
The reactions of the male and female characters, in both texts, symbolize a sort of involuntary recognition of the gender power role-reversal. As previously indicated, Benjamin explains that recognition is an essential part of the Master-Slave relationship. By reacting to the female characters’ dominant behavior, the male characters acknowledge the power reversal. Without the male characters’ submission to the female characters’ empowerment, the female characters would lose their viability as dominant in the relationship. The sudden assertion of power by the female character dictates the instability of the male character. Their reactions to this instability, in turn, inspire them to recognize the change in dynamic. In “Lavinia”, for example, the narrator asserts that Lionel’s “esprit rebelle se taisait et restait éperdu à contempler Lady Lavinia” (102). Lionel is essentially speechless and mesmerized by Lavinia’s change in character. Similarly, in Mauprat, after Edmée turns the tables and asks Bernard if he loves her, Bernard admits in reaction, “Je n’eus plus la force de vouloir ce que je désirais; ma tête de loup-cervier fut bouleversée, ni plus ni moins que celle d’un homme, et je crois que j’eus l’accent de la voix humaine” when he proclaimed his love for her (82). Bernard thus acknowledges that, because of Edmée’s assertion of control, he, too, was affected, momentarily abandoning his carnal desire. He goes so far as to proclaim that Edmée inspired him to have a human reaction. In both cases, the male characters recognize that they have been influenced by the female characters’ empowerment. The state of instability inspired by the female empowerment creates a vulnerable, submissive male character. The female character’s assertion of power is recognized and accepted by the male character, making the role-reversal possible. What sustains the role-reversal, however, is the competitive, dominating nature that exists within the male character. Without his will to challenge the female character’s authority,
her power would go unrecognized and she would lose her status as dominant in the relationship. It is also relevant to indicate that this situation creates an example of the tension necessary to eventually establishing Benjamin deems necessary to establishing mutual reognition. Benjamin's model helps to explain how, in Sand’s texts, the male character’s constant challenging of the female character’s power is important to the female character’s dominant position in the following terms, “When I act upon the other it is vital that he be affected, so that I know that I exist—but not completely destroyed, so that I know he also exists” (38). That is to say that, in both “Lavinia” and Mauprat, the male characters’ reaction to the female characters’ assertion of power provides the female characters with the validation they need to redefine their existence as being dominant in the role-reversal.

As previously mentioned, Benjamin specifies that the relationship of domination “can be reversed [...] but it can never become reciprocal or equal” (62). So what is there to be gained from this gender power role-reversal imposed by Sand if not equality? It can be argued that what is gained is an understanding of the other. In the relationship of domination, the dominant partner requires the other to recognize him/her as dominant while the submissive partner acquires his/her identity through the dominant partner’s control (Benjamin 62). The problem lies, however, in the singularity of each character’s role, one always being the dominant partner and the other always being the submissive partner. Sand uses the gender power role-reversal to allow the male and female characters to gain the perspective of the other by educating the formerly dominant partner on what is to be gained by submission and the formerly submissive partner on what is to be gained by assertion. Benjamin claims that, “Only through the other’s survival can the subject move
beyond the realm of submission and retaliation to a realm of mutual respect” (39). While Benjamin is speaking in terms of life and death, one could apply the same theory to the dominant-submissive male female relationship by interpreting survival in more loose terms. For Sand, the survival, or completion of the education acquired through the gender power role-reversal, would allow the characters to eventually move toward mutual recognition, where each character both asserts the self and submits to the other.

Sand clearly advocates the importance of such an education in *Mauprat*.

“L’éducation vous apprendrait, Bernard, ce que vous devez penser des choses qui vous intéressent le plus, de votre position, de vos devoirs, de vos sentiments” (128). It is as such that Edmée defines the role and necessity of Bernard’s education, placing importance on the need to gain understanding, compassion and respect for life and one’s place in the world. It is through this understanding that one acquires the ability to recognize the other as another subject rather than an object. To submit is to sacrifice for the benefit of the other. Patience, another male character in *Mauprat* known as a peasant visionary, explains that Bernard only loves Edmée for her beauty while Patience describes her as “la lune qui éclaire le monde” (132). Bernard is blind to who she really is. His education, overseen by Edmée, will enlighten him and help him to see the world with new eyes. Keith Wren asserts, “[…] Bernard’s learning to understand the only relationship that Edmée will accept, a contract between equals, implies his learning to understand that the nature of the only genuine bond is similar” (361). This genuine bond is the male-female relationship based on love and equality. Bernard’s animalistic and carnal desire to possess Edmée is not the kind of desire that bonds two beings together eternally. Wren continues, “Relationships between the sexes cannot be conducted purely on the grounds of appetite, neither can they be made
to order on the basis of society’s [...] habitual understanding of what constitutes a ‘suitable marriage’. Bernard must learn to deny his selfish carnal instincts and desires to possess Edmée and submit to this education imposed by Edmée. Bernard reveals in retrospect: “[...]

pour passer d’un état de l’âme à un état opposé, même du mal au bien, même de la douleur à la jouissance et de la fatigue au repos, il faut que l’homme souffre, et que, dans cet enfantement d’une nouvelle destinée, tous les ressorts de son être se tendent jusqu’à se briser” (137). This realization describes the immense suffering to which Bernard is subjected while undergoing this education. He is confronted with both his jealousy of M. de la Marche’s relationship with Edmée, to whom she is legitimately betrothed, and her cold, distant demeanor toward Bernard. However, at this early stage of his education he is incapable of controlling his jealousy and comprehending the reasons behind Edmée’s indifference. He recognizes that this education is causing him to suffer yet it remains unclear to him what good could come from such sacrifice. His only goal, at this point, is to win over Edmée.

In *Mauprat*, the reader is clearly informed of the necessity of the male character’s education and what it is intended to achieve. The reader is equally able to observe Bernard’s frustration and difficulty accepting such an education. When the same analysis is applied to Lionel in “Lavinia”, one observes similar struggles taking place within the male character. Lady Lavinia, like Edmée, is similarly idolized by the male character, being presented in a way that indicates that she has a greater understanding of herself and the world than she had had ten years prior during their former relationship: “elle était mieux selon ses idées, selon le monde” (108). This representation of Lady Lavinia implies that she herself has undergone an education, similar to that of Edmée’s. Like Bernard with Edmée,
Lionel is unable to understand Lady Lavinia’s vision of the world. This is further demonstrated when Lady Lavinia describes the landscape to Lionel: “Avez-vous remarqué aussi que, dans le brusque passage des ténèbres à la lumière et de la lumière aux ténèbres, tout semblait se mouvoir, s’agiter, comme si ces monts s’ébranlaient pour s’écouler?” (123). Here, Lady Lavinia illustrates her ability to analyze the cause and effects of the storm in nature. Lionel refrains from commenting on Lady Lavinia’s worldly insight regarding nature, which suggests that he is unable to imagine the world in the same way as the female character. It is important, however, to emphasize that Lionel is not from the same barbaric background as Bernard. He is in fact civilized and educated; yet he has not achieved the same level of understanding as Lady Lavinia.

A love triangle also exists in “Lavinia”, just as in Mauprat. Lionel must struggle to control his jealousy toward M. le comte de Morangy, who is swiftly pursuing to form a relationship with Lady Lavinia, not unlike Edmée, who is promised to M. de la Marche. Lady Lavinia obliges Lionel to learn to control his jealousy by having him wait on the balcony while she meets with M. le comte de Morangy. Lionel declares Lady Lavinia to be an “impertinente femme” (111) who dares to subject him to a one-on-one with her lover and tries to escape from the balcony, only to discover that there is no safe route by which he could escape. He is thus forced to listen to the sentimental confessions of M. le comte de Morangy to Lady Lavinia. This sparks Lionel’s competitive nature to reclaim what had once been his, designating M. le comte de Morangy a suitable rival. By requesting Lionel to wait on a balcony from which he could not escape while she met with M. le comte de Morangy, Lady Lavinia seems to subject Lionel to this observation in an effort to torture him, knowing it would awaken his jealousy, as a sort of retaliation. He must suffer the way that
she suffered after he left her. This is part of his education, demonstrating to the male character the sensation of being, in part, overwhelmed with emotion, yet being powerless to vanquish his conquest.

In both texts, overcoming jealousy is presented as a fundamental lesson for the male characters. Bernard is the witness of similar episodes as Lionel, where he is forced to observe Edmée bluntly favor M. de la Marche over himself. Since jealousy is typically viewed as a negative emotion born out of the fear of losing that which one currently possesses or used to possess, this is an interesting lesson for the male characters to undergo. On one level, it suggests a movement away from the notion of possession in a relationship. By denouncing the presence of jealousy in the male characters, Sand is advocating the male characters to relinquish their viewpoint that defines women as objects to be possessed. A woman is, contrarily, an active person in the relationship and should be valued and appreciated for who she is and what she brings to the relationship. Moreover, overcoming one’s jealous tendencies represents the denunciation of the self. Therefore, the male characters are being forced to reconcile the lack of concern for their needs and desires shown by the female characters. Despite the fact that the female characters have taken on the dominant role, the suffering to which the male characters are being subjected is ultimately a symptom of their egos and sense of entitlement. The jealousy, which the male characters are being forced to suppress, stems from their inability to take control of the situation and prevent the female characters from subjecting them to such torture. However, rather than opting to pursue another woman who is more easily dominated (especially in the case of Lionel) the male characters choose to accept the challenge, thereby submitting to the will of the female characters in hopes of winning them over. This
insight coincides with Jessica Benjamin’s argument that it is indeed a choice to submit. While traditionally it is women who desire to please their men, in this case it is the male characters who desire to please the female characters in an effort to win over their affection. Benjamin explains, “Though [the subjugated] may reject the master’s right to domination over them, they nevertheless do not reject his personification of power” but instead accept the dominant partner’s desires as their own (220). In the case of both Bernard and Lionel, they choose to accept to submit to the terms of Edmée and Lady Lavinia because they feel that submission if the only way they will be able to be united with the female characters.

As the gender power role-reversal continues to penetrate the minds of the two male characters, vanity presents itself as yet another obstacle to overcome. For Bernard, in *Mauprat*, this characteristic does not surface until after he fully submits to the education that Edmée has imposed upon him. That is to say that he is no longer resisting his social reform, vowing on bended knee to dedicate himself to his education. His only request: “vous me pardonnerez tous les chagrins que je vous ai causés, et vous m’aimez un peu”, to which she insists, “je vous aimerai beaucoup [...] si vous êtes toujours comme ce soir” (149). Bernard’s request for forgiveness symbolizes that he recognizes his barbaric past behavior as inappropriate. Edmée thereby sets the standard and Bernard finally accepts the challenge of transforming himself into a man worthy of her. The difficulty arises, however, when his perseverance earns him an abundance of praise from both Edmée and l’abbé, his instructor. Bernard asserts, “mais bientôt je la troublai plus que jamais par un vice que l’éducation développa en moi [...] ce vice, qui fit le désespoir de mes nouvelles années, fut la vanité” (156). He, thus, embraces his education so much that he develops an
arrogance and vanity. His knowledge feeds his ego to the point that he declares himself “un homme au-dessus du commun” (156). His vanity empowers him to disobey Edmée’s advice not to challenge, and thereby disrespect, the authority of her father. However, his vanity leads him to believe that he now possesses some profound knowledge and therefore seeks to reclaim some control, but this time with the force of his vain knowledge rather than his brute force. This newfound knowledge thus manages to sustain the gender power role-reversal in reaffirming his existence to Edmée. By rebelling against her desires, she observes that it is still necessary for her to exert her authority over him by maintaining her distance and denying him her affection. In retrospect Bernard recognizes his partial transformation, “Je n’étais plus cet animal lourd et dormeur” (161), yet he admits: “La préoccupation où je fus bientôt de la nullité d’autrui m’empêcha moi-même de m’élèver au-dessus de ceux que je croyais désormais m’être inférieur” (162). He is now preoccupied with the need to prove that he is superior to others. Bernard is, on the contrary, demonstrating that he remains inferior to Edmée whom he describes as “une femme supérieure […] qui […] sait se taire, surtout avec les sots qu’elle pourrait railler et les ignorants qu’elle pourrait humilier” (165). Bernard’s recognizes Edmée’s dominant position over him, as he is unable to control his vanity. In complimenting Edmée, he illustrates the type of humility that he is not yet capable of exhibiting. Additionally, Bernard’s statement reaffirms for the reader why Edmée continues to remain distant from him in order to exercise her dominant role. Despite his triumphs and acquired knowledge, his vanity prevents him from fully submitting to Edmée’s authority. He cannot yet conceptualize what he has to gain from his education apart from Edmée, such as the importance of respecting her father, his uncle, who has treated Bernard with kindness and
compassion, having welcomed him into his home. He continues to see Edmée as the prize, undergoing his education merely to make her his wife, and therefore remains unworthy of her affection.

Similar to Bernard, Lionel is attempting to gain Lady Lavinia’s affection at all costs, but cannot see beyond his own personal triumph. When Lavinia is admiring the beautiful landscape surrounding them, Lionel proclaims, “Je ne vois rien ici que vous, Lavinia” (123). In making this declaration, he too is missing the big picture. Blinded by his ultimate desire to triumph over his lost love, he is oblivious to his environment. Moreover, refusing to see the world through Lavinia’s eyes, he is ultimately refusing to see who she truly is. The narrator attests that “Il y a tant de vanité dans le coeur de l’homme!” (118). This vanity causes him to suffer “amèrement de voir celle qui fut longtemps dominée et emprisonnée dans son amour […] libre et fière maintenant” (118). Lionel is thus so vain that he cannot permit himself to see the elegance of Lady Lavinia’s strong character, which is apparent to everyone but him. The suffering of the male character also reinforces the gender power role-reversal as it demonstrates that the female character, having long been dominated and imprisoned, was now free and proud. It is her status as a widow that ultimately freed her from male domination. This vanity evokes his resolve to “s’acharn[er] de tout son pouvoir à réveiller cette passion éteinte” (119). Believing that she is obligated to allow him to reconcile his poor past behavior, he professes his awakened love for her, pleading that she grant him “le pardon et l’oubli du passé” (123-4). In asking for forgiveness, Lionel demonstrates that he recognizes his inappropriate behavior of the past, in the same way as Bernard. This request to forgive and forget, made by both male characters ultimately reveals their innate vanity. That is to say that, because of their love for the female
characters, Edmée and Lady Lavinia should relinquish control over them. The dilemma lies in the fact that it is not love that they have for the female characters, but for themselves. They are so proud to be able to recognize their inconsiderate and cold nature of the past and they are requesting recognition for this revelation. Nevertheless, requesting forgiveness is only another attempt to regain their dominant position rather than fully submitting to the female characters. Their vanity demonstrates that they have not relinquished their selfish desire to dominate the female characters.

It is at this point, however, that the two male characters begin to move in opposite directions regarding their personal growth. Lionel, after an elaborate confession of his love and growth, reveals his unchanged nature to the reader. He fights to the bitter end to win over Lady Lavinia, vowing, “Aujourd’hui, je saurai [...] apprécier [le bonheur] et le conserver; car moi aussi j’ai changé” (124). But there is a contradiction in his professed devotion. It is today that he will know how to appreciate and conserve his happiness, not necessarily tomorrow. In this way, the statement appears as another attempt to reclaim control. His actions provide no proof that he actually understands how to appreciate his happiness any better than he did in the past. After all, at the start of the narrative, he lies to Miss Ellis, the woman to whom he is betrothed, in order to meet with Lady Lavinia. Lady Lavinia reminds him of her dominant position, stating, “vous allez vous jurer de m’obéir” (126), and she asks him to return to Bagnères and, yet again, await her response. When he finally receives her letter, declaring, “Ni l’un ni l’autre” (126). Lionel cannot stand the thought of being turned down and opts to return to Miss Ellis who “lui accordait [la] marque de pardon” (130) that Lady Lavinia refused him. His return also demonstrates his full submission to Lady Lavinia, respecting her decision to remain single rather than
chasing after her in an effort to regain the upper hand. Lionel’s education through the gender power role-reversal is complete.

Bernard, on the other hand, migrates even deeper into his submission to Edmée, continuing to follow her instructions and devoting himself to his studies. He finds strength in the idea “de forcer son amour par [son] dévouement”, but this hope was fading, as Edmée was unyielding and “ne s’aveuglait pas sur les défauts de [son] caractère [...]” (169). Bernard does not cease to try and gain her affection. She asks, “comprenez-vous que vous devez me rendre ma liberté et renoncer à des droits barbares?” (175), indicating the next level of his education. He must allow her to freely choose to love him, by releasing her from her promise to marry him, to which he eventually consents: “j’écrivis à Edmée qu’elle était libre et que je ne contrairerais aucune de ses résolutions, mais qu’il m’était impossible d’être témoin du triomphe de mon rival” (178). This consent demonstrates both his growth and his weakness. He releases Edmée from her marital obligations to him, but leaves to fight in the revolution in America because he cannot bear the thought of seeing her with anyone but him, thereby demonstrating the continued vanity of his ego. Bernard’s education is thus not yet complete.

In analyzing both scenarios, Lionel’s journey ultimately comes to an end by his return to his life as it was before Lady Lavinia at her request. Bernard, likewise, opts to walk away from Edmée at her request. However, he continues his education in America with the assistance of Arthur, an American friend and fellow soldier in the American army. Edmée responds by offering him her ring and vowing to wait for him, thus rewarding him for allowing her the freedom to choose between him and M. de la Marche. Arthur eventually gives Bernard the invaluable advice to “[se] soumettre jusqu’à ce qu’on jugeât à
propos de [s']absoudre" (*Mauprat* 185). Bernard responds, “Mais [...] n’est-ce point une honte qu’un homme mûri, comme je le suis maintenant, par la réflexion et rudement éprouvé par la guerre, se soumette comme un enfant au caprice d’une femme?” (185). This is the essential question. Is it shameful for a mature and educated man to submit to a woman? Arthur replies, “non” (185). This question is, in a way, the one Bernard has been asking himself all along. It requires a seven-year education for him to realize that it is not. The reference to war can also refer, not only to the American Revolution, but also to the gender war that has been taking place throughout the novel, the Edmée-Bernard revolution. This comparison between the two concepts of war is symbolic, as the American Revolution was a controversial war between dominant England and the submissive colonies, where the French sided with the colonists against England. Bernard thus fought on the submissive, weaker side against the dominant during the American Revolution. This time fighting in America and being separated from Edmée, is what allows Bernard to complete his education.

But the gender power role-reversal does not only offer an education to the male characters, but also to the female characters. These characters must learn to act in opposition to what was expected of their sex at the time. Declaring their power over the male characters takes a great deal of strength, maintaining it is difficult, but learning not to abuse it becomes a real challenge. The result of gaining recognition of their power from the male characters, when it had so long been denied to their sex, creates a sense of ultimate euphoria. Domination in this way becomes a game. The female characters subject the male characters to a suffering that is typically associated with women. Lady Lavinia purposefully evokes Lionel’s jealousy by exposing him to her encounters with M. le comte de Morangy.
She knew that, after observing another man confess his love and desire for her, Lionel would not be able to resist the challenge. Just before le comte de Morangy arrived, Lady Lavinia was feeding Lionel’s ego, insisting that she was faultless in the failure of their former love affair. She goes so far as to claim that, if she were presented with the same choices today, “je saurais [...] ajouter [au] bonheur [d’un homme] au lieu de chercher à le détruire” (107). However, through this gender power role-reversal, she does in fact have the opportunity to grant Lionel his happiness by agreeing to take him back, yet she chooses to play the game. The narrator supports this proclamation by describing the irony of her speech: “tout en rendant hommage au pouvoir de la raison, un peu d’amertume secrète se montrait contre cette impérieuse puissance, se trahissait sous la forme du badinage” (109). Lady Lavinia could not resist the temptation to punish the male character for his past behavior, despite the fact that she was, simultaneously, teaching him to be a better man.

Even more so in Mauprat, Edmée struggles to learn the balance between instructor and dominator. In a way, she tortures Bernard beyond what his education requires by playing with him. She shows him only enough compassion to keep him interested and then tortures him by indefinitely refusing to confess her true feelings for him. The abuse of her power is demonstrated when she asks Bernard, “Appartient‐il à un esprit modeste, à un coeur généreux, de nier [...] une fidelité de sept ans, parce que je vous demande encore quelques mois d’épreuves?” (222). It is here that the reader learns exactly how long Bernard has been subjected to Edmée’s education. This statement appears to be manipulative on the part of Edmée, who is requesting that Bernard, after having suffered for seven years, suffer longer. She continues to dominate him until it becomes a matter of life or death. Once Bernard is wrongly accused of trying to kill her, Edmée finally concedes
to confess her love to Bernard. When Bernard reveals that he is now prepared to die, knowing that she loves him, Edmée responds by admitting her abuse of power in order to save his life, accusing herself “de coquetterie et de dureté” (299). She acknowledges that a little coquetry is not a crime: “c’est une fierté naturelle bien innocente que de vouloir faire sentir à celui qu’on préfère qu’on est une âme de prix et qu’on mérite d’être sollicitée et recherchée longtemps” (299). The emphasis here is on the word, “longtemps”. How long is too long? It seems that it took Bernard being on the edge of death before Edmée was finally able to relinquish her power over him. She was caught in the empowerment of domination. No action made by Bernard seemed to be enough to win her over. It is at that point that Edmée was abusing her power. The gender power role-reversal was a teaching tool for Bernard, but it also taught Edmée what could happen with an excess of power.

Contrary to Edmée, however, Lavinia is unable to escape her role of domination because she has no worthy partner to whom she wants to submit. Her ultimate moment of domination is her refusal to marry either man, for which she explains her reasoning in a letter to Lionel: “ne sommes-nous pas tous faibles et mobiles? Moi-même n’étais-je pas calme et froide [...] hier? [...] Et pourtant le soir [...] n’ai-je pas senti mon âme se fondre et s’amollir?” (128). This series of questions demonstrates Lady Lavinia’s personal growth and her realization that one cannot remain the dominant partner, or the submissive partner if one ultimately desires to form an ideal relationship that values and respects both the male and female partner. Borrowing Benjamin’s terminology, in a relationship of mutual recognition, one must toggle back and forth between the two positions. Lionel has not served the time necessary to prove himself to Lady Lavinia. He proposes marriage as an attempt to triumph over both M. le comte de Morangy and Lady Lavinia. His intentions are
therefore not worthy for her to sacrifice her power. Nor are those of M. le comte Morangy as “[u]n homme de son rang vend toujours trop cher la protection qu’il accorde en la faisant sentir” (129-30). Moreover, Anna Rosner asserts, “Refuser, c’est affranchir d’un destin féminin prescrit, obligatoire; c’est mettre en cause les dogmes patriarcaux” (120). Rosner continues, claiming that this reversal of the archetypical marital roles aims to contribute to the development of a conscious awakening to sexual and social inequality (120). In other words, in addition to serving as an education for the male and female characters, Sand’s gender power role-reversal also emphasizes the inequalities that exist in the gender roles defined by the marital contract of the 19th-century reader. Lady Lavinia ultimately proclaims her disdain for men and marital contracts. She dedicates her life, instead, to “les voyages, la rêverie, la solitude, le bruit du monde, pour le traverser et en rire, puis la poésie pour supporter le passé, et Dieu, pour espérer l’avenir” (130). The statement indicates that the female character is opting for liberation over a marital union that is defined by dominant and submissive roles. Rosner states, “Ce qu’elle désire, c’est l’abstrait, l’antithèse de sa vision conjugale” (111). Having been betrayed a second time by Lionel’s inability to put her before himself, Lady Lavinia begins a love affair with nature, finding no worthy suitor to which she could consecrate her life.

The education received by all four of these characters was inspired by a gender power role-reversal. By analyzing the two works side by side, one is able to observe different possibilities that could arise out of the role-reversal, such as Lady Lavinia and Lionel’s inability to escape the realm of domination and submission, or Bernard’s undying will to better himself in order to become a man deserving of Edmée. However, the role-reversal educates the reader as well, allowing the reader to observe that gender roles are
not fixed. It also allows the 19th-century reader to discover and critique him/herself through the characters and their actions, thus undergoing the education along with them, whereas, if there had been no role-reversal, everything would have been status quo and no revelations would have taken place within the characters or the reader. It is in this way that Sand attempts to transform the condition of 19th-century men and women by changing the reader’s perception and understanding of gender roles. Implementing this gender power role-reversal aims, not to fully establish equality, but to first, disprove the status quo as natural in order to educate the dominant partner and the submissive partner on the other’s position. Lady Lavinia and Edmée escape their traditionally submissive roles to assume the dominant position and exercise authority over the male characters, whereas Lionel and Bernard abandon their dominant roles and discover what it means to submit to the desires of the female characters. This allows the female characters to learn what it means to be recognized, but also to remember what it means to recognize the value of the other. Similarly, it permits the male characters to learn to recognize the authority of others. Jessica Benjamin emphasizes the importance of mutual recognition in order for some sort of equality to exist between the sexes. Sand proposes, in Mauprat, a possible education that could lead to mutual recognition and the establishment of sexual equality.
CHAPTER 3:

ESTABLISHING SEXUAL EQUALITY IN *HORACE, MAUPRAT*, AND “LAVINIA”

[L’oiseau [...] est l’être supérieur dans la création. [...] Il a des instincts
d’amour conjugal, de prévision et d’industrie domestique; son nid est un chef
d’œuvre d’habilité, de sollicitude et de luxe délicat. C’est la principale espèce
où le mâle aide la femelle dans les devoirs de la famille, et où le père s’occupe,
comme l’homme, de construire l’habitation, de préserver et de nourrir les
enfants. (*L’Histoire de ma vie* 236)

This quote from George Sand on the superiority of the bird is evidence that she had
strong, idealistic opinions about the roles that men and women should play in the male-
female relationship. This analogy of the bird contrasts with 19th-century society's narrow-
minded, patriarchal vision of the couple and inequality between men and women. My
previous two chapters exposed Sand’s efforts to emancipate the female character within an
early 19th-century context, which she demonstrates in *Horace*, and impose a new education
that redefines the acceptable and unacceptable behaviors of the male and female
characters in both a late 18th-century context, as is the case in *Mauprat*, and an atemporal
context, as it is presented in “Lavinia”. However, it becomes increasingly relevant to
identify what social changes at large Sand deems essential to establishing sexual equality in
the male-female relationship. In this chapter, I will identify three different male-female
relationships: Lady Lavinia’s freedom of choice in “Lavinia”, the Edmée-Bernard union in
*Mauprat*, and the Marthe-Paul Arsène union in *Horace*. The Lady Lavinia model serves to
dissolve the rigid marital contract of the 19th century; the Edmée-Bernard union embodies
Sand’s vision of the ideal couple, which encourages a revolutionary transformation through
education, and the Marthe-Paul Arsène union aims to recreate the image of the ideal family.

I will illustrate Sand’s vision of sexual equality through the analysis of these three relationship models, presenting the texts in chronological order to allow the reader to witness the evolution of Sand’s vision of sexual equality as it pertains to these texts.

In “Lavinia,” Sand advocates social change by suggesting women have the right to choose their own destiny. This text is a short story published during the very early stages of Sand’s career in 1833, where the female character, Lady Lavinia, exercises her right to choose, not only her husband, but to refuse to take a husband at all by declaring, “ni l’un ni l’autre” (126). Both male characters fail to prove themselves worthy of a marital union.

Lionel sees her as a conquest; another trophy to put on the mantle: “[M. le comte de Morangy] était le rival le plus redoutable qu’il fût possible d’avoir à combattre; c’était un adversaire digne de lui” (111). Lionel is, thus, more interested in beating his notably worthy adversary than in gaining Lady Lavinia herself. M. le comte de Morangy, on the contrary, admits to being in love with Lady Lavinia, however, in his proposal of marriage he states, “C’est un nom honorable, j’ose le croire, et une brillante fortune, dont je ne suis pas vain, vous le savez, que je viens mettre à vos pieds, en même temps qu’une âme qui vous adore, un coeur qui ne bat que pour vous” (114). Although M. le comte de Morangy acknowledges to genuinely love Lady Lavinia, the marriage proposal emphasizes the honorable rank and brilliant fortune that he is offering her should she accept his love and devotion. The structural emphasis on his rank and fortune symbolizes society’s view as to why she, or any other woman, should undoubtedly accept his request. His love and devotion for her appear to be nothing more than a secondary asset. Moreover, the very confession of his love is belittled by an earlier proclamation made by the female character:
“Je sais qu’il n’est pas toujours au pouvoir de l’homme de tenir ses serments et qu’il abuse aussitôt qu’il obtient” (113). This declaration made by Lady Lavinia regarding the untrustworthy nature of a man’s oath invalidates, for the reader, any promises of marriage and love made by either of the male characters. Sand, thereby, justifies to the reader the female character’s refusal to marry. The male characters are henceforth identified as being untrustworthy and thus incapable of forming of a marriage based on equality.

The refusal to marry symbolizes Sand’s disapproval of the 19th-century’s vision of the institution of marriage. She provides her readers with an alternative by suggesting that women should have the right to choose their own destinies. Sand’s proposition that women should have the right to choose whom they marry, or not to marry at all, is extraordinary in a 19th-century context due to the widely adopted viewpoint that women were the foundation of the family unit and had little, if any, existence apart from that of their husbands. Hegel proclaims in his Philosophy of Right, “The sphere of women is essentially marriage” (143), thereby indicating the role women play in society. Susan K. Foley asserts in Women in France Since 1789, “Women were not envisaged as citizens” (112). She, subsequently, explains, “The logic by which all women were placed in an inferior position to all men [...] was attributed [...] to men’s superior reason and powers of judgment” (112). Women’s livelihood was, therefore, primarily determined by their fathers and, later, their husbands. It is precisely these widely accepted beliefs that Sand denounces through the portrayal of Lady Lavinia. It is in this context that the reader understands Lady Lavinia’s declaration: “je hais le mariage, je hais tous les hommes, je hais les engagements éternels, [...] l’avenir arrangé à l’avance par des contrats et des marchés dont le destin se rit toujours” (130). Sand’s critique of marriage as a social institution during the early 19th
century resonates in this proclamation, denouncing marriage and men for attempting to manipulate women’s destiny and deprive them of their personal liberty. In having Lady Lavinia choose solitude over marriage, Sand takes a clear stance in the name of women’s right to control their own destiny.

Sand’s critique of the marital institution is further illuminated when placed in the context of her own personal experiences with her marriage to Casimir Dudevant. In a lengthy letter to Casimir dated November 15, 1825, Sand discusses her perception of their relationship. She explains that Casimir did not share any of her interests, specifically music and literature, so she suppressed her passions to please her husband. As a result she asserts, “I was not happy. We had no home life, none of those quiet chats by the fireside which give such delightful hours. We did not agree. [...] I was restless, unconsciously oppressed by a terrible vacuum” (Barry 312). This acknowledgment of unhappiness in her own marriage is crucial to understanding Sand’s desire to recreate women’s role in marriage through her writing. Her vision of the injustices of 19th-century marriage is born out of her personal experiences and frustrations with the institution and with society as a whole. She is careful, however, not to hold her husband personally responsible for these injustices, which indicates that she is critiquing the society of which he is a product rather than he himself: “It never entered my mind to hold you responsible for [my malaise]. You were so good and considerate!” (312). Sand’s choice to relieve Casimir from any sense of blame or guilt is significant as it indicates that Sand did not hold particular men responsible for these injustices against women. The philosophies that defined men and women’s societal roles were deeply ingrained in the consciousness of both sexes, and they would not be easily overcome. It is for this reason that Sand opts to utilize her writing to inspire
change in individuals with the hope of eliminating these deeply rooted prejudices.

Furthermore, this represents one possible reason for which Sand’s writings frequently take place in very realistic and historically accurate settings in order to permit her 19th-century reader to more easily identify with her characters.

An example that demonstrates how Sand grounds her idealistic female character to the reality of 19th-century social order is through the presentation of Lady Lavinia as a widow. Lady Lavinia’s status as a widow appears to be a loophole around the constraints of patriarchal society, which permits her to remain independent in order to acquire a sense of freedom that is otherwise denied to women. The reader learns of Lady Lavinia’s widowhood through the narrator, who states, “elle raconta d’une manière brisée, mais piquante et fine, ses voyages, ses amitiés, son mariage avec un vieux lord, son veuvage, et l’emploi qu’elle faisait désormais de sa fortune et de sa liberté” (109). The fact that she is a widow is introduced in a nonchalant manner that, in part, suggests that it appears merely as a justification for Sand’s critics that may argue that she is portraying radical female characters to her readers. However, being a widow in the context of the 19th century granted women a chance at independence. In Être veuve sous l’ancien régime, Scarlette Beauvalet-Boutouyrie identifies three types of widows during the 19th century: la sainte veuve, who embodies the model women in the eyes of the church (53-4); the grieving widow who modestly provides for her children in the absence of a male protector (33-5); and la veuve indépendante, who represents the young, childless widow who is freed from the authoritative constraints of marriage (104). Jean-Paul Barrière continues this analysis of widowhood, in “Les veuves dans la ville en France au XIXe siècle: images, rôles, types sociaux”, where he explains that, of these three types of widows, the latter poses the
greatest threat to patriarchal society as she embodies the voluntary widow who threatens to “renverser les rôles familiaux et l’ordre masculin” (173). This statement that the young widow without children symbolizes a threat to patriarchy seems to be a concept of which Sand would have been conscious. The argument can thus be made that Lady Lavinia’s widowhood has a dual purpose. On one hand, it justifies her choice to remain single according to 19th-century social norms. On the other hand, her widowhood also symbolizes the deconstruction of these rigid social constraints by allowing her, and other widows, to exercise their right to freedom.

In examining the structural presentation of Lady Lavinia’s widowhood within the text, Sand’s reader observes that the reference to her marriage appears to be insignificant in comparison to the other aspects of her life. It is both preceded by the mention of her travels and her friendships and followed by the mention of her widowhood and her liberty. Her marriage is presented as nothing more than one minor aspect of her life that is surrounded by details that emphasize her personal freedom as opposed to being the definition of her existence. In this way, the reference to marriage is incongruous in a sentence that overtly celebrates the female character’s liberty when the 19th-century marriage was almost synonymous with female imprisonment. This implication of marriage as female imprisonment is reinforced by Foley, who asserts, “Married women were the most disadvantaged because in marrying they lost independent legal status” (22). Sand’s presentation of the order of events of Lady Lavinia’s life thus perpetuates the devaluation of the institution of marriage, as Hegel defines it, while it commemorates the female character’s freedom to exist independently from the other male characters. It is widowhood, however, that legitimizes her ability to assume such independence. Foley
explains that unmarried and widowed women were “the least disadvantaged” during the 19th century, provided that they were financially independent and did not have any children (21). Sand thus contextually justifies her female character’s independence while, simultaneously, identifying her as potential threat to patriarchy by presenting her as a widowed woman who refuses to reintegrate herself into the male-dominated social order.

In opposition to the social belief that women’s existence is defined by their husbands, Sand encourages women to discover and embrace their own desires over those of men, which contradicts the common assumption that women’s desire should be to please the men in their lives. This notion is supported by Lady Lavinia’s statement “Je n’aime plus que les voyages, la rêverie, la solitude […] et Dieu pour espérer l’avenir” (130). This statement represents Sand’s argument that women should be able to choose a life that includes travels, dreams and solitude over the confinements of marriage and the household. The reference to travels, reverie and solitude also echoes the ideology of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who was a frequent critic of society. He believed that people were inherently good and moral beings that were corrupted by the injustices of society. He encouraged men to retreat from society and return to nature in order to discover one’s natural virtue (Doyle and Smith 4). Rousseau often felt like an outcast, rejected by society for articulating his revolutionary ideas in his works. Les rêveries du promeneur solitaire embodies this ideology to the fullest, as it is a text written as he was nearing the end of his life after having been criticized and misunderstood by his fellow philosophers, as well as society. In this work, he also describes how he finally found peace in nature. In his fifth promenade he writes about the peaceful state he is able to discover on the île de Saint-Pierre: “Mais un infortuné qu’on a retranché de la société humaine et qui ne peut plus rien
faire ici-bas d'utile et de bon pour autrui ni pour soi, peut trouver dans cet état à toutes les félicités humaines des dédommagements que la fortune et les hommes ne lui sauraient ôter” (117). This quote reveals Rousseau’s manner of coping with the injustices of a society that rejects anyone that differs from the societal mold. Expelled from society, Rousseau retreats to nature where he finds a sense of happiness that he believes cannot exist in society.

Sand was a Rousseau enthusiast and she frequently references him in her writing. In echoing his notion of retreating from society in order for her female character to find happiness, Sand becomes a sort of disciple of Rousseau and applies his theory to her notion of women’s liberation. Sand creates a scenario where the female character retreats from a society that would have inevitably rejected her for her radical opposition to the sacred institution of marriage. Retreating from the strict confines of the social order permits Lady Lavinia to embrace her individual freedom. It is in solitude that one can escape from the injustices of society and discover a state of blissfulness that society cannot penetrate. This Rousseauian notion is paralleled by Sand in *Histoire de ma vie* when she discusses the beauty of a shepherd’s life in the mountains: “vivre ainsi dans la solitude des monts sublimes” (15162). Sand hereby indicates that her solution to society’s injustices, like Rousseau’s, is to escape from societal constraints by retreating to nature. By portraying Lady Lavinia as a female character who denounces marriage and patriarchal society, ultimately choosing solitude and travels rather than rejoining society through marriage, Sand adapts Rousseau’s vision of escaping social injustices to liberate the female character from the oppression of marriage. In this way, Sand is providing a model that her readers who identify with this character can follow.
However, Sand’s critique of society does not end with a rejection of men, marriage, and patriarchal order. In *Mauprat*, Sand articulates her vision of how individuals can transform their mindset from the patriarchal social order of the past to the egalitarian society of the future. The Edmée-Bernard union symbolizes the ideal couple. The development of this ideal couple is a metaphor for social transformation. Naomi Schor asserts, “In Sand, socialist idealism entails the idealization of marriage” (89). This claim describes the same phenomenon demonstrated in the forming of the ideal couple portrayed in the Edmée-Bernard model. The reader observes Sand’s vision of the development of the ideal couple from start to finish in the novel. Sand’s transition from gender inequality to the ideal couple allows her readers to discern how the transformation of individuals in society could eventually lead to the creation of an ideal society.

At the start of the novel, Bernard explains, “Il y avait la branche aînée et la branche cadette des Mauprat. Je suis de la branche aînée” (35). Bernard, and the elder branch of the family, symbolizes patriarchal tyranny, having been raised by “cette race de petits tyrans féodaux” (37). Edmée’s character, on the contrary, belongs to the younger branch of the family. She is presented as an educated, strong and independent young woman who was raised on Rousseau and the ideas of the enlightenment. Furthermore, the narrator emphasizes an effort by M. Hupert, Edmée’s father, to find an heir for the branch cadette that was “digne de relever son nom flétri” by the deaths of his siblings (35). This search for an heir evokes the notion of an active effort to ensure the younger branch’s existence in the future while Bernard indicates that “[l]a civilisation, qui marchait rapidement vers la grande convulsion révolutionnaire, effaçait de plus en plus ces exactions [des tyrans féodaux] et ces brigandages organisés” (38). There is thus an active effort to propel the
younger branch of the family into the future, while the tyrannical practices of the elder branch are increasingly disappearing. This distinction between the male and female characters symbolizes a contrast between the feudal order of the past and the enlightened years of the future, while the two characters’ upbringings and practices illustrate the great divide that continues to exist in society. It is because of this great divide that the two characters appear to be from two different worlds and are therefore unable to understand one another on any significant level. After undergoing a rigorous education, as I discussed in chapter two, the characters are finally able to find common ground and ultimately form a marriage based on equality. Sand thereby advocates that education is the key to uniting society in the same way that it is the key to uniting her feudal male character and her female character inspired by the ideas of the enlightenment.

It is additionally significant that Sand sets *Mauprat* during a time period when society was on the brink of revolution near the end of the 18th century. This is a time when the people were rebelling against the government and about to overthrow the monarchy in order to establish “the natural, inalienable, sacred rights” with the publication of “The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen” in 1789 (Hunt 77). The narrator states, “[l]es lumières de l’éducation, une sorte de bon goût, reflet lointain d’une cour galante, et peut-être le pressentiment d’un réveil prochain et terrible du peuple” resonated throughout society (38). This statement embodies the revolutionary spirit that was rising in the people, spawning a desire to revolt against the tyranny of their feudal lords. Placing the action of the novel just before the outbreak of the Revolution can be interpreted to suggest that, from a 19th-century women’s perspective, the Revolution had perhaps not accomplished all that it had promised. It had liberated men from the tyranny of their feudal lords, but
women were still being oppressed in the same way that peasants had been under monarchical rule. Keith Wren further supports this notion, declaring, “George Sand makes it perfectly clear that the principles of the Revolution embody a philosophy that its practice signally fails to put into effect” (367). The setting of the novel being at the brink of the Revolution thus symbolizes Sand’s attempt to accomplish in her novel what the Revolution had not.

Furthermore, the reference to an enlightenment inspired by education that would result in the awakening of the people can also be interpreted to make a parallel between the effects it had on the commoners of the ancien régime and the effects it could have on women. Education is presented as a key factor in liberating a people as it grants them an understanding that is equal to that of their oppressors. One interpretation of this quote could suggest that, similar to the Revolution, providing an education equal to that of men for women could inspire a similar reaction against the patriarchal social order. Recalling the overthrow of the monarchy to the 19th-century reader could imply that educated women could, likewise, disrupt the patriarchal order. Educated women would, in this sense, be regarded as a threat to the 19th-century social order. Depriving women of a proper education ensures their restriction to the confines of the household as they lack the common knowledge necessary to directly participate in the public sphere. It is in this way that society is able to maintain the patriarchal social order. Interestingly, even near the end of her life, Sand was still denouncing this same aspect of society. In 1867 in the sixth letter of Lettres à Marcie, she writes, “Les femmes reçoivent une déplorable éducation; et c’est là le grand crime des hommes envers elles. Ils ont porté l’abus partout, accaparant les avantages les plus sacrées. Ils ont spéculé jusque sur les sentiments les plus naïfs et les plus
légitimes. Ils ont réussi à consommer cet esclavage et cet abrutissement de la femme, qu’ils disent être aujourd’hui d’institution divine et de législation éternelle” (215-6). This assertion legitimizes the claim that Sand is in fact attempting to correct through her writing what she believes are the flaws of her society, as she accuses men of forcing women into slavery by depriving them of an education. David A. Powell reiterates this point, explaining that women’s independence is, for Sand, “a slow and arduous task” due to a lack of women’s education (37). By presenting Edmée as an independent female character who “s’était formée seule” (116), Sand demonstrates for her readers that women can be just as capable as men when they receive a proper education.

Sand’s portrayal of Edmée as a well read, self-educated, independent young woman who encourages Bernard to embrace the prospect of becoming an educated and civilized man in order to render him worthy of a relationship with her symbolizes the active role Sand encourages women to play in order to transform society from patriarchy to equality. Powell explains, “George Sand attempted, through her rich and varied portrayal of strong women, to present French women with a goal, not an unrealistic ideal, but a pragmatic approach to coping with the world” (37). Edmée is a prime representation of the portrayal of the strong female character that serves as a model for 19th-century women. Sand thereby indicates that women should take control of their own destiny by educating themselves. If women desire to play more active roles in society, education is essential.

Moreover, the development of the ideal couple depends upon the female character’s education. Bernard explains, “Edmée avait allumé sa vaste intelligence aux brûlantes déclamations de Jean-Jacques” (116). Sand once again introduces Rousseau as the primary source of the female character’s education. Furthermore, at certain points in the narrative,
Sand specifically mentions *La Nouvelle Héloïse* and *Emile*, two of Rousseau’s works that present his philosophy on education and love. However, contrary to *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, in *Mauprat* it is the female character that is the instructor to the male character. Likewise, Edmée provides for Bernard what Sand believes is a proper education for men, emphasizing the necessity to respect women. Referencing these two texts can be interpreted to suggest that Sand was expanding upon Rousseau’s philosophy by incorporating the women’s perspective into the discussion of education and love. The fact that the female character organizes Bernard’s educational transformation from his savage ways of the past offers her a primary role in the forming of the ideal couple.

Sand does not, however, suggest that one can quickly transition from the rigid practices of the patriarchal social structure to her vision of the ideal couple, let alone society. In fact, the male character undergoes a rigorous education that takes place over a seven-year period before he is deemed worthy of the female character. Moreover, in the preliminary frame chapter, Bernard indicates, “Quand, pour se transformer de loup en homme, il faut une lutte de quarante ou cinquante ans, il faudrait vivre cent ans par delà pour jouir de sa victoire” (33), which indicates that, in addition to his standard education, his overall transformation requires the greater part of a lifetime. The immense length of time that is necessary for Bernard to transform from a savage wolf into a civilized man allows one to imagine the extraordinary amount of time that would be necessary for many men, enough to make up an entire society, to undergo a similar transformation.

The fact that Edmée is deceased before Bernard tells his story suggests that such an intricate transfiguration of the manner in which one exists in the world may not be able to be accomplished within the lifetime of those who advocate such a change in society.
However, the fact that Bernard goes on to tell his story of “[l]a fée qui m’a transformé” (33), leaves the reader with a lasting impression of the transformation that Sand implements through the cultivation of the Edmée-Bernard relationship model. In the end, Bernard comes to represent the new, civilized man in the way that Sand envisions him to be.

The male character becomes a model for the reader to be able to imagine that individuals can change their ideas, their beliefs, and their overall disposition to the world and to others. This is a concept that must be embraced by society before Sand’s vision of the ideal couple can be accepted by society. The male character embraces the notion of change in the following declaration: “si j’étais législateur, je ferais arracher la langue ou couper le bras à celui qui oserait prêcher ou écrire que l’organisation des individus est fatale, et qu’on ne refait pas plus le caractère d’un homme que l’appétit d’un tigre” (44). The fact that it is an aged Bernard who makes this statement to the frame narrator is significant because he has already undergone an incredible transformation from the barbaric ways of his childhood into a civilized and educated man. Sand is hereby declaring that change is possible through the male character who claims that if he were in a position of power, he would denounce anyone who stated the contrary. The male character’s story, the plot of the novel, provides a model of the way that one’s character can be transformed with proper support and education, which contrasts with the rigid mindset that governs 19th-century society. The powers that be would prefer to render society stagnant than allow it to continue to expand and flourish. It is this stagnation that permits the perpetual subjugation of women. Presenting a male character who has undergone such an elaborate transformation and openly denounces those who believe that individual change is impossible represents an effort to convince Sand’s readers that change is possible, but only
if this rigid social mindset of society can be overcome. This transformation must ultimately be able to occur on the greater social level in order for Sand’s vision of the ideal couple to be indoctrinated into social practice.

The trial at the end of the novel symbolically determines whether Bernard has successfully transformed himself into a respectable and civilized man or if he continues to engage in his feudal, oppressive habits of his past. If he is convicted of having attacked Edmée, the transformation is unsuccessful. He must convince the court that he is a changed man. Bernard initially fights a losing battle in the oppressive court that intends to condemn him based on the testimonies of witnesses, although no one can specifically identify him as the culprit. He is being judged based on the opinions of the witnesses as to whether or not he is still capable of committing a violent attack on Edmée. The trial thus embodies the corrupt judicial practices of the ancien régime, calling upon witnesses of whom, “il n’y eut que Marcasse parmi ces derniers qu’on pût réellement considérer comme [un témoin]” (271). The other characters serving as witnesses in the trial could only say that they saw a figure that resembled a Mauprat. Moreover, of Bernard’s short interrogation, only one of the questions pertained to the incident, while the other two referred to his childhood, his education and his feelings for Edmée. The court initially condemns Bernard, though it seems he had been declared guilty before truly being able to prove his innocence.

However, it is Arthur, his American friend, with whom Bernard had fought during the American Revolution, who comes to his rescue. Arthur’s presence permeates the courtroom with a revolutionary spirit by association. It is important to mention that the American Revolution had managed to establish a democracy while the French Revolution was unable to sustain its first Republic and reverted back to monarchical rule. It is also
relevant to note that it is Arthur who explains to Bernard, earlier in the novel, the justice of a man submitting to the whims of a woman: “Il n'y a que de l'honneur à réparer le mal qu'on a fait [...] Il n'y a que justice dans la pudeur offensée qui réclame ses droits, et son indépendence naturelle” (185). Here, Arthur's character embodies the principles of equal justice for those who correct their behavior. He acts as judge over the actions of the male and female characters. Within the context of the trial, it is, again, Arthur who obtains the king’s order for a retrial, where Edmée provides her testimony to the court and Bernard is acquitted of his charges. Bernard’s declared innocence indicates that his transformation into an honorable man is successful. Not only is he not responsible for committing a barbaric crime, but also he is not responsible for attempting to annihilate the future generation that Edmée represents. Sand’s choice to end the novel with a trial could be an invitation for her readers to judge the validity of the male character’s transformation as well, not simply based on the information presented in the courtroom, but over the course of the novel. She is essentially inviting her readers to determine for themselves whether or not such a transformation is possible. If so, there is hope that her vision of the ideal couple can be realized, not simply in the context in the novel, but in society as well.

While *Mauprat* offers a model to form the ideal couple that parallels the creation of an ideal society, Sand redefines the concept of the ideal family in *Horace*. In order for Sand’s utopian society to be realized, the 19th-century gender roles within the family must be re-evaluated. The Marthe-Paul Arsène relationship embodies an alternative vision of the ideal family. Through this couple, Sand deconstructs certain stereotypes about the roles men and women must play in the family. These newly defined roles are clearly indicated by the narrator: “[...] l'un et l'autre avaient un but indiqué. Celui de Marthe était d'assurer à son
enfant, par son travail, les bienfaits de l’éducation; celui d’Arsène était de l’aider à atteindre ce résultat sans entraver son indépendence et sans compromettre sa dignité” (278). In a 19th-century context, this vision of the ideal couple is revolutionary. Sand reverses the gender roles within the family, placing Marthe as the primary breadwinner who must care and provide for her son, while Paul Arsène fulfills the role of friend and lover for his female counterpart. The male character assumes a supporting role to the female character by assisting her in meeting her familial obligations. The female character occupies a position not only in the private sphere, but also in the public sphere, combining the traditional roles of both the male and female characters, both provider and caregiver. Sand thereby reinvents the notion of the ideal family by blurring the boundaries of men and women’s participation in the public and private spheres, creating an equal platform for men and women within the family unit. This vision is in contrast to Hegel’s vision of the family, which restricted women to the private sphere. It is additionally significant to indicate that Sand proposes this family model when the notion of women’s potential to work and have financial independence would not be widely accepted until the late 20th century, which represents one way that Sand merits being considered a precursor to the 20th-century feminist movement.

The narrator’s definition of the male and female characters’ newly assigned roles also emphasizes the importance of acknowledging and respecting the independence and dignity of the female character. In this context, dignity signifies a certain command of respect from others. Sand demonstrates that women could assume non-traditional roles, as does Marthe, and still maintain dignity. Women were commonly perceived as delicate beings possessing certain virtues, such as: “La douceur, la bonté, la modestie, l'humilité,
l’obéissance, l’ordre, l’économie, la charité, la réserve, la pudeur, la pureté” (Bricard 169). These qualities support women that assume the traditional role as domesticated mothers and wives. Sand’s choice to portray a male character who regards the female character as dignified, although she defies her traditional societal role, redefines the manner in which a husband should treat his wife. She should, ideally, be treated with as much respect as her husband, regardless of what familial roles she assumes. Sand demonstrates throughout the novel how the female character earns her dignity by overcoming many obstacles and undergoing several life-lessons, as I discussed in chapter one. Sand also indicates through the narrator that Paul Arsène “alla écouter les prédications saint-simoniennes [...] et s’y forma un jugement, des sympathies, des espérences” (185). This statement reveals that it is through the influence of Saint-Simonianism⁠¹ that the male character is able to transcend and combat the prejudices indoctrinated by society. It is precisely the influence of Saint-Simonian ideology that permits the male character to internally deconstruct his preconceived notions of women and recognize and accept Marthe’s independence and dignity. Sand thus employs Saint-Simonian ideology in the novel to provide the foundation for the ideal family. In linking Saint-Simonianism with the deconstruction of prejudices, Sand suggests that it is through individual, spiritual growth that one can begin to reinvent society.

Furthermore, Sand proposes Saint-Simonian’s concept of marriage as an alternative to legal marriage subject to the Napoleonic Code in 19th-century society. Paul Arsène confesses to Marthe, “Je ne t’offre rien que mon coeur et mes bras [...] car je ne possède ni

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¹ As I explained in chapter one, Saint Simonianism is a socialist religious group that began to gain popularity in the 1830’s. The group embraced the concept of women’s liberation and encouraged their participation within the organisation, as well as in society.
or, ni argent, ni vêtement, ni asile, ni talent, ni protection; mais mon coeur te chérît, et mes bras pourront te nourrir, toi et ce cher trésor” (260). Interestingly, Sand indicates all the material luxuries that the male character could not offer before following up with the one thing he could, that one thing being love for her and her son. This statement emphasizes how status and money were valued over love and devotion in 19th-century society, marriage often being considered a means of elevating that status. The Saint-Simonian ideology indicated “couples would no longer be bound in the marriage of civilization, marriage based on dupery for men and servitude for women. Love alone would unite couples [...] and the union would last only so long as the attraction that joined them” (Moses 94). This concept of a spiritual union thus liberates women from their institutional prison. The male character’s confession that he can only offer Marthe love symbolizes their spiritual union. Sand, in this way, endorses this notion that love, support and devotion are essential aspects of a relationship based on equality, not status. This echoes Lavinia when the female character criticizes both Lionel and M. le comte de Morangy for this very idea, declaring, “Vous m’offrez un nom, un rang, une fortune; vous croyez qu’un grand éclat dans le monde est une grande séduction pour une femme” (127). This assertion made by Lady Lavinia reinforces Sand’s belief that, in order for a relationship based on equality to exist, the union cannot be founded on the basis of one person’s, particularly the one’s, name, rank and economic status. These material offerings, on the contrary, perpetuate the existence of inequality within the relationship as they represent the common assumption of the time that women were merely extensions of men.

Sand also introduces, through this exemplary model, the notion of fraternity between the male and female characters. The narrator explains, “Arsène fut à ses yeux un
frère, qui s’associait par pure affection, et non plus par pitié généreuse, à son sort et à celui de son fils” (Horace 278). Describing Paul Arsène as being like a brother to Marthe suggests that a certain equality and camaraderie exists between the two characters, despite their gender differences. Eugénie later explains to Théophile how she can see the affection between a man and a woman in love simply by looking at them. She refers to a couple she sees walking down the street as an example: “Voici un couple qui s’adore, je le parierais! […] à la manière dont elle s’appuie sur le bras de ce jeune mari ou de ce nouvel amant, je vois qu’elle est heureuse de lui appartenir” (290). It is physically apparent that the two are in love and happy to be together. She then realizes that the couple is Marthe and Paul Arsène. This detail reinforces the idea that they are in fact a young couple in love, and therefore more than friends. It is significant, however, to keep in mind that Sand placed a great deal of importance on the need for friendship in a loving relationship. Sand expands upon this notion in Histoire de ma vie: “si vous cherchez l’amour idéal, vous sentirez que l’amitié idéale prépare admirablement le cœur à en recevoir le bienfait” (16246). It is likewise, through friendship, that Sand imagines the development of an ideal love between Paul Arsène and Marthe in the novel, as the two characters were originally childhood friends. The notion that the two characters first endure a lengthy and complex friendship before forming a love relationship demonstrates Sand’s understanding of the type of commitment necessary for sustaining a relationship. It is also significant to note the resemblance this friendship bears to the lengthy education that Bernard had to undergo before uniting with Édmée in Mauprat. The Marthe-Paul Arsène model of ideal love is thus realized, in Sand’s eyes, through the presence of unfaltering friendship, whereas, in the Édmée-Bernard union it is realized through the trials and tribulations of education. In both
situations, it is one character’s ability to prove his/her devotion to the other that is ultimately being scrutinized and the unions are able to be formed because of the lessons learned throughout the process. In the Marthe-Paul Arsène union, it is the qualities of friendship that ensure the longevity of the commitment.

In these three works, Sand provides a blueprint for her 19th-century readers of how equality can be established in the male-female relationship and eventually throughout society. In addition to portraying different possibilities for the male-female union, these three works demonstrate Sand’s evolution of her vision of sexual equality. As previously stated, “Lavinia” symbolizes Sand’s early identification of the flaws within the male-female relationship; women had no control over their destiny and no voice in their marriages. It is for this reason that Sand appears to be anti-marriage during this early stage of her career. However, by 1837 in *Mauprat*, Sand seems to soften her anti-marriage stance, in proposing, through the Edmée-Bernard union, an education that transitions the male-female relationship from patriarchal order to an egalitarian union, Sand’s vision of the ideal couple. This transition demonstrates Sand’s increased maturity, as she is willing to recognize that the problem is not men and marriage but rather the societal roles that men and women are taught to play. Sand chooses a revolutionary backdrop to develop this vision of the ideal couple through her male and female characters. The transformation of the male character from barbarian to a civilized man parallels the transformation that all men must undergo in order to achieve Sand’s vision of the ideal, egalitarian society. Finally, in 1842, Sand offers a third relationship model, exemplified by the Marthe-Paul Arsène union that is based on love, respect, friendship and Saint-Simonian ideology. This model, in a way, combines many elements that Sand presented in the preceding two models.
However, this model emphasizes the necessity for spiritual growth in order to form the ideal family. Much of the male and female character growth is carried out apart from each other. What is interesting about the separation of these characters’ educations and their relationship is that it introduces the notion that one can recover and learn from the past, which implies that an ideal, egalitarian union can be formed despite the oppressive nature of past relationships. Likewise, the separation of Edmée and Bernard in *Mauprat* played a similar role, allowing Bernard to recover from his barbaric ways of the past. Through the Marthe-Paul Arsène model, Sand also redefines the familial image by redistributing the gender roles of the family.

However, despite the fact that one can observe a certain evolution is Sand’s understanding of equality, none of these models seem to negate the other’s validity. They appear, on the contrary, to demonstrate Sand’s evolution of her vision of the egalitarian male-female couple. More importantly, each of these models seems to articulate the necessity to incorporate women’s right to control her own destiny, to be educated, to work, to be self-sufficient and independent in order to establish an even platform for men and women. Only then can both the male and the female’s interests be considered, valued and respected. One key aspect of these models, however, is that Sand does not suggest that men should be undervalued, but merely that women need to be valued by their men as well.

What the reader is able to observe in these three male-female relationship models is a clear argumentation that women can choose their own husband or no husband at all, women are capable of educating men, women are capable of controlling their emotions, women are capable of manipulating men, women are capable of learning from their mistakes, women are capable of earning their own living, women are capable. Essentially,
women have all the capabilities of men. Sand manages to articulate these revolutionary ideas within the context of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. She also manages to justify her characters and their circumstances and decisions for her 19th-century readers, so much so that, despite frequent criticism, she is able to establish herself as a successful female novelist. The argumentation that women possess similar capabilities as men, however, is not to suggest that Sand believed that women are the same as men. Sand asserts in *Histoire de ma vie*, “Que la femme soit différente de l'homme, que le coeur et l'esprit aient un sexe, je n'en doute pas […]. Mais cette différence, essentielle pour l'harmonie des choses et pour les charmes les plus élevés de l'amour, doit-elle constituer une infériorité morale?” (16170).

Sand here identifies an invaluable distinction between the question of difference and inferiority. Being other than the norm is frequently what incites oppression. The fact that women think and feel in a manner that is different from men does not constitute defining them as inferior beings. Women should thus be entitled to the same legal rights as men, however legal equality for men and women would threaten patriarchal society. It is through education and understanding that one can better understand the beneficial aspect of being different. The differences that exist between men and women are what make a love based on equality attainable, as they are what attract us and bind us, what compel us to be our best. What Sand is fighting for, through these models, is the acknowledgment that women are just as important to the relationship and to society and therefore should be recognized and valued both in and outside of the relationship accordingly.
CONCLUSION

Sand’s depiction of ideal male and female characters that embrace the principles of equality is revolutionary within the context of the 19th century. However, one aspect of her writing that certainly should not go overlooked is her choice to set her novels in realistic and historically accurate settings as opposed to fantastic backdrops that would have disconnected her writing from reality. It is this important fact that permits the interpretation that she was using her idealism to transform the world in which she lived. The manner in which Sand depicts her idealistic vision of the world in her novels serves to introduce the notion and realization of equality into the minds of her readers. Naomi Schor states, “her idealist politics is rooted in a refusal of the gender arrangements both reflected and constructed by romanticism and realism” (71). This statement supports the notion that Sand chose realistic settings to demonstrate to her readers that equality was attainable even within the rigid context of 19th-century society if social structures were transformed. Moreover, granting women equal rights to men did not necessarily mean the rejection of their domestic duties or the demise of the family unit. Sand rather suggests the inclusion of men in the private sphere and women in the public sphere, thereby eliminating a sort of sexual segregation.

Sand was very aware, however, that the society in which she lived was not prepared for her revolutionary vision of the ideal couple, let alone the ideal society based on equality for both genders. She states in a letter “To Members of the Central Committee of the Left” in 1848:

I shall express my whole thought concerning this famous emancipation of women so much discussed of late. I believe it to be easily and immediately realizable, in so far
as the present state of our customs allows. It consists simply in giving back to women the civil rights which marriage alone deprives them of, which remaining single alone maintains for them. [...] Yes civil equality, equality in marriage, equality in the family – that is what you should ask for, indeed demand. ... No man should obey a woman – that would be monstrous; no man should give orders to a woman – that is despicable. (Barry 411-3)

Sand thus responds to 19th-century women who were fighting for political rights by identifying where she clearly believes the battle for equality must initiate, from within the family. Until women are recognized as equals within the family, the accordance of individual political rights would be meaningless, as it would be implemented by the same legislation that empowers men over women through the marital contract. The manner in which Sand evolves the male and female characters in *Horace, Mauprat*, and “Lavinia” demonstrates how Sand envisions such a transformation could take shape in the 19th century.

In this study, I demonstrated how Sand believes women can become independent yet remain virtuous according to 19th-century standards. Reading appears as one the essential tools necessary to educating and transforming women’s role in society, as it is through reading that her female characters are introduced to other roles which women can play in relationships and society other than the domesticated role they are assigned in 19th-century society. Interestingly, just as Sand depicts female characters who are influenced by the characters they read, Sand is, in the same way, attempting to influence her readers that identify with her female characters. Ultimately, Sand’s female characters’ demonstrate for
her readers how women can be liberated from male tyranny and still possess good
motherly values.

This study also illustrated Sand’s vision to redefine social gender roles within the
couple and society. Sand reverses the gender roles in order to demonstrate for her readers
that men and women do not have to be restricted to certain social roles in order for the
relationship and society to function properly. Sand shows how reversing the gendered
social roles could serve as an education that would create a give and take exchange
between men and women that is necessary to sustaining the ideal couple. In altering these
gender roles, Sand also identifies certain social aspects that need to change in order to
realize her ideal vision of society. She demonstrates that women are capable of existing in
society separate from men, and therefore do not need men to shelter them from the world.
Women should have equal rights to men. They should have the right to work, to marry or
not, to choose whom they marry, to raise their children on their own terms as opposed to
their husband’s. But in order for women to be able to exercise their rights responsibly, they
must be educated. Essentially, Sand identifies education as the key to her ideal vision. A
lack of education is what hinders women’s ability to participate in society and thus renders
them a prisoner to marriage, men and the home. Sand demonstrates, however, that when
provided with a proper education, women are capable of adding to society, rather than
destroying it.

In these works, Sand demonstrates for her readers how she would transform society
by creating a fictional atmosphere that depicts the emancipation the female character,
provides an education that results in the forming of ideal couples founded on the principles
of gender equality, advocates women’s right to choose their own husband or to refuse to
marry at all, advocates a reformation of women’s education, and argues for the equality regarding gender roles within the family. She does all of these things within a historically accurate portrayal of 19th-century society and all within the first decade of her writing career. Moreover, equality is a principle theme that resonates throughout her entire repertoire. For her to not be acknowledged for her commendable efforts to transform women’s conditions through her writing would be unjust and inaccurate. While she may not have been fighting to obtain women’s political rights and representation, she realized that women must first gain equality in the family before they would be able to gain equal political representation in society. It is my hypothesis that Sand was in fact a precursor to the feminist movement of the 20th century due to her revolutionary vision to form the ideal couple and the ideal society that she planted in the minds of her 19th-century readers. Equality must be able to be conceived in the minds of a people before it can become part of the political doctrine.
REFERENCES


