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**QUINTINIE, QUARRELS AND SILENCE:  
THE ARGUMENTS IN AND ABOUT GEORGE SAND'S  
ROMAN À THÈSE**

**Kate M. Bonin**

*Mademoiselle La Quintinie* (March-May 1863) was arguably the most explosive novel that George Sand ever wrote. Before *Quintinie*, Sand's prolific and successful writing career had spanned thirty years. Many of her earlier novels dealt with current-day social issues, with the explicit goal of shaping her readers' opinions, as she wrote in 1842: "Je n'avais point à faire un traité de jurisprudence, mais à guerroyer contre l'opinion; car c'est elle qui retarde ou prépare les améliorations sociales" (1842 preface to *Indiana*, 47). Yet with *Mademoiselle La Quintinie*, Sand anticipated an unusually forceful negative response, as her letters to François Buloz, editor of *La Revue des Deux Mondes*, clearly show. Proposing the manuscript to Buloz on 20 October 1862, Sand warned him, "Avec un gouvernement de bon plaisir et de caprice imprévu, vous risquerez un avertissement [...]. [N]ous serions tancés, honnis, maudits, attendez-vous à cela. Si vous publiez ce livre, vous ne serez jamais canonisé et peut-être jamais pardonné" (*Correspondance* 17: 258-259).

Sand was right to anticipate institutional censure of *Quintinie*, though it came not from the French Ministry of the Interior, but from the Vatican. Not for the first time, either: prior to *Quintinie*, and starting with *Lélia*, thirteen individual novels of Sand's had been placed on the Index Librorum Prohibitum, or list of works that the Catholic Church forbade its parishioners to read, as Jean-Baptiste Amadiou shows (416-18). The timing is interesting; though published over a span of nearly ten years, these thirteen works were all prohibited between 1840 and 1842. Then a twenty-year hiatus: Sand does not appear on the Index again until 15 December 1863, when all of her published works were condemned *en bloc*, making Sand only the third French novelist of the century (after Eugène Sue and Alexandre Dumas *filis*) to receive this total prohibition. Vatican archives show that *Quintinie* was one of Sand's works reviewed by the Congregation of the Index in 1863; the novel clearly played a direct role in this escalation in adverse judgment.<sup>1</sup>

With *Mademoiselle La Quintinie*, Sand attempted to offer her readers what she termed "la solution du problème religieux" (preface 4); that is, the novel seeks to counter what Sand perceived as the undue influence of the ultramontane French Church and its supporters (the *parti clérical*) in Second Empire politics and social life. *Quintinie*'s attack on the *parti clérical* articulates Sand's positions on issues

ranging from Church doctrine and policy, the Italian Risorgimento and the contested legacy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. These were controversial subjects, but if Sand had already written other polemical, even censored works of fiction, then what specifically sets *Mademoiselle La Quintinie* apart? In addressing this question, Lucienne Frappier-Mazur underlines the importance of the novel's form, as "l'exemple-type d'un roman à thèse" (15). For Frappier-Mazur, *Quintinie* constitutes "la grande exception" within the body of Sand's work, because it sustains a single, authoritative point of view by which all characters, events and opinions are ultimately judged (39-40). Christine Planté also focuses on the novel's form, but she emphasizes its hybrid epistolary and third-person narrative; for Planté, this narrative polyphony demonstrates "contradictions" within Sand's own thought (93). In similar vein, Michael O'Dea suggests that there are moments within *Quintinie* that "escape" or place limits on the scope of its authoritarian voice (68).

The issue of narrative voice—polyphonic or monologic?—is key to understanding this painfully conflicted work. Rather than analyze the play of voices within the novel, however, I would like to shift focus to the wider dialogue within Second-Empire society in which *Quintinie* was meant to play a part. Sand conceived her novel of quarrels as a response to ongoing events and to other voices, some of which she incorporated within the novel itself through strategies of direct quotation<sup>2</sup> and through other forms of dialogue. By "orchestrating" the voices in conflict with her own, is Sand indeed able to control the terms of the argument? Or is the novel subverted from within, a voice divided against itself? To address these questions, I focus on how Sand engages some of these "outside" voices—Octave Feuillet, Prince Jérôme Napoleon and especially Jean-Jacques Rousseau—in order to better understand her *prises de position* in this highly partisan debate.

As Suzan van Dijk suggests, *Quintinie* may be read as "une leçon d'écriture donnée par George Sand à Octave Feuillet" (51). In the preface, Sand frames *Mademoiselle La Quintinie* explicitly as a thesis novel written in response to Feuillet's *Histoire de Sibylle*, recently published in the same journal (July-September 1862): "L'*Histoire de Sibylle* est le roman d'une âme; *Mademoiselle La Quintinie* est l'histoire d'un prêtre, avec toute la rigueur de ses déductions et tous les développements que la pensée du livre comporte" (3). The central "pensée" of *Quintinie* is articulated in starkly dualistic terms: "Il y a l'humanité qui cherche sa voie, qui flotte entre le prêtre et le philosophe, entre le passé et l'avenir," although these oppositions are swiftly complicated by the existence of yet another binary, announced and then immediately undone: "Il y aurait donc en ce temps-ci deux Églises: une officielle qui a le droit d'imposer, et une secrète qui a le droit de protester. [...] Mais non, il n'y a pas deux Églises dans l'Église: il y en a trente, il y en a cent; il y en a mille, il y en a peut-être autant que de catholiques" (3-4). In other words, Sand represents monologism itself as the enemy, advocating for "la liberté de discussion" (3) and the freedom of individuals to determine their own beliefs, however heterodox. By entering into

dialogue with *Sibylle*, *Quintinie* puts its own principles into practice, underscoring the central place that debate itself holds in Sand's thought.

Sand's interactions with Octave Feuillet were not limited to the dialogue between novels; on 27 February 1859, she initiated a correspondence in which she warmly declared her admiration for Feuillet's work, as well as her artistic, intellectual and moral solidarity with the author: "Notre pauvre siècle, si grand par certains côtés, si misérable par d'autres, vous comptera parmi les bons et les consolateurs [...]. C'est un devoir de s'aimer quand on est sorti du même temple; aimons-nous donc, nous qui ne sommes pas bêtes et mauvais," (*Corr.* 15: 339). It is noteworthy that Sand initially counted Feuillet among "les bons;" by 3 September 1862, she had changed her mind, declaring to Buloz: "Je lis *Sibylle*, il y a là toujours un grand talent, mais ce catholicisme me tape sur les nerfs et je trouve qu'il serait bien temps de dire son mot contre le mesonge du siècle" (*Corr.* 17: 222).

Surface points in common between *Sibylle* and *Quintinie* become complicated precisely over the issue of who has the opportunity to "dire son mot." Feuillet's novel relates the unhappy romance of Sibylle-Anne de Férias, an orthodox Catholic who refuses to marry Raoul de Chalys, her atheist suitor. Just before dying, Sibylle succeeds in converting Raoul, a victory that emphasizes the extraordinary performative force of Sibylle's speech: she makes things happen with words. Indeed, Raoul is only the last in a long line of characters who are either converted to Catholicism or brought back to truly orthodox practice through Sibylle's direct intervention. Meanwhile, *Mademoiselle La Quintinie* reprises *Sibylle*'s romantic tension of young lovers separated by their opposing views on religious faith. Free-thinking (not atheist) Émile Lemontier falls in love with the eponymous Lucie La Quintinie while traveling. Lucie, an orthodox Catholic like Feuillet's Sibylle, reciprocates Émile's love but hesitates to marry a non-Catholic. However, where Sibylle articulates her position concisely ("Je n'ai pas deux paroles: je ne serai jamais la femme d'un homme qui ne croit pas," 193), one cannot find a parallel declaration in *Quintinie*. Or rather, the obstacles to Lucie and Émile's marriage are articulated by every major character other than herself. "[J]e vous déclare que je ne donnerai jamais ma fille à un homme *sans principes*" states Lucie's father (88), while the abbé Moreali adds that "vous ne pourrez jamais vous entendre avec [Émile] sans rompre avec l'Église" (101); even Émile himself refuses Lucie's plea to be allowed to retain her own religious beliefs within the marriage: "On peut se marier sous le régime de la séparation de biens, mais non sous celui de la séparation des âmes, ou bien alors le mariage est nul devant Dieu!" (77). The dogmatism of Lucie's father is laughable, fully in keeping with his role as a caricature of tyrannical fatherhood; the conflicted abbé Moreali himself is ultimately converted to a more open-minded set of beliefs, but Émile remains inflexible, dogmatically anti-dogma.

Though she claims to hold to orthodox doctrine, Lucie's personal beliefs remain elusive, "open to question," as Thelma Jurgrau observes (236). When Lucie does make a detailed profession of faith, it is political, not religious. Her

sense of self is strongly connected to her birthplace, near Chambéry, Savoy: a region of France that was, in fact, not French at all until just prior to *Mademoiselle La Quintinie*. As Christine Planté notes, choosing this particular setting allows Sand to incorporate contemporary events within the novel (85). Moreover, Lucie's specifically Savoyard identity dovetails with *Quintinie*'s themes of conflict and an individual's right to self-determination, as I argue below.

Until 1860, Savoy belonged to Victor Emanuel II, king of Piedmont-Sardinia. In a secret agreement with Victor Emanuel, Louis-Napoleon committed over 100,000 French troops to the Second Italian War of Independence (April-July 1859) against Austria, a key campaign in the ongoing unification of Italy (il Risorgimento). Military intervention in Italy brought protest from some French Catholics (and also some French liberals), but it also resulted in concrete territorial gains; Piedmont-Sardinia ceded the county of Nice and the duchy of Savoy to France at the 1860 Treaty of Turin (Furet 463, Price 304). In short, Savoy's national identity had been in flux just prior to the fictional events of *Quintinie*. The war abroad and political conflict at home—in both of which the Church was a major factor—resonate strongly with *Quintinie*'s central themes. Within the novel, Sand represents Savoy as contested territory. Literally so: the abbé Moreali and his mentor, the virulently dogmatic père Onorio, constitute a two-man invasion force, as they scheme to obtain a plot of land in Savoy on which to construct a monastery. Moreali also hopes that Lucie will establish and direct an adjacent convent: a chaste utopian partnership that is intended to promote the continued production of new generations of Catholic Savoyards. This fictional priestly plot followed contemporary trends in education in France, in which the Church's role was actually increasing. During the first half of Louis-Napoleon's reign, the number of children taught by members of religious orders expanded, from 15% (boys) and 45% (girls) in 1850 to 22% and 54% by 1863 (Price 196).

Lucie, ignorant of Moreali and Onorio's plans, declares her Savoyard identity in opposition to the recent change of sovereignty:

—Je veux, reprit-elle, vous dire les opinions politiques que je me permets d'avoir. Née d'un père français et d'une mère savoisienne, j'ai été élevée en Savoie, c'est-à-dire en Italie, puisque nous sommes Français d'hier. Je suis donc Italienne à demi, et je n'admets pas que l'annexion ait pu nous dénationaliser si vite. Étant bonne Italienne et patriote, je m'en pique, je ne puis aimer l'Autriche, et je ne puis pas approuver la résistance politique du saint-siège à l'unité de l'Italie. [...] J'irai plus loin, j'avouerai que j'aime Garibaldi, et que je cesserais d'aimer Victor-Emmanuel le jour où il cesserait de protester pour l'indépendance de l'Italie. Voilà ma profession de foi. (27)

Half-Italian, newly French and somehow still a good Italian patriot: clearly, conflict and heterogeneity are central to Lucie's sense of self, which she expresses in terms of resistance to Frenchness, to Austria, even to recognition of papal temporal authority. It is significant that even at this early point in the novel,

Lucie's political opinions mark a point of rupture with the Church. According to Lucie herself, her politics and her faith do not need to coincide ("je suis orthodoxe quand même, car le pouvoir temporel n'est pas un article de foi," 27). This declaration differentiates Lucie from extreme ultramontane Catholics, as Bernard Hamon observes (*George Sand* 175-76). Furthermore, while both Louis-Napoleon and Victor Emanuel made efforts to avoid appearing to threaten papal authority, the more radical freedom-fighter Giuseppe Garibaldi would lead an attack on Rome in 1862. Lucie's admiration of Garibaldi, which echoes Sand's, thus marks a further break with the majority of French Catholics, who were hostile to Garibaldi as a matter of course (174).

Like Lucie, Sand took a lively interest in the ongoing Italian conflict, as can be seen in letters that she wrote in 1862 to Prince Jérôme Napoleon, cousin to the emperor and a good friend of Sand's.<sup>3</sup> It is worth taking note of these letters here, because of the interesting light that they shed on the power dynamics of *Quintinie*, which was composed (as her letters to Buloz show) in the same year. Prince Napoleon had played a role in the Franco-Piedmontese alliance of 1859, leading one of the French corps during the campaign. He also got married as a result: one of the terms of the alliance was an arranged marriage between Victor Emanuel's sixteen-year-old daughter, Marie-Clothilde, and the thirty-seven-year-old Jérôme. This marriage of state parallels the plot of *Quintinie* in some respects, though the Catholic Marie-Clothilde (unlike Lucie) did not change her religious views to match those of her anticlerical French bridegroom; in fact, steps were taken to beatify Marie-Clothilde after her death (Corley 210)! Throughout 1862, while the issue of further support to Italy was being hotly debated in France, Sand applauded Jérôme's continued support of Italian unification, in a tone that is sometimes sincere, as on 26 February 1862: "Cher prince, vous êtes dans le vrai: l'Empire est perdu, si l'Italie est abandonnée" (*Corr.* 16: 820), sometimes more playful, as on 11 May:

Nous sommes excommuniés, comme tous ceux qui, de fait ou d'intention, ont souhaité l'unité de l'Italie et le triomphe de Victor-Emmanuel; nous nous tenons pour chassés de l'Église. Mais ne le dites pas à la princesse Clothilde! Il ne faut pas faire pleurer les anges. Elle croit—nous ne croyons pas, nous autres, —à l'Église catholique. Nous serions hypocrites d'y aller. (*Corr.* 17: 91-92)

Differences in tone aside, both letters agree in anticipating dire consequences to the confrontation between camps which Sand figures as irrevocably opposed. If one is for the French empire, then one must be for Italian nationalism, and one must expect an inevitable end to one's relationship with the Church, whether by excommunication or self-willed exile: Sand's deductive reasoning rests on questionable premises, ignoring (for instance) the imperial régime's complicated and shifting balancing act between competing interest groups within French society, and even within its own administration. As Roger Price observes, Louis-Napoleon continued actively to defend the Pope by stationing French troops in

Rome; ultramontane idealists who were strongly hostile to the Empire were in the minority among French Catholics (286-87). Sand's intransigence here (like Émile Lemontier's) mirrors the very dogmatism which she accuses the Church of imposing on its members. It is also noteworthy that Sand suggests leaving Marie-Clothilde entirely out of this quarrel. Compare the impetus to protect Marie-Clothilde from her hypothetical tears to Lucie's pledge never to practice Confession again: "Jamais! cela ferait souffrir Émile" (147). By this assessment, argument within marriage can lead to no positive resolution, only suffering that should be avoided: an interesting exception to the "liberté de discussion" that Sand championed.

Two months later, on 26 July 1862, Sand congratulates the prince on the birth of his and Marie-Clothilde's first child, obliquely warning the prince against allowing too much of the "wrong" influence on his son's formation:

La princesse est une brave mère de nourrir son enfant! Vous, il faut en faire un homme, un vrai homme, de cet enfant-là. Vous serez un tendre père, j'en suis sûre, parce que vous avez été un bon fils; mais occupez-vous *vous-même* de son éducation, et elle sera ce qu'elle doit être pour un homme de l'avenir et non du passé. (*Corr.* 17: 183)

One recognizes the same opposition between "passé" and "avenir" that appears in the preface to *Quintinie* months later. Sand's insistence on the role of the father in the production of his offspring's "true" manhood also resonates strongly with the novel's conflation of "vérité" and "phallocentrisme," to use Frappier-Mazur's apt phrase (30). And here again, Marie-Clothilde's contribution is wordless.

The correct way to rear children was clearly much on Sand's mind in 1862. This issue forms a crucial part of *Quintinie*, preoccupied as the novel is with orienting future generations toward an enlightened future. Questions of education, unorthodox religious beliefs and of course controversy resonate strongly with Savoy's famous former resident: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who played a key role in Sand's own early formation (*Œuvres autobiographiques* 1: 1053-62). As other critics have observed, *Mademoiselle La Quintinie* is clearly in extended dialogue with Rousseau (Trousson 27-31, O'Dea 47-70). If *Quintinie* is conceived as a polyphonic argument, then Rousseau is both one of the loudest voices within that debate, and a chief subject of contention. Though Sand engages with several of Rousseau's works—O'Dea, for instance, observes interesting parallels between *Quintinie* and *La nouvelle Héloïse* (63-64)—it is Rousseau's *Confessions* (written 1765-1770, published 1782 and 1789) and *Émile, ou de l'éducation* (1762) which are most relevant to my own study.<sup>4</sup>

Sand's feelings toward Rousseau in the early 1860s seem mixed, in spite of her forceful protestations of loyalty, as can be seen in "À propos des Charmettes," the companion piece published shortly after *Quintinie*, in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* (November-December 1863). Here, Sand describes a visit she made to Les Charmettes, the idyllic country house near Chambéry, Savoy where Rousseau

lived with his lover and protector, Françoise-Louise de Warens, from 1735 to 1736. The house became (and remains) a tourist destination for admirers of Rousseau. Sand made her visit on 31 May 1861. It's worth noting that *Quintinie* begins with Émile Lemontier's first letter to his father, dated 1 June 1861: the day after Sand's excursion, highlighting the close connections between novel and essay.

In his autobiographical *Confessions*, Rousseau declares Madame de Warens the first great love of his life, but she was also a professional proselytizer who received a pension from the King of Piedmont for her missionary work converting protestants to Catholicism (Cranston 48-49). Indeed, Rousseau characterized his own change of faith as a "coup de foudre" brought about by his first sight of Warens (*Confessions*, *ŒC* 1: 49). In short, for Sand, this part of Savoy had long held associations of Catholic intrigue and religious conversion paired with romance. At the same time, Sand also figures Les Charmettes as a locus of quarrels. The site sparks disagreement between Émile, who considers it a shrine, and Lucie, whose impressions are colored by local gossip and médisance: "je sais, par la tradition du pays, tout ce qui concerne cette existence des Charmettes, et le nom de madame de Warens me répugne" (27). When Émile later visits Les Charmettes, he encounters a stranger by chance (in fact, it is the enigmatic abbé Moreali), with whom he falls into an intense though courteous argument on the nature of divine versus earthly love.

Unsurprisingly, Sand also characterizes her own "pèlerinage" to Les Charmettes in 1861 as marked by chance meetings and intense quarrels. Anti-Rousseau hostility confronted her even in this secular shrine: inside the house, Sand came across a guest book in which some visitors had written "injures grossières ou de blâmes stupides contre Rousseau" ("Charmettes" 5). She then reports meeting an unnamed Catholic M\*\*\* at the same site (though M\*\*\* may be only a straw man, created to enable Sand to expose her thoughts on Rousseau in dialectic form). Although more urbane than the anonymous scribblers, M\*\*\* was equally inclined to make ad hominem attacks: citing Rousseau's love affairs, his too-public *Confessions*, his (supposed) suicide and most importantly, his complete abrogation of his parental duties, abandoning his and Thérèse Levasseur's several illegitimate children to a foundling hospital.

Sand's response to M\*\*\* is clearly conceived as a response to the "injures" leveled against Rousseau. Within the article, she casts herself as Rousseau's staunchest defender; indeed, Sand characterizes her loyalty to Rousseau with a noteworthy comparison: "je lui reste fidèle [...] comme au père qui m'a engendré" (1). Issues of paternity are highly fraught, in both the "Charmettes" article and *Mademoiselle La Quintinie*. None of Rousseau's faults is as painful to Sand as the charge that he abandoned his children (11); her efforts to exculpate him, or at least attenuate the blame, are extraordinary. After raising doubts that Rousseau was the biological father of Thérèse's children, Sand concludes that the point is moot in any case, because he and Thérèse were not legally married when the children were born:

Cette question est celle que les lois civiles n'ont pu résoudre et qu'elles ont tranchée hardiment en défendant la recherche de la paternité d'une part, et en imposant de l'autre les obligations de la paternité envers tous les enfans nés dans le mariage. La loi a sa logique: si elle impose au mari un devoir rigoureux, elle lui attribue un droit rigoureux aussi sur la conduite de sa femme. C'est à lui de la séquestrer ou de la surveiller, s'il n'a pas foi en elle. Dans les unions libres, et celle de Rousseau était une affaire de hasard, nullement sérieuse au début, l'homme, n'ayant pas de droits, n'a pas de devoirs. (18)

Drawing this distinction between legal marriage and “unions libres” allows Sand to argue that Rousseau had no paternal duty towards children born out of wedlock. However, this use of the “logic of the law,” which authorizes husbands to spy on or lock up their wives, is highly unsettling. At other points in Sand's career, she criticized in no uncertain terms “l'injustice et la barbarie des lois qui régissent encore l'existence de la femme dans le mariage” (1842 preface to *Indiana*, 46). Arguing here that such barbaric practices somehow contextualize or even exculpate Rousseau's own failures as a parent is a rhetorical device of dubious value; one wrong hardly cancels another. More to the point, however, if neglect of duty and overly despotic exercise of duty consitute, for Sand, the opposite extremes of paternal or spousal bad conduct, this raises a thorny question: what is Sand's conception of the “good” husband and father? What precisely are the “rigorous” duties that such an ideal figure ought to perform?

Patriarchs clearly hold a special place in Sand's thought in the early 1860s, as her letters to Prince Napoleon also show. Sand maintains that it is a father's duty to protect his children's freedom of conscience—yet at what cost to his spouse's freedom? I would argue that this problem—not the more simplistic binaries of past versus future, priest versus philosopher, forced orthodoxy versus liberal heterodoxy—emerges as the central conflict of *Mademoiselle La Quintinie*. In *Quintinie*, Sand quarrels with the Catholic Church, but also with herself.

And with Rousseau: one finds a similar internal inconsistency within Rousseau's controversial pedagogic treatise *Émile, ou de l'éducation*. On the one hand, the work declares categorically that “Toute fille doit avoir la religion de sa mère et toute femme celle de son mari [...]. Hors d'état d'être juges elles mêmes, elles doivent recevoir la décision des pères et des maris comme celle de l'Eglise” (*EC* 4: 721; original spelling respected). On the other hand, the most radical portion of *Émile*, the “Profession de foi du vicaire savoyard,” sharply criticizes Church dogmatism (“étant né dans une Eglise qui décide tout, qui ne permet aucun doute, un seul point rejeté me faisoit rejeter tout le reste,” 568). The Savoyard vicar advocates for the freedom of individuals to judge for themselves the truth-value of diverse modes of thought: “Portant donc en moi l'amour de la vérité pour toute philosophie [...], je reprends sur cette règle l'examen des connoissances qui m'intéressent, résolu d'admettre pour évidentes toutes celles auxquelles dans la

sincérité de mon cœur je ne pourrai refuser mon consentement” (570). By making the protagonist of her novel both Savoyard and female, does Sand “correct” *Émile*’s gender inequities, extending the Savoyard vicar’s radical vision of religious freedom to young women as well as men? Is *Mademoiselle La Quintinie*, as Raymon Trousson asserts, “une nouvelle Profession de foi du Vicaire savoyard jetée dans le contexte historique des années 1860” (31), or even, as Bernard Hamon concludes, “un grand roman féministe” (“Vive George Sand” 71)?

There is evidence to support this reading. Although she declares herself an orthodox Catholic, Lucie clearly embodies the Savoyard vicar’s ideal of self-directed intellectual inquiry; in her childhood religious studies, she makes use of “ma logique naturelle pour comprendre Dieu, et de mon cœur tel qu’il était disposé à l’aimer” (60). Lucie also repeatedly resists threats to her freedom of conscience, which occur in the form of adversarial father-figures who combine despotic paternity with Church dogmatism. Lucie’s biological father, General La Quintinie, declares “ma fille est ma chose” (119) and threatens to kill her if she marries a non-Catholic (143). Her spiritual father, the abbé Moreali—who suffers under the dour influence of his own spiritual father, père Onorio—seeks to stifle Lucie’s intellectual curiosity by advocating blind faith in Catholic doctrine: “Quelle belle chose qu’une croyance qui ne discute rien et ne se laisse pas discuter” (63). Against these negative examples of despotic paternity, *Émile*’s father Honoré Lemontier is clearly designed as the counter-example of ideal fatherhood. Honoré and Onorio, paired together by their variant first names, are meant to embody the opposing forces that struggle for dominance in modern society, as the preface to *Mademoiselle La Quintinie* announces. Quite clearly, too, Honoré Lemontier recalls Jean-Jacques Rousseau, but he is a Rousseau somewhat idealized and even corrected of the flaws that Sand criticizes in the “Charmettes” article: a moral philosopher who is fabulously rich, effortlessly chaste and universally respected, even by the most partisan members of the *parti clérical* (even the irascible General La Quintinie recognizes Monsieur Lemontier’s “Excellente réputation, caractère à l’abri de tout reproche,” 92). In short, there are no failures of fatherhood, no abandoned offspring in Monsieur Lemontier’s past. On the contrary, Monsieur Lemontier puts the theoretical education of *Émile* into practice by rearing his son *Émile* according to Rousseauistic principles of free inquiry and respect for “vérités fondamentales” (21) gleaned from a range of religions and other systems of thought. In the fight for Lucie’s heart and mind, Monsieur Lemontier criticizes dogmatism itself more than any single tenet or practice: “nous n’agirions pas à la manière des catholiques; nous laisserions à Lucie liberté absolue d’écouter, de lire, d’examiner toutes les exhortations contraires aux nôtres. D’où viennent les erreurs invétérées selon nous? Des croyances sans examen possible, sans discussion permise” (140). The freedom to question—and even to quarrel—is indeed central to Sand’s own epistemology. Up to this point, *Mademoiselle La Quintinie* does what it sets out to do in the preface: that is, it argues the need for “la liberté de discussion” (3), the freedom to hear all voices when weighing issues of conscience and faith.

Raymon Trousson concludes that *Quintinie* constitutes “avant tout” a revendication of “la liberté de penser” (30).

However, the freedom of conscience that Monsieur Lemontier advocates for Lucie only leads to her freely (!) choosing subjugation to a rigidly patriarchal conception of human society. Clever, opinionated Lucie is encouraged to listen to all voices, including the “voix intérieure” of her own heart or conscience (76), in keeping with the Savoyard vicar’s teaching. But this inner voice leads Lucie to a confined vision of womanhood “glorieuse et douce dans le sanctuaire de la famille” (110), in which her husband rightfully becomes the ultimate director of her conscience: “J’ai le devoir de comprendre et de servir Dieu selon les vues de l’homme à qui je consacrerai volontairement ma vie toute entière” (128). Émile warmly agrees with Lucie that “le but de la femme [est] la maternité” (89); for his own part, he is eager to “faire acte de virilité intellectuelle et morale” (111) against the dogmatic adversaries whom his father characterizes as “eunuques intellectuels” (43, 83).

Thelma Jurgrau characterizes Émile and Lucie’s marriage as “a call to arms for direct communication between couples, without the mediation of social institutions, and which ends in a happy union of the lovers, as parental and religious obstacles are overcome” (225). However, one must not overlook that Lucie’s “direct communication” with her husband is still mediated by parental influence, and marked by lapses in communication. Although the novel represents Monsieur Lemontier—and he clearly believes himself—as a champion of freedom of conscience over dogmatism, freedom of speech over censorship (“le silence auquel on nous condamne,” 175), Lemontier fails to live up to his own ideal, directing Lucie’s thoughts where he wants them to go: “il se regardait comme obligé d’amener Lucie à une entière confiance dans les principes de son fils” (185). The differences between the “good” father and Lucie’s more flawed father figures become blurred at this critical point. Ironically, the end result for Lucie—originally defined by her resistance to authoritarian pressures—is silence: as the narrator observes, “si elle gardait des doutes, elle n’en parlait pas” (185). More symbolically, Lucie’s voice is again silenced when she leaves the Church: an act which ends her public singing career, confining her artistic expression to wholly domestic circles.

In a letter to Buloz on 9 February 1863, Sand herself acknowledges Lucie’s transformation: “Mlle La Quintinie devient nécessairement un peu *passive* vers la fin, et *Moreali* absorbe tout” (*Corr.* 17: 438). Here, Sand is urging Buloz to change *Quintinie*’s title in favor of the priest, in her mind the novel’s true protagonist.<sup>5</sup> I would argue, however, that Lucie’s final passivity is not so much a by-product of the real protagonist’s taking center stage, but rather the inevitable conclusion of her chosen role. Marriage and maternity are figured throughout *Quintinie* as a fundamental loss of the woman’s self, and not only for Lucie’s unhappily-married mother. Lucie’s endpoint is foreshadowed from the moment when she describes her experience fostering her god-daughter Lucette: “ma

personnalité disparut pour moi en quelque sorte [...] je vécus aussi absente de moi-même que si je ne m'étais jamais connue" (88).

With its sensitive subject and deliberately confrontational style, *Mademoiselle La Quintinie* was clearly designed to provoke strong responses from both supporters and detractors. Just as clearly, the debate surrounding the novel mirrors the dialectic form of the work itself. Yet within this carefully orchestrated, multi-voiced debate, Lucie's glaring silence—the voice left out of all the quarrels—speaks volumes.

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> For more details, consult Amadiou's excellent article (395-422). See also Hamon, "Vive George Sand" 69-70.

<sup>2</sup> Two voices whom Sand quoted verbatim in her novel have been identified by Bernard Hamon: Paul-Louis Courier, a Revolution-era pamphleteer, and Louis Veuillot, whose novel *Le parfum de Rome* was published in 1862 ("Vive George Sand" 43-71).

<sup>3</sup> Writing on 13 February 1863 to Buloz about the likelihood of being put on trial for *Quintinie*, Sand speculated that Prince Napoleon might intercede on her behalf; in contrast, she judged the Empress Eugénie "très bonne et charitable, mais très enfant et probablement soumise au confesseur" (*Corr.* 17: 450).

<sup>4</sup> Michael O'Dea characterizes Lucie as "un lointain écho de Julie" (65), noting that both young married mothers reunite both *dévots* and *mécréants* under their benevolent wings; see O'Dea 64-66 for a detailed comparison.

<sup>5</sup> Some modern critics agree with Sand's preference for Moreali as the novel's true protagonist; see Dijk 44, Frappier-Mazur 29, Hamon "Vive George Sand" 53, O'Dea 61, Planté 89.

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