

Paris in the Nineteenth Century

Part II: 1850-1899

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Vassar College LLI
Fall 2026

Lecture 1: 1848-1860

Part 1

Adolphe Adam: Overture to his opera “Si j’étais roi” (1851)

The Revolution of 1848

and its aftermath

A Reminder:

King Louis Philippe

(1773-1850)

Reigned 1830-1848

THE LAST FRENCH KING



Why another revolution?

In 1846 a crop failure quickly developed into a full-scale economic crisis: food became scarce and expensive; many businesses went bankrupt; unemployment rose.

Perhaps more importantly, there was persistent opposition from the government to the idea of universal male suffrage, and this led to widespread discontent.

Beginning in 1847, leaders of the opposition set out to force the regime to grant liberal reforms. Since **public political meetings were outlawed**, these leaders held a series of political “banquets” to mobilize the forces of discontent.

The “Campaign of the Banquets”

Seventy banquets attended by 17,000 persons took place from July 1847 to February 1848, throughout the country.

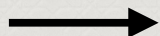
(Chateau-Rouge is in Montmartre.)



The banquet of Château-Rouge (9 July 1847) began the *campagne des banquets*.

The prohibition of one of these meetings . . . which was supposed to take place on January 14, 1848 . . . and then [the prohibition] of another one set up for February 22, 1848, were the immediate cause of riots that led to Louis-Philippe's abdication.

Paris Erupts: February 24, 1848



“Invasion of the Tuileries by the Parisian People, February 24, 1848”

“The people, having been misled by Louis-Philippe, who had promised a constitutional government at the time of his arrival on the throne in 1830, resolved to take revenge. Having entered the royal residence, they seized the royal throne and carried it to the foot of the July Column, and offered it as a sacrifice for the spirits of those immortal victims of that liberty that had just been reconquered by new heroes, on February 25. And from this hearth, the Republic arose, backed by French Patriotism.”



Le Trône Brulé (“The Burnt Throne”)

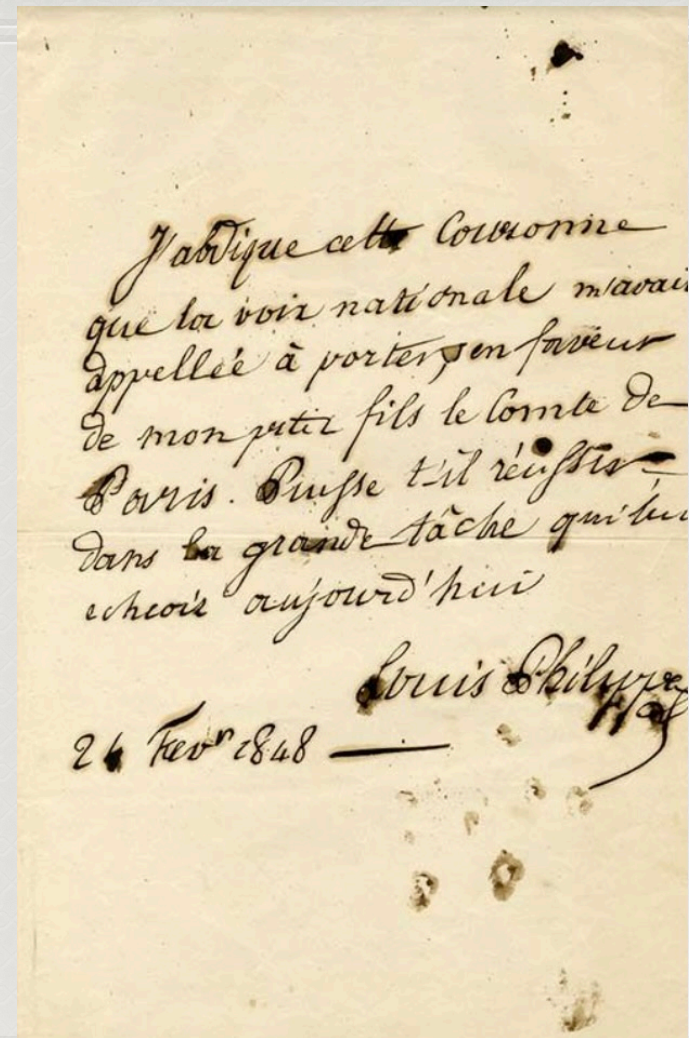
Louis Philippe Abdicates

“I abdicate this crown which I was called to bear by the voice of the nation, in favor of my grandson* the Count of Paris . . .”

Louis Philippe
February 24 1848

(He fled almost immediately to England.)

* Prince Philippe (1838-1894)



*J'abdique cette Couronne
que la voix nationale m'avait
appelée à porter en faveur
de mon petit fils le Comte de
Paris. Puisse-t'il réussir
dans la grande tâche qui lui
est dévolue aujourd'hui*

Louis Philippe
24 Fev^r 1848

On February 24, the “Second Republic”
is provisionally proclaimed.



February
25,
1848

“Lamartine Rejecting the Red Flag in Front of the City Hall”

Henri Félix Emmanuel Philippoteaux (1815-1884)

Alphonse de Lamartine: poet, statesman

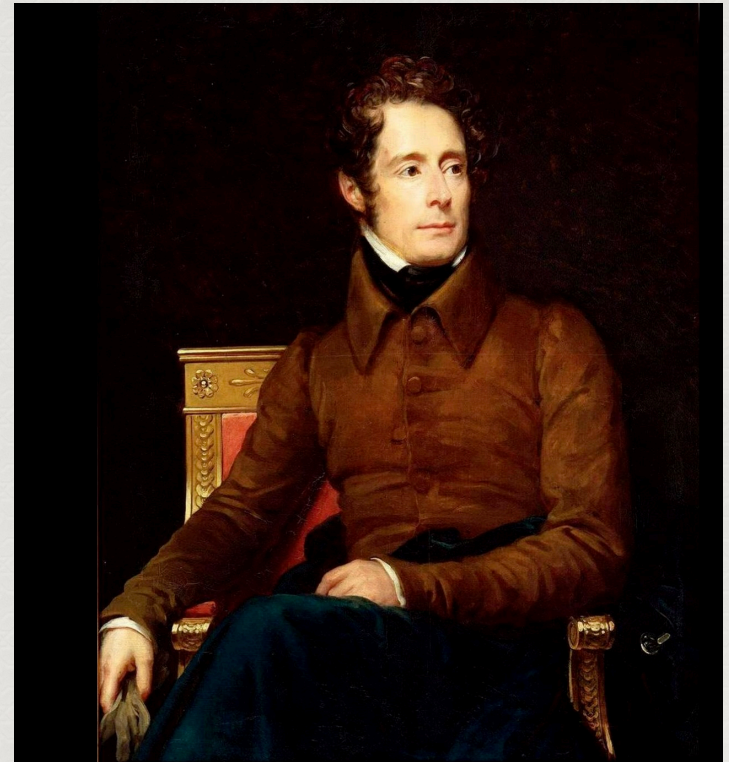
1790-1869

a key figure in the new
provisional government



A Younger Alphonse de Lamartine

(one of whose poems from 1820
we examined in Part I)



A woman on horseback carries a red flag and is wearing a red Phrygian cap—an ancient symbol of freedom and liberty.



(This painting is in the Musée Carnavalet.)

(An Important Aside)

Eugénie Niboyet

(1796-1883)

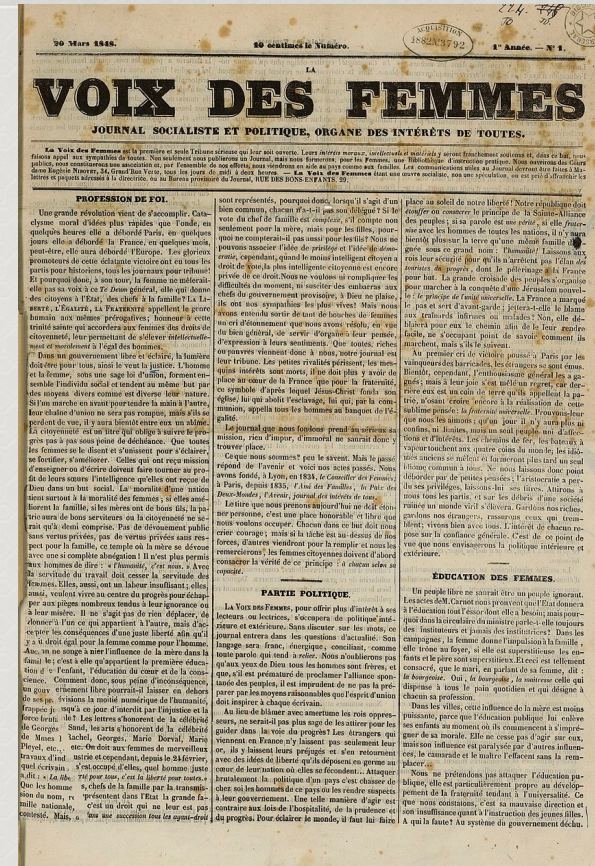
An early French feminist



1848

A short-lived periodical VOIX DES FEMMES (The Voice of Women)

Established by Eugénie Niboyet



It only ran from March to June



“JOURNAL QUOTIDIEN, SOCIALISTE ET POLITIQUE, |
 ORGANE DES INTÉRÊTS DE TOUTES

“daily newspaper, socialist and political, representing all women’s interests”

Another Napoleon Enters the Scene

Louis Napoleon: (1808-1873)

Son of Napoléon I's younger brother Louis

In other words: Napoleon I's nephew

Ambitieux!

During the reign of Louis Philippe
(1830-1848) Louis Napoléon attempted
more than once to seize power, failing every
time.



October 1836: Louis launched
a coup attempt in Strasbourg.

He was captured, tried, convicted,
and sent into exile.

(In the following year
he traveled to the USA.)



1840

Louis again attempted to lead an uprising against Louis Philippe. He was captured and imprisoned for life in the “fortress of Ham” in northern France.



Louis studying while in prison in Ham.

He referred to his prison as the
“University of Ham,” because he spent
his years there reading, writing books,
and conducting scientific experiments.

In 1846, he staged a daring escape, and made
his way to England. He remained there
until *after* the Revolution of 1848.



LOUIS NAPOLEON

à Ham

The Second Republic in 1848: Some Dates

- March-April: The provisional government grants universal male suffrage* and outlaws slavery in the colonies, and sets up “National Workshops” for the unemployed.
- June 21-26: The government closes the costly National Workshops. Insurrections follows, which were violently suppressed.
(see the following slide)

* At a stroke, the eligible electorate increased from 200,000 to 9,000,000

June 25, 1848

These are apparently the
first photograph
of Parisian barricades

These insurrections were
violently suppressed: at least
1,500 rebels were killed; 12,000
were arrested . . . The radical
movement was decapitated; the
workers withdrew into silent and
bitter opposition.

Britannica Online



The Second Republic in 1848: continued

November 4: A new constitution is adopted, creating a strong presidency chosen by direct universal male suffrage.

December 10: **Louis Napoléon wins a landslide victory in the presidential election.**

Lamartine also ran . . .

President Napoleon!

“Louis Napoleon Bonaparte,
guided by the genius
of the people and of the
Republic, receives, from the
hands of France,
the Crown of the Republic.”



LOUIS NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

Guidé par le Génie du peuple et la République reçoit des mains de la France la Couronne de la Présidence...

1852

The Second Republic in 1849 and 1850

A conservative Legislative Assembly passes reactionary laws restricting suffrage and freedom of the press, laws supported by Louis Napoléon, who is showing his true colors . . .

The Constitution of the Second Republic called for a single four-year term for the president.

Louis Napoleon's four-year term was thus scheduled to run out in 1852 . . .

Louis Napoleon tried—unsuccessfully— to have the law changed.

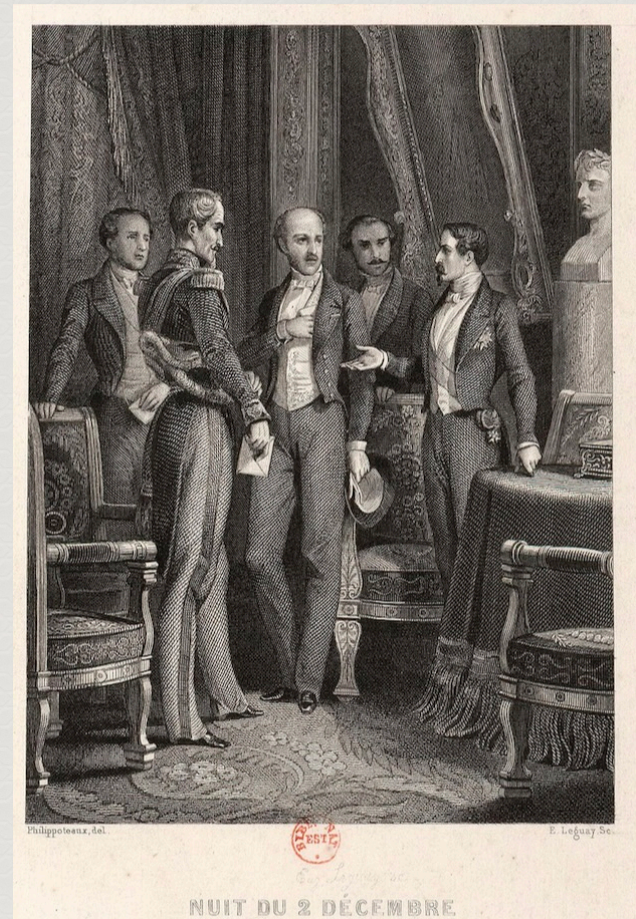
His response?

**A Coup d'Etat—
Successful This Time**

December 2 1851

Napoleon and his co-conspirators

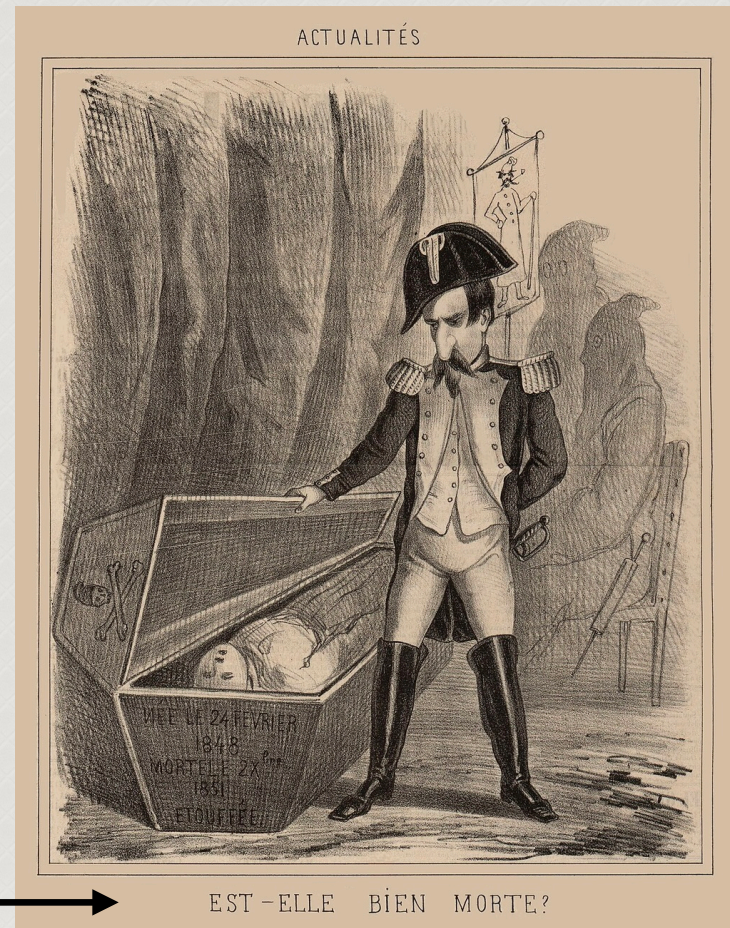
“Nuit du 2 décembre”
(1851)



Louis Napoleon examining the corpse of the Second Republic

“Is she really dead?”

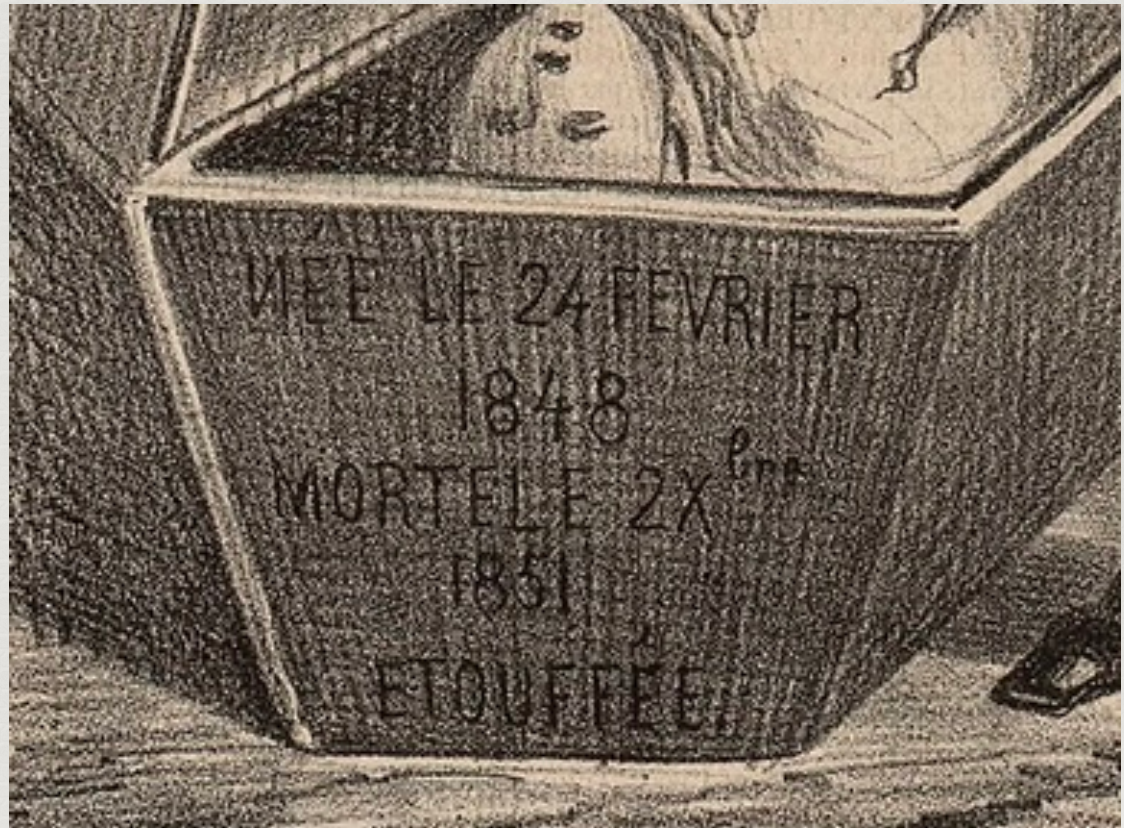
“Est-elle bien morte?”



[The Republic:]

“Born February 24, 1848,
Died December 2, 1851
Strangled”

*“Née le 24 février
1848
Morte le 2 décembre
1851
Étouffée”*



Question: After 1848, what happened to the aspirations of those still hoping to restore the monarchy? They were divided . . .

**The
Legitimists**

Legitimists supported the senior line of the House of Bourbon, last represented by Charles X, who was forced to abdicate in 1830. His grandson, the Count of Chambord, was “next in line.”

**The
Orleanists**

Orleanists supported the descendants of Louis Philippe I, the “Citizen King” who abdicated in 1848.

Louis Napoléon, Empereur

“Napoléon III”

“The Second Empire”

Le Deuxième Empire

Emperor from 1852 to 1870

1870: *Le Débacle* of the Franco-Prussian war



He declared himself
emperor on December 2
—the same date in 1803
that his uncle crowned
himself emperor in Notre
Dame Cathedral.

An Aside: What happened to “Napoléon II”?



In 1811, Napoleon I's second wife Empress Marie Louise gave birth to “Napoleon II,” who never reigned. After his father's defeat and exile to St. Helena, the boy lived with his mother at the imperial court of Austria in Vienna, until his death in 1832 at the age of 21. Edmond Rostand, the author of *Cyrano de Bergerac*, wrote *L'Aiglon*, a play devoted to this sad figure.

Littérature!

(Novels, poetry and plays)

STARTING WITH TWO BLOCKBUSTERS

Henri Murger

(1822-1861)

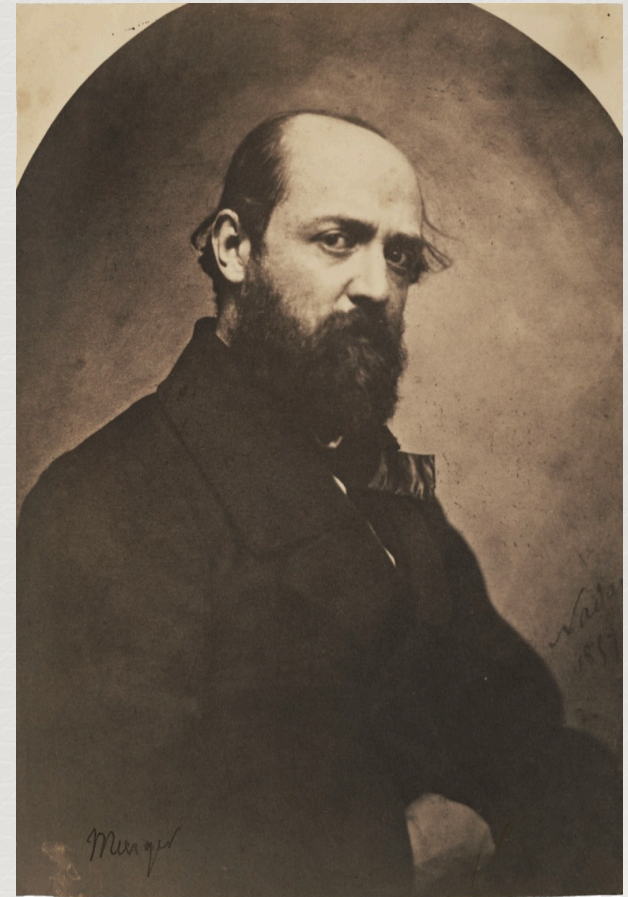
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Novelist and poet

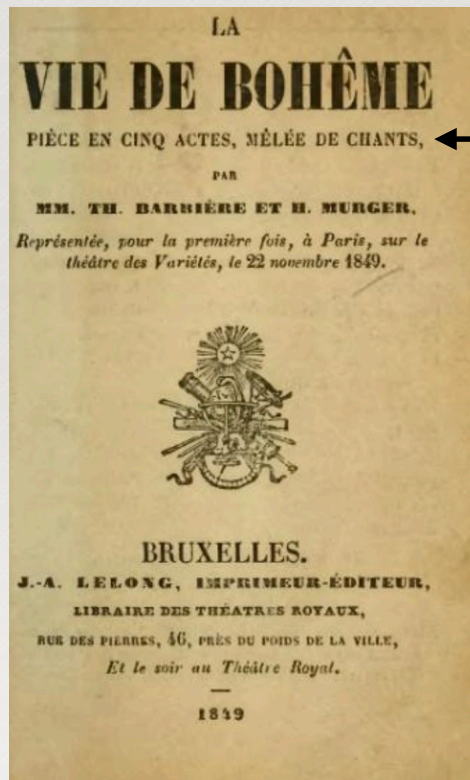
Author of

Scènes de la vie de Bohème
(Scenes of Bohemian Life)

A collection of stories published in the late 1840s,
gathered together, revised,
and published as a novel in 1851



In 1849 Murger and playwright Théodore Barrière turned the stories into a successful play, entitled *La Vie de Bohème*.



← (“Play in five acts, mixed with songs”)

The play’s success prompted Murger to add more stories, and publish them as a novel in 1851.

Bohemians and Bohemianism

“**Bohemianism** is a social and cultural movement that has, at its core, a way of life away from society’s conventional norms and expectations. The term originates from the French *bohème* and spread to the English-speaking world. It was used to describe mid-19th-century non-traditional lifestyles, especially of artists, writers, journalists, musicians and actors in major European cities.”

(Wiki)

As the novel reaches its conclusion, one of the “Bohemians”
(the composer Schaunard)
looks soberly at the *vie de Bohème* . . .

*We are slaves to habit, not to a passion. It is this bondage, which we must escape, where we exhaust ourselves in a ridiculous and shameful slavery. Well, the past is past, we must break the bonds which still tie us to it. The hour has come to go forward without looking back; **we have had our days of fun, of carelessness and of paradox.** All that is very fine, a good novel could be made of it; but this comedy of mad love affairs, this wasting of days with the prodigality of people who believe that they have all eternity to throw away, **all that must come to an end.***

In fact, what will happen if you and I continue this monotonous and useless wandering? We will get to be thirty years old, unknown, isolated, disgusted with everything and with ourselves, full of envy towards those whom we see arriving at any goal whatever it is, and obliged in order to live to resort to the shameful habits of parasites . . .

Giacomo Puccini:
La Bohème

First performed in Turin,
February 1, 1896, conducted
by Arturo Toscanini

One of the most often performed operas
in the history of the genre





TEATRO LA FENICE
 Giovedì 6 Maggio 1897 alle ore 8 ³/₄ p.
Prima Rappresentazione
 dell'Opera NUOVISSIMA in 4 atti

LA BOHÈME
 Parole e Musica di
RUGGERO LEONCAVALLO

PERSONAGGI	ESECUTORI
Marcello, pittore	Sig. U. REDURCHI
Rodolfo, poeta	- R. ANGELINI FORNARI
Schvankar, musicista	- G. ENARDON
Barbameche, istitutore	- G. PRIGIOTTI
Guastav Collina, filosofo	- L. ARISTOTTI
Vicente Paolo	- R. GORDANI
Gasparetto, seduttore	- R. NOGRINI
Durand, portinaio	- R. NOGRINI
Un Bocaro	- R. NOGRINI
Il Signore del primo piano	- R. NOGRINI
Musette, greco	Sig. L. PRANDIN
Mimi, fiorista	- R. STORCHIO
Edmondo, straniero	- C. CAPPELLA

Studenti, Griseo, Leonte, Inquilini di anba i sonni, Servi, Cuochi, Giovani del Caffè, Sguatter, Panchini

Mastro Concertatore e Direttore d'Orchestra
ALESSANDRO POMÉ
 Mastro Direttore dei Cori ANTONORE CARCANO

PREZZI PER QUESTA SERA
 Ingresso alla Platea, Palchi e Loggia L. 5 - Militari (bassa forza) e fanciulli L. 250
 Palchi II ordine L. 50 - III ordine L. 25
 Poltrone L. 30 - Scanni riservati L. 20 - Scanni L. 15 - Loggia I fila L. 5 - II fila L. 3
 Ingresso al Loggione L. 2 - Posto numerato L. 3

Ruggiero Leoncavallo: *La Bohème*

First performed in Venice,
 May 6, 1897

Seldom performed

Statue of Murger
in the
Jardins du Luxembourg
(1895)



BLOCKBUSTER NUMBER 2

“The Lady with the Camellias”

But first . . .

Alexandre
Dumas,

→ *père*

(1802-1870)

(a successful writer ...)



Author of *The Three Musketeers*, *The Count of Monte Cristo* ...



Southwest
of
Paris

(now a museum)

Dumas's "Chateau de Monte Cristo"



(a chip off the old block?)

Alexandre Dumas, *fils* (1824-1895)



Novelist, playwright, and
author of

La Dame aux camélias
(The Lady of the Camellias)

A partly autobiographical novel from 1848

“La Dame aux camélias”

was a real person:

Marie Duplessis

(1824-1847)

She died of tuberculosis at the age of 23.

She was one of the most famous
courtesans of the 19th century, and
briefly Dumas’s lover.



Marie Duplessis

Painting by
Jean-Charles Olivier

1840
(age 16)



Marie Duplessis at the theatre



In the novel her name is changed to Marguerite Gautier

What is a courtesan?*

Two definitions . . .

- ? “A courtesan is a highly cultivated, educated woman who associated with wealthy, powerful, or royal clients. Historically, rather than traditional sex work, they provided companionship, wit, and artistic entertainment in exchange for financial security, gifts, and social status . . .”
- ? “A female sex worker with a courtly, wealthy, or upper-class clientele”

*in French: *courtisane*



1852

Dumas turns his novel into a play

La Dame aux Camélias

“Play in Five Acts,
with Songs”

First performed at the
Théâtre du Vaudeville,
on February 2, 1852

The play remained popular throughout the nineteenth century.

A poster for a performance of the play in Paris starring the famous French actress, Sarah Bernhardt (1896)



In the novel, Dumas mostly refers to Marguerite
as a “kept woman” (“*une femme entretenue*”)
(*Entretenir* means to maintain.)

The word “prostituée” never appears.

At some point, her named was changed once again, to Camille.

Marguerite lived in the *demimonde* . . .

Demimonde translates literally as “half-world.” The word was coined by Dumas (*fils*) and describes women (*demimondaines*) who live outside traditional moral rules and are supported by wealthy lovers. Dumas titled a 1855 play *Le Demi-Monde*.

An enduring theatrical phenomenon
well into the twentieth century, on the
stage and at the movies (below):



Theda Bara, 1917



Alla Nazimova, 1921



Greta Garbo, 1936

(Back to 1852 . . .)

In March 1852, Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901)
was in Paris, and attended a performance of Dumas's play.

Dumas's play served as the model
for his new opera, *La Traviata*.

La Traviata

("The woman who went astray")

First performed
in Venice at the
Teatro la Fenice,
March 6 1853

GRAN TEATRO LA FENICE
Per la sera di Domenica 6 Marzo 1853. Recita XLI.
PRIMA RAPPRESENTAZIONE DELL'OPERA NUOVA
LA TRAVIATA
Libretto di F. M. PIAVE. — Musica del Maestro G. VERDI espressamente composta per questo Teatro

PERSONAGGI VIOLETTA Valery FLORA Bervoix ANNINA ALFREDO Germont GERMONT Giorgio, suo padre GASTONE, Visconte de Lestouves Corno di Signori e Signore amici di Violetta e Flora, Maltalari, Piccerari e Zingari. — CORO: Uomini di Sordani di Violetta e di Flora, mas-here, er. ce. — SCENA, Parigi e sue vicinanze nel 1700 circa. Lo spettacolo è di proprietà del Sig. Giovanni Ricordi di Milano — Il vestiario di proprietà dell'Impresa — Le scene d'invenzione e lavoro del Sig. Giuseppe Bertola.	ARTISTI Fanny Salvini-Donatelli Speranza Giareppini Carlotta Berini Lodovico Graziani Felice Faresi Angelo Zuliani	PERSONAGGI BARONE Douphol MARCHESE d'Obigny DOTTOR Gréville GIUSEPPE, servo di Violetta DOMESTICO di Flora COMMISSIONARIO	ARTISTI Francesco Dragone Arnaldo Silvestri Andrea Bellini G. Borato G. Tosi Antonio Manzini
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Dopo l'Opera avrà luogo il gran Ballo in cinque Atti composto e messo in Scena dal Coreografo sig. A. MONTICINI.

LA LUCERNA MARAVIGLIOSA

PERSONAGGI AUTOPPE Imperatore del Viopere, padre di PALMIRA, Sacerdotessa REHUR, Principe Tartaro ALVINO, giovane pastore, fratello di SCHERINA ZURICA, Isotomista africana. Uomini — Magli — Guardie dell'Impero — Sceriffi di Bruma — Rejdera — Danzatori — Popolo Parigi — Mori — Banda — Soldati Tartari e Chinesi — Guerrieri di Aladin — Danzatori Chinesi.	ARTISTI Domenico Sigelli Beloni Marant Giuseppe Rosi Raffaello Rossi Alfonsio Monopoli-Rossi Marcello Mancini	PERSONAGGI FANTASTICI OBERON, Re dei Gnomi NAKARONKIR, Re di Dandifiani, amico di Oberon e Ingegnere delle Eghe dell'Impero. ZULBIR, Golem maledetto QUAZON, Golem della Lucerna ARDOLE, Golem del Penacchio Gnomi della Lucerna, seguaci di Nakarankir. — Negromanti e Gnomi della Notte — Gnomi del Penacchio.	ARTISTI Pietro Carlini Isaacson Achiana S. S. F. G. G. G. Anselmo Zangheri Gnomi del Penacchio
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FIGURA ALLEGORICA
Mostrano
La scena è nel Fingiano nel deserto della Patte. — Le divinità sono fantomatiche.

DANZE. { Alto Terzo — GRAN MARCIA DANZANTE eseguita da tutti i primi ballerini di mezzo carattere.
* { Alto Quarto — TERZETTO composta dal Primo Ballerino assoluto sig. EUGENIO DURAND ed eseguito dallo stesso, e dalle Signore MARMET e CITERIO.
* { — BALLABILE CINESE e INDIANO eseguito da tutto il corpo di Ballo.

Il prezzo del Biglietto d'Ingresso Austr. L. 5. —
Pei Piccoli Fanciulli " 1 50

La prima Fila degli Scanni resta riservata per Sig. Ufficiali, e gli altri tutti si vendono ad A. L. 3. — al Cancelliere di M. Marangoni presso il quale sono vendibili anche i Polci a disposizione dell'Impresa.
Dalle ore 11 ant. alle ore 3 pom. saranno dispensati i libretti ai Sign. Abbonati nel solito locale degli abbonamenti in Teatro. — Avvertesi che i libretti che fossero trovati in circolazione non muniti del Timbro dell'Impresa verranno sequestrati per riguardi dovuti ai diritti di proprietà.

D il Cancelliere del Teatro il 6 Marzo 1853. Si alza la Tela alle ore 11 precise. Appaltatore G. B. LASINA. —

(Traviare means to mislead or lead astray.)

La Traviata in Paris

The opera was first performed in Paris on 6 December 6, 1856 in Italian, and on October 27, 1864 in French.

(In Verdi's opera, Marguerite's name is changed to Violetta.)

The male character's name is Armand in the novel and the play, and Alfredo in the opera.

La Traviata and *La Bohème*

Two operas set in
mid-century Paris

At the end, the main female characters—
Violetta and Mimi—die

The crux of the matter: Armand's father travels to Paris to speak with Marguerite, effectively forcing her to put an end to her love affair with Armand . . .

Finally, child, you should know the rest, for I have not told you everything: let me explain my reason for coming to Paris. I have a daughter . . . She is young, beautiful and pure as an angel. She is in love, and she too has made love the dream of her life. I did write and tell Armand all about it, but, having thoughts for no one but you, he never replied. Well, my daughter is about to be married. As the wife of the man she loves, she will enter a respectable family which requires that there should be nothing dishonorable in my house. The family of the man who is to be my son-in-law has discovered how Armand is living in Paris, and has declared that the arrangement [wedding] will be cancelled if Armand continues to live as he does at present . . .

Do you have the right to destroy her future? . . . In the name of your love and repentance, give me my daughter's happiness . . .

The triumph of “bourgeois morality”

La Poésie

A Poem by Victor Hugo

(1802-1885)

“Demain, dès l’aube . . .”

Lamenting the tragic early deaths of
his daughter and son-in-law



Léopoldine Hugo

(1824-1843)

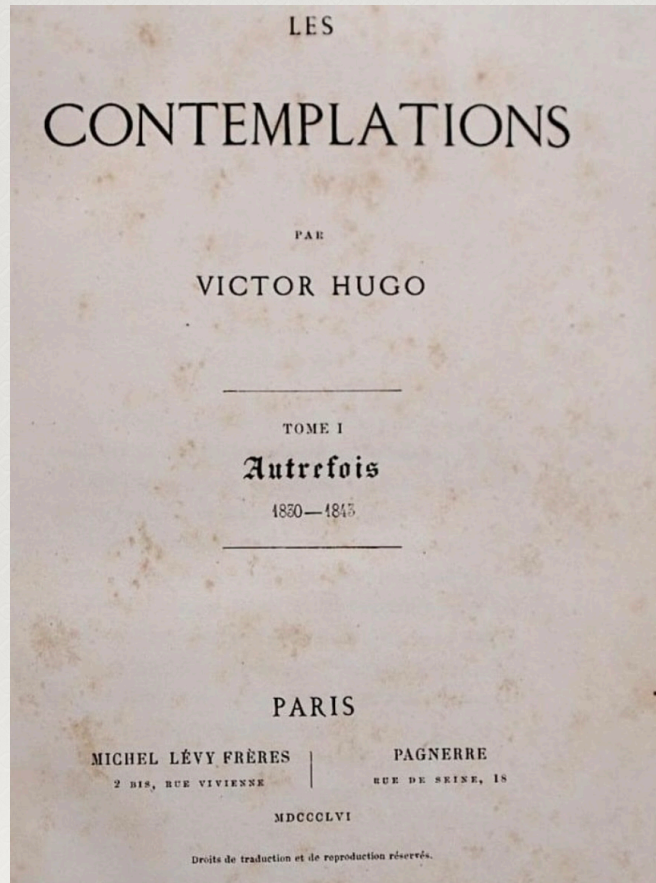
Léopoldine and her
husband drowned
in a tragic boating accident
on the river Seine.

Victor Hugo was traveling in the south of France,
and read about their deaths in a newspaper.



Charles Vacquerie
26 years old
and
Léopoldine Vacquerie
née Hugo
19 years old
married 15 February and died
4 September 1843





Les Contemplations

A collection
of Hugo's poetry

Paris, 1856

Hugo wrote "*Demain, dès l'aube*" in 1847.

Victor Hugo (1802-1885)

“Demain, dès l’aube”

From *Les Contemplations* (published in 1856)

*Demain, dès l’aube, à l’heure où blanchit la campagne,
Je partirai. Vois-tu, je sais que tu m’attends.
J’irai par la forêt, j’irai par la montagne.
Je ne puis demeurer loin de toi plus longtemps.*

*Je marcherai les yeux fixés sur mes pensées,
Sans rien voir au dehors, sans entendre aucun bruit,
Seul, inconnu, le dos courbé, les mains croisées,
Triste, et le jour pour moi sera comme la nuit.*

*Je ne regarderai ni l’or du soir qui tombe,
Ni les voiles au loin descendant vers Harfleur,
Et quand j’arriverai, je mettrai sur ta tombe
Un bouquet de houx vert et de bruyère en fleur.*

Tomorrow, at dawn, in the hour when the countryside becomes white,
I will leave. You see, I know that you are waiting for me.
I will go by the forest, I will go by the mountain.
I cannot stay far from you any longer.

I will walk [with my] eyes fixed on my thoughts,
Without seeing anything outside, nor hearing any noise,
Alone, unknown, my back curved, my hands crossed,
Sad—and the day for me will be like the night.

I will look neither at the gold of the evening that falls,
Nor the faraway sails descending towards Harfleur.
And when I arrive, I will put on your tomb
A bouquet of green holly and flowering heather.