Alain-Fournier (1886-1914), French writer, whose only novel, *The Wanderer* (1913; translated 1928), with its mystic overtones and spiritual quality, differed greatly from the realistic and naturalistic fiction of his contemporaries and exerted great influence on writers. Alain-Fournier was the pseudonym of Henri-Alban Fournier, born in La Chapelle-d'Angillon. Alain-Fournier's promising career was cut short by World War I; he was reported missing after the fighting of September 22, 1914, in France, and was presumed dead. Most of his writing was published after his death. *Miracles* (1924) is a collection of his early verse and prose, much of which had been published previously in various periodicals.
JEAN ANOUILH

Jean Anouilh (1910-1987), French playwright, director, and producer, known for well-crafted and provocative plays. Born near Bordeaux, Anouilh spent most of his life immersed in the theater world of Paris. After studying law and working briefly at an advertising agency, in 1931 he became secretary to actor, director, and producer Louis Jouvet. Anouilh’s first plays, written during the 1930s, were strongly influenced by the theatrical performance styles embraced by Jouvet and by Jacques Copeau, an experimental director and producer. During and after World War II (1939-1945), Anouilh wrote plays praised for their theatrical virtuosity, although some critics felt they lacked substance. After 1948 he worked closely with director Roland Piètri, with whom he codirected several of his own plays. In later years he adapted the works of others for the stage and worked on a number of motion-picture scripts.

His earliest plays, including Le voyageur sans bagage (1937; translated as Traveller Without Luggage, 1959) and La sauvage (1938; Restless Heart, 1957), seek this explanation in the nature of society, emphasizing its imperfections and the limitations imposed on it by the past. Anouilh termed these plays piècesnoires (black plays) because of their relatively pessimistic tone. He later sought an explanation in the individual, emphasizing individual psychology and memory as reasons for the failure of idealism. Plays such as Le bal des voleurs (1938; Thieves’ Carnival, 1952) are more poetic and optimistic than his black plays, and the author termed them piècesroses (rose-colored plays).

During and after World War II Anouilh turned to Greek mythology for an explanation for the failure of idealism. The plays from this period include Eurydice (1942; Point of Departure, 1951) and Médée (first performed in 1937; published 1946; Medea, 1967). Antigone (1942; translated 1946), often considered to be his masterpiece, combines an interest in the personality of the individual with a new curiosity about the role of destiny prominent in myth. The conflict arises less from religious or political causes than from fate, which condemns them to play out their respective roles: Antigone breaks the law to bury her brother and Creon upholds the law, even though it means executing his niece. Anouilh’s interest in idealism and realism often leads to an unusual mixture of fantasy and reality in his plays. His other well-known plays include L’invitation au château (1947; Ring Round the Moon, 1950), L’alouette (1953; The Lark, 1955), Becket, ou, l’honneur de Dieu (1959; Becket, or, The Honour of God, 1961), Cher Antoine (1969; Dear Antoine, 1971), and La culotte (The Trousers, 1978).
Guillaume Apollinaire (1880-1918), French poet, novelist, dramatist, and art and literary critic. He became a leader of the avant-garde in Paris in the early 20th century and is believed to have coined the term *surrealist*.

Wilhelm Albert Wladimir Alexander Apollinaris de Kostrowitzky was born in Rome to a Polish mother and an Italian father. He was educated at the Lycée Saint-Charles in Monaco. After youthful travels in Europe, he settled in Paris, France, in 1902 and quickly became a leader of the literary avant-garde under the pseudonym Guillaume Apollinaire. He was an advocate of symbolism and a friend of symbolist writers (*see* Symbolist Movement). This late 19th-century movement rejected its predecessors’ rules for poetic style and proclaimed the imagination to be the source of all ideas. Apollinaire also championed cubist painters and Cubism, a revolutionary style of the early 20th century that marked the beginning of abstraction in painting. He was wounded in 1916 while fighting in World War I and died in the great influenza epidemic of 1918.

Apollinaire was fascinated by the relationships between the arts, especially between poetry and painting, and his own poems are very pictorial. *Calligrammes: poèmes de la paix et de la guerre* (1918; translated as *Calligrammes*, 1980) contains poems whose printed shapes visually imitate the subjects of the poems. For example, a poem about a fountain is shaped on the page like a fountain.

Apollinaire’s writing reflects also his fascination with the modern world. The Eiffel Tower, airplanes, and cosmopolitanism are among the motifs in his masterpiece collection, *Alcools, poèmes* (1913; translated 1964). In his novel *Le poète assassiné* (1913; *The Poet Assassinated*, 1923), he rejected the realist novel of the 19th century by writing a work of fantasy and satire. His *Méditations esthétiques: les peintres cubistes* (1913; *The Cubist Painters*, 1949), a brilliant work of art criticism, helped the world understand Spanish painter and sculptor Pablo Picasso and other modern artists. His play *Les mamelles de Tirésias* (first performed 1917; published 1918; *The Breasts of Tiresias*, 1966) anticipates both surrealism, a literary and artistic movement that emphasized the role of the subconscious in creativity, and the theater of the absurd, drama that employs illogical situations to show the absurdity and futility of life in an unpredictable world.
Louis Aragon (1897-1982), French novelist, poet, and essayist, who was a leader of the movements in French literature known as dada and surrealism. He was born in Paris on October 3, 1897. During the early years of his career he wrote a number of experimental works, including the collection of poems *Feu de joie* (Bonfire, 1920), which reflected the anarchy of dada and the lyricism and imagination of surrealism. With André Breton and Philippe Soupault, he also founded the surrealist review *Littérature* (1919). Aragon’s long essay *Traité du style* (Treatise on Style, 1928) attacked the established values of French society.

In 1930 Aragon embraced the political doctrines of communism and the related aesthetic doctrine of socialist realism. Thereafter he was one of the most active French Communist propagandists. His incendiary poem *Front rouge* (1931; *The Red Front, 1933*) called for a revolution in France and brought him a suspended prison sentence and his final break with the surrealists. During World War II (1939-1945) he was a leading figure in the French Resistance, and after the war he edited a Communist newspaper.

Aragon’s novels, realistic portrayals of modern France, include *Les Cloches de Bâle* (1934; *The Bells of Basel, 1936*), *Les beaux quartiers* (1936; *Residential Quarter, 1938*), and *Aurélien* (1945; translated 1946). His historical novel of the romantic period, *La Semaine sainte* (1958; *Holy Week, 1961*), was regarded as a masterpiece of its kind. Several volumes of lyric poetry, including *Le Crève-coeur* (1941; *Heartbreak, 1943*) and *Les Yeux d’Elsa* (1942; *The Eyes of Elsa, 1944*), reflect Aragon’s return to the classic themes of love and patriotism after his break with surrealism. A novel, *Henri Matisse*, was published in 1971. He died in Paris on December 24, 1982.
ANTONIN ARTAUD

Antonin Artaud (1896-1948), French poet, dramatist, and actor, whose theories and work influenced the development of experimental theater. He was born and educated in Marseille, France. Artaud went to Paris in 1920 and became a stage and screen performer. In 1927 he cofounded the Théâtre Alfred Jarry, where he produced his own play *The Cenci* (1935), an illustration of his concept of the theatre of cruelty. He used this term to define a new theater that minimized the spoken word and relied instead on a combination of physical movement and gesture, nonspecific sounds, and the elimination of conventional spatial arrangements and sets. Their senses thus violated, spectators would be forced to confront the inner, primal self, stripped of its civilized veneer. Hindered by lifelong physical and mental illness, Artaud was unable to implement his theories. His book *The Theatre and Its Double* (1938; translated 1958) describes theatrical modes that later, however, became identifying traits of the ensemble theater movement, the theater of the absurd, and the environmental and ritual theater. *See also* Drama and Dramatic Arts.
Théodore Agrippa d’Aubigné (1552-1630), French poet and historian. As a Huguenot soldier he supported Henry of Navarre (later Henry IV of France). One of his major prose works—*Histoire universelle* (1616-18)—is a lively, mostly eyewitness history of the Huguenots during the second half of the 16th century. Of his poems, the most important is the lengthy (seven cantos) *Les tragiques* (1616), in which he praised God and Protestantism, deplored war's cruelty, and touched on the sciences, magic, and political and military affairs.
ÉMILE AUGIER

Émile Augier (1820-89), French dramatist, born in Valence. His early work, typified by *The Adventuress* (1848; trans. 1888), contains graceful and witty glorifications of romantic love. With *Gabrielle* (1849), however, he began his mature career, characterized by satirical comedies of manners revealing the corruption of contemporary French domestic life. His masterpiece is *Le gendre de M. Poirier* (Monsieur Poirier's Son-in-Law, 1854), which he wrote with the French playwright Jules Sandeau. Other plays, such as *Les effrontés* (The Shameless, 1861) and *Le fils de Giboyer* (Giboyer's Son, 1862), deal with the social corruption caused by the struggle for wealth.
Marcel Aymé (1902-67), French writer. His early, satirical novels explored farm life, and *The Hollow Field* (1929; trans. 1933) established his reputation. Among his stories for young readers is *The Wonderful Farm* (1934; trans. 1951). He also wrote plays, noted for a combination of bawdiness, fantasy, and logic, of which *Clérambard* (1949; trans. 1952) was most successful.
HONORÉ DE BALZAC

Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850), French author, one of the world’s great novelists. Along with many short stories, plays, and essays, Balzac wrote La comédie humaine (1842-1848; translated as The Human Comedy, 1895-1900), a cycle of about 90 novels describing French society in detail.

Balzac’s first important novel was Les chouans (1829; The Chouans, 1899), based on civil war in the Vendée region of western France during the French Revolution (1789-1799). While it is clearly influenced by romanticism, a literary movement that emphasized individualism, imagination, and emotion, its historical accuracy and factual descriptions became hallmarks of Balzac’s fiction. The relative success of Les chouans was followed by the resounding triumph of two philosophical novels, La peau de chagrin (1831; The Ass’s Skin, 1899) and Louis Lambert (1832; translated 1899). Balzac’s newly acquired fame enabled him to meet a Polish countess, Eveline Hanska. She became the great love of his life, and they finally married shortly before his death.

Balzac reached his full creative maturity between 1833 and 1835, when he wrote and published his masterpieces Le médecin de campagne (1833; The Country Doctor, 1899), Eugénie Grandet (1833; translated 1899), Père Goriot (1834; Old Goriot, 1899), and Le lys dans la vallée (1835; The Lily of the Valley, 1899). During this period he conceived of the idea of linking his novels into a larger whole. In this way he hoped to create a detailed depiction and study of French society from the Revolution to the ascendance of Louis Philippe to the throne in 1830. After 1834 Balzac wrote his novels with a view to inclusion in La comédie humaine, and a 17-volume edition under this title first appeared between 1842 and 1848.

Balzac’s introduction to this edition reflects the impact of the groundbreaking theories of French scientists Jean-Baptiste Lamarck and Étienne Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire about the development of animal species. Balzac’s scientific intention is evident in his use of the word studies to describe the three main groups of his works: “Analytic Studies,” “Philosophical Studies,” and “Studies of Manners.” Balzac extended the ideas of Lamarck and Saint-Hilaire to human character and behavior, which he believed were determined by environment and heredity. His goal in La comédie humaine was to depict the human species in France with its many character types and associated behaviors from 1789 to 1830. This undertaking implied a significant degree of historical realism, and, in fact, Balzac is frequently cited as a forerunner of literary realism. Others see in Balzac characteristics of literary romanticism. A brief consideration of Balzac’s novel Père Goriot confirms the correctness of both views.

In the novel Eugène Rastignac arrives in Paris from the provinces in 1819 to study law. He lives in a cheap boarding house, but through the influence of his aristocratic aunt frequents high society. Another resident of the boarding house is old Goriot, a retired merchant who lives humbly so that his two daughters may marry into nobility and live luxuriously. Rastignac meets these daughters in high society and through them becomes friends with Goriot. Vautrin, a mysterious and charismatic boarder, later found to be a notorious criminal, vies with Goriot as a father figure to Rastignac. Vautrin also tries to persuade Rastignac to marry yet another boarder, Mademoiselle Taillefer, who will inherit her father’s entire fortune once Vautrin has murdered her brother. Eventually, the two selfish daughters bankrupt Goriot, who then dies of anguish; Vautrin kills Mademoiselle Taillefer’s brother (although Rastignac has not entered into his conspiracy) and is arrested; and Rastignac alone accompanies old Goriot’s coffin to a cemetery on the hill above Paris, where he dramatically shouts his defiance to the city below and to the Parisian world he had wanted to conquer.
JULES AMÉDÉE BARBEY D’AUREVILLY

Jules Amédée Barbey d’Aurevilly (1808-89), French novelist and critic. He was of an aristocratic family and was a staunch Roman Catholic and a Royalist. His novels, which are tragic stories of violent emotions, deal with everyday character types on the Cotentin Peninsula in his native Normandy (Normandie). Among his fictional works are Une vieille maîtresse (An Old Mistress, 1851), Bewitched (1854; trans. 1928), Un prêtré marié (A Married Priest, 1865), The Diaboliques (1874; trans. 1925), and What Never Dies (1884; trans. 1909). Most of the critical work produced by Barbey d'Aurevilly is in Les oeuvres et les hommes (The Works and the Men, 26 volumes, 1860-1909).
HENRI BARBUSSE

Henri Barbusse (1873-1935), French novelist concerned with change in human society. He acquired international fame with *Under Fire* (1916; trans. 1917), the story of a squad of soldiers in the trenches during World War I who philosophize on the future of humanity. Despite its pacifist tendencies, *Under Fire* was awarded the Prix Goncourt. After the publication of *Light* (1919; trans. 1919), Barbusse organized the Clarté movement, which sought to interest the writers of the world in social and political progress. Among Barbusse's other works are the novels *The Inferno* (1908; trans. 1918) and *Chains* (1925; trans. 1925).
Maurice Barrès (1862-1923), French novelist and politician, born in Charmes. He served in the Chamber of Deputies from 1889 on. His earlier writing is highly introspective, but in his later work he was concerned chiefly with expounding his views on making France a strong nation. He profoundly influenced such French writers as André Gide and André Malraux. Among his numerous novels are the trilogies *Le culte du moi* (The Cult of the Self, 1888-91), *Le roman de l'energie nationale* (The Novel of National Vigor, 1897-1902), and *The Sacred Hill* (1913; trans. 1929).
ROLAND BARTHES

Roland Barthes (1915-1980), French social and literary critic and theorist. He is associated with structuralism, the study of how cultures organize or signify meaning in their written texts; with semiotics, the study of symbols, representation, and signs pioneered by Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure in the early 20th century; and also with New Criticism, a literary movement in Europe and the United States, prominent after World War II (1939-1945), which emphasized analyzing the written text itself, excluding biographical, cultural, or social sources.

Barthes was born in Cherbourg, France. His father, a sub-lieutenant in the French Navy, was killed in 1916. The family lived in Bayonne, France, until 1924, when they left for Paris, where Barthes completed his secondary studies. He received his baccalaureate in 1934. He then attended the Sorbonne, the University of Paris, receiving degrees in classical studies (1939) and in grammar and philology (1943). From 1934 until 1947, his health was affected by tuberculosis and he spent time in various sanatoriums, completing his studies by reading the works of German political philosopher Karl Marx and French historian Jules Michelet.

Henri Bataille (1872-1922), French dramatist and poet. From about 1900 to the outbreak of World War I he was regarded as the foremost French dramatist. Among his plays, which are psychological studies of passion as a motivating force in human behavior, are *L'enchantement* (Enchantment, 1900), *Maman Colibri* (Mother Colibri, 1904), and *La femme nue* (The Naked Woman, 1908). His verse includes the book of war poems *La divine tragédie* (1917).
CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867), French poet and critic, a leader of the symbolist school.

Charles Pierre Baudelaire was born in Paris on April 9, 1821, and educated at the Collège Louis-le-Grand. His boyhood and adolescence were unhappy, for his father died when he was six years old, and he disliked his stepfather and resented his mother for having married him. Opposed to his choice of a literary career and hoping to distract him, his parents sent him on a sea voyage to India. He left the ship, however, and returned to Paris more determined than ever to devote himself to writing. In an effort to solve his financial problems he began to write critical journalism. His first important publications were two booklets of art criticism, Les salons (1845-1846), in which he discussed with acute insight the paintings and drawings of such contemporary French artists as Honoré Daumier, Édouard Manet, and Eugène Delacroix. He was first acclaimed as a skilled literary craftsman in 1848, when his translations from English of the work of the American writer Edgar Allan Poe began to appear. Encouraged by that success and inspired by his enthusiasm for Poe, with whom he felt a strong affinity, Baudelaire continued to translate Poe’s stories until 1857.

Baudelaire’s major work, the volume of poetry Les fleurs du mal (The Flowers of Evil), appeared in 1857. Immediately after its publication the French government prosecuted Baudelaire on a charge of offending public morals. Although the elite of French literature came to his support, he was fined, and six poems in the volume were suppressed in subsequent editions. His next work, Les paradis artificiels (1860), is a self-analytical book, based on his own experiences and inspired by Confessions of an English Opium-Eater by Thomas De Quincey. From 1864 to 1866 Baudelaire lived in Belgium. Stricken by paralysis, he was brought back to Paris, where he died on August 31, 1867.

His originality sets him apart from the dominant literary schools of his time. His poetry has been variously regarded as the last brilliant summation of romanticism, the precursor of symbolism, and the first expression of modern techniques. He viewed an individual as a divided being, drawn equally toward God and Satan; his poems deal with the timeless conflict between the ideal and the sensual. They depict all human experiences, from the most sublime to the most sordid.

Among his other writings are Petits poèmes en prose, a collection of prose poems, and his intimate journals, Fusées (Fireworks) and Mon cœur mis à nu (My Heart Laid Bare). All were posthumously published in 1869.
PIERRE DE BEAUMARCHAIS

Pierre de Beaumarchais (1732-99), French playwright. Pierre Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais was born in Paris. The son of a watchmaker, he became watchmaker to Louis XV and a court favorite. Young Caron married the widow of a court official in 1756 and took the name Beaumarchais. He bought the office of secretary to the king, which made him a nobleman. Subsequently he was employed in confidential missions by Louis XV and Louis XVI. During the American Revolution, Beaumarchais sold arms to the American colonies.

His literary fame rests on his two comedies, Le barbier de Seville (1775) and Le mariage de Figaro (1784). In these plays Beaumarchais satirized the French ruling class, reflecting the growing dissatisfaction with the nobility in the years preceding the French Revolution. The plays were made into popular operas, Le nozze di Figaro (The Marriage of Figaro, 1786) by Mozart and Il Barbiere di Siviglia (The Barber of Seville, 1816) by the Italian composer Gioacchino Rossini.
SIMONE DE BEAUVIOR

Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986), French novelist, playwright, autobiographer, and essayist. One of the most important writers of her generation, she became known as an influential feminist theorist and a key exponent of existentialism, a movement in philosophy that emphasizes individual freedom and choice. Her autobiographical works are essential for an understanding of her era because they illustrate, with actual circumstances and events, the fundamental tenets of existential philosophy.

Beauvoir was born in Paris and spent her life there. She studied at the École Normale Supérieure and the Sorbonne, graduating in 1929 with a degree in philosophy. While at the Sorbonne she met French philosopher and writer Jean-Paul Sartre, with whom she shared intellectual interests. The two became lifelong companions. Beauvoir taught high school until 1943, when she published her first novel, L’invitée (translated as She Came to Stay, 1949).

Beauvoir and Sartre remained in Paris during World War II (1939-1945), writing about and discussing philosophy with friends. They also were active in the Resistance movement against the German occupation of France. During these years they refined the principles of existentialism: one exists first, and through one’s acts, one becomes something. They reasoned that in a godless world, one has absolute freedom and must exercise that freedom in order to live authentically.

After 1947 Beauvoir became a committed writer and devoted herself to analyzing the philosophical, social, cultural, and political problems of her era. She collaborated with Sartre on the political and literary journal Les temps modernes (Modern Times) and traveled with him throughout Europe and to the United States.
Henry François Becque (1837-1899), French playwright, born in Paris. His first play, *L'enfant prodigue* (The Prodigal Son, 1867), a light comedy, was well received. His masterpieces, however, are *The Vultures* (1882; translated 1913, also known as *The Crows*) and *The Woman of Paris* (1885; translated 1913), both naturalistic portrayals of French bourgeois life. Becque was one of the first French playwrights to break with classical formalism and the emotionalism of romantic drama. His dialogue, with its revolutionary use of slang and colloquialisms, contributed as much as the themes to the realistic effect of his plays.
JOACHIM DU BELLAY

Joachim du Bellay (1522?-1560), French poet, born near Liré. As a student in Paris he met the poet Pierre de Ronsard, who introduced him to the Pléiade, a Renaissance group restyling French literature on Greek and Roman models. In 1549 du Bellay wrote the Pléiade manifesto *La défense et illustration de la langue française* (The Defense and Illustration of the French Language) and *L'Olive*, 115 sonnets styled after the Italian poet Petrarch. From 1553 to 1557 du Bellay was in Rome, and in 1558 he wrote two more sonnet collections, *Les regrets* and *Les antiquités de Rome*. The latter collection was translated in 1591 into *The Ruins of Rome*, by the English poet Edmund Spenser.
PIERRE JEAN DE BÉRANGER

Pierre Jean de Béranger (1780-1857), French poet and writer of political songs, born in Paris. In 1804 one of his revolutionary songs brought him to the notice of Lucien Bonaparte, brother of Napoleon and a strong Republican sympathizer. Bonaparte supported the poet for several years until Béranger obtained a clerkship. With the publication of the first collection of his songs in 1815, he was recognized as the poet of the Republican faction in France. The chanson, in which the 18th-century writers praised love and wine, became in his hands a powerful political weapon. He was imprisoned for his sentiments.
GEORGES BERNANOS

JACQUES HENRI BERNARDIN DE SAINT-PIERRE

Jacques Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre (1737-1814), French writer, whose work foreshadowed the romantic movement. Born in Le Havre, he held a government post in Île de France (now Mauritius) from 1768 to 1771. On his return to France he became a disciple of the philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau. Saint-Pierre's works reveal imagination, sentiment, and love of nature, as opposed to the emphasis on wit and external form that characterized most of the French literature of his time. He wrote *A Voyage to the Island of Mauritius* (1773; trans. 1775) and *Paul and Virginia* (1788; trans. 1789), which is generally regarded as his masterpiece.
NICOLAS BOILEAU-DESPRÉAUX

Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux (1636-1711), French poet and critic, born in Paris, and educated at the Sorbonne. About 1670 he was granted an annual pension by Louis XIV, who made Boileau his historiographer in 1677. In 1684 Boileau was elected to the French Academy.

Boileau had great influence on French literature, as both poet and critic. He established the principles of French classical literature and was called the lawgiver of Parnassus. His works include 12 Satires (begun in 1660), in rhymed couplets, which contain wittily barbed criticism of contemporary writers; volumes of Épîtres (Epistles, begun in 1669); The Art of Poetry (1674; trans. 1683), in imitation of Horace's Ars Poetica, in which Boileau analyzed the various kinds of poetry and laid down the principles governing their composition; and Le lutrin (The Lectern, 1674), a mock-heroic poem that was later used by the English poet Alexander Pope as a model for Rape of the Lock.
ANDRÉ BRETON

André Breton (1896-1966), French poet and critic, a leader of the surrealist movement. He was born in Tinchebray, Orne Department, studied medicine, and worked in psychiatric wards in World War I (1914-1918). Later, as a writer in Paris, he was a pioneer in the antirationalist movements in art and literature known as dada and surrealism, which developed out of the general disillusionment with tradition that marked the post-World War I era. Breton’s study of the works of Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, and his experiments with automatic writing influenced his formulation of surrealist theory. Breton expressed his views in Litérature, the leading surrealist periodical, which he helped found and edited for many years, and in three surrealist manifestos (1924, 1930, 1942). His best creative work is considered the novel Nadja (1928), based partly on his own experiences. His poetry, in Selected Poems (1948; trans. 1969), reflects the influence of French poets Paul Valéry and Arthur Rimbaud.
EUGÈNE BRIEUX

Eugène Brieux (1858-1932), French dramatist, born in Paris. His first success was *Artists' Families* (1890; trans. 1918). He became one of the most prolific French dramatists, dealing always with social abuses. Among his plays are *The Red Robe* (1900; trans. 1915), about injustice under the law; *Damaged Goods* (1902; produced in New York City in 1913); *L'Avocat* (The Lawyer, 1922); and *La famille Lavolette* (The Lavolette Family, 1926).
ANTHELME BRILLAT-SAVARIN

Anthelme Brillat-Savarin (1755-1826), French politician and writer on gastronomy, born in Belley. He held office under the Directory and the Consulate. Brillat-Savarin wrote works on political economy, law, and dueling, but his acknowledged masterpiece is *Physiologie du Goût* (1825, *A Handbook of Gastronomy*, 1883), which is also known in English as *The Physiology of Taste*. This treatise on the art of cookery and the pleasure of eating combines basic observations with delightful anecdotes.
FERDINAND BRUNETIÈRE

Ferdinand Brunetière (1849-1906), French literary critic, born in Toulon. He was the editor of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, a member of the French Academy, and professor of French at the École Normale Supérieure in Paris. Brunetière is best known for his theory of the evolution of literary genres, which he compared to evolution in nature, and for his attacks on naturalism in literature. He was particularly opposed to literary trends in France represented by such naturalist writers as Émile Zola.
MICHEL MARIE FRANÇOIS BUTOR

Michel Marie François Butor, born in 1926, French writer, and one of the *nouveau roman* novelists who made radical changes in the traditional form. His works include *Passage de Milan* (*Passage from Milan, 1954*), *Dégrès* (*Degrees, 1960*), *L'Emploi du temps* (*Passing Time, 1963*), and *Improvisations sur Michel Butorm* (*Improvisations on Michel Butor, 1993*). *Mobile* (1962) is a volume of essays.

He has published longer essays on French writers Charles Baudelaire (1961) and Michel Eyquem de Montaigne (1968), as well as accounts of his travels in America, southern Europe, and Egypt. Butor has also written poetry, and an opera with Belgian composer Henri Pousseur, *Votre Faust* (1962).
ÉTIENNE CABET

Étienne Cabet (1788-1856), French social reformer and writer; his philosophy attracted many followers, who came to be known as Icarians. Cabet was born in Dijon, and educated as a lawyer. Following active participation in the July Revolution of 1830, he was elected to the Chamber of Deputies. In 1834 Cabet was exiled for his attacks on the government. He went to London, where, influenced by the works of the 16th-century English humanist Sir Thomas More and the social reform movement of the British Socialist Robert Owen, he adopted a Communist philosophy. In 1839 Cabet was permitted to return to France, where he published *Histoire populaire de la révolution française de 1789 à 1830* (Popular History of the French Revolution from 1789 to 1830, 4 volumes, 1839-40) and the novel *Voyage en Icarie* (Voyage to Icaria, 1840). The latter book, which enjoyed great popularity, depicted an ideal society in which social and economic life is supervised by an elected government.

In 1849 Cabet and 280 of his adherents immigrated to the United States and founded an Icarian community at Nauvoo, Illinois. The population never numbered more than 1800, and only some of Cabet's ideas were put into effect. In 1856, because of internal dissent, he left with 180 disciples to found a new colony; he died the same year in St. Louis, Missouri, but the movement he founded lasted in the U.S. until 1895.
ALBERT CAMUS

Albert Camus (1913-1960), French-Algerian novelist, essayist, dramatist, and journalist, a Nobel laureate whose concepts of the absurd and of human revolt address and suggest solutions to the problem of meaninglessness in modern human life.

Camus’s early writings, collected in Le premier Camus (1973; Youthful Writings, 1961), announce the themes of his later works. Noces (1939; Nuptials, 1967) and L’envers et l’endroit (1937; The Wrong Side and the Right Side, 1968) are lyrical and narrative essays about the beauty of Algeria and the joys, sorrows, and intellectual preoccupations of the young Camus. The novel L’étranger (1942; The Stranger, 1946), the essay Le mythe de Sisyphe (1942; The Myth of Sisyphus, 1955), and the plays Caligula (1944; translated 1958) and Le malentendu (1944; The Misunderstanding, 1958) make up what Camus called “the cycle of the absurd.” In these works, Camus illustrated his sense of the absurdity of human existence: Human beings are not absurd, and the world is not absurd, but for humans to be in the world is absurd. The protagonist of L’étranger, who was awaiting death after being condemned, and the Greek mythical hero Sisyphus, who was condemned to roll a heavy rock up a hill forever, both know a uniquely human kind of happiness because they accept the limits of human reason and life. The Roman Emperor Caligula, in Camus’s play of that name, exceeds those limits, tries to be a god, embodies the absurd, and must be destroyed by the revolt of his subjects.

“The cycle of revolt” consists of the novel La peste (1947; The Plague, 1948), the philosophical essay L’homme révolté (1951; The Rebel, 1951), and the plays L’état de siege (1948; State of Siege, 1958) and Les justes (1950; The Just Assassins, 1950). The concept of revolt in these works extends the philosophy of the absurd expressed in the earlier works. Human beings, recognizing the limitations implied in being human, cannot create a world that ignores these limitations and the absurdity of existence. But they can revolt. The kind of revolution Camus envisions is a collective effort of human beings to build a society consistent with the values of moderation and social justice. In La peste, the protagonist, Dr. Rieux, and his team of plague fighters in Oran, Algeria, revolt against the epidemic, just as the Resistance fighters in Paris revolted against the Nazi occupation. L’homme révolté recounts the history of revolution from ancient to modern times, demonstrating that revolt will succeed only when the means of the revolution reflect and justify the ends. The Russian revolutionaries of Les justes refuse to bomb their political enemy’s carriage because his children are with him; this action would be unacceptable under their new regime, and they therefore refuse to justify it as a revolutionary act.

Although no single idea unifies Camus’s final works in the way that the notions of the absurd and the revolt do in the earlier cycles, judgment is a dominant theme of the essays in L’été (1954; Summer, 1968), the stories of L’exil et le royaume (1957; Exile and the Kingdom, 1958), and the novel La chute (1956; The Fall, 1957). These works remind the reader that in a world without God or absolute values no one is entirely innocent or guilty, and they assert that moderation is therefore appropriate in our judgments of one another.

Besides these essential works, Camus published selections from his journalistic writings in the collection Actuelles (3 volumes, 1950, 1953, and 1958) and in various magazines, newspapers, and journals. Some of these are available in English in Resistance, Rebellion and Death (1960) and Lyrical and Critical Essays (1968). A number of Camus’s works, both finished and unfinished, have been published since his death. His Carnets (2 volumes, 1962, 1964; Notebooks, 1967, 1970) have appeared, as have his earliest effort at novel writing, La mort heureuse (1971; A Happy Death, 1972), and the partially completed autobiographical novel Le premier homme. The manuscript of this novel was found on the highway at the scene of his death.
MARIE ANTOINE CARÊME

Marie Antoine Carême (1784-1833), French master chef and writer on cookery. He rose from tavern apprentice to pastry cook in an elegant patisserie in Paris. About 1805 he became cook to the French statesman Talleyrand. Subsequently Carême was head chef in the households of the prince regent, later George IV of England; Emperor Alexander I of Russia; and the French banker, Baron James de Rothschild. It is believed that Carême's great skill in making the elaborate pastry constructions used as centerpieces at great banquets was due to the study and practice of architectural drawing. Among his writings—on food and its service as well as on pastry making—is *L'art de la cuisine française au XIXᵉ siècle* (The Art of French Cuisine in the 19th Century, 1833-34). This five-volume work, completed by an associate after Carême's death, set the standards for French classic cuisine.
Marcel Carné (1906-1996), French motion-picture director, who developed the film style known as poetic realism. Motion pictures in this genre strive to portray everyday life in a lyrical visual style. He is also remembered for his many collaborations with French poet and screenwriter Jacques Prévert. Born in Paris, Carné worked as a journalist until he became an assistant to French film directors René Clair and Jacques Feyder.

Carné’s journalistic training was reflected in the style of his early films, as he set out to portray the lives of ordinary people in their everyday environment. He was also influenced by the style of Austrian theatrical director Max Reinhardt, who put an emphasis on psychological subtleties rather than exaggerated dramas.

Despite their realism, Carné’s films capture a distinctive beauty within their grim settings. His artistry is most evident in his early films with scripts by Prévert, which include Drôle de drame (Bizarre, Bizarre, 1937), a farcical murder mystery; Quai des brumes (Port of Shadows, 1938), a romantic crime thriller set in a waterfront bar; Les visiteurs du soir (The Devil’s Envoys, 1942), a medieval, dreamlike romance; and Les enfants du paradis (Children of Paradise, 1945), the film that is generally regarded as Carné’s masterpiece. Set in a popular Parisian theater district in the early 19th century, Children of Paradise is a self-conscious reflection of performance in ordinary life, as a drama depicted on stage in the film mirrors that of the characters’ lives. Although Carné continued to direct films into the 1980s, his later works did not achieve the impact of his films of the 1930s and 1940s.
PAUL CELAN


Celan was born Paul Antschel, a member of a German-speaking Jewish family, in Chernivtsi, Romania, (now Ukraine). In 1942 Celan's parents were deported and both eventually died in a Romanian concentration camp. Celan was interned for two years in a labor camp. After his release in 1944 he moved to Bucharest and worked as a translator and reader for a publishing company.

Celan left Romania in 1947 and moved to Vienna, Austria, where he published his first volume of poetry, *Der Sand aus den Urnen* (The Sand from the Urns, 1948). In 1948 he emigrated to France and subsequently became a French citizen.

Celan's own poems, which are influenced by surrealism and often use biblical imagery, express his grief about the Holocaust and his sense of the absurdity of modern life and the difficulty of communication. In addition to *Mohn und Gedächtnis*, his volumes of poetry include *Lichtzwang*, (Lightforu, 1970), *Atemwende* (1967; *Breathturn*, 1995), and a collection of translations into English, *Speech-Grille and Selected Poems* (1971). Celan drowned himself in the Seine River in Paris.
LOUIS FERDINAND CÉLINE

Louis Ferdinand Céline, pseudonym of LOUIS FERDINAND DESTOUCHES (1894-1961), French novelist and physician. Born in Courbevoie, a Paris suburb, he studied medicine and from 1924 to 1928 traveled widely as a physician and medical researcher. Back in France, he joined the staff of a state clinic in Clichy, working mainly as a physician to the poor. His nihilistic first novel, *Journey to the End of the Night* (1932; trans. 1934) was followed by a similar work, *Death on the Installment Plan* (1936; trans. 1938), and *Guignol's Band* (1944; trans. 1954). Celine's savagely misanthropic outlook, combined with his anti-Semitic writings of the late 1930s, caused him to be accused of collaboration with the Nazis, although he was a pacifist. As a result, Celine fled to Germany in 1944. Finally exonerated by the French government, he returned to France in 1950. His experiences in exile are recorded fictionally in *Castle to Castle* (1957; trans. 1968) and two later works. His writings continue to be valued for their stylistic innovations and absurdist outlook.
BLAISE CENDRARS

Blaise Cendrars (1887-1961), French writer, best known for his innovative use of literary forms and his fictional and literary inventions, such as syncopated rhythm. Born Frederic Sauser in La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland, he obtained French citizenship after World War I (1914-1918). Early on he abandoned his studies and traveled through Europe, Russia, and Asia, working at various jobs. His first works of poetry were Les Pâques (Easter, 1912), later published as Les Pâques à New York (Easter in New York, 1926); and the celebrated La Prose du Transsibérien et la petite Jehanne de France (The Prose of the Transsiberian and of the Little Jehanne of France, 1913). These works are part travel journal and part reflection. Cendrars created a style based on a succession of photographic impressions, themes, and feelings in which nostalgia and disillusion are mixed with a limitless vision of the world.

In 1914 Cendrars joined the French foreign legion. He was wounded by a shell in 1915 and lost his right hand. Between 1915 and 1926 he continued publishing poetry, including Panama (1918), a long poem, and Poèmes Élastiques (1919), a volume of short poems. He also wrote essays on painters, and a collection of traditional African tales entitled Anthologie negre (1921; The African Saga, 1927).

In 1925 Cendrars published his first novel, L'Or (Sutter's Gold, 1926; Gold, 1982). Moravagine (1926; Moravagine, 1968), is a surrealistic novel. Cendrars's novels combine a number of writing styles including reportage, science fiction, autobiography, and mystery. His most important works written in this manner are L'Homme foudroyé (1945; The Astonished Man, 1970), La Main coupée (1946; Lice, 1973), Bourlinguer (1948; Planus, 1972) and Le Lotissement du ciel (1949; Sky: Memoirs, 1992).

Cendrars greatly influenced American writer John Dos Passos, who was his translator, American writer Henry Miller, who is said to have brought Cendrars the international recognition that eluded him for most of his life, and French poet and painter Henri Michaux. Cendrars was made a Commander of the Legion d'honneur and was awarded the Médaille Militaire. He received the Grand Prix Littéraire de la Ville de Paris in 1961, the year of his death.
CLAUDE CHABROL

Claude Chabrol, born in 1930, French motion-picture director and screenwriter, a leader of the nouvelle vague (new wave) movement of French cinema in the late 1950s. Chabrol is best known for his films that explore dominance, dependency, and shifts of power within close personal relationships.

Born in Paris, Chabrol worked as a critic for the influential film journal Cahier du cinéma (Film Notebooks) from 1953 to 1957. In 1957 Chabrol and French film critic Eric Rohmer published Hitchcock, an analytical study of the psychological thrillers of British-born American director Alfred Hitchcock. As a critic, Chabrol helped to develop the so-called auteur (author) theory of filmmaking with other French critics and future filmmakers, including Rohmer, François Truffaut, Jean-Luc Godard, and Jacques Rivette. Together they rejected the refined, impersonal style of commercial films then prevalent in France and called for a new cinema movement to exist independent of the major motion-picture studios in order to produce films which would express a more personal artistic vision of the director.

In 1958 Chabrol wrote, produced and directed Le beau serge (Bitter Reunion), generally recognized as the first film of the nouvelle vague and the first to reflect the auteur theory. When Chabrol tried to switch to films with greater popular appeal, such as with Le tigre aime la chair fraîche (The Tiger Likes Fresh Blood, 1964) and subsequent films throughout the mid-1960s, he failed both commercially and critically. In the late 1960s he regained his stature as one of France's most important filmmakers with Les biches (The Does, also released as The Girlfriends, 1968) and Le boucher (The Butcher, 1969), both elegant psychological thrillers. Chabrol's later films, including Une affaire des femmes (Story of Women, 1988), Madame Bovary (1991), and L'enfer (Hell, 1994), consistently met with widespread critical acclaim.
Jean Chapelain (1595-1674), French man of letters and poet, born in Paris. He was secretary to Louis XIV and in 1635 became one of the organizers of the French Academy. As a leading member of the academy, he established a code of laws to govern the group and organized the academy's project of compiling a dictionary and grammar of the French language. He spent 20 years writing *La Pucelle*, an epic poem about Joan of Arc. Twelve cantos were published in 1656 and the remaining 12 by 1882.
RENÉ CHAR

René Char (1907-1988), French poet and member of the French Resistance movement during World War II (1939-1945). As a literary descendant of French poet Arthur Rimbaud and the surrealists, who drew upon their subconscious for inspiration, Char believed poetry could provide a nonrational understanding of a constantly shifting and mysterious world.

Char was born in L’Isle-sur-la-Sorgue, a village in the region of Provence in southern France. He awakened to a love for poetry upon reading the poems of French surrealist writer Paul Éluard. In the early 1930s, by then a poet himself, Char befriended French surrealist poets André Breton and Louis Aragon, and he collaborated with them in an experiment in collective writing. Char’s first independently written collection of surrealist poems, *Le marteau sans maître* (1934; translated as *The Hammer without a Master*, 1976), was later put to music by French composer Pierre Boulez.

When World War II broke out, Char became a leader of the underground movement against the Germans and participated in numerous acts of sabotage and secret parachute drops behind enemy lines. He joined General Charles de Gaulle in 1944 in Algeria and participated in the liberation of Paris from German occupation in August of that year. From the end of the war until his death in 1988, Char devoted himself to poetry. He spent much of his life in his native Provence, writing and conferring with his friends, who included French writer Albert Camus and German philosopher Martin Heidegger.

Char wrote tributes to those who most influenced his concept of poetry, including Rimbaud, as well as poems inspired by surrealism. Two collections published after the war reflect his experience in the Resistance: *Seuls demeurent (Alone Remain*, 1945) and *Feuilles d’Hypnos* (1946; *Leaves of Hypnos*, 1973). Many of Char’s poems, including “Congé au vent” (Notice to the Wind) and “Biens égaux” (Equal Blessings), also capture the rustic atmosphere of his beloved Provence. Others, less descriptive, evoke the secret and elusive beauty of existence through concise, dense phrases. Char wrote and wanted to be read with passionate intuition. He is considered one of the most important French poets of the post-World War II era.
Alain Chartier (1385?-1433?), French poet and diplomat, born in Bayeux, and educated at the University of Paris. He served the Dauphin, later Charles VII, as secretary. After the crushing defeat in 1415 of France by England in the Battle of Agincourt, Chartier wrote *Le quadrilogue invectif* (1422), a passionate appeal to all French classes to unite in support of their king. One of his most famous love poems, *La belle dame sans merci* (1424), set a literary fashion and suggested the poem of the same title by the English poet John Keats. Chartier is primarily remembered for his allegorical love poems, especially *Lai de plaisance* (Poem of Pleasure, 1413), and *Bréviaire des nobles* (Breviary of the Nobility), which was so greatly admired in his time that court pages were required to memorize parts of it.
François René de Chateaubriand (1768-1848), French writer and statesman, a pioneer of the romantic movement, most famous for his brilliant autobiography.

François Auguste René, Vicomte de Chateaubriand, was born on September 4, 1768, in Saint-Malo, Brittany. He entered the French army in 1786, and was in Paris during the early years of the French Revolution. Refusing to join the Royalists or the radical revolutionaries, he went to the United States in 1791 supposedly to search for the Northwest Passage. He traveled, however, only on the eastern coast. Chateaubriand returned to France in 1792 and fought with the Royalist army. Several months later, wounded and ill, he escaped to England (1793).

Returning to France (1800) under a false name, Chateaubriand found favor with Napoleon, who gave him a diplomatic post. He resigned and turned against Napoleon in 1804 upon the execution of Louis, duc d'Enghien. After the Bourbon restoration he was made a peer of France in 1815, ambassador to Britain in 1822, and minister of foreign affairs in 1823-24. He died on July 4, 1848, in Paris.

Chateaubriand was one of the most important French writers of the first half of the 19th century. He introduced new and exotic types of character and background, principally the Native Americans and scenery of North America, and emphasized introspection, generally of a pessimistic nature, as exemplified in his novels Atala (1801) and René (1802). These new literary elements mark him as a forerunner of the romantic period. In addition, in The Genius of Christianity (1802; trans. 1856) he asserted that Christianity was morally and aesthetically superior to other religions. This assertion profoundly influenced the religious and literary life of his time. Among his other important works are other defenses of Christianity, literary accounts of his travels in America, and his posthumously published autobiography, Memoires d'outre-tombe (Memoirs from Beyond the Tomb, 1849-50).
ANDRÉ MARIE DE CHÉNIER

André Marie de Chénier (1762-1794), French poet, regarded as one of the most important French classical poets and as a forerunner of the French romantic poets. Born in Constantinople (now İstanbul, Turkey), where his father was the French consul general, Chénier grew up in France. He was educated at the Collège de Navarre. He entered the army after graduating but soon resigned from the military to travel and study. In the late 1780s Chénier worked in London as the secretary to the French ambassador to England. He returned to France after the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789. Although Chénier supported the objectives of the revolution, he was alarmed by the excesses of the Reign of Terror, a particularly violent and chaotic period lasting from April 1793 to July 1794. His writings, which expressed his displeasure, antagonized revolutionary leader Maximilien de Robespierre, and Chénier was arrested in 1794. Later that year he was put to death by the guillotine, shortly before the Reign of Terror ended.

Although Chénier admired classical poetry, his works were also seen by many romantic poets as precursors to their own verse (see Classic, Classical, Classicism; Romanticism). He is known for his use of *enjambment*, the literary technique used to carry the sense of a poetic statement from the end of one line of verse to the beginning of the next. Chénier's best-known poems are “Le serment de jeu de paume” (The Oath of the Tennis Court, 1791) and “La jeune captive” (The Young Captive, 1795). The former was one of the two poems published during his lifetime; the latter was smuggled out of prison and published posthumously by his friends. In prison Chénier also wrote *iambes* (Iambics, 1794), a bitter denunciation of the Reign of Terror. The first complete edition of his works was published in 1819. An opera, *Andrea Chénier* (1896), based on his life, was written by Italian composer Umberto Giordano.
CHRÉTIEN DE TROYES

Chrétien de Troyes (flourished late 12th century), French poet, born probably in Troyes. Chrétien was one of the medieval trouvères, a group of lyric poets of northern France who were influenced by the romantic verse of the poets of southern France known as troubadours. He was one of the first poets to write metrical romances in rhymed couplets, dealing with the semilegendary English king Arthur and his knights. These poems, imbued with the ideals of chivalry and courtly love, include *Percival, or the Story of the Grail*, the earliest literary version of the legend of the Holy Grail; *Erec and Enide*; and *Lancelot, or the Knight of the Cart*, in which Arthur's favorite knight and rival in love is introduced. Chrétien's sources for these works are the subject of scholarly dispute, but he was widely imitated by poets in various European countries and is considered the originator of the medieval romance.

Other works by Chrétien de Troyes include imitations of the Latin poet Ovid and *Guillaume d'Angleterre* (William of England), based on the legend of St. Eustace. Dante praised Chrétien for his contribution to French narrative verse.
RENÉ CLAIR

René Clair, professional name of RENÉ CHOMETTE (1898-1981), French film director, producer, and writer, born in Paris. He began his career as a journalist, then directed a number of silent films. The most famous of these was Un chapeau de paille d'Italie (The Italian Straw Hat, 1927). Several of his early sound films, written as well as directed by Clair, are regarded as classics. These films, including Sous les toits de Paris (Under Paris Rooftops, 1929), Le million (1931), and À nous la liberté (For Us, Liberty, 1931), led film critics to consider Clair the first director to explore fully the potentials of film sound. In England he directed his first English-language film, The Ghost Goes West (1935). During World War II Clair lived in the United States and made such highly praised films as I Married a Witch (1942), It Happened Tomorrow (1943), and And Then There Were None (1945). His postwar films, made after his return to France, include Beauty and the Devil (1949), Beauties of the Night (1952), Gates of Paris (1957), and Les fêtes galantes (Courtly Affairs, 1965). These films combine a new mellow thoughtfulness with the grace and charm of Clair's earlier work. He wrote Reflections on the Cinema (1953). In 1960 Clair was elected to the French Academy.
Paul Louis Charles Marie Claudel (1868-1955), French writer and diplomat, born in Villeneuve-sur-Fère. During most of his life he served in the French diplomatic corps, but he is best known as one of the most distinguished and prolific 20th-century French men of letters.

Claudel's volumes of poetry, plays, religious prose, travel writing, and literary criticism express his ardent faith in Roman Catholicism. He frequently used themes relating to spiritual conflict and the salvation of the soul. His poetry, possibly the greatest of which is found in his *Five Great Odes* (1910; trans. 1967), was influenced by that of the symbolists; their influence can be seen also in the poetic drama *La ville* (The City, 1890) (*see Symbolist Movement*). Among his other plays are *L'annonce faite à Marie* (The Tidings Brought to Mary, 1910) and *Le soulier de satin* (The Satin Slipper, 1928-29). Claudel also wrote the dramatic oratorio *Le livre de Christophe Colomb* (The Book of Christopher Columbus, 1930), set to music by the French composer Darius Milhaud. Claudel was elected to the French Academy in 1946. His correspondence (1899-1926) with the French writer André Gide was published in 1952.
Jean Cocteau (1889-1963), French poet, novelist, dramatist, designer, and filmmaker, whose versatility, unconventionality, and enormous output brought him international acclaim. As a leading member of the surrealist movement, which emphasized the role of the unconscious in artistic creation (see Surrealism), he had great influence on the work of others.

Cocteau was born at Maisons-Laffitte, near Paris. Overindulged by his mother (his father committed suicide in 1898), he was a poor student, and his lack of motivation overshadowed his intellect. He eventually dropped out of school. At the age of 16, Cocteau met actor Edouard de Max, who launched him as a poet. At de Max's invitation, a fashionable audience attended a reading of Cocteau's poems in April 1908. His first volume of verse, *La lampe d'Aladin*, appeared in 1909 and quickly established him as an important writer.

In 1909 Cocteau met Russian impresario Sergey Diaghilev, who had moved to Paris with the Ballets Russes. Inspired and encouraged by Diaghilev, Cocteau began creating ballet scenarios. During World War I (1914-1918) Cocteau served in the Red Cross as an ambulance driver. During that period he met French writer Guillaume Apollinaire, Spanish artist Pablo Picasso, Italian artist Amedeo Modigliani, and many other writers and artists with whom he later collaborated or who influenced his work. In 1923 Cocteau became addicted to opium after the tragic death of his companion, Raymond Radiguet. He described his recovery in *Opium: journal d'un désintoxication* (1930; *Opium: The Diary of an Addict*, 1932). During his recuperation he produced some of his major works: the plays *Orphée* (1926; *Orpheus*, 1933) an adaptation of Cocteau's favorite Greek myth (*see Orpheus*), and *La machine infernale* (1934; *The Infernal Machine*, 1936); the novel *Les enfants terribles* (1929; *Children of the Game*, 1955); and his first motion picture, *Le sang d'un poète* (Blood of a Poet, 1930).
COLETTE

Colette, pen name of Sidonie Gabrielle Claudine Colette (1873-1954), French novelist, who probed deeply into the life of the senses and into human, particularly physical, relationships.

Colette was born in Saint-Sauveur-en-Puisaye in the province of Burgundy. Although she and her husband collaborated on the four novels of the Claudine series (1900-1903), using his pen name (Willy), these frank semiautobiographical stories were largely the work of Colette. Divorced in 1906, she spent a few years satisfying her theatrical ambitions by appearing on the music-hall stage. This experience provided the background for The Vagabond (1910; trans. 1912). Then, writing under the name Colette, she established her reputation as the leading woman novelist of France with the publication of Chéri (1920; trans. 1929), the bittersweet story of an older woman's love affair with a selfish boy. The Last of Chéri (1926; trans. 1932), The Other One (1929; trans. 1931), and Gigi (1945; trans. 1952) are other highly praised novels by Colette. In books of reminiscences, including Sido (1929; trans. 1953), about her mother, and Apprenticeship (1936; trans. 1953), about her first husband, she frequently explores her love of nature and domestic animals.

Colette was also a journalist, critic, and playwright. Her own works, strong in characterization and dramatic in situation, have frequently been adapted for the stage and screen.
BENJAMIN CONSTANT DE REBECQUE

Benjamin Constant de Rebecque (1767-1830), French writer and political figure, who contributed to the development of romanticism and the psychological novel. He was born in Lausanne, Switzerland, the son of a Swiss officer, and was educated in German and British universities. During the Napoleonic period he spent much time in exile in Switzerland and Germany. In these years he maintained an intense relationship with the brilliant French writer Madame Germaine de Staël, who influenced his famous semiautobiographical novel Adolphe (1816; translated 1959) and the unfinished Cécile (1951; translated 1953), which wasn't discovered until the 20th century. These early reflections of the romantic spirit are among the first novels to probe the psychology of their protagonists. Constant also wrote the tragic poem Wallenstein (1809), a treatise on religion, and journals. After the restoration of the monarchy, he lived in Paris, where he founded two liberal periodicals and served in the Chamber of Deputies (1819-1822, 1824-1830).
PIERRE CORNEILLE

Pierre Corneille (1606-84), French dramatist, whose plays are masterpieces of classical French literature.

Corneille was born on June 8, 1606, in Rouen, Normandy (Normandie), the son of a government official. Educated in Jesuit schools and in law, he held minor public offices in Rouen from 1629 to 1650. His career as a dramatist began when Mélite, a comedy of love, was successfully produced in Paris in 1630. The tragicomedy Clitandre (1631), as well as other comedies and his tragedy Médée (1635), an adaptation of classical Greek and Roman plays, followed.

In 1636 or 1637 Corneille produced the tragedy Le Cid, based on a Spanish play about the legendary medieval hero. Although critics bitterly condemned the play because it did not adhere strictly to the classical rules of construction that require unity of time, place, and action, it was a triumph. The theme, the conflict between love and duty, characterizes many of Corneille's subsequent tragedies. In them, however, he observed the classical unities. His finest tragedies, after Le Cid, are Horace (1640), Cinna (1641), and Polyeucte (1643), all set in ancient Rome. These four plays, imbued with strength, dignity, and elegance, created the standards of French tragedy, which were further developed by his younger contemporary Jean Baptist Racine.

Corneille was also a master of comedy. Le menteur (The Liar, 1643) is considered the best French comedy before those of Molière. Like his earlier Mélite, it is a comedy of manners, a form he originated.

In 1647 Corneille and his large family, including that of his brother Thomas Corneille, who was also a successful playwright, moved to Paris. Established as a major dramatist receiving a government pension, Corneille was elected to the French Academy in that year.
Prosper Jolyot de Crébillon, originally Crais-Billon (1674-1762), French writer of tragedy, born in Dijon, and educated in Paris. He wrote the well-received plays, *Idoménée* (1705), *Atrée et Thyeste* (1707), *Électre* (1708), and his masterpiece *Rhadamiste et Zenobie* (1711). They have classical themes and stress violence and horror. Later works failed, and the unambitious Crébillon stopped writing. Then, with the encouragement of Louis XV's mistress Madame de Pompadour, he wrote *Catalina* (1748), which was successful and brought him a royal pension. He lived in close accord with his son, Claude Prosper Jolyot de Crébillon, known as Crébillon *fils*, who wrote light novels.
Cyrano de Bergerac (1619-1655), French writer, whose many duels and other escapades gained him a reputation as a romantic hero. He also became known for his prominent nose, though this characteristic may have been invented by a later writer. Savinien Cyrano de Bergerac was born in Paris. He became a soldier but soon abandoned this career because of a battle wound. He wrote several tragedies and then turned his attention to satirical comedies in which he lampooned his associates. Cyrano's most famous works are two prose fantasies, *L'Histoire comique des états et empires de la lune* (1656) and *L'Histoire comique des états et empires du soleil* (1662), which in 1923 were combined and translated by English writer Richard Aldington as *Voyages to the Moon and Sun*. The works are considered precursors to modern science-fiction writing. A fictional verse drama by French author Edmond Rostand concerning Cyrano was first performed in 1897.
Vincent d’Indy (1851-1931), French composer, teacher, and writer, born in Paris, and educated at the Paris Conservatoire. He was a pupil of the Belgian-French composer César Franck. D'Indy's reputation as a composer was established in 1886 with the performance of his so-called dramatic legend, *The Song of the Bell* (1879-83). In 1890 he became president of the National Musical Society, which he had helped establish, and after 1900 he taught composition at the influential Schola Cantorum in Paris, of which he was a founder and director.

From Franck, d'Indy learned the principle of cyclic form, in which the same thematic material is used throughout all the movements of a composition. D'Indy's work is in general more complex and intellectual than that of Franck, a tendency counterbalanced in part by his fondness for nature and themes from French folk song. He wrote three symphonies, among them the *Symphonie Cévenole (sur un Chant Montagnard Français)* (Symphony on a French Mountain Air, 1886). Among his literary works are biographies of Ludwig van Beethoven (1906) and Franck (1911).
Alphonse Daudet (1840-1897), French writer, known for his accounts of his native Provence. Born in Nîmes, in Provence, he went to Paris, where he published a volume of poetry, *Les amoureuses* (The Lovers, 1858). About 1861 he became a contributor to the newspaper *Le Figaro*. Daudet is perhaps best known for his naturalistic, gently humorous sketches of Provençal life, *Letters from My Mill* (1869; trans. 1900), which first appeared in *Le Figaro* in 1866, and for his tales about Tartarin, an amusing Provençal braggart. The latter include *Tartarin de Tarascon* (1872), *Tartarin sur les Alpes* (Tartarin on the Alps, 1885), and *Port Tarascon* (1890). He also wrote *Les contes du lundi* (The Monday Tales, 1873), short stories about the Franco-Prussian War. Among his other works are the play *L'arlésienne* (The Woman from Arles, 1872), for which the French composer Georges Bizet wrote incidental music; the novels *Jack* (1876), *Le nabab* (The Nabob, 1877), *Les rois en exil* (The Kings in Exile, 1879), and *Sapho* (1884); and the semiautobiographical novel *Le petit chose* (The Small Matter, 1868). This account of school life is sometimes compared to Charles Dickens's similarly autobiographical novel *David Copperfield* (1850). Daudet's two volumes of memoirs, *Souvenirs d'un homme de lettres* (Reminiscences of a Man of Letters) and *Trente ans de Paris* (Thirty Years in Paris), were published in 1888.
Eustache Deschamps (1340?-1407?), French poet, born in Vertus, Champagne. He studied under the poet Guillaume de Machaut, had some legal training, and held several minor posts under Charles V and Charles VI, kings of France. In addition to many ballades and rondeaux on love, he wrote several long poems, including the satiric *Mirror of Marriage*, and the treatise *Art of Poetry* (1392). The posthumous edition of his complete works (11 volumes, 1878-1902) provides much information, gained from his own experience in royal service, about the French people and their sufferings in the Hundred Years' War.
DENIS DIDEROT

Denis Diderot (1713-1784), French Encyclopedist and philosopher, who also wrote novels, essays, plays, and art and literary criticism.

Diderot was born in Langres on October 5, 1713, and educated by Jesuits. He went to Paris in 1734 and spent ten years as an ill-paid tutor and hack writer. His first serious work, published anonymously, was *Pensées philosophiques* (1746), which stated his deist philosophy. In 1747 he was invited to edit a French translation of the English *Cyclopaedia* by Ephraim Chambers. Diderot, collaborating with the mathematician Jean Le Rond d'Alembert, converted the project into a vast, new, and controversial 35-volume work, *Encyclopédie ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, which is usually known as the *Encyclopédie*.

Aided by the most celebrated writers of the day, including Voltaire and Montesquieu, the skeptical, rationalist Diderot used the *Encyclopédie* as a powerful propaganda weapon against Ecclesiastical authority and the superstition, conservatism, and semifeudal social forms of the time. Consequently, Diderot and his associates became the objects of clerical and royal antagonism. In 1759 the Conseil du Roi formally suppressed the first ten volumes (published from 1751 onward) and forbade further publication. Nevertheless, Diderot continued work on the remaining volumes and had them secretly printed. The 17 volumes of text were completed in 1765, with plates and supplements added until 1780.
GEORGES DUHAMEL

Georges Duhamel (1884-1966), French writer, born in Paris. He was educated in medicine, and his first published fiction was based on his experience as a surgeon in the French army in World War I. *The New Book of Martyrs* (1917; trans. 1918) and *Civilization* (1918; trans. 1919) were collections of short war stories. For *Civilization*, written under the pseudonym Denis Thévenin, Duhamel was awarded the Goncourt Prize. During his long career Duhamel wrote novels, plays, poetry, and criticism and works on philosophy, medicine, and travel. His major works were two cycles of novels, plays, poetry, and criticism and works on philosophy, medicine, and travel. His major works were two cycles of novels, *Salavin* (5 volumes, 1920-32; trans. 1936) and *The Pasquier Chronicles* (10 volumes, 1933-45; trans. 1937-46). *Salavin* deals with a man determined to achieve sainthood; the *Chronicles* concerns several generations of a Parisian family. Duhamel, elected to the French Academy in 1935, wrote in a lucid, sympathetic style about the freedom of the individual and the basic dignity and goodness of human beings.
ALEXANDRE DUMAS

Alexandre Dumas (1802-1870), French novelist and playwright of the romantic period, known as Dumas père. Dumas, the most widely read of all French writers, is best remembered for his historical novels *The Three Musketeers* (1844; trans. 1846) and *The Count of Monte-Cristo* (1844; trans. 1846).

Dumas was born in Villers-Cotterêts, Aisne, July 24, 1802. He was the son of a general and the grandson of a nobleman who had settled in Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) and married a black woman there. He had little formal education but read voraciously and was especially attracted to 16th- and 17th-century adventure stories. While working as a clerk, he attended performances of an English Shakespearean company and was inspired to write drama. The Comédie Française produced his play *Henri III et sa cour* (Henry III and His Court) in 1829 and the romantic drama *Christine* in 1830; both were resounding successes.

Dumas was a prolific writer; about 1200 volumes were published under his name. Although many were the result of collaboration or the production of a “fiction factory” in which hired writers executed his ideas, almost all the writing bears the unmistakable imprint of his personal genius and inventiveness.

Dumas's earnings were enormous but scarcely sufficient in his later years to sustain his extravagant style of living. He spent great sums of money in maintaining his estate outside Paris (Monte-Cristo), supporting numerous mistresses (one of whom was the mother of his son Alexandre), purchasing artworks, and making up the losses incurred by numerous business ventures. At his death, on December 5, 1870, he was virtually bankrupt.

Besides his historical novels, the works of Dumas include the plays *Antony* (1831), *La tour de Nesle* (The Tower of Nesle, 1832), *Catherine Howard* (1834), and *L'Alchimiste* (The Alchemist, 1839), as well as numerous dramatizations of his own fiction. He also wrote memoirs, which give a vivid picture of his times.
ALEXANDRE DUMAS

Alexandre Dumas (1824-1895), French playwright and novelist, who wrote realistic plays about the problems of the middle class. He was born in Paris, the natural son of the writer Alexandre Dumas père. Dumas fils, as he was known, had an unhappy childhood because his schoolmates constantly taunted him about his illegitimacy. His first literary work was a volume of poetry, *Péchés de jeunesse* (Sins of Youth, 1847). The following year his first novel, *Camille* (1848; trans. 1856), appeared, and his subsequent dramatization of this work, produced in 1852, established him as a success in the theater. The play, about a courtesan who sacrifices her happiness for her lover's good, has served as a vehicle for many great actors, including Sarah Bernhardt and, in a film version, Greta Garbo. The story was immortalized by Giuseppe Verdi in his opera *La Traviata*.

Dumas continued to write novels, but he was far more successful as a dramatist. In his view the playwright's function is essentially moralistic, and nearly all of his plays are concerned with social and moral problems, such as marital infidelity and prostitution. Despite his dramatic ingenuity and his gift for dialogue, his plays are somewhat marred for the modern spectator by their tendency to preach. Dumas was elected to the French Academy in 1874. Among his other plays are *Le demi-monde* (1855), *The Money Question* (1857; trans. 1915), and *Un père prodigue* (A Prodigal Father, 1859).
Marguerite Duras (1914-1996), French novelist, playwright, motion-picture director, and screenwriter, who first achieved international fame for her screenplay *Hiroshima mon amour* (Hiroshima My Love, 1959). She was born Marguerite Donnadieu in Saigon, Indochina (now Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam). Her father died when she was four, and her family lived in poverty as her mother struggled to support them. Duras’s works often build on her memories of her childhood experiences in Asia.

Duras’s career took a new direction in 1959, when French director Alain Resnais invited her to write the screenplay for his film *Hiroshima mon amour*. The film was similar in style and theme to *Moderato cantabile*; it centered on a love affair between a French woman and a Japanese man. Duras was nominated for an Academy Award for her work, and she continued writing screenplays, including *Une aussi longue absence* (1961; also released as *The Long Absence*), *Nathalie Granger* (1972), *India Song* (1973), and *Le Navire Night* (1978). She also began writing plays in the 1960s, often adapting or reworking her novels, and directing films. Duras’s later works include the autobiographical novel *L’Amant* (1984; *The Lover*, 1985), which won the Prix Goncourt, a French literary prize, as well as a large audience; another novel, *La pluie d’été* (1990; *Summer Rain*, 1992); and *Yann Andrea Steiner* (1992; *Yann Andrea Steiner: A Memoir*, 1993).
Louise Florence d’Épinay, *née* Tardieu d'Eslavelles (1726-1783), French writer, born in Valenciennes. After separating in 1749 from her husband, D. J. de la Live d'Épinay, she moved to the château of La Chevrette, Montmorency, at which her salons were attended by such leaders of the Enlightenment as Denis Diderot, Baron F. M. von Grimm, and Jean Jacques Rousseau. In 1756 she provided a rural cottage, l'Hermitage, for Rousseau, from whom she later became estranged. She carried on an extensive correspondence with various sovereigns in Europe. D'Épinay spent her later years in a small house, La Briche, near La Chevrette, entertaining her literary friends, chiefly Grimm (her literary heir), with whom she had been on intimate terms since 1755. Her writings include *Les conversations d'Émilie* (Emily's Talks, 1774), a work in which she prescribed the moral upbringing of her granddaughter; *Lettres à mon fils* (Letters to My Son, 1752); and *Memoirs and Letters* (3 volumes, 1818; trans. 1897).
AUGUSTE ESCOFFIER

Auguste Escoffier (1846-1935), French chef, and master of the haute cuisine style of French cookery originated by Marie Antoine Carême (1784-1833).

George Auguste Escoffier was born on October 28, 1846, in the village of Villeneuve-Loubet. He started his career as a kitchen boy at the age of 12 in Nice. Before beginning his celebrated work in England he spent six years in Paris, served as a cook in the Franco-Prussian War, and master chef at the Grand Hotel in Monte Carlo. From 1890 to 1898 he presided over the kitchens of the Savoy Hotel in London, and in 1898 he began his 13-year tenure at the Carlton House there. At the Carlton House and for brief periods at other great hotels of Europe and New York City, Escoffier perfected the elaborate sauces, many courses, and elegant decorations of Carême's haute cuisine to their modern standards. He trained hundreds of chefs in the grand tradition. Although he retired at the age of 65, he spent some of his time writing. He is credited with the invention of 10,000 recipes. Escoffier died on February 12, 1935, at Monte Carlo.
FRANÇOIS DE SALIGNAC DE LA MOTHE FÉNELON

François de Salignac de la Mothe Fénelon (1651-1715), French writer, prelate, and liberal theologian, whose theories and publications, despite the opposition of church and state, eventually became the basis for profound political and cultural changes in France.

Fénelon was born August 6, 1651, into a noble family in Dordogne and educated at the University of Cahors and the seminary of Saint Sulpice. He was ordained a priest in 1675 and in 1679 was appointed head of the Nouvelles Catholiques, an institution in Paris for the instruction of women who were recent or prospective converts to Roman Catholicism. In 1685, after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, he was sent as the head of a mission to convert the Protestants in Saintonge in western France. He became a disciple and favorite of the prelate Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet and in 1689 was appointed tutor to Louis, duc de Bourgogne, grandson of King Louis XIV. Fénelon wrote a series of moral lessons designed to instruct his pupil in the duties and obligations of a ruler.

In 1695 Fénelon was made archbishop of Cambrai but soon afterward became involved in a controversy with Bossuet over the quietist doctrines of Madame Guyon. Fénelon had been influenced by quietism, which stressed the contemplative life, and his *Explication des maximes des saints* (Maxims of the Saints, 1697) was attacked by Bossuet as inconsistent with traditional Christian teachings. The two prelates appealed to Rome, and parts of the book were condemned by Pope Innocent XII in 1699. Fénelon was exiled to his diocese by Louis XIV, who had sided with Bossuet. In addition, Louis had been offended by Fénelon's *Télémaque* (Telemachus, 1699), the book for which he is best known. A political novel, it states that kings exist for their subjects; it also expresses an ardent denunciation of war and a belief in the fraternity of nations. He died January 7, 1715, in Cambrai.

Fénelon's works show no consistent philosophy that expresses his rebellion against established ideas. In his influential *Traité de l'éducation des filles* (Treatise on the Education of Girls, 1687), Fénelon followed a middle course between those who believed in higher education for women and those who believed that women should have no education at all.
GEORGES FEYDEAU

Georges Feydeau (1862-1921), French dramatist known for his farces with elaborate plot lines, often dealing with cases of marital infidelity or mistaken identity. Feydeau's matchless perception of the frailty of end-of-the-century respectability and his superb economy in writing reveal his skill as not simply a light entertainer but an accomplished writer of satire. Feydeau's plays do not lend themselves well to reading but rely on the dynamics of the visual dramatic mechanism consisting of impossible coincidences, complicated stage directions, and failures of communication.

Born in Paris, France, the son of the novelist Ernest Feydeau, he was attracted very early both by acting and writing for the theater. His comedy Tailleur pour dames (1886; Fitting for Ladies, 1974) gained him an audience, but it was not until 1892, with the staging of his vaudeville Monsieur chasse (Monsieur is Hunting, 1976), that he gained wide popular success. This play and those that followed were to bring the farce, a genre initiated by late-19th-century French playwright Eugène Labiche, to perfection: their humor relies on complex and highly efficient plots, usually improbable and contrived, in which the slightest threat to the middle-class order can give way to an unstoppable series of mishaps, leading to a disastrous conclusion. Feydeau himself regarded his comedies as so-called reverse tragedies.

After his major works, such as La dame de chez Maxim's (The Lady from Maxim's, 1889), La puce à l'oreille (The Flea in Her Ear, 1907), and Occupe-toi d'Amélie (Keep an Eye on Amelie, 1908), he took to writing ferocious farces dealing with matrimonial difficulties, including Feu la mère de Madame (The Former Mother of Madame, 1908), Le dindon (1910; Sauce for the Goose, 1974), On purge bébé (1910; The Purging, 1977), and Hortense dit: “J'm'en fous” (1916; Hortense says, “I Don't Give a Damn,” 1979). His complete works appeared in nine volumes (1948-1956). Feydeau's plays have continued to be performed into the 1990s in both French and English.
GUSTAVE FLAUBERT

Gustave Flaubert (1821-1880), French writer, known for his novels Madame Bovary (1857; translated 1886) and L’éducation sentimentale (1869; Sentimental Education, 1898). Considered by many to be the father of realistic fiction (see Realism), Flaubert consistently rejected membership in any school, asserting that he “strove only for beauty.”

Madame Bovary, however, is the great novel by which Flaubert is chiefly known. Subtitled Moeurs de Province (Provincial Customs), the novel portrays unforgettable but ordinary characters, as well as a historical period in its tangible and specific reality. Charles Bovary, a country doctor, marries Emma, whose education in a convent has left her with vague, mystical longings, and whose readings of romantic novels leave her awaiting a great love to redeem the dreariness of reality. The dull Charles disappoints her, as do Rodolphe and Léon, the two men with whom she has love affairs, and her disastrous financial dealings finally bring her to despair. She commits suicide by swallowing arsenic and dies a horrible and vividly described death. Upon publication of the novel, Flaubert was tried for offenses to public morals resulting from the book’s subject matter and frank detail, but he was acquitted.

“Madame Bovary, c’est moi” (“I am Madame Bovary”), Flaubert asserted of his title character, and yet his stated goal was to hide all trace of the author, much as he considered God to be absent from nature. The reader encounters characters of remarkable mediocrity and stupidity, but no narrator judges them or indicates clearly to the reader how they should be judged. Flaubert’s use of this so-called free indirect style, by which the exact thoughts of a character are reported by an objective and articulate narrator, revolutionized modern fiction. This narrative technique and style allowed Flaubert to be, and simultaneously not to be, Madame Bovary. He could present the romantic psychology of Emma (and his own younger self) and undercut it with irony at the same time. Thus Madame Bovary both depicts and critiques the inability of the romantic temperament to live in the real world.
BERNARD DE FONTENELLE

Bernard de Fontenelle (1657-1757), French writer and scientist. Bernard le Bovier, Sieur de Fontenelle, was born in Rouen. He was educated at the college of the Jesuits at Rouen and studied law but chose a literary career. At age 30, he had already written dramas, operas, dialogues, short stories, and dissertations on science. The philosophical work *Dialogues des morts* (Dialogues of the Dead, 1683) established his reputation as a man of letters, and in 1691 he was admitted to the French Academy.

From 1699 until 1739 Fontenelle served as secretary of the Academy of Sciences, writing during that time several works dealing with the history of the academy. He became particularly well known for these and other writings on science. His most important works attempted to popularize the scientific learning of his age. In his greatest work, *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes* (Discourses on the Plurality of Worlds, 1686), he presented the astronomical principles of the Copernican system in a clever literary form. In other writings he attacked religious superstition. Fontenelle's questioning attitude predated the inquiring spirit of the 18th-century Enlightenment.
ANATOLE FRANCE, PSEUDONYM OF JACQUES
ANATOLE FRANÇOIS THIBAULT

Anatole France, pseudonym of JACQUES ANATOLE FRANÇOIS THIBAULT (1844-1924), French novelist and Nobel laureate, who is frequently regarded as the greatest French writer of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

France was born on April 16, 1844, in Paris. He attended the Stanislas School in Paris, but was mostly self-educated. From early youth he was an insatiable reader. His first published books were the volume of verse *Les poèmes dorés* (Golden Tales, 1873) and the verse drama *The Bride of Corinth* (1876; trans. 1920). It was not, however, until the publication of his first novel, *The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard* (1881; trans. 1906), that he exhibited the stylistic grace, subtle, biting irony, and genuine compassion that later became the distinguishing characteristics of his work. He was elected to the French Academy in 1896 and was awarded the 1921 Nobel Prize in literature.

In 1883 France formed a liaison with Madame Arman de Caillavet, who inspired France to arduous creative labors and promoted his works through her social connections. His writings of those middle years include the critical essays *La vie littéraire* (The Literary Life, 4 volumes, 1888-92); the novels *Thaïs* (1890; trans. 1909) and *The Red Lily* (1894; trans. 1908); and the tetralogy of novels *L'histoire contemporaine* (A Contemporary Tale, 1897-1901), a harsh analysis of the corrosive effects on French life of the Dreyfus affair. France was among the French intellectuals who fought successfully for the exoneration of Alfred Dreyfus, an army captain convicted of treason (see Dreyfus Affair).

Despite his polemics, however, the elegant, sweeping cadences and masterly language of France's works testified to his devotion to classical forms. Outstanding among the writings that demonstrate both his powerful social consciousness and his classical eloquence are the allegorical novels *Penguin Island* (1908; trans. 1909) and *The Revolt of the Angels* (1914; trans. 1914) and an account of the Reign of Terror during the French Revolution, *The Gods Are Athirst* (1912; trans. 1913). France died at Tours on October 13, 1924.
ABEL GANCE

Abel Gance (1889-1981), French motion-picture director whose innovative techniques and technical achievements during the silent film era (1895-1927) profoundly influenced the development of modern cinema. Born in Paris, Gance initially sought a career in the theater, but began writing motion-picture screenplays in 1909 in order to support himself. In 1911 he founded a motion-picture production company, Le Film Française, and directed his first film, *La Digue* (The Dike). In his early films—especially *La Folie du Docteur Tube* (The Folly of Doctor Tube, 1915), *Mater Dolorosa* (Sorrowful Mother, 1917), and *La Dixième Symphonie* (The Tenth Symphony, 1918)—Gance experimented with camera movement, close-ups, and distorted lenses. He then introduced innovative editing techniques with a grand-scale anti-war film, *J'Accuse* (I Accuse, 1918), which brought him international critical acclaim and his first commercial success.

In the 1920s Gance released two motion pictures that became landmarks of silent cinema, *La Roué* (The Wheel, 1923) and *Napoléon* (1927). *La Roué* is a powerful melodrama set in a railroad yard. The film established new technical standards in cinema with its dramatic lighting effects, flashbacks, and rapid cuts between scenes which emphasized the movement of the trains. *Napoléon*, an ambitious epic which traces the early life of French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte (see Napoleon I), is generally regarded as Gance's masterpiece and as one of the most influential films in the history of cinema. *Napoléon* features an extraordinary range of cinematic techniques, such as superimposing images over one another and filming with cameras mounted on sleds, wires, or horses. Gance's most notable technical achievement with *Napoléon* was the introduction of a revolutionary screening process known as Polyvision, which simultaneously projects three separate images, creating a much larger scale for the film's action scenes.
Théophile Gautier (1811-72), French poet, critic, and novelist, who was a prominent figure for 40 years in the artistic and literary life of Paris.

Gautier was born on August 31, 1811, in Tarbes, and educated in Paris. In the 1830s he supported the romantic movement, then superseding the classical movement in French literature and the drama. As a poet, however, Gautier opposed the principles of romanticism, avoiding in his work the expression of strong emotions and emphasizing instead technique and finish of style. These qualities are characteristics of his early *Poésies* (1830) and *Albertus* (1832); they are particularly strong in his masterpiece *Émaux et camées* (Enamels and Cameos, 1852; enlarged ed., 1872). The impersonality and technical expertness of his poetry foreshadowed the Parnassian school of French poetry, which succeeded the romantic school. Gautier became a leader of the Parnassians, who held that poetry should be concerned with artistic effect rather than with life (“art for art's sake”); he particularly influenced the work of one of the most important of the group, Charles Baudelaire.

As a novelist, Gautier is known chiefly for his *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (1835), an expression of the hedonistic philosophy of life. He was also a noted writer of exotic short stories, among which are “*La morte amoureuse*” (The Love-Death, 1836) and “*Une nuit de Cleopatre*” (One of Cleopatra's Nights). In addition, he was among the best and most influential critics of his time. Among his critical writings are *Histoire de l'art dramatique depuis vingt-cinq ans* (History of Dramatic Art During the Last Twenty-five Years, 6 volumes, 1858-59), and *Rapport sur le progrès des lettres depuis vingt-cinq ans* (Report on the Progress of Literature During the Last Twenty-five Years, 1868). Gautier died on October 23, 1872, in the Paris suburb of Neuilly.
Jean Genet (1910-1986), French novelist and dramatist, whose writings, dwelling upon bizarre and grotesque aspects of human existence, express profound rebellion against society and its conventions. Born in Paris, Genet was the illegitimate child of a prostitute. He was caught stealing at the age of ten and by early adolescence had begun to serve a series of sentences, spanning nearly 30 years, for theft and homosexual prostitution. In 1947, following his tenth conviction for theft, he was sentenced to life imprisonment.

Genet's first novel, an autobiographical work about homosexuality and life in the prison underworld, was *Notre-Dame des fleurs* (1943; translated as *Our Lady of the Flowers*, 1963). His later novels include *Le journal du voleur* (1949; *The Thief's Journal*, 1961), *Miracle de la rose* (1946; *The Miracle of the Rose*, 1965), and *Pompes funèbres* (1947; *Funeral Rites*, 1969). Lyric imagery and use of underworld jargon are characteristic of his prose.

In 1947 Genet turned to drama, the medium in which he made his greatest impact. His first play, *Les bonnes* (1947; *The Maids*, 1954), one of his most successful, marked his entry into the movement known as the theater of the absurd. In the play two maids take turns at playing the role of their mistress, seeking their identities amid ever-shifting reality and illusion. In the plays *Haute surveillance* (1949; *Deathwatch*, 1954), *Le balcon* (1956; *The Balcony*, 1958), *Les nègres* (1958; *The Blacks*, 1960), and *Les paravents* (1961; *The Screens*, 1962), Genet often used role playing and the inversion of good and evil as techniques for commenting on the hypocrisy and absurdity of social and political values.
André Gide (1869-1951), French writer, whose novels, plays, and autobiographical works are distinguished for their exhaustive analysis of individual efforts at self-realization and Protestant ethical concepts; together with his critical works they had a profound influence on French writing and philosophy.

Thereafter his works were devoted to examining the problems of individual freedom and responsibility, from many points of view. The Immoralist (1902; trans. 1930) and Strait Is the Gate (1909; trans. 1924) are studies of individual ethical concepts in conflict with conventional morality. The Caves of the Vatican (trans. 1927 and also published in English as Lafcadio’s Adventures), in which Gide ridiculed the possibility of complete personal independence, appeared in 1914. The idyll La symphonie pastorale (The Pastoral Symphony, 1919; produced as a motion picture, 1947) dealt with love and responsibility. Gide examined the problems of middle-class families and of adolescence in If It Die (1920; trans. 1935) and in the popular novel of youth in Paris, The Counterfeiters (1926; trans. 1928).

Gide’s preoccupation with individual moral responsibility led him to seek public office. After filling municipal positions in Normandy (Normandie), he became a special envoy of the colonial ministry in 1925-26 and wrote two books describing conditions in the French African colonies. These reports, Voyage au Congo (1927) and Retour du Tchad (1927), were instrumental in bringing about reforms in French colonial law. They were published together in English as Travels in the Congo (1929). In the early 1930s Gide had expressed his admiration and hope for the “experiment” in the USSR, but after a journey in the Soviet Union he reported his disillusionment in Return from the U.S.S.R. (1936; trans. 1937).

Besides writing the verse dramas Le roi Candaule (The King Candaule, 1901) and Saüll (1903), Gide translated Shakespeare’s Antony and Cleopatra and Hamlet into French. He also made distinguished translations of Marriage of Heaven and Hell by the early 19th-century poet William Blake and of excerpts from the works of the mid-19th-century American poet Walt Whitman. The publication of Gide’s Journal (4 volumes, 1939-51), a series of literary diaries, excited worldwide critical interest. Gide received the 1947 Nobel Prize in literature. He died February 19, 1951, in Paris.
Jean Giono (1895-1970), French novelist, born in Manosque. At the age of 19 he was inducted into the French army to fight in World War I (1914-1918). Later he wrote about the horrors of war in *Le grand troupeau* (To the Slaughterhouse, 1931). His pacifist creed was expounded in *Refus d'obéissance* (Refusal to Obey, 1937). Giono used his native Provence as the setting for his novels, the majority of which are concerned with the relationship of people to the earth, as in *Les vrais richesses* (True Riches, 1936). Other works include *Hill of Destiny* (1920; translated 1929), *Harvest* (1930; translated 1939), and *Horseman on the Roof* (1951; translated 1954).
GONCOURT

Goncourt, name of two French literary collaborators who were brothers. Their names were Edmond-Louis-Antoine Huot de Goncourt (1822-1896) and Jules-Alfred Huot de Goncourt (1830-1870).

Edmond was born May 26, 1822, in Nancy; Jules, December 17, 1830, in Paris. Both were educated in Paris. Their mother extracted from them a promise that they would spend their lives in the closest association. Reputedly, they carried out this promise so faithfully that they were never apart, except for a single 24-hour period. Jules died June 20, 1870, in Anteuil; Edmond died 26 years later on July 16, 1896, in Champrosay.

The first results of their literary collaboration were a series of historical works, including *Histoire de la société française pendant la révolution* (History of French Society During the Revolution, 1854) and *Portraits intimes du XVIIIe siècle* (Intimate Portraits of the 18th Century, 2 volumes, 1857-58). Concerning themselves exclusively with the 18th century, they sought to present history not as the relation of great events, but in a new way, as an analysis of society derived from the study of intimate, unpublished documents, social customs, popular music, costumes, and other details. Their approach to art criticism, as displayed in *L'art du XVIIIe siècle* (The Art of the 18th Century, 3 volumes, 1859-75), was the same: an intimate study of the personal lives of the artists.

Similarly, the outstanding characteristic of the novels written by the Goncourts is a painstaking presentation of the details of physical reality, with the aim of explaining the emotional lives of the characters in terms of their reactions to reality. Their fiction includes *Renée Mauperin* (1864; trans. 1902), *Germinie Lacerteux* (1864; trans. 1891), and *Madame Gervaisais* (1869); these deal largely with pathological cases. The novels written by Edmond after the death of Jules closely resemble in style those written jointly.

In 1851 the Goncourts began a diary, *Le journal des Goncourts*, continued by Edmond until shortly before his death. Full of gossip, anecdotes, and scathing judgments of artists, writers, and society figures, it was published in part in 9 volumes between 1887 and 1896. The entire work was published in 22 volumes between 1956 and 1958; English translations of selections appeared in 1937 and 1962.
Rémy de Gourmont (1858-1915), French writer and critic, who was a leader of the symbolist movement. He was born in Bazoches-sur-Hoëne and educated at the University of Caen. He joined the staff of the Bibliothèque Nationale, in Paris, in 1883 and founded (1890) the noted periodical *Le Mercure de France*. He was compelled to resign from the library in 1891 because of an allegedly subversive article he had written. His later writings include several notable series of essays, such as the *Épilogues, réflexions sur la vie* (1903-13), dealing in rather cynical terms with contemporary life, and *Promenades littéraires* (1904-28), perceptive criticisms of contemporary writing. in *L'esthétique de la langue française* (1899), *Decadence and Other Essays on the Culture of Ideals* (1900; trans. 1921), and *Le probleme du style* (The Question of Style, 1902), Gourmont concerned himself with general problems of aesthetics and literary craftsmanship. He also wrote the novels *The Dream of a Woman* (1899; trans. 1927) and *A Virgin Heart* (1908; trans. 1921).
JULIAN GREEN

Julian Green (1900-1998), American author, regarded as one of the great 20th-century French-language writers. Julian Hartridge Green was born in Paris, where his American parents lived. (His first name is spelled Julien in France.) During World War I (1914-1918) Green served as an ambulance driver on the Italian front and then joined the French Army. After the war he moved to the United States to enroll at the University of Virginia.

In 1922 Green went back to Paris without having earned a degree. He only returned to the United States from 1940 to 1945, during World War II. Green wrote almost entirely in French, and in 1971 he became the first non-French person to be elected to the French Academy. In 1996, saying that he felt “exclusively American,” he resigned from the organization.

Two of the major events of Green’s life were his conversion from Protestantism to Catholicism and his realization of his homosexuality. Many of his works reflect these events. Green’s characters typically struggle with conflicts they feel between spirituality and sensuality. In portraying these conflicts, Green sometimes explored the dark side of human nature, but his later works hold out the possibility of redemption for his characters.

Green’s novels include Mont-Cinère (1926; Avarice House, 1927), Adrienne mesurat (1927; The Closed Garden, 1928), Léviathan (1929; The Dark Journey, 1929), Moira (1950; Moira, 1951), and Chaque hommes dans sa nuit (1960; Each in His Own Darkness, 1961). He also wrote the English-language reminiscence Memories of Happy Days (1942), the play Sud (1953; South, 1955), and a long series of memoirs. Early in his career he began a book about the American South, but he put it aside when he learned of the epic novel Gone With the Wind (1936), by American author Margaret Mitchell, which addressed the same subject. He picked the project up again in the 1980s and published a trilogy: Les pays lointains (1987; The Distant Lands, 1990), Les etoiles du sud (1989; The Stars of the South, 1996), and Dixie (1995).
Guillaume de Lorris (circa 1200-40), French poet. He is the author of the first 4000 lines of the 22,000-line verse romance Le Roman de la Rose, the second part of which was written by the French poet Jean de Meun. Nothing is known of Guillaume's life. His section of the poem is distinguished by the beauty of the imagery and the allegorical setting.
Louis Hémon (1880-1913), French novelist, born in Brest. After studying for a diplomatic career, he went to Canada in 1911 and worked as a farm laborer near Lac Saint-Jean, Québec, while gathering material for his major work, *Maria Chapdelaine* (1914; trans. 1921). Shortly after sending this vivid, realistic novel of French-Canadian pioneer life to the French newspaper *Le Temps*, Hémon was killed by a train near Chapleau, Ontario. Three of Hémon's earlier novels and a travel journal were published posthumously.
José María Heredia (1842-1905), French poet, born near Santiago de Cuba, Cuba, and educated in Havana and Paris. Heredia remained in France after 1861, writing poetry that was greatly influenced by the Parnassians, a school of French poets who advocated impersonality and a concentration on form in their works. In 1893, he published *Trophies* (translated 1963), a collection of 118 sonnets and a few other poems divided into five groups, four devoted to the history of the world from Hellenistic times to the Renaissance and the last on nature and the dream. In these poems, Heredia presents dramatic moments with objectivity, avoiding all personal comment and all philosophical implications. His technical brilliance made him the acknowledged master of the French sonnet, and he was elected to the French Academy in 1894.
VICTOR HUGO

Victor Hugo (1802-1885), French poet, novelist, and playwright, whose voluminous works provided the single greatest impetus to the romantic movement.

Hugo was born on February 26, 1802, in Besançon, and was educated both privately and in Paris schools. He was a precocious child, deciding at an early age to become a writer. In 1817 he was honored by the French Academy for a poem, and five years later, he published his first volume of poetry, *Odes et poésies diverses* (Miscellaneous Odes and Poems). This was followed by the novels *Han d'Islande* (Han of Iceland, 1823) and *Bug-Jargal* (1824), and the poems *Odes et ballades* (Odes and Ballads, 1826). In the preface to his long historical drama *Cromwell* (1827), Hugo made a plea for freedom from the classical restrictions. The plea quickly became the manifesto of the romantic school. Censors banned Hugo's second drama, *Marion de Lorme* (1829; trans. 1872), based on the life of a 17th-century French courtesan. Hugo answered the ban on February 25, 1830, when his poetic drama, *Hernani*, had a tumultuous premiere that ensured the success of romanticism. *Hernani* was adapted by the Italian composer Giuseppe Verdi for his opera *Ernani* (1844).

The period 1829-1843 was the most productive of Hugo's career. His great historical novel *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1831; trans. 1833), a tale set in 15th-century Paris, made him popular and brought him, in 1841, election to the French Academy. In another novel of this period, *Claude Gueux* (1834), he eloquently indicted the French penal and social systems. He wrote several well-received volumes of lyric poetry, including *Les Orientales* (1829), *Les feuilles d'automne* (Autumn Leaves, 1831), *Les chants du crépuscule* (Songs of Twilight, 1835), *Les voix intérieures* (Inner Voices, 1837), and *Les rayons et les ombres* (Sunbeams and Shadows, 1840). His dramatic successes included *Le roi s'amuse* (The King Amuses Himself, 1832), adapted by Verdi for the opera *Rigoletto* (1851); the prose drama *Lucrèce Borgia* (1833); and the melodrama *Ruy Blas* (1838; trans. 1850). *Les burgraves* (The Governors, 1843), however, was a complete failure.

Hugo's disappointment over *Les burgraves* was overshadowed in the same year by the drowning of one of his daughters and her husband. He turned from poetry and took a more active role in politics. He had been raised in a Bonapartist home, and as a young man he had become a Royalist. In 1845 he was made a peer of France by King Louis Philippe, but by the time of the Revolution of 1848, Hugo was a Republican. In 1851, following the unsuccessful revolt against President Louis Napoleon, later Emperor Napoleon III, Hugo fled to Belgium. In 1855 he began a 15-year-long exile on the island of Guernsey.

While in exile Hugo wrote the fiercely scurrilous verse satire, *Napoléon le petit* (The Little Napoleon, 1852), the satiric poems *Les châtiments* (Punishments, 1853), the volume of lyric verse *Les contemplations* (1856), and the first volume of his epic poem *La légende des siècles* (The Legend of the Ages, 1859-1883). On Guernsey he completed his longest and most famous work, *Les misérables* (1862; trans. 1862), a novel that vividly describes and condemns the social injustice of 19th-century France.
Joris Karl Huysmans, pseudonym of Charles Marie Georges Huysmans (1848-1907), French novelist, born in Paris. A minor government official, he spent most of his energy writing a series of searching semiautobiographical novels. Huysmans's early novels, such as *Marthe* (1876) and *Les soeurs Vatard* (The Vatard Sisters, 1879), inspired by the naturalism of Émile Zola, faithfully depict the seamy side of life. His later novels constitute his search for spiritual values. The frail, decadent hero of *Against the Grain* (1884; trans. 1959) vainly seeks salvation in overrefined experiences of art and literature. The hero of novels based on Huysmans's conversion to Roman Catholicism—*Down There* (1891; trans. 1958), *En Route* (1895), *La cathedrale* (1898), and *The Oblate* (1903; trans. 1924)—is obsessed with religion. Huysmans's style is distinguished by its color, complexity, irony, and use of forceful epithets. His championship of naturalism, the symbolist movement, and impressionism was highly influential.
EUGÈNE IONESCO

Eugène Ionesco (1909-1994), Romanian-born French playwright, one of the chief exponents of the movement known as theater of the absurd. Born Eugen Ionescu in Slatina, Ionesco spent his childhood in Paris but returned to Romania at the age of 13. He taught French in Bucharest before returning to Paris in 1939 to write. His plays depict the ridiculous, futile existence of humans in an unpredictable universe, who, because of their innate limitations, cannot communicate with one another. This pessimistic philosophy became a tenet of the theater of the absurd, a movement in French and English theater that lamented the senselessness of the human condition. Although Ionesco's intent was serious, his plays are rich in humor. Avant-garde, chiefly one-act works, they employ stifling, meaningless language and illogical, isolating situations to emphasize human incapabilities.

*La cantatrice chauve* (1950; translated as *The Bald Soprano*, 1956) is a satire that exaggerates aspects of routine living to demonstrate the pointlessness of mediocrity. The characters, capable of speaking only in platitudes and non sequiturs, are unable to communicate with each other. Ionesco used the same chattering technique in *La leçon* (1951; *The Lesson*, 1958), in which a raving professor ultimately kills his young students. In *Les chaises* (1952; *The Chairs*, 1958) two old people chat with nonexistent guests. *Amédée* (1953; translated 1958) is about a couple whose deadness of mutual feeling produces a corpse that grows threateningly until it surrounds them. *Le nouveau locataire* (1956; *The New Tenant*, 1958) is centered around a character confined to the space of an armchair. In *Rhinocéros* (1959; translated 1960), perhaps his best-known work, the people of a small town are transformed into rhinoceroses. The main character, initially an average-man prototype, becomes isolated from the town's citizens as he struggles against their conformity. *La soif et la fain* (1966; *Hunger and Thirst*, 1969) portrays a man who, stifled by his stable marriage, unsuccessfully seeks fulfillment elsewhere.

Ionesco's other plays include *Jeux de massacre* (1970; *The Killing Game*, 1974) and *L'homme aux valises* (The Man with Bags, 1977). Many of his plays were staged in the United States. He also wrote commentary on the theater; memoirs, titled *Present passe, passe present* (1968; *Present Past, Past Present*, 1971), and the novel *Le solitaire* (1973; *The Hermit*, 1974). No longer writing plays in the 1980s and 1990s, he spent a great deal of time painting. Ionesco was elected to the French Academy in 1970.
Max Jacob (1876-1944), French writer and painter, born in Quimper. He is regarded as an important link between the symbolists and the surrealists, as can be seen in his prose poems *Le cornet à dés* (Dice Box, 1917) and in his paintings, exhibitions of which were held in New York City in 1930 and 1938. Jacob's writings include the novel *Saint Matorel* (1911), the verses *Le laboratoire central* (1921), and *Le défense de Tartuffe* (1919), which expounds his philosophical and religious attitudes.
ALFRED JARRY

Alfred Jarry (1873-1907), French playwright and poet, born in Laval. His savagely funny dramas as well as his dissolute and eccentric way of life won him much notice. *Ubu roi* (1896; trans. 1951), Jarry's first play, lambastes traditional views of authority by presenting the rise to power of a grotesque and pompous king, Ubu, who symbolizes greed, ignorance, and the bourgeois attitudes that Jarry found ridiculous. The farce, which caused a scandal at its opening, is considered the first work of the theater of the absurd; it was followed by two sequels. Jarry also wrote symbolist poetry and a surrealistic novel, *The Supermale* (1902; trans. 1968).
LOUIS JOUVET

Louis Jouvet (1887-1951), French director, actor, stage designer, teacher, and writer, who was an outstanding figure in 20th-century French theater. Born in Crozon, a small town in southeastern France, Jouvet originally worked as a pharmacist before turning to the theater. In Paris he was refused entrance to France’s premier drama school, the Conservatoire d’Art Dramatique, because of his stammer. After a few minor roles, however, Jouvet made his professional stage debut in a stage adaptation of Brat’ja Karamozovy (1880; English translation, The Brothers Karamazov, 1911), by Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoyevsky.

In 1913 the well known French director Jacques Copeau invited Jouvet to join the newly created Vieux-Colombier acting company. Jouvet worked with the company as stage manager, stage designer, and electrician, but also gained recognition for his interpretation of the character of Sir Andrew Aguecheek in a production of Twelfth Night (1600?) by English playwright William Shakespeare. From 1914 to 1917 Jouvet served with the French Army during World War I, and he then traveled in the United States with Copeau and the Vieux-Colombier from 1917 to 1919. He returned to France in 1919 and in 1922 was appointed director of the French theater the Comédie des Champs-Elysées. In this capacity Jouvet received acclaim for his 1923 production of the farce Knock; ou le triomphe de la médecine (1923; English translation, Doctor Knock, 1923), in which he starred as well as directed, and which was written by French playwright Jules Romains.

In 1928 Jouvet staged Siegfried, written by French novelist Jean Giraudoux. As a result of the success of Siegfried, Jouvet and Giraudoux continued their collaboration until 1939; during this joint endeavor they produced some of the best French theater pieces of the period. In 1939 Jouvet was appointed director of the Théâtre de l'Athénée (since renamed Athénée-Louis-Jouvet).

As a film actor, Jouvet is best remembered for performances in, among others, Carnet de bal (Dance Card of the Ball, 1938) by French director Julien Duvivier, Drôle de drame (Strange Drama, 1937) by French director Marcel Carné, Hôtel du nord (Hotel of the North, 1938) also by Carné, and Quai des orfèvres (Goldsmith’s Wharf, 1947) by French writer-director Henri-Georges Clouzot.
Jean de la Bruyère (1645-1696), French essayist and moralist, born in Paris, and educated principally at the University of Orléans. From 1684 he was tutor and then secretary to the prince de Condé. La Bruyère is famous for a single work, *Les “caractères” de Théophraste, traduits du grec, avec les caractères ou les moeurs de ce siècle* (The “Characters” of Theophrastus, Translated from the Greek, with Characters or Customs of This Century, 1688). This work is a translation of the ancient Greek philosopher Theophrastus combined with maxims, critical comments on French society, and La Bruyère's frank and often satirical literary portraits of eminent contemporaries. The book, written in a brief and incisive style in contrast to the usual elaborate manner of the period, won immediate popularity. Nine editions were published between 1688 and 1696. *Les caractères* brought La Bruyère the enmity of those he had ridiculed, and as a consequence, they delayed his election to the French Academy until 1693.
Marie Madeleine La Fayette (1634-1693), French novelist, whose book *La princesse de Clèves* (The Princess of Clèves, 1678) is generally regarded as one of the most influential French novels. Born in Paris, La Fayette studied Greek, Latin, and Italian in her youth. In 1655 she married François Motier, comte de La Fayette. She lived with him on his estates in Auvergny until he deserted her about 1660. She then took up life in Paris, and from about 1665 she maintained an intimate friendship with noted writer François de La Rochefoucauld.

La Fayette's masterpiece is *La princesse de Clèves*, the story of a married noblewoman who falls in love with another man. She chooses to keep her love a secret, however, and even after her husband dies (having discovered the secret), she does not remarry. The novel is most notable for the level of psychological complexity it reveals in the mind of its characters. This realism in character portrayal sets the book apart from other books of the time. By focusing intensely on emotions and thoughts rather than on physical actions, La Fayette also departed from traditional adventure-oriented prose. Another notable aspect of *La princesse de Clèves* is the strict sense of historical detail with which La Fayette re-created 16th-century France. She demonstrated this attention to detail in other historical novels as well, including *La princesse de Montpensier* (The Princess of Montpensier, 1662) and *Zayde* (1670). She also wrote the biography *Histoire de Madame Henriette d'Angleterre* (Henrietta of England, published posthumously, 1720).
Jean de La Fontaine (1621-1695), French writer, who produced the most famous fables of modern times.

La Fontaine probably was born on July 8, 1621, in Château-Thierry and educated at the College of Reims. For many years he followed his father's profession of ranger in charge of supervising the forests and streams of the duchy of Château-Thierry. After 1659 he was supported by a number of noble and influential patrons of literature. His first major published work was an adaptation (1654) of the play *Eunuchus* (The Eunuch) by the Roman playwright Terence. La Fontaine's literary reputation was established by his *Tales and Novels in Verse* (1644; translated 1934). He became a member of a noted French literary group that included the playwrights Molière and Racine and the critic and poet Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux. Subsequent works of La Fontaine, which included additional volumes of *Tales and Novels in Verse* (1667-1674) and three collections of his *Fables choisies mises en vers* (*Selected Fables Versified*, 1668-1694), made him one of the most eminent French men of letters of the period. In 1683 he was elected to the French Academy, despite opposition from Louis XIV.

La Fontaine's work influenced many later writers. His fables are distinguished by vivid and artful narration and by the subtlety and range of their author's understanding of life. His *Tales and Novels* have as their sources *The Decameron* of Giovanni Boccaccio, *L'heptaméron* (1559; *The Heptameron*) of Margaret of Navarre, and *Les cent nouvelles nouvelles* (*One Hundred New Tales*), reputedly by Antoine de La Salle, but La Fontaine retold the stories of these earlier authors with considerable variation and with unique verve and wit. He also wrote many miscellaneous works, including poems, opera librettos, and plays; the most important of these is the romantic tale in verse and prose *The Loves of Cupid and Psyche* (1669; translated 1744). La Fontaine died on April 13, 1695, in Paris.
François de La Rochefoucauld (1613-80), French epigrammatist and moralist, born in Paris. He took a prominent part in the court life, politics, and wars of the reigns of Louis XIII and Louis XIV. La Rochefoucauld's political beliefs and his position in court intrigues were greatly influenced by his intimate friendships with distinguished noblewomen, including successively the duchesse de Chevreuse, the duchesse de Longueville, and Marie Madeleine, the comtesse de La Fayette; his intellectual life was broadened by his friendship with Marie de Rabutin-Chantal, the marquise de Sévigné. La Rochefoucauld was the author of a noted volume of memoirs, *Les mémoires sur la régence d'Anne d'Autriche* (Memoirs on the Regency of Anne of Austria, 1662). He is world famous for his *Réflexions ou sentences et maximes morales* (Reflections or Moral Thoughts and Maxims, 1665-1678), a book consisting of about 700 maxims. They are worldly yet moral and are distinguished by their brevity, clarity, fullness of meaning, and wit. La Rochefoucauld has never been surpassed in France as a writer of epigrammatic maxims.
JULES LAFORGUE

Jules Laforgue (1860-87), French symbolist poet, noted for his ironic, pessimistic point of view and his innovations in free verse. Notable among his works are *Les complaintes* (1885), *L'imitation de Notre-Dame la Lune* (Imitation of Our Lady, the Moon, 1886), and *Le concile féerique* (Magical Assembly, 1886). Laforgue's fresh imagery, loosely woven style, and coinage of new words made him an important influence on 20th-century poets.
Alphonse de Lamartine (1790-1869), French poet, man of letters, and statesman, who was a leader in the romantic movement.

Alphonse Marie Louis Prat de Lamartine was born October 21, 1790, in Mâcon, the son of a Royalist army officer. A supporter of the Bourbon restoration in 1814, he became secretary of the French embassy at Naples under Louis XVIII. During the reign of Charles X, Lamartine served in the diplomatic corps at Florence, and, under Louis Philippe, he was elected to the Chamber of Deputies. He was minister of foreign affairs in the provisional government established after the overthrow of Louis Philippe in 1848.

As a writer, Lamartine is known chiefly for his poetry, which has the romantic characteristics of conventional sentiment expressed with lyric grace and refinement, an atmosphere of gentle melancholy, and particularly effective descriptions of rural scenery. His most popular and influential volume of poems is Méditations poétiques (Poetic Meditations, 1820); other volumes are Nouvelles méditations poétiques (New Poetic Meditations, 1823), Harmonies poétiques et religieuses (Poetic and Religious Harmonies, 1830), Jocelyn (1836), La chute d'un ange (An Angel's Fall, 1838), and Recueillements (Reflections, 1839). Lamartine was also a prolific writer of fiction and of biographical, critical, and historical works. His prose works include Histoire de Girondins (1847) and the autobiographical novels Raphaël (1849) and Graziella (1852; trans. 1876). Lamartine died February 28, 1869, in Paris.
LE CORBUSIER

Le Corbusier, professional name of Charles Édouard Jeanneret (1887-1965), Swiss-French architect, painter, and writer, who had a major effect on the development of modern architecture. Born on October 6, 1887, in La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland, he received an early art education there, then studied modern building construction under Auguste Perret in Paris. Later he spent brief periods working with the German architect Josef Hoffmann. In 1922 he went into partnership in Paris as an architect with his cousin, the engineer Pierre Jeanneret, and adopted his mother's maiden name, Le Corbusier.

While practicing as an architect, Le Corbusier was also active as a painter and writer. In his painting he was associated with Amédée Ozenfant in the school of purism, one of a number of movements that grew out of cubism.

His most famous buildings include a prize-winning design for the Palace of the League of Nations, Geneva (1927-1928); the Swiss Building at the Cité Universitaire, Paris (1931-1932); Unité d'Habitation (1946-1952), an apartment house in Marseille, France; Notre-Dame-du-Haut (1950-1955), a pilgrim church in Ronchamp, France; and the High Court Buildings (1952-1956) in Chandigarh, India, part of his plan for the entire city. He was also one of the architects appointed to plan permanent buildings for the United Nations in New York City; the Secretariat, a tall, glass-sided slab, is primarily of his design. His writings include Vers une architecture (Towards a New Architecture, 1927); La maison des hommes (The Home of Man, 1942); and Quand les cathédrales étaient blanches (When the Cathedrals Were White, 1947). Le Corbusier died at Cap-Martin, France, on August 27, 1965.
Charles Marie René Leconte de Lisle (1818-94), French poet, born on the island of Réunion in the Indian Ocean, and educated chiefly at Rennes, France. After 1846 he lived in Paris, where he wrote and was assistant librarian of the Luxembourg Museum. Leconte de Lisle became a leader of the Parnassians, writers who stressed poetic discipline. His work is marked by classical correctness of style, coldness of emotion, and a pessimistic and scornfully aloof attitude toward life. It includes the volumes Poèmes antiques (Poems of Antiquity, 1852), Poèmes et poésies (Poems and Verses, 1854), Poèmes barbares (Poems of Barbarians, 1862), and Derniers poèmes (Last Poems, 1899); and the tragedy in verse, modeled on an ancient Greek tragedy, Les Erinnyes (1872). His Parnassian view of art lost favor with the advent of Charles Baudelaire and the symbolists. Leconte de Lisle was elected to the French Academy in 1886.
Alain René Lesage (1668-1747), French novelist and playwright, whose picaresque novel *L'histoire de Gil Blas de Santillane* (The Story of Gil Blas of Santillane, 1715-1735) had a strong influence on subsequent European fiction. His name is also spelled Le Sage. Born in Sarzeau, Brittany, Lesage studied law and was admitted to the bar in Paris in 1692. He decided, however, to devote himself to writing. His first successful works included the dramatic comedy *Crispin, rival de son maître* (Crispin, His Master's Rival, 1707), the novel *Le diable boiteux* (The Devil with a Limp, 1707), and the play *Turcaret* (1709), a satire remarking on financial greed. He later wrote about 100 comedies for the Théâtre de la Foire, the name given to the comic operas that were held in booths during festivals. Lesage's most important work is *L'histoire de Gil Blas de Santillane*, the satirical tale of the adventures of a Spanish rogue, which Lesage wrote in the style of the Spanish picaresque romances of the 16th and 17th centuries. The considerable influence of the book, one of the earliest significant realistic novels in European fiction, can be seen particularly in the works of English novelists Tobias Smollett and Henry Fielding.
PIERRE LOTI, PSEUDONYM OF LOUIS MARIE JULIEN VIAUD

Pierre Loti, pseudonym of Louis Marie Julien Viaud (1850-1923), French novelist and naval officer, born in Rochefort, and educated at the naval school at Brest. He rose through the ranks to become a captain in 1906, retired in 1910, and served in World War I. Loti began writing in 1876 after having traveled extensively. Some French critics consider him the initiator of modern exotic fiction. Employing a romantic and melancholy tone and a simple style, he attempted continually to evoke vicarious nostalgic experiences in his readers. His notable works are An Iceland Fisherman (1886; trans. 1887), Ramuntcho (1897; trans. 1897), and The Last Days of Pekin (1901; trans. 1902). He also wrote a number of travel books.
Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949), Belgian author, the outstanding exponent of symbolist drama and the author of *The Blue Bird* and *Pelléas and Mélisande*.

Maeterlinck was born August 29, 1862, in Ghent (Gent) and educated in law at the university there. He abandoned the legal profession when he moved to Paris in 1886 and came under the influence of the symbolist poets. Reacting against the prevailing naturalism of French literature, Maeterlinck wrote some symbolist poetry, notably *Les serres chaudes* (Hothouses, 1889). He is known principally for his plays, for which he received the 1911 Nobel Prize. He lectured in the U.S. in 1921 and spent World War II there. Maeterlinck returned to Europe following the war and died May 6, 1949, in Nice, France.

Maeterlinck's plays are characterized by clear and simple writing, by a dreamlike atmosphere, and by the suggestion rather than the direct expression of ideas and emotions. His early plays are marked by an attitude of profound melancholy and pessimism in the face of evil and death; in his later plays this attitude gives way to a belief in the redeeming power of love and in the reality of human happiness. His plays include *The Princess Maleine* (1889; trans. 1892); the melancholy fantasy masterpiece *Pelléas et Mélisande* (1892; trans. 1892), made into an opera (1902) by the French composer Claude Debussy; and *The Blue Bird* (1909; trans. 1909), which has become a classic for children. Less popular are *Monna Vanna* (1902; trans. 1904) and *The Burgomaster of Stilmonde* (1918; trans. 1918). Maeterlinck was also the author of many works in prose that deal with philosophic questions and with nature; they include *The Treasure of the Humble* (1896; trans. 1897), *The Life of the Bee* (1901; trans. 1901), and *The Intelligence of Flowers* (1907; trans. 1907).
François de Malherbe (1555-1628), French poet and critic, who laid the foundations for classical French literature. He was born in Caen and educated at the universities of Basel and Heidelberg. He was court poet to Henry IV and Louis XIII. In both his poetry and prose, Malherbe reacted against the romantic fervor and luxuriant style of the prevailing group of French poets known as the Pléiade (see Pleiad) by stressing simplicity and exactness of expression, euphony in style, and restraint in emotion. He was instrumental in making Parisian French the standard language for all France. Malherbe's own poetry foreshadowed the precision of verse later developed by the French classical poets and dramatists. His poetic works consist chiefly of lyrics, including odes to the French queen Marie de Médicis and to Louis XIII and a piece dedicated to a friend on the death of the latter's daughter. Among Malherbe's prose writings are translations of works by the Roman philosopher Seneca and the Roman historian Livy.
Stéphane Mallarmé (1842-1898), French poet, one of the originators of the symbolist movement. He was born in Paris and educated at the lycée in Sens. He taught English at the Lycée Fontanes, Paris, and translated literary works in English, notably the poems (1888) of the American poet Edgar Allan Poe. He used symbols to express truth through suggestion rather than by narration. His poetry and prose are characterized by musical quality, experimental grammar, and thought that is refined and allusive to the point of obscurity. His best-known poems are *L'après-midi d'un faune* (The Afternoon of a Faun, 1876), which inspired the prelude by the French composer Claude Debussy, and *Hérodiade* (1869). Among Mallarmé's other writings are the anthology *Vers et prose* (1893) and the volume of prose studies *Divagations* (Ramblings, 1897).

Mallarmé was noted for his conversation, which was as lucid as his writings were obscure. At his renowned Tuesday-night receptions at his home in Paris, his critical comments on literature, art, and music did much to stimulate the creative efforts of the French symbolist writers and the artists and composers of the impressionist school that developed late in the 19th century and emphasized spontaneity, as opposed to formality, of composition.
ANDRÉ MALRAUX

André Malraux (1901-1976), French novelist, archaeologist, art theorist, political activist, and public official, whose writings were major contributions to 20th-century culture.

Malraux was born November 3, 1901, into a prosperous Parisian family and educated at the School of Oriental Languages, Paris. In 1923 he went to Indochina to do archaeological research. He became active in the struggle of Annamese revolutionists to win self-rule from France, and he remained in the Orient until 1927. Malraux used his Asian experiences as background for three novels: The Conquerors (1928; trans. 1929), The Royal Way (1930; trans. 1935), and Man's Fate (1933; trans. 1934). The last-named work won the Prix Goncourt and international fame. His next novel, Days of Wrath (1935; trans. 1936), was inspired by a visit to Germany, then under the dictatorship of Adolf Hitler. His experiences as a pilot with a Loyalist air squadron during the Spanish Civil War were the basis for the novel Man's Hope (1938; trans. 1938). In World War II Malraux volunteered as a private, was captured by the Germans, escaped, and served as a colonel in the French Resistance but was recaptured.

Malraux wrote extensively about aesthetics. His Psychologie de l'art (1947-49), was published in condensed form as The Voices of Silence (1951; trans. 1953). The Metamorphosis of the Gods (trans. 1960) and Le Triangle noir (1970) are also about art.

Malraux was fully involved in the events of his time; his novels live on two levels, those of frantic action and anguished thought. The first volume of his autobiography, Anti-Memoirs, was published in 1967 (trans. 1968). His last work was Felled Oaks: Conversations with de Gaulle (1972; trans. 1972).
MARIE DE FRANCE

Marie de France (circa 1200), French poet. She is thought to have been of Norman origin and to have lived chiefly at the court of Henry II, Norman king of England. Marie wrote 12 *lais*, French medieval narrative poems that relate romantic tales of knighthood. They vary from about 100 to 12,000 lines. The *lais* are taken from Breton sources, which in turn were based on Oriental and Scandinavian sources. Several deal with Arthurian legend. Marie also wrote *Ysopet* (Little Aesop), a collection of 103 fables that she translated from English into French.
PIERRE CARLET DE CHAMBLAIN DE MARIVAUX

Pierre Carlet de Chamblain de Marivaux (1688-1763), French dramatist and novelist, whose distinctive manner of writing came to be called *marivaudage*. Born in Paris, Pierre Carlet de Chamblain de Marivaux trained as a lawyer but as a young man began a writing career. In the early 1720s he founded his own magazine, *Le spectateur français* (The French Spectator), which was inspired by the English publication *The Spectator* (edited by writers Joseph Addison and Sir Richard Steele). Marivaux later became a member of various Parisian literary salons (private gatherings of writers and intellectuals), and in 1742 he was elected a member of the French Academy.

Marivaux is well known for his comedies, which usually focus on aspects of love. They include *La surprise de l'amour* (The Surprise of Love, 1722), *Le jeu de l'amour et du hasard* (The Game of Love and Chance, 1730), and *Le legs* (The Legacy, 1736). In writing his comedies he developed a unique tone of language, called marivaudage, characterized by a strong sense of human emotion and a sophisticated attention to linguistic detail. Marivaudage was criticized by many writers of the time as an affected and artificial language. In addition to his many plays, Marivaux also wrote two unfinished novels, *La vie de Marianne* (The Life of Marianne, 1731-1741) and *Le paysan parvenu* (The Successful Peasant, 1734-1735). They are considered realistic treatments of 18th-century middle-class French life.
Jean François Marmontel (1723–1799), French novelist and dramatist. He wrote tragedies and librettos (texts) for several light operas, and he contributed articles on literature to the famous *Encyclopédie*, which contained the most advanced opinions of the day on a broad range of academic subjects. These articles were later republished as *Eléments de littérature* (Elements of Literature, 1787). In 1758 Marmontel obtained control of the journal *Le Mercure* (The Mercury), in which his *Contes moraux* (Moral Studies, 1761) appeared. Other works include the historical romances *Bélisaire* (Belisarius, 1767) and *Les Incas* (The Incas, 1777). Marmontel was appointed historiographer of France in 1771 and secretary to the Académie Française in 1783. He retired in 1792 to write his *Mémoires d'un père* (Memoirs of a Father, 1804).
Clément Marot (circa 1496-1544), French poet, born in Cahors. Writing lilting *rondeaux, ballades,* and epigrams earned Marot a good reputation and the patronage of Francis I and his sister, Margaret of Navarre. His best poems include *L'adolescence Clémentine* (1532) and *Enfer* (1542), which he wrote while exiled for heresy. He is also noted for a French translation (1541-43) of the Psalms.
ROGER MARTIN DU GARD

Roger Martin du Gard (1881-1958), French novelist, playwright, and Nobel Prize winner, whose works address the daily challenges and perplexing moral dilemmas facing ordinary people.

Martin du Gard was trained as an archivist at the École de Chartres, in Chartres, France, graduating in 1906. He studied under several psychiatrists in Paris before publishing his novel Devenir! (Becoming, 1908). His first successful novel, however, was Jean Barois (1913; translated into English in 1949), a dialogue that traces a young man's moral and intellectual conflicts regarding science and religion.

Martin du Gard's most ambitious work is the eight-volume Les Thibault (1922-1940; translated as The World of the Thibaults, 1939-1941), a complex epic novel that examines conflicting ideas viewed from multiple perspectives, contrasting the lives of the brothers Jacques and Antoine Thibault—one a revolutionary, the other a social conservative. Martin du Gard, who had a lifelong friendship with French novelist Andre Gide, edited the leading French literary journal Nouvelle Revue Francaise (New French Review). He received the Grand Prix Littéraire de la Ville de Paris for L'été (1936; part seven of Les Thibault: Summer 1914, 1940), and, in 1937 the Nobel Prize for Literature.
Guy de Maupassant (1850-1893), French novelist and short-story writer. He is deemed one of the modern masters of the art of the short story and has influenced practitioners of that genre from his time to the present.

"The Necklace" by Guy de Maupassant

Nineteenth-century French writer Guy de Maupassant, a master of the short story, became one of the most popular writers in France during his lifetime. His view of the world was ultimately grim, and many of his short stories end with a cruel twist. In “La parure” (“The Necklace”), first published in 1884, the reader is left to judge whether fate or pride leads to tragedy for Madame Loisel, a woman who yearns for a more affluent lifestyle.

Although Maupassant does not offer an explicit philosophy in his work, he portrays a consistent and honest vision. His is a grim, bleak, and pessimistic world in which human activity is futile and ultimately meaningless in a universe devoid of evidence of a merciful God. While he admired the courage and generosity of spirit of certain individuals, although they almost never belonged to the middle or upper classes, he usually depicted the human spirit as defeated by darker instincts. Thus in “Boule de suif,” a prostitute and the middle-class travelers who accompany her in a coach are caught by invading Prussians. The prostitute alone has the patriotism to resist, and then the selflessness to succumb to the advances of a Prussian officer in order to save them all. Afterward, in the coach, her companions’ attitude toward her reverts to disdain.

In “La parure” (“The Necklace”), perhaps Maupassant’s best-known story, a couple borrows a priceless diamond necklace from a friend for a ball. When the necklace is lost the couple sinks into poverty paying for an exact replica, only to discover years later from the original owner that the borrowed necklace was in fact a cheap imitation. The reader must decide if this tragedy is a result of fate or of the vanity and false pride of the borrower.

Best known for his short stories in Britain and the United States, Maupassant is generally better known in France for his novels. The best known of these are Une vie (1883; translated as A Woman’s Life, 1903), Bel-ami (1885; translated 1891), and Pierre et Jean (1888; The Two Brothers, 1890). Many critics consider the last of these his masterpiece. The work illustrates the author’s characteristically dark view of life and his keen psychological insight.
François Mauriac (1885-1970), French novelist and Nobel laureate, born in Bordeaux, and educated at the University of Bordeaux and at the École des Chartes, Paris. He began his literary career as a poet, but achieved his greatest success as a novelist. His first novels, *Le baiser au lépreux* (A Kiss for the Leper, 1922) and *Genitrix* (1923), published together in English translations as *The Family* (1930), won wide critical and popular acclaim. Later novels, including *The Desert of Love* (1925; trans. 1929), *Thérèse* (1927; trans. 1928), and *Vipers' Tangle* (1932; trans. 1933), rank among the finest works of fiction produced in the 20th century. Among Mauriac's other writings are plays, notably *Asmodée* (1938; trans. 1939), the philosophical *What I Believe* (1963; trans. 1963), the biography *De Gaulle* (1964; trans. 1966), and critical works.

A profoundly religious Roman Catholic, Mauriac was chiefly concerned in his novels with basic moral conflicts. The desires of the flesh, offering no real satisfaction, are shown in tragic opposition to an essential human longing for a spiritual life. Acutely aware of the darker sides of human nature, he is unsurpassed in his psychological analyses of men and women struggling against the evil in themselves. An extraordinary stylist, Mauriac showed a remarkable gift for evoking an emotionally charged atmosphere. He was elected to the French Academy in 1933 and awarded the 1952 Nobel Prize in literature and the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor in 1958.
ANDRÉ MAUROIS

André Maurois, original name Emile Salomon Wilhelm Herzog (1885-1967), French biographer and critic, born in Elbeuf, and educated at the University of Caen. From 1904 until the outbreak of World War I, he worked in a textile factory owned by his father. He served as a French officer in World Wars I and II.

Maurois's first work, The Silence of Colonel Bramble (1918; trans. 1920), is a fictionalized memoir of his experiences during World War I. Five years later the biography Ariel, the Life of Shelley (1923; trans. 1924) introduced a series of romanticized biographies written in an engaging popular style and relying more on imaginative interpretation than on scholarly originality. Several of these works, however, are remarkable for a high order of critical insight, notably Lelia, the Life of George Sand (1952; trans. 1953) and The Titans: A Three-Generation Biography of the Dumas (1957; trans. 1958). Maurois is the author also of An Illustrated History of France (1960), novels, and autobiographical journals. He was elected to the French Academy in 1938.
Prosper Mérimée (1803-1870), French novelist and historian, best known for his lengthy short stories, which often contain both realistic and fantastic elements. Born in Paris, Mérimée studied law before entering the civil service, eventually becoming inspector general of historical monuments. Later, through his friendship with French empress Eugénie, he became a senator during the rule of French emperor Napoleon III. Throughout Mérimée's writing career he maintained a friendship with French author Stendhal.

Mérimée's first literary work was a play, *Cromwell* (1822). He followed this with two pieces of writing, hoaxes that he successfully passed off as original works. One was a collection entitled *La théâtre de Clara Gazul* (The Theater of Clara Gazul, 1825), six plays purported to be written by a Spanish actress and translated by a figure named Joseph L'Estrange. Mérimée also wrote *La guzla* (1827), a forged collection of supposedly Illyrian folk songs. In 1829 his historical novel *La chronique du règne de Charles IX* (The Chronicle of the Reign of Charles IX) was published.

Mérimée's stories, for which he is best remembered, show aspects of both classical and romantic writing (see Classic, Classical, Classicism; Romanticism). They are known for their irony, humor, and concise and objective manner. *Mateo Falcone* (1829) addresses matters of family honor. *Le vase étrusque* (The Etruscan Vase, 1830), another prominent tale, concerns death brought about by jealousy. *La Venus d'Ille* (The Venus of Ille, 1837), which verges on the fantastic, features a statue that kills a man. *Colomba* (1840) is the tale of a Corsican soldier who is persuaded by his sister to participate in a vengeful killing. *Carmen* (1845), the story of a tragic romance between a Romni (Gypsy woman) and a Spanish military officer, served as the basis for the opera of the same name by French composer Georges Bizet. Many of Mérimée's nonfiction works, in addition to selections of his correspondence, were also published.
FRÉDÉRIC MISTRAL

Frédéric Mistral (1830-1914), French Provençal poet and Nobel laureate, born near Maillane, Bouches-du-Rhône Department. In 1854 Mistral and other writers founded the Félibrige, a society to revive the use of the Provençal language. His pastoral poem Mirèio (1859; trans. 1868), written in his native Provençal dialect, gained for him the poet's prize of the French Academy. He also wrote and compiled a Provençal-French dictionary (1878-86) and wrote several volumes of poetry, including Lis isclo d'or (The Golden Isles, 1876) and the dramatic poem La Reino Jano (Queen Joan, 1890). He shared the 1904 Nobel Prize with the Spanish writer José Echegaray y Eizaguirre.
JEAN-BAPTISTE POQUELIN

Born Jean-Baptiste Poquelin in Paris, the son of a well-to-do upholsterer who worked at the king’s court, Molière attended the Jesuit Collège de Clermont. He then turned his back on a secure future in the position he could have inherited from his father and became an actor instead. After founding the Illustre Théâtre (Illustrious Theater Company) in Paris with actors Joseph and Madeleine Béjart, he adopted the name Molière. Although the company foundered in 1645, he toured the French provinces in another troupe with the Béjarts from 1645 to 1658. During that time, Molière began writing short plays, influenced by French farce and the popular form of Italian theater known as commedia dell’arte.

In October 1658 the traveling company accepted an offer from the king of France, Louis XIV (known as the “Sun King”), to present plays in the Théâtre du Petit Bourbon, part of the Louvre palace in Paris. There Molière produced his first major comedy, Les précieuses ridicules (1659; translated as The Conceited Ladies, 1732), a satire on the extravagant manners, style, and language of contemporary women who wished to distinguish themselves through excessively refined taste and behavior.

In 1662 Molière married Armande Béjart, the much younger sister of Madeleine and also a member of his troupe. The marriage was not a happy one. This misfortune was reflected in L’école des femmes (1662; School for Wives, 1739). In this play the character Arnolphe’s efforts to shape his much younger prospective bride, Agnès, through education in a convent and his own tyrannical rules are defeated by Agnès’s natural inclination toward Horace, a man her own age.

Les précieuses ridicules and L’école des femmes were highly successful and aroused considerable jealousy among Molière’s rivals. To answer his critics and satirize them in the process, Molière wrote and produced two short discussion plays in 1663: La critique de l’école des femmes (The School for Wives Criticized, 1739) and L’impromptu de Versailles (The Impromptu of Versailles, 1739). The king supported Molière during these battles and in 1664 became godfather to his son. That same year Molière wrote the first version of Tartuffe (translated 1670), a play that satirized religious hypocrisy. It was banned from the stage through the efforts of the Roman Catholic Church. Molière wrote two more versions of the play, in 1667 and 1669, and the third version was finally produced. During these years he also wrote seven of his greatest plays, including the complex Dom Juan (1665; Don Juan, 1739); his masterpiece, Le misanthrope (1666; The Misanthrope, 1739); L’avare (1668; The Miser, 1739); and Le bourgeois gentilhomme (1670; The Would-Be Gentleman, 1739), called a comedy-ballet because it included ballet interludes as part of the narrative. In addition to writing these plays (most of which are in rhyming couplets), Molière managed the business of his company, directed all the productions, and played some of the most demanding roles.

Molière’s last great plays were Les femmes savantes (1672; The Learned Ladies, 1739) and Le malade imaginaire (1673; The Hypochondriac, 1739). Ironically, Molière, who had been grievously ill for some time, played the role of the hypochondriac in his last play, fell mortally ill during the fourth performance, and died an hour after being taken home.
MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE

Michel de Montaigne (1533-92), French writer, who introduced the essay as a literary form. His essays, which range over a wide variety of topics, are characterized by a discursive style, a lively conversational tone, and the use of numerous quotations from classical writers.

Michel Eyquem de Montaigne was born February 28, 1533, in the Château de Montaigne (near Libourne) of a wealthy family, and educated at the Collège de Guyenne. He studied law, probably in Toulouse. His first literary undertaking was a translation, published in 1569, of *Theologia Naturalis* by the Spanish theologian Raymond of Sebond.

In 1571 Montaigne inherited the family estate, including the Château de Montaigne. He spent most of the rest of his life there, following the pursuits of a country gentleman, studying his favorite classical authors, and writing the essays that constitute his great collection, *Essais*. The first two books of his work appeared in 1580. Subsequently, Montaigne traveled in Germany, Italy, and Switzerland. After his return, he served two terms (1581-85) as mayor of Bordeaux. He wrote a third book of essays, which was included in the 1588 edition of *Essais*. During his last years Montaigne remained in retirement except for visits to Paris and Rouen. His only other work is an account of his travels that appeared in 1774.

As a thinker Montaigne is noted for his investigation of institutions, opinions, and customs and for his opposition to all forms of dogmatism that have no rational basis. Montaigne observed life with philosophical skepticism; he emphasized the contradictions and incoherences inherent in human nature and behavior. His basic morality tended towards Epicureanism, however, revealing the attitudes of a scholar and humanist who refused to be enslaved by passions and desires. His longest essay, *Apologie de Raymond de Sebond*, is an inquiry into the rational powers and religious aspirations of the individual.

Montaigne’s view on most subjects is conservative. In literature and philosophy he admired the ancient writers, and in politics he preferred monarchy as the form of government most likely to ensure peace and order. On education, Montaigne, who was interested in the training of the aristocrat, held that the pupil should be taught the art of living. This art is mastered through developing the powers of observation and conversation and through travel. Reading should serve to aid in arriving at correct judgments and not in merely improving the memory. Montaigne insisted on rigorous physical training as part of the development of the whole person, mind and body.
BARON DE MONTESQUIEU

Baron de Montesquieu (1689-1755), French writer and jurist. Charles Louis de Secondat, Baron de la Brède et de Montesquieu, was born in the Château of la Brède and educated at the Oratorian school at Juilly and later at Bordeaux. He became counselor of the Bordeaux parliament in 1714 and was its president from 1716 to 1728. Montesquieu first became prominent as a writer with his *Persian Letters* (1721; trans. 1961); in this work, through the device of letters written to and by two aristocratic Persian travelers in Europe, Montesquieu satirized contemporary French politics, social conditions, ecclesiastical matters, and literature. The book won immediate and wide popularity; it was one of the earliest works of the movement known as the Enlightenment, which, by its criticism of French institutions under the Bourbon monarchy, helped bring about the French Revolution. The reputation acquired by Montesquieu through this work and several others of lesser importance led to his election to the French Academy in 1728. His second significant work was *Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur et de la décadence des Romains* (Thoughts on the Causes of the Greatness and the Downfall of the Romans, 1734), one of the first important works in the philosophy of history. His masterpiece was *The Spirit of Laws* (1748; trans. 1750), in which he examined the three main types of government (republic, monarchy, and despotism) and states that a relationship does exist between an area's climate, geography, and general circumstances and the form of government that evolves. Montesquieu also held that governmental powers should be separated and balanced to guarantee individual rights and freedom.
HENRY MARIE JOSEPH MILLON DE MONTERLANT

Henry Marie Joseph Millon de Montherlant (1896-1972), French novelist and dramatist. Montherlant was an ardent nationalist and sportsman and a sensualist who combined the values of paganism and Christianity. He was noted for his literary championship of aristocratic, virile values and for his contempt for the weakness he saw in French democracy. Montherlant's chief contribution to French fiction was a cycle of four novels (1936-1939) published in English as Pity for Women (1937) and Costals & the Hippogriff (1940). His reputation as a playwright is based on his numerous, usually historical, dramas.
ALFRED DE MUSSET

Alfred de Musset (1810-1857), French poet of the romantic movement, born in Paris, where he briefly studied law and medicine. His first collection of verse, *Contes d'Espagne et d'Italie* (Romances of Spain and Italy, 1829), was successfully published when he was 19 years old. His first play, *Nuit Venitienne* (Venetian Night, 1830), was a failure, but *Les caprices de Marianne* (The Caprices of Marianne, 1833) and *On ne badine pas avec l'amour* (No Trifling with Love, 1834) are witty, romantic, and bittersweet comedies of manners that have remained in the classic repertory of French theater. In 1833 he met and fell in love with the French writer George Sand. He traveled with her to Italy, but after a prolonged series of quarrels he returned to France alone in 1834. His autobiographical novel *La confession d'un enfant du siècle* (Confessions of a Child of the Century, 1836) deals with this relationship as well as with the author's artistic and political philosophy of disillusionment.

 Critics usually point to his lyrics as de Musset's most important work. These include the four well-known *Nights* (“La nuit de mai,” “La nuit de décembre,” “La nuit d'août,” and “La nuit d'octobre”), first published between 1835 and 1837 in the periodical *Revue des Deux Mondes*. In English, *The Complete Works of Alfred de Musset* was published in a ten-volume edition in 1905.
Gérard de Nerval, pseudonym of Gérard Labrunie (1808-55), French symbolist writer. His use of dreams and fantasies to show the interrelation of the ordinary and supernatural worlds had some influence on surrealism. Auriéla (1853-54), a prose work, blends the themes of lost love and religious salvation. The stories in Des filles du feu (1854; trans. in part as Daughters of Fire, 1922), notably “Sylvie,” are eerie reminiscences of lost youth and lost beauty. The sonnets in Les chimères (1854) are dominated by a sense of despair, for Nerval suffered from severe mental depression and committed suicide the following year.
PARNASSIANS

Parnassians, group of 19th-century French poets, influenced by the work of Théophile Gautier. They were called Parnassians based on the name of their journal, *Le Parnasse Contemporain* (The Contemporary Parnassus, 1866-76). Prominent among them was Charles Marie René Leconte de Lisle. In reaction to romanticism, the Parnassians were devoted to the doctrine of art for art's sake, writing verse on exotic subjects, characterized by meticulous craftsmanship. They were succeeded by the symbolists. See French Literature
BLAISE PASCAL

Blaise Pascal (1623-62), French philosopher, mathematician, and physicist, considered one of the great minds in Western intellectual history.

Pascal: From *Pensées*

“If you win you win everything, if you lose you lose nothing.” Such was the reasoning of the 17th-century French mathematician, philosopher, and physicist Blaise Pascal on why he chose to believe in God. This well-known passage from Pascal’s *Thoughts on Religion and on Other Subjects* (1670), or *Pensées*, is called “Pascal’s Wager.” Generally considered one of the most brilliant minds in the history of Western civilization, Pascal was also a prominent adherent of Jansenism, a sect of Roman Catholicism that emphasized predestination.

Pascal espoused Jansenism and in 1654 entered the Jansenist community at Port Royal, where he led a rigorously ascetic life until his death eight years later. In 1656 and 1657 he wrote the famous 18 *Lettres provinciales* (Provincial Letters), in which he attacked the Jesuits for their attempts to reconcile 16th-century naturalism with orthodox Roman Catholicism. His most positive religious statement appeared posthumously (he died August 19, 1662); it was published in fragmentary form in 1670 as *Apologie de la religion Chrétienne* (Apology of the Christian Religion). In these fragments, which later were incorporated into his major work, he posed the alternatives of potential salvation and eternal damnation, with the implication that only by conversion to Jansenism could salvation be achieved. Pascal asserted that whether or not salvation was achieved, humanity's ultimate destiny is an afterlife belonging to a supernatural realm that can only be known intuitively. Pascal's final important work was *Pensées sur la religion et sur quelques autres sujets* (Thoughts on Religion and on Other Subjects), also published in 1670. In the *Pensées* Pascal attempted to explain and justify the difficulties of human life by the doctrine of original sin, and he contended that revelation can be comprehended only by faith, which in turn is justified by revelation. Pascal's writings urging acceptance of the Christian life contain frequent applications of the calculations of probability; he reasoned that the value of eternal happiness is infinite and that although the probability of gaining such happiness by religion may be small it is infinitely greater than by any other course of human conduct or belief. A reclassification of the *Pensées*, a careful work begun in 1935 and continued by several scholars, does not reconstruct the *Apologie*, but allows the reader to follow the plan that Pascal himself would have followed.
Charles Pierre Péguy (1873-1914), French poet and essayist, considered one of the foremost modern Roman Catholic writers. He was the founder of *Cahiers de la Quinzaine* (Fortnightly Notebooks, 1900-14), a periodical that published the work of many significant writers of the period. Dedicated to the cause of social justice, he was a staunch supporter of the French army officer Alfred Dreyfus. Péguy himself was killed in action at the Battle of the Marne in World War I.

Outstanding among Péguy's powerful, chantlike religious verse, devoted to the theme of spirituality in action, is *The Mystery of the Charity of Joan of Arc* (1910; trans. 1950). Among numerous translations of his collected works is *God Speaks* (1945).
Charles Perrault (1628-1703), French writer, born in Paris. He practiced law for a time but after 1683 devoted himself to a literary career. His poem *Siècle de Louis le Grand* (The Age of Louis XIV, 1687), in which he argued that the arts and sciences had come to their full flowering in 17th-century France, touched off a literary controversy; his point of view was opposed by those who upheld the superiority of ancient Greek and Roman culture. Perrault is best remembered, however, for the fairy tales, including such favorites as *Cinderella* and *Sleeping Beauty*, that he set down, from oral tradition, in *Stories or Tales from Olden Times* (1697; trans. 1729). Based on the frontispiece to the original edition, which bore the inscription “Contes de ma mère l'oye,” these are also known as *Tales of Mother Goose*. 
SAINT-JOHN PERSE

Saint-John Perse, pseudonym of Alexis Saint-Léger Léger (1887-1975), French poet, diplomat, and Nobel laureate, born on one of the islands constituting the French overseas department of Guadeloupe. Léger was educated at the universities of Bordeaux and Paris. He entered the French diplomatic service in 1914. He served as secretary general of the ministry of foreign affairs from 1932 until 1940, when he was dismissed because of his stand against appeasement of Germany. Léger exiled himself to the United States in 1941.

Under his pseudonym, Saint-John Perse, Léger was awarded the 1960 Nobel Prize in literature. Although his poetic output was small and its popularity limited because of its complexity and obscurity of style, he was much admired by critics and by other poets. Among his works, which deal chiefly with the themes of solitude and exile, are: *Eloges and Other Poems* (1911; trans. 1944), a collection of his earliest, chiefly symbolist verse; *Anabase* (1924), which reflects the epic tradition and which was translated into English by the American-British poet T. S. Eliot and published as *Anabasis* (1930); *Exile and Other Poems* (1942; trans. 1949); *Seamarks* (1957; trans. 1958); and *Birds* (1962; trans. 1966).
CHRISTINE DE PISAN

Christine de Pisan (1364-1430?), French poet, prose writer, and humanist, born in Venice, Italy. Her childhood was spent at the court of the French king Charles V, and she later wrote his biography. After ten years of marriage to the court secretary, Étienne du Castel, she became a widow at the age of 25. Thereafter, she worked to support her family by writing. Her first poems, ballades of lost love, were immediately popular. Prose works defending women include Épître au dieu d'amour (Letter to the God of Love, 1399), which was written to counter courtly love attitudes, and The Book of the City of Ladies (1405; tr. 1982), an account of heroic deeds of women. An autobiography, La vision de Christine (Christine's Vision, 1405), was written in reply to her detractors. One of her last works is Ditié en l'honneur de Jeanne d'Arc (Song in Honor of Joan of Arc, 1429).
ABBÉ PREVOST

Abbé Prevost (1697-1763), French novelist, born in Hesdin, and educated there at a Jesuit school. He was ordained a priest in the Benedictine Order in 1726 but abandoned the order two years later and lived several years in England and Holland. He is best known as the author of Mémoires et aventures d'un homme de qualité (Memoirs and Adventures of a Man of Quality, 7 volumes, 1728-31), the seventh volume of which is Histoire du chevalier des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut (1731), popularly known as Manon Lescaut. This novel chronicles with sympathy and honesty the tragic romance of a young aristocrat and a luckless courtesan; it inspired two popular operas, Manon (1884), by the French composer Jules Massenet, and Manon Lescaut (1893), by the Italian composer Giacomo Puccini. His several books with English themes and his translations of the novels of the British novelist Samuel Richardson, including Pamela (1742) and Clarissa (1751), stimulated French interest in English literature.
PIERRE JOSEPH PROUDHON

Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809-65), French writer and political theorist, sometimes referred to as the father of modern anarchism.

Proudhon was born in Besançon on January 15, 1809. Belonging to a poor family, he received scholarships that enabled him to study and to write. In his pamphlet *What Is Property?* (1840; trans. 1876), Proudhon condemned the abuses of concentrated economic power and private property. His radical theories made him popular as an anarchist thinker, and he was elected to the constituent assembly after the Revolution of 1848. In the assembly, his proposal to levy antiproperty tax on rent and interest was defeated. He also attempted to found a people's bank at which credit would be provided to borrowers without interest.

Proudhon opposed the view of the French utopian socialists François Fourier and Claude Rouvroy, comte de Saint-Simon, on the ground that society could not be transformed in accordance with a preconceived plan.

Proudhon was imprisoned from 1849 to 1852 for criticizing Louis Napoleon. After his release he lived in exile in Belgium. After being pardoned (1862), he returned to France in broken health and died on January 19, 1865.

Proudhon’s greatest work is generally considered his *System of Economic Contradictions; or, The Philosophy of Misery* (1846; trans., vol. 1, 1888). Other major works are *Les idées révolutionnaires* (Revolutionary Ideas, 1849), *De la justice dans la révolution et dans l'église* (Of Justice in the Revolution and in the Church, 3 volumes, 1858), and *De la capacité politique des classes ouvrières* (Of the Political Capacity of the Working Classes, 1863).
MARCEL PROUST

Marcel Proust (1871-1922), French writer, creator of the 16-volume À la recherche du temps perdu (1913-27), the lengthy cyclic novel known in English as Remembrance of Things Past (1922-31) and regarded as one of the greatest achievements in world literature.

Proust was born July 10, 1871, in Paris, of a well-to-do family and educated at the Lycée Condorcet. As a young man he studied law, but gave it up after a brief time to mingle with Parisian fashionable society and to write. His first work, a collection of essays and stories titled Pleasures and Regrets (1896; trans. 1948), was not notable, but the impressions he gathered in salons provided the material for this book and were used to greater effect in his later work. At the age of 35, Proust, a victim of asthma since childhood, became a chronic invalid. He spent the rest of his life as a recluse, almost never leaving his cork-lined room, and worked on his masterpiece, the vast À la recherche du temps perdu. Proust died November 18, 1922, before the final three volumes of the novel, which comprises seven related books, had been published. In Proust’s novel the physical life and, more particularly, the life of the mind of a man of leisure moving in elegant society are described in minute detail. The entire work is written as an interior monologue in the first person and is in many respects autobiographical. The first part, Swann’s Way (1913; trans. 1928), published initially at Proust’s own expense, failed to attract attention. Five years later the second part, Within a Budding Grove (1919; trans. 1922), was a great success and won the prestigious Prix Goncourt. The third and fourth parts, The Guermantes Way (2 volumes, 1920-21; trans. 1925) and Cities of the Plain (2 volumes, 1921-22; trans. 1927), were also well received. The three final parts, left in manuscript form at Proust’s death, were published posthumously: The Captive (1923; trans. 1929), The Sweet Cheat Gone (2 volumes, 1925; trans. 1930), and Time Regained (2 volumes, 1927; trans. 1932).

The importance of Proust’s novel lies not so much in his descriptions of changing French society as in the psychological development of characters and in his philosophical preoccupation with time.
FRANÇOIS RABELAIS

François Rabelais (1494?-1553), French writer, whose boisterous satirical work, with its emphasis on individual liberty and its enthusiasm for knowledge and life, is a vigorous expression of Renaissance humanism.

Rabelais was born in Chinon, Touraine. His father, Antoine Rabelais, lord of Lerné, was a prosperous lawyer of Chinon. Tradition records that François began his studies at the Benedictine abbey of Seuilly. Later, as a Franciscan friar at Fontenay-le-Comte in Poitou, he continued to study Greek, despite the opposition of the ecclesiastical faculty of the Sorbonne. After further studies at another Benedictine house and at various universities, including Paris and Montpellier, he went to Lyon, then an intellectual center, where he practiced medicine and published a reprint of the Aphorisms of the ancient Greek physician Hippocrates. At the same time he expressed his sense of humor writing popular almanacs making sport of astrology.

Pantagruel (1532), Rabelais’s first great work, is the life story of a lusty young giant of great strength and appetites. It had its origins in an anonymous contemporary book entitled Les grandes et inestimables cronicques du grand et énorme géant Gargantua (The Grand and Inestimable Chronicles of the Grand and Enormous Giant Gargantua). In 1534 Rabelais published La vie très horrificque du grand Gargantua (The Very Frightful Life of the Grand Gargantua), the story of Pantagruel’s father. Both books, printed under the pseudonym Alcofribas Nasier, had prodigious success, although they were condemned by the Sorbonne.

Following two trips to Italy, Rabelais resided and taught at Montpellier. In 1540 he moved to Paris. During this time he was writing his third book in the series. The first two books were read to Francis I, who was so pleased with them that he granted a license for the publication of the third, Tiers Livre, which appeared in 1546. Quart Livre followed in 1552. In 1547 Francis died, and a reaction against liberty of thought immediately began. Rabelais fled to Metz, and then to Rome. He subsequently became curate of Meudon, where he spent the remainder of his life quietly. Rabelais died in Paris, probably on April 9, 1553.
JEAN RACINE

Jean Racine (1639-1699), French dramatist, considered the greatest writer of French classical tragedy.

Jean Baptiste Racine was born December 22, 1639, in La Ferté-Milon, the son of a tax official. He was educated at the Collège de Beauvais, the Jansenist Convent at Port Royal, and the Collège d'Harcourt in Paris. The intellectual, rigorously moralistic Jansenist philosophy became one of the greatest influences in Racine's life. Another influence was the Greek and Latin classics; he was able to read fluently and annotate his favorite authors, Euripides and Sophocles, in the original Greek.

While a student in Paris after 1658, Racine composed conventional poetry and became friendly with important literary figures, among whom was the French poet Jean de La Fontaine. Under pressure from his family, Racine left Paris in 1661 and began to study for the priesthood in the town of Uzès. He returned to Paris in 1662 or 1663 to resume his literary career and soon gained a place among the most famous French writers of the time, including Molière, Pierre Corneille, and Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux; the last particularly influenced his work. Racine's first play, La Thébaïde (The Thebaid), was performed at the Palais-Royal by members of Molière's company in 1664, and his second, Alexandre, was performed the following year. Convinced that his second work had been badly presented, Racine transferred the play to the rival company at the Hôtel de Burgundy, which thereafter produced all his plays.

During the next ten years, Racine wrote seven great tragedies that are considered masterpieces, the themes all adapted from Greek and Roman literature. These tragedies are Andromaque (1667), Britannicus (1669), Bérénice (1670), Bajazet (1672), Mithridate (1673), Iphigenie (1674), and Phèdre (1677). The success of Phèdre was marred by Racine's enemies, who commissioned a lesser French poet, Nicolas Pradon, to write a rival Phèdre that met with greater success than Racine's version. Except for his one comedy, Les Plaideurs (The Suitors, 1668), a satire on lawyers set in contemporary Paris, all Racine's work concerns the heroes and heroines of antiquity, their words and emotions adapted to 17th-century France. His last dramatic works were the biblical tragedies Esther (1689) and Athalie (1691).
Ernest Renan (1823-1892), French philologist and historian of religion. In his youth, Renan studied for the Roman Catholic priesthood, but later broke with the church. His widely read *Life of Jesus* (1863; trans. 1863), which caused great controversy in France because of its unorthodox point of view, formed the first part of his *History of the Origins of Christianity* (8 volumes, 1863-1883; trans., 5 volumes, 1888-1890). In 1878 Renan was elected to the French Academy, and in 1883 he was made director of the Collège de France, a post he retained until his death. His many other works include *Recollections of My Youth* (1883; trans. 1883) and *History of the People of Israel* (5 volumes, 1887-1893; trans. 1888-1896). Renan approached religion as a rationalist and humanist, using contemporary historical findings in a field long restricted by tradition. His writings are valued today more for their literary style than for their erudition.
ARTHUR RIMBAUD

Arthur Rimbaud (1854-1891), French poet of the symbolist school. He was born and educated in Charleville, Ardennes Department. He exhibited great intellectual precocity and wrote verse at the age of ten. When he was 17, he composed the strikingly original poem, “The Drunken Boat” (1871; trans. 1941), which he submitted to the older poet Paul Verlaine. This work, which set the tone of the entire symbolist, or decadent, movement, so impressed Verlaine that he entreated the author to move to Paris. Later, accompanied by Verlaine, he went to England and then to Belgium. In Belgium, Verlaine, with whom Rimbaud had a stormy relationship, tried twice to take the life of the younger poet, wounding him seriously in the second attempt. Rimbaud wrote an allegorical account of the matter in A Season in Hell (1873; trans. 1932).

In 1880 Rimbaud became a trader in North Africa, with headquarters at Hārer and Shoa, central Abyssinia. Verlaine, under the impression that Rimbaud was no longer alive, published the latter's poems in Illuminations (1886; trans. 1932). This work contains the famous Sonnet des voyelles (Sonnet of the Vowels), in which each of the five vowels is associated with a different color. In 1891 Rimbaud returned to France for medical treatment of a tumor on his knee; he died in a hospital at Marseille. On the strength of a few poems that he wrote between the ages of 10 and 20, Rimbaud ranks as one of the most original of all French poets.
Robbe-Grillet’s first novel, *Les Gommes* (published in 1953; translated into English as *The Erasers*, 1964), retells the Oedipus story under the complicated disguise of mystery. It contains most of the author’s characteristic techniques and is considered the key to his entire work. Robbe-Grillet began to gain a reputation with the publication of *Le Voyeur* (1955; *The Voyeur*, 1958), a portrayal of the hypnotic obsessions of a pervert, and *La Jalousie* (1957; *Jealousy*, 1959), which is often considered his most successful novel. *La Jalousie* has almost no action. It contains meticulously detailed descriptions of inanimate objects and reduces the characters to initials. The narrator is an unmentioned recording eye, detached in tone but obsessively involved with objects and events related to his wife’s affair with another man. The time sequence of the narrative is disrupted by endless repetitions of the same episodes. Robbe-Grillet’s fourth novel, *Dans le Labyrinthe* (1959; *In the Labyrinth*, 1960), is a nightmarish evocation of the modern city, a theme echoed in *Project pour une révolution à New York* (1970; *Project for a Revolution in New York*, 1972) and in *Topologie d’une Cité Fantôme* (1976; *Topology of a Phantom City*, 1977).

In the early 1960s Robbe-Grillet turned to motion pictures, first with the screenplay for director Alain Resnais’s *L’Année dernière à Marienbad* (1961; *Last Year at Marienbad*), published as a “cinenovel” in 1961, then with the text of Robbe-Grillet’s own film *L’Immortelle* (1963; *The Immortal One*), a mystery set in İstanbul, Turkey, that the author directed himself. While he returned to writing fiction in 1965, with *La Maison de rendez-vous* (translated 1966), he continued to make films.

Robbe-Grillet’s preeminence among French new novelists was partly due to the forcefulness of his theoretical statements. In various writings, collected in 1963 under the general title *Pour un Nouveau Roman* (*For a New Novel*, 1965), he called for an end to the traditional novel, whose clearly defined plot and well-rounded hero no longer correspond to the individual’s marginal position in the modern world. Instead, Robbe-Grillet advocated the need to “cleanse literature of anthropomorphic distortions,” that is, to describe nature and things as they really are, in objective and, especially, visual terms, without projecting human feelings onto them. Reflecting this view, his novels have been characterized as *chosiste*, or “thing-oriented.”

Beginning in the middle of the 1960s Robbe-Grillet, both in essays and in fiction, moved toward a new humanism, stressing the creative power of the imagination. The perceiving, remembering minds of his characters became increasingly free to mix reality and dreams, the past, present, and future, and logic and irrationality, all of which are equivalent in the mind’s imaginary world. Amid the apparent confusion, it is nevertheless possible to distinguish motifs and well-organized networks of imagery, often of an erotic nature.

Other works by Robbe-Grillet include *Djinn* (1981; *Djinn*, 1982); *Angélique, ou, L’Enchantement* (1987); *Les derniers jours de Corinthe* (1994); and *La reprise* (2001; *Repetition*, 2003). In his novel *La belle captive* (1975; *Belle Captive*, 1994), several dozen artworks by Belgian surrealist painter René Magritte are accompanied by stories that—directly or indirectly—elucidate the works or reflect on them.
ERIC ROHMER

Eric Rohmer, born in 1920, French motion-picture director, screenwriter, and critic, whose films are often concerned with the psychology of self-deception. He was born Jean-Maurice Henri Schérer in Nancy, France. Part of the French New Wave, his works include Ma nuit chez Maud (My Night at Maud's, 1969), Le genou de Claire (Claire's Knee, 1970), Die marquise von O (The Marquise of O, 1976), and Conte d'été (A Tale of Summer, 1996).

During the German occupation of France, Rohmer wrote a novel under the pen name Gilbert Cordier. He cofounded the Gazette du cinéma in 1950 with film directors Jean-Luc Godard and Jacques Rivette. That same year he made his directorial debut with the short Journal of a Scoundrel. In 1951 Rohmer joined the staff of the journal Cahiers du cinéma. He became one of the journal’s most perceptive critics, and he edited the journal from 1956 to 1963. He also cowrote a study of Alfred Hitchcock with director Claude Chabrol.

Rohmer made his feature debut with La signe du lion (The Sign of Leo, 1959). In this work he developed the economical, philosophical, and conversational style that has characterized all his films—a style he called ‘a cinema of thoughts rather than actions.’

Romain Rolland (1866-1944), French author and Nobel laureate, born in Clamecy, and educated at the École Normale Supérieure, where he later taught the history of art. He also taught the history of music at the Sorbonne. His most famous work is *Jean Christophe* (10 volumes, 1904-12; trans. 1910-13), a partly autobiographical novel about a German composer that criticized the society of his time; it won him the 1915 Nobel Prize in literature. As a pacifist, he exiled himself to Switzerland (1914-37), where he wrote the controversial essay *Above the Battle* (1915; trans. 1916) during World War I. His other works include the play *The Wolves* (1898; trans. 1937), based on the Dreyfus affair; the biography *Vie de Beethoven* (1903; trans. 1907); and the political novel series *The Soul Enchanted* (1922-33; trans. 1925-34). His *Memoires* (1956) and letters reveal him as a mystic and idealist dedicated to the causes of intellectual freedom and world peace.
JULES ROMAINS

Jules Romains, pseudonym of LOUIS FARIGOULE (1885-1972), French writer, who was a leader of the unanimist movement. He was born in Saint-Julien Chapteuil, in the Cévennes region, and educated in science and philosophy at the École Normale Supérieure in Paris. He taught philosophy (1909-1919) before devoting his life to writing. Romains published nearly 100 titles. His work expresses his unanimist philosophy that humans must be regarded as social creatures, not as individuals. His books are distinguished by a panoramic vision that enabled him to describe, with a strong sense of irony, different strata of society in almost reportorial detail and clarity. His views first appear in La vie unanime (The Unanimist Life, 1908), a volume of poetry. The most comprehensive statement of his philosophy is his monumental study of French life and thought in the years 1908-1933, a series of novels entitled Men of Good Will (27 volumes, 1932-1946; trans. 1933-1946). Romains’s other notable works include Doctor Knock (1923; trans. 1925), a farce that has become a modern classic, and the novels The Death of a Nobody (1910; trans. 1914) and The Boys in the Back Room (1913; trans. 1938).
PIERRE DE RONSARD

Pierre de Ronsard (1524-1585), French poet of the Pléiade (see Pleiad). He was born near Vendôme and trained as a royal page and then a squire but became deaf and turned to books. In 1544 he went to Paris, where he studied with the French classicist Jean Dorat at the Collège Coqueret. At this time Ronsard and others, including the French poet Joachim du Bellay, formed the famous Pléiade, a group of writers dedicated to reforming French language and literature. Ronsard first published *Odes* (5 volumes, 1550, 1552), scholarly poems modeled after those of the classical Greek poet Pindar and the Roman poet Horace. In 1552 *Amours de Cassandre* (Loves of Cassandra), a sequence of graceful love sonnets influenced by the Italian poet Petrarch, followed. These works made Ronsard famous, and he continued to write in both styles, publishing *Continuation des amours* in 1555 and *Hymnes* in 1556. He enjoyed the friendship of the French king Charles IX. Ronsard's epic *La Franciad* (1572), about the origins of the French nation, was left unfinished. His best-known love poems were the melancholy *Sonnets for Helene* (1578; trans. 1934).
EDMOND ROSTAND

Edmond Rostand (1868-1918), French author of romantic plays, mostly in verse, that provided strong roles for several generations of actors. He was born in Marseille. His first drama, Les romanesques (The Romantics), was produced in Paris in 1894, and its story of innocent young love was adapted in The Fantasticks (1960), an American musical with the longest run in theatrical history.

Rostand achieved international fame with Cyrano de Bergerac (1897), a brilliant verse play based on the life of an actual person. Cyrano has become a theatrical classic. The title role—that of a long-nosed, star-crossed poet—has been performed by many famous actors, including Benoît Constant Coquelin (1898) and Gérard Depardieu (1990), from France; and Richard Mansfield (1898), Walter Hampden (1923), and José Ferrer (1946), from the United States. Rostand's next play, L'aiglon (The Eaglet, 1900), had for its hero the unhappy son of Napoleon. The role was first played by the French actor Sarah Bernhardt. In 1910 the fantasy Chantecler, Rostand's last play, was performed with French actor Sacha Guitry in the title part, and the role was played in the original English production by American actor Maude Adams.
Marquis de Sade, familiar designation for Donatien Alphonse François, comte de Sade (1740-1814), French writer of novels, plays, and philosophical treatises, best known for his long-suppressed erotic works. He was born in Paris and fought in the French army during the Seven Years' War. In 1772 he was tried and sentenced to death for a series of sexual crimes. He escaped to Italy, but on his return to Paris in 1777 he was arrested and imprisoned at Vincennes. After six years at Vincennes he was removed to the Bastille and in 1789 to the Charenton lunatic asylum. He was released from the asylum in 1790 but arrested again in 1801. He was moved from prison to prison and in 1803 again incarcerated at Charenton, where he died.

In many of his writings, which include *The Story of Juliette* (6 volumes, 1797; trans. 1958-59) and *The Bedroom Philosophers* (1795; trans. 1953), de Sade described in detail various sexual activities that he himself practiced. Consequently, the term *sadism*, used by psychiatrists to denote that form of neurosis wherein sexual satisfaction is gained by the infliction of pain on others, is derived from his name. In his philosophy, both criminal and sexually deviant acts are regarded as natural. His works were therefore labeled obscene, and their publication was banned well into the 20th century.
FRANÇOISE SAGAN

Françoise Sagan (1935-2004), French writer whose glamorous lifestyle and elegant novels and plays made her a bestselling author and fashionable public figure.

Born Françoise Quoirez in the village of Cajarc, Sagan was a very bright but unruly student who was expelled from several schools. In 1953 she attended the Sorbonne (University of Paris) but failed her exams, chiefly because of her active nightlife in the clubs of Paris. Shortly after leaving the university that year, she wrote her first novel at age 18.

The book, *Bonjour tristesse* (Hello Sadness, 1954; translated 1955), catapulted Sagan to celebrity and won the coveted Prix des Critiques. The novel’s 17-year-old female protagonist, who relishes the experience of losing her virginity and has a questionable relationship with her playboy father, shocked middle-class French society. The story enthralled a younger generation of readers, who were searching for a way to live with a feeling of emptiness brought on by the hardships of World War II (1939-1945). The breathless pleasure-seeking of Sagan’s own life and that of her characters met this need.

Sagan’s fiction revolves around upper-middle-class French society and its sexual life, leisure activities, and hypocrisies. Her distinctive style displays a sweet, melancholic, detached tone evident in the novels *Un certain sourire* (1956; *A Certain Smile*, 1956) and *Aimez-vous Brahms?* (1959; translated 1960). She was also known for the wit of her theatrical dialogue, as in her best-known play, *Château en Suède* (Chateau in Sweden, 1960).

Sagan also wrote song lyrics and screenplays. Her works inspired several motion pictures, including Goodbye Again (1961), based on *Aimez-vous Brahms?*.

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (1900-1944), French writer and aviator. Antoine Marie Jean-Baptiste Roger de Saint-Exupéry was born in Lyon and educated at the University of Fribourg. He joined the French air force in 1921 and became a commercial pilot in 1926.

His first two books, *Southern Mail* (1929; translated 1933) and *Night Flight* (1931; translated 1932), are novels distinguished by a poetic evocation of the romance and discipline of flying, which requires devotion to duty at the risk of death. His later works, including *Wind, Sand and Stars* (1939; translated 1939) and *Flight to Arras* (1942; translated 1942), stress the humanistic philosophy of Saint-Exupéry. His popular children’s book *The Little Prince* (1943; translated 1943) is also read by adults for its allegorical meaning.

During World War II, Saint-Exupéry rejoined the French air force, was shot down, escaped to the United States, and later joined the Free French forces. On a reconnaissance mission over southern France in 1944, his plane was lost. The remains of the aircraft were not found until 2004 when scuba divers recovered a tailpiece bearing the serial number of the aircraft Saint-Exupéry was flying, a Lockheed P-38 Lightning. The cause of the crash, which occurred about 5 km (3 mi) off the French coast, between the cities of Marseille and Cassis, is still unknown. Saint-Exupéry’s notebooks, collected under the title *Wisdom of the Sands* (1948; translated 1950), were published posthumously.
Louis de Rouvroy, Duc de Saint-Simon (1675-1755), French writer of memoirs, born in Paris. He served in the French army until 1702, when he established himself at the court of Louis XIV at Versailles. From 1694 to 1723 Saint-Simon recorded his observations of court life, which subsequently formed the basis of his *Mémoires*, written between 1739 and 1751 and published in 1839. Publication began in the 1780s, but the definitive edition (in 41 volumes) only appeared starting in 1879; selections from the voluminous work appeared in an English translation in 1958. Saint-Simon's account of the court of the French monarch is considered a classic of eloquent French prose, if digressive and partisan. Especially noted for its vivid character sketches, it provides a detailed picture of that period in French history.
Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve (1804-1869), French writer and literary critic, whose works revolutionized methods of French literary criticism. Sainte-Beuve was born in Boulogne and educated in Paris at the Collège Charlemagne and the Collège Bourbon. In 1827 he began a friendship with the romantic writer Victor Hugo and wrote the first of many articles sympathetic to the works of the romantic movement. In 1828 he published a group of literary portraits of French authors of the past, including Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux and Pierre Corneille. A series of lectures he gave on the Jansenist movement of the 17th century was later published under the title *L'histoire de Port-Royal* (1840-1859). He was elected to the French Academy in 1844. In 1849 he began to write a column on current literary topics that appeared first in the Monday editions of the newspaper *Le Constitutionnel*; these famous articles were eventually collected as *Monday Chats* (15 volumes, 1851-1862; trans. 1877).

Sainte-Beuve covered every genre of literature in his attempt to replace unqualified admiration and prejudice with exacting scholarship and sensitive discrimination. He also wrote several volumes of poetry, including *Les consolations* (1831), and an autobiographical novel, *Volupté* (1834).
GEORGE SAND

George Sand (1804-1876), pseudonym of Amandine Aurore Lucile, Baronne Dudevant, French novelist of the romantic movement, whose irregular life and many love affairs shocked Parisian society.

Sand was born in Paris on July 1, 1804, the daughter of a French army officer named Dupin who was descended from King Augustus II of Poland. Most of her childhood was spent in the country at Nohant, in Berry, except for a convent education in Paris. She married Casimir Dudevant, a country squire, in 1822 but soon became bored and left her husband. In 1831, she moved to Paris and joined a group of distinguished artists that included the French novelist Honoré de Balzac and the Hungarian composer Franz Liszt. She became celebrated both for her writings and for her romantic liaisons, particularly those with the French poet Alfred de Musset and the Polish composer Frédéric Chopin.

Sand was a prolific writer, expressing in her works a deep concern for human problems and strong feminist ideals. She wrote her first two novels in collaboration with the French novelist Jules Sandeau. They were published under the name Jules Sand, which suggested the pseudonym she adopted for her next work, Indiana (1832). Her writings generally are divided into four periods. The novels of the first period (1832-1836) were idealistic and romantic, typical examples being Valentine (1832) and Lélia (1833). They, like Indiana, exalted free love unhampered by conventional marriage. The second period (1840-1848) was devoted to such novels as Consuelo (1842), in which she expounded socialistic and humanitarian ideals. After the Revolution of 1848, she retired permanently to her country house at Nohant, where she wrote the novels of her third period (1848-1860), concerned with country life and the peasants, including François le Champi (1848) and La Petite Fadette (1849). Her last novels, which returned to wider social considerations and were judged among her best, include Le Marquis de Villemer (1861) and Mlle. de Quintinie (1863). She also wrote her autobiography, Histoire de ma vie (1854-1855; Story of My Life), and Contes d' une grand'mère (1873; Tales of a Grandmother), a collection of stories she wrote for her grandchildren. She died at Nohant on June 8, 1876.

Although Sand's novels were widely read in her time and were a strong influence on young writers, they gradually lost favor. With the recent development of feminist criticism, interest in her life and work has significantly revived.
Victorien Sardou (1831-1908), French dramatist and creator of the “well-made” play, born in Paris. Sardou studied medicine for a brief time at a Paris hospital. He turned to writing and quickly gained enormous popularity. Today his contrived melodramas are admired much less than they were in his lifetime. He wrote about 70 plays, including *Madame Devil-May-Care* (1893; trans. 1901) and *Robespierre* (1899; trans. 1899). For the French actor Sarah Bernhardt, he wrote the well-known *Fedora* (1882; trans. 1883) and *La Tosca* (1887; trans. 1925), both of which were adapted for opera librettos.
NATHALIE SARRAUTE

Nathalie Sarraute (1900-1999), French novelist, essayist, and playwright, best known for innovations associated with the *nouveau roman* (new novel) in France. Sarraute and other practitioners of the nouveau roman challenged the traditional form of the realistic novel; her writings considerably influenced the conception and craft of the modern novel.

Born Nathalie Tcherniak in Ivanovo-Voznesensk (now Ivanovo), Russia, Sarraute lived the first eight years of her life in Russia, Switzerland, and France, with one or the other of her divorced parents. After university study in France, England, and Germany, Sarraute received a law degree from the University of Paris (where she met and married fellow student Raymond Sarraute) and was admitted to the bar in 1925. She practiced law for several years before becoming a full-time writer.

JOSEPH JUSTUS SCALIGER

Joseph Justus Scaliger (1540-1609), French classical scholar. He was born in Agen, the son of the immigrant Italian physician Julius Caesar Scaliger, who was also a classical scholar. Joseph studied Latin and Greek at the University of Paris and Hebrew, Persian, and other languages on his own. A convert to Calvinism, he escaped French persecution first in Geneva (1572-74) and then in the Netherlands, where he taught from 1593 until his death.

Scaliger laid the foundation for textual analysis of the classics with his editions of numerous Latin authors. In his great De Emendatione Temporum (1583) and Thesaurus Temporum (1609) he corrected ancient calculations of historical time and set forth a scientific method of chronology that became the basis for the modern study of ancient history. He also wrote a study on ancient coins, establishing numismatics as a further tool for historical research.
PAUL SCARRON

Paul Scarron (1610-1660), French writer, whose works directly influenced French dramatist Molière. Born in Paris, Scarron originally studied for a career in the church, but a nervous disease made him an invalid at the age of 27. Scarron's most famous work is a picaresque novel, *Le roman comique* (The Comic Novel, 1651-1657). He also wrote short stories; plays; satires, including a parody of the *Aeneid*, by Roman poet Virgil; and burlesque poems. In 1651 Scarron married Françoise d'Aubigné, who later, as Madame de Maintenon, became mistress and wife of French king Louis XIV.
EUGÈNE SCRIBE

Eugène Scribe (1791-1861), French playwright. Scribe enjoyed great popularity in his time, producing about 350 plays and opera librettos, many of which were written with collaborators. Although he was criticized for a lack of taste and originality, he was acknowledged to be a master of craft. His best-known plays include *Adrienne Lecouvreur* (1849)—written with Ernest Legouvé—a vehicle for the famous French actor Rachel. Among his librettos are those for *Fra Diavolo* (1830), music by the French composer Daniel François Esprit Auber, and *Les Huguenots* (1836), music by the German composer Giacomo Meyerbeer.
Madeleine de Scudéry (1607-1701), French novelist, one of the most popular authors of her time, whose principal works are lengthy, sentimental novels. Born in Le Havre, she was raised by her uncle after her parents died. She later moved to Paris and became part of the literary salon (a private gathering of writers and intellectuals) hosted by Catherine de Vivonne, marquise de Rambouillet. Scudéry eventually hosted her own literary salon.

Scudéry's major works are the novels *Artamène, ou le grand Cyrus* (Artamene, or Cyrus the Great, 10 volumes, 1649-1653) and *Clélie, histoire romaine* (Clelie, Roman Tale, 10 volumes, 1654-1660). Scudéry wrote these novels in the literary style known as *preciosity*, which emphasized refinement in language over coarseness. In addition, adherents to preciosity worked, in their gatherings at literary salons and in their writings, to give women increased control over their lives. Preciosity played an important role in fostering the tendency toward psychological realism that would later become prominent in French fiction. Although preciosity became popular in the mid-17th century, its adherents and their beliefs were also mocked as pretentious by other French writers of the time, including Molière and Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux.
Marie de Rabutin-Chantal Sévigné (1626-1696), French writer, whose letters constitute one of the most celebrated collections of epistolary writing. Born in Paris, Sévigné received her education from tutors. In 1644, at the age of 18, she married a French nobleman, Marquis Henri de Sévigné, who was killed in a duel in 1651. After her husband's death Sévigné continued to move in social and intellectual circles, making the acquaintance of many of the major literary figures of her time, including François de La Rochefoucauld and Marie Madeleine Pioche de la Vergne, Comtesse de La Fayette.

Sévigné is known for her letters, which number more than 1500. These missives, sent to her daughter, and other relatives, and friends, are spontaneous and detailed chronicles of life among court and high society in 17th-century France. Sprinkled with concern and humor, the letters also reveal details of Sévigné's personal life, especially her relationship with her daughter. Sévigné's rich portrayals of the people and events of her time led many later writers to draw on her letters for inspiration in the creation of their own fictional characters.
Georges Joseph Christian Simenon, principal pseudonym of GEORGES SIM (1903-1989), Belgian-French novelist, born in Liège. Simenon, a prolific author, wrote hundreds of popular novels, employing a variety of pseudonyms. He is best known as the author of a series of detective novels about a French police officer, Inspector Maigret, whose work is marked by unusual psychological insight. These novels achieved outstanding success in Europe and the United States, and editions have appeared in many languages. Among the many titles published in the U.S. are The Patience of Maigret (1940) and Maigret Hesitates (1970). Simenon's other novels, most of which also deal with crime, include The Man Who Watched the Trains Go By (1946) and Confessional (1968). His autobiography, Intimate Memoirs (1981; trans. 1984), details his own neurotic tensions and includes the story of his beloved daughter's suicide.
CLAUDE SIMON

Claude Simon (1913-2005), French novelist, who was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature in 1985. He is best known for his lengthy novels, associated with the French *nouveau roman* (new novel) style of the 1950s. Simon's novels are noted for their lack of plot, character development, or punctuation, and for their largely image-driven, stream-of-consciousness effects. His long sentences, sometimes of a thousand words or more, are meant to convey the complexity of inner life.

Claude Eugène-Henri Simon was born in Tananarive (now Antananarivo), Madagascar. His father, a French cavalry officer, was killed in World War I (1914-1918) and Simon was brought up in Perpignan, France, by his mother, who died when he was 11 years old. He was educated at the College Stanislas, a boarding school in Paris, and then attended both Oxford and Cambridge universities in England.

Simon served in the French cavalry during World War II (1939-1945) and in 1940 was taken prisoner by the Nazis (see National Socialism) while fighting in Belgium. Later the same year he escaped from the prisoner of war camp in France where he was being held, making his way to Perpignan and joining the French resistance movement against the Germans. After the publication in 1945 of his first novel, *Le Tricheur (The Cheat)*, and the end of the war, Simon settled in the eastern Pyrenees, writing and cultivating vineyards.

Simon is regarded as one of the finest exponents of the French *nouveau roman*. At the same time, critics have suggested that unlike the work of French writers of the same style such as Alain Robbe-Grillet or Nathalie Sarraute, Simon's novels are concerned less with theories than with an attempt to reconcile a fragmented perception of the world and the continuity of the writing process, as in *Le Vent* (1957; translated as *The Wind*, 1959).

GERMAINE DE STAËL

Germaine de Staël (1766-1817), French writer and intellectual, famed for her international salon. Her full name was Anne Louise Germaine, Baronne de Staël-Holstein. Born in Paris and generally known as Madame de Staël, she was the daughter of the French financier and statesman Jacques Necker. In 1786 she married the Swedish minister to France, Eric Magnus, Baron de Staël-Holstein. It was through her own talents, however, that Madame de Staël made her mark on contemporary political and literary affairs. In 1793, fleeing the French Revolution, she took refuge in Switzerland where she conducted a brilliant international salon. Back in France, she drew the condemnation of Napoleon and was forced to leave Paris after the publication of her first novel, Delphine (1802); in 1807 she was exiled again after the publication of Corinne, ou l'Italie (Corinna, or Italy, 1807). This novel, centering on the triumphant literary and artistic career of the Anglo-Italian heroine Corinne, became Madame de Staël's best-known work; it exerted enormous influence on literary women in Europe and the U.S., challenging their aspirations and desire for fame. For the rest of the 19th century, echoes of the novel recurred in fiction.

Madame de Staël is credited with disseminating the theories of romanticism—in such works as De la littérature (1800), important also for its chapter championing women writers, and Germany (1810; trans. 1813), a study of German culture, especially of the period (circa 1765-1785) of Sturm und Drang.
STENDHAL

Stendhal derived his pseudonym from the German town Stendal, and it is the best-known of many pseudonyms that the author used. Born into a family that supported the monarchy, six years before the French Revolution (1789-1799), Stendhal lived through some of the most turbulent times in European history, including the Revolution, the French Empire under Napoleon (1799-1814), the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy to France’s throne (1814-1830), and the turbulent reign of King Louis Philippe (1830-1848). He became aware that individuals were at the mercy of enormous social, political, and historical forces from which they needed to protect themselves. This self-protection, he felt, took the form of deceit, pretense, and masks.

Stendhal dedicated his works to “the happy few,” whom he conceived of as an elite of extreme individualists who shared his belief in the necessity of skepticism and the value of energy and passion. To pursue happiness in contemporary society, Stendhal believed that the “happy few” had to mask their differences, pretend to conform, and abide by the customs and decorum of the dominant culture.

Underlying these beliefs was a philosophy that Stendhal called beylism (after his family name). Based on the ideas of 18th-century theorists Destutt de Tracy and Claude Adrien Helvétius, beylism is both a theory of knowledge and a method of living. It stems from the notion that the experiences of the mind originate in sensations and that the sensual experiences of individuals differ. Naturally passionate, energetic individuals derive their happiness from the emotional and intellectual resonances of sensual experiences. In order to realize fully their potential happiness, these individuals must, through constant skepticism, question the values and assumptions of their culture, which, Stendhal felt, was fundamentally hostile to beylism.

Because of this elitist “cult of the self,” Stendhal has often been associated with romanticism, a movement that championed individual freedom, subjectivity, and the role of the imagination. Many critics view his essay Racine et Shakespeare (1823, 1825; Racine and Shakespeare, 1962) as a manifesto of the romantic movement, because it advances the theory that every period in history has been romantic in its own way. Moreover, his principal heroes in Le rouge et le noir and La chartreuse de Parme embody romantic qualities as rebels pitted against oppressive social and political regimes. The peasant boy Julien Sorel, the protagonist of Le rouge et le noir, aspires to improve his lot by using his intelligence, passion, good looks, and energy to ascend the social ladder, as his hero Napoleon had done.
HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896), American writer and abolitionist, author of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852), a forceful indictment of slavery and one of the most powerful novels of its kind in American literature.

**UNCLE TOM’S CABIN**

By 1850, when her husband accepted a position at Bowdoin College in Maine, Harriet Beecher Stowe was the mother of seven children. Back in the New England atmosphere of rising religious abolitionism, she poured her own indignation over the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 into *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, the novel that brought her fame. It was serialized in 1851 and 1852 in an abolitionist paper, the *National Era*, and issued as a book in 1852.

As a serial, the story attracted no unusual notice. The success of the book, however, was unprecedented; 500,000 copies were sold in the United States alone within five years, and it was translated into more than 20 foreign languages. It did much to crystallize militant antislavery sentiment in the North, and therefore was an important factor in precipitating the American Civil War (1861-1865). *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, like most of Stowe’s novels, is rambling in structure, but rich in pathos and dramatic incident. It is one of the best examples of the so-called sentimental fiction that enjoyed popularity in the United States during the 1800s. Sentimental writers focused on domestic scenes, and their work evoked strong emotions. Like Stowe, many of these authors were social reformists, but they were criticized for creating overly idealized characters.

The Uncle Tom of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* is a devout Christian slave, owned by the kindly Shelby family. When financial difficulties make it necessary for the Shelbys to sell their slaves, Tom is purchased by a dealer and taken to New Orleans. On the way there he saves the life of Eva, the daughter of the wealthy St. Clair family, and in gratitude St. Clair purchases him.
SULLY PRUDHOMME

Sully Prudhomme, real name René François Armand Prudhomme (1839-1907), French poet and Nobel laureate, of the Parnassian school. He was born in Paris and trained in engineering, law, and philosophy. His early poems, such as *Stances et poèmes* (1865), *Les destins* (1872; The Destinies), and *Les vaines tendresses* (1875; The Empty Endearments), are lyrical and sad. Later work was Parnassian in its antiromantic striving for aesthetic, objective expression of philosophical truth. “La justice” (1878) and “Le bonheur” (1888; Happiness) are considered masterpieces of analytic subtlety. He was admitted to the French Academy in 1881 and received the first Nobel Prize in literature in 1901.
ANDRÉ PIERRE GABRIEL AMÉDÉE

André Pierre Gabriel Amédée Tardieu (1876-1945), French politician and writer, born in Paris, and educated at the École Normale Supérieure. From 1902 to 1914 he was foreign news editor of *Le Temps*. He entered the French Chamber of Deputies in 1914, and during World War I he served as an officer at the front between 1914 and 1916. Tardieu was appointed special commissioner of France to the U.S. in 1917-18, and he subsequently was a member of the Paris Peace Conference in 1918-19 and minister of the liberated regions in 1919-20. At the conference he presided over the Alsace-Lorraine committee and the committee of the Saar, and he took a leading part in drafting the political and territorial clauses of the Treaty of Versailles. Tardieu was a dedicated supporter of the policy of Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau, and he expressed his opposition to the revisions of the treaty as director of the daily newspaper *Echo National*. He was appointed minister of public works in 1926 and served as prime minister of France in 1929-30 and again in 1932. Tardieu's writings include *La France et les alliances* (France and Alliances, 1908) and *La paix* (Peace, 1921).
BERTRAND TAVERNIER

Bertrand Tavernier, born in 1941, French motion-picture director and screenwriter, known for his explorations of complex interpersonal relationships and for his elegant tributes to American music and cinema. Born in Lyon, Tavernier studied law at the University of Paris before beginning a career as a writer of film reviews for various French journals. In 1964 he directed a short segment of the motion picture Les baisers (The Kisses), which also included installments by French directors Claude Berri and Bernard Michel. Disappointed with this effort, Tavernier began working as a publicist for American directors, including Howard Hawks, Samuel Fuller, and Elia Kazan. He was also the coauthor of a book about the films of Hollywood, California, Trente ans de cinéma américain (Thirty Years of American Cinema, 1970).

In 1974 Tavernier directed his first feature-length film, L'Horloger de St. Paul (The Clockmaker), a psychological drama based on a novel by Belgian-French writer Georges Simenon. The film won several awards, including the Prix Louis Delluc, awarded annually by the French cinema industry to an outstanding French feature film. Tavernier quickly proved himself a versatile and meticulous director with his subsequent films, including two historical dramas, Que la fête commence (Let Joy Reign Supreme, 1975) and Le juge et l'assassin (The Judge and the Assassin, 1976); a partly autobiographical drama about a film director, Des enfants gâtés (Spoiled Children, 1977); and a science-fiction movie with an American cast, La mort en direct (Deathwatch, 1979). Tavernier turned to documentary filmmaking with Mississippi Blues (1983), a motion picture about the people and music of the American South, codirected by American filmmaker Robert Parish. Tavernier enjoyed his first international commercial success with Un Dimanche à la campagne (A Sunday in the Country, 1984), about a celebrated French painter who reflects on the end of his working life. Tavernier returned to the subject of American music with Round Midnight (1986), a highly acclaimed film based loosely on the lives of American jazz pianist Bud Powell and Francis Paudras, a French jazz enthusiast who befriended Powell in Paris. Tavernier's later films include Daddy Nostalgie (Daddy Nostalgia, 1990), La vie et rien d'autre (Life and Nothing But, 1990), L.627 (1992), and L'Appat (The Bait, 1995).
ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE

Alexis de Tocqueville (1805-1859), French political writer and statesman, whose work on the United States political system became a classic.

Alexis Charles Henri Maurice Clérel de Tocqueville was born July 29, 1805, in Verneuil, and studied law in Paris. With the French publicist Gustave Auguste de Beaumont de la Bonninière, he went abroad in 1831 to study the penal system in the U.S. The two men reported their findings in *Du système pénitentiaire aux États-Unis et son application en France* (The Penitentiary System in the United States and Its Application in France, 1832). After returning to France in 1832, Tocqueville wrote his most famous work, *Democracy in America* (2 volumes, 1835-40; trans., 4 volumes, 1835-40). One of the earliest and most profound studies of American life, it concerns the legislative and administrative systems in the U.S. and the influence of social and political institutions on the habits and manners of the people. Tocqueville maintains in this work that the full development of democracy occurred in the U.S. because conditions there best permitted the diffusion of European social ideas. He was highly critical of certain aspects of American democracy. For example, he believed that public opinion tended toward tyranny and that majority rule could be as oppressive as the rule of a despot.

As a member of the French Chamber of Deputies (1839-48), Tocqueville advocated a number of reforms, including the decentralization of government and an independent judiciary. He became vice president of the National Assembly in 1849 and for part of that year was minister of foreign affairs. After opposing the 1851 coup d'état of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, later French emperor as Napoleon III, Tocqueville retired from political life. He died on April 16, 1859, in Cannes.

Tocqueville's major works offer a penetrating analysis of the principal political and social ideas of his period. His main emphasis was the evolutionary developments underlying all changes in society. His second most important work, *The Old Regime and the Revolution* (1856; trans. 1856), which he left unfinished at his death, interprets the French Revolution as having been the result of gradual changes in the structure of government and in political attitudes toward equality and freedom.
François Truffaut (1932-1984), French motion-picture director and critic, a leader of the nouvelle vague (new wave) movement of filmmakers who rejected the slick, impersonal style of studio filmmaking for a more personal approach, in which the director has sole creative authority and is recognized as the author (auteur) of a film.

Truffaut was born in Paris. After a troubled childhood, he left school at the age of 14. Through his passion for film, he met André Bazin, founder and co-editor of the influential journal Cahiers du Cinéma, for which Truffaut began writing. Throughout his filmmaking career, which began in the late 1950s, Truffaut wrote or coauthored as well as directed all his feature films, which combine comedy, pathos, suspense, and melodrama. His first film was the highly acclaimed 400 Blows (1959), the story of Antoine Doinel, a misunderstood adolescent. This semiautobiographical protagonist is featured and further developed in Stolen Kisses (1968), Bed and Board (1970), and Love on the Run (1979).

Truffaut's eclectic films also include Shoot the Piano Player (1960), mixing farce and suspense; Jules and Jim (1961), the wistful story of a love triangle; Fahrenheit 451 (1967), his one excursion into science fiction; The Wild Child (1969), based on a true 19th-century story of a dedicated doctor's attempt to civilize a feral child; Two English Girls (1972), a tale of a young man in love with two sisters; Day for Night (1973), an homage to filmmaking that won an Academy Award for best foreign film; The Story of Adele H (1975), portraying an obsessive love; Small Change (1976), exploring the lives of children in a French village; and a theater tribute, The Last Metro (1980).

Truffaut was strongly influenced by French filmmakers Jean Vigo and Jean Renoir and by English-American director Alfred Hitchcock. His fascination with the latter culminated in a series of interviews he conducted with Hitchcock to explore their respective views on film, which he subsequently compiled into a book, Hitchcock/Truffaut (1983). Several of Truffaut's films are considered to be either influenced by Hitchcock or homages to him—notably The Bride Wore Black (1968), Mississippi Mermaid (1969), and Truffaut's last motion picture, Confidentially Yours (1983). Truffaut acted in many of his own films, most memorably in The Wild Child and The Green Room. He also appeared as the French scientist Lacombe in Close Encounters of the Third Kind (1977) directed by Steven Spielberg.
TRISTAN TZARA

Tristan Tzara (1896-1963), French essayist and poet, born in Romania, known primarily as the founder of the Dada movement (*see* Dada). First in Zürich, Switzerland, and later in Paris, Tzara wrote the movement's first manifestos, describing its nihilistic tenets. By 1930, however, he abandoned the pessimism and sterility of Dadaism and became interested in surrealism. He joined the French Resistance during World War II, and following the war he turned his poetic insight toward the more realistic problems of humankind.
PAUL VALERY

Paul Valéry (1871-1945), French poet and man of letters, whose work presents a conflict between contemplation and action that must be resolved artistically in order to grasp the meaning of life. He is considered one of the greatest of modern philosophical writers in verse and prose.

Paul Ambroise Valéry was born in Sète and educated at the University of Montpellier. In 1892 he settled in Paris, where he entered the literary circle of the symbolist poet Stéphane Mallarmé. Valéry’s early poems, written between 1889 and 1898 and collected in Album des vers anciens (Album of Ancient Verse, 1921), were influenced by the symbolists.

Valéry’s first two prose works concern the mastery of intellectual techniques. In Introduction to the Method of Leonardo da Vinci (1895; trans. 1929) he discusses the creative method of one of the world’s universal geniuses. The work of fiction An Evening with Mr. Teste (1895; trans. 1925)—that is, “Mr. Head”—is concerned with the introspective processes of his principal character, a man of prodigious mental abilities.

Valéry held posts in the civil service (1897-1900) and in a news agency (1900-22). During most of this period he pursued studies in mathematics. A perfectionist, he refused to have any of his poetry published until 1917, when the allegorical poem La jeune parque (The Young Goddess Fate) appeared. In his poem he views the nature of the world as a combination of the forces of life and absolute essences. As in his later poetry, including Graveyard by the Sea (1920; trans. 1932) and many of the poems in Charmes (Odes, 1923), a rarefied analysis of human self-consciousness is conveyed in a severely classical form with sensuous, natural description and a musical technique.

Valéry’s later prose works consist of philosophical studies and meditations. In Eupalinos, or the Architect (1923; translated 1932), he develops a theory of architecture as the form of art that is most akin to music. In Reflections on the World Today (1933; translated 1948) Valéry is concerned with the ideological bases of modern politics. He was appointed a lecturer in poetics at the Collège de France in 1937. The writer’s other works include Dance and the Soul (1924; trans. 1951), Variété I-V (1924-44), and L’Idée fixe (1932).
PAUL VERLAINE

Paul Verlaine (1844-96), French poet, who was a leader of the symbolist movement.

Verlaine was born on March 30, 1844, in Metz, the son of an army officer, and educated at the Lycée Bonaparte in Paris. His early works, including *Poèmes saturniens* (1866), are characterized by the antiromanticism of the Parnassians with whom Verlaine was then associated; the verse is concerned more with technique than with feeling. In 1870 Verlaine married, but he left his wife two years later to travel and live with the 17-year-old poet Arthur Rimbaud. Verlaine shot and wounded Rimbaud during a quarrel in 1873 and was imprisoned for the next two years. The collection *Romances sans paroles* (Songs Without Words, 1874), is based on his life with Rimbaud and was written in prison.

Verlaine taught French in England from 1875 to 1877, then returned to France to teach English for a year. With his student Lucien Létinois, whom he called his adopted son, Verlaine tried unsuccessfully to be a farmer. Létinois died suddenly in 1883; Verlaine's *Amour* (1888) is primarily about Létinois. The rest of Verlaine's life consisted of alternating periods of drunken debauchery and ascetic repentance. With the publication of *Les poètes maudites* (Accursed Poets, 1884), a work of criticism, and of *Jadis et Naguère* (Long Ago and Not So Long Ago, 1884), a collection of verse, Verlaine emerged as a symbolist poet, concerned with dreams and illusion.

Verlaine thus exerted considerable influence on the French poets who followed him. The sound of his poetry is usually more important than its meaning; it is therefore unusually difficult to translate. He also wrote autobiographical prose, including *Mes Hôpitaux* (My Hospitals, 1892), *Mes prisons* (My Prisons, 1893), and *Confessions* (1895). Verlaine died on January 8, 1896.
JULES VERNE

Jules Verne (1828-1905), French author, who is often regarded as the father of science fiction. He was born in Nantes, France, and ran away to sea at the age of 11. After he was sent home in disgrace, he vowed to travel only in his imagination. He carried out this pledge in more than 50 works that combine scientific fantasy and exciting adventure.

Verne studied law in Paris, and from 1848 until 1863 wrote opera librettos and plays. His interest in science and geographical discovery led him to write on the possibility of exploring Africa in a balloon. Many publishers rejected this work, until one publisher suggested he rewrite it in the form of an adventure story. The result was Cinq semaines en ballon (1863; Five Weeks in a Balloon, 1869). Its success encouraged Verne to write other tales of adventure in distant lands. He based them on his wide reading.

Verne rode a wave of 19th-century interest in science and invention to enormous popular favor. Laying a carefully documented scientific foundation for his fantastic adventure stories, he forecast with remarkable accuracy many scientific achievements of the 20th century. He anticipated flights into outer space, submarines, helicopters, air conditioning, guided missiles, and motion pictures long before they were developed.

Verne’s best-known work is Le tour du monde en quatre-vingt jours (1873; Around the World In Eighty Days, 1873). The book’s hero is Phileas Fogg, an English gentleman noted for his cool-headedness and ingenuity. During a discussion at his London club, Fogg bets that he can travel around the world in 80 days, a seemingly impossible task at that time. He is accompanied on the journey by his French valet, Passepartout, and by Detective Fix, who has been sent by the club to observe his progress. During their adventures in many parts of the world, Fogg masters every obstacle with unflappable ease. He completes the journey with ten minutes to spare.

Among his other classic books are Voyage au centre de la terre (1864; Journey to the Center of the Earth, 1874); De la terre à la lune (1865; From the Earth to the Moon, 1873); Vingt mille lieues sous les mers (1870; Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea, 1873); and L’île mystérieuse (1870; Mysterious Island, 1875). Verne received the French Legion of Honor in 1870, a merit award for outstanding achievements in military or civil life.

Verne’s works have been the source of many films, beginning in 1902 with Le voyage dans la lune (A Trip to the Moon) by the pioneering French film director Georges Méliès.
Alfred de Vigny (1797-1863), French poet, novelist, and dramatist, born in Loches, in Touraine, and educated in Paris. He entered the military at the age of 17 and after 12 years as an officer in the French army became a man of letters, associating himself with the literary movement known as romanticism. He established his reputation with his collected *Poèmes antiques et modernes* (1826). Although later eclipsed by his contemporaries, the poets Victor Hugo and Alfred de Musset, Vigny was regarded as the leader of the early years of romanticism. He was an intellectual and philosophical writer, and his work—the best of which appears in the poems of *Les Destinées* (pub. posthumously 1864)—expresses a deep spiritual isolation and a corresponding stress on human values. His works include the historical novel *Cinq Mars* (1826; trans. 1847) and the romantic drama *Chatterton* (1835; trans. 1908), based on the life of the British poet Thomas Chatterton. *Journal d'un poète* (pub. posthumously 1867) is a collection of his *pensées*, or thoughts, which inform much of his writing.
Jean Marie Mathias Philippe Auguste Villiers de l’Isle-Adam (1838-1889), French writer, one of the forerunners of the symbolist movement. He was born into a noble family in Saint-Brieuc, Brittany, lived a precarious Bohemian life in Paris, and died in poverty. He is best known for his collection of short stories *Sardonic Tales* (1883; trans. 1927) and for the drama *Axel* (final form 1890; trans. 1925). His works, rejecting the prevailing naturalism and materialism of the day, reflect the romantic and symbolist interest in fantasy, the supernatural, and even the horrifying and shocking. They serve chiefly to express his idiosyncratic philosophical ideas.
FRANÇOIS VILLON

François Villon (1431?-1463?), French poet, considered by many scholars France’s outstanding lyric poet, famous for the beauty and originality, as well as the evocative quality, of his verse.

Villon was born in or near Paris in 1431. His real name is thought to have been either François de Montcorbier or François des Loges. He assumed the name Villon, however, out of gratitude to his patron Guillaume de Villon, a chaplain and professor of canon law. While earning the degree of bachelor of arts (1449) and master of arts (1452) at the Sorbonne, Villon participated fully in the roistering academic life of the time. In 1455 he killed a priest in a street brawl. A year later he was involved in the theft of 500 crowns from the chapel of the Collège de Navarre in Paris, for which crime he was banished.

During the next four years (1456-60) Villon wandered about France. In 1461 he was arrested by order of the bishop of Orléans and imprisoned in the town of Meung. After a few months, however, he and his fellow prisoners were pardoned by Louis XI.

Villon returned to Paris in 1462, but quickly got into serious trouble again. He was arrested as a result of his presence at a serious fracas and was condemned to death. About a year later, his sentence was commuted to banishment from Paris. Information on his activities thereafter has not been found.

Villon’s great merit as a poet lies in the subjectivity of his verse. He candidly expressed what he felt, whether good or bad, and his frankness about himself led him to write with equal frankness about others; his poems, therefore, present a colorful and generally reliable picture of his times. His major writings include *Les lais* (The Lays), also called *Le petit testament* (The Little Testament), written in 1456, and *Le testament*, also called *Le grand testament* (The Great Testament), written in 1461. Both poems are composed of eight-line stanzas, with eight syllables to a line. *Le grand testament*, which ironically and sincerely reviews his own vagabond life and also human life in general, includes a number of ballades and rondeaux. Among Villon’s minor work are some half-dozen poems written in underworld slang.
EUGÈNE EMMANUEL VIOLETTE-LE-DUC

Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1814-79), French architect and writer, who was especially skilled in the restoration of works of medieval architecture, although many modern experts have denounced his work as more fanciful than authentic. He was born in Paris and educated at the Collège Bourbon. He designed and supervised the restorations of the walled city of Carcassonne, the château of Pierrefonds, the church of Vézelay, and the cathedrals of Laon, Amiens, and Notre Dame in Paris. His prolific writings set forth his theory that the Gothic style resulted from attempts to solve the engineering problem of relating pointed arches to ribbed vaulting. Among his works are Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XI au XVI siècle (10 volumes, 1854-69) and Dictionnaire raisonné du mobilier français de l'époque Carolingienne à la Renaissance (6 volumes, 1855-75).
Voltaire quickly chose literature as a career. He began moving in aristocratic circles and soon became known in Paris salons as a brilliant and sarcastic wit. A number of his writings, particularly a lampoon accusing the French regent Philippe II, duc d'Orléans of heinous crimes, resulted in his imprisonment in the Bastille. During his 11-month detention, Voltaire completed his first tragedy, *Œdipe*, which was based upon the *Œdipus tyrannus* of the ancient Greek dramatist Sophocles, and commenced an epic poem on Henry IV of France. *Œdipe* was given its initial performance at the Théâtre-Français in 1718 and received with great enthusiasm. The work on Henry IV was printed anonymously in Geneva under the title of *Poème de la ligue* (Poem of the League, 1723). In his first philosophical poem, *Le pour et le contre* (For and Against), Voltaire gave eloquent expression to both his anti-Christian views and his rationalist, deist creed.

A quarrel with a member of an illustrious French family, the chevalier de Rohan, resulted in Voltaire's second incarceration in the Bastille, from which he was released within two weeks on his promise to quit France and proceed to England. Accordingly he spent about two years in London. Voltaire soon mastered the English language, and in order to prepare the British public for an enlarged edition of his *Poème de la ligue*, he wrote in English two remarkable essays, one on epic poetry and the other on the history of civil wars in France. For a few years the Catholic, autocratic French government prevented the publication of the enlarged edition of *Poème de la ligue*, which was retitled *La Henriade* (The Henriad). The government finally allowed the poem to be published in 1728. This work, an eloquent defense of religious toleration, achieved an almost unprecedented success, not only in Voltaire's native France but throughout all of the continent of Europe as well.
Marguerite Yourcenar (1903-1987), real name, Marguerite de Crayencour, French poet, novelist, dramatist, and translator. Yourcenar was born in Brussels, Belgium, to a French father and Belgian mother. She had little formal education. In 1947 she became an American citizen, but she wrote only in French. Her first volume of poems, *Le Jardin des chimères* (1921), showed her sophistication as a writer by reinterpreting ancient Greek myths to make them relevant to the modern world. In 1922 she published another collection of poems, *Les Dieux ne sont pas morts*. Her first novel, *Alexis, ou le traité du vain combat* (1929; *Alexis, or the Story of a Vain Struggle*, 1984), was written from the point of a view of an artist trying to remain dedicated to his work, but faced with opposition from his family. Her visit to Italy prompted her to write *Denier du rêve* (1934; *A Coin in Nine Hands*, 1982), a novel about the difference between dream and reality.

In 1934 Yourcenar met the American Grace Frick; they became close companions, and when World War II broke out in 1939, Yourcenar moved to the United States. She taught comparative literature at Sarah Lawrence College, produced a French translation of *The Waves* by Virginia Woolf in 1937, and published a French translation of *What Maisie Knew* by Henry James in 1947.

Her most famous novel, bringing her French and American critical acclaim, was *Mémoires d'Hadrien* (1951; *Memoirs of Hadrian*, 1954). This was a fictional autobiography of the Roman emperor, written as a series of letters to his nephew. Another historical novel, *L'Oeuvre au noir* (1968; *The Abyss*, 1976), presented the life of an imaginary physician, Zeno of Bruges. This won her the Prix Femina in 1968. In 1971, *Théâtre*, two volumes of her plays, was published. She also wrote biographies of her early family life, *Mishima: ou la vision du vide* (Mishima: or the Vision of Emptiness, 1981), and gave a series of interviews about her life and work published as *Les Yeux ouverts: entretiens avec Matthieu Galey* (Open Eyes: Conversations with Matthieu Galey, 1980).

Yourcenar's literary style changed with each work as she sought to challenge her abilities as a writer.
ÉMILE ZOLA

Émile Zola (1840-1902), French novelist, essayist, and critic, the chief advocate and practitioner in France of a movement known as naturalism. Naturalist writers aimed at an objective depiction of life and regarded human behavior as determined by hereditary instincts and emotions and the social and economic environment, rather than by free human choice.

Born in Paris, Émile Édouard Charles Antoine Zola spent his formative years in Aix-en-Provence in the south of France. Although Zola’s father died when Émile was seven, Émile and his mother remained in Aix until poverty forced them to move to Paris in 1858. There the young Zola eked out a living working as a clerk for the publishing house Hachette and writing literary and political articles for newspapers. His knowledge and understanding of poverty, evident in his later novels, was due in part to personal experience.

Zola’s published work began with a collection of stories, Contes à Ninon (1864; translated as Stories for Ninon, 1888), and a full-length novel, La confession de Claude (1865; Claude’s Confession, 1882). Neither received much attention, but in 1867 Zola achieved notoriety with Thérèse Raquin (translated 1962), a lurid tale of lust and murder.

Inspired in part by La comédie humaine (1842-1848; The Human Comedy, 1895-1900), a vast cycle of novels by French writer Honoré de Balzac, Zola then conceived of a series of 20 novels, Les Rougon-Macquart, which would relate the history of a single family during the reign of French Emperor Napoleon III (1852-1870). In these novels he sought to imitate the scientific method through detailed, objective observation of his characters under controlled conditions. He also sought to incorporate ideas on the ways in which heredity and the environment shaped human character and determined human behavior—ideas that he had encountered in his reading of French critic and philosopher Hippolyte Taine, British scientist Charles Darwin, and French scientist Prosper Lucas. Zola considered heredity modified by environment to have the force of fate.

Zola accomplished his great task, beginning in 1871 with La fortune des Rougons (The Fortune of the Rougons, 1886) and ending in 1893 with Le docteur Pascal (Doctor Pascal, 1957). After publishing the seventh of these novels he read Introduction à l’étude de la médecine expérimentale (1865; An Introduction to the Study of Experimental Medicine, 1927) by French physiologist Claude Bernard and tried to adapt this scientific method of observation and experimentation in the remainder of his work. In 1880 Zola published the essay “Le roman expérimental” (“The Experimental Novel,” 1893), in which he developed these ideas and articulated his concept of naturalism and the naturalistic novel. He further explored these ideas in “Les romanciers naturalistes” (The Naturalist Novelists, 1881).

Zola visited the locations in which the action of his books took place, observed closely, and took copious notes. In his novels he introduced characters inspired by his research, studied their hereditary backgrounds (often familiar to readers of earlier novels in the cycle), and observed how their lives played out in their world. Although Zola’s science sometimes seems amateur, it lent coherence to the enormous cycle of novels. Some think it fortunate that Zola’s epic imagination often eclipses his scientific aspirations.

Although Les Rougon-Macquart includes many excellent novels, two works in this series are recognized as among the best French novels of the 19th century: L’assommoir (1877; translated 1879) and Germinal (1885; translated 1885).