French Literary Manuscripts at Syracuse University

Edward Lyon

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French Literary Manuscripts
at Syracuse University

BY EDWARD LYON

An unexpected and largely unrecognized strength of the George Arents Research Library lies in French literary manuscripts of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Authors’ letters, autograph manuscripts and typescripts, and revisions in proof, as well as publishers’ records, offer essential biographical, textual, and bibliographic documentation. Even though French literature has not been a primary collecting area, Syracuse University has had the good fortune to acquire individual items and collections of variety and depth. The summary that follows is offered as both an introduction to these collections and an invitation to scholarship.

French literary manuscripts at Syracuse University range in date from Chateaubriand and Tocqueville to Marguerite Yourcenar, the first woman elected to the Académie Française. Researchers will find authors, not always native-born, who have written influentially in French, and other figures prominent in French cultural life. Authors include Honoré de Balzac, Gustave Flaubert, Anatole France, Charles-Augustin Sainte-Beuve, and Émile Zola. Details on individual holdings appear in the checklist. Notes on other major collections follow.

Two collections of intimate nineteenth-century letters reflect the personal side of two very public poets, Victor Hugo and Alphonse de Lamartine, both of whom played an active part in political life. Of great general appeal are forty-six letters written to Victor Hugo by Juliette Drouet, the actress who was his companion for fifty years. Many of these letters date from the autumn of 1878 when the couple returned to Guernsey while the poet recovered from a stroke. Alphonse de Lamartine, the virtual head of the provisional government in the Revolution of 1848, is represented by 176 letters that span almost all of his literary and political life. One hundred fifty-four of these letters are addressed to his favorite niece, Valentine de Cessiat, whom he presumably married late in life.
Recognizing the importance of publishers’ correspondence to literary research, Syracuse University acquires records of publishing houses and literary periodicals. Some of these, such as E. P. Dutton and Grove Press, hold significant letters and manuscripts of French authors. E. P. Dutton published Henri Barbusse and, a generation later, introduced Françoise Sagan to America. Grove Press, acquired by Barney Rosset in 1952, quickly captured Simone de Beauvoir as one of its initial authors. Soon the works of Jean Genet and Eugène Ionesco appeared over the Grove imprint. By the 1960s, Grove had added Marguerite Duras, André Pieyre de Mandiargues, Robert Pinget, Alain Robbe-Grillet, and Boris Vian. Grove’s ties with the European literary community were further strengthened by the appointment of Richard Seaver as managing editor; he had been editor of the English-language literary quarterly Merlin in Paris. Evergreen Review, founded by Grove in 1957 and edited by Rosset, provided a widely accessible forum for new literature and experimental theater.

One ‘French’ author who is properly included here is Samuel Beckett. Although born in Dublin, he has written primarily in French, which he then translates into English. He first visited France in 1926, later met James Joyce there and became his assistant, and in 1937 moved permanently to Paris. After World War II, having already written in French for literary journals, Beckett began to write novels and plays in his adopted language. He was relatively unknown when Barney Rosset first met him in Paris in 1953. Grove Press published Beckett’s own translation of En Attendant Godot the following year and continues to be Beckett’s American publisher. The thirty-year correspondence between Grove and Beckett now exceeds 600 items.

Jean Cocteau, the versatile poet and artist, filmmaker and experimenter in the visual media, donated manuscripts to Syracuse University. When approached by the library in the summer of 1963, Cocteau responded by writing that he intended to send the bound manuscript of the film L’Aigle à Deux Têtes. On 11 September he wrote again from Milly-la-Forêt: “Je vais voir si quelque manuscrit moins indirect qu’un ouvrage de films se trouve à ma campagne et, malgré mon écriture illisible, serait, pour votre bibliothèque, un document plus humain et plus amicale.” To this letter, Cocteau appended a postscript: “Beaucoup de mes manuscrits ont été volés et vendus.” Cocteau died at his country house on 11 October. What arrived at Syracuse, postmarked on 2 October, was a folio volume of manuscript poems, colorfully inscribed to Syracuse University. With
this gift as a beginning, the library added substantial purchases between 1967 and 1971, assembling over 200 letters and many manuscripts. The artist's fluid hand is evident in these albums of manuscripts, their accompanying drawings, and the Cocteau signature with paraph star.

The Albert Schweitzer manuscripts, letters, and notebooks constitute the principal research collection in the United States on the theologian, music scholar, organist, and medical missionary. Born in Alsace and educated at the University of Strasbourg, first in theology and then in medicine, Schweitzer in 1913 established a hospital at Lambaréné in French Equatorial Africa. Most of the collection was formerly in the possession of his daughter, Rhena Schweitzer Miller. In addition to manuscripts in German, there is material in French that includes hundreds of letters written from the Lambaréné hospital, Sunday sermons preached there, and the appeal “Paix ou Guerre Atomique?”, broadcast from Oslo in 1958. The Rhena Schweitzer Miller Collection arrived at Syracuse University primarily through the efforts of Professor Antje B. Lemke, with support from the Syracuse University Library Associates.
The following checklist is selective; more than one hundred authors are represented in the collections. Entries list manuscripts, proof corrections, letters, and documents, in that order. Information is given sufficient for identification, but many of these items deserve more detailed analysis than is possible within the scope of this article. Titles are quoted in full as they appear on the manuscript, as are places and dates; supplied information is bracketed. Manuscripts that are listed without dates may be assumed not to carry them. Dates, unless quoted, have been anglicized and are standardized to day-month-year form. Because of the variety of forms of modern written communication, the word letters may be used collectively to describe all items of correspondence, including cablegrams, telegrams, and postcards. Routine presentation inscriptions in books are not listed.

CHECKLIST OF MANUSCRIPTS AND LETTERS

Adamov, Arthur (1908–1970)
Typed letter signed, 26 September 1958; with copies of letters (3), 1959–61, from Grove Press to Adamov.

Arrabal, Fernando (1932– )
Typed letters signed (8), 1959–73, mostly to Richard Seaver of Grove Press; with copies of letters (10), 1959–73, from Grove Press to Arrabal, and other letters that reflect international concern over Arrabal's imprisonment in Spain in 1967.

Balzac, Honoré de (1799–1850)
Scènes de la vie privée, Autograph manuscript, fragment, [ca. 1830].
Proof sheets to Mémoires de deux jeunes mariées, with Balzac's corrections and revisions, 2 leaves, 4 September 1841. Proof pages to Mémoires de deux jeunes mariées, with Balzac's corrections and revisions, 4 pp., 29 October 1841. Proof for the covers of Scènes de la vie privée IV (Paris, 1844), with Balzac's corrections and revisions.
Autograph letters signed (8), 1832–44 and n.d.
Contract between Balzac and the publisher Hippolyte Souverain selling
"Un Grand Homme de Province à Paris" and "Soeur Marie-des-
Anges", Paris, 12 November 1838. Contract, in Balzac's holograph,
between Balzac and the publisher Hippolyte Souverain for the publi-
cation of Balzac's "pièce de théâtre" Les Ressources de Quinola, Paris,
23 March 1842. Document signed by Balzac, on a printed form of the
École Centrale du Département de l'Aveiron [sic], n.d. [Proposition
d'achat] for "Un Grand Homme à Paris" and "Le Cabinet des an-
See also: Hanska, Eveline Rzewuska.

Barbey d'Aurevilly, Jules Amédée (1808–1889)
Ce qui ne meurt pas, Autograph manuscript, 1 p., corresponding to pp.

Barbusse, Henri (1873–1935)
"Notice. Titre: Les Enchaînments, visions." Autograph manuscript
signed, 8 pp., [1924].
Autograph and typed letters signed (3), 1919–24.

[Beauvoir, Simone de] (1908–
) The Grove Press editorial files and other files on its editions of America
Day by Day and The Marquis de Sade.

Beckett, Samuel (1906–
) "The End" Holograph revisions to the text printed in Evergreen Review
"The Expelled" Galley proof corrected by Beckett, 2 leaves. Holograph
revisions to the text printed in Evergreen Review for January–February
1962.
"Serena III" Autograph manuscript, 2 pp., [ca. 1934].
Letters (296), 1953–81, from Paris, Ussy-sur-Marne, and other loca-
tions, mostly to Barney Rosset or Richard Seaver at Grove Press.
Most of the letters are in English. Also, letters (366), 1953–72, in
retained carbons, addressed to Beckett from Grove Press; and files of
letters addressed to Beckett, care of Grove Press, but not forwarded.
Tape recordings (7 reels), made during the shooting of Film in New
York in June 1964, of conversations between Beckett and Alan
Schneider, Boris Kaufman, and others.
Also, the Grove Press editorial files and other files on its editions of
Beckett titles. Additions to the Grove Press records are expected.

Berlioz, Hector (1803–1869)
Autograph letter signed, n.d., to "Mon cher Damke" [sic].
Blanc, Louis (1811–1882)
   Autograph letter signed, 29 February 1864.

Boissonade, Jean François (1774–1857)
   Autograph letter signed, n.d., to Émile Egger.

Bourget, Paul (1852–1935)

Breton, André (1896–1966)
   Autograph letter signed, 10 May 1932, to Peter Neagoë.

Buloz, François (1804–1877)
   Autograph letters signed (6), 1848–52. Also, one letter, 17 April 1836,
   from Alphonse de Lamartine to Buloz.

Chadourne, Marc (1895–1975)
   Absence (novel, 1932), successive drafts in holograph; with typescript
   synopses in French and English, 8 pp. and 9 pp., respectively.
   Cécile de La Folie (novel, 1930), successive drafts in holograph and type-
   script.
   Dieu créa d’abord Lilith . . . (novel, 1937), successive drafts in holograph
   and typescript, and corrected page proofs.
   Le Mal de Colleen (novel, 1955), holograph and typescript (incomplete),
   [1952].
   Restif de la Bretonne (biography, 1955), successive drafts in holograph
   and typescript.
   Vasco (novel, 1927), successive drafts in holograph and typescript (in-
   complete).
   “Vaudou, Synopsis de Marc Chadourne” typescript, 7 pp.
   Letters (8), 1963–67; with carbons of letters (13), 1963–70, to Cha-
   dourne.

Champfleury [pseud. of Jules Husson, dit Fleury] (1821–1889)
   “Voyage autour de ma bibliothèque” Autograph manuscript, 6 pp.,
   n.d., with a transcript, 6 pp., n.d., by Champfleury’s secretary, Jules
   Troubat, and Troubat’s letter of transmittal, [8? July 1890], to Paul
   Eudel.

Chateaubriand, François René, vicomte de (1768–1848)
   Letters signed (3), 1814–23.

Cocteau, Jean (1889–1963)
   “Un Ami dort” Autograph manuscript signed (in initials), 1946 (2
   drafts), 12 pp. altogether, with 2 pencil drawings. Holograph, 8
   “Le Bel indifférent” Holograph and typescript, 10 pp.
“La Belle et la bête: Scénario imaginé d’après le conte de Madame Leprince de Beaumont” Autograph manuscript, 6 pp.

[on Christian Bérard] Autograph manuscript signed, 1 p., 1960 (2 copies).


[on Coco Chanel] Autograph manuscript signed, 1 p.

“Cinématographes” Autograph manuscript, 7 pp.


[on Sergei Diaghilev] Autograph manuscript, 2 pp.

“Diaghilev” Autograph manuscript of a radio talk given by Cocteau, 12 pp.

“Drôle de panache” Autograph manuscript signed, 2 pp.

“Escales” by Jean Cocteau and André Lhote. Text in Cocteau’s holograph, with 10 ink drawings and 6 pencil sketches by André Lhote, 30 leaves; conjugate with “Musée secret”.

“Les États-Unis ont ceci d’admirable que bout en exigeant . . . [incipit]” Autograph manuscript signed, 2 pp.

“Fantômes et vivants” Autograph manuscript signed, 2 pp.

“La Fin du Potomak” Autograph manuscript signed, 58 pp., folio, “1er mai—5 mai 1939”; with “Le Clef de l’oeuvre de Jean Cocteau” Autograph manuscript, 4 pp.

“Fin d’une rétrospective” Autograph manuscript signed, 4 pp.

“Homage à Serge de Daighilew [sic]” Autograph manuscript signed, 9 pp.


[on “La Machine infernale”] Autograph manuscript signed, 2 pp., n.d.; with a typescript copy, 1 p., 20 January 1949.

“Madame se meurt” Autograph manuscript, 5 pp.

“Marie Laurencin” Autograph manuscript signed, 6 pp.

“Max [Jacob]” Autograph manuscript signed, 2 pp.

“Musée secret” Autograph manuscript, 5 leaves; conjugate with “Escales”.

Le Mystère laïc, Holograph revisions in a copy of the first edition (Éditions des Quatre Chemins, [1928]).

“Notes sur la crucifixion” Autograph manuscript, 5 pp.

“Notre Dame de Paris, La Fille aux yeux d’or” Autograph manuscript, 4 pp. (incomplete).

[Ode to Picasso] “Prospectus” Autograph manuscript, 2 pp., and “Préface” Autograph manuscript, 1 p.

[Oedipe roi] Typescript, 21 pp., heavily revised in Cocteau’s holograph,
Honoré de Balzac’s proof corrections and revisions to a passage of Mémoires de deux jeunes mariées, 1841.

with 3 full-page drawings of set and costume designs and 2 smaller drawings.


“Le Pêlican de Ray[mon]d Radiguet” Autograph manuscript, 1 p.
“Poèmes” Autograph manuscript, 13 leaves.
“Poèmes” (cover title) Holograph, 28 pp. of text in a bound folio notebook of 33 leaves. Inscribed on the front cover “A Syracuse University ces quelques calculs d’un mathématicien du verbe avec l’amitié de Jean Cocteau 1963”.
“Poèmes de jeunesse” (wrapper title) Autograph manuscript, pp. 8–157, containing 90 individual poems.
“Procès de l’inspiration” Autograph manuscript, 5 pp.
[on Raymond Radiguet] Autograph manuscript, 2 pp.
[Return of Ulysses to Ithaca and Penelope’s welcome] Autograph manuscript, 8 pp.
[on Raymond Rounce] Autograph manuscript signed, 3 pp.
“Une Rétrospective de J. E. Blanche” Autograph manuscript signed, 6 pp.
“Romantisme” Autograph manuscript signed, 4 pp., “fait pour la radio italienne. Rognoni, le 29 Sept. 1950.”
“Satie” Autograph manuscript signed, 2 pp.
“Satie est mort, vive Satie” Typescript signed, with Cocteau’s revisions, 3 pp.
“Sources des films” Autograph manuscript signed, 6 pp.
“Suite d’un rétrospective” Autograph manuscript signed, 5 pp.
“Les Tragédiens (Jean Desbordes)” Autograph manuscript signed, 5 pp.
“Vocabulaire” Holograph, 6 pp.
“Voilà deux ans que je me refuse d’écrire quelques lignes sur le numéro Barbette. [incipit]” Autograph manuscript, 9 pp.
Letters (217), 1921–63 and n.d., to various correspondents, principal among them Maurice Sachs. Other addressees include Max Jacob, Georgette Leblanc, and Marcel Raval.

[Colet, Louise née Revoil] (1808–1876)
Letters (2), 16 August 1853 and n.d., from Flaubert to her.
Coppée, François (1842–1908)
   Autograph letter signed, n.d.

[Dabit, Eugène] (1898–1936)
   Letters (6), 1927–35, from André Gide to Dabit.

[Daudet, Alphonse] (1840–1897)
   Letter, 2 December 1880, from Émile Zola to Daudet.

Drouet, Juliette (1806–1883)
   Autograph letters (47), a few of the earlier letters signed (“J. Drouet” or “Juliette”), 1839–78 and n.d., all but one of them to Victor Hugo.

Dumas, Alexandre, père (1802–1870)

Dumas, Alexandre, fils (1824–1895)
   Autograph letter signed, 21 October 1886. Also, 1 letter, 4 August 1877, from Charles Gounod to Dumas fils.

Duras, Marguerite (1914– )
   Autograph and typed letters signed (3), 1965–66; with copies of letters (20), 1960–70, from Grove Press to her.

Éluard, Paul [pseudo of Eugène Grindel] (1895–1952)
   Autograph note signed, 19 June 1950, with memorabilia and photographs, including 6 snapshots.

Flaubert, Gustave (1821–1880)
   “Livre de Néhémias” Autograph manuscript signed, 2 pp.
   “Proverbes de Salomon” Autograph manuscript signed, 3 pp.
   Autograph letters signed (27), 1853–72 but mostly n.d., to correspondents that include Louise Colet, Paul Dalloz, Alphonse Lemerre, and Philippe Leparfait. Also, a letter, [14 June 1871], from George Sand to Flaubert.

France, Anatole [pseudo of Jacques Anatole François Thibault] (1844–1924)
   “Le mauvais ouvrier” Autograph manuscript signed, 1 p.
   Autograph letters signed (18), [ca. 1877 and 1915–18], 17 of which—those from World War I—are addressed to Jean-Paul Oury.

Genet, Jean (1910– )
   Autograph and typed letters signed (9), 1952–68 and n.d. Also in the Grove Press records are files of correspondence, 1952–67, with Genet’s translator into English, Bernard Frechtman.
Gide, André (1869–1951)
Autograph and typed letters signed (6), 1927–35, to Eugène Dabit.

Gounod, Charles François (1818–1893)
Autograph letters signed (123), 1850–93, to various correspondents.

Guizot, François (1787–1874)
Autograph letter signed, 17 August 1848.

Hanska, Eveline Rzewuska, comtesse (1801–1882)
Document, Paris, 26 September 1850, concerning Balzac’s estate.
Also, letters (3), n.d., from Paul Lacroix to Armand Dutacq that refer to her and her sister, Mme. Jules Lacroix.

Hugo, Victor Marie, vicomte (1802–1885)
Autograph letters signed (8), 1842–69 and n.d., to recipients that include his son Toto. Also, 46 letters, 1839–78 and n.d., from Juliette Drouet to Victor Hugo.

Ionesco, Eugène (1912–

Jacob, Max] (1876–1944)
Letters (17), 1918–25 and n.d., from Jean Cocteau to Max Jacob.

Lacroix, Paul ["le bibliophile Jacob"] (1807–1884)
Autograph letters signed (3), n.d., to Armand Dutacq.

Lamartine, Alphonse Marie Louis de Prat de (1790–1869)
“Les Conditions personnelles [for establishing a political newspaper]”
Autograph manuscript signed, 2 pp., n.d. Also, “La Fleur des eaux, Romance de Valentine” Manuscript, in Valentine de Cessiat’s holo-graph, 4 pp., 28 May 1845.
Autograph letters signed (176), 1829–67, including 154 letters, 1841–56, to his niece, Valentine de Cessiat; with 3 letters 1853–54, from Valentine de Cessiat to Lamartine. Also, 12 letters from Marianne (Birch) de Lamartine to various correspondents.

Lavedan, Henri (1859–1940)
Autograph letter signed, 28 June 1906, 5 pp.

Louys, Pierre (1870–1925)
“L’Île” Autograph manuscript, 72 pp., [n.d., but ca.1905].
Macdonald, Jacques Étienne Joseph Alexandre, duc de Tarente (1765–1840)
Autograph letters signed (143), 1807–40, to three generations of the Billacoys family, with related documents.

Maritain, Jacques (1882–1973)
Typed letters signed (2), 11 January and 7 April 1943, to Dorothy Thompson; with 2 letters from her to Maritain.

Maupassant, Guy de (1850–1893)
Autograph letters signed (2), 1872 and 8 May 1890.

Maurois, André [pseud. of Émile Herzog] (1885–1967)
Autograph and typed letters signed (5), 1941 and n.d.

Milhaud, Darius (1892–1974)

Mistral, Frédéric (1830–1914)
Autograph letter signed, 29 October 1867.

Nodier, Charles (1780–1844)
“Le vieux marinier” Autograph manuscript, 4 pp.

Pailleron, Édouard (1834–1899)
Autograph letter, n.d., 3 pp., that includes 2 ink sketches.

Peyre de Mandiargues, André (1909–)
Autograph letters signed (15), 1958–69; with copies of letters (15), 1958–69, from Grove Press to Peyre de Mandiargues.

Robbe-Grillet, Alain (1922–)

Rodin, François Auguste René (1840–1917)
Autograph letters signed (2), 3 May 1884 and 28 March 1906.

Rolland, Romain (1866–1944)
Autograph letters signed (2), 7 July 1918 and 14 October 1920.

Romains, Jules [pseud. of Louis Farigoule] (1885–1972)
Typed letter signed, 9 October 1940.

Sagan, Françoise [pseud. of Françoise Quoirez] (1935–)
“L’Homme étendu” Typescript, 8 pp.

Sainte-Beuve, Charles-Augustin (1804–1869)
Proof corrections in galleys to 3 reviews by Sainte-Beuve in Le Constitu-

Autograph letters signed (21), 1851–66 and n.d., including 19 to Antonia Devaquetz, dite Mme. de Vaquez. Also, 1 letter, 30 June 1851, of A[ntonia] de Vaquez to her mother; and 1 letter, 3 December 1855, from Thomas Devaquetz to Monsieur Saint Boeuf [sic].

Sand, George [Lucile Aurore Dupin, baronne Dudevant] (1804–1876)

Autograph letter signed, [14 June 1871], 3 pp., to Gustave Flaubert.

Schweitzer, Albert (1875–1965)

[Lectures and essays, in German, on subjects of religion, philosophy, music, medicine, and peace] Holograph and typescript (21 items), 1906–32 and 1963.

“Message pour le centenaire de Brazza” Typescript, 1 February 1952, 2 pp.

[Notebooks (37), the so-called blue notebooks], 1940–65, mostly in French, some in German, on subjects that include medical supplies for the Lambarené hospital, schedules for Schweitzer’s trips to Europe, and nuclear power.


[Sermons (14) preached at Lambarené, 22 June—20 July and 3 August—28 September 1930] Typescript, 52 pp., in French.

Letters (647), 1912–65, including 180 to his daughter Rhena; 396, 1950–65, to the photographer Erica Anderson; and others to correspondents that include Rudolf Bultmann. Also, letters addressed to Schweitzer, 1944–45, from Hermann Hagedorn, author of the biography Prophet in the Wilderness.

Sue, Eugène Marie Joseph (1804–1857)

Autograph letter signed (“M. J. Sue”), 20 September 1826.

Also, 218 letters and documents, 1826–52, 1868, and n.d., relating to the author’s step-mother, Rosella de Milhau Sue Niles; the American diplomat Nathaniel Niles (1791–1869); and their families.

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Tocqueville, Alexis Charles Henri Maurice Clérel, comte de (1805–1859)
Autograph letters signed (2), 19 June 1839 and n.d.

Verne, Jules (1828–1905)
Autograph letter signed, 18 April 1874.

Vielé-Griffin, Francis (1864–1937)
Autograph letter signed, 14 November 1929.

Vigny, Alfred, comte de (1797–1863)
Autograph letter signed, 1859.

Yourcenar, Marguerite [pseud. of Marguerite de Crayencour] (1903–

Zola, Émile (1840–1902)
Autograph letters signed (32), 1864–1902 and n.d., to correspondents that include Alphonse Daudet.