Madame de Staël and the Transformation of European Politics, 1812–17
Glenda Sluga*

What place do women have in international history? This article approaches the chronic uncertainty surrounding this question through an examination of the role of one woman, Germaine de Staël (1766–1817), in the processes of peace-making that Paul W. Schroeder has described in his landmark study The Transformation of European Politics as ‘the decisive turning point’ in the transformation of ‘the governing rules, norms, and practices of international politics’. The author argues that Staël’s intellectual and personal involvement in these events give us cause to reconsider the presence of women in international history, as actors intruding on what is normatively a masculine landscape, and as the agents of the political ideas that informed the ‘transformational’ peace-making agenda in the period leading up to and after the celebrated Congress of Vienna. She argues that adding Staël to this history recasts the relevance of female elites to the shifting parameters of diplomacy and the rise of a new Europe-centred liberal internationalism in the early nineteenth century, while inviting larger questions about the intersecting trajectories of gender relations and international politics and power.

Keywords: Congress of Vienna; gender; international history; women

Introduction
A quarter of a century has passed since the US scholar Joan Scott drew attention to the failure of gender analyses to penetrate histories of ‘war, diplomacy, and high politics’. In the intervening years, as political history moved to the margins and cultural history to the centre of historical scholarship, gender took hold as a method of studying the past, but not without inciting new controversies about the foregrounding of masculinity and the continued absence of women. With the best of intentions one could study ‘gender’ in political settings by focusing solely on men, on the understanding that women were just not there. As a result some feminist historians have become suspicious of the Trojan-horse qualities of gender analyses, regarding it as effectively marginalising women or making them even more invisible. They have a point. Despite available evidence of women as agents and subjects in the arena of war, peace-making, and diplomacy, the core historical narratives of international history remain notably depleted of women.

What place do women have in international history? This essay approaches the chronic uncertainty surrounding this question through an examination of the roles of one woman, Germaine de Staël (1766–1817), in the processes of peace-making that brought to an end the Napoleonic era and initiated a new epoch in international politics. In the standard English-language study of that episode, Paul W. Schroeder’s

*Email: glenda.sluga@sydney.edu.au

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The Transformation of European Politics, this period is considered ‘the decisive turning point’ in the transformation of ‘the governing rules, norms, and practices of international politics’ that occurred ‘above all in the field of ideas, collective mentalities, and outlooks’.\(^4\) It began with the advance in 1812 of the so-called Fourth (or Sixth, depending on your historian) coalition of Russia, Sweden, Britain, Prussia, and Austria united against Napoleon, and ended with the terms of peace deliberated by the coalition members over a series of treaties and conferences that stretched from 1814 to 1822, commonly referred to as the Congress of Vienna, even though the Vienna meeting itself only ran from September 1814 to June 1815.\(^5\) In a period when the relatively new term ‘international’ grew increasingly popular,\(^6\) the Congress of Vienna enabled new ways of thinking about the universal relevance of morality and politics enacted in a sphere that was imagined as international - albeit from a European perspective, where Europe included Russia as much as Britain. Although we could not know it from reading mainstream accounts of the remaking of a European order after Napoleon, including Schroeder’s, these transformations occurred in an era in which exceptional women, empowered by money or title, exerted influence over diplomacy and political ideology.\(^7\)

In the history of this period as it currently stands, women appear only insofar as they are part of the popular representation of the Vienna gathering as a ‘dancing congress’, and then usually in the guise of spies, whores, and mistresses.\(^8\) This is despite the presence of female sovereigns, and the diplomatic parleying that took place in salons overseen by women. In the 1960s, the Austrian historian Hilde Spiel recognised that the Vienna congress was one of the few historical examples in which ‘a group of statesmen and politicians, assembled solely and exclusively to deal with matters of commonweal interest, labored so extensively and decisively under the influence of women’.\(^9\) My argument in this article is that a focus on Staël gives us cause to reconsider the significance of women’s presence in the international past, and their absence in international history. As I will try to show, Staël’s place in the international past offers an illustrative example of an exceptional woman intruding in scenarios normatively populated by men, and as the agent of the ideas that informed the ‘transformational’ European political agenda in the period leading up to and after the celebrated Congress of Vienna. Adding Staël to international history also recasts the relevance of female élites to the shifting parameters of diplomacy and the rise of a new Europe-centred liberal internationalism in the early nineteenth century. Finally, it invites us to reflect on the gender anomaly that has pervaded the history of the Congress ever since - the simultaneous presence and absence of women - and the intersecting trajectories of gender relations and international politics and power.

Germaine de Staël

In 1813, common parlance in England and on the continent had it that there were three powers in Europe: Britain, Russia, and Germaine de Staël.\(^10\) She was by then in her mid-forties, celebrated across the Continent and Atlantic for her writing: from the novels *Delphine* (1802) and *Corinne or Italy* (1807), to her original studies of national literatures and cultures such as *On Germany* (1813). Even in an age when women were tolerated as the writers of novels, Staël’s status as a female ‘genius’ was exceptional.\(^11\) Some of her social circumstances worked against her prospects as a public figure - she was neither a man, nor an aristocrat, and, as importantly in her native France, she was not a Catholic. But her privileged private situation also
worked to her advantage. Her father, the Genevan-born Jacques Necker, was Louis XVI’s celebrated Minister of Finances, a position that placed the family in the corridors of the French Royal Court. Her mother, Suzanne Necker, was famous for her salon, where the young Germaine imbibed the Enlightenment at the feet of its greatest spokespersons. By the time she had grown up, Staël was, thanks to her father, an extremely wealthy woman with her own flair for financial management. When, in 1785, she married the hapless Baron Eric Magnus Staël-Holstein, Swedish Ambassador to France, she added to her capacity to act in the world the status of Baronne and ‘ambassadrice’. These titles gave her personal status at court and in society and, as importantly, access to diplomatic immunity. Until 1792, when the republican-minded Staël became a political persona non grata for her opposition to the violence of the new republic, the Swedish Embassy in the rue du Bac was the hearth of her celebrated salon. As the political situation deteriorated, she used her money and situation to help rescue from peril individuals in her circle, as well as others outside; ‘woman as I am’, she wrote at the age of twenty-eight, she preferred ‘real dangers’ to a safe life removed from the centre of political events. When the Terror brought the denunciation of her salon, Staël was forced to flee to England, returning to Paris only after Robespierre’s death in 1794.

Under both the Directory, and Napoleon’s early years of rule, Staël’s reconstituted salon in the Faubourg St. Germain became a gathering point for liberal republicans and moderate royalists, ‘diplomats, ambassadors, artists and men of letters’, a place for the cultivation of discussion, generation of ideas, dissemination of views, and orchestration of political favours and appointments including, most famously, Charles Maurice de Talleyrand to the position of Foreign Minister in 1797. Successive French governments also had Staël’s salon in their surveillance sights. In 1803, Napoleon condemned Staël as ‘a perpetual motion machine, who stirs up the salons’, and ordered her to keep a distance of forty leagues from Paris. Staël would quip that under Napoleon a whole social order was being organised to prevent an ambitious woman from rising to the reputation of a man. During the ten years of exile that ensued, Staël’s most permanent address was her father’s chateau in Coppet, on Lake Geneva, already well known as home to the Coppet circle, most famously Benjamin Constant, August Wilhelm Schlegel, and Simonde de Sismondi. Despite her geographical displacement, Staël continued to speak out against Napoleon’s creeping hegemony over Europe and domestic despotism. She accused him of wielding ‘absolute power’, to the extent that ‘no person could any longer follow his own will, either in the most important circumstances or in the most trifling’. While much of this account of Staël’s political activism and her ostracism can be told as a French story, for our purposes it contains the seeds of her later international interventions. Against this background, Napoleon’s consolidation of power became the crucible in which Staël’s conception of liberty translated most clearly into international concerns. We can hear the provocation to this broader landscape of ideas and action in her persistent denunciations: ‘while he is on the throne,’ she warned, ‘there will always be another war, another conquest. He is the great threat to liberty and independence in Europe.’ Staël’s genius was to cast independence in the form of a nationally diverse Europe, and as the antithesis of Napoleon’s ambitions for a ‘world monarchy’. Liberty, on Staël’s view, rested on the constitutional guarantees and political forms that restricted abuses of power, usually on the model of existing English political institutions and practices, and on ‘an animated sentiment of public life’, which itself required freedom of religion, the press, and opinion.
From 1812, when Staël found herself literally in the middle of the intellectual and diplomatic machinations of a new European-wide coalition against Napoleon, these principles of liberty and independence, in combination with her own actions, became integral to the machinations for a new international order. Having fled French security forces, Staël arrived in St Petersburg just as the Russian Tsar Alexander was about to initiate with Sweden the first alliance in this fateful coalition; in Stockholm as the Swedish Crown Prince Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte manoeuvred his interests through the advances of Britain, Austria, and Prussia for the coalition’s expansion; in London as the English began to strategise the terms of an international peace with implications for Europe and its colonies; and in Paris, as coalition members disputed the conditions of the treaty that would set the terms for the iconic Vienna congress. In the 200 years since, Staël’s place in the story of Napoleon’s downfall and the imagining of a new ‘international’ political order has been told in fragments or for the purposes of biography. Indeed, of all her roles, the political Staël operating in an international context remains the most difficult to resurrect. The following narrative combines the available evidence and new research of my own with the history of the transformation of European politics. It establishes not only that Staël was there, but also the specific forms of influence she was able to wield in the domains of international politics and ideas.

From St Petersburg, to London, via Stockholm, 1812–14

The mislaid history of Staël’s role in Napoleon’s downfall begins in the early winter of 1812, and the formation of an Allied coalition. Comprising in the main Russia, Sweden, Great Britain, Prussia, and Austria, the coalition was eventually successful in defeating Napoleon, although it took until April 1814 for the self-styled Emperor to abdicate and for the allied troops to occupy France and force the terms of a peace treaty. What seems simple enough, or even inevitable, on the page of history - the forging of a coalition, determining a post-war political order - was a complicated process of ‘kaleidoscopic groupings and regroupings’ requiring the manufacture of all manner of illusions as well as pecuniary obligations. The Swedish government was initially suspicious of Russian intentions, since the Russian sovereign had taken Finland from Sweden in a treaty it agreed with France in 1807 at Tilsit. Even more confusingly, Bernadotte, the Swedish Prince Royal negotiating with the Russians, was a Frenchman who had earned his political fame as Napoleon’s Army Marshal and found himself at the head of the Swedish state. British interest in the coalition was motivated by a desire to smash Napoleon’s ‘continental system’, a blockade of British trade that the French Emperor had manoeuvred through a complex system of alliances and deceptions between France and sovereigns across the continent. At one time or another, the European members of the coalition had succumbed to Napoleon and the continental system on the understanding that there were economic or political gains to be had. The salient point is that by 1812, as Napoleon made his badly measured military advance on Russian territory, circumstances had shifted on all sides. The Russian court was now the centre of Napoleonic opposition for the dissidents of Prussia, Switzerland, and Austria, as well as the sovereign powers that one by one came to join the anti-Napoleonic crusade.

Staël’s arrival in St Petersburg in August 1812 and her role in the formation of the coalition was the result of a chain of events that began with her completion of On Germany, a work she had begun four years earlier, in the wake of Napoleon’s
annihilation of Prussian forces at the Battle of Jena. On Germany constituted a new kind of ‘cultural’ study written, like her novel Corinne or Italy, in the absence of the objective political features of the relevant nation, and evocative of national patriotism as a method of opposition to Napoleon. It described the characteristics of a German national esprit that, Staël argued, traversed the lands of the historic federation, including Prussia, Austria, and the German-speaking parts of the Swiss cantons, and that she believed could excite its populations to take up arms in defence of their difference from the French.²³

As news of the existence of the manuscript spread, Staël became the object of renewed French repression. In a Europe where ports and paths and passports were difficult to negotiate for an open enemy of Napoleon, she fled beyond the Emperor’s reach, taking with her the only copy of the manuscript and fixing her sights on Stockholm, a city to which she was linked by virtue of her now dead Swedish husband.²⁴ The arduous and constantly re-routed journey, in evasion of Napoleon’s international army, eventually brought her to St Petersburg just as Tsar Alexander, facing invasion, prepared to travel to Abo (now Turku on the south-west coast of Finland, then part of the Russian Empire) to meet Bernadotte and discuss a military pact. Hearing of her arrival, the Tsar sought out the propitiously placed Staël who knew Bernadotte from an earlier collaboration against Napoleon. Thus began a relationship of convenience, which saw Staël mobilise support for the Tsar and Bernadotte as the leaders of a new Europe-wide alliance against Napoleon.

Staël announced herself keen on the Tsar’s leadership because he acknowledged the limitations of his own absolutist rule in Russia and supported constitutions and even republics. Although it was obvious that Alexander’s liberal inclinations did not extend to the overturning of serfdom in Russia, she was convinced of his intrinsic liberalism. When it came to Bernadotte, Staël based her faith in his good political judgement on the example he had set by dispensing liberal laws in Sweden,²⁵ and his personal combination of Northern traditions of liberty and Southern (by virtue of being born in the south of France) energy. Bernadotte, she believed, would be able to foster ‘enthousiasme’ for opposing Napoleon’s Grand Armée and for reconciling the dispersed interests of Europe’s governments and its populations.²⁶ We know that Staël was not alone in imagining either the Tsar or Bernadotte as the saviours of Europe. But she was singularly responsible for shoring up Bernadotte’s participation in the coalition and its military campaign.²⁷

We find glimpses of the significance of Staël’s involvement and views in her own later accounts, even when she self-consciously played down her activities. These tell us that she had the Tsar’s ear, that he sought her views on Napoleon’s counter-offers, and asked her to press Russia’s case with Bernadotte. From the memoirs of her arch-enemy the Duc de Rovigo - Napoleon’s Minister of Police who pursued Staël and her manuscript above and beyond the call of duty - we learn it was Staël who finally convinced Bernadotte to trust Alexander.²⁸ Correspondence from the period too provides us with the evidence of how Staël was able to exert influence in this period, regardless of the national setting. In St Petersburg, as later, we find her widely feted by the most cosmopolitan society in Europe and at the heart of a concerted diplomacy effected through private conversations and correspondence, whether at the Russian court or in the drawing rooms of the nobility. Her salon at the Hôtel de l’Europe drew Russian military and diplomatic figures,²⁹ the English men who were in St Petersburg gathering information for the Foreign Ministry, and the US Ambassador John Quincy Adams.³⁰ On one cool evening towards the end of her
short stay, Baron vom Stein - adviser to the Tsar on the preparation of a ‘German’
insurrection against Napoleon - sat transfixed by Staël’s stirring recitation from the
still unpublished On Germany. Her theme was the necessary enthousiasme of young
German men to take up arms in defence of their right not to be subjugated by a for-
eign power. 31 Moved to tears, Stein wrote home that he was captivated by the ugly
woman with brilliant eyes. He even copied out for his wife the passages Staël dedi-
cated to the description of enthusiasm. 32 However, as Staël’s role as an intermediary
between Bernadotte and the Tsar grew more apparent and intense, Stein himself
grew more critical, fearing the influence of her distinctive liberal agenda. 33 Stein
argued for the creation of a centralised federation that linked Prussia and Austria
and revived the Germany of the Holy Roman Empire; Staël attacked Stein’s model
of Germany as potentially more despotic than Napoleon’s own rule had been. 34

On 24 September, a week after the Russian forces set Moscow alight forcing
Napoleon and his surviving troops into retreat, Staël arrived in Stockholm equipped
with some Swedish and a deep knowledge of local political life acquired by virtue of
her marriage. In the period leading up to the French revolution, in her role as ambas-
sadrice, Staël had been privy to her husband’s Swedish diplomatic networks. (In her
married life she had taken responsibility for writing the Baron’s despatches on
French politics to the then reigning Gustave III, who preferred her insights.) 35 From
late 1812 until mid-1813, Staël kept an open house near the Swedish royal palace, in
a four-room apartment on the Arsenalgatan. She gave balls, cultivated a salon, and
presented readings from On Germany. ‘Madame de Staël’s conversational dances’36
became, in the words of the Prussian envoy von Tarrach, ‘a central meeting point for
the large-scale plot against Napoleon’. 37 The Swedish Foreign Minister, von Enges-
trom, described the Stockholm salon as a ‘café politique’, where the chatter was about
everything, and the doctrine preached was ‘subversive of all order’. 38 The collection
of emigrés, dissidents, and diplomats - including von Brinkman, the former Secretary
at the Swedish legation under the Baron de Staël-Holstein - depicted her as the
‘conscience’ of an outraged Europe, and as the single person who had the most influ-
ence over both the Tsar and Bernadotte. No diplomat could risk refusing Staël’s invi-
tations. 39 The French Chargé d’Affaires, M. de Cabre, whose own star sank as Staël’s
rose, reported back to Paris that her effect was ‘bomb-like’. Staël was always at
Bernadotte’s side: ‘He tells her everything, and she sometimes advises him.’ 40 We
know too she advised Bernadotte to respond on behalf of ‘la cause de l’humanité’ to
Napoléon’s threats, to keep firm with the Austrian and Prussian ambassadors so
that their emperors would be forced into the alliance against Napoleon. 41 In January
1813, when Bernadotte planned a meeting with von Tarrach to invite Prussia to join
the emerging coalition, it took place at Staël’s. 42 The coalition was agreed in Febru-
ary. When Bernadotte finally headed off into battle, the proclamation he took with
him to spread among the French soldiers and urging them to change sides was her
work. 43

At times Staël utilised her networks, whether cultivated personally, through cor-
respondence, or her salon, to a variety of specific ends: to orchestrate Cabre’s expul-
sion under police surveillance; to appeal to the British envoy for monetary aid for
Sweden; 44 to suggest that an exiled former French General take command of troops
against the French Emperor. 45 More typical of her interventions was her correspon-
dence with Jacques Augustin Galiffe, the Genevan-born Secretary to the Russian
Court Banker, in which she sourced and passed on information, casting it in a light
that would help her cause. As diplomats and other political representations in
Stockholm sallied round her salon and sent off missives and received their own instructions, Staël used Galiffe to send news from Sweden to Russia, and to keep both Russia and Sweden to their Abo promises. In a setting where no letter could be expected to evade interception, she cajoled and flattered the Genevan into writing to her, or passing on her own letters to third parties. Employing her telegraphic style, she pressed Bernadotte’s requests for more troops, and informed Galiffe of reasons for the delays in Bernadotte’s military campaign. The Prince would probably head off in the spring, she kept telling Galiffe, expecting the news to be passed on to the Tsar. To her other correspondents around the continent, including the Prince de Ligne in Vienna, and the Duchesse of Saxe-Weimar (the Tsar’s sister), she conveyed her frustrations, including the difficulty of getting Austria, Russia, and Prussia in an alliance, because they continually undermined each other.

Staël also thought more broadly. In November 1812, she resumed her epistolary acquaintance with Thomas Jefferson, who she knew from the 1780s when he was Minister to France. Her aim now was to dissuade the United States from its war with England. Insisting that ‘free peoples all belong to the same family’, Staël argued that England and the United States shared an interest in defeating Napoleon, rather than in fighting each other. She claimed that if the Americans destroyed England’s naval power, then they would find a new enemy in Napoleon because he was against all liberties. Jefferson’s response was dismissive: just as Staël considered Napoleon the enemy of the liberty of continental Europe, Americans viewed England as the enemy of the liberty of the oceans and commerce.

Networking, letters, her salon, and her publications: these were the means by which over a matter of nearly two years Staël continued to spin the general cause of a coalition, to varying effect. She may have failed with Jefferson, but she was successful in making Bernadotte’s participation in the war against Napoleon an obligation of sorts. From her base in Stockholm, she used her connections with Russian and Swedish diplomats to extend her information-gathering networks to London. When Dorothea Lieven - the enterprising wife of the newly appointed, dull-witted, Russian Ambassador to England - passed briefly through Stockholm, Staël co-opted her support. Once Lieven was back in London, Staël reported to her on the state of the alliance between Sweden and Russia, as well as on the importance of promoting Bernadotte’s suitability as the future King of France. On 16 February 1813, Dorothea wrote back through the Russian diplomatic office, referring, ambiguously, to ‘our operations’. By the beginning of March, England had come to an agreement with Bernadotte over subsidies for military action on the continent, and the fate of Norway: a million pounds to be paid for 30,000 men, naval support ‘to help compel the Danes to surrender Norway, and the island of Guadeloupe as a possible additional or consolation prize’. Staël now sent Lieven a copy of her newest manuscript, Ten Years of Exile, having marked the passages that celebrated the virtues of Russia and the Tsar and acknowledged a ‘great service to the universal map by arranging for us “the affair of Norway”’. Although Staël’s role in this episode is not easily parsed, we do know from her correspondence to Lieven around this time, that her view of contemporary events was on a world scale. When Bernadotte finally set off on his military campaign - with Staël’s wayward son Albert as his aide-de-camp and her close confidant, the family ‘tutor’ August Schlegel, as his Secretary - Staël complained: ‘Stockholm has the air of yesterday’s town and we await a great battle from one moment to the next never has humankind played so important a game all your nation is electrified and the asiatics will save Europe.’
If Staël saw one of her tasks as stoking Bernadotte’s resolve in order to keep him focused on the Coalition and the prospect of replacing Napoleon as the head of the French state, the French Swedish prince also contemplated the benefit in feeding her own self-esteem. ‘If I were Charles VII’, he wrote, ‘I would be tempted to make you play the role of Joan of Arc . . . Give me your plume as an ally and I will have thousands more men to throw into the balance’.\(^57\) The power of that ‘plume’ was on full display during her time in Stockholm. Visitors to her home recorded that most mornings she received in bed, ink-stained and animated. Strewn around her were the pages of her endless correspondence and manuscript drafts: the final version of Reflections on Suicide, newly prefaced with its call to Bernadotte to maintain his motivation; a draft of a memoir, Ten Years of Exile, attacking Napoleon and enjoining the Tsar to the defence of liberty; the early pages of Considerations on the French Revolution with its mapping out an English model of constitutional monarchy for post-Napoleonic France; and, possibly, Sur le Système Continental\(^58\), the anonymously published tract that first appeared in Hamburg. Although authorship of the document is still disputed, this biting attack on diplomacy in the Napoleonic age bursts with her ideas and language, from its famous accusation that Napoleon was ‘not a man, but a system’, and its deft description of the manner in which Napoleon’s foreign policy had cowed the sovereigns of Europe and set them against each other, to its call for a European war of independence.

In June 1813, Staël moved to London where her celebrity as a writer and her prestige as Napoleon’s nemesis again preceded her.\(^59\) Writing to the Queen of Sweden, she described having received 300 visits in four days and twenty invitations. She was exhausted by twelve successive late nights.\(^60\) Staël was already powerful enough a presence to have her own code in British Foreign Office ‘cipher lists’.\(^61\) The dinners at her Soho and Richmond residences were attended by ‘almost all of the Cabinet Ministers’.\(^62\) Sir James Mackintosh, perhaps her greatest ally, recorded ‘the whole fashionable and literary world [was] occupied with . . . the authoress of Corinne, and the most celebrated woman of this or, perhaps, of any age.’\(^63\) We know that even though Staël complained about her schedule, she was keen to capitalise on the coincidence of the English publication of On Germany and the Bernadotte-led Prussian victory over Napoleon in Leipzig, the famous Battle of the Nations. The book sold 1,500 copies within days, and sections were widely excerpted and reviewed. Even Goethe, who knew Staël from her sojourn in Berlin in 1803, remarked on the pre-science of her argument for a German patriotism rallied to military opposition against Napoleon’s forces.\(^64\) By this time, Staël had other as pressing motivations for her pointed sociability and publicity, reflected in the continuing stream of letters she wrote to Bernadotte, each of which reported on her exchanges with either the English Prime Minister, or Foreign Minister, or clarified the political discussion in England, and implied that the prospect of the French throne could turn to his favour, if only he would grab the mettle: ‘the deliverance of Europe depends on You’; ‘Drive on until the liberty of France granted and directed by You!’\(^65\) She also persisted in asking that he give her orders and put her to work for him.\(^67\)

Even without Bernadotte’s ‘orders’, Staël sought backing for the application of a constitution anglaise in France, under Bernadotte rather than Napoleon or the old Bourbon French dynasty. She insisted with her English interlocutors - whether Lord Liverpool, Lord Castlereagh, or Lord Grey - that Bernadotte was the best option for both France and Norway.\(^68\) She became known for her ‘invective against Buonaparte, praise of Bernadotte, the state of Europe, and above all the happiness
of Englishmen’. Her persistent involvement in European questions at this time included spreading (through Galiffe’s connections with Francois d’Ivernois, the Swiss financier who worked for the English government) the idea that the Tsar should declare himself the King of the Poles, and thereby restore Poland. When a Russian diplomat was tasked with politically and territorially reconstituting Switzerland, she lobbied on behalf of Genevan interests.

The British did not always appreciate these international-scale interventions precisely because Staël was a woman. Mackintosh described her as having ‘every sort of talent and would be universally popular if, in society, she were to confine herself to her inferior talents - pleasantry, anecdote, and literature - which are so much more suited to conversation than her eloquence and genius.’ Staël’s novel Corinne makes clear that she was completely au fait with English gender conventions, but like her novel’s protagonist, she refused to comply, insisting on staying on after dinner with the men smoking their cigars. The looming Whig figure of the period, Lord Holland, a vocal opponent of the forced union of Sweden and Norway as the price of Bernadotte’s alliance, ‘declared she was the most presumptuous woman he had ever met with’. Staël found herself combatting the familiar prejudice against the idea that France might be suited to (or deserve) the forms of political liberty practised in England, as well as criticism of her own transgressions of the gender-separated spheres of English political and social life.

Given the controversy sustained by the conventional incompatibility of her gender and genius, Staël’s intellectual and moral authority is all the more historically compelling. Her name and ideas appear in the correspondence that shuttled forth between England and the male English negotiators in the field of war; some consulted On Germany as they moved through the German countryside with the Prussian troops. Louis XVIII, the Bourbon claimant to the French throne in exile in England, sent his male emissaries to persuade her that she would have all that she desired if she lent her support to his return once Napoleon was removed. To have agreed would have seen the return of Staël’s missing 10 million French livres: the money lent by her father to the French Treasury in the most compromised days of the pre-revolutionary period, and that she had been trying to recover from the French state ever since. However, even though by this time she had begun to accommodate a constitutional monarchy as the best way forward, she could not countenance the royal heir on the French throne. He was for her merely an obese man in his ‘rolling chair’, ‘pulled from the front, and pushed from behind’, the living emblem of the worst self-indulgent aspects of pre-revolutionary France. She rejected Louis’ offer, as she would later spurn attempts by Napoleon to bribe her in exchange for supporting his return in the name of liberty.

In April 1814, it was Louis XVIII who entered Paris as the new King, and Bernadotte who retreated to Stockholm, against all Staël’s designs - and thanks to the interventions of other intriguers, including Dorothea Lieven and Talleyrand, the man whose political career she had helped make. Staël did not give up on Bernadotte, and continued to act on his behalf, although she questioned his inability to act on the cards fate had dwelt him. By then new contingencies had come to dominate her interventions. A week after the Treaty of Chaumont was signed consolidating the alliance of the four powers, Staël wrote to Prince Dimitri Pavlovitch Tatichtchev, then First Councillor at the Russian Embassy in London, launching her (unsuccessful) campaign to keep the coalition from continuing on to Paris:
I hold your nation in high regard and have even more exalted feelings for your emperor. This I have demonstrated to Mme de Lieven in sending her what I wrote about the burning of Moscow, on the Russian resistance, and when that is published [in Dix Années d’Exil] there will, I think, be none who can say that the gallantry and patriotism of the Russian people has been praised more by anyone else than by myself. . . . If I wanted to praise myself, I would say to you that the only way I can see Paris again (something that has been my regret for ten years) is through the removal of Napoleon. I would tell you that while all the powers of Europe have yielded to Bonaparte, my weakness alone has resisted him for ten years [. . .].

The note is significant in two ways, as a mark of Staël’s continued awareness and use of diplomatic networks, and her shifting viewpoint in response to the post-war settlement. As before, Staël was not alone in her desire to stop the coalition effort at the borders of France. The irony was that the Tsar, her greatest ally in support of Bernadotte as the future head of a French constitutional monarchy, had almost single-handedly drawn the Allies across the French border into the capital. His motivation was not, as Staël feared, revenge for Napoleon’s attack on Russia, but rather, in a further ironic twist, to claim for himself leadership of the cause of liberty in Europe, much as she had promoted it to him.

From Paris to Geneva, and back again: 1814–15

A full month after the city’s pro-Napoleon defences had fallen to the coalition troops, Staël returned to the city she had not been allowed to visit for more than ten years. The rumours and shreds of evidence for this period take us in multiple directions: Staël trying to influence the peace of the Coalition partners with France, and the claims of Poland, Switzerland, and the German states; and the centrality of her salon in these informal conversations, which concluded with the Treaty of Paris, signed on 30 May 1814. Although drafting of the Treaty of Paris was a less celebrated affair than the Vienna congress, at stake in these formally ‘informal conversations’ between the ministers of the four powers and France was the detail of France’s future, and the conferencing system taken up at Vienna, including the status of colonies, European rivers, trade, and abolition, and the principles of diplomacy on which a commitment to ‘harmony and understanding’ between all the states of Europe might be based. It was in this context that all the key political and intellectual figures and spectators who had descended on Paris in order to influence the terms of the treaty, or watch history as it was being made, were drawn to Staël’s salon.

As we have seen, over the course of the period 1812–14, Staël was an ambassadrice by virtue of conventions that bestowed this title on the wives of ambassadors, and by temperament and practice. Her unofficial diplomacy mirrored the official style of European diplomacy at which French ambassadors were said to excel, precisely because they had been trained by the experience of salons as conversationalists. According to one of the most influential diplomatic texts of the time, François de Callières’ De la manière de négocier avec les souverains (1716, translated into English as The Practice of Diplomacy), it was the advantage of the salon experience that had made the French ‘the cleverest diplomats in Europe’. As Staël described in On Germany, the salonnières ‘understanding of conversation’ had ‘singularly developed the more serious understanding of political negotiation’. She maintained that the original role of the salon was to call ‘men distinguished by their nature to eminent places in society’, as well as women to the role of ‘legislateurs’, moderating hostility,
teaching civility, and inspiring heroism. Here she was also thinking of her own salon, in which from the 1790s onwards she had ventured 'in the spirit of enterprise, to try a mixture of the two parties, by bringing together at dinner the most intelligent men of each side; for people of a certain superiority almost always understand each other'.

(The undone Napoleon recognised its political potential when he hissed that '[h]er salon was fatal', she had gathered in it 'all the partisans republicans, and royalists. She put them in each other’s presence; she united them all against me. She attacked me from all sides.').

On Staël's historical accounting, by the 1810s French salons were less likely to be places in which elite conversation subjected public issues to rigorous intellectual scrutiny, and more often superficial sites of gossip, thanks to Napoleon's enervation of 'the public spirit'. Yet, in May 1814, Staël's salon - alternating between her residence in Saint Germain and the chateau of her friend Juliette Recamier at Clichy, on the northern outskirts of Paris - was a crucial site of diplomatic negotiation. Police spies warned the King that Staël's salon was operating as a 'centre of opinion'. Her admirers claimed it was still a space in which people were encouraged 'to think who have never thought before, or who had forgotten how to think'.

For the US Ambassador John Quincy Adams, it was 'a kind of temple of Apollo', where one could meet 'the world'. For the pragmatically minded, the crucial point was that Staël still had the Tsar's ear. According to the Swiss envoy Pictet de Rochemont - an old flame of Staël's who was only ambivalently comfortable with the extent of her influence - it was at these salon gatherings that the Tsar promised publicly to suppress serfhood in his empire and joined Staël's criticism of Bourbon anti-liberalism.

A three-hour-long gathering on 'un soir mémorable' in mid-May 1814 offers a useful example of just how, guided by Staël, this salon culture did its political work. The Marquis de Lafayette, acting as the emissary of US wishes, records that Staël began the game by commenting on her correspondence with Jefferson and his 'observations relative to the United States and the spirit of monopoly in England, extending even to liberty itself'. She then steered the conversation to the importance of passing on these concerns to the English. Before the evening's end, it had been arranged that the Russian Tsar and the Swiss-born US envoy Albert Gallatin would have a private audience in England, and the Tsar would represent the US perspective on their political differences to the English. Other causes that profited from Staël's salon strategising that same evening were Geneva's territorial claims in the drawing of a new French border, liberalism in Sicily and South America, and the abolition of the slave trade.

As in Stockholm and London, Staël's Paris salon did not merely provide a meeting space. Staël directed the salon conversation to the specific ends of libéralisme as she understood it: constitutional guarantees against abuses of political power and in defence of freedom of religion, press, and association; meritocratic rather than hereditary government; and thriving public spheres. On her view, these points were directly relevant to the reconfiguration of the French polity, on the grounds of their universal applicability, as the principles of peace-making on the international scale augured by the end of the war. Thus, despite evidence, for example, that abolition was not at the time a popular cause in France, Staël was able to use her influence to bring abolition to the fore in the course of Treaty discussions. Against the background of the 1814 peace deliberations, Staël also circulated (in English and French) her published summary of the abolitionist argument as a 'Call to the Sovereigns Convened in Paris to Grant the Abolition of the Slave Trade'. She registered
abolition as a ‘great humanitarian act’ already adopted by England, and commended it to all the governments of Europe as fundamental to the peace agreement. She appealed not only to a French audience, but also to the vanity of the Tsar, who would, she proclaimed, cement his reputation as ‘an absolute sovereign [who] fought to found the wise principles of political liberty’, if he supported abolition. She waxed on:

The crown of such a monarch should be composed of every kind of glory: the emperor of Russia rules peoples of diverse degrees of civilization within the confines of Asia; he tolerates all religions, he permits all customs, and the scepter, in his hands, is as equitable as law. Asia and Europe bless the name of Alexander. May that name resound as well on the savage shores of Africa! There is no country on earth unworthy of justice.  

When the Treaty of Paris between the allies and France was finally signed, its terms rejected retribution and reparations as a basis for an enduring or permanent peace, and went so far as to stipulate that the future Vienna Congress was ‘to facilitate the communication between peoples and continually to render them less strangers to each other’. The strategic Gex corridor between France and Switzerland was to be shared between the two states, while the German states were to be linked by a federative bond. It was agreed too, that France would within five years abolish the slave trade (although French colonies under temporary British occupation had already ceased the trade). The Treaty, which became the template for the principles of peace lingered over in Vienna, resonated other of Staël’s views, including her insistence on blaming Napoleon not the French people. She was not the only spokesperson for many of these views, but she was amongst the most articulate across Europe, her influence equal if not superior to that of many of the better-known men identified with these events.

After the signing of the Treaty of Paris, the previously peripatetic Staël might have been expected to follow the sovereigns and diplomats to Vienna where discussions were to continue, as other women did. Instead, Staël was kept away by her entangled public and personal preoccupations: the question of her daughter’s future, her husband’s illness, her exhaustion and disillusionment. She even publicly, and repeatedly, vowed off politics. However, she hardly disappeared from the international political scene. In the months leading up to the Vienna meeting, while the Coppet-based salon was at its celebrated international height, Staël grew increasingly adamant in private that her political efforts deserved recognition. Having intervened with the Tsar to obtain Russian support for diverting Britain from continued war against the United States, Staël expected to be kept in the political loop, and chided Gallatin: ‘I perhaps merit some kindness for my efforts to help you. Lord Wellington claims that I never see him without lecturing to him about America.’ In October, Gallatin finally replied that he could not tell her about the peace negotiations between the United States and Britain, adding: ‘I fully appreciate everything you have done to be of help to America.’

As Vienna filled up with sovereigns, dignitaries, plenipotentiaries, and numerous interested parties, Staël remained connected to events there, despite her physical absence. Alerted to her on-going ‘efforts to engender constitutional heat’ in Paris, and her resistant reputation as ‘the high-priestess of liberty and peace’, Talleyrand - now King Louis XVIII’s Foreign Minister - wrote from the Congress rebuking her. Her Genevan friend Jean-Gabriel Eynard recorded in his diaries a ‘grand diner
diplomatique’ at Talleyrand’s temporary residence in the Palais Kaunitz, where seated next to the Marquis de la Tour du Pin: ‘Mme de Staël was our first subject of conversation, and, as there is so much to say about her, our meeting was very animated.’ 100 Meanwhile, the ancient but still enigmatic Prince de Ligne pondered more privately on her ugliness, her disdain of female company, and loss of celebrity despite his own debt to her.101 He was not the first to emphasise her physical features as the clue to the limits of her power, and definitely not the last. The Russian envoy Count Pozzo di Borgo wrote to Wellington’s niece that Staël was a ‘monstrous’ hybrid, speaking and writing ‘like a man’ even though she comported herself ‘like a woman’.102 There were some people, Madame de Chastenay recalled, ‘for whom, hating Madame de Staël was a way of life’. 103 In the wake of the first Treaty of Paris, Staël was criticised as a ‘bad citizen’ stirring up trouble with her ‘false air of sincerity’. 104 When Staël went to the Parisian theatre, her appearance may have inspired ‘cries of Viva Viva’,105 but, as Lady Melbourne confided to Byron in early 1815, the view in English circles was, ‘It is quite over with Madame de Staël’, an evaluation, it could be argued, as illustrative of the force of her presence:

Nobody can bear her; she thinks only of courting Ministers but they will have nothing to say to her. They are wiser than ours [British]. Did I ever tell you that most of them went to the Regent to desire him to go and pay her a visit; and gave as a reason, that she had such a powerful pen, that it was of great consequence to make her speak well of this country.106

By then, the French and Austrian surveillance correspondence that flew between Paris and Vienna depicted her as mad, ridiculous, a charlatan, and dangerous. The pro-Napoleon Le nain jaune, ou journal des Arts, des Sciences, et de la Litterature spoofed her as the plenipotentiary sent to bring about peace and an accord between rival French Classicism and European Romanticism.107 The satire may have only been for the initiated, but it hit a mark. English papers reported (and Le Nain Jaune relayed) on 10 January 1815 that Staël was feeling indignant about the way in which her service to France had been forgotten; she was claiming to have overthrown Bonaparte with her pamphlets.108 Other party publications emanating from Paris took her on her word and blamed her for the Allied occupation of Paris. John Quincy Adams was more appreciative of her political efforts at this time, as he wrote to his mother Abigail: ‘Since the overthrow of Napoleon, and the European peace, she [Staël] has been among the most distinguished friends of our country, and contributed in no small degree to give the tone to the public opinion of France and of Europe, with regard to the vandalism of the British exploit at Washington.’109

Over this same period, Staël’s own correspondence shows that even though she moved between Paris and Geneva, and away to the Italian peninsula for the sake of her husband’s health, she assiduously kept up her network of correspondents (the Tsar, Wellington, and Jefferson among others), and developed sturdy lines of political information connecting her to the major international discussions concerning Europe and the Americas. She persisted in arguing for representative liberal constitutions and institutions as the future of Europe, along the lines of both US and English practices, even as she urged Jefferson to abolish slavery in that otherwise perfect republic. She worked up her critique of English political behaviour in Ireland and abroad as the precedent that explained the English disregard for liberty at the Congress. Responding to news of the agreements in train in Vienna, she denounced
‘all those political reasonings on the balance of Europe, those old systems which serve as a pretext to new usurpations’. Humankind,’ she wrote to Bernadotte (one of the few European sovereigns to avoid the Congress), ‘is very far from liberty at this moment. The miscarried revolution in France has caused those enlightened spirits everywhere to step back.’ A noticeable world-wearyinssion of political progress in Vienna: a ‘world spectacle made to inspire sadness, with the only consolation that discontent is being aroused’.

From 1814, and in the course of the relatively brief remaining period of her life, until 1817, Staël continued to work on her history of the French Revolution, supplementing her privately conducted political agitation with public political commentary. In its pages she criticised the Vienna Congress for giving France a say in the affairs of Germany, sacrificing Poland to short-sighted concerns, and only weakly stamping the peace with the cause of abolition. She directed her rancour particularly at Castlereagh, the English Foreign Minister (he had read all Staël’s works, and she knew him through her London salon). England, the great model of a liberal political system, she wrote, had failed to support the cause of liberty elsewhere, choosing Spanish repression over the independence movements in ‘Mexico and Perú’. Having given Napoleon every practical and ideological opportunity to attempt his return (she was writing after Napoleon’s infamous resumption of power in France, March to June 1815) and after defeating Napoleon a second time at Waterloo, England had imposed a new peace on France intended to punish its population by subjecting it to five years of military occupation and decimating its economy and politics. Staël’s critique of the second Treaty of Paris (1815) revolved around what she construed as the abandonment by England of liberal principles. Her evidence? The weakness of political institutions that had been put in place in France; the toll on political morale of the occupation of France under Wellington; the failure to bolster freedom of the press or religion, or to prevent the murder of Protestants in the French countryside. She blamed not only English diplomats, but also the self-interest of Talleyrand, who made a small fortune out of the Vienna decisions. From her perspective, by 1815, a long-anticipated opportunity to reshape political institutions in the image of liberty had been lost.

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A third class of historians - the so-called historians of culture, following on the lines laid down by the writers of universal history who sometimes accept littérautes and grandes dames as forces producing events - interpret this force still differently. They see it in what is termed culture, in intellectual activity.

Tolstoy, War and Peace ([1869], 1985). Once we start looking for Staël, it is relatively easy to see her everywhere in the history of events leading up to the Congress of Vienna. Staël was politically involved in international affairs in capacities that she could individually negotiate relative to the determining roles of male political and military elites, and in ways that contemporaries (and some later historians) conceived of as diplomacy. The point of looking is not to establish that she was a lone crusader, or that she was victorious in her political ambitions, or even that those ambitions represented a historically transcendent vision of liberal values. Rather, the evidence of her presence illustrates that Staël was at the centre of the transformations that took place in ‘the governing rules, norms, and practices of international politics’, which Schroeder pinpoints as ‘the decisive turning point’ in the ‘international system’.
For contemporaries, Staël was a crucial - sometimes annoying - catalyst, confirming and consolidating strategies, providing the intellectual context in which the moral and political resolve to strategise was clear.\textsuperscript{117} Her scripting of liberty as an imperative driving the coalition and the terms of peace, disseminated through her publications, letters, her ‘harangues’ in the setting of English country houses, and the moveable salons in her own homes in Stockholm, London, and Paris, lay enduring transnational intellectual foundations for the idea that liberal institutions could be borrowed and emulated, and that no nation or state was hostage to its own past or traditions. In this period, then, she was critical to the establishment of the liberal spectre that haunted the Congress and that, according to Schroeder, launched Europe in 1814 ‘more than 1789 . . . on a century of genuine political, social and economic progress’. In the course of what Schroeder describes as a major political shift in as ‘this sense of inherent limits, acceptance of mutual rules and restraints, common responsibility to certain standards of conduct and loyalty beyond the aims of one’s own state’, Staël demanded the relevance of liberal principles to international peace-making:

Is the question the abolition of the slave trade, or the liberty of the press, or religious toleration? Jefferson thinks as La Fayette, as Wilberforce; . . . Is it then from the calculations of interest, is it from bad motives that men so superior, in situations and countries so different, should be in such harmony in their political opinions?\textsuperscript{118}

As enduring as her version of a universal liberalism was her simultaneous articulation of the cultural significance of national differences and the political virtues of patriotism.\textsuperscript{119} Staël’s anti-Napoleon texts were the harbingers of the new age of nation-states that wove its way through the Congress proceedings, just as her texts on Germany and Italy helped shape coalition perceptions of what they were seeing in the campaigns of 1813 and after.\textsuperscript{120} That intellectual or cultural influence was of course separate from Staël’s own view, namely that nations were not expressions of an intrinsic liberty. Rather nations were forms of sociability that were produced by, and led to, an effective organisation of public power in the interest of civil liberty.\textsuperscript{121}

The case of Germaine de Staël also returns us to the question of what adding women as historical actors can tell us about the Congress of Vienna at the threshold of a new era in diplomacy. The conventional narrativisation of the history of diplomacy represents the salon as the antithesis of the transformations initiated by the conferencing system begun at Vienna: precisely ‘not the art of conversation’ but, instead, ‘the art of negotiating agreements in precise and ratifiable form . . . far better left to the professional diplomat’.\textsuperscript{122} As we have seen however, the innovation of congressing - presented by Schroeder as the new recognition of the value of ‘intermediary bodies . . . of concert and grouping methods’, and the possibility of a ‘political equilibrium in international affairs’ without a geo-political ‘balance of power’, of international politics ‘restrained by consensus and bounded by law’ - resonated the ambitions of Staël’s archetypal salon. So did Castlereagh’s recommendation to his Prime Minister of the new system of international ‘congress’ - ‘how much solid good grows out of these Reunions, which sound so terrible at a distance. It really [sic] appears to me to be a new discovery in the Science of European Government.’\textsuperscript{123}

Eventually, and ironically, one consequence of the introduction of the professional diplomat and a ‘scientific’ approach to European government was a definitive, if gradual, identification of international political affairs with the public life of men. I
emphasise ‘gradual’ since, as Schroeder also insists, the transformation of European politics occurred as a longer process of adaptation rather than an absolute break. The same is apparent when we consider the mix of gender expectations in this period. If the semi-private sphere of salon diplomacy and the informal intervention of non-sovereign women in questions of foreign policy came to represent the antithesis of professional diplomatic practices, as importantly, salon diplomacy did not immediately disappear from the European political landscape. (We need only think of the role of the Russian *ambassadrice* Dorothea Lieven through to the 1850s.) Indeed, the international history of the period 1812–15 with women added illustrates the uneven transformations in gender roles that accompanied the equally crooked history of international politics: the resilience of older models of salon diplomacy and the possibilities for political agency among exceptional women, usually aristocratic and at least wealthy; the simultaneous anxieties provoked by female agency, whether it was exercised directly or through the publication of ideas. Gallatin, we should not be surprised to discover, confided to Staël that her genius made him tremble.

The Congress diary of the fifty-seven-year-old Danish Foreign Minister, Count Niels Rosenkrantz, suggests that the sometimes viscerally felt ambivalence surrounding Staël’s political and intellectual agency reflected more general ambiguities in gender relations. Like the paid government spies circling the salons of Vienna in 1814 and 1815, Rosenkrantz, a self-professed Russophile, saw in the Tsar’s propensity for discussing politics with women evidence of a fatal flaw and the threat of political chaos. But it was not only the Tsar who in this period consulted women such as Staël, or his sister, the Grand-Duchess Catherine, or, indeed, the mystic, Baroness von Krudener; the Austrian Foreign Minister Metternich and the Prussian King were amongst the most noted. We still know very little about the significance of gender relations for understanding how political power worked in the international domain. In the next, final section, I want to argue that the on-going recovery and re-evaluation of primary evidence constitutes only one, albeit, crucial dimension of this inquiry. We need to both add women and analyse the connections between, on the one hand, the principle of the *Primat der Aussenpolitik* that was taking hold of newly professionalised historical imaginations, and, on the other, the growing absence of women from the historiographical record of international political and diplomatic events.

Germaine de Staël was a nymphomaniac maneater who flaunted her love affairs in public, defying the decorum and discipline of family life which Napoleon aimed to restore.

Felix Markham, *Napoleon* ([1963], 2010, Penguin New American Library, 134)

Recovering Staël’s place in the international history of the campaign against Napoleon and the problems of peace-making returns us to older questions about the invisibility of women in political and intellectual history. To be sure, in Staël’s case that effacement began in her own lifetime, the consequence of the same gender conventions that compelled her to express her ideas through the novel form and innovative literary genres rather than overtly political or philosophical tracts, or required her to keep out of drawing rooms and led to ridicule of her public exertions. For all her celebrity, Staël struggled to manipulate the public image of herself as a woman and
writer in rejection of the propaganda put forth both by Napoleon and his opponents. When it came to posterity, as her earliest biographer, her close friend and cousin Albertine Necker de Saussure, warned in 1821, any account of Staël’s thoughts and actions was inevitably subsumed by the fact that she was a woman:

Only men have been given the right to portray themselves through their actions and to match their external lives to their thoughts. Seen from the outside, Madame de Staël’s life does not correspond to what we might have the right to expect of it . . . How can we disentangle what actually belongs to her in the delicate and complicated fabric of contemporary history?128

Necker believed that, given the prejudice towards women as political agents, only Staël could write about her life and feelings in a way that did justice to them. Ironically, the timidity of Necker’s own portrayal, published at the height of the conservatism of the Restoration, supports her argument. Necker emphasised Staël’s religiosity, maternal instinct, and loyalty to France - a portrait that is only accurate insofar as it counterbalances the charges of immorality and foreignness brought against Staël by French revolutionary and post-revolutionary regimes. When it came to her cousin’s political writings, Necker ventured that Staël would be remembered as an author who had ushered in a new epoch in literature, and ‘perhaps in the political sciences’, and who had a direct influence on international politics (although she did not use those words). Necker then reduced that influence to a vague account of Staël’s presence in St Petersburg in 1812.129

The strands of a historical memory of Staël’s roles in the playing out of international events were picked up through the nineteenth century in unpredictable places. Tolstoy, for example, ended his fictional rendering of the contest between Napoleon and Alexander with a reflection on the writing of its non-fictional history, in which he made space for the cultural influence of Staël alongside the Tsar and others.130 Early Swedish historians comfortably credited Staël ‘with arranging the Abo meeting, thereby playing a key role in Napoleon’s downfall’. They claimed that she created ‘a platform for the political principles for which the prince as yet had not succeeded in winning the general sympathy of the nation’.131 The French historian Duvergier de Hauranne briefly recorded a diplomatic stoush as the English consuls in Paris, Sir Charles Stuart and Mr Canning, reported on Madame de Staël’s criticism of the English for not allowing the Allied forces to decamp, and ‘pointing out the dangers inherent in Mme de Staël exciting national passions by her language’.132 On some more popular nineteenth-century biographical accounts, Staël was the era’s ‘ambassadrice triomphale’.133 Biographers who ruminated over her place in French history and her contribution to Napoleon’s downfall, oscillated between censorious accounts of feminine ‘intriguing’ by the ‘mistress of her age’, and more sympathetic attempts at the documentation of her actions and their consequences.134

When it came to the international past, Staël’s relative invisibility mirrored that of women more generally, even if she made appearances in Anglophone private correspondence, and the Encyclopedia Britannica.135 Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the future editor of the *Cambridge Modern History*, Lord Acton, emphasised Staël’s indirect contribution to historical progress. She had rendered liberalism a thing of *bon gout* and *bon compagnie*, and stood up for the reign of conscience in politics as well as religion, in public life as well as family.136 But for Acton, this was the stuff of morality and a private exchange with George Eliot, not for the science of
history. The *Cambridge Modern History* narrativised the transformation of European politics instead as a tale of male diplomats, statesmen or sovereigns, most commonly Britain’s Castlereagh, Austria’s Metternich, France’s Talleyrand, and the Russian Tsar. The aim of this new modern history was not to probe the nature of political power in the sense of who exercised it or how: the assumption was that power was exercised by male political elites and the representatives of states. However, lack of power or representative status cannot fully explain the way in which the Congress of Vienna story has been told since. Although Staël did not act as the formal representative of any state, other women did, whether as queens, princesses, or duchesses, and they have similarly been written out of the international history of diplomacy and peace-making.

Even as specialist Staëlian scholars were invested in promoting Staël’s significance for the making of a new cosmopolitan, liberal, and national Europe, the historical status of her political writing, and her even less well-remembered political agency, remained controversial through the twentieth century. As late as the turn of the twenty-first century, it was still legitimate for histories of the early nineteenth century, whether penned by scholars of Napoleon, such as Felix Markham, or of the Congress of Vienna and the period of peace-making, to either reduce women to representations of feminine intrigue and immorality, or ignore them altogether as actors worthy of historical analysis.

It is not difficult to trace in mainstream narratives evidence of both the disappearance of women as agents of politics or political ideas, and the presence of norms of gendered separate spheres. Nor should we underestimate Staël’s own role in these developments, given her intellectual and cultural importance to the transformation of European politics. Staël represented herself in her public writing as the exemplary victim of the range of injustices perpetrated by the Napoleonic regime, rather than an agent of change, and excluded her more heroic actions, ‘ses propres agissements contre la tyrannie’. (At the time, Rovigo thought she was in denial because things did not turn out as she had hoped.) Even as she found herself reminding individuals of her diplomatic efforts and of her presence at key events in the history of Napoleon’s downfall, in more public settings she openly disowned her overtly political interventions. We also know that Staël’s disavowal of agency accompanied a growing wariness of the effects of her actions on the prospects of her unmarried daughter, given the power of existing gender conventions. Writing to Bernadotte in August 1814, she expressed concern about the possible consequences of the publicity of her political views on her daughter’s marriage opportunities: ‘Do not quote me on anything, Sire, I beseech you. My fortune and my residence and perhaps my daughter’s destiny are all in France. Burn my letters after having read them.’

Then there is the influence of Staël’s best-known publications on the development of normative gender roles. For example, in *De l’Allemagne*, Staël not only elaborated the existence of a German culture, she posited the social conditions that would render it a political community, including the necessity and reasonableness of excluding women from political and civil affairs: ‘nothing’, she declared, ‘is more contrary to their natural vocation than that which makes them the rivals of men’. The destiny of women, she added, ‘remains always the same’, dependent not on political or historical contingencies, but on the quality of their ‘souls’. Women’s subjectivity lay outside the historical dynamic of the individual’s relationship to their community, and rendered them passive and static embodiments of nationality. By contrast, the point that Stein so admired in this text was that societies able to ensure an energetic,
military masculinity were in a position to defend their difference, their individuality, as expressions of their liberty, from the conquering forces of Napoleon, and the political repression upon which his version of social stability relied. Of course, the popularity of this vision of masculine patriotic enthusiasm belied the wider role actually played by women in the German lands in the Napoleonic wars.\textsuperscript{144}

As Susan Tenenbaum has shown: ‘Staël’s position on the role of woman in the post-Revolutionary liberal state contained deep tensions. . . . her preoccupation with the issues of social control led her to champion a cult of domesticity . . . that defined the parameters and nourished the privatised spirit of the modern liberal state.’\textsuperscript{145} When Staël wanted to contrast the moral virtues of ‘free countries’ and ‘the dystopia of arbitrary and repressive government’, in order to advocate a liberal post-Napoleonic world order, she returned to the behaviour of women to make her point. Where institutions objectively and transparently protected the interests of all, she argued: ‘The true character of a woman and the true character of a man can be known and admired.’ In the opposite circumstances, such as had existed under Napoleon, women were compelled for personal advantage to exert influence in the public sphere in ways that were ultimately destructive of transparent and equitable political practices.\textsuperscript{146} In effect, the intriguing women of illiberal and dysfunctional societies were not unlike the anarchic mistresses of the historical imagining of the Congress of Vienna and of international politics. Staël had detailed the social and national characteristics of a new world in which she herself may not have been comfortable and which undermined her own status.

In the wake of the agreements reached in Vienna in 1815, the unsuitability of women’s intervention in matters of international politics came to dominate historical and popular accountings of ‘the Congress that danced’. Over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Staël’s place in this narrative would be held hostage to the conventions of gendered separate spheres. Subscribed to wholesale by generations of political and intellectual historians, these conventions contributed to the effacement of women in international history, and consolidated the illegitimacy of women as historical actors. It is no small irony that these gender norms encouraged the erasure of evidence of the potent ambiguities that surrounded women’s agency in an emerging international sphere of ‘rules, norms, and practices’, and of the shifting political possibilities in the international realm, as restrained as they always were for even exceptional women, such as Staël imagined herself.

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Notes
1. J.W. Scott, ‘Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis’, \textit{The American Historical Review}, xci, no. 5 (1986), 1053–75.
2. For discussion of these developments see G. Sluga, ‘Gender’ in P. Finney (ed), \textit{Advances in International History} (Basingstoke, 2005).
3. Feminist scholars have found the question easier to answer (although never uncontroversial) in the context of the twentieth century when the realm of international politics itself was subject to a gradual democratisation; see, for example, Cynthia Enloe’s landmark work in I.R. In my own work I have tackled this question in the context of peace-making in 1919, the history of twentieth-century internationalism, and the cold war; see G. Sluga, *The Nation, Psychology, and International Politics* on women and peace-making at the end of the First World War, and idem, *The Problem of Trieste* on women and the cold war. See also T. Hampton, *Fictions of Embassy* (2009), 197.

4. P.W. Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics 1763–1848, The Oxford History of Modern Europe* (Oxford, 1994), vii–viii.

5. See A. Zamoyski, *Rites of Peace: The Fall of Napoleon and the Congress of Vienna* (New York, 2007), xv: “‘The Congress of Vienna’ is a blanket term for a process that began in the summer of 1812 and did not end until ten years later.’ In some accounts the Fourth Coalition is the Sixth Coalition. In this essay I follow the chronology: The First Coalition (1792–7), the Second (1799–1801) the Third (1805–6); the Fourth (1812–14). See H. Nicolson, *The Congress of Vienna: A Study in Allied Unity: 1812–1822* (New York, 1946), 14, 281; and Schroeder, *Transformation of European Politics*, 445.

6. M. Mazower, *Governing the World* (New York, 2012), 21.

7. See Eileen O’Neill’s forceful argument in ‘Disappearing Ink: Early Modern Women Philosophers and Their Fate in History’ in J.A. Kourany (ed), *Philosophy in a Feminist Voice: Critiques and Reconstructions* (Princeton, 1998), 17–62.

8. For these ‘popular’ versions, see most recently D. King, *Vienna 1814: How the Conquerors of Napoleon Made Love, War, and Peace at the Congress of Vienna* (New York, 2010). The classic Anglophone texts include Nicolson, *The Congress of Vienna* and C. Webster, *Congress of Vienna* (London, 1919).

9. H. Spiel, *Congress of Vienna, an Eyewitness Account* (Philadelphia, 1968). Even Spiel dealt mainly with the undocumented and unanalysed detail of their sexual influence.

10. This claim can be traced to Madame de Chastenay, *M/C19 emoires* (Paris, 1897), ii. 445.

11. For more on Staël’s oeuvre see: G. Sluga ‘Passions, Patriotism, and Nationalism and Germaine de Staël’, *Nations and Nationalism*, xv, no. 12 (2009), 1–20; idem, ‘The Nation’ in M. Spongberg (ed), *The Palgrave Guide to Women. Writing History* (Basingstoke, 2005); idem, ‘Defining Liberty: Italy and England in Madame de Staël’s Corinne’, *Women’s Writing*, i (2003), 241–51.

12. ‘Mme de Staël to Alexandre de Lameth, c 1794, from Coppet, “given to me by Charles du Verac, J d’Estournel, 7 January 1843”’, *Bibliothèque de Genève* [BGE], do44-066 to do44-068. See also G. de Staël, *Réflexions sur le procès de la Reine par une femme [August 1793] (Accessed through Gallica, 27 January 2010).

13. See S.D. Kale, ‘Women, Salons, and the State in the Aftermath of the French Revolution’, *Journal of Women’s History*, xiii, no. 4 (2002), 64.

14. Talleyrand was once Staël’s lover, and a man who successfully transitioned from the court of Louis XVI to Napoleon’s cabinet, and then the Restoration ministry of Louis XVIII, and beyond.

15. G. Gengembre, ‘Fréquentation et sociabilité mutuelles’, *Revue Francaise d’histoire des idées politiques*, xviii, no. 2 (2003), 267.

16. Staël, *Considérations*, 473. See also C. Takeda, ‘Deux origines du courant libéral en France’, *Revue Francaise d’histoire des idées politiques*, xviii, no. 2 (2003), 233–58. Cf. Schroeder, *Transformation of European Politics*, 441.

17. For the transnational and international context of her activism in the 1790s, see Spalding in K. Szmurlo, *Germaine de Staël: Forging a Politics of Mediation* (Oxford, 2011).

18. Staël, *Considérations*, 624.

19. Scholars of her work such as Lucien Jaume argue that Staël, like the Coppet circle at large, represents a lost strand in French liberal thought that privileged the individual rather than the state, while simultaneously promoting the importance of a liberal culture. L. Jaume, ‘Coppet, creuset du libéralisme comme “culture morale”’ in idem (ed), *Coppet, creuset de l’esprit libéral* (Paris, 2000), 69.

20. Nicolson, *Congress of Vienna*, 9.
21. Bernadotte had distanced himself from Napoleon and set himself up as a rival of sorts in Sweden, where Karl XIII had adopted him.
22. From mid-October 1811, Napoleon put into operation preparations ‘for a great offensive’ (Schroeder, Transformation of European Politics, 425).
23. Staël, De l’Allemagne (Paris, 1968 [1813]), i. 322.
24. Gautier, Mme de Staël et Napoléon, 314.
25. A Bernadotte, 25 mai 1813, letter 404, in G. Solovieff, Madame de Staël, ses amis, ses correspondants, Choix de Lettres (1778–1817) (Paris, 1970).
26. Pange, Schlegel, 399.
27. King, ‘Madame de Staël et la chute de Napoleon’ in Madame de Staël et l’Europe (Paris, 1970), 65.
28. Rovigo, Mémoires du duc de Rovigo, pour servir à l’histoire de l’empereur Napoléon, iii. 95 (Accessed at http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/21023, 18 February 2013). See also Sukhtelen Letters 18–21; Pange, Schlegel, 395.
29. G. Solovieff, ‘Madame de Staël et ses correspondants russes’, Cahiers staéliens, 1 (nouvelle série) mars (1962), 4–30.
30. See S. Balayé, Les Carnets de voyage de Mme de Staël (Genève, 1971), 313, 321, and N. King, ‘A.W. Schlegel et la guerre de libération: Le Mémoire sur L’état de L’Allemagne’, Cahiers staéliens, xvi (nouvelle série 1973), 3.
31. Moritz von Arndt, the future German hero of the crucial Battle of Nations in October 1813, was also listening.
32. Stein, 31 Aug. 1812, in Briefe und Samtliche Schriften, hrsg. Von E. Botzenhart und W. Hubatæch (Neue Ausgabe, Stuttgart, 1961–1970), III, 719; King, ‘A.W. Schlegel’, 4.
33. Stein to Ouvaroff, 28 mars 1813 [my translation], ‘I would in general like it if Mme de Staël kept to literature and did not occupy herself with politics at all, at least I am not in the least interested in getting mixed up in her politics’, Briefe IV, 68–9.
34. King, ‘A.W. Schlegel’, 7; Pange, Schlegel, 392 cf. Solovieff, Madame de Staël, 23. See also H. Straus, The Attitude of the Congress of Vienna toward Nationalism in Germany, Italy and Poland (New York, 1949).
35. Pange, Schlegel, 393.
36. Sophie von Knorring, cited in P. Tisseau, ‘Les Illusions de la Baronne Sophie con Knorring’, Cahiers staéliens 60 (nouvelle serie), 2009 [1932], 102.
37. S.M. Riordan, ‘Sentiments of Travel: Madame de Staël on Sweden’, Moderna Sprak, xc, no. 2 (1996), 190–9.
38. Cited in M. Trail, Mme de Staël Her Russian-Swedish Journey (University of Southern California, Ph.D. thesis, 1946), 262.
39. Staël’s proximity to Bernadotte was also noted by the Danish Ambassador who sought her out as a result; Trail, Mme de Staël, 282. Gautier argues that all diplomatic activity was in effect focused on Staël’s residence, and that at its centre she directed a form of secret agency run alongside the formal work of the embassies based in Stockholm; Madame de Staël et Napoléon, 365; Riordan, ‘Sentiments of Travel’, 191.
40. Cabre reported to Talleyrand, who was busy running Napoleon’s Foreign Ministry and playing a double game - as Foreign Minister - while collecting a salary by betraying Napoleon to Russia on behalf of the Bourbons-in-exile; Lady Blennerhasset, Her Russian-Swedish Journey (University of Southern California, Ph.D. thesis, 1946), 262.
41. Bernadotte to Napoleon, cited in Trail, Mme de Staël, 298.
42. Gautier, Madame de Staël et Napoléon, 335.
43. Trail, Mme de Staël, 265, working from Gautier, who had access to the Coppet archives.
44. Letter written 5 May 1813, in N. King, ‘Correspondances suédoises de Germaine de Staël (1812–1816)’, Cahiers staélien, nouv. sér., 39 (1988), 75.
45. J.C. Herold, Mistress to an Age: A Life of Madame de Staël (New York, 1958), 444. See also Rovigo, Mémoires, 91–4.
46. See BGE, Ms2763 Papiers Galiffe. See for example, letters 277–340, esp. 289, 292.
47. S.M. Riordan, ‘Politics and Romanticism: Germaine de Staël’s Forgotten Influence on Nineteenth-Century Sweden’, Australian Journal of French Studies xxxv, no. 3 (1998), 335.
48. Letter to the Grand Duchess of Weimar, 12 Jan. 1813 cited in S. Balayé, Madame de Staël: Lumières et liberté (Paris, 1979), 214.
49. Thomas Jefferson to Ann L.G.N. Staël–Holstein, 3 July 1815, *Thomas Jefferson Papers* series I. General Correspondence 1751–1827, Library of Congress, (Accessed 18 February 2013) http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/jefferson_papers/. See also John Quincy Adams’ record of his discussions with Staël around this time in *Writings of J.Q. Adams* iv. 1811–13, W.C. Ford (ed) (New York, 1914).

50. Winock, *Madame de Staël*, 431.

51. King, ‘Madame de Staël et la chute de Napoléon’, 70. See also Letter to Frederike Brun, in Riordan, ‘Germaine de Staël’s Influence on Nineteenth Century Sweden’, 337, and Winock, *Madame de Staël*, 425.

52. Staël à Dorothea Lieven, Stockholm, November 1813 [London, British Library.] Lieven Papers, MSS. 47374, f.59–63.

53. N. King, *Correspondance suédoise de Germaine de Staël* (Paris, 1988), 68.

54. Schroeder, *Transformation of European Politics*, 459.

55. Staël a Dorothea Lieven, Stockholm, November 1813 [London, British Library,] Lieven Papers, MSS. 47374, f.59–63.

56. Ibid.

57. Cited in Trail, *Mme de Staël*, 263.

58. John Quincy Adams had no difficulty believing it to be Staël’s work, ‘To John Adams’, St Petersburg, 19 April 1813, in *Writings of J.Q. Adams* iv. 1811–13, 473.

59. R. Whitford, *Mme de Staël’s Literary Reputation in England* (Johnson Reprint Society, February 1918).

60. À la Reine de Suède, 8 juillet 1813, letter 410, Solovieff, *Madame de Staël*; and à A.W. Schlegel, Londres, 2 juillet 1813, letter 407.

61. Godefroi Martens to Earl of Aberdeen, 23 Sep. 1813, [London, British Library,] Aberdeen Papers, Add MSS. 43074.

62. Lady Blennerhassett, *Madame de Staël* (London, 1889), cxi. 538.

63. Sir James Mackintosh, *The Miscellaneous Works* (New York, 1871).

64. See J. Mistler, *Madame de Staël et Maurice O’Donnell, 1805–1817, d’après des lettres inédites* (Paris, 1926), 306.

65. À Bernadotte, 2 juillet 1813, letter 408, Solovieff, *Madame de Staël*.

66. À Bernadotte, 11 octobre 1813, letter 420; ibid, my translation.

67. 8 juillet 1813 lettre 410; fin octobre 1813, letter 421, Solovieff, *Madame de Staël*.

68. Letter to Lord Grey, 7 mai 1814 Londres, letter 441, Ibid.

69. Jessie Allen to her sister Mrs Josiah Wedgwood, 5 July 1813, in H.E. Litchfield (ed), *Emma Darwin: A Century of Family Letters, 1792–1896* (London, 1915), i. 32–3.

70. Lettre à Galiffe, 20 Nov. 1812, *Papiers Galiffe*, no. 297.

71. Copy of a note from Lord Bathurst to Mr de Staël dated Foreign Office 9 Feb. 1814, National Archive, London, FO139/4, f.210.

72. See R. Escarpit, *L’Angleterre dans l’oeuvre de Madame de Staël* (Paris, 1954), 41. She attacked the Duke of Wellington’s brother, the Marquis Wellesley, on his speech opposing the Swedish Treaty.

73. Emma Allen to her sister Mrs Josiah Wedgwood, 28 July 1813.

74. In *Corinne, or Italy*, England stood as the morally upright antithesis of corrupted France and a politically dysfunctional Italy, Sluga, ‘Defining Liberty’.

75. Aberdeen to Lord Abercorn, Freyberg, 19 Dec. 1813, CLIII, Aberdeen Papers, Add Mss. 43259; Staël forwarded a copy of *De l’Allemagne* to the Austrian Foreign Minister, Metternich, for his instruction; A Metternich, dec 1813, M. Ullrichova, *Lettres de Madame de Staël conservées en Bohème* (Prague, 1960), 75.

76. N. King, ‘Libéralisme et légitimité’, *Europe*, lxiv (1987), 65.

77. See à Bernadotte, 25 mai 1813, Stockholm, letter 404, Solovieff, *Madame de Staël*.

78. 23 Jan 1814, letter 433; à Constant, Londres 24 avril 1814, letter 438; à Necker de Staël, 29 avril 1814, letter 440, all in Solovieff, *Madame de Staël*.

79. 15 March 1814, letter 415, Ibid.

80. See H. Spiel, *Fanny von Arnstein, A Daughter of the Enlightenment, 1758–1818* (Oxford, 1991), 279–80.

81. Cited in B. Craveri, *The Age of Conversation* (New York, 2005), 289.

82. *De L’Allemagne*, i. 105.

83. Staël, *Considérations*, 252.

84. Cited in Kale, ‘Women, Salons, and the State’, 65.
85. Staël, Considérations, 253, 377. Staël’s critical assessment of the changing shape of the salon is backed up by Steven Kale’s recent account of Napoleon’s attempt to supersede political salons by creating alternative government salons. These official salons were run by respective foreign ministers, including Talleyrand, and took the form of drawing-room receptions or dinners hosting visiting dignitaries and diplomats. They were spaces where the woman or ‘maîtresse de maison’ ‘did the honors of the house, supported her husband, and cultivated respect for the emperor by enforcing civility and silencing frondeurs’; Kale, French Salons, 93.

86. Bulletin de l’état des esprits en France, Direction Générale de la Police de France, July 1814; 24 Sep. 1814; 26 Sep. 1814, MAE, Paris, vol. 337, France, Affaires Intérieures, 1814–1815.

87. Mémoires de Mme de Remusat (London, 1880), ii. 155.

88. Memoirs of John Quincy Adams (Lippincott, 1874), i. 278–9, 371.

89. L. Cramer (ed), Correspondance Diplomatique de Pictet de Rochemont et de François D’Ivernois (Paris, 1914).

90. ‘Letter from Gen. Lafayette to Mr. Crawford, giving an account of an interview with the Emperor Alexander and showing the latter’s inclination to promote peace, May 26, 1814’ in Count Gallatin (ed), The Diary of James Gallatin: Secretary to Albert Gallatin. A Great Peacemaker, 1813–1827 (New York, 1920), 22.

91. For more on Staël’s politics in this period, see A. Craiutu, A Virtue for Courageous Minds: Moderation in French Political Thought, 1748–1830 (Princeton, 2012).

92. In the early 1790s, the revolutionary government had introduced abolition, provoked in part by Staël’s own father. Napoleon, however, relegitimated the French slave trade. For a thorough account of the context for Staël’s abolitionism, and all its recorded manifestations, see J. Isbell, ‘Voices Lost? Staël and Slavery, 1786-1830’ in D. Kadish (ed), Translating Slavery: Gender and Race in French Women’s Writing, 1783–1823 (Kent, 1994), 140.

93. A.T. Gardiner, ‘Representing Slavery: Germaine de Staël and the French Abolition Debate at the Revolutionary Turn of the 19th Century’, Conference on Humanitarian Responses to Narratives of Inflicted Suffering 13–15 October 2006, University of Connecticut Human Rights Institute, 10.

94. G. Staël, ‘An Appeal to the Sovereigns’ in Kadish and Massardier-Kenney, Translating Slavery, 159.

95. Article 5. In its English translation, peuples was translated as ‘nations’.

96. It was not until 1848 that slavery was ‘finally and definitively banned’, by the intermediary revolutionary government. Gardiner, ‘Representing Slavery’, 15.

97. See H. Adams, The Life of Albert Gallatin (Lippincott, 1879), 563.

98. M. Berger, Madame de Staël on Politics, Literature, and National Character (New York, 1964), 27.

99. Talleyrand to Staël, Vienne 21 octobre 1814, letter 456, Solovieff, Madame de Staël.

100. J.-G. Eynard, Au Congrès de Vienne (Paris, 1914), 82. My translation.

101. Comte A. De la Garde–Chambonas, Souvenirs du Congrès de Vienne, 1814–15 (Paris, 1901), 125. Staël had organised for a selection of Ligne’s letters to be published, and written a preface to help sell them.

102. Pozzo to Lady Burghersh, 12 aout 1813, (my translation), in J. McErlean et N. King ‘Mme de Staël, A.W. Schlegel et Pozzo di Borgo’, Cahiers staëliens, xvi (nouvelle série 1973), 49.

103. Madame de Chastenay, Mémoires, ii. 445.

104. D’Albany 12 nov 1814, MAE, vol. 676, f. 22.

105. Letter From Lady Romilly, 9 Oct. 1814, in J. Bentham, The Correspondence of Jeremy Bentham (London, 1968), viii. 435.

106. Lady Melbourne to Lord Byron, Whitehall, 31 Jan. 1815, in Jonathan David Gross, Byron’s ‘Corbeau Blanc’ The Life and Letters of Lady Melbourne (Texas A&M University Press, College Station, 1998), 281.

107. ‘Chronique littéraire’, Le Nain Jaune ou Journal des Arts, des Sciences et de la littérature t.1er, n. 337, cinquième anne, 15 Jan. 1814, xxvii –ix.
108. ‘Bruits de ville et revue de journaux’, *Le Nain Jaune*, 10 Jan. 1815, 70.
109. ‘To Abigail Adams’, Paris, 21 Feb. 1815, *Writings of J.Q. Adams*, vol. v, 1814-1816, W.C. Ford (ed.) (New York, 1915), 279.
110. Staël, *Considérations*, 719.
111. Staël to Prosper de Barante, Geneva, 28 octobre 1814, ‘Lettres de divers ouvertes et copiées à la poste de Paris’, f.395, MAE, vol. 675 *France et Divers États de l’Europe, 1814*; see also Staël, *Considérations*, 744.
112. Staël suffered a stroke in December 1816, from which she never recovered, and died in July 1817.
113. Staël, *Considérations*, 598, 709–11.
114. V. de Pange, *Madame de Staël et le duc de Wellington, correspondance inédite, 1815–1817* (Paris, 1962).
115. Tolstoy, Epilogue, *War and Peace*, trans. R. Edmunds (Penguin, 1957 [1869]), 1406–7.
116. P.W. Schroeder, *The Transformation of European Politics 1763–1848*, The Oxford History of Modern Europe (Oxford, 1994), vii–viii.
117. Norman King concludes she was able to bring order to the preparations for war against Napoleon, and conviction to the uncertainty and vacillation of Europe’s reticent sovereigns, see ‘Mme de Staël et la chute de Napoléon’ in *Madame de Staël et l’Europe* (Paris, 1970), F.D. Scott has claimed that ‘Bernadotte, guided and aided by Madame de Staël, August Schlegel, and Benjamin Constant, gives us the only example outside of France in this period of the deliberate use of propaganda for demoralizing the enemy’, *Bernadotte and the Fall of Napoleon* (Cambridge, MA, 1935), 101.
118. Staël, *Considérations*, 755.
119. King, ‘Mme de Staël et la chute de Napoléon’, 75.
120. See Sluga, ‘Passions, Patriotism and Nationalism’.
121. J.C. Isbell, *The Birth of European Romanticism: Truth and Propaganda in Staël’s ‘De l’Allemande’, 1810–1813* (Cambridge, 1994), 9.
122. Nicolson, *Diplomacy* (London, 1963), 101 cf. M. Mosslang and T. Riotte, ‘Introduction’ in *The Diplomats’ World: The Cultural History of Diplomacy, 1815–1914* (Oxford, 2008).
123. Schroeder, *Transformation of European Politics*, 803; Castlereagh to Liverpool, Aix, 20 Oct 1818, [London, British Library,] Liverpool Papers, MS. 38566, ff. 67–8.
124. See G. Sluga, C. James, and G. Calvi (eds), *Women, Diplomacy and International Politics* (London, forthcoming, 2014); and for rare examples of mainstream interest, D.H. Thomas, ‘Princess Lieven’s Last Diplomatic Confrontation’, *The International History Review*, v, no. 4 (1983), 550–6, and H. Temperley (ed), *The Unpublished Diary and Political Sketches of Princess Lieven Together with some of her Letters* (London, 1925).
125. The coinciding intellectual influence exerted by the Prussian Rahel Levin/Varnhagen before and after the Congress suggests that even the salon of an untitled and relatively impecunious Jewish woman could be noticed if she were smart and feisty; see H. Arendt, *Rahel Varnhagen*.
126. Gallatin à Staël, Gand, 4 oct. 1814, letter 454, Solovieff, *Madame de Staël*.
127. N. Rosenkrantz, *Journal du Congrès de Vienne, 1814–1815* (Copenhagen, 1953).
128. A. Necker de Saussure, *Notice sur le Caractère et les Écrits de Madame de Staël* (Treuttel and Wiirtz, 1820), viii.
129. Ibid, v–vi, viii.
130. *War and Peace*, 1406.
131. B. von Schinkel, *Minnen ur Sveriges nyare historia* (1853), 12 vols, vii, 69. Riordan, ‘Sentiments of Travel’, 190, and idem, ‘Germaine de Staël’s Influence on Nineteenth Century Sweden’, 335.
132. *Histoire du gouvernement parlementaire en France 1814–1848* (Paris, 1860), iv. 97.
133. Escarpit, *L’Angleterre*, 49, 166.
134. P. Gautier, *Madame de Staël et Napoleon* (Paris, 1903); H. Guillemin, *Madame de Staël, Benjamin Constant et Napoléon* (Paris, 1959); M.L. Pailleron, *Madame de Staël* (Paris, 1931); L. Pingaud, *Bernadotte, Napoléon et les Bourbons* (1901); J. de la Pange, *Auguste Wilhelm Schlegel et Madame de Staël d’après des documents inédit* (Paris, 1938); J. Wickman, *Mme de Staël och Sverige* (Lund, 1911). For more on her ‘history of denigration’, see Szmurlo, *Germaine de Staël*, xv.
The 1911 edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica was predictably curmudgeonly in its criticisms, which were as revelatory of the increasing difficulty of reading her work uninfluenced by gender stereotypes: ‘The men of her own time exalted her to the skies and the most extravagant estimates of her (as the greatest woman in literary history, as the foundress of the romantic movement, as representing ideas, while her contemporary Chateaubriand only represented words, colours, and images and so forth) are to be found in minor histories of literature. On the other hand, it is acknowledged that she was soon very little read. No other writer of such eminence is so rarely quoted; none is so entirely destitute of the tribute of new and splendid editions. Nor, when the life and works are examined is the neglect without excuse. Her books are seen to be in large part merely clever reflections of other peoples’ views or views current at the time. The sentimentality of her sentiment and the florid magniloquence of her style equally disgust the reader.’

Acton to George Eliot, mai 1887, Selection from the Correspondence of the First Lord Acton (London, 1917), i. 277.

See J. Isbell, Introduction to Madame de Staël, Corinne or Italy, trans. and ed. S. Raphael (New York, 1998); Balayé, Lumières et liberté; M. Delon, ‘Le Libéralisme au féminin’, Europe, lxiv (1987), 5.

David King’s Vienna, 1814 (New York, 2008) cites Staël’s De l’Allemagne for its reference to the mediocrity of Vienna’s salons; and Adam Zamoyski’s Rites of Peace (New York, 2007) mentions that Staël supported Bernadotte, and that her salon was en vogue in April 1814. Henry Kissinger’s A World Restored (New York, 1964) like all the earlier best-known Anglophone studies of the Congress, including Nicolson, Webster, and Schroeder’s, ignores women as agents altogether.

Balayé, Lumières et liberté, 232. See also J. Isbell for an interesting parsing of this paradox, ‘The Painful Birth of the Romantic Heroine: Staël as Political Animal, 1786–1818’, Romanic Review, lxxxvii, no. 1 (1996), 59–67.

Trail, Mme de Staël, 195; A Galiffe, 25 8bre, 1812, Stockholm, Papiers Galiffe, BGE, f.299.

A Bernadotte, 20 aout 1814, Coppet, letter 451, Solovieff, Madame de Staël.

Staël, De l’Allemagne, 524

Staël, De l’Allemagne, i. 29

See for example, K. Hagemann, “‘Heroic Virgins’ and “Bellicose Amazons”: Armed Women, the Gender Order and the German Public during and after the Anti-Napoleonic Wars’, European History Quarterly, xxxvii (2007), 507.

S. Tenenbaum, ‘Staël: Liberal Political Thinker’ in M. Gutwirth et al. (eds), Germaine de Staël: Crossing the Borders (Rutgers, 1991), 161.

Staël, Considérations, 692, 735.