

FANTASTIC ENCOUNTERS:
IDENTITY, BELIEF AND THE SUPERNATURAL
IN WORKS BY PAUL FÉVAL

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ABSTRACT

Nineteenth-century French fantastic tales are rampant with supernatural creatures and events. The manifestation of supernatural phenomena, as a literary device, creates a relationship between the reader and the author that allows the reader to negotiate the fictional world the author has created. The belief that the reader is able to accord to the supernatural, and thus the narrative as a whole can fluctuate depending upon the reader's own perception. By questioning identity, as well as by introducing archetypal images such as the femme fatale, the author is also able to modify the reader's perception by integrating historical figures and events that promote credibility to the overall narrative. Paul Féval, a French nineteenth-century novelist, demonstrates the author's role of establishing the author-reader relationship in many of his fantastic tales and works of popular fiction. This study examines the supernatural figures, most notably vampires, fairies, and ogres, which Féval uses to engage readers and promote belief in the narrative worlds he creates.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, who has always helped me and supported me.
She truly is my fantastic encounter.

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I am pleased to acknowledge at this time the immense support that I have received from both my director and the other members of my committee. Without their assistance, during this project as well as the years of instruction and training which preceded it, I would scarcely have been ready to take on such a task. Their wealth of information, guidance and encouragement has helped me to grow in my understanding of the French language, literature and the world around me.

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CHAPTER 1

RESURRECTING THE DEAD

French literature abounds in examples of fantastic tales, a genre characterized by the presence of ghosts, vampires, zombies and other monsters, who all seem to coexist in a modern, rational world in which psychological, scientific and technological advancements would appear to preclude them. Theorists such as Jutta Fortin and Jean Le Guennec suggest varying ways to approach fantastic texts, though many reject directly addressing supernatural elements, and choose to focus on psychoanalytical interpretations instead. In doing so, they risk concealing the marvelous side of the fantastic. The goal of this study is to demonstrate how the supernatural elements within fantastic literature signify more than a counter-balance for psychological abnormalities. They highlight instead how the supernatural modifies the reader's perception of reality, history, and identity. A prolific yet seldom-studied author whose works span from the middle to the late nineteenth century, Paul Féval offers various examples of supernatural elements throughout his body of work. While he is not considered exclusively an author of fantastic tales, his historical fictions and popular novels allow a place for the supernatural figures that are common to fantastic literature. By turning to the supernatural, and looking specifically at superstition, magic, vampires, and monstrous creatures in works by Paul Féval, namely *La Vampire* (1865), *La Ville-Vampire* (1874), *Le Chevalier Ténèbre* (1860), *La Fée des grèves* (1850), *L'Homme de fer* (1855) and *Le Bossu* (1857), this study outlines the importance of belief and perception with regard to supernatural elements, exposes the instability of identities which seem to be the end result of a volatile and unstable socio-political environment marked by

numerous social revolutions and redefinitions of the classes, and highlights the depiction of women as stemming from archetypal femmes fatales. Reorienting the fantastic to give greater emphasis to the supernatural will help to discover the proper merit of Paul Féval's works.

The few extant studies of Paul Féval all agree on the following two points: he was a prolific *feuilletoniste*, having written anywhere from eighty to over one-hundred works during his career, and he is continually relegated to paraliterary standing with relation to his more famous contemporaries, Eugène Sue and Alexandre Dumas, père. With so many works attributed to his name, and success comparable to literary champions, Féval's *oeuvre* demands exposure, if only to understand why it remains in the margins of literary history. The most definitive biographical work to date is Jean-Pierre Galvan's *Paul Féval: Parcours d'une Oeuvre*, which focuses on elements of Féval's life and his various correspondences with publishers. In addition to showcasing the role of perception in fantastic tales, this study likewise brings to light a selection of works penned by Féval which have yet to enter into the canon of nineteenth-century French literature, and it compares his works subsequently with those of already canonized authors, such as Théophile Gautier, E.T.A. Hoffman and Bram Stoker, in order to revisit theories about the fantastic in literature and sharpen our tools for understanding the development and evolution of the genre. With the sheer volume of publications and the success Féval achieved at the height of his career, it is curious that he has not come to be more heavily treated in the time since his death. A few possibilities have been offered concerning this matter. Among these is Féval's conversion to Catholicism after his financial ruin in 1876. After his conversion, Féval purchased the rights to his works in order to align them with his newly adopted beliefs, an act that can be construed as compromising the original artistic value of the works. Another possible reason for Féval being forgotten is that his writings are at times too rushed and lack the

organization and depth that is expected of the great authors. Some have accurately claimed that the term “conversion,” which Féval himself uses to describe his change in religious devotion is an inapt term since Féval was born, baptized and raised catholic. This “conversion” is rather a rededication to his childhood belief, and a point in his life where he becomes a practicing member of the faith. However, as Féval uses the term conversion to refer to this event, and does so often, I, too, will use it within the same context. In fact, much of Féval’s correspondence dates from the period after this conversion and in it, he discusses his spiritual journey. It is somewhat unfortunate, however, that many of Féval’s letters are from late in the author’s life, and thus the descriptions of his sentiments, views and life conditions are perhaps altered by hindsight and seen through a lens different than what his thoughts may have been at the peak of his writing career. After having converted to Catholicism, his comments are often lined with spiritual rhetoric as well as expressions of regret for his previous disposition toward riches. The letters that have survived from the years during which he penned many of his works show Féval prodding and urging editors and publishers to promote his writings. Fortunately, there nevertheless remains enough information to define Féval and reveal some of the mystery of who this author once was.

Paul Henri-Corentin Féval was born in Rennes in the year 1816. He describes his family as poor and dependent upon help from others. “Je suis Breton, fils d’un conseiller pauvre, et ma sœur aînée touchait, quand nous fumes orphelins, une pension sur la cassette de Madame la Dauphine, jusqu’en 1830” (Buet 174). He passed through the various levels of education to begin a short career as a lawyer. This career, however, was limited to a single trial. Féval often recounted how at his one trial he passionately defended a man accused of stealing chickens, an event which the scholar Reverend Blunt sums up as follows.

When he arose to speak he launched out into a solemn oration in defence [sic] of the chicken-stealer, and with such pomposity that even the judges burst into laughter. To make matters worse, the presiding judge asked the culprit what he had to say in his own defence [sic] and the poor thief gave a dissertation on the art of stealing chickens while preventing them from making any outcry. (102)

From this failed day in court, Féval renounced his career as a lawyer and left for Paris, hoping to find work more to his liking. He worked several different jobs including those of finance clerk and proof-reader, but ultimately hoped for and aspired to a writing career.

One of his first works,¹ *Le Loup blanc*,² was published in 1842. While not his greatest success, this novel nevertheless demonstrates the author's ability to write a tale that can reach beyond his circle of friends and engage a larger audience. He writes of it in a letter to Vicomte Oscar de Poli dated May 20, 1881: "Vous avez lu le *Loup blanc* aussi; c'est mon premier roman; il est de 1842 et antérieur aux *Mystères de Londres*. Il a bien eu cinquante éditions, vingt traductions, et un nombre vraiment incalculable de reproductions. Tous les journaux de province l'imprimaient à la fois, et il y en a eu pas mal qui ont redoublé à dix et quinze ans de distance" (Buet 171). This novel makes his name well known enough that when the time comes for Anténor Joly to commission a newly established author, Féval is the man who is chosen. The work which Joly presents to Féval is *Les Mystères de Londres*, a novel whose title is intended to rival *Les Mystères de Paris*, which at that point had earned Eugène Sue a great deal of success. Although Féval had never been to England, he accepts to write a tale that purports to expose the

¹ Féval's literary career began in journalism, working with journals such as le *Nouvelliste* and *Pierre Michet*, in which he published *L'Oncle* and *Le Cabinet de lecture* respectively in 1839 and 1840.

² Féval's *Le Club des phoques* is actually considered by most to be Féval's first novel, published in 1841 in *La Revue de Paris*. When Féval states in this letter that *Le Loup Blanc* is his first novel, this might indicate that this is the first novel which he completed, but he was unable to publish it until later.

underbelly of British society. He writes of an Irishman who is betrayed and disappears for years, only to resurface with a new identity. From the early success that this story celebrates, Féval is able to visit London and further develop this serialized novel, adding to its intrigue and creating the notion of secret brotherhoods and societies that will inform much of his later popular writings, such as *La Vampire*, *Le Bossu* and his series *Les Habits noirs*. While secret societies are prevalent in many of his texts, they are by no means the only thread that ties his body of work together. In his writings there are many examples of royalty and nobility, hinting at his monarchist beliefs. He likewise includes ghostly women and strange men that are reminiscent of the Breton folklore he undoubtedly heard in his youth.

Paul Féval, as a monarchist, hoped for the reinstatement of a king and remembers crying out in class as a young student “Vive le roi!” The passion evident in his early youth subsides as he ages and acquires a more reserved perception of politics and governmental rule. Again through one of his letters, one written to his friend Jules Claretie, his views on politics are revealed. Should this letter be truly revealing of his personal belief in the French government and the French citizens, he is not the violent or aggressive monarchist that one would expect the boy who disrupted classrooms with royal rhetoric to become, but instead he sees a monarchy as a unifying principle that could help to dissipate the societal problems of France.

En notre siècle, croire aux révolutions est un *don*, comme être beau, comme être brave. Je n’y crois pas. J’en subis les conséquences plus durement que vous ne pouvez l’imaginer; mais je n’en ai pas honte, au contraire.

Cet “au contraire” n’est pas de l’intolérance. Mieux que personne, vous savez quelle jeunesse de sympathie j’ai gardée dans mes vieux jours. Je vais au talent,

quelle que soit l'opinion de ce talent, de sorte que je n'ai pas même la consolation du grinchisme.

Il m'est survenu parfois des tentations. Saint Antoine résistait-il vraiment? J'ai vu passer de l'autre côté de ma table l'ombre d'Eugène Sue, cet aristocrate qui gagna tant de renommée et tant d'argent avec la démocratie. Il fut sans doute sincère. Moi, qui ne suis pas aristocrate du tout, je vois l'avenir des peuples là où les peuples semblent ne pas le voir. Toutes les réformes sociales si urgentes sont pour moi dans l'autorité agrandie. Je vais bien plus loin, je crois que nous aurions aujourd'hui la plupart des réformes souhaitées, s'il n'y avait pas eu de révolutions.

Unus Deus, rex unus, una lex. À mes yeux, voilà le droit du vrai socialisme possible, quoique ce fut celle d'un des rudes Normands qui conquièrent l'Angleterre: "Un roy, une foy, une loy." (Buet 178)

In another letter to his friend, Oscar de Poli, dated March 25, 1881, Féval writes, "Les *républiques* sont bonnes et remarquables, mais *royauté* vaut encore mieux. C'est éloquent et c'est heureux." To this letter he adds a postscriptum with a large *fleur de lis* drawn next to it, stating "Dieu et le roi" (Buet 168). Féval's proclaimed support for the reinstatement of a king is only demonstrated in a few of the texts in this study. His balanced view, one which respects the views of other political clubs and parties, is far from the dramatic or violent depictions he writes of in his works, especially that of the monarchist Georges Cadoudal in *La Vampire*. His attitude, when compared to the passions of the revolutions some of his stories depict, shows tolerance of, if not respect for those who do not share his opinions in politics. However, this same attitude is hardly applied to the business of writing.

Like others of his time, Féval's writing found a place in the daily and weekly journals, and only a few of them made it to papers widely distributed; the rest were distributed by papers with a smaller audience.³ Thus his works were divided and presented in installments by editors who understood how to make a profit from serialized novels. As a marketing strategy, these stories create a desire within the reading clientele to subscribe to the journal. By presenting the stories in installments, the readers are left at the mercy of the next issue in order to discover what is to become of the fictional characters they have been following. Often, after the tale has run its course through the journal, and if it achieved enough success, the story may be printed in its entirety by a publishing house. Féval, perhaps better than most, understood the business of writing, and created tales whose chapters ended by revealing a twist in the plot or by presenting a new problem which has yet to be resolved. In the spirit of the business of writing, Féval's tales are often set in Paris, with a few exceptions, like *Les Mystères de Londres*. This is a conscious choice, for he felt that readers wanted Parisian tales; they wished to hear stories of the capital. To further ensure literary success, he would often write to publishers and editors encouraging them, and even nagging them, to promote and advertise his story. "Un roman non-chauffé, rappelez-vous, n'a qu'un demi-succès" (Galvan, *Parcours* 17).

Féval almost tirelessly promoted his writings and engaged in the business of literature. Those efforts are matched by the dedication with which he penned the tales that would bring him riches and moderate fame. This is evident not only in the number of works he produced, but also in the criticism offered by those who esteem him a sub-standard literary figure. Some criticize him for being too hurried, choosing quantity over quality. Should this indeed be the case, his prolific production is no doubt motivated by the financial reward that he is to obtain from

³ It was in the newspaper *Le Gazette de France* that Féval published his *La Fée des grèves*. Joseph Moody points out that this particular paper was among "the most prominent newspapers in Paris [which was] primarily political but normally supported Catholic causes . . ." (398).

creating and selling so many of his novels to papers around France. Of course, the nature of the tales he wrote may have only appealed to certain demographics. Not all readers of literature enjoy fantastic tales of vampires and ghosts, neither do they all enjoy the more religious texts he penned later in his life. In fact, his most widely accepted and enjoyed novel is *Le Bossu*, a swashbuckler that appeals to a larger audience. Regardless of the theme, Féval felt that honest writing was a laudable vocation. In his semi-autobiographical novel that he wrote late in life, Féval explains his theory of writing. In this novel, *Les Étapes d'une conversion*, Paul Féval is embodied in a man whom he calls Jean. Through Jean, Féval details his own life with the central purpose of sharing with his readers the conversion he underwent from being catholic only in name to being an active participant in the faith. It is through Jean that he reveals what the life and mind of an author truly are.

Je vais vous raconter l'histoire d'une intelligence et d'un cœur. Mon ami s'appelait Jean; son nom de famille importe peu. Avant de tourner ses yeux vers Dieu, il avait dépensé une longue vie à regarder les hommes pour faire fortune et gagner de la renommée. L'écrivain est un espion involontaire qui viole incessamment autour de lui le secret des consciences.

Je parle, bien entendu, ici des écrivains qui ont la passion et le respect de leur art, et non pas de ces écorcheurs de papier, noircissant des pages à la sueur du poignet, ne voyant rien par eux-mêmes, volant, copiant, plagiant, déshonorant la pensée des maîtres pour la resservir démarquée et malpropre à l'innombrable cohue des lecteurs qui ne savent pas lire. Je parle des forts et des dignes, de ceux qu'on ne pourra pas remplacer l'année prochaine en perfectionnant la machine à

coudre jusqu'à lui faire piquer du dialogue imbécile et des alinéas idiots. (Féval V)

He considered himself one of the “worthy” and “strong” authors, marred by charlatans who live off his ideas. A similar lamentation is found as he begins *La Ville-Vampire*, in which Féval uses the English writer, Ann Radcliffe, as the central protagonist. Féval writes:

Il y a beaucoup d'Anglais et surtout d'Anglaises qui ont pudeur quand on leur raconte les actes d'effrontée piraterie dont les écrivains français sont victimes en Angleterre. . . . Sa Très Gracieuse Majesté, en effet, défend à ses loyaux sujets de nous prendre nos drames, nos livres, etc., mais elle leur permet d'en faire ce qu'elle a la bonté d'appeler “une blonde imitation.” (Féval 9)

Féval's concern with the blond imitations of his and other authors' works is seen in his service within *la Société des Gens de Lettres*. La Société des Gens de Lettres, established in 1838 and still intact to this day, was founded with the goal to help professionalize the career of authors. As the president of this society, Féval worked towards the goals of the society by focusing on securing rights to intellectual property outside of regional and national borders.⁴ Féval is among those to whom both Jerrold Seigel and Henry Murger refer when they write of the *bohèmes*. The nineteenth century saw a dramatic change in how the arts were funded. In place of a *mécène* to fund and otherwise support artistic endeavors, artists and writers turned to the public to finance their work. These writers “found themselves participants in a commercial market, a world of buying and selling from which they had been mostly excluded or protected before” (Seigel 13). The *Société des gens de lettres* served (and continues to serve) as a guild for those many writers, those *bohèmes* that otherwise have little or no support. However, as Galvan indicates, being the president of the society during the Second Empire was no easy task. “La libéralisation du régime

⁴ Féval served as president from 1865 to 1868.

ayant pour conséquence de laisser le champ libre aux débats politiques, la [Société des Gens de Lettres] se trouva rapidement, et ouvertement, divisée” (*Parcours* 33). Even though Féval’s service as president of the *Société des Gens de Lettres* did not guarantee him the success that he had hoped for, it is nevertheless evidence of his commitment to the craft of writing and his dedication to the career of the writer.

Féval, unable or unwilling to make a living with another career, writes at a voracious pace. It is perhaps this lifestyle, one which constantly places the author at his desk, to which Féval refers as he writes of his trade to an author young in his career. “Il faut bien du courage pour travailler, travailler, travailler avec la certitude de pareilles récompenses. Que d’amers chagrins dans ce métier! Et quel peut être le but de ceux qui gagnent des sous à poignarder ainsi!” (Buet 117). His attitude of writing as being work is evident in the wide array of novels that he produced. He was not limited solely to the fantastic or historical novels which will be the focus of this study. Rather, these are only a sampling of the breadth of his body of work: “. . . du roman régionaliste au roman d’aventure exotique, en passant par le roman de mœurs parisiennes, le roman historique, le roman fantastique, et même le roman d’espionnage (*L’Homme du gaz*). Ses livres sont partout imprimés, ses personnages et ses lecteurs sont partout dans le monde” (Galvan, *Parcours* 25).

While riches and popularity are both attributed to Féval at various points in his life, one success eludes him even after death. For nineteenth-century France, literary success is divided between financial gain and literary renown. After attaining the wealth he needed, and having works like *Le Bossu* known across the country and translated into multiple languages, Féval yearned for the respect and veneration of fellow authors by seeking a seat in the *Académie Française*. His name was twice submitted, once in 1873 and again two years later. “Malgré les

efforts déployés durant près de trois décennies par Balzac, Féval et leurs confrères de la Société des Gens de Lettres, il n'était toujours pas temps. Le roman devait attendre encore ses lettres de noblesse et les romanciers la considération académique" (Galvan, *Parcours* 35). The rejections to enter the ranks of the elite of the academy endured by Féval during his lifetime are telling of the lack of treatment his work was to receive after his death.

Although Féval was never admitted into the Academy, he nonetheless contributed to the world of literature. His tales, which often employed supernatural creatures, create a sort of meta-reading of the texts that engage readers with both the creatures in the story and the narrator himself. Vampires, who have proven to be popular subjects of recent literature, film and television, appear in Féval's works more than other supernatural creatures. Their part-human, part-animal, part-demon composition creates an intriguing entity that perpetually draws in readers and viewers. Regardless of their renewed popularity, these vampires and other supernatural creatures (from ogres and fairies to doppelgangers and ghosts) are more than faddish. By not existing in the "real world" they cut away from it and develop a narrative world in which these creatures and events are permitted to exist. As these supernatural events all pull readers from the real world, there are often equally convincing events that root the narrative in the real world that the readers know and understand. Historical events or a savvy narrator draw the reader back from the narrative world into the "real world" and blur the lines between reality and fiction. This is, at least in part, what is understood to be fantastic literature.

Sigmund Freud, H.P. Lovecraft, and Rosemary Jackson are among the many who have suggested approaches for treating the fantastic. In his essay *The Uncanny*, Freud treats E. T. A. Hoffmann's *Der Sandmann* in order to illustrate the psychological underpinnings that create the uncanny feeling that one associates with fantastic tales. Freud defines this uncanny feeling as

being familiar and yet unknown. In order to explain this seemingly contradictory emotion, Freud turns the reader's attention to the words *heimlich* and *unheimlich*, whose etymologies demonstrate that they can give divergent and compatible meanings. "In general we are reminded that the word *heimlich* is not ambiguous, but belongs to two sets of ideas, which without being contradictory are yet very different: on the one hand, it means that which is familiar and congenial, and on the other, that which is concealed and kept out of sight" (375). H.P. Lovecraft, like Freud, insists on the emotions that the fantastic inspires. However, unlike Freud, he presents these strange tales as developing independently of the progress that society makes. In his *Supernatural Horror in Literature*, the role of the supernatural is shown to compete with the rational, as continual progress towards optimism and idealism do not affect "the weird tale [that] has survived, developed, and attained remarkable heights of perfection" (12). Rosemary Jackson, in contrast to Freud and Lovecraft, does not consider the fantastic as a literary genre, but rather as a mode that transcends genres. Quoting Eric Rabkin she writes that the fantastic includes "whole conventional genres, such as fairy tale, detective story, fantasy" (13). Like Freud, Jackson insists on including psychoanalysis within studies of the fantastic, and thereby suggests that supernatural events can be explained by rational causes.

For both Lovecraft and Freud, a study of the fantastic is based on the emotional reaction that a text inspires. Tzvetzan Todorov employs a similar emotional framework in his approach to the fantastic by relying on a hesitation between what is supernatural and what is real, and then adds to it a structural perception of the fantastic genre. In his seminal work, *Introduction à la littérature fantastique*, he argues that the marvelous and the uncanny are presented as two different outcomes to resolve what may seem to be a supernatural occurrence within a text.

Celui qui perçoit l'événement doit opter pour l'une des deux solutions possibles: ou bien il s'agit d'une illusion des sens, d'un produit de l'imagination et les lois du monde restent alors ce qu'elles sont; ou bien l'événement a véritablement eu lieu, il est partie intégrante de la réalité, mais alors cette réalité est régie par des lois inconnues de nous. (29)

Supernatural events encourage readers of the fantastic to compare the supernatural against reality and the laws of nature. These supernatural events vary as far as human imagination will permit. The supernatural in literature often takes the form of magical fairies and talking animals, but also through grotesque and inhuman creations that unsettle the senses. These supernatural events are a prerequisite for fantastic literature, but as Todorov points out, they are not the only requirement. The fantastic is introduced into a text when the supernatural is presented and when its validity is called into question. In order to define the fantastic, the marvelous and the uncanny must first be explained.

For Todorov, as well as for the purposes of the present study, the division between the uncanny and the marvelous is rather straightforward. All things that do not coincide with natural laws are considered marvelous. Thus wizards, dragons and magic potions are most often relegated to the marvelous. The uncanny, by contrast, constitutes those things that appear supernatural, but in fact are the result of coincidence that is improbable or strange, but real. In other words, within the uncanny there is a rational explanation for the supernatural. These two genres are the result of a process of either assimilation or accommodation. The uncanny assimilates the supernatural into a reader's perception of reality, whereas the marvelous accommodates the supernatural, and thereby modifies reality for the reader. The moment of hesitation wherein the reader is unsure if the narrative is supernatural or simply improbable,

regardless of its duration, is the fantastic. Even though both sides of the fantastic are necessary to the understanding of the genre as a whole, up until this point, the fantastic is primarily addressed according to its relation to the uncanny, neglecting the marvelous. Todorov's definition of the fantastic urges scholars who research such supernatural tales of ghosts, monsters, and vampires, as well as impossible and incredible technologies, to identify the moment of hesitation in the text wherein the credibility of the narrative can be examined. The marvelous permits the phenomenon in question to be understood at face value and causes the readers to modify their paradigm of nature in order to make it coincide with the text. The uncanny requires that an incredulous reader scrutinize the event and adapt it to correlate with his conceptualization of reality. When this happens, as it does in Guy de Maupassant's *Le Horla*, for example, the reader is often left with a strange sensation, mulling over the idea that the strange and often horrifying events, the madness in Maupassant's tale, are not limited to the pages of the story but can be manifest in the real world in which the reader lives.

A duality is created in the uncanny and the marvelous wherein the fantastic only seems to offer a temporary balance between the rational and the irrational. The fantastic therefore pushes a reader to choose, or at least to prefer, one explanation over another. That uncertainty becomes the reason for inquiry, and the reader becomes engaged with a text through the doubts he wishes to resolve. The fantastic creates a space where the reader can meditate on various aspects of the supernatural and search for a resolution to the hesitation. When a text is marvelous (we will use Goethe's well-known *Faust* as an example) the reader takes the happenings of the text as fact (within the world that the text has created) and receives the story on its own merit. Thus when Faust converses with mythical creatures, the reader does not stop to examine the possibilities of such an encounter, but understands that in this text, witches and centaurs are permitted to exist.

A similar argument can be made for the uncanny. Uncanny texts offer their readers the assurance that while what they are being presented may seem strange, they will not be forced to seek explanations beyond the natural or scientific. The reader does not perceive the supernatural as such, and expects that a rational explanation is soon to come. One example of an uncanny text is *Le Horla* in which the central figure believes a spirit-like being is haunting him and even attempting to kill him. Readers understand this ethereal being to simply be an expression of the central figure's madness. Unlike the uncanny and the marvelous, which offer explanations to either confirm or reject the notion of supernatural events and figures in a text, the fantastic multiplies the possibilities of explanations and pushes the reader to question reason as well as to search for it. Thus, in attempting to categorize the fantastic as either real or imagined, Todorov's structural approach to the fantastic frames itself as a search for truth without explicitly stating it as such. However, truth is not something that is easily defined, particularly in fiction. Therefore, while its desire for definition and categorization is legitimate, its overall goal is an aspiration too great, given its current capacity as a critical approach to a literary genre.

When referring to fantastic literature, confusion is inevitable since scholars use it as a blanket term, signifying the uncanny, the marvelous and the fantastic all at once, as well as the specific genre that resides between the uncanny and the marvelous. This adds to the difficulty of defining the fantastic, as a genre or as a mode, and complicates efforts to establish a unified discussion on the subject. Studies of the fantastic, however, omit the role of the marvelous and thus reduce the fantastic to an inevitable analysis of psychosis, madness, hysteria, etc. Studies such as Jutta Emma Fortin's *Method in Madness* and Jean Le Guennec's *Raison et déraison dans le récit fantastique du XIX^e siècle* have heavily treated the cognitive and rational aspects of the fantastic. From these works we see the degree to which nineteenth-century France is influenced

by the works of Freud, Mesmer and Charcot. Technological advancements such as photography and improvements in modern medicine, much like the psychological advancements, are manifest in the works of their contemporary authors. Seen in this light, the fantastic reflects the progress of nineteenth-century France, as well as in the rest of Europe. These novels show that the irrational elements typical of the marvelous are rooted in a collective past and are reminiscent of similar genres, such as fairy tales, fables, and folk tales, just as the more rational side of the fantastic is reflective of modernity and innovation. Fantastic literature serves as a chronological mile-marker to indicate the psychological and technological trails blazed. While it is clear that fantastic literature, incorporating the marvelous and the uncanny, exemplifies how life in nineteenth-century France reaches forward toward technologies and discovery, it also serves as an anchor to the mythical, spiritual and even superstitious roots of the past. In other words, at the same time that the uncanny is representative of the rational and positivist trends that find foothold in many nineteenth-century French narratives, the marvelous represents a nostalgic and retrospective view of former beliefs and the figures that embody those beliefs.

Many previous studies on the fantastic rely on Freud's principles of psychoanalysis when confronted with the supernatural. This approach is beneficial in that it rationalizes phobias, compulsions and other mental defects. Nevertheless, it neglects to address the influences the supernatural has within the marvelous. It is for this reason that I will at times integrate Gilbert Durand's studies on archetypes which address the irrational, marvelous aspects of the texts that escape the capacities of psychoanalysis. Durand's research follows that of Carl-Gustav Jung, a former student of Freud. The primary difference separating Jung from Freud is their definition of the subconscious. For Freud, the subconscious is the result of repressed events from childhood, and thus in terms of the fantastic it is manifest as a reaction to repression (Chelebourg 21). In

contrast, Jung treats the subconscious as having two layers; the first is a personal subconscious which rests upon the second subconscious. The deeper layer he calls “the collective unconscious” and it is upon this layer that similarities are found to exist in mythologies of diverse societies (Jung 287). Building upon Jung’s finding in his *Anthropological Structures of the Imaginary*, Durand identifies images which are common across cultures and which are manifestations of this Jungian subconscious, categorizes them as symbols and groups those symbols together as constellations. These images serve as the basis for myth criticism, which can help reveal the structural foundations of myths. Addressing the role of symbols, Durand writes that

[la] puissance fondamentale des symboles . . . est de se lier, par-delà les contradictions naturelles, les éléments inconciliables, les cloisonnements sociaux et les ségrégations des périodes de l’histoire. Il apparaît alors qu’il faille chercher les catégories motivantes des symboles dans les comportements élémentaires du psychisme humain, réservant pour plus tard l’ajustement de ce comportement aux compléments directs d’objet ou même aux jeux sémiologiques. (35)

While there are inevitably similarities that will arise between myth criticism and psychoanalysis, the two remain separate and even complementary for the following reason: for the psychoanalyst, the imaginary is a product of “un conflit entre les pulsions et leur refoulement social”; for Durand on the other hand, “. . . l’imagination est au contraire origine d’un défoulement. Les images ne valent pas par les racines libidineuses qu’elles cachent, mais par les fleurs poétiques et mythiques qu’elles révèlent” (36). Both myth criticism and psychoanalysis have a place within fantastic works: the one represents a collective subconscious and is demonstrated through the marvelous; the other illustrates an individual psyche and embodies the

uncanny. The mythical and archetypal elements employed by Féval enrich the images he uses in tales such as *La Vampire*, *La Ville-Vampire* or *L'Homme de fer*. This is particularly true with regard to the females of his texts and their interactions with supernatural figures.

In the ensuing chapters, the supernatural elements and events showcased in the serialized and popular Féval novels demonstrate a closer affinity with the marvelous, whereas the nineteenth-century works that have entered the French canon are more prone to developing the uncanny. The first significant ramification of the project is to resuscitate an important author whose works have until now remained in the margins of literary history. Moreover, Paul Féval's works, more than other nineteenth-century French fantastic tales, uncover an awareness of the barriers surrounding the rational and the irrational with regard to the creation of a fantastic tale. While many have viewed the fantastic as a result of advancement, the fantastic is also a struggle with it. The futuristic technologies and science that inspire many of these stories that both impress and perplex are also plagued with danger and horror. Ironically, comfort can be found within the irrational because it is familiar.

Again, one of the difficulties of working with the fantastic is the lack of universal definitions. Even though Todorov's study serves as a common ground for many who study the fantastic, the definitions for the fantastic are seemingly as numerous as the studies of it. Rosemary Jackson points out that part of the fascination of the fantastic is our inability to capture and objectify it. This study builds on the definitions provided by Todorov, Jackson and others. These definitions, while not perfect in nature and dependent upon a reader's subjective perception of the supernatural, are the clearest means we currently possess to approach this literary genre. They represent the closest thing to a taxonomy and guide us toward an understanding of the fantastic as a whole. The purpose of this study is not so much to redefine

these genres, although clarification of the fantastic is inevitable. Rather it is to draw attention to the supernatural elements and the reader's perception of them, which have been largely ignored. While this introductory chapter touches upon the life and career of Féval, it is to the works themselves that we now turn, in order better to understand a neglected author. As this study attempts to demonstrate, relationships exist between fantastic narrative and perception, both through the role of the reader and the historical context of the narrative. Moreover, there are connections between fantastic narrative and identity, via multiple identities in the narrative and the roles of exotic figures and dangerous women.

The presence of supernatural elements in Féval's works is the point of departure for much of this study. These supernatural elements, whether they be vampires, fairies, ogres or magic, demonstrate the unfixed nature of a fantastic tale. By introducing the supernatural, the narrator engages the reader directly. From the narrator-reader relationship, the supernatural is defined and the text in which it is found is liable to change depending upon the reader of the tale. The reader's understanding likewise plays a key role when supernatural events are juxtaposed with historical events. As the real and historical events are displayed alongside the fictitious and supernatural, both the real and the fictitious elements of the text are uprooted and the assurance of their accuracy (as being either real or fake) becomes negotiable. These supernatural events that define both the reader's role and meaning in Féval's texts as well as destabilize historical references, are demonstrated in several figures. Perhaps chief among these figures is that of the vampire, which when analyzed reveals multiple personalities, secret societies and parasites within the novels. The female-vampire associations in Féval's works likewise stretch beyond being a parasite and espouse another archetypal figure, the Medusa. The narrator-reader relationship, historical elements and archetypal figures employed by Féval place the supernatural

creatures and events at the center of the narrative and deny a universal reading experience for different readers of the same text.

The following chapters will show the role supernatural events and figures play in Féval's works. In chapter two, I will demonstrate the importance of the author-reader relationship with regard to fantastic tales. This chapter will introduce new terminology in the effort to clarify, rather than complicate, the role that perception plays when treating a work containing supernatural elements. Building on the problem of perception, chapter three discusses how Féval places historical events and supernatural creatures within a novel. The friction caused by placing history and the supernatural together within a narrative requires the reader to measure the verisimilitude of events that are seemingly invested with historical authority. In chapter four, I will discuss how multiple identities and secret societies are manifest in Féval's works. This chapter will also highlight how contact with supernatural elements in Féval's works can create a change in identity and how a secret society acts as a vampire or a parasite, living off the larger society to which it belongs. Chapter five explores how Féval depicts feminine figures as both beautiful and deadly in his novels. This, again, relies heavily on the problem of perception, since serpentine and deathly images of the female figures portrayed in Féval's works are drawn from how women were represented in other arenas of French society and in archetypal images, such as the Medusa or Eve.

The various works by Paul Féval which will be studied in the subsequent chapters have been chosen because they demonstrate an awareness of supernatural elements. These works, however, have not been extensively studied. In order to facilitate a better understanding of these works, the following summaries are provided.

Plot Summary for Féval's Works Treated in this Study

La Fée des grèves (1850). Set in fifteenth-century Brittany, *La Fée des grèves* is a historical tale that begins with the funeral procession of Gilles de Bretagne. At this funeral, Hue de Maurever accuses François de Bretagne of murdering his brother, Gilles, and immediately flees. This is of particular interest to the young Aubry Kergariou, since Hue's daughter, Reine, is Aubry's love interest. When François promises knighthood to whomever captures Hue, Aubry refuses. His cousin, Méloir, who also hopes to marry Reine, begins to pursue Hue. As Hue hides in an abbey, Reine collects food for him at night from a nearby town. She is mistaken for the *fée des grèves* that is and pursued by those who wish to capture her in order to be granted a wish. The novel follows both those involved in the funeral procession, as well as those who lived in the nearby town. At the novel's conclusion, a guilt-ridden François accepts blame for his brother's death, thus allowing Hue de Maurever to live freely.

L'Homme de fer (1855). Set in fifteenth-century Brittany, *L'Homme de fer* follows Féval's *La Fée des grèves* as part of a series set around the Mont Saint-Michel. Jeannin, one of the villagers who helped protect Hue and Reine de Maurever in *La Fée des grèves*, suspects that there is soon to be a war between Brittany and the king of France, Louis XI. His worries are confirmed when the king arrives and strikes a deal with the infamous count Otto Béringhem. This count, the titular man of iron, is rumored to possess supernatural abilities and rule over a hidden city named "Hélion." The king of France attempts to gain control of Brittany by enlisting the aid of Otto Béringhem and forces François II to submit to French rule. This novel introduces Jeannin's daughter, Jeannine, as well as Aubry and Reine's daughter, Berthe. These families are menaced

by the count Otto Béringhem, also known as the *ogre des îles*, who attempts to take Berthe as his bride.

Le Bossu (1857). This novel follows the character, Henri Lagardère, a skilled swordsman who by chance stumbles upon an assassination plot against Philippe de Nevers. De Nevers leaves behind a wife, whom he secretly wed, as well as a young daughter named Aurore. Lagardère, hoping to protect the child from her father's assassins, promises the dying de Nevers to watch over and raise the child as his own. Even after Aurore reaches adolescence and becomes a young woman, Philippe de Gonzague, the man responsible for de Nevers's death, continues to send men across Europe trying to find Aurore in order to claim de Nevers's wealth, which he left behind. In an effort to discover de Nevers's killer and expose him to justice, Lagardère returns to France and disguises himself as a hunchback in order to gain access to all the echelons of society. After much effort, Lagardère wins over de Nevers's widow and causes de Gonzague to expose himself as the killer of de Nevers.

Le Chevalier Ténèbre (1860). Two brothers, one a vampire and the other, a vampire-like creature (an *eupire*), are in a constant pursuit of wealth. They go from one gathering to the next, continually disguising themselves as different individuals (brothers, father and son, husband and wife, etc.) and are able to leave each gathering with the riches they desire. They present themselves as the Baron d'Altenheimer and his brother, Bénédict Altenheimer, at a fund-raising soirée, where a few guests begin to suspect them as the infamous bandits and chase after them. Eventually the brothers are killed, only to be resurrected from their tombs at a later date. *Le Chevalier Ténèbre* is considered to be Féval's own parody of fantastic literature. By

incorporating numerous narrative frames and an essay on trickery, Féval indirectly offers commentary on the nature of fantastic tales.

La Vampire (1865). Jean-Pierre Sévérin is appointed director of Paris' morgue, which is scheduled to open in the spring of 1804. At the same time that the construction of the morgue is approaching its conclusion, citizens begin to find bodies in the Seine River and rumors of a vampire preying on Parisians begin to circulate among the general population. The historical setting is Napoleon Bonaparte's rise to power and the tale recalls the actual historically based plot to assassinate Bonaparte, an assassination attempt that led to the arrest and execution of Georges Cadoudal. In the novel, Sévérin searches for his stepdaughter, Angèle, and attempts to protect her and her fiancé (Georges Cadoudal's nephew) from a mysterious woman known as the countess, Marcian Gregoryi. This countess is given many identities, which complicates the reading of the novel. She is a countess who marries young nobles, only to kill them and take their money. She is also the leader of a secret society named *la ligue de la vertu*, which plans, like Cadoudal, to kill Bonaparte. She is, finally, a vampire accumulating wealth in order to return to her vampire husband. The money that comes at the cost of others' lives is payment for one night's sexual intercourse with her vampire husband, Szandor. The novel ends somberly, with the vampire killing Angèle and returning to her husband, leaving Sévérin and his wife to raise Angèle's child.

La Ville-vampire (1875). In this novel, Féval uses the gothic novelist, Ann Radcliffe, as his central protagonist. On her wedding night, Ann learns that her two dear friends, Ned and Cornelia, have fallen into grave danger just weeks before their own marriage, which was to take

place on the same day as Ann's. With the assistance of her servant, Grey-Jack, Ann leaves England to travel to continental Europe and find her friends. Along the way, Ann enlists the help of her Irish friend, Merry Bones. When she arrives at the last known location of Ned, an inn named *La Bière et l'amitié*, she encounters the servants of a vampire named M. Goëtz. It is this vampire who orchestrated Cornelia's disappearance. In this adventure, Ann and her friends combat a group of vampires as well as gain access to the vampire city "Sélène." The novel concludes with Ann's arrival at an Italian castle where Ann, just as she is about to die, awakens still wearing her wedding clothes, revealing the adventure to have been a dream. In the tradition of fantastic literature, Féval describes how a poster, which existed in Ann's dreamt adventure, is seen again by Ann after the dream is over, a detail that suggests the entire adventure may not have been limited to the dream.

CHAPTER 2

METAFANTASTIC: THE NARRATEE AND THE READER

The fantastic, as Erik Rabkin puts forth in *The Fantastic in Literature*, is a versatile and adaptable genre. For this reason, Rosemary Jackson posits that fantastic narratives constitute a mood rather than a genre. As a mood, the fantastic sets the tone that a particular work takes as it juxtaposes reality against the impossible. The roles that the author and reader play in creating a fantastic tale contribute to the narrative's central goal of questioning both reality and the plausibility of supernatural creatures or events. In literature, fairies, vampires and other monsters are perceived as powerful figures when they evoke a sensation of awe or fear in those who observe their doings. The infamous count Dracula is frightening in his supernatural abilities to climb up and down the side of stone walls, transfigure into mist, and above all in his need to sustain his own life by taking that of a human. The fear-inciting description of this creature is not intrinsic in his name but has become so through the text and through the numerous narrators of Bram Stoker's classic *Dracula*. Although they have not achieved literary acclaim, Paul Féval's fantastic tales, *La Vampire*, *Le Chevalier Ténèbre*, *Histoire de revenants* and *La Fée des grèves*, provide a theoretical background for fantastic narratives that reflect the changing and evanescent nature that Jackson and Rabkin associate with such stories, and bring to light the roles and relationships of both the author and the reader of fantastic tales. It is through the narrator and the reader that these supernatural elements of a text are endowed with a resemblance to life. As if performing a magical act, the author presents his reader with something fabulous and incredible, and hoping to inspire awe, he plays with the line between belief and disbelief. By observing the fantastic tale's construction as a metafictional work, and thereby creating the sub-genre of

metafantastic literature, the reader understands his relationship with the author and the magic of the fantastic is revealed.

It is well understood that fantastic literature contains strange or supernatural events. In fact, it is the presence of these events which are at the root of the fantastic itself. While many readers dismiss these events as not being representative of reality, the narrator attempts to maintain the credibility of his narrative by incorporating his readers into the text. Ironically, the incorporation of the reader likewise reminds him of the fictional aspects of the narrative. Féval's *La Vampire* demonstrates this as he begins his tale. "Nous avons à raconter un épisode, historique il est vrai, mais bourgeois Il n'y a que des récits dans ce livre: notre préface elle-même était encore un récit . . ." (2-3). Following this brief introduction to the novel, the narrator offers background information about some of the characters and themes that will be introduced in the text. The narrator's preparatory comments imply an audience, but they distance him from the audience as well. The narrator brings the art of storytelling to the forefront of the tale by addressing various notions of legends, story tellers and narratives.

Le commencement du siècle où nous sommes fut beaucoup plus légendaire qu'on ne le croit généralement. Et je ne parle pas ici de cette immense légende de nos gloires militaires, dont le sang républicain écrivit les premières pages au bruit triomphant de la fanfare marseillaise, qui déroula ses chants à travers l'éblouissement de l'empire et noya sa dernière strophe – un cri splendide – dans le grand deuil de Waterloo.

Je parle de la légende des conteurs, des récits qui endorment ou passionnent la veillée, des choses poétiques, bizarres, surnaturelles, dont le scepticisme du dix-huitième siècle avait essayé de faire table nette.

Souvenons-nous que l'empereur Napoléon I^{er} aimait à la folie les brouillards rêveurs d'Ossian, passées par M. Baour au tamis académique. C'est la légende guindée, roidie par l'empois ; mais c'est toujours la légende. (5, emphases added)

His reference to the skepticism, a reference to the Enlightenment movement, gives the narrator and the narratee a shared historical background, creates a fraternity with those who consider themselves less skeptical and creates a barrier for those critical of bizarre and supernatural things. The narratee, who will be addressed in more detail later, is what some theorists refer to as the implied reader. After bringing the role of the narrator into the forefront of the narrative, the first chapter of *La Vampire* also recognizes the presence of the narratee. Féval groups the narratee with the narrator into one pronoun with his use of "Souvenons-nous" when referring to Napoléon's love for "les brouillards rêveurs d'Ossian" (6). He later adds, "Et souvenons-nous aussi que le roi légitime des pays légendaires, Walter Scott, avait trente ans quand le siècle naquit" (6). It may seem a trivial thing to employ the first person pronoun "nous" but it carries with it several implications. The first, as mentioned previously, is that the narrator admits to the existence of the narratee. In doing so, the narrative abandons the traditional reading where the reader escapes the real world by observing the fictional world of the text, and the reader becomes implicated into the narrative. This trait is typical of metafictional literature, a genre which by definition is self-aware and self-referential. Like other works of metafiction, Féval's implication of a reader, or more specifically of the narratee, is not without consequences. Inger Christensen indicates how in Laurence Stern's *Tristram Shandy* a similar feat is accomplished. "Tristram uses the pronoun *we* about himself and the narratee, stressing the close relations that exist between them. He entices the sympathetic narratee to make common front with him against the nasty critics" (32). In a later context the use of the first person pronoun is intended to silence the

narratee from any possible criticism: “The comment is inserted primarily to ward off criticism of the difficult, preceding passage. The narrator seems to say that if the reader does not understand, he himself is to blame” (Christensen 53). While Féval is not persuading the narratee to side with him against critics, he is attempting to manipulate him in another manner. As a fantastic tale, and even with a title openly evoking a fantastic creature, Féval’s narrator is attempting to draw the narratee into the text and help him to trust in the fantastic world being created. The use of first person pronouns is the first step in doing so.

By inviting the narratee into the narrative, the text is no longer an isolated tale on a page; the narrator acknowledges that he is dependent upon the narratee for his own purpose, which is to tell the tale. Without “tu” or “vous” there cannot be “nous.” Secondly, the use of “nous” instead of “vous” is a means for the narrator to appropriate the audience and close some of the distance that exists between them, and thus he melds together the narrative world with the real world. The proximity that is created by the narrator also serves to redefine the narrative by reevaluating the source of the tale. However, there is a constant pushing and pulling by the narrator. At times he brings the narratee in close with “nous,” whereas at other times the narrator risks ostracizing the reader. “Sévérin, dit Gâteloop, faisait ici allusion à la bizarre aventure qui est le sujet de notre précédent récit: *la Chambre des Amours*” (233). This particular intertextual reference is lost on those readers who are not familiar with his other works and thus are excluded from fully comprehending the passage at hand. As the narrator changes to become more familiar and ostensibly more reliable, the narrative that he supplies also becomes more familiar and reliable. It is in the interest of the fantastic to create a narrator that is believable and trustworthy for the readers in order to create an audience that will succumb to the tricks and traps that it will later set for them. These interjections from the narrator can weaken the plausibility of the

narrative world. They draw the reader out of the fictional world by revealing the differences between the reader and the narratee.

There are noticeable differences between fantastic tales, such as *La Vampire*, and those to which Inger Christensen refers when addressing metafiction. As a literary genre, metafiction is self-referential and addresses the nature of writing by transgressing commonly respected conventions. While the more prominent studies of metafiction tend to address the nature of the novel in the twentieth century, Féval's works of metafiction are more specific to the nature of fantastic tales. A more substantial difference found in the novels to which Christensen refers and Féval's texts is the role of the supernatural. In addition to resembling metafiction by creating a narrative that is self-aware, self-referential and includes the reader in the narrative, these tales rely upon the beliefs and views of the reader who will have to negotiate the validity of the text's supernatural events and creatures. Metafantastic literature displays evidence of the process of belief in supernatural elements of a text. It is for this reason that a distinction will be made between metafiction and metafantastic. Metafiction is a term that applies to literature in a broad sense, whereas metafantastic, being a subgenre of metafiction, is only valued in texts that incorporate elements of the supernatural. Since metafantastic is a subgenre of metafiction, it shares the basic tenets of its underlying framework. However, the role of the reader within metafantastic tales is accentuated in the works of Paul Féval. Metafantastic is so named, as one could rightfully assume, because it is a fusion of both metafiction and the fantastic. Metafiction is literature that is self-referential and self-aware in order to focus on the writing process and the nature of literature in general. Metafantastic literature is self-aware and self-referential in order to underscore the importance the reader's belief in and perception of supernatural figures. Metafantastic literature acknowledges that supernatural elements are in competition against

rational explanations for them in literary works. It also acknowledges the reader's awareness of this struggle between the supernatural and the rational. This awareness gives way to the associated principles of belief and perception that can vary from reader to reader. It is from this point that a distinction between the narratee and the reader is most easily established. The difference between the reader and the narratee can be compared to that of the author and the narrator. Though the author may be a perfectly lucid individual, the perspective of the narrator could betray the true author's sanity and suggest a madman. While the reader of *Les Mystères de Londres* is open to a large selection of individuals, the narratee is undoubtedly a nineteenth-century Frenchman or woman, and not the English men and women of whom he wrote. The reader and the narratee, like the author and narrator, can be defined very differently.

In *Histoire de revenants*, Féval shows how a character within a text undergoes changes in his own perception of the fictional world. Étienne, a soldier returning from war after having lost an arm, discusses the strange effect which overcomes him with his fellow veteran as they approach their home town. Their discussion turns to a supernatural or psychic power called *le voile de Treguern*.

“Ah! ha! fit Mathurin dont le gros rire devint un peu forcé. Le *voile* de Treguern ! Oui, oui, j'ai entendu parler de cela. Et, en vérité, je crois qu'on change dès qu'on se retrouve au milieu de nos landes. Je n'avais pas songé à toutes ces diableries depuis dix ans, et Dieu sait que j'aurais ri comme un bossu si on m'avait conté quelque histoire de revenants à l'armée de Sambre-et-Meuse. Maintenant, voilà que j'ai presque la chair de poule!

-Si tu as entendu parler du *voile de Treguern*, poursuivit Étienne dont l'accent était mélancolique et calme, tu sais que depuis le grand chevalier Tanneguy, dont

le tombeau est dans l'église d'Orlan, tous les males du sang de Treguern ont le don de prévoir la mort de leurs amis et de leurs ennemis.” (29)

It is clear that Étienne more readily accepts the presence of supernatural powers and events, as it is he who reminds Mathurin that all male descendants of the Treguern family are endowed with a gift of prophecy. The narratee, however, does not necessarily share this same faith which Étienne exhibits. When considering Féval's *Histoire de revenants* or other fantastic tales treated here, the perception of the implicit reader (or narratee) is not always clear. As the narratee becomes part of a text, he, like the narrator, needs definition. Unlike the other characters, the narratee does not receive a detailed description of their social, physical or emotional make-up. However, it is not uncommon to be given clues within a text as to those originally intended readers of a work. The narratee for *Histoire de revanants* is obviously unaware of the legends and prophecies that Étienne and Mathurin discuss during their return. While penning *La Vampire*, as another example, Féval the author undoubtedly intended his narrator to “speak” to those who were familiar with the events surrounding Georges Cadoudal's attempted kidnapping and assassination of Napoleon Bonaparte. It is safe to assume that the narratee need not be entirely familiar with vampires, as Féval continually defines what a vampire is for that specific text. The reader brings to the text preconceptions that may contradict the world which the narrator creates. These preconceptions, such as the nature of vampires, are dismissed by the narratee as the narrative provides parameters and definition for them. These parameters establish the laws which govern the narrative world as well as the narratee who resides within it. Writing about Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*, Erik Rabkin points out that as Alice, speaking of flowers, states “I wish you could talk,” this is in fact a means to define the narratee. The narratee, like Alice, considers flowers to be mute. Clearly, Étienne's statement that all males of Treguern

descent are given the gift to see the deaths of their friends and enemies is considered as truthful in the mind of the narratee.

The narratee for Féval's works could easily be said to be the general literate public. However, since his different tales appeared in many newspapers during his lifetime, it is difficult to exact a specific group whom he intended as his market. Féval's career is situated in the century that follows the Enlightenment. In France, this period's thirst for knowledge and progress is typified by the *philosophes* and their efforts to create a unified collection of knowledge within the *Encyclopédie*. The Enlightenment would seem to exclude, and in many cases does, inexplicable and irrational events, dismissing them as superstition or mysticism. While this turning away from all things supernatural marks a select portion of the nineteenth-century French population, it is not a universal portrayal of the cosmological and ideological make-up of Féval's contemporaries. After all, in 1858, early in Féval's career, "Bernadette Soubirous had the first of eighteen apparitions" at Lourdes, which have subsequently triggered innumerable pilgrimages, many seeking for a supernatural healing (Harris 3). One could even look beyond mid-nineteenth-century France to the decadent period and see it as a witness to how mystical images and practices remain entrenched in various facets of the French psyche⁵. These show the limitations of the Enlightenment, and demonstrate the impossibility of classifying, codifying and rationalizing all aspects of life. Féval, like many other authors of his time, published the majority of his work serially through newspapers.⁶ These publications were distributed in various regions of France, reaching a vast readership for Féval's works. More evidence of Féval's renown comes from his contemporary, Théophile Gautier, who, commenting

⁵ This is evidenced in Robert Ziegler's *Beauty Raises the Dead*.

⁶ *La Fée des grèves*, for example, was first published in *La Gazette de France* from late June to late October in 1850. *Le Chevalier Ténèbre* was first published in the revue *Le Musée des familles* from April to May in 1860. Féval's most notable work, *Le Bossu*, was first published in *Le Siècle* from May to August in 1857.

upon the theatrical version of *Le Bossu*, writes in *Le Moniteur universel*: “Le Bossu [sic], taillé en plein drap dans un roman de M. Paul Féval, que tout le monde a lu, tient tous les soirs, de sept heures à minuit, les yeux éveillés et les oreilles attentives” (Galvan, *Choix de Lettres inédites* 68). Féval’s audience is indeed comprised of the pilgrims of Lourdes, as well as literary intellectuals such as Gautier.

When considering the function of the narratee in metafantastic literature, it is helpful to return to metafiction’s conceptualization of the reader and narratee. Linda Hutcheon’s discussion of metafiction is centered on the relationship that exists between art and life:

Unlike Gerald Graff, I would not argue that in metafiction the life-art connection has been either severed completely or resolutely denied. Instead, I would say that this “vital” link is reforged, on a new level – on that of the imaginative process (of storytelling), instead of on that of the product (the story told). And it is the new role of the reader that is the vehicle of this change. (3)

Metafiction demonstrates a shift in values that is made evident as the narrative itself is overshadowed by how the narrative draws attention to itself. According to Hutcheon, the role of the reader is circumscribed within the writing process of metafiction. The reader becomes directly implicated in the work instead of observing it from an outside perspective. This implies that along with the fictitious characters of a text, as well as the narrator, the narratee becomes a figure within the work. Inger Christensen echoes the importance of the reader’s role in metafiction, writing that: “The reader . . . usually plays a prominent part. The author of a work of metafiction exhibits his awareness of the reader’s participation in the creative process” (28). Writing more specifically of the nature of the hero in serialized novels, Galvan notes that “Le récit se double d’un discours dans lequel l’auteur se révèle de plus en plus présent, prenant ses

distances avec le texte qu'il écrit, se parodiant, dévoilant avec humour ses procédés au lecteur qu'il veut complice, multipliant les digressions, etc." (*Parcours* 29). Within Féval's works, this same relationship which Galvan describes is apparent as the author consistently incorporates the reader into the text as an accomplice in creating the fictional world. However, as the nature of the reader proves to be unfixed, it becomes evident that it is not necessarily the reader who is implicated directly into the work, but rather the narratee. In *La Fée de grèves*, one need not consider that the narrator is actually addressing the readers of nineteenth-century France, only that the narratee will undoubtedly bear similarities to the actual reader which Féval hoped to attract to his novels.

For metafiction, the reader that is implicated into the textual work is not the same individual as the *real* reader. In fact, for both metafiction and fantastic tales the reader is divided into two distinct individuals. Though the different theorists approach this duplicity of the reader in different terms and for different reasons, they nevertheless share the need to sever the real reader from the narrative. Even though the terminology is different, the first reader is the real human reader who holds the pages in his hand. The second reader has received different appellations such as "the reader of the armchair world," "the implicit reader," "the narratee" and "narrataire." This study will use Christensen's term of "narratee" as it is easily opposed to that of the narrator. For some, namely Todorov, Genette and Hutcheon, this secondary reader is detached completely from the real reader and serves as "a function implicit in the text, an element of the narrative situation. No specific real person is meant; the reader has only a diegetic identity and an active diegetic role to play" (Hutcheon 139). Todorov defines this particular member of the narrative cast as the implicit reader.

Le fantastique implique donc une intégration du lecteur au monde des personnages; il se définit par la perception ambiguë qu'a le lecteur même des événements rapportés. Il faut préciser aussitôt que, parlant ainsi, nous avons en vue non tel ou tel lecteur particulier, réel, mais une "fonction" de lecteur, implicite au texte (du même qu'y est implicite la fonction du narrateur). La perception de ce lecteur implicite est inscrite dans le texte, avec la même précision que le sont les mouvements des personnages. (35-36)

This division between the reader and the narratee (Todorov's implicit reader) is perhaps clarified through identifying another more commonly studied literary function: the narrator.

As discussed previously, the narrator of *La Vampire* seemingly broadcasts his role to the narratee. The narrator does not hide the fact that he is presenting a story, as many texts do, by avoiding a discussion of it; instead he modifies the presentation of the tale to obscure its authenticity and organizes the text to make the authentic traits easily recognized. In *La Vampire*, as well as other novels addressed here, Féval demonstrates an awareness of his audience in creating a narratee. The avant-propos as well as the first few introductory chapters of *La Vampire* are full of the narrator's interjections and *mises-en-abyme* (the instances in the narratives that remind readers of the narrative world), both of which call attention to the narrative itself. Even near the end of the text, when one would suppose that the narrator would choose to have a more subtle presence and allow the story to run its course, the narrator instead reappears and recalls the fictive nature of the text. "La maison où Georges Cadoudal avait établi sa retraite fut célèbre en ce temps et citée comme un modèle de tanière à l'usage des conspirateurs. J'en ai le plan sous les yeux en écrivant ces lignes" (337). The reader, but not necessarily the narratee, is pulled out of the fictitious world with such comments. As the narrator addresses the reader directly (even

through the narratee), the reader is reminded that the text is a work of fiction; after all, the narrator himself said so in the beginning; thus the reader questions the truthfulness of whether or not the author really had the blueprints of Cadoudal's home on the desk as he writes. This withdrawal from the text by the reader illustrates not only how the reader and narratee are separate, but also how the author, in an attempt to include the reader, ironically forces him out of the text.

Todorov hints at the role of the reader when defining the fantastic in *Introduction à la littérature fantastique*. One of the points that he touches upon when addressing the narratee is his intrusion into the fictional world: "Le fantastique implique donc une intégration du lecteur au monde des personnages" (35-36). The central definition regarding the narratee in Todorov's terms is that he must question the reality of proposed supernatural events within a work. This definition allows for the fantastic to exist and is vague enough to incorporate a diverse audience. The narratee is defined as separate from the reader for Todorov in their divergent perceptions of the supernatural. "À la fin de l'histoire, le lecteur, sinon le personnage, prend toutefois une décision, il opte pour l'une ou l'autre solution, et par là même sort du fantastique" (46). The goal is the same for both the reader and the narratee, to determine "si ce qu'ils perçoivent relève ou non de la 'réalité,' telle qu'elle existe pour l'opinion commune" (46). When a text is left without resolution, as will be seen later with *La Vampire*, the reader is free to select arbitrarily what aspects of the unresolved tale he will accept as either real or supernatural. The narratee, however, is subject to the parameters established by the narrator. If an element is unresolved, the narratee, acting as a function of the text, is unable to resolve it. Unlike the narratee, the reader is able to believe or disbelieve the supernatural elements of a text, and the range of belief is vast enough to incorporate all readers.

The common opinion that Todorov refers to does not limit the possibility of the fantastic, as some might assume, but rather creates the prospect for the fantastic to exist where it otherwise would not. Identifying an established norm serves as another means to distinguish the identity of the reader from that of the narratee. If we re-examine Rabkin's discussion of talking flowers in *Through the Looking Glass* this becomes clear. "When Alice says 'I wish you could talk!' the implied author behind the text is reminding us today that flowers are preconceived as mute; in future times, that same line may merely remind readers that in 1872, when the book was published, people once saw plants as mute" (4). In *Through the Looking Glass* the narratee is closely associated with the views of Alice. Her surprise to find later on that plants can talk is shared by the narratee. If it were commonplace for plants to be given speech, this surprise would still be maintained by the narratee, but would be lost upon the reader. Whether separated by time, region or culture, not all readers are representative of the society to which they belong, but rather they are unified under certain conditions. Citizens of various regions of France feel allegiance first to their region before their nation, such as Féval himself, who considered himself first *un Breton* before *un Français*. Speaking specifically of nineteenth-century France, a century which marks an explosion of development in various fields of research, the overall mentality and underlying beliefs of *un Français* cannot be penned in a few lines. Under these circumstances, it becomes clear that the common opinion is both versatile and malleable, and yet it remains the goal of literary endeavors to formulate a text speaking to the common opinion. "On sait depuis Aristote que le sujet du théâtre – et, extensivement, de toute fiction – n'est ni le vrai ni le possible mais le vraisemblable, mais on tend à identifier de plus en plus nettement le vraisemblable au *devant-être*" (Genette, *Figure II* 72-73). The *vraisemblable* (verisimilitude), like

common opinion, is subjective and unfixed. Both of these are linked to the manner in which an individual perceives an object or event and is not universal for all.

A clear example for the need to reconsider the notion of verisimilitude or common opinion is found in *Histoire de revenants*. At two different instances in the text, Stéphane and Étienne experience an inner voice that speaks to them and cautions them from a future action. Étienne explains that even though he has already lost one arm, there is still more for him to lose. “Pourquoi je crois ça, je n’en sais rien; mais il y a comme une voix qui tinte à mes oreilles et qui me crie: Dépêche toi! Si je n’ai plus qu’un bras, Dieu merci! Il est bon: je pars. Ce n’est pas une chose naturelle qu’un Le Brec soit devenu l’ami de Treguern” (37). There is a clear similarity between Étienne’s warning voice and that of Stéphane. He explains that a member of another family, Gabriel de Feuillans, evokes a similar inner warning voice.

Si vous ne trouvez pas cela, continua Stéphane, qui essayait de rire aussi, c’est que je deviens fou, il n’y a pas à en douter. Ce Feuillans produit sur moi, depuis quelques jours, un effet véritablement agaçant. Je ne peux pas m’empêcher de l’aimer. Il m’attire, il me séduit, il me fascine! Et il y a en moi je ne sais quelle voix mystérieuse qui me crie: “Prends garde !. . .” (157)

Both of these warnings come as a mysterious voice. For some readers, this is nothing more than an expression of one’s own consciousness, for others it is a sixth-sense, and again for another group of individuals this may be seen as a spiritual intervention. By not giving a direct explanation for the source of these voices, Féval leaves the perception, or perhaps the interpretation, of them open to the reader. Should we adhere to the notion of common opinion, the supernatural voice that speaks to these two figures shows that there is not one solution to the origin of the voice, and that which is verisimilar is subject to the reader of the text.

Returning to the introduction of *La Vampire* quoted previously, in the few opening paragraphs which dismiss the military glory of Napoleon and replace it with the strange tales that persisted even beyond the “scepticisme du dix-huitième siècle,” we can see how Féval opposes the supernatural against rational thought, just as Lovecraft will do in the next century (5). Féval initiates readers into a different and more permissive system of beliefs that will accommodate supernatural events intervening in life, even to the point of favoring supernatural explanations. Féval’s insistence upon the belief, in this passage, performs several tasks with regard to the narrator-narratee-reader relationship. First he defines his readership as being a part of a more skeptical society than that of previous centuries. Second, in addressing the reader directly, he creates distance from the supernatural elements of the tale. A similar demand is made at the beginning of *La Fée des Grèves* when the narrator instructs the narratee that “Il faut quitter le milieu sceptique” and “Il faut se reporter au lieu et au temps” (Féval 25). The reader is invited into the text, but not entirely, since in the act of naming “le milieu sceptique,” the reader is reminded that the post-Enlightenment world to which he belongs is notably different from the one about which he will read. The narratee welcomes this invitation and honors the directives of the narrator, inasmuch as those directives are not later contradicted. The reader remains somewhere between the skeptical nineteenth-century world and the fictitious worlds of these fantastic tales.

Aside from drawing readers out of the context of the narrative, the open discussion of supernatural elements in the text can make the rift between reader and narratee more perceptible. Undoubtedly the narrator in *La Vampire* speaks to a narratee whose beliefs would coincide with those of the protagonist Jean-Pierre Sévérin, although the narratee is given more liberty to be skeptical since, as the story progresses, he is shown rational explanations for the supernatural

events that are not made known to Sévérin. Sévérin, a character known by many different names, “le patron des maçons du Marché-Neuf, M. le gardien, M. Jean-Pierre” (37) and later Gâteloup, embodies a mentality that bridges the past rituals and the beliefs that are hesitant to progress towards the future. Speaking to Germain Patou, a young medical student, he admits, “Je suis du passé, tu es de l’avenir: le passé croyait à ce qu’il ignorait; vous croirez sans doute à ce que vous aurez appris; je le souhaite, car il est bon de croire. Moi, je crois en Dieu qui m’a créé ; je crois en la république que j’aime et en ma conscience qui ne m’a jamais trompé” (36). Even Patou, with his medical training and penchant for the homeopathic teachings of Samuel Hahnemann, does not subscribe exclusively to those truths that are considered empirically proven. Half jokingly he states, “Je crois à tout . . . c’est moins fatigant que de douter” (46). The supernatural is given a third witness for the narratee to adhere to in the character of René de Kervoz, whose conviction that he has been placed under a spell is permitted because he is from “un pays où la superstition s’obstine. L’idée naquit en lui qu’on lui avait jeté un sort” (94).

The admission of superstition by so many characters within the text, including the narrator, invites the narratee to adopt that same mentality. As the narratee admits to the possibility of the supernatural, that a vampire prowls the streets of Paris, that René de Kervoz may have been placed under a spell, or even that a ring may have been obtained from the belly of a fish, a rift is created between the reader and the audience. The reader, a nineteenth-century Parisian or a twenty-first century scholar, can view these events from a greater distance than the narratee of the novel can. Nevertheless, as the reader is increasingly absorbed in the text and falls for the traps and tricks of the fantastic, he approaches the same perspective as the narratee.

Another tactic employed by Féval to place readers on the outskirts of the narrative instead of inside it is his use of intertextual references and narrative frames. The role of the narrator and

the activities of prospecting and fishing, all of which will be addressed later in this chapter, occupy a certain importance in the early stages of *La Vampire*. More importantly, however, they also contribute to the overarching question that spurs the notion of the fantastic, which is: What is the nature of the titular vampire? When introducing the vampire, the narrator begins in broad terms and incorporates a different literary text about a vampire named Faust. “Faust était là, le monstre! avec ses yeux brillants et ses lèvres humides. Il cuvait le sang de Marguerite, couchée un peu plus loin” (19). This reference in name to Goethe’s⁷ well-known figure brings readers out of the world that the narrator creates in this opening chapter by reminding them of another fictitious being. This Faust vampire is credited as Féval’s source of instruction on this supernatural creature.

Instead of attributing his knowledge of vampires to authentic literary sources or even religious texts, the narrator claims that he owes much of his learning to “un vieux bouquin en trois petits tomes” (14). He writes that he has received more instruction on the supernatural from this book than from any other source. This tale composed of three engravings speaks to the importance of popular literature. While the vampire in this briefly recounted story within the text is named Faust, it is not the same as the acclaimed Faust of Goethe. The resemblance in name is by no means coincidental; it allows for Féval quickly and concisely to rewrite the myth of Faust in order to transform him into a more malicious monster chasing after his prey, Marguerite. The name of the book that describes this Faust revisited is a mystery: “Je cherche, et je ne trouve pas dans mes souvenirs d’enfant le titre du prodigieux bouquin qui prononça pour la première fois à mes yeux le mot *Vampire* Il racontait bonnement, presque timidement, des histoires si sauvages, que j’en ai encore le cœur serré” (14). The education that the narrator received on the

⁷ Goethe’s popularity is known to have reached France during this time as is evidenced in Ulrich Gaier’s “Helena, Then Hell: *Faustas* Review and Anticipation of Modern Times.”

nature of a vampire did not come from literary sources, such as Goethe, but from a cheap book whose forgotten title allows us to assume that perhaps it never existed. By insisting upon the value of this three volume book treating vampires, the narrator indirectly insists upon the worth of *La Vampire*, the novel in which this frame tale is found. Should the narratee and reader be convinced, as the narrator suggests, that the seemingly insignificant and inexpensive vampire book with Faust as the monster is didactically more valuable than other sources, that same value can be transposed onto *La Vampire*, the second generation of the Faustian vampire, and the audience will be able to attest, as Féval the narrator does, “que les articles des recueils savants ne m’en ont jamais tant appris sur les vampires” (19).

The language used in Féval’s works, much like his intertextual reference to Faust, reminds the reader of the fictitious nature of the narrative. The well-known work of Théophile Gautier, *La Morte amoureuse*, illustrates this very point. As the young man, Romuald, takes his vows to become a priest, he sees the supernatural Clarimonde.

Elle parut sensible au martyre que j’éprouvais, et, comme pour m’encourager, elle me lança une œillade de divines promesses. Ses yeux étaient un poème dont chaque regard formait un chant.

Elle me disait:

“Si tu veux être à moi, je te ferai plus heureux que Dieu lui-même dans son paradis” (438)

This communication which the young protagonist receives telepathically, while supernatural, does not draw attention to its opposition with reality. We can contrast this first contact between Clarimonde and the soon to be priest with something Romuald remarks after having experienced a relationship with her, not knowing if the time he spent with her were a dream or real. “Malgré

l'étrangeté de cette position, je ne crois pas avoir un seul instant touché à la folie. J'ai toujours conservé très nettes les perceptions de mes deux existences" (453). Romuald, even in denying it, draws attention to the possibility of madness, a common means used to rationalize the apparent supernatural. He likewise describes how he lives two separate lives, one of which is a dream and the other is reality, although at times he cannot decide which is real and which is imagined. Unlike Romuald's first encounter with Clarimonde, the narrator of *La Vampire* brings the question of the supernatural, and thus the fantastic, to the forefront of the text.

Similarly, Féval's narrator inserts the notion of supernatural or fantastic elements in the simple comparisons and descriptions that he creates. These seemingly little details are much more than adjectives for the nouns they describe or literary embroidery to beautify the text. As the narrator chooses descriptions of characters that focus on their supernatural or strange appearances, he reminds the reader that the text is not real, but an escape from reality. "Patou et [Jean-Pierre Sévérin] descendaient de la petite porte de l'église Saint-Louis au quai de Béthune. Dans l'ombre, la différence qui existait entre leurs tailles atteignait au fantastique. Patou semblait un nain et Jean-Pierre un géant" (37). We are given a metaphorical description of two otherwise normal characters, and the narrator calls the narratee's attention to this difference in size and how it reaches fantastic proportions. The word choice "fantastique" clearly describes the story as a whole, and indeed maintains the extravagance that the narratee expects when reading about a creature such as a vampire. When describing a room which will hold captive the nephew of Georges Cadoudal, René de Kervoz, a similar comparison is made. "C'était une pièce beaucoup plus petite, et le seuil qui séparait les deux chambres pouvait compter pour un espace de six cents lieues. Il divisait l'Occident de l'Orient" (83-84). While physically located in Paris, this bedroom-prison is seen as "un de ces boudoirs féériques où les riches filles de la Hongrie

méridionale luttent de magnificence et de mollesse avec les reines de *Mille et Une Nuits*” (84).

Again, just as “fantastique” divides the narratee from the reader by recalling the impossibility of the events, words like “féerique” keep the narratee’s mind focused on the magical and impossible traits of the text, as well as provide another example of intertextuality that will remind readers of other marvelous tales.

Even while imprisoned in this bedroom, passages that illustrate the metafantastic resurface throughout the storyline that follows René. “Le *sort*, du reste, puisqu’il est convenu qu’il avait un sort, ne lui laissait ni repos ni trêve. La fascination commencée ne s’arrêtait point, le roman continuait, nouant aux pages de son prologue toute une chaîne de mystérieuse et friandes péripéties” (122). Féval compares René’s plight to the plot of a novel where at each turn of a page new mysteries are revealed. Just as René discovers new mysteries, so does the narratee, who is presented with one new mystery after another throughout the novel. In this passage the mystery revealed to the narratee is that René appears to be held captive by means of sorcery to stay in the bedroom-prison. The spell keeping him, however, is only one answer to what restrains René. Féval presents another reason for René to have his mind altered, to be held captive against his will and to witness unexpected events, without the need for magic or enchantment.

Il gardait pourtant l’usage de ses yeux et de ses oreilles, mais pour voir, pour entendre des choses impossibles et telles que les rêveurs de l’opium en trouvent dans leur ivresse.

Deux hommes entrèrent dans la serre par une porte qui communiquait avec l’intérieur de la maison. Ils portaient un fardeau de forme longue qui donna à René l’idée d’un cadavre enveloppé dans un drap. (71)

Féval offers the supernatural explanation of enchantment, as well as the possibility that René has been drugged, “telles que les rêveurs de l’opium,” intimating that the drug is what causes him to stay and witness strange and horrific things. These various metafictional elements that frankly address the supernatural and its rational counterparts in *La Vampire* demonstrate the awareness of the transitional period which the nineteenth century represents. The advancements in rational thought spurned from the eighteenth century did not completely dispel the superstitious and mystic beliefs which preceded it.

Féval’s *La Fée des grèves* offers a different perspective on the metafantastic. Unlike *La Vampire*, this tale set in fifteenth-century France has very few truly fantastic moments. It may seem strange that a text can be considered metafantastic and not have the concept of the fantastic as a central role in the narrative. After all, if a work is metafantastic, there are the implicit assumptions that it is self-referential and requires fantastic elements. The development of the supernatural in *La Fée des grèves* circumvents the hesitation often used to classify a text as fantastic by demonstrating how the supernatural is explained. In fact, the explanation for the fairy in this tale is simply reduced to coincidence and misunderstanding. Central characters mistake one another for a fairy that the inhabitants of Saint-Jean superstitiously feed by placing a plate of food on their doorstep at night. Thus, in following Todorov’s definition of the fantastic, readers dismiss the supernatural as such and view the fairy as the result of coincidence, which only appears to validate folklore. The separation of the fantastic from the metafantastic is possible in this tale through the fairy as she is embodied by the characters and as a function in the story. It is clear in Féval’s description of the action, that the presumed fairy is never more than a mistaken identity and the reader and narratee are in many cases informed of the real identity. This additional knowledge that the reader is given adds to the metafantastic nature of

the text since it is in fact a discussion of how belief in the existence of a supernatural creature is created and reinforced. For Todorov, a second reading of a fantastic text, once the secrets have been revealed, is inevitably a meta-reading (95). This example of the metafantastic demonstrates how the first reading is not necessary in order to display the role of the fantastic, but rather that full disclosure regarding the supernatural is required in order to execute a meta-reading.

In one particular instance, soldiers awaiting orders to hang one of the young protagonists, Jeannin, begin discussing the nature of *la fée des grèves*. While some of them openly dismiss her existence, others begin sharing similar tales about cats that speak Latin, white women, Korigans, etc. Slowly, each of them begins to be overwhelmed by the mystery surrounding the ghostly figure. “On ne riait plus qu’à demi, parce qu’il ne faut pas parler longtemps de choses surnaturelles, quand on veut que les vrais Bretons restent gaillards” (179). The narrator continues, “Ils sont faits comme cela. Au bout de dix minutes, ils ont froid; au bout d’un quart d’heure, leurs dents claquent” (179). Féval’s commentary on the effect that ghost tales have upon the soldiers discussing *korrigans*, *femmes blanches*, and *la fée des grèves* creates a *mise-en-abyme* and reminds readers that they, too, are reading a ghost tale themselves. The Celtic traditions and superstitions are placed next to what has become the more prominent system of belief, Catholicism. The first episode of a supernatural event serves as the introduction to the novel when Hue de Maurever⁸ condemns François de Bretagne during the funeral for his brother, Gilles de Bretagne.

-En présence de la Trinité sainte, reprit-il, et devant tous ceux qui sont ici, prêtres, moines, chevaliers, écuyers, hommes-liges, servants d’armes, bourgeois et manants, moi, Hugues de Maurever, seigneur du Roz, de l’Aumône et de Saint-

⁸ Féval uses two different spellings for Hugues de Maurever within *La Fée des grèves*, using “Hue” for the majority of the novel. He employs “Hugues” only three times, twice when Hue is in the presence of François de Bretagne.

Jean-des-Grèves, parlant pour ton frère Gilles, assassiné lâchement, je te cite, François de Bretagne, mon seigneur, à comparaître, dans le délai de quarante jours, devant le tribunal de Dieu!

Le vieillard se tut. Sa main droite, qui tenait un crucifix, s'éleva. Sa main gauche sortit du froc entrouvert et jeta aux pieds de François un gantelet de buffle que chacun put reconnaître pour avoir appartenu au malheureux prince dont on fêtait les funérailles. (25)

Hue de Maurever's accusation against François de Bretagne borders on the supernatural. The supernatural is presented in the seemingly omniscient knowledge that Maurever displays in both accusing François and in pinpointing the day that François will die and be called before the judgment seat of God. Following this marvelous declaration, the magic is demystified by Féval as he draws attention to it.

Pour se rendre compte de l'effet foudroyant produit par cette scène, il faut quitter le milieu sceptique où nous vivons et secouer l'atmosphère de prose lourde qui nous entoure; il faut se reporter au lieu et au temps. Le quinzième siècle croyait: la religion entraînait alors dans la vie de tous, et il n'était guère de cœur qui ne se serrât au seul mot de miracle. (17)

Metafiction and metafantastic tales consistently play with the roles of both the narratee and the narrator. As has been illustrated above, the relationship that exists between the narrator and the narratee is an extension of the relationship that exists between the author and the reader. These supplemental roles created within the body of the text serve as a protection which distances the two real individuals from one another. This affective distance is alleviated and aggravated by the different intrusions permitted by each side. The author provides extra-diegetic

objects, such as the blueprints to Cadoudal's Parisian home, to become a part of the narrative, or by simply reminding the reader that the book he is reading is just a book. The reader can react to what the narrative presents and can question the narrative, but in metafiction he is limited by a need to conform to the narratee, at least in part. For the fantastic, however, the individual reader is key. As we have touched upon with our discussion of Genette's *vraisemblable* and Todorov's common opinion, the reader can vary immensely from the narratee in what he believes is real or fake, natural or supernatural, rational or irrational. This individuality is part of the creation of a fantastic tale, and even more so, a metafantastic text.

Among Féval's works, it is perhaps *La Vampire* that best embodies a clear presentation of metafantastic literature. The juxtaposition of historical characters, such as Napoleon Bonaparte and Georges Cadoudal, alongside supernatural events and figures, sorcery and the eponymous vampire, classifies this text into the genre of fantastic literature. This intermixing of historical fiction and elements of the supernatural is a subject reserved for a separate portion of this study, and thus it is sufficient at this time to remember Eric Rabkin's position that the fantastic is not a singular genre, isolated from others; it is incorporated within a vast array of tales. "We have embraced whole conventional genres, such as fairy tale, detective story, and Fantasy, and we have seen that as genres they may be related according to the degree and kind of their use of the fantastic" (117-18). It is easy to see, given that the fantastic is versatile in its application, that it can occupy diverse genres, provided it creates the hesitation and doubt between the supernatural and natural by which it is defined. For *La Vampire*, this one tale can be both a historical novel as well as a piece of fantastic literature.

As metafantastic works, both *La Vampire* and *La Fée des grèves* illustrate how the narrator is able to pull the narratee into the fantastic tale and force him to decide between two

separate realities. An atmosphere that causes the reader neither to accept wholly nor to dismiss entirely the supernatural elements in *La Vampire* is created in one of two ways: by establishing credentials for the tale or by creating a transition from plausible events to supernatural ones. Considering first how the narrator attempts to establish credentials for his narrative, the introduction of *La Vampire* makes the following statement regarding its authentic source: “Ceci est une étrange histoire dont le fond, rigoureusement authentique, nous a été fourni comme les neuf dixièmes des matériaux qui composent ce livre, par le manuscrit du ‘papa Séverin’” (Féval 1). Papa Séverin, a fictitious character and one of the central figures in this tale, is proposed as a real individual. In addition to his manuscript, which the narratee is to assume is a real document and the source of this narrative, Jean-Pierre Séverin is validated as being real by his interactions with historically real individuals, such as Napoleon Bonaparte and Georges Cadoudal. Féval’s *La Fée des grèves* takes a more distanced approach in its discussion of the supernatural than does *La Vampire*. The narratee in *La Vampire* is oriented with the characters, sharing their doubts and uncertainties about the nature of the vampire. The narratee’s view in *La Fée des grèves*, on the other hand, is more closely oriented with that of the reader, understanding the mystical and supernatural more fully than the characters do.

The supernatural element in *La Fée des grèves* is the eponymous fairy that walks the sands around Tombelène and the Mont Saint-Michel. Galvan notes that the inspiration for much of Féval’s fantastic writings originally comes from both regional folklore and superstitions. “Prenant sa source dans les superstitions et les terreurs ancestrales, il devait trouver chez le jeune Paul Féval, nature particulièrement sensible et impressionnable, un terrain propice où se développer” (*Parcours* 59). These “superstitions” and “terreurs ancestrales” serve as credentials for this narrative Brittany. Féval’s region of birth shares this Celtic superstition. Just as Tarascon

has its dragon-creature *la tarasque*, Brittany has tales of fairies and imps. Féval's choice to use a fairy for this tale is not only to add local color to a narrative set in the north-west; it also draws from a background with which he was already familiar and that he and many of his fellow citizens of Brittany knew. Stories such as this benefit from the already established mythological structures familiar to natives of the region, even though many of these myths had been, or were in the process of being, dismissed as superstition. Though the actual belief in fairies and other such creatures can no longer withstand the onslaught of positivist thought, their influence remains in the form of legends, folk tales and narratives like *La Fée des grèves*. Even amidst the thrust for empirically based science and reason, we cannot entirely dismiss the role of superstition or the trust which individuals place in the supernatural. The comprehensive dictionary *Trésor de la Langue Française* defines superstition as a "croyance religieuse irrationnelle, attachement inconsidéré aux doctrines et prescriptions qui sont du domaine du sacré" (1110). Built into this idea of superstition is a level of subjectivity based on what one considers rational. It is when that belief or bit of knowledge is believed to no longer be rational that it is dismissed as superstition. Thus, if superstitions remain, it is only because some still consider the beliefs in question to be wise and truth-bearing, whereas another considers them irrational. Even though these supernatural beings are discussed in the narrative of the text, they do not qualify the text itself to be entirely fantastic. In the case of *La Fée des grèves*, how readers understand the various perceptions of the supernatural is itself a discourse on the dual nature of fantastic literature. It is again through a frame narrative that the supernatural is introduced in *La Fée des grèves*.

Frame narratives within Féval's fantastic tales assist in the creation, definition and perception of the narrator and the narratee. It is through these supplemental tales, narratives that

supply additional information in the context of the main narrative of which they are a part, that both diegetic and extra-diegetic material inform the reader's understanding of the text. One such tale has already been treated, that of the Faust vampire found in the introduction of *La Vampire*. This short tale gives the reader and narratee an understanding of the nature of the vampire for Féval's own text. The presumed supernatural figure in *La Fée des grèves* likewise originates from a frame narrative, this one told by Simon le Priol, the patriarchal figure within the village of Saint-Jean. He tells the other inhabitants of the village about this fairy who, once captured, granted the wish of a Breton in order to help him win a bet against a Frenchman and a Norman. Féval explains the influence of the fairy in these terms:

D'abord la lutte était bien établie entre les trois races rivales: Bretons, Normands, Français; ensuite il s'agissait des tangles, ces déserts sans routes tracés, aux dangers connus et toujours mystérieux; enfin, on voyait apparaître dans le lointain du récit la *Fée des Grèves*, la mythologie du pays, l'élément surnaturel si cher aux imaginations bretonnes.

La Fée des Grèves allait jouer son rôle.

La Fée des Grèves! l'être étrange dont le nom revenait toujours dans les épopées rustiques, racontées au coin du foyer.

Le lutin caché dans les grands brouillards.

Le feu follet des nuits d'automne.

L'esprit qui danse parmi la poudre éblouissante des mirages de midi.

Le fantôme qui glisse sur les *lises* dans les ténèbres de minuit.

La Fée des Grèves! avec son manteau d'azur et sa couronne d'étoiles! (42)

Through this frame narrative, Féval establishes the fairy as the center of mythological discourse for these fifteenth-century Bretons. The mouthpiece for the myth is Simon le Priol, who “était à la tête du village de plein droit et sans conteste” (31). Aside from establishing a patriarchal order, Féval asserts the superiority of the Breton race, as he does in many of his novels.

In addition to introducing the supernatural elements, narrative frames within Féval’s works also serve as a commentary upon the larger work. Both the historical authenticity that is present in *La Vampire* and the employment of regional folklore for *La Fée des grèves* establish credibility for the fantastic narrative. However, these credentials are not the only means used to give a supernatural tale authenticity. In addition to establishing credentials for a fantastic tale, *La Vampire* also puts forth a transitory introduction which moves from the plausible and the real to the improbable and the supernatural. This approach begins by anchoring the narratee (and the reader) in events which are rational and believable. From this rational beginning the tale gradually trespasses into the irrational and supernatural, keeping the narratee along for the ride, but allowing the reader to discredit the narrative according to his own judgment. This is epitomized in the introductory chapter of *La Vampire* entitled *La Pêche miraculeuse*, which details how the fisherman, Ezéchiél, catches a monstrous fish and finds within it riches in the form of a knight’s ring. Féval describes a painting depicting Ezéchiél’s sudden rise to moderate wealth.

Ezéchiél en costume de maison, éventrant, dans le silence du cabinet, le monstre dont il est question ci-dessus et retirant de son ventre une bague chevalière ornée d’un brillant qui reluisait comme le soleil.

Il est juste d'ajouter que la bague était passée à un doigt et que le doigt appartenait à une main. Le tout avait été avalé par le monstre du récit de Thérèse, sans mastication préalable et avec une évidente volupté (10)

Catching a fish, in and of itself, is an ordinary thing. For both Ezéchiel and the reader, this plausible action moves from the ordinary to the uncanny in its extravagance. The dismembered hand invites comparisons to other body parts that are found to be detached from their previous owners; the foot in Gautier's *Le pied de momie* and the eyes from Hoffmann's *Der Sandmann* are just a few examples. The riches found within the mouth of a fish are reminiscent of the biblical account wherein Christ instructs his disciple Simon Peter on how he should obtain money required for a tribute: “. . . go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee” (Matt. 17.27 KJV). The comparison between these two catches is not gratuitous. There are a few significant differences between the coin in the fish's mouth and the ring in the belly of the fish. One is procured in order to appease the leaders of the land, whereas the other is obtained through avarice. What is not lost on the two accounts is the act of fishing. Fishing, whether it is a hobby or a form of livelihood, demonstrates an act of prospecting or even gambling. When fishing in any body of water, there is no guarantee that a fish will take the bait or that once the fish bites the hook, it will make it to the boat or to the shore. When a fisherman leaves to fish, he does so with the expectation of a catch. Selecting a destination will alter the odds of a catch, as will the choice of bait and the meteorological conditions. The link between this biblical account of an extraordinary catch and that of the *quai de Béthune* is not lost on the nineteenth-century French readership that is still predominantly Catholic in its tradition. Even if the reader does not subscribe to any Christian faith (Catholic or

Protestant), this biblical example grants more credibility to Féval's fish story simply with the familiarity that it offers, with the understanding that Ezéchiel's catch is distinguishable by its self-serving search for riches. Féval's version suggests that many are consumed by the quest for the next giant fish and hope to follow Ezéchiel's path by finding similar riches.

Parmi les pêcheurs de profession ou d'habitude qui venaient là chaque jour, il y avait nombre de profanes, gens d'aventures et d'imagination qui visaient à une tout autre proie.

Le Pérou était passé de mode et l'on n'avait pas encore inventé la Californie.

(8-9)

Like the California gold rush alluded to by the narrator, the unknown treasures of the river Seine attracted prospectors. Among the new ranks of fisherman at the *quai de Béthune* one could find “des poètes déclassés, des inventeurs vaincus, . . . des comédiens honnis, des philanthropes maladroits, des génies persécutés” (9). In this context, the search for treasure is reserved for the desperate and hopeless men who have failed in their dreams. Insult will later be added to injury as the reader discovers that this catch yielding a ring found in the belly of the fish is just a tale. The cabaret owner and fisherman, Ezéchiel, explains to Jean-Pierre Sévérin as they hunt the vampire, the countess Marcian Gregoryi, that he was paid by her to propagate the story of *la pêche miraculeuse*: “On ne voit pas clair dans ces histoires-là, du premier coup, vous sentez bien... et j'ai été longtemps à deviner pourquoi la comtesse avait monté la mécanique du quai de Béthune” (291-92). This revelation, near the climax of the novel, discredits the fantastic frame narrative that was used to introduce the text. The narratee learns that the actual miraculous catch of *la pêche miraculeuse* was a hoax. The men chasing after this dream, after having lost in so many other adventures, were chasing after something that simply was never there.

As a final note on fishing, or more appropriately prospecting, these are illustrations of the fantastic and define the role of both narrator and audience (as both the narratee and the reader). The narrator seeks to catch the audience, to strike gold in creating a world that is both believable and incredible at the same time. The audience is the prey, waiting for the right bait to entice it into belief and look beyond the rational mentality that has shaped its critical thought. “In fact,” writes Hutcheon, “all reading (whether of novels, history or science) is a kind of ‘escape’ in that it involves a temporary transfer of consciousness from the reader’s empirical surroundings to things imagined rather than perceived” (76-77). Literature, and more specifically fantastic literature, draws the reader into an escape from reality. If this escape is most troubling in the fantastic, perhaps it is due to the genre’s slippery status vis-à-vis reality and authenticity on the one side, illusion and factitiousness on the other.

Another source of frame narratives is the novel *Le Chevalier Ténèbre*, a text in which each frame treats a different account of the same two brothers who are able to steal the riches of others through disguise and deception. In view of the supernatural characteristics of the brothers, the author explicitly states a preference for incredulous or skeptical readers over the more superstitious ones. Everyone is susceptible to the chills and shivers that come with a well told ghost story. The unquestioned faith that Lovecraft claims to find “amongst educated and uneducated alike . . . in every form of the supernatural; from the gentlest doctrines of Christianity to the most monstrous morbidities of witchcraft and black magic” is no longer the status quo for a post-Enlightenment France (19). The superstitions of old have been forgotten or been converted to tales and myths, understood only as narratives and not as factual accounts. The rational mind, developed and instructed through the observation of empirical tests and trials, and

nourished with science and philosophy in place of theology, is most apt to succumb to the effects of a well told supernatural tale.

Or, je vous mets au défi de prendre un rond d'arbres séculaires à deux ou trois cents mètres seulement d'un vieux château, d'y placer, par une nuit orageuse et sombre, une trentaine de personnes assemblées et causant de certains sujets effrayants ou simplement mystiques, sans qu'une sorte d'épouvante vague ne vienne à la longue se mêler à l'entretien. Je fais les concessions larges: je vous accorde deux tiers d'esprits forts; j'irais plus loin, si vous vouliez: je vous donnerais une unanimité de sceptiques en y joignant le narrateur lui-même, pourvu qu'il fût habile, et je gagnerais encore contre vous, sûr de mon fait, en vous disant: LE FRISSON VA VENIR. (*Le Chevalier Ténèbre* 10)

The sureness of their reason and the rational structure of reality that they have created cause the “esprits forts” to succumb most devastatingly to the effectively told fantastic tales: “Rien ne frissonne si bien qu'un esprit fort” (10).

The deception in *Le Chevalier Ténèbre* is the ability of the vampire to steal away with the riches from the party, all the while discussing with the soon to be victims of previous, similar exploits. Féval gives little definition to the second brother's role as an *eupire*;⁹ a creature of Féval's creation that he simply defines as “un mangeur de chair humaine,” which is contrasted against the vampire being a “buveur de sang humaine” (25). The Altenheimer brothers are just shy of claiming to be the bandits themselves. Let us compare for a moment what both the baron Altenheimer and the narrator propose in identifying the criminals. First the baron:

⁹ Eupire, a word which Féval utilizes in *Le Chevalier Ténèbre*, is defined by Féval as being a vampire-like creature that eats flesh in the pace of drinking blood. The phonetic proximity to ‘oupire’ which he utilizes in *La Vampire* appears not to be trivial, as it is a word which he defines to be one of the feminine versions of ‘vampire’ in the text (130).

Veillez: je puis affirmer qu'avant une heure les frères Ténèbre seront ici.

Comptez-vous alors, et cherchez le visage étranger parmi les figures connues et amies. Souvenez-vous que le cercle de leur travestissement est borné par leur nature physique: un grand, un petit, à peu près dans le rapport de taille qui existe entre mon bien aimé frère et moi; cela peut donner un vieillard et un jeune homme, un mari et sa femme, un père et sa fille... (60)

Calling the audience's attention to the two strangers among them, and whose heights match that of his own and of his brother, the reader may recognize that the only individuals matching such a description are precisely his brother and himself. The guests, as well as the reader, are forgiven should the connection between the two not have been made. In the chapter entitled *Essai sur la philosophie du vol*, the narrator explains how these brothers are able to formulate the beliefs of their audience and make this oversight possible. In England, he explains, a criminal is identified through his crime, and not his testimony. "Dites au constable: je suis Jack Sheppard, il ne vous croira pas; . . . volez-lui alors sa montre, sa bourse, sa chemise et sa baguette, il rira en lui-même, disant: Allons donc! Jack Sheppard! Ce n'est pas possible!" (89). Going further, he explains that most criminals escape prison, not through hidden tunnels dug out of the floor or complex jailbreaks, but in plain sight of the guard: ". . . on s'évade la tête haute, le front découvert, le sourire aux lèvres; on s'évade en saluant avec bienveillance la femme du concierge et en disant au factionnaire: Bonjour, l'ami" (90). It is the baron's and his brother's audacity that keeps guests from supposing their true identities. Typically, as illustrated by Todorov in *Introduction à la littérature fantastique*, when the supernatural is presented as plainly as these brothers suggest, the ground rules of the narrative are redefined to accommodate the various phenomena, and the work is best described as marvelous. The supernatural is easily admitted to in the text, and the

reader and the narrator do not question whether or not the brothers really are a vampire and an *empire*. For this reason, it is easier to understand *Le Chevalier Ténèbre* as a metafantastic work, offering details on what it means to be a fantastic narrative, without actually belonging to the fantastic genre itself.

The narrator begins to explain the nature of this deception by introducing an array of professions that make a living out of trickery, “Tous les gens qui font métier de tromper ou de déjouer la tromperie, - tout le gibier et tous les chasseurs, - les admirables voleurs de Londres, . . . et aussi les admirable *détectives* . . . ” (88). This list is not exhaustive, for there is one obvious omission, that of the storyteller, that has had a role equal to any other within this work. In various cultures storytellers maintain a place of importance, even a position of power. African societies often transmitted oral traditions via a *griot*, different Native Americans relied on their elders to serve a similar function, and even in Catholic France, priests have always been responsible for instructing and interpreting the stories contained in the Bible. These storytellers occupy a prominent role in societies and they are similar to the storyteller in *Le Chevalier Ténèbre*. The storyteller for Féval, and for fantastic tales, is not responsible for passing along oral or mystical traditions, but this figure shares in their responsibility to instill beliefs. The prominent difference, perhaps, is that the belief the narrator in *Le Chevalier Ténèbre* hoped to instill was known by the storyteller to be a lie.

Lies are integral to the creation of fantastic narratives. Tobin Siebers writes: “The romantic authors of the fantastic were both doubters and lovers of lies” (57). They inherited the skepticism of the rationalists but instead of marginalizing the irrational they embraced it by seeking to “aestheticize rather than exorcise superstition” (57). Siebers further explains that “the Romantics began to lose sight of the doubt that originally permitted them to transform the

supernatural into an aesthetic doctrine; and the doubters and liars often turned into true lovers of lies” (57). For many narrators in fantastic tales, there is a desire to “both involve themselves and to preserve a disinterested air. They are attracted to common people and fantastic notions, but prefer to conceal their attraction for fear of compromising themselves” (59-60). Just as in a staged performance that alleges magical or supernatural phenomena, the fantastic tale brings to light the grades of belief or disbelief that are possible. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries hosted several such staged performances, one of which is known as *La Femme Invisible*. In this performance, Étienne-Gaspard Robertson presented guests a “ball of Bohemian glass, fully visible from every angle” and that is “suspended by a very thin rope” (Matlock 175). The spectators are then informed that within this ball resides a young woman to whom they may address their questions. As the spectators converse with the young woman, they are given evidence of her reality. Her claim to be from Marseilles is validated by her “perfect Provençal accent” and her physical, if not visible, proof is confirmed in the guests being able to feel her breath (175-76). The gradations of belief for a spectacle like this are as many as the number of spectators who view it. For the sake of simplicity, however, it is best to think in four general degrees of belief.

The first degree of belief is attributed to those who accept or believe what they are being presented as fact. Those in the crowd who did believe they had witnessed (or had auditory proof of) an invisible woman are among this first gradation of belief. A second degree of belief describes others, such as an editor of the *Gazette de France*, who occupy a middle ground of belief. Upon examining the spectacle and testing his own theories against the proposed invisible woman he stated “that ‘a really invisible woman’ was perhaps in the box suspended above the crowd—or at the very least, a ‘dwarf’ . . .” (179). This second degree is comprised of those who

believe in the supposed supernatural after challenging its existence. The third degree is comprised of individuals who disbelieve what they are presented without evidence to support their disbelief. Before testing his theories, the editor could be categorized in this very grade. He had reasons to disbelieve, but those reasons had not yet received validation. Finally, the fourth gradation is comprised of individuals who disbelieve what is presented because they have discovered the secret. The invisible woman and the showman both are a part of this fourth gradation. They know that above the ceiling the young woman can see the audience through a small peephole and that she speaks to them through a tube which carries her voice to the glass box. The sensation of magic, for this group, is gone. These same degrees of belief can be applied to the readers of fantastic literature.

Returning to *La Vampire*, the question that permeates the text is the true nature of the vampire. Should a supernatural explanation be permitted, then readers accept that the vampire named Addhéma has taken on the alias of the young Hungarian countess, Marcian Gregoryi. Inversely, the rational explanation of the text allows for the vampire to exist under the guise of a secret society joined together in order to assassinate Napoleon Bonaparte. A central theme of the text is the uncertainty about the supernatural, which is evident in the possibility of viewing both the irrational and the rational interpretations of the story even up through the conclusion. *La Vampire* offers two resolutions: the first concludes that the vampire may not be supernatural, and the second follows the supernatural vampire back to her homeland. The dual conclusions of this text are only possible through the sustained dual storylines that exist from the beginning of the narrative. By allowing both conclusions to play out to their end, and not allowing one to be entirely dispelled, the narratee and the reader are left without resolution. This lack of resolution which permeates the text gives added energy to the plot. The question of the vampire's true

nature is the bait that the reader and narratee chase after, and which leads them to be “caught” to question reality in the novel. Todorov observes a similar phenomenon while commenting on Penzoldt’s theory of the structure of ghost tales: “Voici, en résumé, la théorie de Penzoldt: ‘La structure de l’histoire de fantômes idéale, écrit-il, peut être représentée comme une ligne ascendante, qui mène au point culminant (...) Le point culminant d’une histoire de fantômes est évidemment l’apparition du spectre [...]’ [...] Mais d’autres nouvelles fantastiques ne comportent pas pareille gradation.” (91-93). According to Penzoldt, the climax of the suspense for *La Vampire* would be the moment where the true nature of the vampire is revealed. As Todorov notes, this is not always the case. It could best be said for *La Vampire* that the fantastic climax in the sense that Penzoldt proposes does not exist. The secret is never revealed, and the greatest mystery remains a mystery even after the last page has been turned. Even though there is no final climax for the fantastic, the mystery continues to build as the audience evaluates these phenomena based upon the evidence supporting the supernatural. This building up of evidence is integral to fantastic tales, for it is what persuades the reader to opt for either a rational explanation or a supernatural one. The gathering of evidence is the reader attempting to avoid the snares and nets of the fantastic and to remain protected against deception.

In the context of fantastic tales, as curious as it may seem, the narrator serves the same role as the showman for the staged performance. These added texts that fit snugly into the larger narratives are like the ball of Bohemian glass that distracts and deceives the readers or spectators from seeing the trick that is playing out before their eyes, either on stage or on the page. Like the reader and the narratee, the narrator is free to oscillate between all of the degrees of belief and disbelief in order to guide the audience along with him, but this mobility between the gradations is in itself a performance. “To tell a fantastic tale, the fantastic writer feigns belief

in the supernatural; in a sense, he joins Nodier's society of madmen and devotes himself to the fantastic lies" (Siebers 61). Throughout the tale, this belief in the supernatural is dispelled by revealing the mechanics of the illusion. Once the belief has subsided, it can only be re-imposed by breaking down the previous revelation which dispelled it in the first place. This is apparent in Gautier's *Le Pied de momie*; as our protagonist wakes from his sleep, the supernatural visitation is discredited as a dream. Upon finding the foot replaced, the supernatural re-appears because the idea that it was all simply a dream no longer constitutes a rational explanation.

The structures of both *Le Chevalier Ténèbre* and *La Fée des grèves*, demonstrate the gradations of belief and disbelief that are brought to light through the show, *La Femme invisible*. Just as spectators display a range of belief in the supernatural, so can characters in Féval's text and readers exhibit different degrees of skepticism. The first division of this skepticism is illustrated in Todorov's challenge to compare fictional elements against reality (46). Féval's *Le Chevalier Ténèbre* shows that this characterization of the hesitation belongs to both the reader and the character and assumes that the reader's conceptualization of reality is the same as the character within the text. As we have seen, these are separate entities and they are thus liable to accept different phenomena as real or supernatural. Rabkin sidesteps this problem by addressing the fantastic as the production of events which are "anti-expected." The anti-expected arises when the perceptions of the "narrative world" and "our armchair" are the same "and these preconceptions only change as the narrative reconfigures them" (10). Thus the narrative infringes upon the armchair world which, in Todorov's terms, would incite a hesitation as the reader feels as if he is between two separate worlds. Both the hesitation proposed by Todorov and the anti-expected introduced by Rabkin can be interchangeably applied to many fantastic tales. The

hesitation occurs as the narratee questions the differences that begin to illustrate the division between the narrative world and the world of the reader (the armchair world).

A change in perspective shows how the fantastic can actually be perceived to incorporate both the marvelous and the uncanny genres instead of occupying a middle ground between them, as suggested by Todorov. It enables readers to transition between multiple perceptions of the supernatural depending upon the reader's own level of skepticism. The evidence of various levels of belief in *La Fée des grèves* is demonstrated in the view the narratee is given of the fairy herself. Pivotal moments of the text are accompanied by this supernatural being and other supernatural phenomena. The narratee sees Hue de Maurever's prophetic accusation of fratricide against the brother of Gilles de Bretagne as an omniscient condemnation. A pouch of fifty *écus nantais* intended as the reward to whoever delivers up Maurever is twice acquired; each time the fairy is a participant in the changing of hands, and at each encounter the narratee is not given a definite answer to the nature of the fairy. When the narratee has discovered that the fairy is Hue de Maurever's daughter, Reine, the narratee is shown the soldier's perspective as she intervenes and saves Jeannin from hanging. Finally, as the novel draws to a close and the existence of a real fairy has been dismissed by the readers, the narrative shifts its perspective from that of the young Jeannin and his rival, maître Gueffès, to nearby fishermen who watch them wrestling on the beach.

La bataille ne fut pas longue. Il paraît que les fées sont plus fortes que les Normands. Dès le commencement du combat, maître Gueffès devint fou, car on l'entendit crier:

-Jeannin, petit Jeannin ! pitié ! pitié !

Qu'a-t-il à faire là-dedans Jeannin, le petit coquetier? pensaient les pêcheurs.

Cependant, la Fée prit Gueffès par le cou et l'entraîna dans le brouillard. Il se débattait, le malheureux! La Fée et lui disparurent derrière la brume. (316-17)

If only for a brief moment, this event resurrects the image of the fairy and permits her to have a role as an active character in the text. The view here is a privileged one of the presumed supernatural. This manifestation of the supernatural fairy demonstrates how she appears real but is only an illusion within this portion of the text. The fairy is thus nothing more than a magic trick, as seen by the narratee, who only discovers the secret through the narrator-magician.

As has been demonstrated, the fantastic in *La Vampire* is never truly resolved and the secret is never really known. After the work is concluded there is no definitive answer given that appeases the curiosity of the reader. *Le Chevalier Ténèbre*, on the other hand, consecrates a large portion of the text to the resolution of the supernatural. In terms of the magic trick, *Le Chevalier Ténèbre* is a text that can be seen as divided into pre- and post-revelation of the secret. The secret for this tale lies in the identities of the Chevalier Ténèbre and his brother Frère Ange.

Supernatural elements are introduced within the text and readers are left either to accept or reject them. The secret is introduced in *Le Chevalier Ténèbre* during a *soirée* where many prominent French noblemen and women are gathered, and in which they match the cost of the evening with a charitable offering to the poor. This pool of donations draws the vampire and *eupire* to the party, for they intend to steal it. The supernatural is introduced via two men, the baron d'Altenheimer and his brother, monsignor Bénédict Altenheimer, who, at the request of the host, regale their audience with a tale. They inform the crowd that they are in the pursuit of two other brothers, the *chevalier Ténèbre*, a vampire, and his brother, an *eupire*. This first division of the story entertains the reader with the illusion of the supernatural. The baron and his brother are in attendance at this gathering only to apprehend the other brothers who are expected to arrive

shortly. The second half of the text reveals that these two brothers, the Baron and monsignor Altenheimer, are in fact the vampire and *eupire* that they declare to pursue. This revelation in the second section of the *Le Chevalier Ténèbre* moves the narratee from his previous level of belief onto the privileged level of disbelief. The secret is revealed in the chapter *Essai sur la philosophie du vol*, which is a hiatus from the narrative, and explains the secret from the first section of the text. This chapter is the clearest example of metafantastic writing for this particular work, in that it explains the means by which the brothers, and by extension the author, attempt to dupe and trap their audience into believing their tales. Thus, by removing the wool from the readers' eyes, the readers are able to see the trick for what it is. Unlike some fantastic tales such as *Le Pied de momie*, where the fantastic is discredited or sustained in only a few words, *Le Chevalier Ténèbre* dedicates its pages to the process of belief rather than the modification of it. In *Le Pied de momie*, as the protagonist wakes from his supposedly real meeting with the pharaoh, the readers are left to believe everything fantastic was nothing more than a dream. When the story closes, however, the new paper-weight obtained from the princess returns the readers to believe that the supernatural encounter indeed took place and “la petite figurine de pâte verte mise à sa place par la princesse Hermonthis” stands as evidence of it (Gautier 666). These brief passages induce a sudden change from the real to the fantastic or vice-versa.

The recurrent emblem of a *mise-en-abyme* that comes about through Féval's narrative frames is again created in this text as the baron Altenheimer begins to tell the gathering crowd the tale of *le chevalier Ténèbre* and his brother frère Ange. The crowd is established as equivalent to the narratee or the reader while the narrator is embodied by the baron himself. The relationship between narrator and narratee is established and they begin to define and alter the nature of the narratee. The baron manages to persuade the crowd, which was at first skeptical, of

the reality of the pair of supernatural bandit brothers. Some resist his reasoning, but all remain attentive to the story that he tells. Readers are given a view of the crowd's opinion on the idea of the supernatural as M. le baron d'Altenheimer relates the following to them:

Tout à l'heure, j'entendais ici plusieurs très puissantes personnes des deux sexes raisonner sur ces questions éternellement controverses et dire: "Il n'y a plus de spectres." Une très illustre dame ajoutait; "Il n'y a plus de vrais *brigands*; les temps de Rob-Roy, de Schinderhannes, de Zawn, de Shubry, de Mandrin et même de Cartouche, sont passés.¹⁰ Nous n'avons plus que des *voleurs*!" (15, emphasis added)

The difference between bandits and thieves highlighted here contributes to the question of plausibility in fantastic works. For the "très illustre dame," there is something unbelievable or extraordinary about a bandit that distinguishes him from a thief. It would seem that a bandit, unlike a thief, can be endowed with a level of respect, or at least less contempt, for the crime he commits. Féval is not alone in insisting upon the difference between a bandit and a thief. Once again turning to the *Trésor de la Langue Française*, the heroic elements of a bandit, which are lost on a thief, are revealed. A bandit can be a "Homme banni, hors la loi et vivant d'expédients" as can be seen in the Hugo's eponymous character of Hernani. This noble outlaw and symbol of romanticism reveals his social status early in the play when he asks Doña Sol, "Vous voulez d'un brigand? voulez-vous d'un banni?" (1.2). Undoubtedly, the skill in disguise and trickery that the baron and monsignor Altenheimer display qualifies these two characters to be "vivant d'expédients" (129). However, these two do not coincide with the heroic example of the noble Hernani. Their wisdom and talent provide them with the tools they need to execute their trade

¹⁰ While each of the men mentioned are bandits that lived as outlaws for various causes in different counties and regions across Europe, Rob Roy is perhaps the most well known. His greater renown is in part due Sir Walter Scott's novel *Rob Roy* published in 1818.

successfully, but they remain bandits in the sense that each one is a “Malfaiteur qui vit en marge de la société et des lois, et se [livre], seul ou en bande, à des actes criminels (vol, attaque à main armée, assassinat, etc.)” (*Trésor de la Langue Française* 129). When defining a thief, a large amount of information is lost. Again from *Trésor de la Langue Française*, a voleur is a “Personne qui s’empare, qui a tendance à s’emparer de ce qui appartient à autrui; celui, celle qui dépossède d’autrui” (1303). In defining these two terms, the focus shifts from the definition of a bandit as the person residing outside of the law, to the thief who simply commits the action of stealing. The difference between these two figures is their credibility and believability. For the “très illustre dame” and undoubtedly others in the fictitious audience, it is far easier to admit the existence of a mere thief, one who takes others belongings, than to concede the existence of a bandit free from the constraints of society. The narrator further persuades the audience to accept the reality of bandits by producing another list of locations where contemporary bandits live and work.

Sans parler des successeurs de Fra Diavolo dans l’Italie du sud, la Hongrie, la Bohême et les provinces méridionales de l’Autriche produisent encore des bandits très dignes d’être connus. D’un autre côté, les spectres continuent comme par le passé, de soulever la pierre des tombes: rien ne change en cet univers. J’ai vu des vampires dans la campagne de Belgrade et des fantômes dans notre cimetière de Tubingen. (15-16)

The belief that bandits no longer exist constitutes the reality that the baron will infringe upon when telling his story. In Rabkin’s terms, the introduction of the bandits is the anti-expected event that pushes his audience into the fantastic. For the illustrious lady and others in attendance at the party, the notion that a noble or even resourceful bandit could exist was

difficult to accept. However, should these bandits still exist, why not ghosts and vampires as well? Indeed, after permitting the existence of bandits, the narrator of *Le Chevalier Ténébre* brings out a case for the existence of vampires, and other supernatural creatures, through rational means. He argues:

Puisque la portion de l'œuvre de Dieu qui nous est visible et tangible présente des anomalies, puisque nous rencontrons dans nos rues des bossus, des bec-de-lièvre et des idiots, il se peut que la mort elle-même, ou la vie, si mieux vous aimez, ait dans sa marche mécanique des dérangements et des écarts: il se peut que l'argile dont nous sommes pétris traitée occasionnellement par d'autres ait de plus puissants réactifs. . . .(32)

The successful dismantling of the rational reality (i.e. the idea that vampires do not exist) is, of course, an illusion and a narrative trick. The success of these tricks lies in the ability of the narrator. A good narrator, as Féval writes, could even scare himself if he is "habile" (*Le Chevalier Ténébre* 10). The baron d'Altenheimer, as a narrator, as well as his brother, exemplifies this adept narrator. The first is described as "le roi des acteurs," and Frère Ange is like "un magicien qui vous fait voir le soleil à minuit!" (46). Their ability to deceive is in part due to their mastery of disguise, but also to their audacity.

The revelation of the secret shows the cunningness of the narrator. Just as when a magic trick is first explained, the fascination of the trick is replaced by either respect for the artist, or self-contempt by the viewer for not understanding what was going on all along. This, too, is the case in *Le Chevalier Ténébre*, as well as in many detective novels whose charm lies in the resolution of a mystery. Once a crime is reconstructed and the perpetrator revealed, readers are disenchanted with the actual mystery and become intrigued with the mechanics of the plot. They

may ask themselves how they did not piece together the clues all along. For *Le Chevalier Ténèbre*, these answers are given. The focus on the mechanics of the story sets in well before the final few chapters.

Whether conceived as fishing, prospecting, storytelling or a magical demonstration, fantastic tales are built upon the roles of the author and the reader. Both have their own part to play and both influence the end result of the fantastic. The author, through the narrator, creates a world that resembles that of the reader. The similarities between the reader's world and the narrative world are much like a mirror, only it is bent and reflects a distorted image of the original object. "En lui-même, le reflet est un thème équivoque: le reflet est un *double*, c'est-à-dire à la fois un *autre* et un *même*. Cette ambivalence joue dans la pensée baroque comme un inverseur de significations qui rend l'identité fantastique (*Je est un autre*) et l'altérité rassurante (*il y a un autre monde, mais il est semblable à celui-ci*)" (Genette, *Figures I* 21). The text is, of course, a double. These distorted reflections tell us about the world in which we live. As we question what is real and what is impossible in the narrative text, we are simultaneously deciding upon what we are willing to accept in our real world. When we are enticed into the story, and baited by the actions and characters of the text, we become lost and destabilized in our conceptualization of the world, even if only for a moment. That hesitation identified by Todorov, brought about by the anti-expected events Rabkin has pinpointed, helps the reader define the world and the reality which exists within it. Just as perception is the difference which lies between the reader and the narratee, it likewise carries over as the pivotal difference found in fantastic literature and historical fiction. The tales that treat both supernatural occurrences and figures alongside historically documented individuals and events call upon the reader to distinguish what is historically accurate and what is evidence of literary license.

CHAPTER 3

MONSTERS FROM THE PAST

Both historical fiction and fantastic literature can overturn the reader's expectations and create a world with an unsettling resemblance to the reality which exists beyond the pages of the narrative. They create a distorted reflection of the past and of reality which is barely recognizable at times, but always identifiable. Féval's villain Otto Béringhem of *L'Homme de fer* describes one parallel that can be made with respect to these two genres. From the beaches below Mont Saint-Michel, one can see the statue of the archangel standing atop a dragon, illustrating the power of good over evil. Otto describes how this triumphant pose loses its effect when seen from another perspective: "Le mirage renverse les objets: un jour de mirage, j'ai vu votre archange d'or terrassé à son tour sous le dragon vainqueur. Le dragon est d'or comme l'archange, et, comme l'archange, il a des ailes..." (68). In this passage Féval demonstrates how with a shift in perspective an entire idea can be overturned. This overturned angel is the vision of an overturned authority. The treachery and treason Féval entertains in his historical novels show how the state's head, should he be a duke, king, emperor or even as a god (as seen in this previous image), is subject to *coups* and threatened by usurpers. When the reader considers history through another perspective, as Otto saw the dragon and the angel, other interpretations of the life and society of that historical period become apparent in a way which otherwise would have been unrevealed. The images of the vampire in *La Vampire* and *La Ville-vampire*, the ogre in *L'Homme de fer* and the fairy from *La Fée des grèves*, even though they are supernatural and detract from historical credibility and accuracy of Féval's novels, manipulate the images of the text and provide a new

perspective on the historical accounts they describe. As such they propose to overturn previously understood realities.

The presence of the supernatural, especially when embedded in female figures such as the fairy of *La Fée des grèves* or the vampire of *La Vampire*, is not as historically inaccurate as it first appears on the surface. May of 1829 marked the beginning of the War of the Demoiselles, a conflict between peasant men dressed as young women and the Forest Guard in the Ariège Pyrénées. Peter Sahlins explains that the perplexing disguise adopted by the peasant men is in fact rooted in “folkloric accounts of forest and mountain fairies, both in the Pyrenees and throughout Europe” (42). These men in women’s clothes emulate the supernatural fairies who, like other mythical creatures, maintained a prominent place in France, as well as in Europe in general. Their connection to the earth, belonging to forests, ravines and caves, when viewed through the Catholic lens, associates them with the fall of Adam, the first sin of man, and adds to their malignant and deplorable state. The creatures, though often considered a product of myth and superstition, still maintain a place in historical fiction as representing the time period portrayed in the narrative. Rosemary Jackson notes, for example, that during the nineteenth century “the demonic ceased to be a supernatural category and developed into a much more equivocal notion, suggesting that alienation, metamorphosis, doubling, transformation of the subject, were expressions of unconscious desire, and were not ‘accounted for’ as reflections or manifestations of supernatural or magical intervention” (62). This new understanding of supernatural and ungodly creatures is not universal in nineteenth-century literature, and indeed the dichotomy between demonic and godlike images persists in Féval’s historical novels. Within these works, consideration is often given to a supernatural creature, even though that creature may not have any historically documented presence. Though the impossible is often given place

in Féval's historical novels, details are not neglected and the political relationships which Féval hopes to highlight are brought into the action of the texts. "Les descriptions étaient précises, la couleur locale soignée, les détails pittoresques abondaient et le contexte politique retraçant les délicates relations diplomatiques entre le Portugal, la France et l'Angleterre était rendu de façon crédible" (Galvan, *Parcours* 42). The presence of real events that are recognizable to the majority of the population as being a part of a shared history offer credibility to the text in which these events are found, even if that same text is otherwise considered incredible. It becomes evident that reality is questioned by placing history next to myth. Just as fantastic literature is a means to question the narrator's and the reader's perception of reality, the historical novel showcases historical events that are similarly scrutinized for their accuracy.

One distinction that should be made when considering historical fiction is that it does not coincide with one of Todorov's definitions of literature. "La littérature se crée à partir de la littérature, non à partir de la réalité, que celle-ci soit matérielle ou psychique; toute œuvre littéraire est conventionnelle" (14-15). History, on the contrary, is the reality which serves as a foundation for historical fiction. History is then complemented with fictional traits and elements, in the case of the works studied here, by introducing supernatural creatures such as vampires, ogres and fairies. In an effort to demonstrate how both historical events and overtly fictitious elements coexist within Féval's historical novels, this chapter will focus on four of Féval's works: *La Vampire*, published in 1865 and set around the anti-Napoleonic uprising involving the royalist insurgent Georges Cadoudal in 1804; *La Fée des grèves*, based upon the imprisonment and death of Gilles de Bretagne in 1450 and originally published in 1850; *L'Homme de fer*, the sequel to *La Fée des grèves*, set around the ducal and royal struggles between François II and Louis XI, and published from 1855 to 1856 in *Le Journal pour tous*; and *La Ville-vampire*, from

1874, published in *Le Moniteur universel*, and a supernatural text which casts the English novelist Ann Radcliffe as its heroine. The historical references within these works, even with their inaccuracies and the supernatural creatures they present, develop a narrative which strikes a balance between plausible and inconceivable characters and events.

The key similarity shared by fantastic tales and historical novels is their attempt to present invented events as having the potential to be real. They are dissimilar however in the process by which the reader of these narratives evaluates supposed truths. For the historical novel, the reader relies on the verifiable aspects of the text, whereas for the fantastic he depends on the plausibility of the presumed supernatural events. When both historical and supernatural events intermix within a text, these two means of evaluation are set at odds against one another and the task of identifying reality is further complicated. Taking the presence of two historical figures within Féval's *La Vampire*, Napoleon Bonaparte and Georges Cadoudal, it is clear how they offer credence to the otherwise unbelievable aspects of *La Vampire*, and create a sensation of the fantastic which differs from that of most other fantastic texts by relying on verifiable events rather than plausible ones. Many studies of the fantastic, like Todorov's, attempt to define the fantastic as having the reader or characters question reality (46). While Todorov's insistence upon a hesitation is still pertinent in *La Vampire*, given the attention to historical events, the object of the hesitation is slightly shifted. It is also important to note that since supposed historically accurate events are included in the texts, the narratee almost universally accepts them as fact and that the questioning takes place in the minds of the readers.

For most fantastic texts the hesitation originates in a supernatural being or event. One such example is Théophile Gautier's *Le pied de momie*, whose fantastic premise is the visitation of an Egyptian princess hoping to recuperate her lost foot. For *La Vampire* however, the

hesitation extends beyond the common question of plausibility for the supernatural. Typically the fantastic is resolved as either possible or impossible. For the historical novel however, there is the added question of verifiability. Continuing the example of *Le pied de momie*, due to the obscurity of the store and the young man, the narratee is not able to confirm if a young man purchased a mummified foot as a paper weight, or if that same young man was visited at night by one claiming to be the original possessor of the foot. These details are beyond the realm of verifiability. However, the ability to prove events within *La Vampire* brings the illusion of truth to otherwise easily contested events. Thus the real facts of the text, Napoleon's early career and the attempt to usurp power by Cadoudal, cast the question of a Parisian vampire into a more plausible light and show how history becomes another tool to ensnare readers into accepting the supernatural. Readers are able to verify historical aspects of the narrative and attest to their accuracy, and the supernatural events, such as the vampire in *La Vampire*, benefit from added credence. This does not imply that rational readers are willing to accept the presence of the supernatural as being historically accurate (that a fictional Bonaparte's role in the novel is evidence of a historically real vampire), but instead that the division between reality and fiction is blurred and the reader is left to negotiate reality within the text and define what is and is not acceptable. Readers will find that the conclusions for some texts, such as *La Fée des grèves*, are based upon rational and historically accurate outcomes. For other texts, like *L'Homme de fer*, a supernatural and historically inaccurate denouement concludes the novel. And yet, a third outcome is still a possibility, one where the resolution is not offered, as is the case for *La Vampire* and *La Ville-vampire*.

The question of verifiability, much like the fantastic itself, is a pursuit to find a definitive answer. In seeking this answer, the presence of the supernatural redirects the narratee's attention

to it, and the reader, rather than questioning historical accuracy, instead considers the fictitious nature of the text. Some texts are centered on verifiable events and use them as a resource to draw the reader into a world where both fiction and history have place, as will be seen in more detail in works like *La Fée des grèves* and *L'Homme de fer*. The supernatural is at times given rational explanations and frees the reader to focus on evaluating the historical accuracy of the text, rather than its plausibility. In the case of *La Vampire*, this is central because the author maintains a constant questioning of reality and plausibility by never permitting an absolute answer to the questions surrounding the supernatural creature which readers wish to resolve. This hesitation to accept the supernatural elements of the text stems from the vampire. Féval offers two solutions concerning everything supernatural. First, sorcery is dismissed as hallucination. Second, incredible events are reduced to chance. The vampire itself is given a rational and plausible origin under the guise of a secret society. Even the *dénouement* of the text is doubled, in that Féval offers first a rational ending, but then proposes an alternative fantastic ending to the text. Combined, these two *dénouements* appear to answer the narratee's questions. The first ending is a rational one that discredits any and all supernatural entity. The vampire is both a rumor propagated by the secret society, *la ligue de la vertu*, led by the countess Marcian Gregoryi, as well as the secret society itself. The existence of *la ligue de la vertu* is essential to allowing this first ending to maintain both a verifiable conclusion and to dismiss the presence of the supernatural. This secret society is comprised of several different members, each with historical connections. The suspected female vampire explains how the brothers of this league are united in their desire to assassinate Napoleon Bonaparte. Andrea Ceracchi is understood to be the brother of the sculptor Giuseppe Ceracchi, hung for his involvement in a plot against Bonaparte's life. Taïeh, also called *le nègre*, joins the brotherhood to avenge the death of his

master Toussaint L'Ouverture, referring the narratee to the Haitian uprising preceding Bonaparte's ascension to emperor. As for the brotherhood itself, it is among various other societies that were created and found unity in their desire to combat or overthrow Napoleon Bonaparte. It is only natural to assume that such groups were created, given the extent to which the Napoleonic wars stretched across Europe in the effort to expand the French influence. However, *la ligue de la vertu* is ostensibly the fictitious beginnings of the *Tugendbund*, a Prussian society with several ambitions, one being to restrict the expansion of Bonaparte's rule, and that was also known as "la ligue de la vertu." In 1808, several years following the events that take place within the novel, the *Tugendbund* was created with the goal of fortifying the powers of the Prussian state. Hertault describes the primary goal as follows: "Pourtant [la ligue] avait foncièrement été créée contre la France napoléonienne" (Hertault, *Franc-Maçonnerie et Sociétés Secrètes contre Napoléon* 112). In his novel, Féval attributes this league to Germany instead of Prussia. "Les sociétés secrètes d'Allemagne sont vieilles comme le christianisme, et leurs lois rigoureuses se sont perpétuées à travers les âges La ligue de la Vertu vient d'Allemagne" (Féval, *La Vampire* 141). The league, like Napoleon Bonaparte, is a character within the text that adds credibility to the historical nature of the novel. It differs from Bonaparte, not only by its inaccuracies, but by its inability to be completely verifiable, for the irony of a secret society is that should it remain true to its name, it could scarcely be known.

The second ending, which is considered to be the fantastic conclusion of the text, puts forth that the countess is a true vampire and that she has been murdering both to rejuvenate herself and to amass wealth for her vampire husband, Szandor. The contradictory nature of these two endings complicates the reader's and the narratee's attempts to find a definitive answer. Readers are thus forced to choose one ending over the other, and in doing so they rely on how

convincing the supernatural is in the face of the historical elements of the text. The division between plausibility and verifiability is found in these two endings as well. Supernatural elements, such as the vampire's existence, challenge the plausibility of the narrative. However, the death of Cadoudal, Napoleon's rise to power and the relatively insignificant historical role of the main characters (most notably Jean Pierre Sévérin) allow the historically based elements to be verified by the reader.

Just as he does for *La Vampire*, Féval integrates historical elements and notable figures into *La Fée des grèves* and *L'Homme de fer*. When depicting François de Bretagne, a Breton noble from the fifteenth century, Féval fashions him after the likeness that is found in Dom Gui Alexis Lobineau's *Histoire de Bretagne*. According to Lobineau's account, it was said in a prophetic statement that François de Bretagne would be called before God to be judged for his brother's death. Féval, who refers to Lobineau's *Histoire de Bretagne* via footnotes in *La Fée des grèves*, creates a built-in verifiable source for the historical elements of his tale, and contributes to the credibility of the authoritative status of his narrative by stating his source. By including the in-text citation of a historical account, Féval doubtless wishes to garner credibility for his narrative and elicit belief from the readers of his own text. Even though there are obvious omissions of historical events and fictitious figures, and events constitute the majority of the text, the embedded source creates an appearance of historical accuracy and faithfulness on the part of the author, which in turn creates a more trustworthy narrative on the whole. Unlike *La Vampire*, which sets the supernatural elements against the historical facts to create duplicity, *La Fée des grèves* mixes the historical novel with the fantastic, favoring historical plausibility by not insisting upon the presence of the supernatural. Set in fifteenth-century France, this novel resembles the conventional historical novel by offering the eponymous fairy as a plausible

misunderstanding stemming from regional folklore. However, the premise of the entire text is also based upon a history taken from Lobineau's research surrounding the death of François de Bretagne. The verifiable aspects of these tales, the life and career of Napoleon Bonaparte, or the death of Gilles de Bretagne, conflict with the improbability of an actual vampire or a real fairy existing alongside these historic figures.

The dilemma of separating history from fiction has not gone unnoticed and is often at the center of discussions surrounding historical fiction. Writing on the role of the historical novel in France, Maxwell Smith notes that "If it remains fiction, they say the imaginative quality of the work is bound to distort and falsify history. If on the other hand the author shows us conscientiously his fidelity to the dry facts of history, the purely artistic and aesthetic interest of his story is apt to be submerged by the scholarly and didactic" (5). In a broad sense, a historical novel is a work of fiction that creates a story around historical events. It is also a narrative technique that, like the fantastic itself, relies on the reader's perception of the events and its efficacy will vary depending upon both the aptitude of the narrative to create a believable world and the reader's skepticism towards historical events. Georg Lukács' *The Historical Novel* posits that works of this genre rely upon a shared historical heritage, and that the French Revolution serves as the basis for modern incarnations of this genre. By relying upon a shared heritage, one that is already familiar to the readers, the author is able to alleviate some of the skepticism by demonstrating historical accuracy in depicting events that the reader easily recognizes. The use of historical figures and the events they participate in become tools for the adept writer who will interpose his own creation upon the shared heritage. These new fictional elements, which will become essential to the historical novel, will need to balance their historical accuracy against the narrative liberties required to write an intriguing tale. Inasmuch as they maintain a clear

resemblance to their historical counterpart, these fictitious elements of the text serve as a link between the real shared past and a fictitious world created. An example of this relationship can be drawn from Dumas' well known *Le Comte de Monte-Cristo*. When Edmond Dantès returns to the docks and recounts his meeting with Napoleon Bonaparte on the Island Elba, readers learn that M. Morrel, the owner of the ship, has ties with Bonaparte by way of his brother's military service. His interest in Bonaparte prefigures future events within the novel, but it also connects the historical events, Bonaparte's military campaigns and his imprisonment on the island, to the fictional events of the narrative.

By including the presence of historical figures and events, these novels become attached to a certain time in history, offering the appearance that the emotions, mentalities or overall depiction of life in the novel will be genuine and authentic. Would historical fictions intrigue readers in the same way if the historical foundations were completely removed? Of course they would not. To give the narrative more credibility, the historical events and characters add dimension and a reason to the characters' emotions. *La Vampire's* Jean-Pierre Sévérin is a wise, older man who understands the fragility of life, primarily due to his new position as head of the morgue. That Féval chose this occupation for Sévérin is due to the fact that in 1804, the year in which *La Vampire* is set, a more efficient morgue opened in Paris where citizens gathered to view corpses of unidentified bodies. This new morgue marked the birth of a new macabre pastime where large crowds of Parisians would "gather and gaze at the neatly arranged corpses," a morbid voyeurism that understandably marked the collective Parisian mentality (Schwartz 51).

According to Lukács, the historical novel differs from other works that bear "historical themes" and examples can be found predating the nineteenth century. This new historical novel is set apart from its predecessors by its preoccupation with establishing a credible mentality for

the time period of which its author writes (19). These works integrate the “dry facts” Maxwell Smith mentions as well as incorporate aesthetic attributes, such as dynamic characters, into the narrative. There are still other works however, which demonstrate less fidelity to historical facts but remain models of historical fiction. These are often considered inferior and are called costume dramas by some. They are “the kind of story with swords and muskets and powdered wigs, but no real pretense to telling the reader anything significant, or even true, about authentic historical figures or events” (Byrd 26). Critics have lamented that the psychological makeup of the time period is not substantially represented in these costume dramas; instead, there is a façade which is used to conceal the mentality of the author’s own time period, which is then projected anachronistically onto a historical setting. While there is a tendency to undervalue these costume dramas, one benefit which they maintain over the supposedly more prestigious historical novels is that in place of offering a glimpse into the mentality of the historical setting, readers are given a masked commentary about the author’s own time period as well as the social and political environment in which the author lives. These two groups of historical fiction, faithful historical fiction and the costume drama, constitute the two extremes of historical fiction that are addressed here. The delineation between these two categories of the historical novel is not as clear as one would hope, for each individual text is a mixture of authentic events, authorial invention and a melding of both historical and contemporary mentalities. Thus, some works tend to embody more closely the authentic (faithful) historical novel, as Lukács outlined it, while others, one could argue, are not truly inferior. Instead, a division can be made where the historical events and the narrative are set at odds against one another.

The question of verifiability and plausibility is resolved by the degrees of historical accuracy which the authors of historical novels adopt. For the purpose of this study, two sub-

genres are positioned against one another, the faithful historical novel and the costume drama. While it is clear that critics like Frederick Dunn have displayed an open preference for what they may call faithful genuine historical novels, as literary works the two genres are considered equally relevant as historical fiction. One can see a clear difference between the costume drama and the authentic historical novel: the first employs historical background in the service of the narrative, whereas the latter uses the narrative to highlight history. Galvan rightfully notes that Féval's works treat history with varying degrees of accuracy.

. . . nulle frontière, spatiale, temporelle ou spirituelle ne parvint à refréner sa curiosité. Toutefois, le succès précipitant sans cesse la rédaction d'œuvres nouvelles, les sources historiques: chroniques et mémoires, scrupuleusement respectées dans ses premiers romans, furent peu à peu négligées au profit d'un passé fantasmé où l'histoire cédait le pas à l'imagination. (*Parcours* 42)

Féval's four works that are presented in this chapter vary in the attention they give to historical accuracy. Each of them represents an entire narrative, though their focus differs depending upon Féval's preference for either history or aesthetics. However, their insistence upon fictional figures interacting with historical figures and events are central to inscribing these works within the tradition of historical novels.

The novel *La Vampire*, which constantly balances the verifiable against the plausible, clearly attempts to embody the sub-genre of faithful historical fiction. *La Ville-vampire*, on the other hand, offers a more relaxed and playful historical tale and constitutes a costume drama. In *La Ville-vampire*, Féval's depictions of Ann (Radcliffe) Ward and her marvelous adventure on the eve of her wedding contain few authentic and verifiable facts. This, however, does not devalue the narrative as a textual work; rather it shifts its importance to reveal Féval's own

preoccupations with Ann Radcliffe's work. The private life of Ann Ward's youth that seems to be penetrated by Féval's tale is revelatory inasmuch as there is little resemblance given to the historic Ann. Since the conclusion of the text reveals the entire adventure to be a dream, everything pertaining to the supernatural, ghosts or vampires, is dismissed as a nightmare she experiences the night before her wedding. Due to the fact that the majority of the plot takes place in Ann's dream, there is very little that can be verified concerning the novel's historical accuracy and the most significant experience that the fictional Ann shares with the real one is that she does marry William Radcliffe. While it is her wedding to William Radcliffe that is undoubtedly the most verifiable historical account in *La Ville-vampire*, it nevertheless remains a work of historical fiction. Like the fantastic, which can fluctuate between intensely magical and impossible events to strange and uncanny occurrences, historical fiction is capable of ranging from those strenuously documented narratives to whimsical recreations of the author's own perception of reality. It is in this second extreme of historical fiction, a proposed history, that Féval's *La Ville-vampire* is classed. Some, like Frederick Dunn and even Georg Lukács, would argue that this approach to historical fiction is inferior. Alessandro Manzoni recasts their concerns when he asks, addressing his questions to an imagined author of historical novels: "You want to make real facts known, yet you don't give me the means to recognize them as real? Then why did you want these facts to play an extended, leading role in your work?" (64). In other words, this critic asks two questions: first, why include historical facts in a fictional novel, and second, how can one discern between factual accounts and events of the author's own invention? This second question is the essence of fantastic tales. How can one identify what is real from that which is fake? Manzoni's response is simply that one can and should not attempt such a distinction.

When you demand that the author of a historical novel allow you to distinguish what really happened from what he has invented, you certainly have not considered whether this can be done at all. You prescribe the impossible, nothing less. To convince yourself, simply try to imagine for a moment how reality and invention must be melded in order to form a single story. For instance, in order to detail the historical events to which the author has tied his plot- for surely you would grant that historical events should figure in a historical novel- he will have to combine both real circumstances, drawn from history or other sources (what could better help present those events in their true and, if you will, distinctive form?) and verisimilar circumstances of his own invention. After all, you want him to give you, not just the bare bones of history, but something richer, more complete. In a way, you want him to put the flesh back on the skeleton that is history. (67-68)

The historical novel is a means to recreate history, to dress it up and restore it, much like one would restore a painting that has worn and faded over time. The new paint that is applied resembles the original, but the pigments and bonding will undoubtedly vary from what the artist first applied to the canvas. Thus, just like an artist whose responsibility is to restore paintings would not dare to highlight the areas of the painting that he restored and draw attention to any disparate portions, so it is for the author of historical fiction who “could not try to make [distinctions between invention and history] without fracturing his narrative” (68).

The difference between historical accuracy and verisimilitude (the appearance of accuracy) is clearly seen by observing some of the key events of Féval’s *La Ville-vampire*. Like many other of his works, *La Ville-vampire* distances Féval from the actual narrative by

attributing the true authorship to another individual. The alternate source in this text is Miss Jebb or Mlle 97, a ninety-seven year old woman who welcomes Féval the narrator into her home to tell him about her experience with Miss Ann Ward, the future Ann Radcliffe. To further distance Féval from the source, the majority of the narrative is based upon what the fictional Mlle 97 claims to have heard from Ann herself. The narrative frames that create these two gaps from the original source allow for an increased amount of skepticism even should there be no supernatural beings that are central to the plot. There remains little hope for the author to pretend that the entire novel is established from historical fact. Instead, where the novel permits, in the realistic and plausible passages, the text reaches a verisimilitude that is undeniable in its plainness. The narrator begins the tale with an editorial tone, addressing the problems of international plagiarism committed by English authors to the detriment of the French. The editorial quickly transforms into a brief tribute on the subject of his story: “La gloire d’Anne Radcliffe remplit un instant le monde, et ses noires fictions obtinrent une vogue que nos plus grands succès contemporains sont loin d’égalers” (Féval 12).¹¹ The tale continues with a brief description of young Ann’s life with her fiancé and their close friends, Ned and Cornelia, who were to marry on the same day as Ann and William. “Chaque fois que Ned et Cornelia s’égarèrent ensemble dans les grands bois, William Radcliffe essayait d’entamer avec notre Anna des conversations d’un genre agréable et tendre, mais *Elle* m’appelait aussitôt et tournait l’entretien vers des sujets de littérature classique” (17). The details of the young couple’s premarital life, as well as that of their friends, are indistinct enough to have actually taken place. These bits of vague information help to create a real life backdrop which substitutes for an accurate portrayal of history. This realistic and slightly historical basis serves as the reference that will contrast the supernatural

¹¹ Féval’s spelling for Ann Ward/Radcliffe is consistently spelled with an “e” for Ann, although this is not her own spelling. She is also referred to at times as “Anna.”

elements of the texts. Once a likeness to reality has been achieved, be it through historical facts, as in *La Vampire* (later we shall see this again demonstrated in *L'Homme de fer* and *La Fée des grèves*) or by the feigning of the historical events surrounding the eve of Ann Radcliffe's wedding (as is the case in *La Ville-vampire*), the narrative has a point of departure and is able to add supernatural elements.

Including the ability to fact check a tale's historical accuracy does not necessarily signify that the text is either trustworthy or superior to another text, although it creates an appearance of being so. When a story is verifiable, the content is perceived as trustworthy and correct, even if that is not the case. For theorists like Frederick Dunn, this presents the greatest dilemma for a historical novel. Dunn's primary criticism is that these works do not adequately portray real events and thereby falsely inform the reader as to their historical accuracy. Dunn's *The Un-Historical Novel* is one source that is skeptical of the historical novel's value to the general public as something other than fiction. Dunn worries that "No commission is authorized by enactment, public or otherwise, to insure that the stream of literature flooding down upon us under the caption of historical fiction shall be filtered at its source and pronounced basically trustworthy" (345). He continues as follows:

Scores of misleading data, inconsistencies, inapt deductions, anachronisms, blemishes of all sorts, may be discovered, not merely lurking but frequently paraded, in some of the most widely advertised of recent fiction . . . for the *errata* are being cloaked under the fascinating guise of popular fiction and are becoming gradually incorporated in the conscience of the people as historically sound. (345)

Dunn's approach to the historical novel focuses on the didactic traits that it possesses, and not upon its literary capacity to mimic reality without producing an exact replica. The shortcomings that he identifies are only valid when the reader hopes to be instructed by the novel.

These inconsistencies and inaccuracies, which Dunn rightfully identifies as possibly misleading, carry with them an effect that he left un-discussed. When considering these works as non-fiction, they indeed are guilty of misrepresentation and speculation. In the case of the works depicted in this study, the blemishes are flagrant, as the better part of them incorporate supernatural and unverifiable elements into the text. One need only consider that in *L'Homme de fer*, the author proposes that an immense fire engulfs the city of Rennes during Louis XI's reign whereas the only notable fire to have inflicted any considerable damage in that city takes place more than a hundred years later. Furthermore, the secret society alluded to in *La Vampire* is not officially organized until a few years after the events that take place in the text. These transgressions against historical accuracy detract from the credibility of the narrative for those who recognize the differences between the fictional and the historical worlds. In other words, the fictional credibility of the narrative is challenged when fiction violates history without the plot requiring it to do so. The distinction can thus be made that historical fiction need not instruct on times past, but rather create an approximation of reality.

These historical events, which at times may seem trivial, are the fabric of the novels which they occupy. In placing the characters and events within the text, they become doubled. Building on the principles discussed in the previous chapter, there is a separation between the author as an individual and the narrator; therefore, how much less should we consider a historically-based figure within a fictional text to bear resemblance to his/her historically real counterpart? Féval's historical works that focus upon real figures, such as Napoleon Bonaparte,

Georges Cadoudal, Louis XI, François I, François II and even the English author Ann Radcliffe, are subject to the same distancing phenomenon that separates the author from the narrator. These real figures are transformed, modified and manipulated within the historical text in such a way that even though many of the events they encounter are historically accurate, they are distinct creations that are characterized by their resemblance to their authentic counterparts. The historical settings in which these characters are placed, whether post-revolutionary France, fifteenth-century Normandy and Brittany, or the eve of Ann Radcliffe's wedding, prompt readers either to challenge or accept the events as historically plausible and accurate, or to accept them as an exercise in literary license. In observing these characters, two points may be made: first, aside from sharing the same name as their real counterparts, these fictional characters will also share some of the same experiences; second, the differences between the fictional and real characters reveal the fictional characters' aesthetic function in the text.

Lukács suggests that modern historical novels find their roots in the shared heritage of the French Revolution. For Féval's historical novels, it is true that they, too, share in this heritage. However, some are only indirectly associated with 1789. While it is true that the events surrounding the French Revolution are integrated into some of his novels, most notably *La Vampire*, Féval's historical novels often embody the history of his native Brittany. This preference for one region over the rest of France would seem to transform his version of the historical novel into an exposé intended to instruct non-Breton readers of that region's history. Whether or not Féval is faithful to historical events that transpired in Brittany, the historical novel inevitably manipulates the way readers perceive that region's history. Dunn's concerns are legitimate in the sense that each reading of a historical novel assists in the construction of the reader's perception. Those most susceptible to this manipulation presumably have enough

knowledge to recognize the historical basis, but not enough to distinguish fiction from fact. French non-Breton readers are granted access to Féval's works of historic Brittany, not by directly addressing the Revolution, but by a recollection of the place which nobility formerly occupied. In these Breton novels some nobles are in the foreground of the narrative and their presence undoubtedly reminds readers of the *Ancien Régime*, as well as the changes to the very concept of nobility brought forth through the French Revolution. Writing specifically of his series, *Habits Noirs*, Galvan describes this phenomenon:

. . . des innocents sont condamnés, des familles disloquées, des héritiers de nom illustres déclassés tandis qu'une ex-chanteuse de cabaret peut usurper sans coup férir le titre de comtesse. C'est dans cette description sous-jacente d'une société anarchique où la loi du plus fort ou du plus habile prévaut sur le droit, où la vieille noblesse, notamment la noblesse bretonne désargentée, est broyée que les romans contemporains de Féval peuvent avoir valeur de romans historiques et trouver une place, modeste, aux côtés des écrits balzaciens. (*Parcours* 46)

By integrating the Breton, Georges Cadoudal, *La Vampire* constitutes a faithful recounting of history (should the overt presentation of a supernatural vampire be forgiven) and shows how as both a historical novel and a fantastic tale, it manipulates the reader's perception of the key historical figures of the text. Napoleon Bonaparte is the most significant figure treated by Féval in this study of historical works and as such Féval's portrayal of the future emperor is both complimentary and critical. As Féval presents different aspects of this fictitious Bonaparte, he, too, adds to the myth and mystique of the emperor, and likewise influences the reader's conception of Napoleon Bonaparte. Readers are encouraged to question what truth, if any, is found within *La Vampire*, not only by sympathizing with opposing characters (Bonaparte and

Cadoudal), but also by negotiating the boundaries between reality and fiction with regard to the eponymous vampire. While readers are thus engaged with the novel, Féval offers them his own perspective to consider. It is in this light that the author uses historical fiction to offer critique and praise. “Toutefois, si le contexte du roman-feuilleton ne permet pas à Féval d’écrire des romans historiques à la Walter Scott, il ne l’empêchera pas d’exprimer sa vision de l’Histoire. Vision forte, clairement énoncée, en laquelle se reflétaient sans ambiguïté ses opinions politiques et ses convictions intimes” (Galvan, *Parcours* 44). Féval’s portrayals of these historical figures like Georges Cadoudal (as a Bonaparte opponent) reveal his preference for monarchical rule and his love for Brittany, and yet they seem extreme compared to his more reserved correspondences. In a letter to Jules Claretie in which he states that “to believe in revolutions is a gift,” Féval likewise states that the benefits brought about by revolutionaries would have been attained without the Revolution (Buet 178). However, his stated passivity and tolerance, while perhaps genuine, are scarcely shown through his representation of Bonaparte.

By using the historical figure of Napoleon Bonaparte, Féval anchors readers in the historical context with a verifiable element and provides the backdrop for *La Vampire*. The protagonist, Jean-Pierre Sévérin, offers the first portrait of Napoleon while a second portrait is provided by the antagonist countess, Marcian Gregoryi. Sévérin, a gentle and wise personality, is only eclipsed by his mysterious and unpretentious background. He embodies nobility of character and honesty, and readers are drawn to align themselves with his principles and convictions. The only fault he is truly given in the text is one he speaks of to a young medical student. “Je suis du passé, tu es de l’avenir. Le passé croyait à ce qu’il ignorait; vous croirez sans doute à ce que vous aurez appris; je le souhaite, car il est bon de croire” (23-24). These are his only faults, should we accept them as such. He claims to be too old, too set in old traditions and

old beliefs. Opposite Séverin is the countess, who, aside from the suspicions inferred by the narrator that she is a vampire, operates as the black widow within the text, continually seeking out a rich groom, stealing him away, receiving his inheritance and reappearing shortly after his death only to repeat the process. With the opposite roles that these two characters occupy, one as a predator and the other as a savior, it is curious that they are able to find common ground with their portrayal of Napoleon Bonaparte.

The countess describes Bonaparte as “un jeune homme de vingt-six ans, pâle, maigre, chétif, coiffant de cheveux plats un front puissant” (98). Séverin later echoes the countess when recounting his first encounter with the future emperor: “Un jeune homme en habit bourgeois, d’aspect maladif et pâle, vint dans ma salle d’armes Ce jeune . . . avait une tournure militaire” (123). Both of these descriptions share the sickly physical appearance (pâle, chétif and maladif). They likewise point to Napoleon’s strength and military prowess, something that is indivisible from the Napoleonic myth. In his discussion of possible-worlds semantics of functionality, Lubomír Dolezel states that “an ineradicable relationship exists between the historical Napoleon and all fictional Napoleons” (788). Claiming that fictional and nonfictional characters are devoid of attachment would be fallacious, just as would be the opposite. The fictional characters both inform and are informed by their real counterpart. Thus physical traits and military background inform the characteristics of Féval’s Napoleon. In return, this creation redefines the myth of Napoleon, allowing for the fictional to influence the real. While the negative aspects of Napoleon are not as extreme as other authors have depicted, they still become a part of the all-encompassing myth of Napoleon, reinforcing it by reiterating what has previously been established (the military strength), and modifying it by portraying him as weak

and sickly, as well as later transforming him into a standard of measurement which others in the text will prove to surpass.

Féval transforms Napoleon Bonaparte into a stepping stone, and thus bolsters the grandeur of both the countess Marcian Gregoryi and Sévérin. The author introduces the future emperor into the narrative twice by employing the framing device of telling a story within a story. Under the guise of another identity, the countess is the first to relate her encounter with Bonaparte. Having left her newlywed husband for a more powerful man, she compares Napoleon to Alexander the Great: “Il est un homme qui jamais n’a reculé, jamais cédé, jamais faibli: le vainqueur de toutes vos défaites, jeune comme Alexandre le Grand et destiné comme lui à mettre son talon sur le front du genre humain” (99). This comparison readies Napoleon for the transformation into a standard of measurement with which readers can evaluate other fictitious characters. After reading the note his wife has left, the count Gregoryi, hoping to regain both his honor and his wife, penetrates into the heart of the camp to challenge General Bonaparte. As the count prepares to strike a deadly blow, the countess takes the life of her own husband, and preserves the life of the compromised general. In this act, Bonaparte is deprived of his military strength, and explains to his soldiers: “Il paraît que la tente de votre général en chef n’est pas bien gardée” (100). In truth, the general’s tent is well guarded, but not by his own soldiers. The young general who conquered European nations and the hearts of many French nationals is forced to rely on a foreign countess for his life. This countess, who is conflated with the vampire of the text, supports and sustains the future emperor, associating him with the evil she incarnates. A new hierarchy is created. The count, able to penetrate the defenses of the camp, is poised to take the life of the general. He is thus greater than Napoleon. However, his wife, who also reaches the general’s tent, succeeds in killing her husband, and thus she is greater than both the

count and Bonaparte. Féval attempts to subvert the image and myth of Napoleon, especially the depiction of his rise to power. This text suggests that Napoleon's efforts do not testify of his own strength; rather, his success is due to a supernatural creature who sustains his efforts.

Napoleon's military success is similarly questioned when Sévérin tells of his encounter with the future emperor. When Napoleon comes to Sévérin's *salle d'armes*, he is looking for an exercise that will tire him out: "Êtes-vous homme à me rompre les os, à me courbaturer les muscles en vingt minutes de temps chaque jour?" (124). Sévérin describes the training in these terms: "Je ne le fatiguai pas, je le moulus si bel et si bien qu'il demanda grâce et tomba tout haletant sur ma banquette" (125). Sévérin, like the count and countess, is placed above the general in the hierarchy of power. By placing Sévérin as a more powerful figure than Napoleon, the myth of Napoleon as a powerful and dominant figure is undermined. After all, Sévérin embodies the lower strata of the French population, and he is one of the two who causes General Bonaparte to ask for mercy. Through these two passages within the text, Féval removes Napoleon from the mythic pedestal of history, only to replace him with the characters of his own creation. Beyond the apparent lack of military prowess, which is contrary to much of what is known about the real Napoleon, Féval has inserted a political criticism of the emperor. Responding to the then young Napoleon's affinity to republican principles, Sévérin states: "Sire, je suis un républicain, moi aussi, je l'étais avant vous, je le serai après vous" (125). It is not difficult to see how Féval hints at this fictional Napoleon's naïve commitment to republican ideals when the central protagonist's convictions sound almost as if they come from Victor Hugo himself. This is another means in which Féval denounces this fictional Napoleon as a committed leader, and in fact makes him less appealing to his readership, one that by and large adheres to the republican principles Bonaparte forsakes in the text.

It is important to note that while Féval's depiction of Napoleon is not entirely faithful to the historic Napoleon, it is nevertheless a product of the myth of Napoleon that was under creation. Modifications to the representations of historical figures cause the perceptions that readers have of history to change as well. After all, perception of history is not fixed. Manipulation of French history, and more precisely of the image of Napoleon Bonaparte, is made clear in Sudhir Hazareesingh's "Napoleonic Memory in Nineteenth-Century France: The Making of a Liberal Legend," in which the author demonstrates how biographers focusing on Napoleon Bonaparte shift their writings from treating his reprehensible rise to power to the more laudable aspects of his leadership. Hazareesingh argues that Napoleon's primary nineteenth-century historians, Las Cases and Constant, are partially responsible for shaping the perception of Napoleon that has been cultivated over time: "Las Cases also gave a decisive ideological twist to Napoleon's legacy, presenting him as the heir of the Revolution and the 'prince of liberal ideas'" (757). Historical fictions, like the more credible studies of Las Cases and Constant, also help shape the images of those they treat, but they do so without the pretensions of being disinterested in their subject matter. Hazareesingh describes how Bonaparte's image progressed throughout his career. In his words, some authors following Napoleon's death (including Constant and Las Cases)

concentrated instead on 'humanizing' the Emperor by focusing on his magnetic personality and character, and on the periods of imperial political weakness and vulnerability – the Hundred Days and the early years of exile at Saint-Helena. Above all, these visions and representations drew away from the history of the Consulate and First Empire, specifically avoiding any intellectual engagement

with the cornerstone of Napoleon's system of rule, namely his conception of power. (764)

He likewise points to Victor Hugo's remark during the *retour des cendres* as being "a ceremonial which was marked by the 'concealment' of Napoleon" (764). Féval's treatment of the former emperor coincides with that of Constant, Las Cases and Hugo, inasmuch as he remains a self-proclaimed *chouan*, uncommitted to condoning Napoleon's rule. The Bonaparte that Féval creates is imperfect and human, to the point that he is weakened when compared to others within the text. The historical Napoleon is distanced from the action of the text. He is only revealed to the reader through the testimonial stories told by the fictitious characters, or as his signature affixed to a letter. It is through Sévérin's description of their first meeting, and the narrative frame provided by the countess, that Napoleon is truly given a place in this novel. Féval revisiting Napoleon's rise to emperor and depicting his shortcoming with respect to the two figures of his novel posits an alternate reality, another history for readers to consider, which blurs the lines that divide reality from fantasy, and history from fiction. The historical foundation also lies in his choice of Georges Cadoudal as an enemy to Napoleon. Historically Cadoudal led several attempts to overthrow the French government in order to restore a monarchy, and scholars such as Pierre Dominique agree that in an effort to reconcile with a group of French royalists known as the *chouans*, Napoleon offered Cadoudal a position within the government (56). Cadoudal refused this position, and we learn that the conspiracy of 1804, the historical background for *La Vampire*, proved to be Cadoudal's last.

The conquering nature of the vampire is given in several different accounts within the novel, and doubles as a commentary upon Bonaparte's role as emperor. In Féval's novel, the vampire does not suck blood, as suggested in the preface for a vampire named Faust: "Il était

hâve; sans son costume de hussard vous ne l'auriez point reconnu; les ossements de son crâne n'avaient plus de cheveux, et ses yeux si beaux, manquaient à leurs orbites vides" (12). The bald head, resembling a skull, illustrates this creature's proximity to death. Likewise, the lack of hair for the Faustian vampire prefigures the necessity for a fresh head of hair that the female vampire in Féval's tale will require to sustain her youthful beauty. When the countess explains to René de Kervoz, the nephew of Georges Cadoudal and the fiancé to Sévérin's step-daughter, the vampire's need for fresh hair, the enterprising nature of the vampire is revealed.

Le don d'Addhéma, ainsi se nommait la Bulgare, était de renaître belle et jeune comme l'Amour chaque fois qu'elle pouvait appliquer sur la hideuse nudité de son crâne une chevelure vivante: j'entends une chevelure arrachée à la tête d'un vivant.

Et voilà pourquoi sa tombe était pleine de crânes de jeunes femmes et de jeunes filles. Semblable aux sauvages de l'Amérique du Nord qui scalpent leurs ennemis vaincus et emportent leurs chevelures comme des trophées, Addhéma choisissait aux environs de sa sépulture les fronts les plus beaux et les plus heureux pour leur arracher cette proie qui lui rendait quelques jours de jeunesse.

Car le charme ne durait que peu de jours.

Autant de jours que la victime avait d'années à vivre sa vie naturelle.

Au bout de ce temps, il fallait un forfait nouveau et une autre victime.

Les rives de la Save ne sont pas peuplées comme celles de de [sic] Seine. Je n'ai pas besoin de vous dire que bientôt jeunes filles et jeunes femmes devinrent rares autour d'Uzel... (93)

The vampire's overindulgence forces her to seek another home and expand her hunting ground. Féval, through Adhéma's vampire-husband, Szandor, explains that this expansion is representative of Napoleon's efforts to enlarge France's empire. For both the vampire and Bonaparte, the acquisition of territory comes at the price of others' lives. Whereas the vampire takes one life at a time, the emperor will cause the death of many with each ensuing battle.

Féval points out that for the vampire to be rejuvenated, hair must come from a newly claimed victim. The effect lasts according to the natural life that her victim has remaining, granting the vampire one day of restored youth for every year that her victim had remaining of natural life. The restorative essence is in the young woman's hair. Through Jean-Pierre Sévérin, the narratee and the readers are shown a glimpse of the horrid process. While in a boat searching for his daughter, he sees a corpse floating against the current at a speed faster than his own. In the distance, he sees the corpse arrive next to a young woman kneeling at the river.

La jeune fille s'inclina en avant et tendit le bras. Un autre bras, celui du corps, s'allongea aussi vers la jeune fille. . . .

J'entrevis, à travers un brouillard, quelque chose d'inouï et d'impossible.

Ce ne fut pas la jeune fille qui attire le corps à elle, ce fut le corps qui attira à lui la jeune fille.

Tous deux, le corps et la jeune fille, restèrent un instant hors de l'eau, car le corps s'était arrêté et dressé.

Une main morte se plongeait dans l'abondante chevelure de la jeune fille, tandis que l'autre main décrivait autour de son front et de ses tempes un cercle rapide.

Puis le corps monta sur la berge, vivant, agile, jeune, tandis que la pauvre enfant prenait sa place dans l'eau tourmentée. (153)

After searching for the girl he believes to be Angèle and the latest victim of the vampire, Sévérin encounters a woman in the streets with hair just like his stepdaughter's. "Je l'arrêtais. Quand elle se retourna, je reconnus la comtesse Marcian Gregoryi, éblouissante de beauté et de jeunesse, mais coiffée de cheveux blonds" (153). The image of the vampire, taking the hair from a corpse and raising it up to her own head, calls to mind Jacques-Louis David's *Le Sacre ou le Couronnement*. This painting, commissioned by Napoleon, gives a visual representation of the ceremony wherein he officially becomes the emperor. Even as the vampire receives supernatural strength and prolonged life and beauty through placing a new head of hair upon her scalp, Napoleon renews the strength and glory of France, and even the empire that has been dormant since Charlemagne, by placing the crown upon his own head. In this context, the restoration of the empire is not as innocent as it otherwise may seem. For, as many have noted, Napoleon's division from the church is seen in the act of him placing the crown upon his own head and thus circumventing papal authority. This rejection of the church by the emperor adds to the already developing association between Napoleon and the vampire, since a pious vampire would be an absurd notion in nineteenth-century France. This criticism of Napoleon's creation of an empire extends to his nephew's later restoration of the empire. After all, for Féval, this new empire under the rule of Bonaparte III is simply another crown taken up that will, like for the vampire in his text, temporarily restore an unnatural life.

That Féval wrote this novel during the Second Empire, and thus during the reign of Napoleon III, suggests that Napoleon Bonaparte's weakness in comparison to Sévérin and the countess is not pure coincidence, but instead a political criticism. This becomes even clearer

when the figure of Napoleon is placed next to that of Georges Cadoudal. Just as the countess Gregoryi and Sévérin are opposing figures within the text, Napoleon is placed opposite Georges Cadoudal. Likewise, just as Féval revisits the Napoleonic image in *La Vampire*, by incorporating historical facts, he models a favorable depiction of Georges Cadoudal that is contrasted against his image of Bonaparte. The Cadoudal of the text lived in Paris, successfully evading the police even among gossip of his presence. Cadoudal accomplished this by taking on the name of Morinière and claiming to be from Normandy. His ability to avoid authorities represents his ability to avoid Bonaparte himself, since each of these agents acts by the power of the First Consulate. However, when the cover of his alias fails him and he flees from the police, Sévérin finds him and begins fighting at his side. Cadoudal refuses his help, explaining:

Je vous remercie de ce que vous avez voulu faire pour moi. [. . .] Je ne suis pas Normand, je suis Breton... Je ne suis pas Morinière le maquignon; je suis Georges Cadoudal, officier général de l'armée catholique et royale... Je ne suis pas un assassin, je suis un champion arrivant tout seul et tête haute contre l'homme qui a des millions de défenseurs... Écartez-vous de moi: votre chemin n'est pas le mien. (217)

Even amidst the numerous references to the supernatural within *La Vampire*, Féval creates a historically realistic portrayal of a celebrated Cadoudal. His death, although scarcely revealed, does not take away from his martyrdom. As the novel approaches its conclusion, Féval's heroic depiction of Cadoudal eclipses the general preoccupation with Bonaparte and places Cadoudal at the center of the narrative.

Féval continues to blur the line between fact and fiction in his account of Cadoudal's trial and execution. The end of Cadoudal's uprising and a significant blow to *chouan* rebellions are

easily traced back to a meeting that allegedly took place in the boulevard de la Madeleine between Georges Cadoudal and the Generals Jean Charles Pichegru and Jean Victor Moreau, although some historians question whether or not Cadoudal was present. “Only Pichegru and Moreau had met in ‘la Madeleine,’ according to Ruby, who took Thiers to task for incorrectly placing Cadoudal there as well” (Montgomery 179). Cadoudal, according to some, was intended to meet with the two others, but due to conflicting interests and a mutual disenchantment between him and Moreau, such a meeting simply could not have taken place. “Both Madelin and Bonnet affirmed that the rendezvous in the boulevard was an attempt by Pichegru to bring the other two principals together but, according to witnesses, the effort had failed because Moreau stalked off, taking Pichegru with him, as soon as he recognized Cadoudal” (Montgomery 178-79). Féval’s account of a meeting in the street between Cadoudal and the protagonist Sévérin is based on this alleged meeting the boulevard de la Madeleine. When Sévérin, hoping to receive help in finding his stepdaughter, Angèle, comes to the prefecture, he is drawn into a lengthy conversation with M. Berthellemot, the *secrétaire général*. Before presenting his cause to M. Berthellemot, he is accused of having met with the conspiring *chouan*, Georges Cadoudal. “Hier, à neuf heures et demie du soir, vous avez été vu et reconnu tenant conférence avec le traître Georges Cadoudal, dans la rue de l’Ancienne-Comédie” (120). Dumbfounded, yet calm, Sévérin protests this accusation by confirming the conversation he had the previous night with the man he knows as M. Morinière: “C’est pourtant vrai, dit-il, que j’étais hier au soir, à neuf heures et demie, au Carrefour du Théâtre-Brûlé, ou de l’Odéon, si vous aimez mieux. Là, j’ai causé avec M. Morinière de l’affaire qui justement m’amène auprès de vous... Mais j’affirme ne pas connaître du tout le traître Georges Cadoudal” (120). At this point in the novel, Féval has not yet revealed to the narratee that M. Morinière and Cadoudal are one and the same. In the novel,

Sévérin's meeting with Morinière in the street is more than coincidental, even if more detailed research does not place Cadoudal in that same boulevard Madeleine meeting. For Féval and his contemporaries, the similarity between the two meetings is quite clear. Not only does Sévérin's meeting with Cadoudal draw attention to the fears of conspiracy against Napoleon, it also underscores the emphasis Féval wishes to place upon Cadoudal himself, as an elusive Breton hero. This conversation contributes to the weakness surrounding Napoleon and his rise to emperor. The constant whisperings of conspiracy and the fear of the treasonous Cadoudal hint at uncertainty in the forthcoming empire, an uncertainty which Féval projects onto the fictitious citizens.

Cadoudal's death, although ambiguous, gives a false impression of the historical account. This is another instance where "it is precisely this tension between fact and fiction, the 'empirical' and 'aesthetic' planes, that creates the peculiar dynamics of the historical novel (and other genres of 'documentary literature') endowing it with a unique and important dimension" (Ungurianu 380). Féval electing to bring Cadoudal's death closer to the action, instead of drawing attention to the subsequent trial and execution, is an obvious shift from the "empirical" to the "aesthetic," as described by Ungurianu. His commanding presence, sending off not only the timid coach driver, but also Sévérin who was eager to help, is further evidence of Féval choosing to create a heroic and independent Cadoudal. This heroic image risks being sacrificed should Féval not display this fight as Cadoudal's final actions in the text. Alluding to the trial would paint him as a criminal, whereas falling to a mob shows him to be the victim. In the text the narratee only learns that

Il n'était pas mort. Les agents n'osaient l'approcher.

Ce fut le même garçon boucher qui lui jeta au cou la première corde.

Cinq minutes après, au moment où la charrette qui avait arrêté le cabriolet de Georges Cadoudal l'emmenait, garrotté, à la Conciergerie, un homme parut au milieu des agents qui formaient le noyau de la foule immense rassemblée au carrefour de Buci. (217-18)

This is the last time that readers encounter Cadoudal. His death is left untreated. Readers are left to turn to other sources, such as Pierre Dominique, to learn of his death. “La fin de Cadoudal est, en effet, d’une beauté sublime. Ce trait surtout qu’il veut être guillotiné avant ses compagnons. Ce n’était point pourtant la coutume: le chef était guillotiné le dernier. Mais Georges se disait que certains de ses compagnons pouvaient croire qu’après leur mort lui serait peut-être gracié” (60). Féval’s decision not to focus on Cadoudal’s death enables him to preserve the image of a passionate rebel who fought insurmountable odds to challenge Bonaparte. The images of Cadoudal and Bonaparte are evidence of Féval’s revisionist presentation of historical figures. While Cadoudal, as an attempted assassin, murderer or traitor, could easily be vilified, and while Bonaparte at the time is already enjoying renewed popularity at the hands of historians, Féval reverses their historical roles to create a weak and unimpressive future emperor and a heroic rebel.

Similarly in Féval’s *La Fée des grèves*, the representations of Gilles and François de Bretagne are subject to the author’s desires to modify his presentation of history. From this text, which takes the fratricidal murder of Gilles by François as its historical reference, readers are given a presentation of betrayal, treason and divine prophesy which depict Gilles as an innocent victim. After having imprisoned and attempted to starve his brother, *La Fée des grèves* shows how François ordered guards to beat his brother to death. This history fails to bring to light Gilles’ allegiance with England, an omission which could otherwise justify his imprisonment in

the minds of some readers. This omission on the part of the author detracts from historical authenticity by not divulging the salient details surrounding the verifiable events, when drawing attention to them would contribute to the text's credibility. Instead, Féval depicts François I as a ruthless brother who moved Gilles from prison to prison, plotting various measures to have him killed. There is truth to this representation, since Gilles was never granted any authentic trial. According to Michael Jones, "In the case of Gilles de Bretagne, for instance, the only 'state' trial for treason mounted in the duchy and attended at duke Francis I's request by royal advisers, procedural difficulties and diplomatic pressure prevented a final decision being reached" (109). As of this time period, Brittany was not wholly incorporated into France, but rather was a duchy which experienced certain autonomy from the French king. Brittany was involved in a constant struggle to maintain a balance between complete sovereignty and dependence upon the two often warring states to which it was connected. It seems that Féval, who was aware of Brittany's history, including the struggles it faced with both France and England, omitted certain historical facts and otherwise modified the information from his historical source to coincide with his vision of the *La Fée des grèves*. Galvan writes that

. . . en rédigeant *La Fée des grèves*, Féval se montrait déjà moins respectueux du texte rapporté par Dom Lobineau dans son *Histoire de Bretagne*. Ainsi, désireux de produire des effets plus dramatiques, il bouleversa la chronologie des événements et transforma un entretien privé en accusation publique. Néanmoins, en 1851, il restait encore très proche de la réalité historique et ses libertés étaient de peu d'importance. (*Parcours* 43)

Féval allows a measure of authorial license regarding the private meeting to which Galvan refers. This meeting, which is in fact an accusation that takes place at the end of the funeral procession

that opens the novel, is likewise modified to allow the elements of vengeance and justice to contrast with treason. Lobineau's historical presentation states that a Cordelier privately accuses François of misdeed. This religious figure is replaced by Hue de Maurever, Gilles' fictitious former squire in *La Fée des grèves*, who attributes the blame of Gilles' death on Duke François I. According to Lobineau's account, the Cordelier is called on by a woman who brings food to Gilles' window as the guards attempt to starve him. In Féval's novel, this young woman is Reine de Maurever, Hue's daughter. Both Hue and his daughter exact justice and vengeance by offsetting the crimes committed against Gilles. Whereas François starves him, Reine brings him food. As he is isolated in his prison cell, these two faithful followers visit him secretly at his window. Though guards murder him at the command by his brother, Hue prophesies that François will die and be brought to God's judgment in forty days' time, avenging Gilles's death.

Comparing the historical account presented by Lobineau and the roles of Hue and Reine in *La Fée des grèves*, it is apparent that Féval manipulated the role of another religious figure to grant Hue a more prominent place. Lobineau writes of a priest who is called to Gilles to offer him his last confession. This priest was requested by a young woman (Reine de Maurever in Féval's account). Féval invented Reine by drawing from Lobineau's account where he describes the only individual willing to help Gilles de Bretagne: "Personne n'osa se hasarder à lui faire la charité, qu'une pauvre femme qui demeurait auprès du château" (643). When his death is imminent, Reine brings her father as well as a priest to comfort him. When Gilles receives his last rights through the bars in the window, he requests one thing of the priest.

-Prêtre, dit-il, tes pareils sont sans peur, parce qu'ils sont sans reproche. Va vers le duc François, mon frère, mon seigneur et mon assassin. Dis-lui que Gilles de Bretagne meurt en le citant au tribunal de Dieu. Le feras-tu?

Le prêtre hésitait.

-Moi, je le ferai, prononça Hue de Maurever parmi ses sanglots.

Car il aimait monsieur Gilles comme son fils.

Celui-ci tendit sa main à travers les barreaux. Hue de Maurever la baisa en pleurant.

Puis monsieur Gilles murmura: Merci et tomba à la renverse. (55-56)

Féval has Hue take up the request for justice addressed to the priest. This not only allows the narratee to see this fictional figure's dedication to the dying Gilles, but also establishes the reason for Hue to take on the disguise of another religious figure, the Cordelier, at Gilles' funeral and tie the novel back to the historical account.

Within each of Féval's historic novels, the theme of betrayal is recurrent and central to the narrative, and the act of betrayal is often linked with the supernatural creature of the text. *La Fée des grèves* showcases the betrayal of François de Bretagne against his brother Gilles while tracking the seemingly supernatural fairy. With *La Vampire*, Cadoudal's attempted assassination was part of an effort to redefine the government from a consulate to a monarchy and is tied to the eponymous female vampire. Even the costume drama *La Ville-vampire* deals with betrayal as the vampire M. Goëtzi turns against the family who employed him. There are instances when the historical background and the supernatural elements work together to develop the verisimilitude needed for a historic novel. The presence of supernatural or magical events in some of Féval's novels adds to the credibility of the overall tale when the reader attempts to view them in the same way as a citizen of the time period the tale is set in may have done. Thus the fairy and the mysterious iron man in *La Fée des grèves* and *L'Homme de fer* become plausible characters, and do not necessitate the rational explanation that the post-Enlightenment mentality requires. These

supernatural events, instead of detracting from the historical aspect of the texts, reinforce the perceptions that some of their contemporaries held with regard to the historical events surrounding them. The richness of mysterious and supernatural creatures attributed to Brittany is seen in *Guide de la Bretagne mystérieuse*, a book which presents the various traditional beliefs concerning supernatural phenomena of this region. The tales that range from ghostly apparitions to entire cities submerged into the sea come from across Brittany. One of the most recurrent images seen from these different cities in this region is that of the *lavandières de la nuit*.

C'est dans cette région, notamment que l'on risque le plus souvent de rencontrer les *Kannerezed noz*, les "lavandières de la nuit." Entre le coucher et le lever du soleil, ces femmes, grandes et maigres, viennent dans les lavoirs de ce monde faire la lessive des suaires. Ce sont les *anaon*, des "âmes" qui dans l'au-delà, attendent leur délivrance et doivent travailler, en rémission de leurs péchés. Le malheureux qui les rencontre reconnaît parmi elles des parentes défuntes: elles le supplient de les aider dans leur besogne, elles le contraignent même à essorer les linceuls. Il faut alors tourner toujours dans le même sens qu'elles, et se bien garder de tordre le linge: sinon, le sang du maladroit s'en écoulerait, il tomberait mort, saigné à blanc, et les mains brisées par la poigne de fer des lavandières.

(Bens and Caradec 152-53)

Aside from these *lavandières de la nuit*, Brittany is home to legends of other creatures, such as dwarfs, giants, *hommes noirs* and *hommes blancs*. Since these creatures constitute a part of the regional folklore, they contribute to the text's authenticity. Even though many of the nineteenth-century readers, as well as those that come after, do not subscribe to any belief in these beings, their presence validates the novels because it was acceptable for the characters of *La Fée de*

grèves and *L'Homme de fer*, who represent a fifteenth-century mentality, to believe in them. The belief in these supernatural creatures permeates the classes of this time period to the point that the supernatural is intertwined with betrayal and treason at the state level. Supernatural influences were a part of the political struggles which took place in Medieval Brittany, and most importantly, as Michael Jones demonstrates, they were incorporated into various crimes of treason. "The use of spies and informers, coded and cryptic messages, poisoning, assassination, torture, bribery and blackmail, pre-arranged meetings with mysterious figures and also the invocation of intangible occult forces, sorcery, divination and black magic, to attain political ends, all these are integral to the most notorious cases of treachery" (92). Therefore, not only would traitors in Medieval France be guilty of betrayal against the State or State head, in some cases they would be accused of heresy, a charge of betrayal that introduces the element of the supernatural to the crime. The latter means of "occult forces" to dethrone kings, usurp power and execute other forms of treason and treachery are central to the power struggles that are found in *L'Homme de fer* (92).

The theme of treason in *L'Homme de fer* is demonstrated in King Louis XI's establishment of the order of Saint Michel as part of his political struggle against the lords of Brittany. The establishment of the order of Saint Michel is not as historically pivotal as the text would have one believe. Its importance is likewise overstated in the text as a means for the king to have the lords of these lands swear allegiance to him. This will in turn allow him to appropriate various lands of Brittany, and eventually Brittany as a whole. Even though the order he proposes did exist and included many of the same knights that he listed, it is a simplification employed by Féval that avoids the more complex circumstances that led to the eventual purchasing of those lands by the king. Lobineau's *Histoire de Bretagne*, the apparent source

from which Féval drew the historical information for *L'Homme de fer*, describes this order and how the Duke François II refused Louis XI's invitation into the order of Saint Michel. "Le Roi s'avisa au commencement de cette année 1470, d'envoyer par des Ambassadeurs exprès, au Duc de Bretagne, le collier de l'Ordre de St. Michel, qu'il avait institué depuis peu; & cela dans la vue d'attacher le Duc plus fortement à lui par les serments qu'il exigeait des Chevaliers de ce nouvel Ordre" (709).¹² The attachment to the king is illustrated in *L'Homme de fer* as Louis XI works up a draft of the vows which the knights within this order will take. These knights pledge "pleinement de leur grande et entière loyauté, et espérant la continuation et persévérance d'iceux de bien en mieux en toutes hautes, dignes et vertueuses œuvres, iceux avons nommés et nommons en nos frères et compagnons dudit ordre duquel nous et nos successeurs, rois de France, serons souverains comme dessus est dit . . ." (Féval *L'Homme de fer* 81). Both historically and in Féval's novel, the initiation of the *Ordre de Saint Michel* is an allegiance that takes sacred oaths and thus is an appeal to supernatural and unseen power as a means to subvert and protect against future betrayals. The king proposes that the knights of this order consider him and his successors their sovereigns. Féval's novel puts forward that the fictitious Otto Béringhem be named one of the knights of Saint Michel in exchange for him delivering François II as a prisoner to the king. Thus, it is never shown to the narratee how, according to Lobineau, François II refuses joining with this newly established order under the pretense that his responsibilities are first to Brittany. His refusal to join with this order can thus be considered a refusal to betray his duchy. Inversely, had the duke joined with the order of Saint Michel, it would be a form of treason for betraying Brittany. Treason against Brittany, which is expressed in the duke's refusal to enter into the order of Saint Michel, illustrates one of the two forms of treason which existed

¹² The spelling has been modified to reflect contemporary standard French, while attempting to maintain as much fidelity to the original as possible (thus "&" remains in place of "et").

in Medieval France. Michael Jones explains that the first conception of treason coincides with the Roman definition as being against the leader: “. . . there is no doubting the wide currency enjoyed by the notion of treason as an offence against the majesty of the ruler as representative of the state” (96). The second conception of treason is considered a crime against the State itself, “The idea that treason was a crime not merely against a person, albeit the ruler of a powerful duchy, but was also in some measure a crime against a province . . .” (96). In addition to the historical François II’s refusal to betray Brittany, these dual conceptions of treason are likewise presented in *L’Homme de fer* as the squire Jeannin asks the monk Frère Bruno: “Êtes-vous pour la Bretagne ou pour la France?” (30). When the monk is unable to answer, Jeannin questions Frère Bruno’s allegiance according to the leader and not the nation or region: “Alors, dit-il, mon frère, vous n’avez point d’attachement personnel pour le roi?” and “Point de répugnance particulière pour le duc?” The questions are answered respectively “Le roi est mon prochain” and “Le duc est mon prochain” (31). The confusion of allegiance is underscored by Frère Bruno’s inability to separate and distinguish one leader (the king or the duke) from the other. The frustration apparent in Jeannin’s questioning illustrates the need for division and categorization, and the desire for stated allegiances to some figure of nobility.

Within Féval’s illustrations of betrayal and ascensions to power, readers witness authority sway from one figure to the next. For Otto Béringhem in *L’Homme de fer*, this authority or power is inversely associated with the supernatural attributes given to him. The narratee is continually given reasons to dismiss his supposed supernatural abilities even as other figures within the novel recognize him as a growing threat. As his power over others in the novel increases, it would seem that his supernatural attributes diminish. This pattern is upheld, when during the conclusion of the text his supernatural powers are undeniably apparent, and he

succumbs to his final loss of authority over other figures. As mentioned in the previous chapter, *La Fée des grèves* borders on the fantastic by modifying the manner in which the reader perceives the fairy, allowing one to see her as supernatural and not as the young Reine de Maurever that she has already been revealed to be. Inversely, *L'Homme de fer* draws attention to Otto Béringhem's armor, his strength and his reputation, suggesting that while he is a fearful individual, there is no basis for him to possess supernatural attributes, and his reputation as a supernatural being is based on rumors circulating among other characters. One of the few times that Otto Béringhem claims supernatural powers before the close of the novel is during a meeting with King Louis XI. In a humorous scene, a dwarf has hidden himself within the king's tent to eavesdrop on the king's conversations. Otto, while not in league with this dwarf, learns of his presence and pretends that he is a spirit named Nasboth. He commands him to show himself to the king, and after some difficulty and help from the count himself the dwarf finally hops onto the table near the king. "Nasboth était un esprit de forme irrégulière et peu gracieuse: une tête énorme, armée de cheveux hérissés sur un corps dont l'exiguïté pouvait paraître assurément un fait surnaturel. Le roi posa précipitamment son saint Michel d'or entre lui et Nasboth. Nasboth faisait peur au roi" (92). In the event that readers suspect supernatural powers after this strange apparition, they are quickly corrected as Otto picks up the spirit and carries him away underneath his arm, simply stating, "J'emporte ce qui est à moi" (92). Surely a spirit who introduced itself into the tent on its own does not need to be carried away. The king, much like the reader, is not duped into believing that Nasboth is what Otto claims him to be. "C'est un nain, se dit-il, un nain de chair et d'os..." (92).

Recalling Rabkin's conception of the fantastic, which is brought about through what he calls anti-expected events, *La Fée des grèves* helps to create a situation for the anti-expected

ending of *L'Homme de fer*. The dismissal of magic in *La Fée des grèves* causes readers to expect a rational understanding for magical events in *L'Homme de fer*. The idea of supernatural forces is then once again accepted and embraced as the novel concludes. The count Otto Béringhem's eventual capture is brought about by Jeannin and his daughter Jeannine. Otto and Jeannin each lead a small army, numbering around one-hundred and twenty soldiers, one side populated with demon-like soldiers and the other with English archers. Both sides, Otto's and Jeannin's, call upon supernatural powers to assist in the fight.

Chaque fois que la voix du Maudit criait son appel magique: Airam! Airam!
La voix du bon Jeannin s'élevait pour jeter vers le ciel le nom béni de la mère du Christ.

Tout à coup, au milieu de la mêlée, on vit paraître une jeune fille aux longs cheveux dénoués. Elle avait le sourire aux lèvres.

C'était Jeannine qui levait au-dessus de sa tête la médaille bénite que lui avait donnée sa mère mourante.

Alors, la terre trembla sous les pas des combattants; on entendit, au lointain comme un sourd éclat de foudre. La nuit tomba sur la table des festins. Les femmes couronnées de fleurs s'évanouirent comme autant de fantômes. Des ossements desséchés sonnèrent dans les armures des chevaliers des Îles.

Otto Béringhem et ses deux faux évêques, les ministres de ses enchantements, étaient seuls vivants. Les hommes d'armes du bon écuyer Jeannin n'eurent pas de peine à les charger de chaînes. (178)

This scene is highly charged with Catholic mysticism. Otto's magic word "airam" is the name Maria reversed, a variant on Christ's mother's name. Marie is also the word that Jeannin uses

counter to Otto's cries during the battle. Féval's Catholic heritage shows in the employment of this mystical motif as well as the blessed medallion that Jeannine presents at the culminating point of the battle. The blessed medallion is sacred, and as such, Otto and his cursed army are vulnerable to it, a trait which will be reflected later in Stoker's tale, where he describes how a vampire can be imprisoned by one placing a sacramental wafer used for communion onto the door of its mausoleum. The symbols of the blessed medallion and the use of "Marie" to combat a monstrous creature, this *ogre des îles*, mark a pivotal point in the narrative where the historical has been set aside, yielding instead to the fictional or mystical. At this moment there is the opportunity, like with all fantastic tales, to return to the rational, and by extension to the historical, traits of the narrative, or conversely, to continue with the supernatural (fictional). If the text offered a rational explanation for the soldiers falling at the presentation of the medallion, readers could return to the rational understanding of the story they cultivated for *La Fée des grèves*. Nevertheless, the marvelous aspect of the novel remains as the novel reaches the conclusion, thus disallowing a rational understanding of the text.

This battle is eclipsed in grandeur by Otto's execution, which reinforces his name as "the iron man." As the executioner strikes his neck with the sword, he is shown to be impervious to the blow. "C'était le bien nommé, cet homme de fer! Il restait debout; son froid sourire n'avait point quitté ses lèvres. Pas une goutte de sang à sa nuque, -mais une large brèche au glaive de l'exécuteur qui avait reculé, blême d'épouvante, jusqu'au rebord de l'échafaud!" (183). Otto then causes fires to engulf portions of the city of Rennes by repeatedly calling out his magic word. Amidst the panic that ensues, the final triumph over the ogre of the isles comes from a reclusive monk who "était monté sur un âne comme Notre-Seigneur, et portait à la main un crucifix" (185). Otto Béringhem becomes subjected to the will of the monk and is executed by Berthe, the

daughter of Reine and Aubry de Kergariou. This mystical conclusion is dependent upon magical elements rather than the rational explanation that dismisses the supernatural. Unlike *La Fée des grèves*, the novel for which *L'Homme de fer* is the sequel, *L'Homme de fer* dismisses the historical background in which it was established, highlights the supernatural aspects of the tale and presents an opposing structure to its preceding novel, *La Fée des grèves*. *La Fée des grèves* opens with a funeral procession and is anchored in historical events. Its supernatural elements, such as the nature of the fairy that intervenes in the tale, are only briefly permitted to be considered as supernatural before revealing the rational explanations that are only misunderstood as mystical and allow the tale to close without any lingering suspicions concerning the fairy. *L'Homme de fer*, however, when influenced by its predecessor, presents the ogre, Otto Béringhem, as a real individual who is misconstrued as mystical. His power and influence depend upon his reputation and aptitude for political negotiation. This reasonable figure is transformed into a marvelous entity, defying the sensible foundation the preceding portions of the text establish. The tale's conclusion is that of a journey taken, resembling the introduction of *La Fée des grèves*, but this journey's destination is that of an execution instead of a funeral.

The fantastic, as has been shown, creates a hesitation where the reader or narratee question supernatural events for plausibility. A similar reservation is evoked for the reader of a historical novel who is caught between trusting in the seemingly historical events of the narrative and doubting what appears to be created for the purpose of the novel. Even though Manzoni's point that an author should not indicate or otherwise draw attention to events or characters as either fictional or historical is well taken, there remains an intrinsic desire among attentive readers of a historical novel to question and identify the authentic and artificial for themselves. Just as success is measured for the author of a fantastic tale by the reader's difficulty in

identifying what is real, so, too, can one measure the author of historical fiction by his seamless juxtaposition of fact and fiction. For Féval, in combining these two genres, the ultimate goal is clearly that of achieving a verisimilitude of history, as it would be difficult to convince readers that supernatural events and figures have a rational place in historical studies. The vampire plotting to kill Napoleon Bonaparte, the fairy avenging Gilles de Bretagne's death and the ogre threatening the life of François II would have caused researchers and laymen alike to be significantly preoccupied with them had there been a credible foundation for their existence. However, rarely is it the case that something supernatural is collectively recognized and verified by historical facts, since the peculiar and strange is often studied and scrutinized until all mystery that surrounds it is dispelled. These figures are thus creations of the author, drawn from the superstitious background of his native Brittany and influenced by his Catholic upbringing. Aside from amusing, frightening and diverting, the figures within these novels also serve to modify the perception of the history they portray. The history that surrounds Féval's novels, most notably society's perception of what is now known as multiple personalities as well as secret societies, influenced Féval's writings to the point that they permeate the pages of his texts.

CHAPTER 4

TWO MINDS ARE BETTER THAN ONE

Paul Féval's first major literary success came with his *Les Mystères de Londres*, a commissioned work that Féval admittedly hoped would benefit from the recent success of Eugène Sue's *Les Mystères de Paris*.¹³ When it was first serialized in *Le Courrier français*, it was published under the ostensibly British pseudonym, Francis Trollope, giving a façade of authenticity to the readers of this supposed British tale. Féval had never visited London before writing this tale that purports to follow a man falsely accused of a crime who goes underground, then resurfaces years later with a new identity. This text, predating *Le Comte de Monte-Cristo*, resembles Dumas's famous novel which chronicles the false imprisonment of Edmond Dantes and his subsequent revenge. In truth, nineteenth-century France is abundant in examples of mistaken and multiple identities. Even Féval, who employed a pseudonym as a second identity, shared this characteristic with many of the fictional characters he created. The multiplication of identities, both in a physical sense as well as psychological, is apparent, for example, in *La Vampire*, *Le Bossu* and to a lesser extent *La Ville-vampire*. Todorov explains that "La multiplication de la personnalité, prise à la lettre, est une conséquence immédiate du passage entre matière et esprit: on est plusieurs personnes mentalement, on le devient physiquement" (122). Readers of fantastic tales find replicas of figures within narratives in the form of paintings, reflections, or even a physical double such as a doppelganger or an estranged twin. While their presentation may vary, this doubling of an individual calls into question the very essence of identity. In Féval's works, the question of identity and the foundation of a personality are

¹³ Sue's *Les Mystères de Paris* was first printed in *Le Journal des débats* from June 1842 to October 1843. Since its publication, it has spurred the creation of works that follow a similar pattern. Féval's *Les Mystères de Londres* and Rusiecki's *Petits mystères de Varsovie* are two of the "crowd of imitators eager to capitalize on the mysteries formula by focusing on the dark secrets of the city" (James 311).

displayed in conjunction with fantastic elements and supernatural creatures. Encounters with these supernatural creatures, elements and events bring about the multiplication or derangement of an identity. The characters take on a plethora of names which correlate to diverse personas. Principal among these supernatural elements that incite a change in identity is the vampire. Vampires take over both the mind and the body of their victims, and vampire-like brotherhoods are created that serve as a doubled identity for society as a whole. Brian Stableford attempts an explanation for this doubling in the afterword of his translation of *La Vampire* (translated as *The Vampire Countess*), stating that “Féval did not believe in vampires” (322). Stableford continues suggesting that disbelief in this supernatural creature appears to have posed a serious moral problem for Féval, accounting for the vampire’s lack of a solid identity and perhaps suggesting that this tale is not truly about a vampire. It may be overstressing the point to say that Féval must believe in what he writes about, especially given the amount of content that contains overtly supernatural elements. It remains obvious, though, that the vampire in this novel, as well as in others, is the source of ambiguity and that the uncertainty that surrounds the vampire is connected to the duplication of identity. When considering these literal and metaphorical vampires within *La Vampire*, *La Ville-vampire*, and *Le Bossu*, alongside medical cases of dual or multiple personalities, the vampire presents a metaphysical justification for what will later be understood as a psychological malady either by embodying several personalities itself or instigating alterations in the identities of other characters.

The medical cases of multiple personalities began to surface a few decades after Féval had already written most of his works. It is impossible for Féval to have known of these cases since many of those presented here are studied after the publication of his novels. However, there are similarities to be found between the subjects of medical case studies of multiple personality

disorders and figures within fantastic literature that experience deranged identities. These individuals or characters appearing in novels that were once the witches, sorcerers and demented bodies of horror tales become objects of study and curiosity. Nineteenth-century France is a unique setting where this change can be viewed. The influences of the Enlightenment, while not universal, seem to have affected and even altered the mindset of the general population. However, the engrained dogmatic roots have not been entirely removed. Superstitions and other beliefs are not entirely relinquished and that allows for rational thoughts to collide with the mythic, religious and even superstitious beliefs. Thus madmen, multiple personalities, and marvelous creatures share both a rational explanation and a supernatural origin. This distinction between the rational and the supernatural explanations for multiple personalities conforms to the nature of fantastic tales as explained by Todorov and accounts for its abundant presence in them. In his lecture on “Double Personalities,” Pierre Janet discusses some of his research on what would now be considered dissociative identity or multiple personality disorder. Janet describes just how a second personality is an extension, or rather a symptom, of hysteria. “The somnambulisms which we consider as the essential phenomenon of hysteria are apt to present a new metamorphosis, whose scientific interest is very great, when they are so protracted and complicated as to give rise to what is called double existences, double personalities” (66). In Janet’s study, the occurrences of double personalities coincide with a strange period of sleep called syncope. This sleep, unlike other forms of slumber, is followed by the sufferer waking with new and remarkably different personality traits, or in some cases, possessing no recollection of their original life or “prime state” (80). We can see evidence of a similar sleep in Gautier’s tales, wherein the protagonist awakens from a dream at the end of his supernatural encounter.¹⁴

¹⁴See *La Morte amoureuse* and *Le Pied de momie*.

The importance of sleep is nearly lost in Féval's fantastic tales, with the exception of *La Ville-vampire*.

La Ville-vampire, as it has been explained in previous chapters, is a tale which takes place almost entirely in Ann Ward's dream the night before her wedding to William Radcliffe. The fantastic journey, the supernatural creatures, and her eventual contact with the spirit of a murdered woman are revealed to be a dream. This novel operates along a similar framework as that of Gautier's *Le Pied de momie*. In Gautier's work the narrator projects doubt onto the narratee by causing the narrative dream world to spill over into the narrative "real" world by replacing the real mummy's foot with a dreamt figurine (Gautier 666). For Féval, the dreamt object that links the narrative dream world to the narrative real world is replaced by a poster the narrator depicts Ann to have seen both in her dream and after having awoken from it. In both instances she is traveling with a man named Grey-Jack, one of the employees of her family's estate. They encounter a poster which reads: "*Capital excitement!!! Dévoration d'une jeune vierge par le vrai vampire de Peterwardein qui boira plusieurs pintes de sang comme à l'ordinaire avec la musique des gardes à cheval Wonderful attraction indeed*" (40). After having awoken from her dream, when Ann sees this same poster again, still in the company of Grey-Jack, she asks what he remembers of it. "Elle indiqua cette affiche à Grey-Jack; mais ce vieux et fidèle serviteur ne se souvenait de rien. Le phénomène qui a servi de base à ce récit était absolument personnel à notre Anna" (182). For the reader, it is as if both Ann and Grey-Jack take on double identities. These identities are the Ann and Grey-Jack of the narrative real world and the Ann and Grey-Jack of the narrative dream world. Their physical appearances, mannerisms and personalities are seemingly identical, and yet their experiences differ. Considering, first, the case of Grey-Jack, his two existences are divided: neither the dream Grey-

Jack nor the “real” Grey-Jack is aware of the other’s existence. This is not unlike one medical study Janet discusses further in his lecture, a study conducted by M. Azam. His patient, Felida X, demonstrated two existences. “During the greater part of her life, these two periods alternated, and it was only in her old age that one of the two periods, the second, - that is to say the better one, - during which the subject was more active and had a total memory, encroached upon the first and filled almost the whole of her life” (81). As Ann questions Grey-Jack of the poster which mentions the vampire of Peterwardein, he is not able to recollect what transpired for the Grey-Jack of the dream. For Ann however, as she wakes from her dream and becomes aware of the dream Ann and her experiences, she demonstrates her awareness of the other identity through her recollection of the poster seen in the narrative dream world. This is how M. Azam describes the second state of Felida X, who over time obtains an awareness of her prime state and understands it to be different from her alter state. However, this first state is not reciprocally privileged to the experiences of the alter (alternate personality). Felida X “would seldom [remain] three or four days in her former state,” but this time was considered “intolerable, for she had forgotten three-quarters of her existence, and this gave rise to the most comical situations. She feared to pass for mad, and in her anguish hid herself till a new syncope restored her to her former state . . .” (81). Because Ann never returns to sleep in the narrative, we assume that the dreaming Ann remains unaware of the other, non-dreaming Ann’s existence. Before considering the significance of other secondary identities created by Féval, it would be beneficial to note that he was not alone in employing the doubling or even multiplying of identities in nineteenth-century literature. Perhaps one of the most well-known cases of multiple identities in literature is found in Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, a case where science is the source

of an alter personality. Féval and others, however, created tales that demonstrate how supernatural elements, and not scientific developments, incite a split in identity.

Théophile Gautier's *Avatar* and *La Morte amoureuse* as well as Hoffman's *Der Sandmann* each illustrate the multiplying of identity through the experience of a presumably supernatural event. In *Avatar*, Octave de Saville and the count Labinski exchange identities via M. Cherbonneau's pseudo-medical assistance. The count is forced to live in Octave's body, whereas Octave attempts to capitalize upon his new experience by attempting, unsuccessfully, to seduce the countess. *La Morte amoureuse* depicts Raoul, the newly initiated priest who, once confronted with Cécile's corpse, begins to lead a double life; one as a priest, and the other as Cécile's lover and companion. He understands that these two lives are contradictory and that they cannot both be real; nevertheless, he remains unable to distinguish which is the dream and which is reality. *Der Sandmann*'s Nathaniel sees the same identity incorporating the three bodies of the lawyer Coppelius, the optician Giuseppe Coppola and the sandman himself. It is no coincidence that within these tales the doubled characters are either the supernatural characters themselves or have had close contact with the supernatural. In a natural state, as indicated by social standards, an individual has only one identity. Temperaments may change, and convictions may fluctuate, but identity is unified into one personality. Aberrations to this standard are perceived as a social flaw as well as a mental illness. For Féval, the encounters with the supernatural produce a change in figures within the text, which results in a disassociation of identities. The multiple identities that are brought forth in *La Vampire*, like the dream and awake representations of Ann and Grey-Jack, are to be considered as alters, and within each body or each mind several alters are maintained.

For certain individuals in these novels, as one alter becomes apparent there is a physical change that accompanies it. In the fictional world, the possessor of the new identity, unlike the patients in Janet's study, benefits from the new personality. In many cases the dual identity protects the characters. In *La Vampire*, however, the victims of a depicted attack are not protected by an alternate identity. The modern psychological understanding of multiple personality disorder proposes that the creation of alter identities is a means of coping with trauma, a means of protecting oneself from the memory of a difficult experience. Commenting upon the case study of Debra Rothschild, one of the most well-known cases of multiple personality disorder, Elizabeth Hegeman writes,

The degree of dissociation represented by a "part", or alter, is the result of trauma that is extreme- usually bodily intrusive trauma before age 7. This is often, though not always, betrayal trauma; that is, not just the physical pain of physical abuse, but the awareness of being the object of malevolence or hatred from someone who is supposed to be a caregiver. (189)

For the early cases of dual or multiple personalities, this principle of trauma remains a factor in the creation of an identity.

The case study of Louis Vivet is one wherein the diagnosis of dual personalities is considered as a subcategory to hysteria. Vivet is regarded by some as one of the first modern multiple personality disorder cases, although there still remains considerable disagreement between researchers as to whether or not his disorder is iatrogenic (influenced by his treating physicians, either by suggestion or hypnosis) or genuinely brought about through childhood influences (Faure et al. 110). Should his condition of a disassociated personality be genuine, this new personality would be considered a means of emotional protection against the abuse he

received at the hands of his alcoholic mother. While his symptoms and the subsequent research concerning multiple personality disorder take place near the end of the nineteenth century, and thus do not directly influence the literature, there remains a relationship between these literary manifestations of multiple personality disorder and those medical cases that are to come a few decades later. The literary evidence reflecting cases of psychosis, disassociation, hysteria or, quite simply, madness, represents an increasing collective awareness of madness as a psychological imperfection and not as a supernatural phenomenon.

When there is a split in identity, a new or alternate personality is created. In recent years, those diagnosed as symptomatic with multiple personality disorder have reevaluated what it means to have an alternate personality. Rather than perceiving it as a disease, it has simply become a part of the self, each alter maintaining a piece of the collective identity. This is a palpable difference from the perception many citizens of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have of the disorder, where when it is not viewed as a psychological defect associated with hysteria, it would instead be considered a demonic possession. As Reiber indicates in “The Duality of the Brain and the multiplicity of the mind: can you have it both ways?,” this mental disorder is not a new phenomenon, but rather has received attention from scientists back into the eighteenth century. It was not until the nineteenth century, however, with popular literature and scientific studies both turning their attention to dual or multiple identities, that a greater understanding gains a solid foothold. “During the nineteenth century the problem of multiple personality was, for the most part, compatible with and influenced by a more romantic view of human nature than its eighteenth-century predecessor” (4-5). Thanks to research conducted by Jean-Martin Charcot on hysteria late in the nineteenth century, work that later was continued by his students, Pierre Janet and Sigmund Freud, more light can be shed upon the nature of this

disorder. The research from each of these individuals is unified as they claim it to be an appendage to hysteria.

Féval, as I have suggested, deploys the new alter personality to fortify and protect the figures within the narrative. A hierarchy of power is created in *La Vampire*, a hierarchy which places Cadoudal, Sévérin and the countess above Napoleon Bonaparte. In previous discussions, their power and influence is based upon Sévérin's swordsmanship, the countess's cunning, and Cadoudal's heroic nature. As study continues of this text, it becomes clear that there is another layer of power and influence by which readers are given an understanding of the positions that these figures occupy. These three characters, as well as others in the text, are given multiple names or identities. As the narrative begins, following the narrator's presentation of the miraculous catch, the narratee follows a man without identity. He is first referred to as "un homme" who was walking down the road. Later, this man who will be known to the narratee as Jean-Pierre Sévérin is called "patron" by a construction worker, a name which is elaborated upon to become "le patron du marché neuf," referring to the morgue over which he will preside (Féval 18). He is renamed "M. le gardien" by the young medical student, Germain Patou (22). Among other names he is also called M. Jean-Pierre, M. le gardien juré and Gâteloup.

For Jean-Pierre Sévérin, there is a physical change that accompanies his alter that is most observable as he first meets Ezéchiél, the fisherman who owns the establishment, *La Pêche miraculeuse*. The alter, Gâteloup, is the personality dedicated to strength and heroism. He is set apart as a champion soldier and is defined by his ability with the sword and by his tact in battle. Sévérin arrives in the cabaret easily noticed, wearing clothes more proper than the rest of the patrons, but he is not recognized by any of them. He is received with hostility; Ezéchiél at first refuses to serve him wine, claiming that the wine is obviously not good enough for Sévérin's

type. Sévérin informs Ezéchiel that he knows that the supposed miraculous catch, where Ezéchiel found a ring inside of a fish's belly and from which he was able to fund the cabaret, was orchestrated by a woman. When Sévérin asks for her name, Ezéchiel calls his patrons to rally behind him and capture Sévérin, falsely accusing him of conspiring with Cadoudal to assassinate Bonaparte. During this fight, the narratee sees Sévérin's demeanor change from a proper and pleasant man to a calculated and nearly superhuman fighter, dispatching all of the assailants with only a fishing rod as a weapon, and doing so without receiving any harm in return. This swordsman is Gâteloup. His adversaries are able to see his face clearly as he makes his way to a dark back room where "La lampe éclairait sa figure si extraordinairement calme, qu'il y a eu un temps d'arrêt dans le mouvement des assaillants" (38). One woman calls him a madman, but none are able to recognize him. It is later, when another woman notices "un cœur brodé d'or et encadré de rosettes" that he wore underneath his coat, that she identifies him as Gâteloup. "-Ah! fit-elle en attachant sur le patron un regard stupéfait, c'est bien pis que le diable !... comment n'ai-je pas reconnu?... C'est M. Gâteloup!" (40). As soon as he is identified, the fight ceases and reverence and respect are paid to Gâteloup. Being a soldier, he would typically be associated with death and glory. However, the narrator explains that Gâteloup is much like Achilles, the hero to whom enemy nations felt no shame in surrendering without a fight. Death, strangely, is foreign to Gâteloup. Even later, as he offers his loyalty to Cadoudal, whom he believes to be M. Morinière, he is denied the opportunity to battle others to the death, and instead is turned away by Cadoudal himself. This is because death is relegated to a different alter, one continually surrounded by death and preoccupied with its perpetual influence. Just as Gâteloup with a sword (or a fishing pole) is able to deal impressive blows, the dark reality of heroism is balanced by

another alter, and death is consigned to the *patron du marché neuf*, *M. le gardien juré*, the future director of the morgue.

While engaged in a discussion with M. Berthellemot, Sévérin speaks of the morgue and wonders what will come of it. It is only logical that the one surrounded by death daily would think of it more often, which is precisely why *le patron*'s personality is so closely associated with the macabre and the miserable. He wonders who will be the first client, the first victim to be put on display for others to identify:

...et c'est une chose étonnante: je songe à cela depuis bien des semaines. Je me demande, *malgré moi*: qui viendra là le premier? Certes, c'est une maison à laquelle on ne peut pas porter bonheur, mais enfin, il y a des présages. Qui viendra là le premier? un malfaiteur? un joueur? un buveur? un mari trompé? une jeune fille déçue? le résultat d'un infortune ou le produit d'un crime? (132, emphasis added)

Sévérin mentioning “*malgré moi*” is far more telling than it may otherwise seem when we consider his personality as director of the morgue as one of his alters. We are to understand that *malgré moi* would indicate that these thoughts are produced without Sévérin initiating them, or rather, even though he makes an effort not to think about them, they are continually manifest. Where, then, are these thoughts produced, or more precisely, from whom do they come? Using Janet's terminology, the division between Sévérin's prime state and his alter the *patron* is breeched. This shows how one alter influences the other. The relationship between these alters is further complicated as this shows that they are not completely separate, but neither are they fully integrated. A similar phenomenon is brought forth in the case of Louis Vivet. For Vivet, a disconnect is thought to exist between the two alters, leaving each one mostly unaware of the

other's doings. However, Vivet's doctor documented where peaceful traits from one personality have at times breached the psychological divide and have been manifest in Vivet's personality that is typically more malicious (Faure et al. 105-08). For Vivet and other medical cases involving multiple personalities, the patients and their medical doctors are left at times perplexed by the strange and seemingly inexplicable alterations that take place in the minds of the patients. For the literary figures, the narratee expecting a simple narrative is disappointed by the lack of singular identities which characters themselves possess.

In *La Vampire*, it is the vampire who is endowed with the greatest number of identities. Beyond the possibility of the vampire existing as a secret society, which will be addressed in more detail below, there are other alters attributed to it. These different names and identities confound readers who hope to enjoy a linear tale. Instead, readers are forced to build connections, seek for clues and even assert assumptions to explain, dismiss or quite simply account for the various identities associated with the vampire. The narratee is presented with Marcian Gregoryi, Lila and Addhéma, all as physical incarnations of the vampire. One of these alters refers to the others when speaking with the captive, René de Kervoz. First, she introduces herself by stating: "Je suis Lila, une pauvre fille de Danube, éprouvée déjà par bien de douleurs, mais à qui le destin semble enfin sourire . . ." (92). Lila explains that she is the sister to the countess and that their mother died at the age of sixteen, victim to the vampire. However, Lila is one identity, one mask the vampire wears, another layer of protection, distancing the identity of Lila from that of Addhéma, the vampire. This becomes clear as another trait of the vampire is revealed. "Addhéma ne pouvait se livrer à un amant avant de lui avoir raconté sa propre histoire" (95). The curse of this vampire requires her to tell her own story to a lover before giving herself to him. Should she not respect this rule, her true self, the decrepit and decaying skeletal figure,

would be revealed to her lover. The presence of Lila, and even the countess Marcian Gregoryi, creates a separation in identities that allows the vampire to fulfill the demands of the curse without revealing her true identity. She tells lovers of the vampire Addhéma, without them knowing that she is the vampire. While these identities are integral to understanding who or what the vampire in *La Vampire* is, they are scarcely representative of the number of identities Féval attributes to the creature. In applying a victim's scalp to her own head, the vampire profits from a constant renewal of life and identity. She thereby creates a new personality with every victim that she claims. The piles of skulls that adorn her home represent the daunting number of identities she has appropriated.

The historical figures in *La Vampire*, Napoleon Bonaparte and Georges Cadoudal, are likewise provided with protective multiple identities. While Bonaparte's identities are easily reduced to the titles that he achieves, it is in the acquisition of these titles that he is fortified against other figures. The protection these titles offer is apparent when Bonaparte is most vulnerable, as the count and countess Gregoryi stand with him in his tent. Here, he has yet to achieve the position of the first consul and is far from becoming an emperor. The weakness that is shown in Bonaparte scarcely evading death transforms into the strength of the countess. While these roles imply different personalities, another moment in the text highlights two contradictory Bonapartes. As both the countess Marcian Gregoryi and Jean-Pierre Sévérin meet with Bonaparte's agents in the prefecture, they likewise both bear a letter claiming Napoleon as its author. The identities in each letter are represented by differing signatures, one being signed "Napoleon Bonaparte" and the other signed simply with "N***." Both letters require the chief of police to cooperate with its bearer, Sévérin, for the first letter, and the countess Gregoryi for the second. The divergence between these two signatures, representing separate identities, if not in

the variance of the signature then by the allegiance to opposing causes, demonstrates the multiple identities of Bonaparte: the one aligned with Sévérin in an effort to rescue Angèle, and the other aligned with the countess in order to apprehend both Sévérin and Cadoudal.

Aside from different titles, Napoleon is also given another and more menacing identity from the vampire herself. She describes Napoleon Bonaparte as the most impressive and terrible of the vampires within *La Vampire*. This alternate identity is clarified as Lila seduces René de Kervoz. Speaking of the future emperor, Féval's female vampire explains:

Je vois partout cette terrible chose qui a nom vampirisme: ce don de vivre aux dépens du sang d'autrui. Et avec quoi sont faites toutes ces gloires, sinon avec du sang?

Avec du sang, dit-on, les hermétiques créaient de l'or; il leur en fallait des tonnes. La gloire, plus précieuse que l'or, en veut des torrents.

Et sur ce rouge océan un homme surnage, vampire sublime, qui a multiplié sa vie par cent mille morts. (103)

As Bonaparte draws from the lives and the blood of others, he shows how he is a parasite, continually drawing in life without granting any recompense. The female vampire lives off one life at a time; in the context of the narrative, Bonaparte's host has yet to be defined, as he continually incorporates more territory under his rule. The novel closes with one final anecdote that Féval explains to be the fantastic ending of the tale. In this ending, he postulates that the countess is indeed a vampire and her supernatural characteristics are genuine. The money she has taken and the beauty she has acquired from her victims are amassed in order for her to purchase a night with her husband, the vampire Szador. Perhaps Szador's words best represent Féval's opinion on the emperor and the price subjects pay underneath his rule.

Il faut du sang pour amasser l'or, et l'or qu'on prodigue fait couler le sang. Il y a un lien mystique entre le sang et l'or. Ce troupeau stupide qui peuple le monde, les hommes, nous appelle des vampires. Ils ont horreur de nous et tendent sans défiance, leurs veines à ces autres vampires qu'on nomme les habiles, les heureux, les forts, sans songer que l'opulence d'un seul, ou la puissance d'un seul, ou sa gloire ne peut jamais être faite qu'avec le sang de tous: sang, sueur, moelle, pensée, vaillance. Des milliers travaillent, un seul profite... (232)

For Féval, as is demonstrated in *La Vampire*, Bonaparte is the one who benefits from the blood and sweat of the masses. The vampires of this text demonstrate supernatural traits while presenting rational explanations, creating a dichotomy wherein the fantastic can reside. They cause the narrative to espouse the genre of historical fiction by integrating prominent figures within the plot. Most importantly however, Féval defines the vampire as a parasite, taking blood, life, riches and time from both individuals and masses. Is not this one of the reasons that such creatures incite fear so readily in literature? Vampires, like the Bonaparte of Féval's text, transgress the function of society which is collectively to give and take. By only taking, the female vampire leaves her young victims bald and dead. It will be shown later how the secret society, *la ligue de la vertu*, deprives the rich of their wealth and seeks to assassinate the future emperor. As a vampire, Bonaparte consumes the lives of soldiers; like an alchemist transforming lead into gold, he converts their death into his own glory. Bonaparte's identities, as an emperor, general, consul or vampire, are set at odds against his rival within the novel, Georges Cadoudal, who likewise possesses multiple identities.

Cadoudal's alternate identities underscore the notion that these aliases provide a protective barrier within the narrative, for he remains unscathed by enemy forces until his two

protective identities fail. M. Morinière, the name by which Jean-Pierre Sévérin knows him, has already been discovered by the *secrétaire général*, M. Berthellemot. Referring to the meeting between Sévérin and M. Morinière, M. Berthellemot explains that Sévérin was seen with Morinière in the street, an accusation that exposes Cadoudal and Morinière to be the same individual (120). Even with M. Morinière exposed, a third identity continues to protect Cadoudal in the text. He appears disguised as a woman at a window as the countess arrives at the home where he has been hiding.

Rue Saint-Hyacinthe-Saint-Michel, la voiture s'arrêta devant une petite allée borgne. La comtesse frappe à la porte. On ne répondit pas. Elle fit descendre le cocher et lui ordonna de cogner avec le manche de son fouet, ce qu'il fit.

Après dix minutes d'attente, une fenêtre s'ouvrit à l'entre-sol, immédiatement au-dessus de la porte de l'allée.

-À qui en avez-vous, bonnes gens? demanda la voix flûtée d'une grosse femme qui parut en déshabillé de nuit.

-Je veux voir le citoyen Morinière, marchand de chevaux, répondit la comtesse.

[. . .]

-Puisqu'il n'est pas ici...

-Je crois qu'il est ici.

-Alors, je mens, foi de Dieu!...

-Oui, vous mentez, monsieur Morinière...

La grosse femme recula et l'on entendit le bruit sec de la batterie d'un pistolet.

-Femme, gronda une voix qui n'était plus flûte du tout, dis ton nom et ce que tu veux...

-Je suis Angèle Lenoir, fille de madame Séverin du Châtelet et fiancée de votre neveu René de Kervoz.

[. . .]

-Vous jouez gros jeu, belle dame. Je connais la fiancée de mon neveu. Vous n'êtes pas Angèle Séverin.

-Je suis, répliqua bravement la comtesse, Costanza Ceracchi, la belle-sœur du statuaire Giuseppe, mort sur l'échafaud. (175-76)

A difference lies between the names taken on by Cadoudal and that of the vampire. While both of them are correctly accused of taking on a false identity, Cadoudal as the large woman in the window and the vampire as Angèle, the vampire seamlessly establishes a new identity for herself and thus restores the protection that the new identity offers. Cadoudal, on the other hand, is left vulnerable with the identity of Morinière, whose cohesiveness has already faltered and thereby does not allow for protection. Once Cadoudal loses the protective layers of his alter identities, he becomes weakened and vulnerable. In short, he becomes as the real Angèle Lenoir.

Angèle is Séverin's stepdaughter, and unlike other figures within this text she is not given supplemental identities. She is attached to René as his lover, his fiancée and the mother of his child. These multiple roles would seem to lend themselves to alternate identities, but each of them is simply an extension of René de Kervoz. Thus, as she witnesses René through the window with Lila, René becomes detached from Angèle and affixed to Lila. The defining portion of Angèle's identity is removed from her. In depressive states she quietly nurses her child, softly weeping, and remains reclusive in her tiny bedroom. In the letters she writes to René, recovered

by Patou and Sévérin, her intentions for suicide and infanticide are clear. Her death, either as suicide or at the hands of the vampire, is simply the prolonged conclusion to the emotionally fatal blow she previously received. Suicide becomes less consequential for her as she has already understood her life to have ended. “Je ne me tuerai pas toute seule. Je prendrai ma petite Angèle dans mes bras, avec sa robe blanche et sa couronne. Je l’emmènerai où je vais. Que ferait-elle sans sa mère?” (190). Her desire to kill her own child is rationalized by the loss of René. Without René, Angèle cannot live, and without her, their child is helpless. While for some, Angèle’s lack of a supplemental identity may seem trivial or coincidental, its significance is magnified when one considers that even secondary characters are endowed with multiple identities within this fantastic tale.

The cabaret owner, Ezéchiél, a man initially hostile to Jean-Pierre Sévérin and working under the protection of the vampire, later reappears no longer as the proprietor of the cabaret, but instead as an officer of peace working under the direction of M. Berthellemot. He explains to Sévérin that he changed his appearance in order not to be recognized when he returns to go fishing at his old spots. When Sévérin is investigating Angèle’s disappearance with the four officers provided by Berthellemot, he only recognizes Ezéchiél when they return to *La Pêche miraculeuse* and Ezéchiél uses his key to open the door. “Est-ce toi, Ezéchiél?” Sévérin asks. Ezéchiél replies:

Pour vous servir, monsieur Gâteloup, si toutefois j’en suis capable, répondit le quatrième agent, qui avança chapeau bas. J’ai mis comme ça un peu de barbe à mon menton pour la gloriole de ne pas passer pour en être quand je reviens pêcher dans le quartier. J’ai ma figure tous les jours en bourgeois, et ma physionomie du métier; ça fait-il du mal à quelqu’un? (179)

After having first encountered Jean-Pierre Sévérin, Ezéchiél expressed concern to the countess's servant, Paraxin. It would seem that her threatening him with death is what prompted him to initiate his own efforts to secure his safety. Aside from the other fishermen and former clients of his cabaret, Ezéchiél is ultimately protecting himself from the vampire by hiding behind his turned-down hat and bearded face. His physical appearance and not his name alters his identity from an avaricious fisherman to a reserved man of the law.

The multiple personalities that are seen in *La Vampire* differ greatly from those found in *La Ville-vampire*. In *La Vampire*, the identities are found and confined to one body, whereas for *La Ville-vampire*, the vampire conquers his victim and takes over both the identity and the body. Once in his possession, the body and identity are subjected to his will and become a slave to the vampire master. The multiplicity of identities in *La Vampire* is fluid and changing. The figures within the text naturally meld together into a conglomerate whole, such as Jean-Pierre Sévérin and Gâteloup, which is a source of the confusion that surrounds them. In *La Ville-vampire*, the natural presentation of identity is replaced with mechanical and automated appropriation of identities. M. Goëtzi, the novel's vampire, is empowered with the ability to take the body of his victim and use it as extensions of himself. The narrator describes the following scene when Ann Ward arrives at the inn *La Bière et l'Amitié*:

Un groupe se tenait immobile au pied de l'horloge. Il était composé d'un gros homme qui n'avait que le cadre d'un visage, c'est-à-dire une chevelure et une barbe. Un perroquet de grande taille perchait sur son épaule; à sa droite un petit garçon à l'air méchant s'appuyait sur un cerceau; à sa gauche, un monstrueux chien couleur de chair qui avait une figure presque humain et se tenait raide sur ses quatre pattes écartées.

Enfin, dans l'enceinte du comptoir, une femme chauve et très grasse dormait en rendant des ronflements aigus. Avec le tic-tac de l'horloge qui retentissait d'une façon profonde et singulière, c'était le seul bruit qu'on pût entendre dans l'auberge.

Elle éprouvait un sentiment indéfinissable, mais qui n'était pas de la frayeur. Et voulez-vous savoir une chose singulière? En dehors de son émotion si grave, *Elle* se disait que tous ces gens-là étaient probablement les accessoires de la pendule et faisaient partie d'un système mécanique comme les personnages de l'horloge de Strasbourg. (54-55)

These accessories to the clock, the strange and seemingly lifeless beings that Ann witnesses, are all victims and subjects of the vampire, M. Goëtz. They have become a part of him, and thus appendages to him. They act according to his will and serve his purpose. Just as in *La Vampire*, where the countess receives new life from her victims, for the vampire in *La Ville-Vampire*, the consumption of a victim's blood sustains this supernatural creature's life. However, it also causes the victim to become incorporated into the vampire, meaning that the vampire obtains control of the body of his victim. There is a striking similarity in the consumption of blood which gives the consumer power in this text and the Christian practice of taking the symbolic blood of Christ. While they both lead to a transfer of power, it is the consumer in *La Ville-vampire* who is given dominance over the other. In the Christian tradition, the consumer symbolically subjects himself to the authority of the other, and in many instances, hopes to become even as Christ was. In both instances, blood is shown to be the essence of the being from which it came and the consumption is thought to grant the recipient with that essence, either to lead to perfection (as in the Christian tradition) or to appropriate the body from whom the blood came (as in *La Ville-*

vampire). During the incorporating process, the victims are subjected to the will of the vampire, even to the point that their physical appearance becomes supernaturally altered. This explains the various individuals who made up the *horloge de Strasbourg* previously described. Speaking of a future victim to one of his minions, one which serves as a physical double or twin, M. Goëtzi illuminates the narratee's understanding concerning this law of incorporation. "Quand nous aurons bu le sang de la belle Cornelia, répondit-il, qui m'empêchera de nous l'incorporer? Et y a-t-il une loi qui lui défende de lui laisser sa forme actuelle? Elle sera donc à la fois Miss Cornelia de Witt et M. Goëtzi" (102). He explains that the appropriation of the victim is both the pilfering and the colonization of identity. On the one hand, the victim's identity is taken. On the other hand, the old identity is not simply stolen but is altered and reflects the desires of the victor, the vampire.

The recurrence of multiple identities in Féval's novels proves to be a theme even in his novels that do not insist upon the presence of the supernatural powers. *Le Bossu*, arguably Féval's most well-known work, is framed around the very question of identity. Within this novel, however, the notion of a vampire as a supernatural being is not treated. Rather, the nature of the vampire that is set forth in this work is incarnate in both the protagonist, Henri Lagardère, and the antagonist, Philippe de Gonzague. These two characters fulfill the role of a vampire when they receive a renewal of life by stealing an identity. These two first come together by seeking the same prey. Philippe de Nevers, the victim they hunt, is a noble man of great fortune. His fortune draws Philippe de Gonzague, who hopes to receive it following Philippe de Nevers's death, as he is the heir to de Nevers's wealth. However, in addition to riches, de Nevers is also a man greatly skilled in swordplay, and he possesses the famous *botte de Nevers*, a fencing maneuver which is reputed to be immune to any parry or defense. Henri Lagardère seeks out de

Nevers to challenge him, sure that he possesses the talent to best the unyielding *botte de Nevers*. In challenging de Nevers, Lagardère wishes to inherit de Nevers's reputation as the greatest swordsman. He does receive that title, though not through the duel he had planned. Instead, by stumbling upon de Gonzague's plan to assassinate de Nevers and learning of de Nevers's secret marriage and child, he nobly attempts to assist de Nevers against de Gonzague's hired men. Lagardère and de Nevers are not able to defeat them all, and de Gonzague stabs de Nevers in the back. That deathly blow, the knife piercing the flesh like a vampire's tooth penetrates the neck, grants Lagardère and de Gonzague new identities and new life that directly reflect the life of their victim. Lagardère, watching over the well-being of de Nevers's child, takes her and flees France in order to keep her safe. From de Nevers's death, Lagardère begins to live de Nevers's life as a father, raising the child from her youngest years. However, since it has been discovered that de Nevers married, had a child and that the child's whereabouts are unknown, de Gonzague is no longer the direct heir of the fortune. As no one but de Gonzague's own servant and Lagardère know who truly killed de Nevers, de Gonzague marries de Nevers's widow, and thus legally assumes de Nevers's position as husband after his death. These two men live for nearly two decades according to these new identities that they owe to the death of de Nevers. Just as the death or the end of one life created these two new identities, the birth or initiation of a new life puts an end to the vampirism of Lagardère and de Gonzague. This brings us to the clearest case of multiple personalities within Féval's works; the eponymous alter known as the *bossu* or Ésope II.

Lagardère creates the identity of the hunchback, or the *bossu*, as a means to penetrate into de Gonzague's circles, gain his trust, spy on his doings and ultimately expose him as de Nevers's murderer. Ésope II is just one of the names this alter assumes. "Ésope, Jonas, et d'autres noms

encore, repartit le petit homme” (386). In a conversation with two of Lagardère’s old and loyal friends who have begun to work for his rival, de Gonzague, Ésope II reveals the identity that lies under the disguise. He informs them that they have a new master to serve, and they, wanting to know of their new master’s identity, press him for answers.

- Et comment s’appelle-t-il, notre maître? interrogea Cocardasse, qui faisait de vains efforts pour garder son insolent sourire; Ésope II, sans doute?

- Ou Jonas? balbutia Passepoil.

Le bossu les regarda; ils baissèrent les yeux. Le bossu prononça lentement:

- Votre maître se nomme Henri de Lagardère! (388)

As Cocardasse and Passepoil come to realize who Ésope II truly is, they remind the narratee who he once was, the first name they had christened him with, “Notre petit Parisien” (88). From his two friends, those who trained him in his earliest days of fencing, we can understand how several stages of Lagardère’s life are accompanied by a new name and a new identity. They explain how he is first introduced as “le petit Lagardère,” a child without parents and no one else to care for him (91). He later becomes *notre Petit Parisien* when he enters their fencing school, “Quelques gentilshommes qui étaient là eurent envie de rire. Le grand chérubin rougit, baissa les yeux, se fâcha, et les fit rouler sur le plancher. Un vrai Parisien, quoi! mince, souple, gracieux comme une femme, mais dur comme du fer” (92). After various successes and failures in armies and militias, he receives recognition from the king to become knighted as “le chevalier Henri de Lagardère.” Following a successful duel with a nobleman, he is granted enough time to leave France or face judgment for illegally dueling. These many different personalities and roles which Lagardère represents are contained and hidden behind the feigned physical deformity. This hump on the back of *le bossu* comes from the child’s youth. Again from Cocardasse and Passepoil it is

revealed how Lagardère's childhood job as a contortionist serves him at this later period of life. "Lou petit couquin de Lagardère faisait tout ce qu'il voulait de son corps: il se grandissait, il se rapetissait; ses jambes étaient des bras, ses bras étaient des jambes, et il me semble encore le voir, sandiéou ! quand il singeait le vieux bedeau de Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, qui était bossu par-devant et par-derrière" (91). The copying of this "vieux bedeau" and Lagardère's almost unnatural control over his body easily allows him to personify and bring to life a new personality. The identity he creates becomes so entrenched and is so successfully executed that those closest to him, namely Aurore, de Nevers's daughter, see in Henri and Ésope II two separate individuals.

... Il y a deux jours, le bossu vint le voir. Mais je ne vous ai pas parlé encore de ce gnome mystérieux, le seul être qui ait entrée [sic] dans notre solitude. Ce bossu vient chez nous à toute heure, c'est-à-dire chez Henri, dans l'appartement du premier étage. On le voit entrer et sortir. Les gens du quartier le regardent un peu comme un lutin. Jamais on n'a vu Henri et lui ensemble, et ils ne se quittent pas! Tel est le mot des commères de la rue du Chantre. (333)

The personality of Ésope II is successful in duping everyone into believing him to be a shrewd and malicious creature. His strange form, with the hunched back, causes the people of the neighborhood to stare, thinking him to be imp or goblin-like. Despite their stares and constant curiosity, they are unable to see beyond the display, to see beyond the act. It would seem that the change in personality has so effectively taken root that physical alterations are produced. The alter personality is not a strange thing for the hero in popular fiction. As put forth by Dumasy-Queffélec, the hero's identity is defined as both one who upholds the laws as well as the criminal who disregards them.

Comme tous ces grands héros mythiques de l'Antiquité, le héros du roman populaire n'est en effet jamais l'innocent. Sous sa forme la plus achevée, il est à la fois le justicier et le criminel. Il a commis une faute – ou bien a été injustement condamné, comme Edmond Dantès; mais qu'il soit criminel en réalité ou par erreur, cette faute l'isole et lui donne une mission – vengeance, justice, revanche – qui le met en dehors de la société. (Dumasy-Queffélec 76)

These contradictory traits found in Lagardère, who is both an outlaw and the executer of justice, create the appearance of dual identities, to the point that what once simply appeared as two separate identities truly becomes distinct. The hero fulfills opposing roles and embodies drastically different physical make-ups. Indeed, even when the *bossu* reveals himself as Lagardère to Aurore and asks her to marry him, de Gonzague and his entourage see Aurore's revulsion change to pleasure, but remain unable to see beyond the appearance and façade created for them. They associate Aurore's change in disposition toward Ésope II with magic or other supernatural causes. "Le bossu avait eu raison. Ceux qui ne croient pas en Dieu ont souvent foi en ces billevesées qui venaient alors surtout d'Italie: les philtres, les charmes, les pouvoirs occultes, la magie" (650-51). One onlooker suggests to the others, "Le bossu a un talisman, un charme!" (649). The creation of Ésope II brings about the demise of de Gonzague by exposing his secrets. It also removes Lagardère from the role of Aurore's father and helps him to become her husband. Unlike *La Vampire* and *La Ville-vampire*, there are no extensive or overtly supernatural references to vampires in *Le Bossu*, but the novel nevertheless demonstrates how identities can be harvested and appropriated in a vampire-like manner and gives insight into Féval's use of the vampire to problematize identity in his works.

The novel *Le Bossu* brings forth two different purposes for the multiplication of identity. The identity of Esope II, like that of Lila and the countess Gregoryi, Gatêloup, M. le gardien for Jean-Pierre Sévérin and the old woman at the window or M. Morinière for Georges Cadoudal, is a protective identity. The name and the appearance are constructed as shields, distancing the buried identity from others within the text. The second purpose is that of a parasite. The vampire-like parasites, as demonstrated above, are both Lagardère and de Gonzague, who live off de Nevers. The role of the parasite unites Féval's vampires with the now established canon of vampire creatures in literature. We can see in the most popular manifestations of vampires how this creature feeds off others. Dracula's violence, as he bends over the newly wedded Mina Harker and draws life from her blood, is palpable.

“Silence! If you make a sound I shall take him and dash his brains out before your very eyes.” I was appalled and was too bewildered to do or say anything. With a mocking smile, he placed one hand upon my shoulder and, holding me tight, bared my throat with the other, saying as he did so: “First, a little refreshment to reward my exertions. You may as well be quiet; it is not the first time, or the second, that your veins have appeased my thirst!” (Stoker 338-39)

Raould from Gautier's *La Morte amoureuse*, in his obscured vision and unsure if he is experiencing a dream or reality, sees a more peaceful Clarimonde prick his finger and suck sustenance from the wound. These vampire and vampire-like creatures share in their need for others in order to survive.

Vampires, like parasites, give little or nothing in exchange for their prey. They receive their sustenance, but contribute nothing to the source from which it comes. In his study of

parasites, *Le Parasite*, Michel Serres explains that they take upon themselves many forms.

Writing of bureaucratic parasites, which Serres compares to lions, he explains:

Que donne le lion en échange de sa nourriture? Rien? Pas tout à fait rien. Un édit, un écrit, un passeport, des mots et des paroles. Il paie son repas en belles phrases bien écrites. Et donc il est en position de parasite, de parasite universel. Il faudra bien comprendre un jour pourquoi le plus fort est le parasite, c'est-à-dire, en fait, le plus faible, pourquoi celui qui n'a fonction que de manger commande. Et parle.
(Serres 39)

The one who speaks holds the power to command others but is, at the same time, the parasite that uses others as his host. He sucks from them, first of all, the time required to listen, and the message conveyed will in turn draw from them additional resources. Vampires in literature do not approach their prey quite like many predators of the animal kingdom, waiting to pounce and feast. Rather there is a seduction, a courting, with the prey. As Jean-Pierre Sévérin in *La Vampire* describes Angèle's death, he explains how she is drawn to the body in the water and reaches out to it. She is not forced to take this action but enticed by some unknown means. The same vampire who drags Angèle into the water holds René de Kervoz prisoner, principally devoting their time spent together to conversation. Dracula regularly visits Mina Harker and spends an extended period of time with Jonathan Harker in the early passages of the novel. In *La Ville-vampire* the English vampire's success can easily be attributed to his care in persuading the count Tiberio and la signora Letizia Pallanti to follow through with his plan to secure a great inheritance. After an all-night meeting with the vampire, M. Goëtzi, the count Tiberio is ready to conspire in murder, even though "Par nature, le comte Tiberio n'était pas ce qu'on appelle un méchant homme" (74). Instead, "la Pallanti le dominait désormais, et M. Goëtzi dominait la

Pallanti” (74). The ability to speak fine words, to seduce and to flatter is typical of the vampire-parasite.

The vampire in *La Ville-Vampire* remains a parasite in his animal form. The modern conception of the vampire expresses an affinity to bats, more specifically a vampire bat, an animal which is known to consume blood as a part of its diet.

Le vampire nous apparaît comme un être fondamentalement pervers et monstrueux dans la mesure où il transgresse un tabou absolu, profondément enfoui dans notre subconscient, qui est l’interdiction de consommer du sang. Symbole de vie, le sang joue un rôle très important dans l’imagination humaine: comme principe vital, il doit être respecté et épargné; à ce titre, il atteint la dimension du sacré. (Hadeh 47)

The creatures associated with vampires are not surprisingly those who also break this same taboo of blood consumption. M. Goëtzi, like Dracula, who will follow some forty years later, is endowed with the ability to metamorphose into non-humanoid forms. His creature of choice is not a bat but rather a tiny spider, small enough to slip through a gap between a door and the floor. On the surface, it may appear that Féval’s choice of an insect is gratuitous. However, the fact that many spiders nourish themselves on the blood of their prey reinforces the importance of this characteristic in the overall image of a vampire. Even though other aspects of the vampire appear unfixed, the need for blood remains indivisible from the vampire figure. This begs the question though, if a need for blood is a defining trait for vampires, how does one account for the apparent lack of interest in blood for Féval’s other vampire tale, *La Vampire*, or even for the vampire figure in *Le Bossu*?

In *La Vampire*, blood that is casually mentioned but never overtly described as of great importance is ostensibly replaced by the fixation on hair. The vampire, Addhéma, draws new life when she dresses her head with the scalp of her victim. She feeds from another's life in order to restore her youth. This, however, is only one aspect that shows the parasitical nature of this creature. This novel epitomizes the duplicity inherent in a fantastic tale as having two possible solutions. Either the Countess Marcian Gregoryi is the vampire, Addhéma, as some propose, or the secret society known as *la ligue de la vertu* is a symbolic vampire which takes Paris as its host and extracts from it the resources it desires. If the reader considers the countess to be the supernatural vampire, the drinking of blood is only scarcely referred to, and it is eclipsed by the insistence on hair. On the other hand, if the reader considers the text as free from supernatural elements, the blood and hair are of little importance and thus are absent from the text. Blood would then be removed from the vampire image, and the text would be without a true vampire. However, the desire to acquire money is a theme that remains associated with the vampire, regardless of the vampire's true identity or the presence of supernatural elements, and that money becomes the symbol for the blood that is to quench the vampire's thirst.

The secret society *la ligue de la vertu* is a vampire devoid of any supernatural pretenses, and yet since the countess Marcian Gregoryi operates as the leader of this society, the actions of the league are the results of her desires. It is explained that in order to terrorize the Parisians of the early nineteenth century, this brotherhood begins circulating rumors of a vampire attacking its victims and leaving their remains in the river Seine. These stories become all the more plausible as members of the society are accused of stealing bodies from the morgue and placing them in the river. While *la ligue de la vertu* does not directly consume blood, it nevertheless demonstrates how symbolically blood is present in the novel. *La ligue de la vertu* is reminiscent

of vampirism as it consumes money and wealth and is funded by the countess's inheritance from her murdered husbands. Money, which circulates through society and helps support the life of the citizens and the city, is much like the blood of society. With the understanding that money is the blood for a society, the vampire in *La Vampire* shows her thirst for blood-money within all of her alters, even that of the secret society that is assumed to be devoid of supernatural powers. During his prolonged interview with Berthellemot, Sévérin states simply the vampire's thirst for money. "Ce n'est pas de sang que la Vampire est avide, poursuit Jean-Pierre. Ce qu'elle veut, c'est de l'or" (140). Examples within *La Vampire* which illustrate the relationship between blood and money, even money and death, are obvious. Ezéchiél's miraculous catch is one of the first items presented to the narratee and serves as a reference for much of the narrative. The money received for his cabaret is presumed to come from a ring found in the belly of a fish, still on the first owner's hand. From death, an image that infers spilt blood, Ezéchiél receives riches. Jean-Pierre Sévérin reveals that the corpses missing from the morgue are turning up in the river, and that he had witnessed Ezéchiél speaking with a woman on the night of the miraculous catch. Even with the revelation that the miraculous catch never took place, the financial backing for the placing of the cadavers, these vessels of expired blood, comes from the vampire. When Ezéchiél discusses with the countess's servant Paraxin his concerns about assisting the countess, she explains to him the result of withdrawing from their pact. "Tout sera fini dans huit jours, l'interrompt la grande femme. L'argent vient; la somme y sera. Ceux qui auront été avec nous jusqu'au bout auront leur fortune faite. Ceux qui perdront courage avant la fin engraisseront les poissons . . . Est-ce tout ?" (50-51). Ezéchiél's partnership with the vampire, the bodies dumped in the river and threats of death should Ezéchiél not uphold his end of the agreement all show how death and money are intermixed in this novel.

Brian Stableford sheds more light on the vampire's relationship with money. "Another metaphorical vampire which has been handed down to us from the rhetoric of 19th century is the 'blood-sucking capitalist'" (328). Stableford is referring to Karl Marx's depiction of capitalism in *Das Kapital*, which according to Marx, "can never more than partially slake the vampire thirst for the living blood of labour" (259). This capitalist vampire, according to Marx, is thus feeding off labor, which as a commodity holds value and is exchanged for currency. Stableford suggests it is unlikely that Féval was familiar with Marx but saw his influence in another nineteenth-century novelist. "Féval probably never read Marx, and would not have approved of him if he had, but he read Eugène Sue, and although he did not altogether approve of him, Féval was certainly prepared to be contemptuous of the myriad ways in which the rich lived as parasites upon the labors of the poor" (328). Both Marx and Sue are possible sources for the relationship between blood and money which is found in Féval's text. However, another explanation can be found in turning to Gilbert Durand's *Les Structures anthropologique de l'imaginaire*, a study which draws on mythical and archetypal images that transcend cultural barriers. Beginning in what Durand identifies as the nocturnal regime of the imaginary, the first image which can further an understanding of the blood and money relationship is that of the biblical figure of Jonah.

The figure of Jonah found in the Old Testament is the "euphémisation de *l'avalage* puis antiphrase du contenu symbolique de *l'avalage*. Il transfigure le déchirement de la voracité dentaire en un doux et inoffensive *sucking*, comme le Christ ressuscité transformait l'irrévocable et cruel passeur en bénéfique protecteur d'un voyage d'agrément" (233). As vampires feed through the drinking or sucking of blood, they too become inscribed in the nocturnal regime through the process of swallowing; their piercing teeth place them between the voracious tearing

and the soft sucking. Belonging to this constellation of images instills a greater value on the product, namely the blood, which is being consumed. He notes that “L’avalage ne détériore pas, bien souvent même il valorise ou sacralise” (234). Sacramental wine, or the symbolic blood of Christ, a sacred emblem that is consumed, is one such example that illustrates the holy or sacred properties of blood. When the blood, or money, is consumed by a vampire it becomes cursed, instead of blessed, and it loses its value. This is a trait that is also noted by Hadeh in “Mythologie de la Chauve-Souris,” wherein she writes, “Le sang est désacralisé, car contaminé, il est la nourriture qui assure la survie du vampire” (38). The blood-money mixture is evident as the countess accumulates riches through marriage. The countess, like a black widow spider, finds a mate, marries him, and kills him. Just as the spider draws from her mate his blood, the countess does this to receive his fortune. The two male victims, the baron de Ramberg and le comte Wenzel, are both wealthy young men who disappear suddenly. “Ramberg! répéta-[Jean-Pierre Sévérin]. Qui est cette femme? Et qui donnera mot à l’énigme?... On croyait le baron de Ramberg parti depuis huit jours, et voilà plus de deux semaines que le comte Wenzel a disparu... La femme avec qui je le vis était brune, mais c’était le même regard...” (21). Féval avoids directly describing the death of the baron of Ramberg or the count Wenzel. Instead he continually repeats the phrase, “Le comte Wenzel est reparti pour l’Allemagne” through the mouths of various characters. Upon seeing what seems to be a body wrapped in sheets, an image that recalls a spider’s prey wrapped in webbing, René de Kervoz is the first to understand this sentence as a cryptic message. He asks Lila, one of the personalities of the vampire, “que signifie ces mots: ‘Le baron de Ramberg va partir aussi pour l’Allemagne?’ Est-ce un meurtre? Est-il temps de le prévenir?”(88). These members of nobility that have fallen victim to the vampire are explained as simply being steps in a greater plan. The countess Marcian Gregoryi explains to one

of the brothers of *la ligue de la vertu* what it will take to kill the emperor. “Ce n’est pas un poignard vulgaire qui tuera cet homme... Il faut du sang et de l’or: des flots d’or et de sang; Il faut cent bras obéissants à une seule volonté, il faut une volonté, une mission, une destinée... le sang coule, haussant de jour en jour le niveau d’or” (73). As the blood is spilt, riches are accumulated. *La ligue de la vertu* is a brotherhood that is united by death and money, two bonds that reoccur within the alliances described in Féval’s novels.

Le Bossu explores how a brotherhood, even without supernatural pretenses or powers, operates as a vampire by drawing resources from others and living off another’s life. Philippe de Gonzague murders Philippe de Nevers in an effort to inherit his fortune. Upon learning of his secret marriage and child, de Gonzague marries the widow, under the pretenses of sympathy. He never touches his new wife’s inheritance so as to maintain the appearance of innocence. However, a family trial is evidence of his desire to claim the riches for which his crime was intended. Although his attempt to take money, the life-blood of finance, from his wife is not successful, he lives off the death of de Nevers in more way than one. Finding the lost child, or replacing her, is de Gonzague’s obsession. The relationship between blood and money is epitomized in Féval’s *Le Bossu* by the confederacy created and led by Philippe de Gonzague. His lackey, M. de Peyrolles, and the soldiers for hire he employs for the purpose of assassinating Philippe de Nevers, are the underlings who constitute the vampiric and parasitic society of this novel. Upon learning of their target, Philippe de Nevers, the men understand the greater risk that is associated with this target and that additional recompense should be in order.

Ou tend ce bavardage? demanda [Peyrolles]. À une augmentation de salaire?

Considérable, d'abord, répliqua le Gascon. En bonne conscience, on ne peut prendre le même prix pour un père qui venge l'honneur de sa fille, et pour Damon qui veut hériter trop tôt de Pythias.

Que demandez-vous?

Qu'on triple la somme.

Soit, répondit Peyrolles sans hésiter.

En second lieu, que nous fassions tous partie de la maison de Gonzague après l'affaire.

Soit! dit encore le factotum. (84)

It would seem that blood is a commodity that can be purchased, but that the price, as is the case with all commodities, varies according the source or quality of the blood. The quality, as is the case for Philippe de Nevers, improves according to the life of its owner. The value of de Nevers's life, and in essence his blood, is evaluated by his position in society and his wealth, as well as the non-measurable qualities such as loyalty. The life appreciates in value, and the blood becomes richer, through the choices made. And yet, noble actions can only bring value to a certain degree without social recognition. Georges Cadoudal and Napoleon Bonaparte in *La Vampire* are two men recognized through their deeds as well as their placement in society, and they are the primary objectives for the vampire and secret society. Their lives and their blood are richer than those of others in the text. Even Jean-Pierre Sévérin in *La Vampire*, while ostensibly the embodiment of traditionally moral choices, insisting on his step-daughter's marriage after she and René de Kervoz conceive a child, is only pursued by the vampire when his actions intersect with her plans. The blood-money that nourishes this vampires-like secret society in *Le Bossu* or *La Vampire* is not the only trait that the societies share with the vampire image.

Vampires often maintain a double identity, an alias that protects them from those who would combat them. Stoker describes how Dracula, in an attempt to blend in with the larger population and before leaving the security of his castle, asks John Harker to correct his English pronunciation so that he might pass as a native speaker when arriving in London. Secret societies in Féval's works share this desire to remain unseen and undetected by society at large. Recalling Janet's description of double personalities, these secret societies function as an alter personality to their larger society. *La ligue de la vertu* is the alter personality for Paris itself. While Berthellemot and other representatives of the Parisian government applaud and nearly deify Napoleon Bonaparte, the secret society offers a second personality, still representative of sentiments shared by certain French citizens, but not that of the official opinion. In the study on Felida X, Azam notes that later in life one personality "encroached upon the first and filled almost the whole of her life" (Janet 81). Just as the division between two personalities can be breached, so it is for Féval's secret societies that draw out of their secret places and encroach upon the larger society. *La ligue de la vertu* leaves the safety of secrecy in an attempt to assassinate Napoleon Bonaparte, and Philippe de Gonzague's brotherhood is exposed by a desire to secure de Nevers's inheritance. Members of larger secret societies, ones which constitute entire cities in *La Ville-Vampire* and *L'Homme de fer*, are forced to go beyond their borders to take from the surrounding communities. These secret societies, brotherhoods, alliances, or entire cities, serve as a vampire or a parasite living off others. Whatever the nature of these secret societies may be, gaining access to them remains a trait that is shrouded in mystery.

L'Homme de fer's Hélion and *La Ville-Vampire*'s Sélène bare the mark of only permitting select persons to enter. "On passait auprès d'Hélion sans la voir" (*L'Homme de fer* 6). While Hélion remains virtually unexplored by the narratee, our understanding of it is enhanced

by a few passages offered. When Aubry, Berthe and Jeannine catch a glimpse of the city, the fog surrounding it, like a veil used to hide it from the rest of the world, is lifted. “Le voile se fit de plus en plus transparent. Ils virent au travers, il [sic] virent ce que nul regard humain ne verra plus: Hélion, la cité enchantée, la huitième merveille du monde!” (170). A similar fog is later cleared by Jeannin who traces a cross with his sword and recites a prayer. With the fog lifted, one can see amidst the battle “une salle immense et toute pleine de clarté mystique qui montait on ne sait d’où pour illuminer les nuits de la ville du soleil” (177). Hélion displays the binary opposition of good and evil by employing Catholic motifs. Behrent demonstrates in “The Mystical Body of Society: Religion and Association in Nineteenth-Century French Political Thought,” that the growth of fantastic literature correlates with the dechristianization of France. “Yet in the 1830s, one finds, for example, Pierre Leroux, a philosopher of impeccable republican pedigree, lamenting, . . . that ‘religious atheism has brought about social atheism’” (220). In conjunction with the growth of disbelief in religion, the growing disenchantment with government, and by extension the society under its care, facilitated the continual revolutions, each promising new rights and better lives.

On the one hand, some believed that religion performed a social function- indeed, that religion was the social function *par excellence*, the institution that made social bonds possible. On the other hand, many believed that human society was of divine institution, or, at the very least, of profound religious significance, whether because it realized a providential plan or because the formation of a unity out of a plurality of individuals constituted a kind of transcendence. (224)

It is difficult to be certain that this was indeed Féval’s intention. After all, he did not convert to the dedicated practice of Catholicism until the end of 1875, twenty years following the

publication of this novel. Still the influence of his religious upbringing permeated his career. His friend and biographer wrote of his writing in these terms:

Paul Féval vécut jusqu'à vingt ans dans ce milieu chrétien, dont le souvenir ne le quittera plus. Ce sont ces influences bénies de la religion et de la famille qui, plus tard, à Paris, à l'époque de ses plus grands succès, quand il sera le rival des Frédéric Soulié, des Alexandre Dumas, des Eugène Sue, le préserveront de faire, comme eux, de lâches concessions aux bas appétits du public. (Buet 37)

The secret societies in these works, then, all embodiments of evil in their desires to lie, steal or murder, are Féval's social commentary upon the rejection of, or at least apathy towards, the Catholic Church, an institution he will embrace with fervor in the latter years of his life.

La Ville-Vampire's Sélène is a veritable parasite, living off nearby lands. This community of predators becomes a collective parasite through the creation of a society and through the observance of laws and codes. As Serres points out, when one considers a parasite in nature, it is typically a smaller creature, an insect or even a smaller organism, which may or may not cause any harm to its host (13). It is when this parasite's toll on its host begins to inflict noticeable damage to the point that the host is no longer able to provide sustenance for the parasite that the relationship is redefined as predatorial. In *La Ville-vampire*, an understanding is shared among the vampires of Sélène that forbids them from taking victims in the towns within fifteen leagues of their hidden city.

Il est bon de constater que le nombre des jeunes filles dévorées par les vampires aux environs immédiats de leur couvent est beaucoup moins considérable qu'on ne pourrait l'imaginer. Pour ne point trop soulever le pays, les vampires ont arrêté

entre eux que, dans un périmètre de quinze lieues, ils ne doivent commettre aucun dégât. (126)

This law that governs the vampires provides them with a protective distance from any retaliation. More importantly though, it helps them to avoid the risk that the nearby town would be overhunted and depleted. Sélène and the expansion around it are not unlike a sustained ecological system. The surrounding cities, such as Belgrade, Peterwardein and Semlin, all mentioned in the text, constitute a valuable part of the Sélène's ecosystem. This society understands and provides for the need of sustainability. The overall toll of a vampire is thus greatly reduced as they work as a collective, banding together as a society.

Nous parasitons nos semblables et nous vivons au milieu d'eux. Autant dire vraiment qu'ils constituent notre milieu. Nous vivons dans cette boîte noire qu'on nomme collectif, nous vivons par elle, d'elle et en elle. Il est arrivé qu'on lui donne la forme d'une bête, et que l'on nomme cette bête: Léviathan ou gros animal. Nous sommes bien dans quelque chose de bestial; en termes distingués, elle est dite un modèle organique du sociétaire. Est-ce notre hôte? Je ne sais. Mais je sais que nous sommes dedans. Et qu'il y fait noir. (Serres 18-19).

As Serres points out, the great beast in which we collectively reside may be our host and we, like all humans, are living off the society to which we belong. This comparison is a bit contradictory, however. For, even while each individual draws from society, he or she doubtlessly gives something back to that same society. The very nature of society is the collective organization of individuals and families in close proximity, existing and interacting together. In this manner, no one is truly a simple parasite, receiving only and returning nothing. This organic and natural order of society created from the relationships fused together within it is not lost on the secret

societies of Féval's novels. It shows in part why the vampires, as actual creatures or as brotherhoods, so readily instill fear in our minds. They live off us. These vampires represent the threat of a being or creature that only takes and returns nothing. They are protected by alternate names and ambiguous identities, which only adds to the threat they pose. After all, the vampire as a creature or a secret society that threatens others is more frightening when it stealthily moves about society. The images of the vampire, parasite, secret society and multiple identities that appear throughout Féval's works of fantastic literature and popular fiction share in this threat of feeding off another being. Whether the multiple personalities fortify characters or create an enigma, they are the reductive counterpart to a secret society. Like the multiple personalities, secret societies offer protection and perpetuate mystery, but additionally they act as a vampire-parasite. These are images that serve as evidence of Féval's own perception of society and the mores he perceives within it. The image of the vampire, however, in addition to being a catalyst for a change or multiplication of identity, is also closely linked to feminine images in Féval's works. He employs both women and vampires within his texts as supernatural figures, or those who combat against them. Among the most prominent of these images is the *femme fatale*.

CHAPTER 5

TEMPTATION AND DEATH

The various revolutions and social upheavals of nineteenth-century France brought with them an altered perception of women in French society. Perhaps the most recognized is that of the courageous and bare breasted Marianne holding the tricolored flag and leading others in battle. There is likewise evidence of the silencing of women that Jann Matlock points to in the lesser-known spectacle of *La Femme invisible* conducted by Étienne-Gaspard Robertson. However, from the settling dust of the battle, another figure is renewed, one which rivals Marianne in courage and refuses to be hidden: the figure of the Medusa. Classic Greek and Roman mythology teaches that the Medusa was once beautiful but has been changed into a monstrous creature whose gaze petrifies men. Her hair of snakes only further illustrates the danger and malicious nature of this once beautiful woman. This mythical representation bears an influence on many other literary feminine figures in nineteenth-century France. These women, like the Medusa, demonstrate a close relationship between, on the one side, the temptation of beautiful and desirable women, and on the other, the fear of a horrible death. Elizabeth Menon claims in *Evil by Design* that “The femme fatale has come to be known as an archetypal woman whose evil characteristics cause her to either unconsciously bring destruction or consciously seek vengeance” (4). In Féval’s *La Vampire, La Ville-vampire, Le Bossu* and *La fée des grèves* the author develops the relationship between beauty, sin and death. He does this as he elicits rivalries between characters of the text and at the same time reinforces predominant patriarchal values of his time by pairing feminine figures with the supernatural elements of the text. Contact with the supernatural similarly demonstrates the exotic nature of other figures within these examples of fantastic literature.

The presence of and insistence upon hair is something that is largely feminine and indeed a representation of a woman's beauty or sexuality. Nineteenth-century France is home to a variety of hair styles which develop and evolve during the decades, and which may or may not be sexually charged. Women often employ chignons, curls or *bandeaux*. While these different styles may be *à la mode* or no longer in fashion depending upon the era, the decision to choose one style over the other is clearly motivated by the desire to cultivate a specific effect. Like other traits of fashion, hair underwent many changes throughout the nineteenth century in France. Well known works, such as Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, showcase evolving styles and cuts that serve to give added depth to the literary figures they represent. Carol Rifelj writes that as the notion of popularity evolves, different cuts can bear different meanings, and what was fashionable will later be reserved for the modest and elderly. She explains, "Loose hair carries the possibility of an erotic charge. Long abundant hair is traditionally associated with sexuality. Venus is usually represented with a full head of hair lavishly disheveled, especially in mid-nineteenth-century paintings" (88). Paramount among the reactions that are intended to be solicited is the desire to project beauty or sexuality. In her book *Coiffures*, Rifelj states plainly that "It incarnates women's sexuality. Long tradition has associated women's hair with lust, sin, and desire" (84). Curls in general can signify "dramatic or painful moments, but on other occasions, ringlets can signify child-like beauty and innocent sexuality . . ." (84). "Sausage curls required elaborate curling and arranging. Novelists use this hairstyle as an indication of elegance and attractiveness" (85). These sexual implications of hair are not lost on Féval's works, even to the point that hair becomes integral to the plot in his novels.

Hair, as a reflection of feminine beauty, serves as a snare as well as a reward for the countess in *La Vampire*. Féval chooses this title consciously employing the feminine *La* instead

of the masculine *Le* to insist upon the fact that the vampire of this text is a woman. To further illustrate this notion, he mentions through his characters that such an appellation is somewhat erroneous since the true feminine for a vampire would be “l’oupire ou succombe, appelée aussi une goule au moyen âge,” suggesting that this text brings to light a new kind of monster (130). Féval’s new creation takes on the names of several women, names such as Lila, the countess Marcian Gregoryi and Addhéma. As seen in previous chapters, this novel embraces multiple genres, embodying a fantastic tale, detective fiction and a historic novel, and is set in Paris around a historically based plot wherein Georges Cadoudal plans to assassinate Napoleon Bonaparte before he establishes himself as Emperor. Féval writes of rumors that a vampire stalks victims in the streets of Paris. Instead of sucking blood from her victim’s neck, Féval’s female vampire, the countess Marcian Gregoryi, removes the scalp of her victims and dresses them upon her own head. The transfer of the scalp is in essence a transfer of sexuality and beauty since this new head of hair restores the vampire’s youth, keeps her from aging, and results in the death of her victim. Even though the vampire’s hair is not comprised of snakes, it nevertheless possesses serpentine qualities that refer it back to the Medusa, as well as another feminine figure associated with death that will be discussed later, the Biblical Eve. In *Les Structures Anthropologiques de l’imaginaire*, Gilbert Durand identifies the snake as a lunar animal by its constant shedding of skin and renewal of life. “Mais la lune, non seulement est le premier mort, mais encore le premier mort qui ressuscite” (337). Just as a snake finds its renewal in the shedding of old skin, so, too, does this vampire as she sheds her own hair and replaces it with another’s.

From both men and women, the vampire uses hair to renew her own life. Women, as it has been shown already, provide the vampire with extended youth. This hair, which constantly switches from being as black as jade or as locks of gold depending upon her previous victim,

beautifies her body and serves to entice future male victims. Sexually charged and inciting desire in masculine figures, this newly acquired hair becomes the lure which embellishes the vampire, making her desirable for the wealthy male victims she intends to marry and kill in order to inherit their riches. Through their death, men renew the vampire's financial well-being and monetarily restore her life. The first presentation of the vampire and her hair is as she is on her way to a secret wedding with a noble groom-victim. The protagonist, Jean-Pierre Sévérin, sees this young and mysterious woman with her new husband. "C'était, en tous cas, un fantôme charmant: une femme toute jeune et toute belle, dont les cheveux blonds tombaient en boucles gracieuses autour d'un adorable visage" (21). This man is one of several men she is understood to have married in the text. Another victim, one more intimately involved in the story's plot, is René de Kervoz, the nephew of Georges Cadoudal, the very man who plans to assassinate Napoleon Bonaparte. René's attention turns to both her hair and her gaze as he is lured to a mysterious house where, as if enchanted, he is imprisoned in a windowless room. "Elle s'arrêta et passa les doigts de sa belle main sur son front, où ruisselait le jais de sa chevelure. À mesure qu'elle parlait, sa voix avait pris des sonorités étranges, et l'éclair de ses grands yeux ponctuait si puissamment sa parole que René restait tout interdit" (91). The flash in her eyes coupled with the narrator's insistence on her hair helps to inscribe this vampire in the tradition of the Medusa. At times René is petrified, lying on the bed only able to watch what is happening around him, unable to move except for the opening and closing of his eyes. The influence of the vampire's constant presence and seduction eventually causes him to betray his uncle by divulging the secrets of his hideout.

Angèle Lenoir, the fiancée to René de Kervoz, is a character in *La Vampire* who reveals the deathly aspects of hair that result from the vampire's rejuvenation. She is the mother to

René's child and awaits the day of their marriage. Feeling that her fiancé has become emotionally distant, and expecting the worst, she follows him to the home of the vampire. When she sees him through the window at night, she compares herself with this other woman and hair becomes her standard for evaluating beauty. She is only given a little view of René and his temptress, but is able to cry out, "Ses cheveux . . . ses cheveux blonds! jamais il n'y en a eu de pareils! Je crois distinguer leurs reflets d'or. Elle est trop belle Oh! René, mon René, ne l'aime pas; on ne peut pas avoir deux amours... si tu ne m'aimais plus je mourrais..."(48). Angèle begins with remarking the splendor of the vampire's hair and ends with her own thoughts of death. Later René looks out the window, but is unable to see Angèle looking back up at him; she understands her apparent invisibility to be caused by her inferior hair. She faints from shock and the narrator again turns to her imperfect hair as her body lies on the street. "Son pauvre corps inerte s'étendait tout de son long; entre son front et le pavé il n'y avait que ses cheveux épars, ses pauvres cheveux" (48).

The ensuing fulfillment of Angèle's death further reiterates the link between hair, sexuality and sin. Jean-Pierre Sévérin returns home from his first day of working at the newly built morgue, only to spend the evening with the body of Angèle. "La hideuse injure qui avait mutilé le front d'Angèle disparaissait sous un bandeau de mousseline blanche. Elle était belle d'une pureté céleste et ressemblait, sous sa candide couronne, à une religieuse de seize ans, endormie dans la pensée du ciel" (225). Féval describes the bandage that covers Angèle's wound as a *bandeau de mousseline*, a descriptor that calls to mind the hair style of *cheveux en bandeau*, where hair is pulled back and held by a headband. The narratee knows already that this *bandeau* that she is wearing is not that of a hair style, but rather in place of one. It is also ironic that

Angèle's hair, with which she was so preoccupied, is taken and used by the vampire whose hair Angèle herself coveted.

When Séverin returns home, Angèle's mother, child and brother surround her body. This scene is mirrored by the vampire after her own alleged death. In place of mourners is the curious medical student, Germain Patou, who sells his books to purchase the vampire's body illegally. As he examines the vampire's body, he, too, becomes enchanted by the hair that once belonged to Angèle. Thus the beauty and sexuality of hair also suggests a provocative necrophilia.

Au bout de quelques minutes, et sans savoir ce qu'il faisait, il enleva brin à brin la paille accrochée aux cheveux ou prise dans les plis des vêtements. Il fut longtemps à faire cette toilette.

Quand il eut achevé, il poussa un grand soupir.

-Il n'y a pas au monde de femme si belle! murmura-t-il.

À l'aide du propre mouchoir de la comtesse, une fine batiste dont la broderie sortait à demi de la poche de sa robe, il essuya son front amoureuxment.

Ce premier contact lui procura une sensation si violente, qu'il eut peur de se trouver mal.

Elle était froide, - elle était morte, - et cependant tout le corps du jeune homme vibra sous cet attouchement.

Malgré lui, il porta le mouchoir à ses lèvres.

Un doux parfum s'en exhalait avec une mystérieuse ivresse (227-28).

Patou's removal of the straw and debris caught in the countess's hair and his subsequent enchantment with her shows how, even after death, her potency to attract male victims is not diminished. Like the Medusa, whose head still petrifies by her gaze after being removed from the

rest of the body, the countess's hair, too, is isolated and considered as separate from the vampire herself. It is no coincidence that between the vampire and Angèle, it is the one who is deprived of hair that is described as saintly and heavenly. The vampire, who maintains this head of hair, continues to tempt and entice. It is as if in losing her hair, Angèle's sins are likewise taken from her body and she is purged of its diabolical influences.

Just as death and hair are united in the Medusa figure, so are they connected together with the women of Féval's tales. However, the means by which death is brought about differs for the women of Féval's texts. For the Medusa, although her head is adorned with venomous snakes, it is not they, but rather her petrifying gaze, that causes death. Her hair still presents a danger, and yet it is not her hair that is the greatest threat. In Féval's fantastic tales, the supernatural figures unify hair and death more closely than the classic Medusa. In *La Vampire*, *La Ville-vampire* and *L'Homme de fer*, the role of hair, and thus the role of beauty, is intimately associated with death, whereas for the Medusa, it is her gaze that kills. The women who illustrate this relationship between hair and death are the previously illustrated Angèle Lenoir and Adhéma of *La Vampire*, the countess Greete and la signora Pallanti of *La Ville-vampire* and the young maidens Berthe and Jeannine in *L'Homme de fer*. While the blond and brunette locks of Berthe and Jeannine carry little significance when this text is isolated from the others, the presence of their hair gains more significance when viewed in conjunction with Féval's other works. Angèle and the countess Greete are parallel characters; they both are deprived of their hair by the supernatural creature of the text and they both have a masculine partner who betrays them for another woman. They follow a similar pattern in their relationships as well. They first attract their lovers through their beauty. That beauty proves to be fallible, and they lose it by some means. When their attempt to recover either their beauty or lover proves unsuccessful,

death is the only recourse. Another look at the victims involved in these deaths reveals the curious detail that between the two women it is inevitably the blond woman who is found on the losing end.

The rivalry that exists in *La Vampire* between Angèle Lenoir and the vampire over René is replicated in *La Ville-vampire* by the characters of the countess Greete and Letizia Pallanti. In this overtly supernatural tale, these two women are both wonderfully gifted. “La comtesse Greete était belle, instruite dans les lettres et dans les sciences, et surtout bonne comme on se représente les saintes du ciel. Mais, malheureusement, son éducation n’avait pas été poussée aussi loin en ce qui regardait la musique, la danse et la langue italienne qui était alors la mode suprême” (61). The countess, while beautiful and well educated, nevertheless lacks formal instruction. Her husband, the count Tiberio, understands his wife’s shortcomings and hires the young Italian tutor, Letizia Pallanti, to instruct his god-daughter, Cornelia. Upon the arrival of the tutor, the narrator informs the narratee of her intellectual competence. Where the countess is lacking, Letizia excels.

Je ne sais pas sur quelles références on se décida en faveur de la signora Pallanti, mais il est certain que, dans l’univers entier, on n’aurait pu trouver une jeune personne si merveilleusement accomplie. Elle était presque d’égale force avec la comtesse Greete sur les auteurs latins et grecs, elle connaissait à fond l’algèbre et la trigonométrie; elle récitait les tragédies françaises, y compris celles de Voltaire, avec un charme surprenant. (61-62)

This is but a sampling of Pallanti’s many talents. The countess, while learned in many respects, is clearly the inferior of these two women when considering the level of their instruction. Even

though the narratee sees the comparisons created between the two, the countess adores the young Italian: “La bonne comtesse Greete l’embrassa plus de cent fois” (62).

The final comparison that is made between the two women is their hair. More precisely however, it is Count Tiberio’s perception of their hair. Even though Pallanti is well received by both the countess and her pupil, Cornelia, the count alone is not enchanted by her. He finds that she is “[une dame douée] de trop d’embonpoint . . . et les prodiges lui faisaient peur” (62). Even more remarkable is the fact that for the count, she does not have enough hair. “La Letizia était brune. Ses cheveux noirs étaient en effet assez clairsemés, et le comte Tiberio était gâté à cet égard par la splendide chevelure blonde de sa femme qui aurait pu se faire un manteau de ses boucles dénouées” (62). Later, the count confesses to his wife how his perception of this young woman has changed from his first impressions. He admits that “En vérité, comtesse, cette jeune personne serait une merveille, si elle avait seulement vos cheveux” (64). The revelation is made that between Letizia and Greete, the countess’s superiority does not rest upon her position in society or even as her role as Tiberio’s wife, but upon her locks of hair. A transformation thus begins to take place that underscores the association between the notion of beauty that is inscribed in the image of the countess’s hair and her death, which follows. The narratee is presented with the vampire’s, M. Goëtz’s, nightly operation, during which he transfers the countess’s hair onto the head of Letizia Pallanti. This vampire’s actions are done with the consent of the tutor who contracted a deal with him and which will result in both of them sharing in another count’s riches. It is in this manner that the Biblical Eve is joined with the femmes fatales of Féval’s texts. Letizia recalls modern interpretations of Eve, who converses and unites with the devil to the point that, through her confederacy with him, she too becomes an embodiment of evil. Writing of the association between serpents and women, Menon suggests

that “What had originally been a dialogue between Eve and a snake became a conspiracy between Eve and the devil. In modern French society, depictions of snakes with contemporary women conjured up the fille d’Eve. Fashionable Parisiennes even came to be depicted as part snake” (227). Menon’s comments are based upon numerous prints and images that emerge in the second half of the nineteenth century which depict women interacting with snakes in the context of Eve and the devil, as having either serpentine-like bodies or undergoing a complete physical conversion in order further to resemble a snake. According to Brenda Mann Hammick, women in late nineteenth century are portrayed as “either a half-human hybrid” or as participating in bestiality. “As Leda or Beauty, Io or Lilith, she posed seductively with animal companions. As coiled Medusa, catty Circe, or bosomy Sphinx, she recapitulated in her feral, mythical features a history of suspect desires. Whether she was figured as victim or victimizer, as Eve in Eden or the snake with woman’s head, she was ever transgressive, regressive, and perverse” (887). The woman’s hair helps to serve in her endeavors of seduction. She uses this as a tool for the luring and trapping of a male, in Féval’s works as well as in other nineteenth century texts. “The Medusas, sirens, and vampires of decadent literature, from Flaubert’s *Tentation de Saint Antoine* to Villiers’s *Isis*, use their captivating long hair to conquer their hapless male victims” (Rifelj 90). These are not the only roots that explain the deadly and threatening aspects of women in Féval’s novels, or even the representation of women in general for nineteenth-century France. The serpentine qualities and their association with death are traced back to the Bible as well. “The femme fatale’s origins are intimately related to the biblical Eve and the narrative of the Fall in the book of Genesis. Eve is arguably the first femme fatale; her daughters, the filles d’Eve- defined broadly as all women who came after her- are also femmes fatales by implication” (Menon 4). Women, through their association with Eve, are likewise bound to the image of the

snake through its proximity to Eve. Anciently serpents were revered and feared “in part due to the reptiles’ seemingly otherworldly attributes, including unblinking eyes that were interpreted as all-seeing and all-knowing. Their cold-bloodedness and their ability to change their skin made them appear immortal” (228). The respect and fear of snakes evolved over time, to the point that:

For nineteenth-century France, the snake and woman motifs are closely linked. In the evil, bestial implications of her beauty, woman was not only tempted by the snake but was the snake herself. Among the terms to describe a woman’s appearance none were more overused during the late nineteenth century than “serpentine,” “sinuous,” and “snakelike.” Only the “catlike” graces of woman provided any competition to considerations of reptilian sinuosity. (Dijkstra 305)

For the female figures in Féval’s works, this snake-like attribute is evident. Through the figure of the Medusa, whose hair is adorned with snakes, hair, snakes and death are unified in the woman.

In Féval’s *La Ville-vampire*, the shedding of skin that marks a rebirth for a snake is transferred to hair, only the hair is not discarded, but rather transferred to a new owner. The recipient of the hair, just as in *La Vampire*, enjoys renewed life. Through the vampire M. Goëtz’s intervention, the countess notices that her hair begins to thin and disappear. There is no trace of it in the teeth of her comb and yet it continues to vanish. As this occurs, la Pallanti begins to gain an ample head of hair. Her brown hair grows in at the same rate that the blond hair of the countess Greete recedes. The hair of the countess “s’en allaient” and “ceux de la Letizia choisissaient justement ce temps pour repousser. On eût dit que le souhait badin du comte Tiberio avait sa réalisation et que la bonne comtesse partageait avec la signora Pallanti” (65). As the countess’s hair is transplanted from her own head to that of Letizia, it becomes apparent that the count’s affection remains affixed to the hair. His love, or simply his interest, is no longer

towards his wife, the countess, but for the younger woman whose once scarcely covered head is now lusciously crowned with hair. This is evident as the countess, lamenting her loss of hair, moves to the parlor where the student, Cornelia, is playing the harpsichord. “Derrière elle, Tiberio et Letizia causaient, assis sur le sofa. Les doigts de Tiberio se baignaient dans les masses bouclées qui retombaient maintenant à flots sur les épaules de la Pallanti” (67). This scene shows how Tiberio, who seems to be betraying Greete for Letizia, is actually unfaithful to his wife because of his obsession for Letizia’s hair.

As for the countess’s death, Féval only mentions it briefly. “Ce fut pendant la saison des vacances que la comtesse Greete mourut abandonnée dans le château désert” (73). In slowly taking the countess’s beauty, the vampire also deprives her of life.

Il se pencha d’abord au-dessus du lit. À l’aide d’une longue épingle d’or qu’il tenait entre l’index et le pouce, il piqua la comtesse Greete derrière l’oreille gauche, et, appliquant aussitôt ses lèvres à la blessure, il *téta* pendant dix minutes, montre à la main. C’était là ce qui faisait pâlir et vieillir la malheureuse dame. Sa santé générale en était cruellement affectée, comme vous pouvez le croire en réfléchissant que la même opération se renouvelait toutes les nuits. (69)

Her fatigue, paleness and bald head all betray her age, which Féval states as being slightly over twenty years old. The bald head, especially for a woman, is the most revealing symptom of the three that suggests an advanced age. Perhaps this may be the most telling image from Féval’s works that displays the perception of hair for women in nineteenth-century France. As women in literature, either through their association with supernatural creatures or diabolical snakes, demonstrate sexuality through their hair, their tresses likewise foreshadow death. Sigmund Freud’s essay “The Medusa’s Head” details the risk which men see in a women’s sexuality, and

even in women in general. The fear of the Medusa is not an actual fear of the creature itself but a symbolic representation of fear. Freud sees this fear as primarily being for men who fear castration and mitigate that fear with the phallic symbol of the snakes that adorn the Medusa's head. There has since been much discussion of the mythical figure of the Medusa, perhaps most notably that of Hélène Cixous, who re-writes this myth in *Le Rire de la Méduse*. Men, according to Cixous, have been too frightened by the Medusa and her gaze to be able to understand that "she's not deadly. She's beautiful and she's laughing" (*The Portable Cixous* 38). It is clear, however, that Féval's nineteenth-century readership is far from accepting this perception of the Medusa and she, along with her feminine accomplices, remains a threatening and a frightful being in literature and in other forms of art. The loss of hair, for Countess Greete, is tantamount to the loss of sexuality, influence and even power, since her opinion no longer carries any value for her husband, the count. Once she loses her sexuality, influence and power, her life, too, is eventually lost, thus underscoring the death-hair relationship which is manifest in many of Féval's supernatural tales.

The image of the snake, whether associated with hair through the figure of the Medusa or considered alone, remains tied to death. The biblical account of the first snake's interaction with Adam and Eve underscores the notion of the original of death, as well as the snake's partnership with the woman.

. . . le second arbre du jardin d'Eden, dont la consommation du fruit déterminera la chute, n'est pas celui de la connaissance comme le prétendent des leçons récentes, mais celui de la mort. La rivalité entre le serpent, animal lunaire, et l'homme semble se réduire dans de nombreuses légendes à la rivalité d'un

élément immortel, régénéré, capable de faire peau veuve, et de l'homme déchu de son immortalité primordiale. (Durand 125)

When examining the relationship between Eve and the snake in the context of *La Vampire*, the vampire becomes like a snake itself by mimicking the snake's regenerative capacity. The vampire of the text who interacts with Sévérin, Bonaparte and Cadoudal is not the dangerous woman as it may appear, but rather the snake that brings death. While the vampire does take the appearance of a woman, her role within the text is informed by the first conflict to take place after the creation of the earth. "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:4-5 KJV). The vampire is the serpent. Her regenerative properties enacted by preying upon others associate her with the serpent and orient this femme fatale within a Catholic view of the saintly pitted against the demonic and man against the devil.

For *L'Homme de fer*, the mention of hair appears almost marginal and is devoid of the serpentine qualities Féval's vampire tales depict. This reveals two important points: first, that like the vampire and the snake, women are often portrayed as predatory creatures; and second, that hair, as a symbol of beauty, remains associated with death even when not associated with snake-like creatures or images. As Olivier, a pseudonym for the count Otto de Béringhem, the *ogre des îles*, recounts a tale of his alter personality's duel with an elderly man, the young Berthe is overcome with emotion and begins to faint. While many begin to worry for her health, Otto remains in his place, watching as her friend, Jeannine, approaches. "[Jeannine] se précipita pour soutenir son amie. Madame Reine la repoussa; messire Olivier eut un sourire en voyant les deux jeune filles, un instant groupées, mêler les boucles brunes et blondes de leurs admirables chevelures" (8). This is the first time the narratee is made aware of Otto's desire, albeit through

his pseudonym Olivier, for one of these two women. This image likewise prefigures the count's motto "À la plus belle" which he employs referring to Berthe. Later, as the young women begin to discuss the mysterious and supernatural city of Héliion, it is once again associated with hair and beauty, as one caresses "avec distraction les cheveux bruns de sa compagne" (50). As they continue to dress one another's hair, they overhear Olivier singing of the count Otto.

Il y eut un silence, Jeannine nouait par derrière les longues tresses blondes de mademoiselle de Maurever. Une voix harmonieuse, qui semblait voiler à dessein l'éclat de ses notes sonores, chanta un couplet sous le balcon. La main de Jeannine lâcha les tresses, qui ruisselèrent en flots d'or sur les épaules de Berthe. Celle-ci restait immobile, la bouche demi-close, l'oreille attentive. La voix disait:

Connaissez-vous le cri du lion?

Au vivant rosier d'Héliion, Vont éclore deux fleurs nouvelles:

Roses jumelles.

Le rosier appartient au lion,

Le vivant rosier d'Héliion.

Marguerite est blonde, elle est belle;

Charmante est la brune Isabelle.

Vous connaissez le cri du lion:

A la plus belle! (52-53)

This adage, "à la plus belle," focused on beauty and repeated by Otto, also becomes associated with death. At the novel's conclusion and as the count is being escorted to his execution, he repeats this motto a final time, indicating clearly that he speaks of Berthe. Under normal circumstances, a similar comment would be viewed as flattery or even a sincere compliment.

However, this statement conveys a contrary meaning due to its proximity with his impending execution and the fact that it comes from a figure within the text that brings about much bloodshed. Instead of being complimentary, these words become menacing. The other figures of the text understand them as such, and they protect Berthe from Otto's monstrous gaze. "M^{me} Reine soutint dans ses bras Berthe défaillante. Jeannin et Aubry se mirent au-devant des deux jeunes filles" (181).

In *La Vampire*, we see a fixation on women's hair and its connection with death and beauty in yet another way. In the final passage of this novel, Féval provides the narratee with the supernatural conclusion to the fantastic novel. He frames it as follows, stating that "Notre histoire a déjà eu son dénoûment [sic] réel. Ceci est peut-être le dénoûment [sic] fantastique de notre histoire" (*La Vampire* 231). The supernatural ending to the tale involves both the vampire, Addhéma, and her vampire husband, the count Szandor. Féval writes of a group of men noticing a bright, burning fire in a large castle near the Sava River. These men understand by this that "Le comte Szandor va vendre une nuit d'amour à sa femme Addhéma" (231). For those who adhere to the fantastic explanation of the tale in *La Vampire*, these few concluding pages bring together the images of blood and money discussed in chapter four with respect to secret societies and add to them the notion of sexuality. Sexuality is given the greatest importance in the final pages of *La Vampire*. The gold taken from the baron de Remberg and the count Wenzel is now understood to be the price which Addhéma's husband requires for this one night of sexual intercourse together. The hair which she claims from young women such as Angèle Lenoir, the hair which empowers her to maintain her own beauty, assists her in her desires to be physically appealing to the husband she wishes to seduce. However, her husband, willing to grant her the night which she has purchased from him, is preoccupied by the more beautiful young women of Prague.

The nuptial relationship which exists between the vampires Addhéma and Szandor is comparable to that of the count Tiberio and his wife the countess Greet of *La Ville-vampire*. Tiberio is revealed only to love his wife for her hair, and once that has been removed, so, too, is his affection for her. Little knowledge of Szandor and Addhéma's relationship is given outside of this narrative frame, but it is clear that his affection for her is truly his desire for the wealth which she can procure for him. Count Tiberio's affection becomes so far removed from his wife once her hair is gone that her death seems to have little or no effect upon him. Once Szandor's desire for wealth is fulfilled, he readies a metal pike which he intends to drive into Addhéma's heart. Addhéma explains, "Je ne veux pas voir le soleil se lever. O toi que j'ai aimé vivante et morte, Szandor, mon roi, mon dieu! Tu m'as promis que je mourrais de ta main, après cette nuit de délices. Tu sais comment mettre un terme à mes souffrances, car mon supplice est de vivre, et j'aspire au bienheureux sommeil de la mort" (234). Addhéma's sentiments resemble those of Angèle Lenoir, whose death she caused, when Angèle finds her fiancé with the vampire, Addhéma, and exclaims in desperation "on ne peut pas avoir deux amours" (48). Death does come for Addhéma, although not as she states. Szandor admits to Addhéma that he wishes to fulfill his promise quickly because, "Il y a de belles filles à Prague. Je veux être à Prague avant la nuit..." (234). Convincing Szandor that she would rather take her own life, she acquires the red hot bar from his hand and drives it into his heart first. Her reply to him that "Les filles de Prague peuvent t'attendre" shows jealous scorn motivating her actions, as well as renews the association which binds beauty with death (235). This is the rare occasion in Féval's works where a female figure turns away from being objectified by the masculine figures. Addhéma, who takes the red hot bar which was intended for her from the vampire and turns it back on Szandor, demonstrates a reversal of the phallic image. Turning the bar back on Szandor, causing penetration to the

masculine figure, likewise demonstrates a reversal of power. As will be shown for *La Fée des grèves* and even *L'Homme de fer*, the women of the text become a prize for competing men of the narratives. While these women hope to distance themselves from the villainous masculine figures, they remain the prize at stake for which the heroes and their foes contend. Adhéma however, as a victimized villain, rejects the role of an object and slays her masculine counterpart in place of being sacrificed for his sake.

Like Adhéma in *La Vampire*, who is beautified as she is rejuvenated through her victims, women in Féval's other novels demonstrate feminine beauty intertwining with death and are aligned with the fantastic elements of the narrative. By so closely associating women in his texts with the supernatural, Féval dehumanizes them, causing the women to become more monster than human. The woman, as she metamorphoses into either a benevolent or malicious creature, becomes either as a goddess or akin to a demon. In either case, when the feminine figure embodies the fantastic, she is distanced from the notions of societal standards. Women that are not associated with the supernatural remain secondary and often fragile figures. The female figures are ostracized within the novels, and from this isolation the female figures reinforce the monstrous image of the classic Medusa by posing a threat to masculinity. In *La Fée des grèves*, a woman embodies the fairy who walks the beaches near the Mont Saint-Michel; two women are the objects of the ogre's desire in *L'Homme de fer*; a woman is used to combat the vampire in *La Ville-vampire*; and a woman is the vampire itself in *La Vampire*.

Within fantastic narratives it is common for the feminine figures to be objects. Women in Maupassant's tales are described as speechless, "elles n'ont pas de voix, pas de possibilité de s'exprimer" (Chavasse 141). Fortin writes of the literal transformation into objects which feminine figures undergo in Hoffmann's *Der Sandmann* and Gautier's *Le pied de momie*. The

mummified foot in Gautier's tale is the cause for the mummy princess's appearance later in the tale, and the mechanical doll created by the professor Spalanzani is viewed by the protagonist Nathaniel as being a real woman who has won his love. "But it is not only that these objects are female-figured: as the stories unfold, the objects actually change into 'real' living women. Inanimate objects are thus endowed with autonomous life . . ." (258). Even though these women seemingly come to life, they remain an object in the narrative. They serve a function in the text that the male protagonist encounters and which the readers continue to view as half real and half extravagant. Their fantastic qualities render them fantastic objects, but they remain objects. Thus the feminine figures become dehumanized.

As was displayed previously in the rivalries between Angèle and the vampire, between the countess Greete and la Pallanti, similar rivalries are found in *La Fée des grèves* that show two men vying for one woman. Aside from the fairy herself (the fairy as the supposed supernatural being, and not Reine de Maurever, being mistaken as her) Simonnette and Reine are the two women in the narrative whose actions bear an influence upon the text. These two women are similar in many respects, most notably in that Simonnette and Reine are both women who are being courted or desired by two contending men. For Simonnette it is the young and poor Jeannin and the older Maître Vincent Gueffès. Reine de Maurever is simultaneously courted by Aubry de Kergariou and his rival Méloir. Both Simonnette and Reine are considered to be the prize for these pairs of competing men. Féval describes the rivalry between these men clearly in the novel. "Maître Gueffès était le rival du petit Jeannin, le coquetier. Il trouvait Simonnette charmante, et quand il songeait à la dot de Simonnette, sa mâchoire tout entière se montrait en un épouvantable sourire" (35-36). He sees his own advantage in Jeannin's poverty. Maître Gueffès understands that the meager earnings which Jeannin obtains from collecting shells along the

beach will never suffice for the dowry required by Simonnette's father, and his rival's misfortune becomes his joy. The understanding that a dowry is necessary in order to wed Simonnette demonstrates the transformation of a woman into an object which can be priced and purchased. She is property whose price has been fixed. Their rivalry over Simonnette Le Priol ends in a struggle on the sands. Jeannin, having exchanged clothing with Reine in an effort to serve as a decoy and offer her protection, is mistaken as the *fée des grèves* by on-looking fishermen who see him and Maître Gueffès fighting early in the morning.

La Fée prit, cependant, Gueffès par le cou et l'entraîna dans le brouillard.

Il se débattait, le malheureux! La Fée et lui disparurent derrière la brume.

Quand le brouillard se leva, vers midi, les pêcheurs trouvèrent maître Vincent

Gueffès étendu sur le sable, la Fée lui avait tordu le cou. (316)

Just as Maître Gueffès and Jeannin fight to the death over a woman, so do Méloir and Aubry de Kergariou fight for the opportunity to marry Reine de Maurever. Méloir outlines the severity of his sentiments when he states “. . . si mon frère me gênait . . . mon frère serait mon ennemi. Et mes ennemis, je les tue” (12). Even though Aubry and Méloir are cousins, they become enemies as they learn of each other's intentions to court Reine de Maurever. For Aubry and Méloir, the objectification of Reine is less an exchange of currency, as is the case of Simonnette; instead, she becomes an award to be attributed to the winner of their eventual duel. This friction between the two men continues until the close of the novel, where Méloir finds Reine in the sands near the Mont Saint-Michel during the rising tide. Unfamiliar with the dangers of the region, he carelessly allows his feet to sink into the sand; his struggles only prove to drive him deeper into his impending grave. Reine, having fainted previously, awakes at his side and plans her escape.

Couchée comme elle l'était, et occupant une grande surface, son poids avait à peine attaqué le sable.

Pour se lever et s'enfuir, elle n'avait qu'un effort à faire, car ses pieds n'étaient point emprisonnés comme ceux du chevalier dans la tange lourde et molle.

. . . .

Et sa belle main blanche s'appuya sur le sable pour aider le mouvement de son corps.

Mais une autre main, une main de fer, se referma sur sa belle main blanche.

Méloir avait aux lèvres un sourire sinistre. Il dit:

-Ceci est notre couche nuptiale, Reine de Maurever, dit-il; j'avais juré que tu serais ma femme. (342-43)

Méloir, even as he faces his death, concerns himself more with making Reine his wife, rather than escaping from the imminent danger. As his rival approaches, "Par un effort désespéré, Méloir essaya d[attier Reine] à lui" (344). Méloir understands that not only is his death forthcoming, but that with Aubry approaching, Reine will not be brought down into the sands along with him. "La vengeance qui lui échappait, il voulait la ressaisir et jeter à son rival vainqueur un cadavre pour fiancée" (344). Even though Aubry is able to save Reine from Méloir, the narratee can see how for Méloir, Reine is valued as an object involved in the rivalry, and by choosing to sacrifice her life for the sake of the rivalry, she is esteemed less important than the rivalry itself.

La Fée des grèves, like many fantastic tales, is a bridge from the past into the nineteenth century. In addition to following the same pattern as many other fantastic tales in displaying this

transitory period through their rationalization of the irrational, *La Fée des grèves* also conforms to the model of a fairy tale which will be outlined years later by Vladimir Propp in his *Morphologie du Conte*. The fairy tale structure of this novel is representative of the past it wishes to portray, while the rational explanation of the supposed supernatural positions it amidst the progressive nineteenth-century mentality. Propp demonstrates that for fairy tales, the functions (actions that influence the plot of the story) and not the characters give structure to this genre. Within this fairytale-like novel, it becomes clear that the heroes, Aubry who wishes to save Reine, or Jeannin who intends to marry Simonnette, are the figures within the text that orient the narratee's understanding of the text. These heroes are also the moral flag bearers, embodying the societal values promoted by Féval.

Ainsi, le mythe du héros convoque conjointement un sens individuel et une dimension collective. Au plan individuel, il correspond au désir de transcender les limites de la condition humaine, au rêve d'être extraordinaire, ainsi qu'au besoin d'être reconnu par les autres. Alors que, au plan collectif, il manifeste concrètement le système de valeurs d'une société auquel chacun est invité à adhérer et qui, par là même, renforce la cohésion sociale et nourrit l'identité collective. (Deproost et al. 56)

These masculine figures in *La Fée des grèves* embody the collective societal values outlined by Deproost. The collective purpose of these heroes is to promote, on the one hand, a noble sense of valor, as seen in Aubry's actions and contrasted against those of Méloir, and on the other, selfless service, displayed in Jeannin's willingness to serve as a decoy for those wanting to capture Reine. The individual desire to "transcender les limites de la condition humaine" is

demonstrated in the supernatural image and extraordinary acts accomplished by the purported fairy (Deproost et al. 56).

The image of the fairy walking along the sands as the tide rises and the narrator's comments concerning ghosts dancing on the incoming tide projects an allure of the supernatural, which the individual, the reader, may use to rise above his or her natural condition and thereby ponder an other-worldly existence. According to Todorov, the presence of magical creatures and supernatural abilities are evidence of dreams for power. "On peut dire, évidemment, que de tels êtres symbolisent un rêve de puissance: mais il y a plus. En fait, d'une manière générale, les êtres surnaturels suppléent à une causalité déficiente" (116). A similar remark is made concerning the nature of the hero in ancient traditions, who represents "le désir d'échapper aux limites d'une vie terne pour accéder à la lumière, la volonté de quitter les bas-fonds pour les hauts espaces, la passion de la souveraineté et de la gloire. Nous désirons tous être dieu" (Sellier 9). If the presence of these supernatural abilities are understood as the projection of man's desire for greater power and to become even as a god, why should this power be transferred to the feminine figures in tales such as *La Fée des grèves* or even *La Vampire*? The answer can be found by returning to the same principles brought about through these myths. When considering the myth of a hero, for example Ulysses, Perseus, Hercules, or another, the purpose of the hero for the audience of the narrative is to be representative of both the individual and the collective audience. The feminine figure endowed with supernatural powers helps to reinforce these aspects of the hero. As Jeannin captures Reine, assuming her to be an actual fairy, she acts according to the expectations he was given when first hearing the tale of the fairy of the sands from Simon le Priol. That is to say, Simon le Priol said that the fairy would grant a wish to her captor in exchange for her freedom. Jeannin receives the money for dowry just as he expected. The fairy

thus remains an object whose purpose is to assist the hero in his journey. Many of the female figures endowed with supernatural powers are in fact obstacles and challenges for the masculine figures, the heroes, of the novels.

The heroines of these tales vary in their traits and characteristics. Some embody maternal traits, while others reject societal standards. In both *La Vampire* and *La Fée des grèves*, the feminine figures are clearly marked as objects, either benevolent to the hero or maliciously obstructing his journey. *La Ville-vampire* poses a different dynamic in the masculine and feminine relationship that is presented, since its protagonist is a woman. It is Ann Ward and not her family's servant, Grey-Jack, nor her Irish friend, Merry Bones, nor finally her fiancé William Radcliffe, who decides to cross several countries throughout Europe to pursue both her friends and the vampire. The vampire in this tale, unlike the one found in *La Vampire* or the fairy in *La Fée des grèves*, is not a woman but a man named M. Goëtz. Ann enters the ranks of the classical heroines. She maintains elements of her femininity, but those elements are now coupled with courage and intelligence, which draws her closer to the traits of a goddess.

. . . l'antiquité nous donne plusieurs exemples d'héroïnes qui se sont distinguées par des actions d'éclat. D'Andromaque à Didon et Cornélie, en passant par Iphigénie, Antigone, Électre ou Médée, les héros féminins de l'antiquité manifestent des tempéraments divers, tantôt rebelles et violents, parfois tendres et soumis, mais toujours liés, peu ou prou, à leur qualité de mère, d'épouse, de fille ou de sœur. Quand elle ne revendique pas hautement son état d'épouse "qui n'appartient qu'à un seul homme" comme Andromaque, Pénélope ou les femmes troyennes, l'héroïne antique proclame fièrement un désir irrépressible de virginité ou un attachement passionné aux valeurs familiales, toutes attitudes qui, certes,

connotent chaque exploit féminin d'une plus-value morale particulière, mais qui en sont aussi la condition. (Deproost et al. 77)

As a heroine, just like the male counterpart of the hero, her function is essentially that of an intermediary figure that negotiates the relationship between the people and the gods. However, in these more modern literary manifestations of heroes and heroines, few gods or goddesses are apparent. Instead, the benevolent and malicious gods and goddesses are replaced with the monstrosity supernatural or the uncannily bizarre creatures and inventions. As the supernatural forces in literature evolve, so do the heroes and heroines that either serve or combat them. Likewise, just as these heroes and heroines used to serve as the intermediaries between men and the gods, they now serve as the intermediaries between the common masses and the emerging changes in the collective understanding of the world.

Considerable attention has been given to the dangerous aspects of feminine figures within the chapter and yet, it remains important to note that not all feminine figures are malicious in Féval's works or fantastic literature in general. Quite often there are feminine figures that represent an opposing image to the femmes fatales of Féval's narrative. In his reading of *le Diable amoureux*, Todorov notes that "La force qui empêche Alvare de se livrer totalement à la femme-diable Biondetta, est précisément l'image de sa mère; elle apparaîtra à tous les instants décisifs de l'intrigue" (137). For *le Diable amoureux*, the image of the mother serves as a protection against the diabolic influence of Biondetta. If one considers *Le Pied de momie*, it is clear that the feminine figure is the embodiment of the supernatural and even a representation of death, but she is devoid of any malicious pretensions towards the protagonist-narrator. Instead she is pitiful and weak. After shedding a tear "elle regardait le pied, car c'était bien le sien, avec une expression de tristesse coquette d'une grâce infinie; mais le pied sautait et courait çà et là

comme s'il eût été poussé par des ressorts d'acier" (Gautier 662). These other women, those still are associated with the supernatural and yet remain benevolent, are often the objects of desire for the male protagonists.

Féval's novel, *Le Bossu*, contains a benevolent female that possesses traits of the deadly feminine figures found in his other novels; this woman is the bohemian. Often depicted as nomadic and yet often claiming roots in Spain, literary examples of bohemian women are shrouded in mystery and intrigue.

La bohémienne ou la gitane est un être en marge, elle représente la dissidence, elle représente l'ailleurs, l'étrange. Et souvent nous la voyons s'adonner à des pratiques qui sont condamnées par la société: la magie, la chiromancie. On l'accuse souvent de sorcellerie. Et si elle retient les hommes par sa beauté et sa grâce, on l'accuse toujours de leur jeter des charmes qui les soumettent et annihilent leur volonté. (Santa 179)

The bohemian woman is considered a threat not only to men with her ability to enchant them, but also to the societal standards. Her practices rooted in superstitions and magic clash with the assumed Catholic dogma of the narratee. In addition to the perception that she is a danger to men, the bohemian woman also embodies a sense of the exotic, of something foreign. Her incarnation of foreign and strange practices and mentalities is not always indicative of the dangers which have been seen in some of the previous women figures studied, rather her abilities can be redirected in a means to assist and protect.

In *Le Bossu*, Aurore's youth is filled with instances of Henri Lagardère protecting her from would be kidnappers who attempt to deliver her to Philippe de Gonzague for a reward. During one of their many relocation attempts they are captured and bound by a group of Spanish

bandits. This episode introduces a new character into the tale, one which Aurore will describe as her only true friend, a young bohemian named Flor. Bohemian nomads are often assigned magical and mysterious powers, the most notable example being Hugo's Esmeralda who is thought to be able to enchant men with her dance. Flor displays a supernatural ability to hypnotize or mesmerize with her eyes and hands. According to the law of the gypsies in this text, they require themselves to wait twelve hours before killing their guests whom they have taken as prisoners. Aurore explains: "J'étais sous la surveillance d'une vieille bohémienne faisant près de moi l'office de geôlière. Elle s'était couchée en travers, la tête sur mon épaule, et, par surcroît de précaution, elle tenait en dormant ma main droite entre les siennes" (307). The menacing image of gypsies that is presented here is contrasted by the young bohemian Flor, who serves as a savior. When writing of the image of gypsies and specifically that of Flor, Angels Santa explains that "il existe aussi l'image positive, celle de la bonne fée, qui peut sauver le héros, grâce aux connaissances ésotériques qu'elle possède. Même si elle est moins répandue et moins fréquente" (179). According to Aurore, Flor "était fée" (308). She is the vehicle by which Aurore and Henri are saved from the band of gypsies. Her magic power seems to come from the gaze of her eyes. Flor sneaks up to the old woman, and the narratee witnesses Flor's Medusa-like traits as Aurore describes how "ses beaux yeux noirs triomphaient" (308). Aurore explains how with her gaze Flor subjects several different guards, sentinels and the leader to her will. "Elle se plaça devant [le chef] et le regarda un instant fixement. La respiration du chef devint plus tranquille. Flor se pencha sur lui au bout de quelques seconds, et appuya légèrement le pouce et l'index contre ses tempes. Les paupières du chef se fermèrent" (308). Aurore's understanding of Flor's influence upon the others is only slightly clarified as Flor operates a similar process upon the old woman lying upon her. "La main de Flor descendit lentement du front à l'estomac, et s'y arrêta. Un de

ses doigts faisait la pointe et semblait émettre je ne sais quelle *fluide* mystérieux. Je sentais moi-même à travers le corps de la duègne l'influence étrange de ce *fluide*. Mes paupières voulaient se fermer” (309 emphases added). The fluid which Aurore refers to is likely universal fluid, the substance that many in nineteenth-century France understand to cause hypnosis. While Aurore, as a figure within the text, is unaware of the scientific pretensions which are commonly discussed in nineteenth-century France, such as mesmerism and hypnosis, the readers of this novel certainly were at least superficially familiar with the notion of universal fluid associated with mesmerism. Jean Le Guennec illustrates the origins of mesmerism from before the beginning of the nineteenth century.

[Mesmer] s'installe alors à Paris, où à partir de 1778, il développe sa théorie, préférant les thérapeutiques de groupe, qui augmentent l'effet du fluide de façon considérable: il réunit les patients dans une pièce close, autour d'un baquet rempli d'eau et de limaille de fer magnétisée. Chaque malade tient une tige de fer articulée qui sort du baquet, et l'applique lui-même sur les parties malades du corps. Tous les patients sont reliés entre eux par une corde de façon à permettre la circulation du fluide. Le médecin impose les mains sur les malades et les touche avec une canne de fer aimanté. (52)

The reader of *Le Bossu* understands that the seemingly supernatural control that Flor demonstrates over the captors of Henri Lagardère and Aurore is a manifestation of hypnotism. Flor is similar to Germain Patou, the young medical student in *La Vampire*, and M. Cherbonneau, the doctor in Théophile Gautier's *Avatar*, in that she employs exotic or foreign knowledge to bring about a physical reaction. These two doctors reflect the progress achieved in the nineteenth century, demonstrating a dependence upon established scientific findings. The

miracles or supernatural changes which they execute do not bear any pretenses of being such; rather these doctors suggest their procedures are utterly natural, only poorly understood. In retrospect, the events which surround them maintain a supernatural allure quite simply because the proposed sciences upon which they were based have either been refuted (as is the case of M. Cherbonneau in *Avatar*) or enlightened to the degree that the strangeness and mystery of them have subsided (as is the case of Germain Patou).

Germain Patou is young and impressionable, smitten by the revolutionary teachings of the German doctor Samuel Hahnemann. Patou represents a new ideology that has taken root in nineteenth-century thought, that of homeopathic medicine. Like mesmerism and hypnosis, homeopathy cultivated a large following in the nineteenth century. By the time Féval writes *La Vampire* it has already begun to make its way into more mainstream circles, whereas for the setting of 1804, when the novel takes place, it is still a somewhat obscure and controversial science. When Patou and Sévérin find René de Kervoz unconscious in the bedroom prison where the vampire countess has kept him, they turn to the teaching of Hahnemann.

- C'est si drôle les évangiles de ce Samuel Hahnemann! murmura-t-il enfin.

On n'ose pas trop en parler aux personnes raisonnables. C'est bon pour les cerveaux brûlés comme moi... *Similia similibus*... Si j'étais tout seul, j'essayerais les formules du sorcier de Leipzig.

- Quelles sont ces formules? Ne parle pas latin.

- Je parlerai français. Il y a beaucoup de formules, car le système de Samuel Hahnemann étant précis et mathématique comme une gamme, la chose la plus mathématique qu'il y ait au monde, varie et se chromatise selon l'immense échelle des maux et des médicaments; seulement ces milliers de formules

s'unifient dans LA FORMULE: *Similia similibus curantur*, ou plutôt la règle elle-même est exprimée d'une façon lâche et insuffisante: Ceci est guéri par ceci; au lieu de l'ancienne norme, qui disait: *Ceci est guéri par Cela*. (197)

The cryptic message Patou offers as a remedy for the ailing René, which is best understood in English by the adage to fight fire with fire, places the aspiring doctor in the same league as other healers in the fantastic tradition. As he names this new science a gospel, he likewise underscores its uniqueness. Not only does the name gospel carry with it his passion for its teachings, but it undoubtedly compares Hahnemann's teachings to the principles of Christianity found in the New Testament. This draws the principles of homeopathy away from being a hard and fast science and associates it more closely to a belief in metaphysical powers and influences. With this fascination for magic-like science, Patou is similar to M. Cherbonneau, the doctor in Gautier's *Avatar*, who causes the spirit of one man to switch bodies with another. These healers, although they are portrayed as Frenchmen, are the embodiment of the exotic other. Cherbonneau is said to have journeyed to places as far as India, and his association with strange and uncanny phenomena is illustrated in his simple statement of "il n'y a plus que le commun qui soit extraordinaire pour moi" (Gautier 781). Patou, like M. Cherbonneau, represents an exotic and esoteric medicine, only instead of coming from India it comes from the closer country of Germany. It is commonly noted that the appearance of Hahnemann and homeopathic medicine in Féval's works is influenced by his own life's experience. Writing of the connection between Féval and his serialized novels, Jean-Pierre Galvan notes that "l'histoire de la vie de Paul Féval se confond entièrement avec celle de ses œuvres. Comment comprendre la teneur de ses écrits si l'on ignore le parcours singulier qui conduisit le jeune écrivain plein d'avenir à devenir un des maîtres du roman-feuilleton?" (*Parcours* 7-8). One example of the integration of life and writing

to which Galvan refers is that of homeopathic treatment. The presence of homeopathic treatment carried with it important consequences in Féval's life. After receiving several criticisms and essentially being informed that the critiques would never perceive him as anything more than a hack writer,

Féval sombre alors dans la dépression. La médecine traditionnelle se révélant impuissante à guérir sa "maladie nerveuse," il a recours à un médecin homéopathique, le Dr Pénoyée, qui lui impose une cure énergique et lui prescrit des exercices physiques. Féval se met dès lors à fréquenter assidûment les salles de gymnastique. Sa guérison achevée, il restera un adepte fidèle de la pratique sportive Le 4 mars 1854, Paul Féval, totalement guéri, épouse, par reconnaissance écrira-t-il, la fille du D^f Pénoyée. (*Parcours* 21)

It is not surprising that Féval, who credits a large portion of his mental and physical well-being to a homeopathic doctor who later was to become his father-in-law, integrated aspects of the treatment and philosophy into his writings. One can view in the comments of Patou the enthusiastic feelings that the author himself felt towards the medicine which cured him. Féval describes Hahnemann as a man so persecuted that Patou cannot but help to regard him as a genius. Homeopathy's influence upon Patou is so sudden and impressive that Patou explains: "Hier, je me moquais de Samuel Hahnemann, aujourd'hui j'attacherais volontiers son nom à mon chapeau . . ." (23).

These strange doctors, both the real and fictional Samuel Hahnemann and Gautier's M. Cherbonneau, are seen by Féval and Gautier as bearers of new truths. M. Cherbonneau is described as "le docteur le plus paradoxal du monde, et qu'il avait rapporté de l'Inde une excentricité complète; mais sa renommée de magnétiseur l'emportait encore sur sa gloire de

médecin . . .” (797). Indeed, the *magnétiseur* in nineteenth-century France is considered as a revolutionary science which explains the basis for all physical ailments. Le Guennec describes the discrepancy between the actual practice of the *magnétiseur* and its representation in nineteenth-century fiction.

Il existe plusieurs techniques d’induction qui varient avec l’opérateur et s’adaptent à la personnalité du sujet. Toutefois, certaines conditions sont généralement requises, en totalité ou en partie: la diminution ou l’exclusion des stimulations extérieures, de manière à créer une ambiance favorable à la détente et au sommeil du sujet en position assise ou allongée, et la fixation de l’attention par un objet, ou par une idée – la fixation par le regard ou la fascination, bien connue du public des music-halls, relève du folklore et n’est pas utilisée par les chercheurs. Au contraire, son rôle est considérable dans la fiction, où l’on ne manque jamais de faire remarquer la puissance étrange du regard du magnétiseur, puissance qui frappe d’emblée tous ceux qui ont affaire à lui. (57)

Gautier’s views on magnetism and universal fluid, the primary tenet to this ideology, are made clear when he writes “Le magnétisme animal est un fait désormais acquis à la science et dont il n’est pas plus permis de douter que du galvanisme et de l’électricité” (*Œuvres* 1704).

There are two significant differences which one should note between Flor’s use of magnetism as a woman, and the similar methods used by the two men in the other texts. The most notable difference is that Flor’s makes no pretense of believing magnetism to be a medical or scientifically sound practice. Aurore calling her a fairy suggests that she is indeed endowed with supernatural abilities and that her abilities go beyond the realm of what is comprehensible. The entire episode with Flor is written as a letter from Aurore, and thus from Aurore’s

perspective. Féval's description, while maintaining an air of confusion and awe, nevertheless offers the narratee enough clues to allow an understanding informed by a nineteenth-century mentality. Secondly, Flor's use of magnetism is malicious. She attacks and renders vulnerable those she subjects to her influence. Once the old woman is hypnotized, Flor is able to interrogate her and receive answers without the risk of false information. Flor possesses a mysterious power over others, and she is akin to the Medusa in her ability to render others motionless with the concentrated gaze of her beautiful black eyes. The male doctors from *Avatar* and *La Vampire* have a similar power, but their use of it is limited to helping a patient. Even M. Cherbonneau, who causes the Count Olaf Labinski to exchange bodies with Octave de Saville, an event which results in a great deal of heartache and stress for the count, acts out of the interest of his patient Octave.

Flor, the vampire Addhéma, the vampire Goëtzi, and the pairs of young women from *La Fée des grèves* and *L'Homme de fer* all illustrate a relationship between female beauty and death. This association is shown in direct correlation between the loss of a defining trait of beauty and a subsequent death. For *La Vampire* and *La Ville-vampire*, beauty is associated with hair more so than with the woman to whom the hair belongs. While these different methods of relaying beauty and death together between feminine figures independently account for what transpires in their respective novels, they are unified in their connection with the archetypal image of the femme fatale and at times conjure the image of the Medusa. These deadly women whose beauty bait would-be male lovers, whose eyes petrify and mesmerize, who conspire with devilish figures, and who inspire fear demonstrate how Féval unifies feminine figures and death.

CHAPTER 6

FINDING A PLACE FOR FÉVAL

This work began with an introduction to the life and writings of Paul Féval. The volume of his writings considerably exceed that of many of his contemporaries who are still remembered and discussed in literary circles after a full century has passed. Féval, however, has been mostly forgotten and dismissed as being an author of the less prestigious denomination of popular fiction. While it is not the goal of this study to establish Féval as the equal of his more famous literary peers, it nevertheless strives to show how Féval's works go beyond the sole purpose of diversion and engage with political and social realities of the nineteenth century. Féval's works, from fantastic literature and historical novels, to cape and sword adventures, suggest a diverse author and illustrate how perception regulates the reading experience: the reader's perception of the narrative is as integral to the reading experience as the reader himself. The reader's perception of the natural, the supernatural and even the historical events and figures modify how he will understand the presence of figures such as vampires, the Medusa, or other similarly monstrous creatures. In the end, the perception of these figures and events will determine how the reader views the narrative as a whole. Only in becoming aware of the different possibilities and allowing for multiple perceptions can the reader truly see that there is both a supernatural and a logical explanation for the seemingly supernatural events and perhaps several explanations for each. This bears a striking resemblance to Todorov's definition of fantastic literature as being constituted of the marvelous and the uncanny. Through the observation of Féval's works, and more specifically the role of the narrator and the narratee, the fantastic is demonstrated not as the hesitation between the marvelous or the uncanny, but rather as the inclusion of both the marvelous and the uncanny. It is the perception of the reader and narratee that determines which

of the two sides is most plausible for his or her understanding of the text. Thus the reading process itself is central to Féval.

The supernatural serves as the catalyst for the reader's questioning of these events and images. However, in fantastic literature, supernatural beings and phenomena maintain a mysterious allure. In fact, the elusive characteristics that describe marvelous and supernatural creatures can be found in many cultures. Trolls hide underneath bridges, the density of forests provides cover for fairies and witches, even in the Judeo-Christian tradition, angels are obscured from view by residing in Heaven, or as unseen guardians who only appear in rare circumstances. Féval's vampires are reminiscent of these creatures: they remain on the outskirts of society, lurking in the shadows and living in secret. From their hiding places they are poised to draw their energies from society and become as a parasite, claiming individuals, families or even an entire city as their host. These vampires, like marvelous creatures, remain a secret, never fully disclosing their supernatural characteristics. As parasites, vampires are figures embodying ideals that are, metaphorically, an illustration of the problems found within French society. Greed becomes the reason for Philippe de Gonzague to become a vampire-like parasite and live off Philippe de Nevers in *Le Bossu*. The secret society, *la ligue de la vertu*, found in *La Vampire* shows how crime and conspiracy sap the resources of a city, and even the rumor of such a society is enough to fill the common citizen with worry and a panicked curiosity. For critics such as H.P. Lovecraft, the purpose of many of these images is the fear and terror which they intend to provoke in the reader. The image triggers emotions, creating a sensation of reality within a fictional realm.

Considering once again Todorov's explanation of fantastic literature, we are reminded that it is the hesitation which lies between strange yet possible occurrences (uncanny) on one

side, and on the other, events or creatures that cannot figure within the readers' understanding of the real world (marvelous). Other scholars have noted that there are sketches of the future and reflections on technology in the uncanny aspects of fantastic works. We can see the budding of artificial intelligence in the automatons in work like Villiers de l'Isle-Adam's *Ève Future* or in E. T. A. Hoffman's *Der Sandmann*. These mechanical creations become endowed with lifelike traits and mimic real human action, if nowhere else than in the view of the protagonists. However, reflections of myth, faith and superstition can alter an otherwise rational narrative (uncanny) into something inexplicable and, indeed, marvelous. This has been demonstrated in Paul Féval's works in the preceding chapters. The fairy of *La Fée des grèves* embodies the folklore of its author's native region of Brittany and dresses the narrative with an equally folkloric and magical allure. The vampires of his various tales reinforce myths and are attached to archetypal figures. Even his adventure-oriented cape and sword novel, *Le Bossu*, integrates supernatural traits which cause the reader to hesitate about the possibility that the events described in the novel may indeed be possible. These supernatural events and impossible creatures seemingly draw readers back into a time where they are neither bound by the constraints of the post-Enlightenment mindset nor motivated by the need for rational thought. Féval's fantastic novels throw into question the categorization and classification of fantastic literature by positing the fallibility of a single perspective on literature.

The question of perspective is first addressed by the idea of metafiction, a genre of literature which is most easily described as being "self-aware," meaning that the literature takes into consideration the role of the narrator, narratee and the work itself. This is why the framing device remains one of the totem institutions of the fantastic narrative; it enables the narrative to be self-referential on several levels. By merging metafiction with fantastic literature, a hybrid

genre is revealed, the metafantastic. Metafantastic literature is identified by its presentation of supernatural elements and the narrator's acknowledgement that belief in the supernatural is not universal. Each reader is liable to react differently than others to the supernatural events presented and thus creates a new narrative at each reading. Much like the magician of a stage performance, the narrator chooses carefully what will and will not be revealed to the narratee. However, regardless of the narrator's choice, he cannot control the background and knowledge which inform the reader's experience of the text. For this reason, the narrator speaks not to the reader, but instead to the narratee, an implied reader whom the narrator envisions. Even though the readers and the narratee may bear many similarities, they can find their greatest division in their final perception of the supernatural. The reader is presented with events through the narratee, but is not bound to perceive them in the same way. Thus, as Féval writes of Flor's intervention to save Aurore and Henri Lagardère in *Le Bossu*, he describes a strange sensation felt by Aurore and uses the word "fluide" to indicate a feeling which ran throughout her body (309). For the narratee, this could be a reference to Mesmer's practices and the universal fluid understood to be the basis for hypnosis. While many readers of the nineteenth century would understand this association, the common reader of this same passage nearly one-hundred and fifty years later would not envision this as a curiously described medical practice, but an enchantment with metaphysical properties.

On the one hand, the use of metafiction (or more specifically metafantastic) draws readers into the novel by addressing them directly and integrating them into the narrative process; on the other, readers are distanced from the narrative by being reminded of the fictional world that is being created and commented upon. Like the fantastic itself, readers are divided. As readers understand that there is a relationship created between the narrator and the narratee, it

becomes easier to identify how the narrator shapes the narratee. In the case of Féval's works, this is most often accomplished through the creation of a false dialogue with the narratee, directly addressing and ostensibly involving the narratee in the text by using pronouns that admit to a first and second person, such as "vous," "nous" and "je." The inclusion of the narratee allows the narrator to interject comments which help to inform the reader as to what the narratee should already know, to the point that through his narrator Féval gives details of other novels which he has written, drawing readers outside of the narrative and causing them to recognize the fictitious nature of the text they are reading.

Another narrative technique which Féval makes use of and which is central to several of his works is the integration of historical elements with supernatural events. Much like the recognition of both narrator and narratee, the presence of historical events and figures obscure the narrative. The most notable and thus the most heavily treated instance of historical figures is that of Napoleon Bonaparte. Bonaparte's reputation alone is reason enough to give his fictional counterpart a place in this study. However, the added dimensions which his figure offers as a standard of measurement and a political platform bring depth to Féval's *La Vampire*. From Bonaparte, Cadoudal and the attempted coup d'état, readers are invited to question history at the same time that they question the existence of the vampire represented in the text. From this interrogation of both history and reality, the relationship between historical fiction and fantastic literature is manifest. The historical references, the very real and verifiable events such as Cadoudal's attempted coup, the fratricidal crime committed by François de Bretagne which offers the historical background of *La Fée des grèves*, or even the almost superficial references to Ann Radcliffe's wedding in *La Ville-Vampire*, create an atmosphere of credibility within the narrative. Within a text that is considered strictly a historical fiction, these references are able to

blur seamlessly the line between fictional and historical events of the text. When they are joined with the supernatural elements found in Féval's fantastic tales, tension is created between the verifiability of historical events and the impossibility of the supernatural. It creates the paradoxical situation where the historical figures and events add credibility to the supernatural elements. In contrast, the supernatural elements of these works challenge the authenticity that the historical events bring to the work.

The emphasis placed on perception in these genres is paramount, both in the constant questioning and guessing when considering the metafantastic as well as when Féval's fantastic tales include historically based elements. This notion of perception is fundamental in understanding the figure of the vampire which Féval employs in *La Vampire*, *La Ville-vampire* and *Le Bossu*. The vampires in each of these works, either as supernatural creatures or as symbolic representations of a real entity, such as a secret society, are endowed with different identities. A reader anticipating a single resolution for the supernatural elements of these tales will indeed find it a difficult task to tease out only one explanation. Féval writes to both sides of what will come to be known as Todorov's hesitation in the following century. The vampire becomes the supernatural creature, drinking the blood, stealing the scalp and otherwise murdering his or her victims, but the vampire is also a secret society depriving others of their riches. The vampire is a parasite in all of these forms, living off the work, life, wealth and blood of others. In *La Vampire*, Féval depicts Napoleon Bonaparte as being the greatest vampire, since it is he who lives off the lives taken in the Napoleonic wars.

In the same text which paints Napoleon Bonaparte as a monstrous vampire (*La Vampire*), Féval demonstrates the almost metaphysical multiplicity of identity to which many of his characters are subject. Figures of the text are not confined to a single name nor can bodies

autonomously dictate their own actions. The threat seen in the strange and supernatural aspects of multiple identities, parasites and vampires, is reflected in the femmes fatales and the image of the Medusa which Féval uses in his strange tales. The ties with Medusa, the hair, snakes, beauty and death, are the means by which Féval defines his female figures as well as the way in which readers view them. Opposite the malicious femmes fatales who bring death and fear are the pseudo-medical doctors, such as Germain Patou, whose practices alternate between supernatural and scientific remedies. How readers understand the medical saviors of Féval's fantastic literature is informed by their perception of the figures within the text. These are either champions of science bringing in the newly established practices that will revolutionize the medical industry, or they are spiritually gifted individuals who have been privy to esoteric teachings. As medical or metaphysical physicians, deadly or benevolent women, bodies in possession of many identities or a single identity in possession of many bodies, or even just a vampire living off others, Féval's supernatural creatures are all divided in their definition with respect to the real world. These beings are brought into their respective narratives to manipulate the reader's perception of the text, and the reader is left unsure of the veracity of the narrator's claims and finally of the ultimate conclusions to be drawn on the texts themselves.

In the end, there are many questions that have been placed before the readers of Féval's works. Those observed here are concerned with the nature of supernatural creatures and events. Is the vampire in *La Vampire* the Hungarian countess protecting Napoleon, a secret society attempting to assassinate him, or an actual vampire who is stealing riches to spend one night with her husband? In *La Ville-vampire*, is Ann Radcliffe's entire adventure, which involves chasing the vampire M. Goëtzi and attempting to save her friends, a dream, or is there another element of truth which the reader should identify within the adventure, as suggested by the poster found in

both the fictional dream world and the fictional real world? Which aspects of *La Fée des grèves* and *L'Homme de fer* are historically accurate and which are simply fictional elements added to the narrative? As Féval would have it, there is no single answer. The narrative has been constructed to avoid a direct response. Rather it guides the narratee around in circles, questioning one answer against another, so the process of reading becomes crucial, and not the problem of realism.

Following Féval's death, two separate obituaries were published in the *New York Times*, one the day after, and the other nearly a month later. Each concludes on the author's place in literature. The first entitled "A Famous French Novelist: Death of Paul Henri Feval, One of the Most Prolific of Writers" was published March 9, 1887 and states that "His works were of the kind that are written to read rather than to remember, and nearly all through their vivid interest found a ready market as they came from the press." The second, first published in the *London World* and then republished in the *New York Times* on April 4, 1887, is far more critical of Féval's accomplishments. "And to think that of the scores of volumes which he wrote, some of which, like the 'Mystères de Londres,' [sic] ran through 130 editions, not one will survive, for not one bears the indelible stamp of sincerity and of art!" ("Paul Feval's Late Years"). What is Féval's place among the other great authors of nineteenth-century France? For the authors of these two obituaries, it is far below that of the well-established writers. For Galvan, this answer was given early on in Féval's writing career. "En lui permettant d'acquérir en quelques semaines renommée et fortune, il l'entraînait dans la voie du roman-feuilleton à succès et le coupait irrémédiablement des élites littéraires" (*Parcours* 15). By engaging in the business of the roman-feuilleton, Féval ostensibly chose fortune over fame. However, should these tales of vampires, fairies, ogres, attempted assassinations, kings, dukes and emperors, inspire thought and

reflection, then it would seem that Féval's works deserve more consideration and attention than previously given. His work may not be those that call to remembrance the great struggles of his century, as do some of the works of Zola and Hugo, but they do offer a new understanding of narrative structures and techniques as well as how "we," the readers, understand supernatural events and beings presented in the literature we read.

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