



Taming the Gypsy: How French Romantics Recaptured a Past

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Taming the Gypsy: How French Romantics Recaptured a Past

A dissertation presented

by

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to

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Abstract

In this dissertation, I examine the evolution of the Gypsy trope in Romantic French literature at a time when nostalgia became a powerful aesthetic and political tool used by varying sides of an ideological war. Long considered a transient outsider who did not view time or privilege the past in the same way Europeans did, the Gypsy, I argue, became a useful way for France's writers to contain and tame the transience they felt interrupted nostalgia's attempt to recapture a lost past.

My work specifically looks at the development of this trope within a thirty-year period that begins in 1823, just before Charles X became France's last Bourbon king, and ends just after Louis-Napoleon declared himself Emperor of France in 1852. Beginning with *Quentin Durward* (1823), Walter Scott's first historical novel about France, and the French novel that looked to it for inspiration, Victor Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831), I show how the Gypsy became a character that communicated a fear that France was recklessly forgetting and destroying the monuments and narratives that had long preserved its pre-revolutionary past. While these novels became models in how nostalgia could be deployed to seduce France back into a relationship with a particular past, I also look at how the Gypsy trope is transformed some fifteen years later when nostalgia for Napoleon nearly leads France into two international conflicts and eventually traps the French into what George Sand called a dangerous "bail avec le passé." In new readings of Prosper Mérimée's *Carmen* (1845) and

George Sand's *La Filleule* (1853), I argue that both authors personify the dangers of recapturing the past, albeit in two very different ways. While Mérimée makes nostalgia and the Gypsy accomplices, George Sand gives France an admirable Gypsy heroine, a young woman who offers readers a way out of nostalgia's viscous circle. I conclude by arguing that nostalgia and this Romantic trope found their way back into France at the dawn of a new millennium, and the Gypsy has once again been typecast in art and politics as deviant for refusing to dwell in or on the past.

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Introduction

France made international news in September 2010 after an internal memo from the Minister of the Interior was leaked to *Le Monde*, and Sarkozy's detailed plan to rid France of more than 300 Roma camps was revealed to the world. This expulsion, as the August memo states, would be different from previous, less successful attempts to rid France of its Roma population. Instead of simply asking camps to pick up and leave, which the memo complains only leads to the dispersion or displacement of Roma communities, it calls for camps to be torn down and their residents sent back to their country of origin. Roma who are "non-expulsables" (those the reader can assume to be French) would have to deal with France's court system which, the memo states, should prevent them from setting up illegal camps again.

In the following weeks, France's gendarmerie and police successfully followed through with the memo's orders, escorting numerous Roma families to France's borders with one-way tickets home to their supposed countries of origin.¹ French intellectuals and human rights organizations denounced Sarkozy's mass deportation as a sad attempt to gain voter support from the xenophobic far right. However, they failed to ask why the French president announced his plans to expulse the Roma in a speech addressing the growing unrest in France's *banlieus*, peripheral urban spaces where first, second and sometimes third generation immigrant populations have been consigned since the 1960s.

If one revisits the July 30, 2010 speech where Sarkozy first announced his plans to rid France of its Roma population, it becomes clear that the president's decision has little to

¹ In many cases, they were sent to Bulgaria or Romania, two countries that are now members of the European Union and whose citizens should have the right to travel freely through the EU.

do with the Roma themselves.² In fact, Sarkozy's speech came shortly after two dozen or so young men from Villeneuve, one of Grenoble's troubled *banlieues*, spilled out of their *cité* and threatened the "security" of those living in the city center. The Grenoble riots began on July 17, 2010 as a protest to police shooting and killing one of Villeneuve's residents, Karim Boudouda, whose family, friends and neighbors denounced the act as yet another example of police violence toward France's Maghreb and *beur* communities. But as the riots turned violent, escalating from burning cars to shoot-outs with police, the French began to ask themselves if the Grenoble riots were not a frightening repetition of the *émeutes* that shook France for three weeks in October and early November 2005 – riots that began in Clichy-sous-Bois, but quickly turned into a nationwide revolt of France's young and frustrated *banlieue* population.³

In his attempt to give meaning to the Grenoble riots, Sarkozy opened his speech by placing blame not on France's police or current administration, but on the parents of the wayward youth who failed to enforce what he believes are the defining *valeurs* of French society. As he put it,

La délinquance actuelle ne provient pas d'un mal être comme je l'entends dire trop souvent: elle résulte d'un mépris pour les valeurs fondamentales de notre société. La question de la responsabilité des parents est clairement posée... Quand je regarde les rapports de police, et je vois qu'un mineur de 12 ans ou de 13 ans, à une heure du matin, dans le quartier d'une ville lance des cocktails Molotov sur un bus qui passe, n'y-a-t-il pas un problème de responsabilités des parents ?

² Transcript: http://www.elysee.fr/president/les-actualites/discours/2010/discours-de-m-le-president-de-la-republique-a.9399.html?search=Grenoble&xtmc=securite_grenoble&xcr=1 A video of the speech can be found at: http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xf0ih7_nicolas-sarkozy-discours-de-grenobl_news

³ I feel it is important to point out that 27-year-old Karim Boudouda was shot and killed by police after he robbed a local casino and then opened fire on police. The deaths that led to the 2005 riots have been called accidental, as the three youth (all minors) were killed by electrocution while hiding in an EDF electrical transformer to avoid interrogation by the national police, who wrongly suspected them of a theft.

He went on to fault modern family structures which, stressed by the demands of work or divorce, are broken and therefore allow children to evade the structures and laws put in place to prevent them from becoming “délinquants.”⁴ To emphasize what he believes France has lost with the disintegration of the traditional family, he turns to nostalgia, and with a despondent tone states: “Le monde change. Beaucoup de nos jeunes ont changé. Des valeurs ont été détruites... »

He then likens these broken homes to France’s own domestic drama, or what he interprets as France’s failure to integrate immigrant populations into the national family.⁵ According to the president, who encapsulates the ideas of nation, city, neighborhood and the ailing family unit into a larger metaphor of home, this failure to assimilate immigrants has left many feeling detached or estranged from France – the political and domestic space he believes children and grandchildren of immigrants should recognize as their home, but increasingly reject. Or as he emphatically stated it in his Grenoble speech, « Il est quand même invraisemblable que des jeunes gens de la deuxième, voire de la troisième génération, se sentent moins Français que leurs parents ou leurs grands-parents. »

Imposing himself as a much-needed father figure, Sarkozy offers solutions: new rules and limits will be put in place to make sure everyone assumes their proper place in the

⁴ Sarkozy names, and I would argue targets, the “mère de famille, notamment dans les familles monoparentales,” who he suggests is unable to juggle all of the responsibilities necessary to raise children. In a condescending and paternal tone, he states “C’est si difficile d’élever des enfants,” implying women should not attempt to raise children without fathers. This is yet another way Sarkozy asserts his own, paternalistic role in the French family.

⁵ « Il faut le reconnaître... nous subissons les conséquences de 50 ans d’immigration insuffisamment régulée qui ont abouti à un échec de l’intégration. Nous sommes si fiers de notre système d’intégration. Peut-être faut-il se réveiller ? Pour voir ce qu’il a produit. Il a marché. Il ne marche plus. »

French family.⁶ Social welfare will be withheld from parents who allow their children to become delinquent and in extreme cases, parents will even serve jail time for their children's transgressions and crimes. Sarkozy would also make it so that « l'acquisition de la nationalité française par un mineur délinquant au moment de sa majorité ne soit plus automatique. » Providing a republican remedy to the *maladie* that has besieged France's domestic spaces, Sarkozy proposes the perfect UMP conclusion to the French family drama he constructs.

However, in a strange plot twist, Sarkozy's closing remarks turn to the Roma, who become a disjointed conclusion to the president's story of broken homes – as they in no way contributed to the violence in Grenoble and seemingly have nothing to do with France's troubled youth. When we look past Sarkozy's discourse on parental responsibility, what we find is a narrative that yearns to capture a lost object – a mythic space that Sarkozy claims once existed, but which has been attacked and degraded by broken homes and a delinquent *banlieu* youth. If I use the word mythic here, it is because the cohesive space that Sarkozy nostalgically refers to in his speech – a France before “50 années d'immigration insuffisamment régulée... ont abouti à un échec de l'intégration” – never really existed. Like most politicians who rely on nostalgia, Sarkozy conveniently forgets an important detail about the time he nostalgically summons, the end of the 1950s, a time when the Algerian

⁶ In this speech, Sarkozy often juxtaposes the family unit to French society, claiming both have become dysfunctional while asserting his authority on both. “La société ne peut pas fonctionner comme ça. Vos propres familles ne fonctionnent pas comme ça.” Home and its ambiguous translations in French, *chez soi*, *le foyer*, *la famille*, *la cité*, *la nation*, are terms that I will explore throughout this dissertation, along with Freud's theory on the *heimlich* and *unheimlich*.

War (1954-1962) and its resulting violence and civil strife led to the end of the Fourth Republic.⁷

Of course, Sarkozy is hoping that his rhetoric of nostalgia is contagious, or at least that it is shared by more conservative French voters who also long to return to a mythic time and place where children, parents and president once resided harmoniously. Furthermore, his politics can only be successful if he is able to convince his constituency that the past is better than the present, and that twenty-first-century France has become an uncanny and unlivable place.⁸

Nostalgia, of course, is not a new *maladie*, and Sarkozy's rhetorical use of it was not a new political trick. As Jean Starobinski has pointed out, nostalgia has existed since the Western world began a relationship with time.⁹ But it wasn't until the seventeenth century that nostalgia began to gain momentum in popular culture. Nostalgia was, as Svetlana Boym observes, the legacy of the Renaissance which had bequeathed a new perspective of the world to future generations – one in which exploration and mapping made it difficult, if not impossible, for Europeans to contain themselves to the local.¹⁰ By 1688, a Swiss doctor by the name of Johannes Hofer made nostalgia the subject of his medical studies, coining the term by combining the Greek words *nostos* (home) and *algos* (longing) and praising those

⁷ Sarkozy's discourse on the death of the traditional family is typical of nostalgic rhetoric that mourns the 1950s, post-World War II era.

⁸ When using "uncanny" in this project, I refer to the Freudian definition of this word – the *Unheimlich*, or unheimly. In his 1919 essay, "The Uncanny," Freud observes that the *Unheimlich* is the *Heimlich* that has become strange. Freud and then Julia Kristeva (in *Étrangers à nous-mêmes*) suggest that strangeness already exists within the familiar, but we must be able to, or willing to recognize it.

⁹ Jean Starobinski, "The Idea of Nostalgia."

¹⁰ Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*.

who fell ill with it for their patriotism, since they “loved the charm of their native land to the point of sickness” (Boym 4). While temporarily disabling, seventeenth-century nostalgia could be cured by sending patients home, and allowing them to retrieve the lost object they so desperately desired. In cases where a return home wasn’t possible, doctors would try and displace this desire onto another object or person, administer leeches or purge the stomach. As Boym puts it, “in the good old days nostalgia was a curable disease” (4).

But after the French Revolution, nostalgia became something altogether different. As Michael Roth has observed, between 1820 and 1840, nostalgia became *la maladie du siècle* in France, as doctors now considered the disease “potentially fatal, contagious, and somehow deeply connected to French life in the middle of the nineteenth century” (26).¹¹ In this modern form of nostalgia, the present, future or anything else that could interrupt the melancholic fantasy, became dangerous to the nostalgic, who had no other wish than to “obliterate history and turn it into private or collective mythology, to revisit time like space, refusing to surrender to the irreversibility of time that plagues the human condition” (Boym xv).¹²

It was also in nineteenth-century France that nostalgia became a useful political tool, as the Bourbon Restoration, then Louis-Philippe and finally Louis-Napoleon, all used nostalgia as a way to legitimize their regimes and to squelch republican or socialist efforts to

¹¹ I quote Michael Roth’s article “Returning to Nostalgia” from Suzanne Nash’s edited volume, *Home and its dislocations in Nineteenth-Century France*. It is important to note, because of the dates I provide here, that Roth believes nostalgia loses popularity by the end of the century, as hysteria becomes the pathology used to translate French society’s ills.

¹² Although I will return to their work in later chapters, I want to point out that my thoughts were influenced by the following work on nostalgia: Susan Stewart’s very helpful book *On Longing. Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*; Alastair Bonnett’s *Left in the Past: Radicalism and the Politics of Nostalgia*. Also, while Hofer treated men and women patients, Roth observes that most of the nineteenth-century medical discourse in France concentrates on male subjects. Also, see Chapter 2 and my comments on Margaret Waller’s important work on the *mal(e) du siècle*.

undermine their authority. In fact, the rhetoric Sarkozy used to impose his own authority after the Grenoble riots follows a political tradition that was perfected in nineteenth-century France, when the past, present and future first became battlefields in a violent ideological war.

The fact that Sarkozy chose to conclude his nostalgic speech with the Roma also isn't arbitrary. As the following chapters reveal, Sarkozy was merely playing upon a French sensibility to a plot that was created and perfected after the French Revolution, when nostalgia first became a pervasive political and literary leitmotif, and the fictional Gypsy was turned into a trope to represent that which is most dangerous to the nostalgic dream of a return: transience.

As the Oxford English Dictionary defines it, transience or being transient means: “passing by or away with time”, “not durable or permanent”, “temporary”, “transitory”, “passing away quickly or soon”, “brief, momentary, fleeting”, “passing through a place without staying in it, or staying only for a short time”, “a person who passes through a place, or stays in it only for a short time”, “a transient guest”, “a traveller”, “a tramp”, “a migrant worker” (*OED* 404). It is evident that transience implies two main transgressions. The first is spatial, as it is a crossing through or between spaces: “passing through a place”. The second is temporal, as transience or the transient is always leaving one time for another: “staying only for a short time,” “not durable or permanent,” “brief, momentary, fleeting.” Both of these movements or crossings stand in direct opposition to the nostalgic fantasy of

dwelling in and on the past.¹³ In other words, what makes transience dangerous to nostalgia is its temporary nature, which is a reminder that everything must pass away with time.

The Roma, for perhaps obvious reasons, would have been a likely trope for transience as they were a transient people, always on the move, refusing to make their home in one place, or to stay in one space for too long. Furthermore, they did not, until recently, give importance to the foundational myths or origin stories essential to nostalgia. By the time the Gypsy was written into nineteenth-century France's most nostalgic tribute to itself, *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes*, they were typecast as the tortured « enfant perdu... ces aventureux bâtards... vagabond qui ne sait d'où il vient, et ne sait pas davantage où il va » (Achard 46) – a metaphor ripe with France's own anxieties with regards to missing beginnings and unknown endings.¹⁴

But this wasn't always the Gypsy's role in French literature. When Cervantes made Gypsies a popular literary character in the seventeenth century, their refusal to be sedentary, or to belong to one space, became a useful way for French writers to critique the inside from the outside. Because the Gypsy character in its early incarnations was rarely a Gypsy, but rather a European who was either kidnapped by Gypsies or taken in by them, Gypsiness was a disguise that could be shed when the time came for the subversive hero or heroine to be integrated back into the community from which he or she was estranged.

It is important at this point to explain my transition from Roma to “Gypsy” and my use of the latter throughout this project. “Tsigane,” “Bohémien,” “Gitan” and “Manouche”

¹³ As the Merriam Webster dictionary tells us, the verb *to dwell* can mean “to remain for a time,” “to live as a resident,” or “to keep the attention directed” (on or upon), as well as “to speak or write insistently.”

¹⁴ In Chapter 3, I will discuss at length Amédée Achard's 1841 portrait of the Gypsy for *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes. Encyclopédie morale du dix-neuvième siècle*.

were, until recently, the words most commonly heard and read in French discussions about the very diverse population referred to today as *Les Roms* in French and Roma in English.¹⁵ In defense of her own use of the word “Tsigane,” which is most often translated by “Gypsy” in English, historian Henriette Asséo points out that *Roms* and Roma are labels that were sanctioned by the European Union at the end of the twentieth century in their attempt to group together and politicize very diverse peoples. Tsigane, she argues, is the term used by the *culture savante* to cover « un ensemble de populations très diverses » whose origin remains a mystery and whose « histoires » are very different, since Gypsies have been rooted in different national spaces for centuries.¹⁶ As Deborah Epstein Nord points out in her book *Gypsies and the British Imagination, 1807-1930*, the “question of terminology is... inseparable from the question of identity” (19) which is still under debate among historians, anthropologists, politicians and some Roma activists who, for different reasons, want nothing more than to solve the mystery of the Gypsy’s origin.

As I will discuss further in the next chapter, much of the mystery surrounding the Gypsy’s origin comes from the fact that they refused to call one place home, claiming as early as the fifteenth century that they were *Bohémiens de Petite Egypte* or *Egyptiens de*

¹⁵ While Henriette Asséo attempts to distinguish a geographical difference between Manouches (who she says are French) and Gitans (who she says are mostly Spanish), what I have found is that both terms are used for Gypsies in French writing and culture, though Manouche seems to carry less of a negative connotation. Contemporary researchers’ attempts to pin these labels down to one geographical space proves how difficult it is for Western thought to escape its sedentary roots.

¹⁶ These quoted comments were published in the October 2010 issue of the French magazine *L’Histoire*, only a month after Sarkozy’s memo made national news. Asséo first defended her use of “Tsigane” in a France24 interview, which can be found at <http://www.france24.com/fr/20101022-roms-henriette-aseo-ue-france>. According to the Larousse Encyclopedia, “tsigane” is ancient Greek and refers to “une secte hérétique de devins et de magiciens (Atsinganos) – qui a été collée au XIIe siècle sur des groupes nomades.” While Asséo and others argue that tsigane is not pejorative, its linguistic roots are. It is also important to point out that while there is a Romani word for someone who is not Roma, *Gadzo*, there was not a word in the Romani language, until recently, for the Roma as a nation or ensemble. Roma is the plural of “rom,” which means man or husband.

Bohême, hoping that Bohemia could open a door, gate or drawbridge when Egypt could not. It wasn't until Heinrich Grellman published his 1787 linguistic study, *Historischer Versuch Über Die Zigeuner*, that the European Gypsy was rooted in India. Providing the definitive answer to Europe's centuries-old question, "Where did they come from?" Grellman had finally pinned the transient Gypsy to a specific space and time, while stitching up what was perceived as a "memory problem" (Trumpener 859), which Katie Trumpener astutely observes was often represented in post-Enlightenment German texts as both "the strength of forgetfulness" or "the struggle to remember" (859).¹⁷

Though Grellman was a racist proponent of Germany's expulsion laws, Romani activists currently have the most invested in his Indian origin story, which they have used to construct a common identity for a people who, until the twentieth century, resisted political organization. Recognizing that cohesion and creating a political voice could prevent another tragedy like the Holocaust, Romani intellectuals and community leaders appropriated identity markers recognized by Europeans – a flag, an anthem and an origins story that legitimize and authenticate the Indian story that was born out of Grellman's xenophobia.¹⁸

¹⁷ Katie Trumpener's cultural study is a cursory look at Germany's post-enlightenment representations of the Gypsy, Britain's nineteenth-century "literarization" of the Gypsy and Canadian Ronald Lee's 1971 novel *Goddam Gypsies*. As she puts it, the "process of 'literarization,' the increasingly powerful Western symbolism developed around the Gypsies, and their discursive placement ever further outside of the national teleologies or cumulative time of history, leads simultaneously to a progressive dissociation and conflation of literary traditions with living people" (Trumpener 849). In Chapter 1, I will argue that France's "literarization" of the Gypsy began long before nationalism took hold in Europe, which is one reason the literary Gypsy figure should not be studied as a "European" myth (861), but as communicating very specific concerns and anxieties about a specific time and place. My other concern with Trumpener's study is that while suggesting the Roma have been left out of history, she seems to suggest that a people cannot live outside of history, that history is inescapable even in a post-modern society. Trumpener's work, as she states in footnotes, was aided/influenced by Ron Lee and Ian Hancock, two Roma advocates who have begun writing a Roma history. I will come to this soon.

¹⁸ Unfortunately, I do not have the space to detail the horrible persecution the Roma have endured with the rise of nationalism. Ian Hancock has done extensive work unburying these stories, especially with regards to the Holocaust. As he points out in *We are the Romani people*, the Holocaust destroyed "over half of the Romani

Some linguists and anthropologists have begun to question Grellman's Indian origin story, asking what Europe's perpetual search for the Gypsy's mysterious origin says about sedentary communities and their fears. In her book, *Traveller Gypsies*, Judith Okely dismantles Grellman's study, showing through her own linguistic research that the Gypsy language has never been "foreign" and cannot stand alone if deprived of its European words. Her conclusion is that Europe's need to place the Gypsy inside India is based on its own desire to exoticize a way of life that has always been perceived as strange and foreign.¹⁹

While this work is about how four influential nineteenth-century writers turned the Gypsy into a trope for the transience that interrupted a French fantasy of recapturing a lost past, I feel it is important to bring up the complexity of terminology in this introduction since it illustrates why the Gypsy figure became a useful way to communicate nineteenth-century France's growing nostalgia. In the texts I study, Gypsies (most often referred to as *Egyptien* and *Bohémien*, but also as *Tsigane* and *Gitan*) became scandalous literary characters by the mere fact that they willingly forget their pasts, or disrupt the writer or hero's efforts to reconstruct one. For a generation who felt it had been alienated from its past by revolutions and competing ideologies, the Gypsy's willing or unwilling act of forgetting the past was salt in a psychic wound that continued to fester well into the second half of the

population in Nazi-occupied Europe. Romanies were the only other population besides the Jews who were targeted for extermination on racial/ethnic grounds in the Final Solution" (Hancock 34). He says that this remains a little known fact because Roma are often forgotten in Holocaust museums and memorials.

¹⁹ Okely and then Wim Willems argue that Gypsies did not claim India as a homeland until linguists and Gypsy historians began disseminating this story. Today, Roma activists are rewriting the story and making it their own. Or as Ron Lee, a respected Roma scholar, put it in an email discussion list: "We all have the right to our theories but academic theories will not give pride to young Roma searching for their identity... like the Jewish scribes who wrote the Old Testament, people like Ian [Hancock] and I and others are trying to create Romani history" (Matras 73). I quote Yaron Matras, who quotes Ron Lee from an August 14, 2000 Patrín email discussion list. I highly recommend Matras' article "The Role of Language in Mystifying and Demystifying Gypsy Identity" for a detailed breakdown of this ongoing debate.

century.²⁰ As Alfred de Musset observed in his 1836 *Confession d'un enfant du siècle*, the failed Revolution of their grandfathers and the failed Empire of their fathers had left his generation with a *mal du siècle*, an aching sensation that they were trapped in an unlivable and unheimlich present, unable to mourn the failures of the recent past or to celebrate the glory of a more distant one. Or as Peter Fritzsche points out in his brilliant book, *Stranded in the Present. Modern Time and the Melancholy of History*, with the Revolution and the rise and fall of Napoleon's Empire, much of Europe began to conceive the past "as something bygone and lost, and also strange and mysterious, and although partially accessible, always remote" (5).

Of course, nineteenth century French writers could have chosen and did a number of tropes to express their fear of losing touch with the past and feeling lost in the present. But as I will show in the following chapters, the Gypsy plot was perhaps the most successful in convincing nineteenth-century French readers and writers that transience could be contained or tamed, so as to give free rein to nostalgic desire. Because I feel this trope was born out of a very specific social and political crisis, I look closely at how this trope was fashioned, reworked and deployed by three writers who were born at the dawn of the nineteenth century and who began their writing careers around the same time the July Revolution brought down the Bourbon Restoration— Victor Hugo, Prosper Mérimée and George Sand.²¹ Whereas most literary studies of the Gypsy attempt to draw conclusions from reading a century or more of literature, I believe this very pointed study, which begins in

²⁰ I refer to Freud's use of "wound" in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, where he explains that trauma is a wound of the mind. Furthermore, because the trauma victim is unable to integrate their experience into consciousness, they are doomed to relive the event again and again.

²¹ Hugo, Mérimée and Sand were born in 1802, 1803 and 1804 respectively.

1823 and ends with 1853, not only allows for a better understanding of a very important debate about nostalgia as a political and aesthetic tool, but illuminates why the Gypsies these French Romantics penned have recently found a new home in twenty-first century France.²² I also argue that while it may be tempting to integrate these Gypsies into some larger European myth, doing so may prevent us from listening to and understanding the subtleties of a debate that argued first for and then against the past as a model for the present.

Because it is important to understand where the Gypsy stood in the French imagination before the nineteenth century, the first chapter of this work examines the evolution of the Gypsy trope from the Middle Ages until just after the French Revolution. While exploring this early French portrait of the Gypsy, I also look at how the Gypsy was almost always the familiar stranger who stood just outside France's foyer. Lodged in the Chapelle-Saint-Denis, in the maid's quarters, or in the poorer part of town, the Gypsy in early modern literature was close enough to see and understand France's problems, yet far enough away to offer another perspective. In much of this literature, the Gypsy is often revealed to be French, and Gypsiness becomes a way of garnering freedom at times when freedom is not to be had.

It wasn't until Jean Nicolas Etienne de Bock translated Heinrich Grellman's linguistic study in 1788 that the Gypsy became a literary figure who was intrinsically different from the French. As Bock's French introduction to Grellman's work explains, this otherness wasn't solely tied to the Gypsy's new Indian roots, but rather resided in France's growing "attachement pour la maison qui nous a vu naître, pour le champ qui nous a nourri,

²² See the Conclusion where I discuss the resurgence of Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris*, and to some extent, Mérimée's *Carmen* at the end of the millennium.

pour le lieu où nous avons passé notre première jeunesse” (Bock 9). In other words, it was symptomatic of a growing suspicion that a certain way of life was coming to an end, as industry and technology heralded a new beginning.

As the end of the eighteenth century turns into the turbulent nineteenth century, nostalgia evolved as *émigrés* wrote from across the English Channel and republican ideology destroyed the vestiges of a past that had been fading since revolutionaries beheaded the king. In Chapter 2, I examine how Walter Scott transformed the Gypsy character he first made popular in Britain into an altogether different figure for France, fashioning a character who personified what he felt had gone wrong with the Revolution and then the Empire. Though Scott’s first attempt to write French history in 1823 was initially a failure in England, France celebrated *Quentin Durward* as *the* example for a new historical novel in France. Victor Hugo, who praised the novel in one of the few literary reviews he penned in his long career, borrowed Scott’s model to construct an altogether new genre in 1831. Recognizing the potential of the Gypsy as an allegory for France’s political and historical crisis, Hugo borrowed the Gypsy trope Scott fashioned for *Quentin Durward* for his own novel, *Notre-Dame de Paris*, turning the character into both an allegory for the ideological forces that hoped to erase an important part of French history and a lesson to his compatriots who dared turn their backs on the past. By way of nostalgia, Hugo also encouraged Parisians reading his novel to bring the past back into the present, remembering and honoring the men who built the monuments they passed in daily walks through their city.

One has to wonder if Hugo’s 1831 aesthetic project, which used nostalgia to reunite the present with its estranged past, didn’t inspire Louis-Phillipe’s Versailles museum, which attempted to knit together France’s disjointed past by representing all the important actors

and intrigues of French history in painting. As Maurice Samuels has pointed out in *The Spectacular Past. Popular History and the Novel in Nineteenth-Century France*, the transformation of the Sun King's palace into a museum that was open to the general public "epitomized the July Monarchy's adherence to democratic and Republican ideals. But inherent in these claims lay a thinly veiled ideological program to use history as a means of cementing a collective national identity in the wake of the Revolution of 1830 and, in the process, to promote loyalty to the state and to the regime" (Samuels 86). However, Louis-Philippe was not as successful as Hugo in his attempt to unite present and past through nostalgia.²³ As conservative critics pointed out, the Versailles museum risked glorifying the Revolution and Napoleon, and nothing good could come of that, at least not for Louis-Philippe.

By the end of the decade, Louis-Philippe was riding a wave of nostalgia for Napoleon that risked capsizing the July Monarchy. In 1840, the Citizen King almost went to war with England in an attempt to placate France's aggrandized ambition to pick up where Napoleon had left off in Egypt. The rampant chauvinism and nostalgia that had led to the infamous Egypt affair would eventually culminate in the overthrow of Louis-Philippe's government and lead to yet another Napoleon appointing himself Emperor of France. Although Mérimée had no way of knowing in 1845 where France's nostalgia would lead in 1848 and then 1852, his novella *Carmen* attempts to examine how the past can be appropriated as a battlefield for the present. In Chapter 3, I read *Carmen* as Mérimée's critique of his compatriots' nostalgia and their absurd need to relive the past in politics.

²³ As I will explain in Chapter 2, it is thanks to Hugo's novel that efforts to restore *Notre-Dame de Paris* began in 1844.

Whereas Scott and Hugo made the Gypsy nostalgia's antagonist, Mérimée suggests that forgetting is symptomatic of both nostalgia and being a Gypsy, since the nostalgic only remembers what he wants to remember about the past. What Mérimée offers readers, as Don José and Carmen are buried in the final pages of his novella, is a more archival relationship to time and history – one that divorces the past from emotion and keeps it locked away in a “safe house” where revisionists and nostalgia have no right of entry.

In the final chapter of this project, I will show how George Sand appropriates the Gypsy plot of her male predecessors in 1853 to propose a remedy for the nostalgia that she believed led France into a vicious cycle of repeating the past's political mistakes. Rather than demonize the Gypsy as Scott, Hugo and Mérimée had done, Sand gives her Gypsy a voice and the textual space to write her own story in *La Filleule*. It is through her Gypsy character's critique of the family drama being played out around her that Sand is able to disrupt the fantasy that initially makes her text nostalgic. Returning to the subversive character that was made popular in the seventeenth century, Sand also uses her Gypsy heroine to critique the 1848 marriage between the bourgeoisie and aristocracy that led to the betrayal of the working and lower classes after the February Revolution and that eventually culminated in a renewed fervor for Napoleon's memory.

Morena's place as an outsider in the text is further complicated by the fact that she is kidnapped by a well-intentioned French couple who hopes to transform her into a proper citizen. The fact that she rejects this identity and seeks her own future outside of France is Sand's powerful conclusion to a novel that is a veiled critic of the political events that led to Louis-Napoleon's election and coup d'état. Refusing to repeat the mistakes of her parents (biological and adoptive), Morena learns from and accepts her past, while showing readers

that the past doesn't necessarily have to pave the road to the future. As Morena breaks free from the aristocratic father and bourgeois godfather who attempt to contain and tame her, successfully building her own life outside of their realm of influence, Sand offers hope to those who had to be wondering in the early months of 1853, if France was ever going to move out of its ad nauseam repetition of the past and into something new and unknown.

Because Sand deploys the Gypsy trope in a similar way in her 1858 novel *Les Beaux Messieurs de Bois-Doré*, I end this project by looking at how her own efforts to reform a plot and a generation were perverted in the late seventies by an artist eager to profit from his generation's nostalgia for a time that had come to a close with the 1968 student riots and the subsequent resignation and death of Charles de Gaulle.²⁴ Closing with a brief study of Bernard Borderie's television drama *Les Beaux Messieurs de Bois-Doré*, I will show how the twentieth century successfully shut down Sand's alternative to *mal du siècle*, opening the door to a resurgence of nostalgia and to a plot that would once again punish the Gypsy for refusing to venerate the past and its narratives.

²⁴ De Gaulle died in 1970, only a year after his resignation. His funeral became a display of great public mourning, not only for the dead president, but for everything he represented – almost 30 years of French history.

Chapter One

The Literary Gypsy's French *Bonne Aventure* Toward the Nineteenth Century

In the Introduction, I argue that twenty-first century France is once again grappling with a trope that first reared its ugly head at a time when French Romantics suffered from what Alfred de Musset would later call *mal du siècle* – a feeling of uprootedness and alienation, or what Peter Fritzsche has recently described as an estrangement from the hallow ground of a past that was ideal simply because it was inaccessible.²⁵ What I begin to read in the next chapter is the message constructed in the early nineteenth-century through the figure of the Gypsy, who by 1830 begins to personify what was lost when the Revolution forced France to cut ties with its past. Engulfed by a pervasive political and social nostalgia that began shortly after the Revolution, writers born just after 1800 used the figurative Gypsy to enter into a debate of which the conclusion became Louis-Bonaparte's coup d'état and the resurrection of his uncle's ghost.

Because the Gypsy figure made infamous by Walter Scott, Victor Hugo and Prosper Mérimée is a response to a character celebrated by seventeenth and late eighteenth-century writers, I will take this chapter to unbury those literary Gypsies whose popularity proceeded Hayraddin, Esmeralda and Carmen and whose subversive laughter and ruses served an altogether different purpose in French literature.²⁶ I will also address a work that is often

²⁵ Fritzsche, Peter. *Stranded in the Present. Modern Time and the Melancholy of History*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004.

²⁶ In the Conclusion of this work, I attempt to address some of the important twenty-first century remakes of *Notre-Dame de Paris* and *Carmen* in the late 1990s. I include Didier Van Cauwelaert's novel *Un Aller simple* (1994), Tony Gatlif's *Gadjo Dilo* (1997), Luc Plamondon's very successful rock opera *Notre-Dame de Paris*

cited by critics reading *Notre-Dame de Paris* as influential to Hugo's understanding of the Middle Ages, but which, to my knowledge, has never been read closely for its subtle use of the Gypsy as a way of exploring the limits of belonging. Because *Le Journal d'un bourgeois de Paris* is the first known French text to discuss the Gypsy at length, I will first turn to the year 1427, more than four hundred years before Hugo buries Esmeralda in the heart of Paris.²⁷

Feeling Strange at Home: Why a Cleric Remembers the Gypsy a Month Too Soon

It isn't surprising to find that the first French text that takes time to describe the Gypsy is often cited as the first known study of French domestic space. *Le Journal d'un bourgeois de Paris*, although a detailed sketch of the minutiae of Parisian daily life, is also a profound reflection on what it means to belong to a city, state or *quartier* in the fifteenth century. Unfortunately for the cleric writing *Le Journal*, 1427 is a year when definitions of those spaces are challenged by a civil war that pit nephew against uncle, and neighbor against neighbor in a battle to determine what it meant to be French. At first, his positing and placement of the *Égyptiens*, which strangely is not in chronological order, seems like an afterthought or simply a break from the more depressing matters of war and death. But then we realize that the cleric's chronological blunder is a strategic way of commenting on the

(1998), and Patrick Timsit's *Quasimodo d'El Paris* (1999). Also see Chapter 3, which addresses some of the *Carmen* rewrites of the 1980s.

²⁷ *Le Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris* is often cited as the first description of a French encounter with the Gypsy. (François de Vaux de Folétier and Henriette Asséo are among many.) As François de Vaux de Folétier points out, *Le Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris* was Hugo's source of information on the first Gypsies in Paris. « Pour l'une de ses œuvres les plus populaires, *Notre-Dame de Paris*, la base de ses informations au sujet des Égyptiens est le récit de leur arrivée aux portes de la capitale, tiré du *Journal d'un bourgeois de Paris*, et qu'il connaît par la copie de Sauval, l'auteur de *l'Histoire et recherché des Antiquités de la ville de Paris* » (Mille 239).

political and family drama that left Paris wondering where it stood in relation to Burgundy, Britain and France.

While the Bourgeois claims that the first Gypsies came to Paris on August 17, 1427 and left the city sometime after mid-September, he carefully places them in his journal after an event dated August 18 and before another dated September 5. Since the appropriate chronological place for the Gypsy would be either before the August 18 entries or long after September 5, we are led to believe that the cleric had a specific reason for placing the Gypsy where he did.

As Anne Curry has pointed out, *Le Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris* is hardly a journal as its nineteenth-century editor and title suggest. Although the different details and anecdotes begin with dates much like a journal, the text is really more of a memoir or a reflection on past events since its language reveals that there was some distance between the author and the events he recounts.²⁸ Reading *Le Journal* as a memoir, one still has to wonder why the cleric decided to put the Gypsies where he did, ignoring the chronological order that would have situated their portrait somewhere in mid-September, not in mid-August.

But in revisiting the entries that come just before and just after the cleric's tale of the Gypsies, his purpose becomes clear. The August 18 entry describes a French countryside that has been ravaged by looters, murderers and marauders – a space that Parisians rarely visit since “touz les jours couroient les murtriers et larrons... comme touzjours pillant et robant, pregnant” (Journal 218). A lawless space where “ne nul ne disoit: *Dimitte*” (Journal

²⁸ Anne Curry, *The Battle of Agincourt. Sources & Interpretations*. “The original manuscript does not survive, the earliest copy is incomplete and the precise date of composition is not clear” (176). Curry also points out that the anonymous author of *Le Journal* was most likely a cleric and not a bourgeois.

218), the other side of Paris's fortified walls had become a no man's land that wasn't Paris and was no longer a familiar France. The September 5 entry that follows the cleric's description of the Gypsies echoes the author's August 18 sentiments of estrangement as he explains how the Dauphin finally succeeded in pushing back the British at the Battle of Montargis. Of course, in 1427, the Bourgeois says this as a Parisian living under the rule of the Duke of Burgundy, whose alliances were more British than they were French. His brief description and veiled congratulations to a young Dauphin reveal the uncertainty of his own citizenship which was no longer French and could soon be British.

Reading the cleric's account of the Gypsy through his anxieties with regards to France and Paris reveals that there is something more to this first encounter than simply a hello and a goodbye. Although this entry has long been cited or used as proof of the intrinsic roguishness of Gypsies, since their "tricks" to gain entry into cities date back to the Middle Ages, reading this portrait in its intended context, and through its sabotaged chronology, reveals more about fifteenth-century Parisians than it does about the Gypsies who first visited their medieval city in 1427.²⁹

As the Bourgeois tells it, the Gypsies who came to Paris in 1427 were "penanciers" (*Journal d'un Bourgeois* 219), carrying what they claimed were letters from the Pope that corroborated their story. Their story was never questioned by religious officials, or believed to be a trick. The first group of men who made it into the city explained how they were from Little Egypt and had been banished from their homeland five years before. Their expulsion

²⁹ François de Vaux de Folétier is considered France's premier Gypsy expert. The historian Henriette Asséo dedicated her book *Les Tsiganes. Une destinée européenne* (1994) to him. Many ethnologists, historians and writers who study the Roma or the French Gypsy figure quote him and recycle his conclusions on *Le Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris*. It is Folétier who claims this first encounter simply proves the Gypsies' roguish nature, since they used tricks to gain entrance into the cleric's city (medieval Paris).

was punishment for religious infidelity, or at least that's how the two European kings who conquered their homeland saw it. The story the *Égyptiens* told their Parisian hosts is typical of a conquered people who are made to feel like strangers in their own home. After they were forced into Christianity by threats and compulsory baptism, the *Égyptiens* quickly returned to their religion, traditions and culture when the European kings returned home, leaving their conquests to fall into the hands of the Saracens. When the Christian kings returned, they punished the Gypsies for betraying their new faith, forcing them off their land and telling them they would only “tenroient terre en leur pasis, se le pappe ne le consentoit” (*Journal* 219). According to the Bourgeois, men, women and children traveled to Rome to seek penitence from the Pope, who told them to “aller vii ans ensuivant parmy le monde, sans coucher en lict, et pour avoir aucun confort pour leur despence” (219). Only after seven years of roaming and misery could they return home. In the meantime, they would have to rely on the charity of their Christian hosts.

Linguists, ethnologists and historians still debate whether this story is real or fabricated. Whichever it was, it would have been well received by fifteenth-century Parisians, who would have recognized themselves and their own story in this tale of occupation and estrangement. When the Gypsy came to Paris in 1427, France had been « divisée en trois » (*Atlas historique* 29) – a large part belonged to the English, a second was occupied by the Duke of Burgundy and the third part was loyal to and fighting for the French Dauphin, Charles VII. More than any other city, Paris was a reflection of France's fractured identity, which had been divided by a family feud that pitted father against son, brother against brother, and a nephew against his uncle.

Before the cleric penned his Gypsy tale, Paris was occupied by the Armagnacs, the southern allies of the Dauphin of France who Parisians referred to as foreigners, since these warriors came from the far edges of the kingdom and spoke a language most of France couldn't understand. Today the Armagnacs are heroes in France's national myth of unity. But as Tracy Adams astutely observes, this is a not-so-honest interpretation that allowed nineteenth-century historians to forge "a common history of a nation united and indivisible" (Adams 6).³⁰ In reality, Adams explains, medieval Paris found it difficult to pledge allegiance to a prince who allied himself with *étrangers*, who acted more like conquerors than allies. In fact, the Armagnac occupation was the city's primary motivation in supporting the Dauphin's cousin, the Duke of Burgundy, who was the prince's sworn enemy and ally to the English invaders who occupied more than a third of France.

As Adams also points out, the violence between the Burgundians and the Armagnacs divided many of France's large cities. Neighbors denounced neighbors and even families were split in their alliances to the Dauphin or the Duke of Burgundy. As Junvel des Ursins describes the situation in Paris in 1417, « pour faire tuer un homme, il suffisoit de dire: 'Cestuy là est Armagnac.' Aussi pareillement quand on pouvoit sçavoir ou trouver quelques uns qu'on sçavoit tenir le party du duc de Bourgogne, ils estoient punis, et leurs biens pris : c'estoit grande pitié à gens d'entendement, de voir les choses en l'estat qu'elles estoient » (Ursins 533, cited in Adams). When the Burgundians took Paris from the Armagnacs in 1418, the situation turned from bad to worse as one foreign enemy gave way to another. The

³⁰ See Tracy Adams' article "Feuding, Factionalism and Fictions of National Identity. Reconsidering Charles VII's Armagnacs." In this article, Tracy reads the uniting "myth" around the Treaty of Troyes, which she argues intentionally hides the deep divisions in France's family story – a story constructed in an effort to forge what Étienne Balibar calls "fictive ethnicity" (in *Race, Nation, Class*).

Bourgeois de Paris, whose loyalties had swayed toward the Burgundians, began to question his allegiance as he watched the Duke's soldiers mercilessly kill anyone who did not conform to their politics and point of view. "The carnage was such that the Bourgeois of Paris resorted to allegory to describe a horror that seemed to him to surpass words" (Adams 19).³¹ Although the Armagnacs or "gens étranges" had left Paris, the city and the rest of France would remain a strange and uncanny place.³²

Given the times, it is surprising that the Gypsies received the welcome they did from Paris. When 120 or so women, children and men entered the city, they were all given food and lodged in the Chapelle-Saint-Denis. As the Bourgeois tells it, the Parisians enjoyed visiting the Gypsies and he himself visited them at least three times. It was only when the Eveque de Paris heard that members of his church were paying Gypsy women to read their

³¹ « Lors se leva la déesse de Discorde, qui était en la tour de MauConseil, [et éveilla] Ire la forcenée et Convoitise et Enragerie et Vengeance, et prirent armes de toutes manières et boutèrent hors d'avec elles Raison, Justice, Mémoire et Dieu et Attrempance... » (Adams 20). I quote Adams' work here, which uses a modern translation of *Le Journal*.

³² Shortly after the Duke of Burgundy claimed Paris, the city was given to Henry V as a bargaining chip for revenge. The French Dauphin, Charles VII, and his men killed the Duke of Burgundy during peace talks in Montereau in September 1419. Hoping to seek revenge for his father's death, Philippe decided to ally himself with Henry V and the British crown. The Treaty of Troyes, signed by the insane Charles VI but negotiated between Philippe and Henry V, assured Henry V that his heir with Catherine of Valois would become king of France. Part of the treaty stipulated that Paris would now belong to Henry V. As Adams points out, the French Dauphin was not a hero in France after his assassination of John, the Bold. And as Parisians saw it, he and his men had sabotaged chances for an accord with the Burgundians and dashed the country's chances of ending a long and very destructive civil war. As the *Journal de Clément de Fauquembergue, greffier de Paris 1417-1435* attests: "Duquel fait les habitans de la ville de Paris, qui tant avoient esté desirans et joyeux de la publication des aliances et traictiez de paix et union dessusdis, esperans yceulz traictiez ainsi solempnelment passez, accordez et jurez, estre entretenus et observez, furent moult troublez de l'infraction desdictes pais, union, assurances et aliances... Dont, et pour occasion duquel fait, plusieurs grans inconveniens et dommages irreparables sont disposez d'avenir, et ensuir plus grans que par avant, à la honte des faiseurs, ou dommage de mondit seigneur Dauphin principalement, qui attendoit le royaume par hoirie et succession après le Roy, nostre souverain seigneur, à quoy il aura mains d'aide et de faveur, et plus d'ennemis et adversaries que par avant" (Fauquembergue 318, cited in Adams). After Charles VII's coronation and consecration in Reims in 1429, which ensured that « désormais, il est 'vrai roi' » (*Atlas historique* 29), he refused to let Joan of Arc lead him into the capital, knowing that Paris wouldn't be a friendly place for him to set up court or from which to negotiate peace.

palms that the visitors were asked to leave. The cleric, who should have been loyal to the Eveque, casts a shadow of doubt on these claims stating :

Je y fu iii ou iiii foys pour parler à eulx, mais oncques ne m'aperceu d'un denier de perte, ne ne les vy regarder en main, mais ainsi le disoit le peuple partout, tant que la nouvelle en vint à l'evesque de Paris, lequel y alla et mena avec lui ung frere meneur, nommé le Petit Jacobin, lequel par le commandement de l'evesque fist là une belle predicacion, en excommuniant tous ceulx et celles qui ce faisoent et qui avoient creu et monstré leurs mains (*Journal* 221).

When the Gypsy left Paris, the Bourgeois and the rest of his city were forced to return to the horrors of their own space and time, to the massacres, treason and the English occupation that had left them feeling like strangers in their own home.

When the *Égyptiens* return to Paris six years later, they have new letters and claim to have protection from Sigismond, King of Bohemia and the Holy Roman Emperor.³³

Referring to themselves as *Bohémiens de Petite Egypte* or *Egyptiens de Bohême*, the travelers maneuvered between two origin stories, knowing that when Little Egypt couldn't open doors, Bohemia would. By providing two points of origin juxtaposed by the preposition *de*, the travelers could effectively sidestep the question "Where do you come from?" and deflect the European's need to root them in one place. As Ken Lee has pointed out, it is the European's tendency to fetishize origins and need to assert "epistemic control" over the Gypsy that has led to the suppression of "alternative possibilities" (31), an oppression that refuses the plurality of stories and histories.³⁴

³³ According to Folétier, the Egyptian travelers were carrying letters of protection from King Sigismond from 1433 to 1437, which is why they began referring to themselves as either *Bohémiens de Petite Egypte* or *Egyptiens de Bohême*.

³⁴ Ken Lee's article "Belated Travelling Theory, Contemporary Wild Praxis: A Romani Perspective on the Practical Politics of the Open End" begins to investigate why the Gypsies' histories have been boiled down to just one story – India – by Gypsyologists, and why Egypt and other "tricks" haven't been investigated for the story they could tell about the Roma's journey to Europe.

According to Donald Kenrick, it wasn't until 1450 that conflicts began to arise between the Gypsy and Europe's sedentary populations.³⁵ Only in the second half of the fifteenth century did cities and towns begin to refuse entry to Gypsies, sometimes threatening or enacting violence on their unwanted visitors, as was the case in a commune outside of Épernay in 1453. Kenrick wonders "was it simply that the citizens had tired of seeing the same faces reappear year after year demanding money? Or was it because there was a new influx of Roma from eastern Europe – as seems to have been the case in Spain?" Kenrick leaves his reader to speculate, but closes with an important date in German history. In 1496, Germany's Parliament decided to devote an entire day to the "Gypsy problem." In records kept of the discussions that day, "there is no mention of bogus refugees, bogus pilgrims, petty crime or defecating in public, for all of which accusations some justification could have been found. None of these. Rather, out of the blue, the Gypsies were accused of being spies for the Turks" (Kenrick 83).

With this conclusion, Kenrick confirms Lee's hypothesis. Unable to understand the Gypsy's transience, the Germans assert "epistemic control" (Lee 31), defining and attributing their refusal to be rooted somewhere in space and time as a hostile act against the state. The Gypsies were now labeled, classified as spies. As the century came to a close, the German Parliament would decide that all Gypsies would have to leave or be expelled "and

³⁵ Donald Kenrick gives an in-depth look at relations between Roma and Europe's sedentary population in the fifteenth century. His article "The Origins of Anti-Gypsyism: The Outsiders' View of Romanies in Western Europe in the Fifteenth Century" pinpoints 1450 as a time when the tide began to turn against the Gypsy in Europe. Before that, "townsfolk in France and the Netherlands in particular were relieved to find that this band of dark-skinned people had come in peace" unlike other unwanted visitors (Kenrick 82).

any who remained were to be classed as outlaws and could be killed at will” (Kenrick 83).³⁶ This act came only three years after Christopher Columbus proved the world map was larger than previously believed, and that the Western world would have to rethink its stories and histories in light of new peoples and places.

As Kenrick also points out, “this is a period in which we have no poems, plays or fiction mentioning Gypsies. The literary stereotype had not yet evolved... The image of the Gypsy in this period is, rather, to be found in historical chronicles and town council records” (79).³⁷ It could also be heard in the nursery rhymes, wives tales, lullabies and folklore told and retold by parents, children, neighbors and friends. As Marina Warner points out, oral tales had weighty influence over the popular imagination and almost always cast those deemed strangers or outsiders by city or state officials into the frightening role of the “bogey” – the personification of unnamable fears that are “grounded in common experience” (4).³⁸ Although rooted in adult racism and xenophobia, the bogey was a dark

³⁶ According to Thomas Acton, Professor of Romani Studies at the University of Greenwich, Germany’s 1498 expulsion of the Gypsies laid the foundation for the first Romani genocide, which began around 1550. His book with Gary Mundy, *Romani Culture and Gypsy Identity*, like Ian Hancock’s book *We are the Romani People*, is a good reference for understanding the persecution and prejudices the Roma have endured over the centuries.

³⁷ The first Gypsy character in literature is a foolish yet harmless male fortune-teller, who shows up in a 1450 Swiss play that isn’t widely circulated. But for the most part, the Gypsy fades into the distant background of texts written before the seventeenth century. The Gypsy, however, does find a place in art, especially Dutch painting. See Reimar Gilsenbach’s *Weltchronik der Zigeuner*.

³⁸ Marina Warner’s work on the bogey is the only study I know that gives legitimacy and emphasizes the importance of lullabies, wives’ tales and folklore as harbingers of important cultural myths. “Hearsay” (Charnon-Deutsch 53) doesn’t explain how the Gypsy kidnapper gained such an important place in Europe’s mythology. Nor does it recognize the link between this myth and the hearth and home, which is where bogey tales are recounted to children. The fact that this Gypsy myth, in its original form, still persists today bears witness to the importance that the Western world places on spaces called home. In October 2013, Greek police discovered a five-year-old blond, blue-eyed girl named Maria living in a Roma camp that they raided looking for illegal arms and drugs. Because the girl looked nothing like her parents, Greek police took her from her home and arrested the couple who claimed to be her mother and father. The story became an international sensation as European and American news agencies began publishing stories claiming the girl had been “snatched” from her real parents and demanded that an international search be conducted to find her real, white

and sinister figure used to “scare the young into obedience, to play the part of the disciplinarian alter egos on behalf of adults and to provide the harsh treatment that appears necessary but for which it is uncomfortable to take responsibility” (Warner 161).

In tales of the Gypsy, children are warned not to wander too far away as Gypsies snatch children when their parents aren't looking and then take them to unfamiliar places. Of course, this escape from home appealed to some because it offered freedom from the control and restraint of parents, which is one reason nursery rhymes and folklore emphasize the alienation and estrangement of this journey. Children taken by Gypsies rarely return home and never feel at home in the Gypsy's caravan. Jean Cocteau's 1927 poem *Les voleurs d'enfants* captures the lesson of this popular bogey tale in just seven stanzas. A bohemian woman who needs extra talent for her circus steals the son of a count, a dear little one who is swept into the excitement of flying on a trapeze and quickly forgets the mother who desperately calls out “reviens, mon chéri, mon bel ange! Aie pitié de ma douleur!” Playing with the homonym *mer/mère*, Cocteau reveals the other side of this newfound freedom as the child's dream is haunted by his mother (“sa tête roule dans les mers”) and by the image of a lonely statue “effrayante, au bord d'un chemin, et qui vole avec les mains” (Cocteau 539). Cut off from home, *l'enfant voleur* (the child who flies and steals) has turned to stone

parents. The Roma couple claimed that they unofficially adopted the girl after a Bulgarian Roma woman begged them to take the child because she couldn't take care of her. But the press, police and humanitarian organizations dismissed this story as a lie (again relying on stereotypes to make their assumptions) and continued to ask if this blond “angel” wasn't the missing child of this American couple or that British family. When Maria's biological mother finally came forward, DNA tests confirmed what the Greek couple claimed all along, and Hristos Salis and Eleftheria Dimopoulou were exonerated of a crime they didn't commit. They were also absolved of a second accusation, child trafficking, after Maria's mother, Sasha Ruseva, told police and Bulgarian TV (quoted by NBC News) : “I didn't take any money... I just didn't have enough money to feed her. I intended to go back and take my child home, but meanwhile I gave birth to two more kids, so I was not able to go.” (From the October 25, 2013 NBC News article “Maria mystery solved: DNA tests confirm Bulgarian Roma woman is her mother.” See my bibliography for a list of press articles related to this story.)

– a hard, cold, emotionless automaton who hardly resembles the boy he had been in his mother’s arms.³⁹

When Home Becomes Stifling: The Gypsy in France’s Seventeenth-Century Literature

Cocteau’s Gypsy story is a twentieth-century descendant of Miguel Cervantes’ 1613 novella *La Gitanilla* in which a similar kidnapping leads two nobles to experience Gypsy life in two different ways – the first as freedom and the second as an estrangement from home. *La Gitanilla*, which was published as part of a collection of novellas titled *Novelas ejemplares*, is cited as being “le modèle du genre” (*Mille* 227), or the archetype of a plot which Victor Hugo, George Sand and Prosper Mérimée would play with in the nineteenth century.

Snatched from her noble parents as a child, Preciosa relishes in the freedoms she has as a *Gitana*. Gender is important here because, as a young Gypsy woman living in early seventeenth-century Spain, Preciosa is not confined to the roles patriarchal law would have her play: dutiful daughter or obedient wife. At fifteen years old, the young woman has had twice the life experience “as one of another race at five-and-twenty” (Cervantes 5), and been allowed to travel life’s many roads using her own internal compass as her guide. As she tells a group of young nobles who have summoned her to read their fortunes: “The wit of a gypsy

³⁹ Although the Gypsy kidnapper in Cocteau’s poem is a woman, there are many examples in folklore and literature of Gypsy men stealing children. It also important to address what is missing from this study – the sixteenth century, a time when discovery of new worlds opened the door to exoticism in literature. Perhaps because Gypsies by the sixteenth century were considered a familiar stranger and therefore less exotic than men and women living in newly discovered lands, French literature mentions them, without making them the important figure in literature that they become in the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. As François de Vaux de Folétier points out, it’s « à partir des premières années du XVIIe siècle » that Gypsies « deviennent fréquemment les personnages principaux ou secondaires de récits entiers, de romans, de nouvelles, de pièces de théâtre » (*Mille* 227). This study is not meant to be a cumulative list of all works that mention the Gypsy, but rather a study of those works that most likely influenced early Romantics who used the Gypsy to communicate their generation’s troubled relationship to the past.

girl steers by a different compass from that which guides other people... Since it is only by being sharp and ready that they can earn a livelihood, they polish their wits at every step, and by no means let the moss grow under their feet” (5). Unlike the Spanish daughters and wives she encounters, who are bound to fathers, husbands and a court, Preciosa is free to let her body and mind wander through the streets and alleyways of cities or in the dangerous no-man’s land on the other side of city walls.

The Gypsy lifestyle has also given Preciosa a keen power of perception, which allows her to read the faces, palms and actions of nobles who are too caught up in courtly affairs to see into the near future – a courtly nearsightedness, Preciosa points out, that makes her happy to be a poor Gypsy, since palaces seem to be spaces where “fools thrive better than the wise” (8). Although Cervantes ends his novella by reintegrating Preciosa into the court she severely chastises in the beginning of the story, the young girl stalls this conclusion by putting stipulations on her assimilation. “First there are many conditions to be fulfilled, and many points to be ascertained,” she tells the young noble trying to win her heart. Concerned by his request that she “go no more to Madrid,” Preciosa tells Don Juan that she will remain “free and unfettered; my liberty must not be restrained or encumbered by jealousy” (11). Much like Carmen, who refuses to give up her freedom and way of life for Don José, Preciosa requires Don Juan to leave his father’s mansion “and exchange it for our tents, where, assuming the garb of a gipsy, you must pass two years in our schools” (11). At this school, Don Juan must give up his name, title and courtly manners – everything that defined his place in society.

But as time passes, it becomes clear that Don Juan is unable or unwilling to forget he is noble. Deceiving Preciosa and the other Gypsies, convincing them that he has assimilated

their lessons, his thoughts eventually drift back home in his reveries.⁴⁰ When another young noble seeks refuge with the Gypsies, reminding Don Juan exactly what he has lost in leaving home, he cracks and his suppressed nobility resurfaces with a vengeance. He stabs and kills a man who takes him for a Gypsy, or what Preciosa had hoped he could become. To save his life, she must give up her freedom and become the kind of woman Don Juan wanted her to be all along – the docile and obedient daughter of nobility.

It is strangely Preciosa's Gypsy grandmother who assists her (re)assimilation into nobility, revealing that she is really Dona Constanza de Acevedo y de Menesis, the kidnapped daughter of the corregidor of Murcia, the city where Don Juan is imprisoned.⁴¹ By the end of the novella, Preciosa is no longer the strong-willed and independent Gitana she has been throughout the story. Her submission to her noble ties leaves her silent, speechless. "Say no more, daughter Preciosa" her corregidor father says as her parents arrange her marriage. "As your father, I take it upon myself to establish you in a position not derogatory to your birth" (40).

Critics have gone back and forth regarding the ambiguous treatment of the Gypsy in *La Gitanilla*. As Lou Charon-Deutsch points out in *The Spanish Gypsy. The History of a European Obsession*, some have read the novella as a "celebration of humanist ideals that transcend racial categories," (18) while others seem stuck on the novella's opening sentence: "It would almost seem that the Gitanos and Gitanas... had been sent into the world for the

⁴⁰ Cervantes on several occasions underlines the difference between the economies Preciosa and Don Juan represent. For example, when Don Juan finally pretends to be an adept thief, "Preciosa rejoiced not a little to see her tender lover become such a smart and handy thief" (25).

⁴¹ Cervantes no doubt implies here that certain social law cannot be denied by anyone. The corregidor is the chief magistrate or the mayor appointed by the King. Cervantes gives several examples in his novella of the Gypsy's compassion, which is not the case in his portrayal of the Spanish nobles.

sole purpose of thieving. Born of parents who are thieves, reared among thieves, and educated as thieves, they finally go forth perfected in their vocation” (Cervantes 1).⁴²

Charnon-Deutsch concludes that Cervantes’ re-assimilation of the blond-haired, green-eyed beauty (whose noble manners sometimes betray her noble birth) into the Spanish court at the end of the novella reveals the author’s loyalty to certain economic and social discourses of its time, which were a direct result of Spain’s “uncertainty about its citizenry” and “the court’s fear of mixing of groups and a desire to cast the Spaniard as a racially uncontaminated subject” (Charnon-Deutsch 38) – anxieties that manifested themselves at a time when Spain’s growing empire was forcing its subjects to re-examine who they were. But, reading the novella for its beginning or end ignores the very heart of the text. After all, what traps both Preciosa and Don Juan is love. As the narrator states exactly halfway through the novella in a rare call to the reader:

“O potent force of him who is called the sweet god of bitterness... how effectually does thou enslave us! Here was (Don Juan), a knight, a youth of excellent parts, brought up at court, and maintained in affluence by his noble parents; and yet since yesterday such a change has been wrought in him that he has deceived his servants and friends; disappointed the hopes of his parents; abandoned the road to Flanders, where he was to have exercised his valour and increased the honors of his line” (24).⁴³

⁴² In her detailed study of other criticism written around the novella, Lou Channon-Deutsch blames the application of contemporary theory to this back and forth debate. “It is likely that such terms as ‘race’ and ‘blood,’ used so frequently in Golden Age texts, were not always as biologically linked as we regard them today. In other words, the question of nature versus nurture is often raised by twentieth-century scholars whose views on race are more exacting in terms of Galenic science than those of Cervantes and his contemporaries; thus a discussion of race often produces wildly differing conclusions. Some critics have argued that the words *parece que* (“it seems that”) in the novella’s opening statement quoted above suffice to set in motion the classic Cervantine irony and cast doubt on his racialist beliefs. Others insist that since in ‘La gitanilla’ one can ‘become’ a Gypsy through certain rituals and trials, it follows that Cervantes understood the fallacy of his narrator’s opening diatribe and rejected biological determinism. On the other hand, it is often pointed out that since no amount of time spent with her abductors is sufficient to transform Constanza-Preciosa into a true (rapacious) Gypsy, it follows that Gypsiness cannot be acquired except through birth” (29).

⁴³ Andrew is the name Don Juan takes when he becomes a Gypsy in the English translation. To minimize my reader’s confusion, I use Don Juan throughout.

By the end of the novella, roles have reversed. Preciosa, who wholeheartedly exclaims that she would rather die a Gypsy than be a noble, finds herself trapped by love in a life that she never wanted. As her Gypsy grandmother points out, freedom is the sacrifice she will have to make, if she is to save Don Juan from execution.

The fact that Cervantes' conclusion is a marriage between the freedom-loving, progressive Preciosa and a noble bound to tradition can also be read through the schism that was tearing at the social fabric of the early seventeenth century. As Svetlana Boym points out, the Renaissance had bequeathed a new perspective of the world to the seventeenth century – one in which exploration and mapping had made it difficult for man to contain himself to the local. As she observes in her study of nostalgia, *The Future of Nostalgia*:

“the early modern state relied on a certain ‘legibility’ of space and its transparency in order to collect taxes, recruit soldiers, and colonize new territories. Therefore the thicket of incomprehensible local customs, impenetrable and misleading to outsiders, were brought to a common denominator, a common map. Thus modernization meant making the populated world hospitable to supracommunal, state-ruled administration bureaucracy and moving from a bewildering diversity of maps to a universally shared world” (11).⁴⁴

Locked to their land and therefore tied to the local, nobles like Don Juan were finding this transition difficult. If they were to survive, they would have to learn a new way of looking at the world, and then readjust their internal compass so it could lead them away from home.

Soon after its 1613 publication in Spain, *La Gitanilla* was exported to France and Holland. As Charon-Deutsch points out, the Dutch rewrites and renditions had to downplay Don Juan's indoctrination into Gypsy life and be careful to separate Preciosa from the other Gypsies, removing parts of the story where she reads palms and celebrates Gypsy customs

⁴⁴ Boym's « early modern state » is a product of colonization, which she feels brought on a tighter, more defined administrative state.

and ways. Like Germany, Holland had passed strict edicts at the beginning of the sixteenth century, banishing Gypsies or anyone who dressed like a Gypsy from its lands. “The gallows, flogging, branding, or hard labor awaited offenders, and organized *heidenjacten*, or Gypsy hunts, were common” (Charnon-Deutsch 39). In France, things were different. As Henriette Asséo observes, the seventeenth century was the “l’âge d’or des tsiganes en France” (24) – at least in and around noble estates. During the religious wars and up until 1660, nobles were hiring Gypsies as a neutral party that would protect their lands from unfriendly neighbors.

Pendant la minorité de Louis XIII, toute la Loire moyenne, des abords de Nantes à l’Auvergne, fut une zone d’affrontements. Les protestants avaient leurs assises entre le Sud-Ouest et l’Ouest. La famille des Bourbons avait son fief traditionnel entre Saumur et Vendôme et contrôlait la route de Paris. Toute la région fut sillonnée par des soldats mercenaires des seigneurs de la guerre, des reîtres venus de Champagne. Et parmi ces troupes en campagne autorisées à vivre sur le pays, des gardes d’Egyptiens au service des princes de sang royal (24).

As Asséo explains it, the enemy at the beginning of the seventeenth century was French, and who better to help guard against this enemy than France’s familiar stranger, the Gypsy.

When *La Gitanilla* was translated by François de Rosset in 1614, hardly a year after Cervantes published *Novelas ejemplares*, the short story became an instant hit with French readers. Soon after, Alexandre Hardy rewrote the Gypsy girl’s story for the theater (1615), and due to the lasting popularity of this play and the short story, Sallebray staged his own version of the story in 1642. Both plays were titled *La Belle égyptienne* and kept the happy ending that assured Preciosa’s assimilation into the Spanish nobility.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ In *Mille ans d’histoire des Tsiganes*, François de Vaux de Foletier gives a detailed list of many of the European literary works that incorporate a Gypsy figure in some way or another. His thorough archiving, historical and ethnological work have been valuable resources, especially *Le Monde des Tsiganes* and *Les bohémiens en France au 19e siècle*.

A French bishop by the name of Jean-Pierre Camus, however, decided Preciosa's story could be put to better use and turned the love story into a *histoire tragique* in 1630. *L'Innocente Egyptienne* was no different from Camus' previous work, which, as Stéphen Ferrari suggests, uses horror as a cultural bridge, or as a way of reaching out to the ordinary people the bishop hoped would be shocked into listening to his edifying message.⁴⁶

L'Innocente égyptienne is the sixth novella in a collection of 35 short stories that Camus published under the title, *L'Amphithéâtre sanglante*, and takes care to introduce with the following message : « Le monde est le Sanglant Amphithéâtre de semblables actions qui arrivent tous les jours devant nos yeux, et qui sont d'autant moins remarquées qu'elles nous sont plus familières. » As Camus saw it, the world (which was first and foremost France) had become a large theater in which the ad nauseam repetition of the same bloody spectacle made people blind to the horrors unfolding before them. With *L'Innocente Egyptienne*, the *bon prélat* attempts to cure this blindness by introducing an innocent Gypsy girl into the theater, which the Bishop transforms into a small village whose prejudices and distrust have closed it off to the outside world.⁴⁷

In typical Camusian fashion, the bishop begins his Gypsy story with a flash forward, revealing the end of the *nouvelle* before it begins. Denouncing the Gypsies as “nés et nourris

⁴⁶ As Stéphen Ferrari points out in his introduction of the work, many critics see Camus as a paradox, wondering how « un bon prélat, si soucieux de la moralité de ses ouailles, si fidèle aux austères principes de la Contre-Réforme, a-t-il pu s'adonner sans complexe à l'ambigu plaisir de raconteur des 'histoires d'horreur' faisant la plus belle part au sexe, au crime et au sang? » (Camus 7). It is Ferrari who suggests that horror was the Bishop's way of reaching out to his faithful flock whose lives were surrounded by the violence and death.

⁴⁷ The France Camus describes as an amphithéâtre sanglante was traumatized « par un demi-siècle de guerres civiles qui ont ravagé des régions entières et dont la France est sortie exsangue » (Ferrari 69). As Ferrari tells it, much of France was « traumatisés par les troubles de la Régence (complots contre le pouvoir royal, luttes militaires entre catholiques et protestants même après l'édit de Nantes, répressions de Richelieu), traumatisés enfin par les épidémies, notamment la peste (venue d'Allemagne, elle se répand dans toute l'Europe à partir de 1624 et la dévaste, particulièrement en 1630) » (69).

dans la magie et le larcin” (Camus 214), the reader is led to believe that the story which “fera voir que la plus innocente vie perd son lustre dans une mauvaise compagnie” (214) is going to begin with a Gypsy kidnapping and end with the corruption of an innocent. But in a surprising twist, Camus portrays the French nobility as the “mauvaise compagnie,” while the small village that at first serves as the quiet setting for the story becomes the monster that kills the innocent Gypsy girl.

While Olive may or may not be a Gypsy, she becomes the French community’s sacrificial lamb, as she is literally torn apart by mad villagers seeking justice for a petty crime she did not commit. Unlike Preciosa, Olive is so ordinary that her boring life story hardly makes for an interesting plot. In fact, her mother, who dies in the first pages of the story, is the most interesting part of Olive’s story. Tamaris, who is the only character allowed to tell a story from the first-person perspective, contemplates what her life could have been, if Gypsies hadn’t kidnapped her as a small child from “les côtes de Bretagne” (216). Unlike Preciosa’s Gypsy grandmother, who reveals her noble roots in the final pages of Cervantes’ story, the Gypsies in Tamaris’ story never tell her who she really is. Unable to return, Tamaris attempts to live the best and most honest life she can with the Gypsies, refusing to participate in their “tours de souplesse, leurs larcins, leurs divinations, leurs débauches” (217). She eventually marries a Spanish man, who sought refuge with the Gypsies, and admits that, despite living among heathens, the couple lived an honest and happy life “avec toute la loyauté et tout le contentement qui se peut désirer” (216).⁴⁸

⁴⁸ While trying to convince Avoie to take Olive, Tamaris explains that they stayed with the Gypsies “par je ne sais quels charmes qui nous faisaient suivre de corps ceux que nos esprits avaient en horreur” (217).

Though Tamaris found happiness living with the Gypsies, she does not want to leave her only child in their care after she dies. Instead she asks Avoie, the lady of the estate, to take her only daughter since “n’ayant plus les yeux d’une mère pour veiller sur ses actions, je crains sa ruine parmi tant d’embûches que l’on dressera à sa chasteté dans une conversation si libre et si périlleuse que celle de ces personnes ramassées qui rodent par le pays sous le titre d’Egyptiens” (217). Avoie agrees to take the girl – but unfortunately, what Olive’s mother’s eyes fail to see is the evil awaiting her daughter within the noble woman’s estate and inside the neighboring “village de Champagne” (214).

Camus’ obvious conclusion is that Olive would have been better off living with the Gypsies, who are more accepting of difference and always willing to take in the straggling wanderer or exiled hero. Juxtaposed with the quiet tribe that mourns Tamaris as their daughter, the French villagers are monstrous as they denounce the beautiful and apparently French Olive as a “sorcière” and “larronnesse” (218), not out of fear, but because they are jealous of “sa gentillesse et de son adresse” (218). Revealing the French community’s true colors, Camus then introduces lust as the poor girl’s ultimate downfall. Avoie’s son Léon, a « jeune Gentilhomme de vingt ans, trouva quelque chose en Olive qui lui plut, et croyant cette place de facile conquête, il commença à l’assiéger et à faire ses approches » (219). When Olive, who has remained honest and chaste while living among Gypsies, refuses Léon’s advances, he turns to vengeance. Not only does he steal the only inheritance Tamaris left her daughter, replacing the 100 pistoles that is her dowry with 100 oak leaves, but he accuses her of being the thief.

A precursor of the climatic plot twist that seals Esmeralda’s death exactly two hundred years later, these oak leaves enrage Avoie, who denounces Olive for stealing her

own inheritance, and then accuses her of sorcery.⁴⁹ Normally a symbol of longevity, the oak leaves cause Olive's death as the wretched village

court aux pierres, aux bâtons, aux épées, chacun lui donne un coup, elle est assommée, accablée, foulée aux pieds, mise en pièces tant c'est un torrent impétueux qu'une émotion populaire. Ainsi l'exécution devança la condamnation. Le corps déchiré fut jeté à la voirie et exposé aux chiens. Voilà comme le juste souffre, et nul ne fait réflexion sur sa mort ; tous sont arrosés de son sang et nul ne croit en être coupable. Au contraire il n'y a celui qui n'estime avoir fait une bonne œuvre, et offert un sacrifice à Dieu » (Camus 220, 221).

When Léon confesses his crime to his mother, she dies of guilt knowing she was responsible for the death of an innocent. The villagers, however, blindly continue to think their laws and prejudices are justified.

The lesson Camus offers is disturbing, as it casts France as an uncanny and dangerous home for Olive, who would have been better off traveling with the Gypsies than living among the wretched French villagers. Although France's religious wars had come to an end by the time the bishop penned his story, mistrust and uncertainty married with the plague, which reached its apex in 1630, left most fearing the future. As Ferrari points out, the « moralistes de l'époque ont le sentiment de vivre une période maudite de l'Histoire qui ne serait que 'l'égout des autres siècles' » (Camus 69). The only way to escape this

⁴⁹ In Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris*, Esmeralda's fate lies in the hands of a greedy *aubergiste* who confesses to having seen a "un fantôme habillé en prêtre" (*Notre-Dame de Paris* 325) leave the room where Phoebus was stabbed, but then condemns Esmeralda by explaining how the *écu* used to pay for the room turned into a dry leaf the next day. Hugo titles the three chapters that describe Esmeralda's court hearing and punishment « L'écu changé en feuille sèche », « Suite de l'écu changé en feuille sèche » and « Fin de l'écu changé en feuille sèche » playing with the ridiculous manner in which Esmeralda's fate was sealed by a dry leaf that the *aubergiste's* son left in exchange for the *écu*. The little boy who "s'approcha adroitement du tiroir, y prit l'écu, et mit à la place une feuille sèche qu'il avait arrachée d'un fagot" (310) is no doubt inspired by Léon.

unlivable space and time, according to Camus' story, was to run away with Gypsies or to obtain a pass to the heavens.⁵⁰

As this “période maudite” came to an end, the heavy hand of a strong monarchy ensured stability returned to France. The Gypsy was no longer needed to fight civil wars, and after 1661, “un renversement general d’attitude à l’égard des Bohémiens avait entraîné l’adoption d’une législation repressive” (Asséo 35). The 1670 *règlement* preventing Gypsies from circulating in France was followed by a 1682 *déclaration* signed by Louis XIV which condemned « les Bohémiens en rupture de ban à la chaîne des galères, leurs femmes à être enfermées à l’hôpital et les enfants... à être élevés selon la religion chrétienne » (37). As the seventeenth century came to a close, France joined Germany, Holland, Spain, Britain and Italy – all of which already had strict laws in place to restrict itinerants and had specifically targeted the Gypsy as an enemy of the state. Gypsies would now have to navigate a Europe that was stratified by borders and laws maintained and retained through fear and an emerging rhetoric of belonging that left little room for a nomadic lifestyle.

And as the idea of home became increasingly tied to borders, a new *maladie* began to emerge in medical discourse – “a disorder of the imagination, from which it follows that the nervous sap... in the brain... excites the very same idea, the desire to return to one’s native land” (Starobinski 87). Although nostalgia was nothing new, the laws, restrictions and borders that were making it increasingly difficult for Gypsies to travel freely in seventeenth-

⁵⁰ In the same year that Camus publishes *L’Amphithéâtre sanglante* (1630), Agrippa d’Aubigné publishes the swashbuckling adventures of the Baron de Faeneste (*Les Aventures du baron de Faeneste*) in which Gypsy captains play a small role. The number of Gypsies that appear in the background of seventeenth-century French literature attests to what François de Vaux de Folétier has pointed out as being a surprising similarity between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. Although there is not enough room in this work to open up this *similarity*, I believe it communicates quite a bit about how the French were rethinking France as a space. I will simply point out here that Gypsies can be seen and heard in the background of Scarron’s *Roman comique*, Tallemant des Réaux’s *Historiettes*, Scudéry’s poetry, and many other well known seventeenth-century works.

century Europe, undoubtedly motivated a young Swiss doctor to make homesickness the subject of his dissertation. Or as Jean Starobinski has pointed out in “The Idea of Nostalgia,”

the fact that exiles languished and wasted away far from their native land was not an original observation in the year 1688, when Johannes Hofer... defended his thesis on nostalgia. The novelty was in the attention which the candidate paid to it, in his effort to convert this emotional phenomenon into a medical phenomenon, exposing it, in so doing, to rational inquiry (Starobinski 84).

Whereas Robert Burton claimed in 1621 “tis a childish humour to hone after home... to prefer, as base islanders and Norwegians do, their own ragged island before Italy or Greece, the gardens of the world” (Burton 168), in 1688 Hofer felt homesickness deserved a name, which he coined by combining the two Greek words *nostos* (home) and *algos* (longing). “For him nostalgia was a demonstration of patriotism of his compatriots who loved the charm of their native land to the point of sickness” (Boym 4). The students, soldiers, maids and other travelers he treated for the disease were right to miss home, and he would legitimate their *maladie* by diagnosing it and treating it.

In his writing, Hofer describes patients who confuse the past with the present, and imaginary events with real ones. One of the earliest symptoms, Hofer points out, is “the sensation of hearing the voice of a person that one loves in the voice of another with whom one is conversing, or to see one’s family again in dreams” (Starobinski 93). Patients also had an extraordinary recall of sounds, tastes, smells, trivia and any other minutiae of the “lost paradise that those who remained home never noticed” (Boym 4). It followed that gastronomy and music were especially important to the nostalgic. “Swiss scientists found that rustic mothers’ soup, thick village milk and the folk melodies of Alpine valleys were particularly conducive to triggering a nostalgic reaction in Swiss soldiers” (Boym 4). A return home to the family, village, town or country the nostalgic was longing for was the

most reliable remedy. But if home was out of reach or unobtainable, hypnotic drugs, leeches, purging the stomach and other seventeenth-century remedies were administered.

Just before Hofer came to the conclusion that everyone could and perhaps should be homesick, Molière staged a play reminding audiences that straying too far from home could lead to « fâcheux accidents » such as « sa maison brûlée, son argent dérobé, sa femme morte, son fils estropié, sa fille subornée » (*Fourberies* 242). At least, this is the moral that Molière inscribes at the beginning of his 1671 play *Les Fourberies de Scapin*, a comedy in which two sons, with the help of their valets, ruse their fathers to avoid arranged marriages.⁵¹ However, as the intrigue of the play unravels, so does Molière's initial lesson, since by the end of the play, fathers don't prove to be the best guides for their children and the audience is left wondering if families aren't better off when fathers are away and children (and valets) are left to play.

Central to these *fourberies* is Zerbinette, Léandre's love interest, a young woman who believes she is Gypsy. Her presence in the play sets off a series of schemes and ruses, as the valet Scapin attempts to help Léandre deceive his father and marry the beautiful Gypsy girl. But as the only youth who does not have parents or a defined and defining domestic space, she represents the truth as it cannot be spoken by the youth who are restrained and silenced by paternal law. Unlike Hyacinthe, Léandre and Octave who must

⁵¹ In *L'Etourdi* (1655), Molière deploys the Gypsy kidnapper in the third to last scene when the characters discover Célie is Trufaldin's long lost daughter (kidnapped by Gypsies) and that Lélié's rival is actually Célie's brother. As Georges Mongrédien explains in his notice to *L'Etourdi*, this early play is not the kind of character study Molière becomes famous for in his later work. Molière relies on the repetition of folly (Lélié's clumsiness interferes with his valet's efforts to help him ten times!) to incite laughs. The structure of the play is "parfois maladroit" (52), and the role of the Gypsy is unclear except in the last few scenes when their kidnapping ensures a happy ending. Gypsies can be heard singing and seen dancing in the background of *Le Mariage forcé* and *Le Malade imaginaire*, but it isn't until *Fourberies* that Molière makes the Gypsy a main character and uses her as a way of protesting against misguided paternal authority.

resort to tricks and lying to circumvent their fathers' wishes, Zerbinette is free to say and do what she feels is true. Like Camus before him, Molière makes the Gypsy the harbinger of truth, emancipating her from the ties that bind the other youth to deception. As such, she can literally laugh in the face of the play's oppressive patriarch, G ronte. Telling her future father-in-law how his son deceived him and why, she begins to laugh hysterically: « Ah, ah, ah. Voil  mon ladre, mon vilain dans ces furieuses angoisses; et la tendresse qu'il a pour son fils fait un combat  trange avec son avarice... Ah, ah, ah » (*Fourberies* 261). Revealing what his son, his valet and the rest of Naples really think of him, Zerbinette provides G ronte a much-needed dose of truth, which eventually will help reform (somewhat) this tyrannical father figure. As the valet Silvestre scolds the Gypsy girl for revealing the ruse Scapin and L andre devised to trick G ronte, she laughs again, stating, "n'aurait-il pas appris cela de quelque autre?" (262).

The Gypsy girl's question reveals the tragedy of the story. In fact, the others cannot tell the truth because the consequences are too severe: disinheritance, sequestration and even death in the case of the valets. Telling the truth would challenge the laws, rules and borders fathers have laid down to contain and discipline their children within a domestic space. As if Zerbinette's truth was too dangerous to sustain, Moli re quickly absorbs it back into the original moral of the story, which, at this point in the play, seems a feigned warning.

The final lines of dialogue reveal that Zerbinette, like Preciosa, is not really a Gypsy. She was kidnapped at the age of four and is really Argante's long lost daughter, which makes her the second child he almost loses in this story.⁵² By making Zerbinette Argante's

⁵² His son Octave swears to Hyacinte that if his father disapproves of their marriage, he will "quitter mon pays, et le jour m me s'il est besoin, plut t qu'  vous quitter" (228).

daughter and then Léandre's wife, Molière follows Cervantes' lead, assimilating his subversive Gypsy into the social order she was able to defy while still a Gypsy. The play, therefore, offers fathers a happy ending, although this final bow to authority is juxtaposed with Scapin's fake death, which is yet another way of tricking Géronte. Scapin's last ruse, which forces Géronte to forgive his scheming, is successful and his subversive plotting, although forgiven, is not stamped out at the end of the play like Zerbinette's laughter. The curtains close on the wily valet joining the fathers at their dinner table – a conclusion that suggests Scapin is now his master's equal and Molière, although compelled to suppress Zerbinette's truth, still gets the last laugh.

***From Obsolescence to Ghoulish Resurgence:
France's Eighteenth-Century Literary Gypsy***

Zerbinette has much in common with Cervantes' Preciosa, who no doubt inspired Molière's Gypsy character. Both young women have freedoms that fathers and marriage take from them by the end of their story. For Zerbinette, it is the freedom to laugh in the face of patriarchal oppression. For Preciosa, it is the freedom to decide where she will go, when she will go, who she will marry, and why and when she will sacrifice her freedom. As the seventeenth century turns into the eighteenth century, the Gypsy character fades into the background of a literature preoccupied with the organization of knowledge. As François de Vaux de Folétier observes in *Mille ans d'histoire des Tsiganes*, « au début du XVIIIe siècle, trois siècles après leur arrivée en Europe occidentale, la curiosité dont bénéficiaient les Tsiganes s'est émoussée. La littérature ne s'intéresse plus guère aux tribus vagabondes. Les auteurs sérieux les ignorent ou les méprisent » (*Mille* 232). The *Bohémien* does occupy a space, albeit small, in Diderot's *Encyclopédie*, but the description is brief. "C'est ainsi qu'on

nomme des vagabonds qui font profession de dire la bonne aventure à l'inspection des mains. Leur talent est de chanter, danser et voler.” For the enlightened philosophers of the *Encyclopédie*, being a Gypsy was a profession that some vagabonds took up, while others did not.

Voltaire, on the other hand, believed Europe's Gypsies to be descendants of ancient Egypt's religious priests. But as he explains in *Essai sur les mœurs*, “cette race” began to disappear as men become “désinfatués des sortilèges, des talismans, des predictions et des possessions.” As Voltaire saw it, the Gypsy would disappear with the Enlightenment, and as humanity began to approach the world through science instead of through superstition.

Voltaire was right on one account, the Gypsy almost disappears from literature and art during the Enlightenment. It isn't until Heinrich Grellmann publishes *Historischer Versuch über die Zigeuner* in 1783 that the Gypsy once again becomes a mainstay of literature and art. As Nicholas Saul points out in *Gypsies and Orientalism in German Literature and Anthropology of the Long Nineteenth Century*, Heinrich's original German version was already widely read in Europe, as it provided *the* definitive answer to the question Europeans had been asking since the Gypsy first arrived in Europe: “Where are you from?”⁵³ Although often referred to as a linguistic study because part of the text is a lexicon that traces the geographic origin of certain Romani words back to India, Grellmann's *Historischer* is first and foremost an excuse for Germany to take proactive measures against “harmful tramps” (Lucassen 83). As Leo Lucassen explains, the German Enlightenment

⁵³ It is important to note that Adam Franz Kollár coined the term ethnology the same year, defining it in his 1783 text *Historiae ivrisqve pvblici Regni Vngariae amoenitates* as the study and science of nations and peoples.

searched for ways to make Gypsies sedentary and to turn them into “decent citizens” (83).⁵⁴ But when the Gypsy colonies they organized failed, Germany’s optimism turned into a “conviction that the ‘Gypsy race’ was incorrigible and... afflicted by a hereditary inclination to wander” (83). Grellmann’s study attempts to corroborate this prejudice, using a linguistic case study to prove that the European Gypsies are descendants of the Suddar caste, better known as the Pariah or the outcasts of Indian society.⁵⁵ Conveniently Grellmann glosses over a third of the Gypsy’s vocabulary, which as Judith Okely and others have pointed out, contains Greek, Slavic and other words of European origin. Instead, Grellmann ignores these European linguistic ties and places the Gypsies’ linguistic roots in India, eventually diagnosing the Gypsy’s supposed thieving, lying and wandering as symptomatic of Suddar origins.⁵⁶

When Jean Nicolas Etienne de Bock translated Grellmann’s text into French in 1788, he felt it necessary to add his own introduction to the study, so as to explain in French words

⁵⁴ Leo Lucassen, “‘Harmful tramps.’ Police Professionalization and Gypsies in Germany, 1700-1945” in *Gypsies and Other Itinerant Groups: A Socio-Historical Approach*.

⁵⁵ I want to remind my reader of the definition of outcast: “a person ‘cast out’ or rejected; an abject; a castaway; one rejected or cast off by his friends or by society; an exile; a homeless vagabond” (OED).

⁵⁶ See my Introduction where I discuss Okely’s place in the Gypsies’ origin debate. It is important to point out that Grellmann is still referred to today in anthropological, linguistic and historical work on the Roma. In fact, twentieth century attempts by some Roma activists to organize a nation rely on Grellmann’s study as proof of Indian heritage. Some social scientists (Judith Okley, Wim Willems and to some extent Yaron Matras) are beginning to question the use of Grellmann’s linguistic study as the foundation for a Roma national narrative, since the politics behind Grellmann’s study are questionable at best. There is still an active debate around creating a Roma nation that I briefly discuss in the Introduction. Some argue political organization will give the Roma a voice in international politics and help prevent their misrepresentation and persecution, whereas others wonder if creating a nation won’t pull the Roma into the snare of nationalism and all of its trappings while betraying what is unique about their culture – that they have never participated in such divisive narratives.

what he believed made the Gypsy intrinsically different.⁵⁷ Explaining a growing attachment to home at the end of the eighteenth century, he states:

Quoique la vie ne soit qu'un voyage, quoiqu'on ne possède rien d'une manière permanente, le charme inexprimable attaché à l'existence est si vif qu'il se répand sur tout ce qui peut contribuer à la rendre heureuse. Delà notre attachement pour la maison qui nous a vu naître, pour le champ qui nous a nourri, pour le lieu où nous avons passé notre première jeunesse ; le souvenir de ce tems fortuné ne s'efface jamais ; toujours on le regrette ; toujours on espère le voir renaître » (Bock 9, 10).

The fact that the Gypsy could never remember the answer to the question “Where do you come from?” and never constructed a narrative around “la maison qui nous a vu naître,” “le champ qui nous a nourri” or the “lieu où nous avons passé notre première jeunesse” (9) was proof enough for Bock that there was something intrinsically wrong with the Gypsy.⁵⁸ Not only did Gypsies refuse to cultivate a relationship with the past or venerate its souvenirs, but they lacked “l'amour de la patrie” (10) that this nostalgic glance backward authenticates.

Picking out what he felt was most important in Grellmann's study, Bock also draws attention to the conclusion that “les Bohémiennes sont toutes diseuses de bonnes aventures” (29) – a statement that insists on Gypsies' irresponsibility with regards to historical narratives, since allowing women to write or tell the future ensures history's corruption. Salic law had long established France's mistrust of women when it came to the future. And when Bock published this translation at the end of the eighteenth century, it was still difficult for women to influence the future of France outside of the traditional roles of

⁵⁷ Bock's translation was published in Metz in 1788. A second, more detailed translation was published in Paris in 1810 (which I briefly mention in the next chapter) because of the popularity of Bock's first translation.

⁵⁸ This first French version does not include all of Grellmann's text and excludes descriptions of Germany's various “chartes et ordonnances” against the Gypsy.

mother, lover or wife. Even then, there was always a strict father or suspicious husband to navigate or circumvent women's influence.

As common as the *bonne aventure* was in Europe, fear of the Gypsy woman's predictions often led those who benefited from their chiromancy, to reward them with persecution. This was the case of Pope Sixtus V, who told biographers the story of how a Zingara predicted he would "finirait ses jours sous la tiare" (Folétier 171). However, one of his first acts as Pope was to condemn any art or discipline "whose purpose was divination as fallacious and foolish, adding that they had been introduced by demons to confuse the minds of men amidst dangerous trivialities and false omens, and to inveigle them into every impiety" (Baldini 91). This was also the case for Napoleon whose greatness, as legend has it, was inspired by a Gypsy woman who read his palm as a young boy. Between 1801 and 1803, he ordered shiploads of Gypsies to be sent to French Louisiana before he sold the territory to the United States in 1804.⁵⁹

Soon after Bock published his translation of Grellmann's study, France found itself embroiled in the Revolution. Four years earlier, a Gypsy character found its way back into French literature, by way of *Le Mariage de Figaro*, a play that has often been cited as Beaumarchais' uncanny prediction of the French Revolution. Although there is no Gypsy character per se, Figaro (like Preciosa and Zerbinette) was stolen by Gypsies as a baby and therefore is free of the social and domestic constraints of a surname and parents. His Gypsy kidnapping also sidelines the court case that would have prevented him from marrying Suzanne and given the Count the prize he greedily attempts to steal from his servant.

⁵⁹ See Chapter 3 for more on this legend, which is memorialized in *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes* in 1841, only one year after Napoleon's remains are repatriated to France.

Although Figaro's Gypsy ties do not reveal a noble birth as he had hoped, they do become the lynchpin in his plans to overturn the tyrannical Count's plans to steal his lover – a contrivance which becomes a full-fledged revolution against the absolutism of the *noblesse* by the end of the play.

The Revolution Beaumarchais predicts, combined with the Industrial Revolution and the Napoleonic wars, opened the door to a profoundly new way of thinking about the relationship between space and time. As Peter Fritzsche observes in *Stranded in the Present. Modern Time and the Melancholy of History*,

something quite new develops around 1800, in the decades around the French Revolution: the perception of the restless iteration of the new so that the past no longer served as a faithful guide to the future, as it had in the exemplary rendering of events and characters since the Renaissance. As past and present floated free from each other, contemporaries reimagined their relations with the past in increasingly flamboyant ways. The past was conceived more and more as something bygone and lost, and also strange and mysterious, and although partially accessible, always remote" (Fritzsche 5).

The past was no longer a scene that one could "espère le voir renaître" (Bock 10) since the republican ideology demanded a decisive break with what came before the Revolution.⁶⁰

Recognizing as Bock did that certain places, things and people help the past maintain a psychic hold on the present, republicans set out to destroy anything that faithfully preserved the story of *l'ancien régime*. Beheading a king and queen, destroying castles, monuments and graves, republicans did what they felt was necessary to free France from its past. Napoleon's administrators continued this work in French-occupied Europe, "wrecking

⁶⁰ Fritzsche is concerned with how the French Revolution and then the Napoleonic Empire changed Europe's understanding and relationship with time. As he points out, not only did the French victories of over Austria in 1805 and Prussia in 1806 come "with a complete reorganization of the state system" (Fritzsche 29) but the "destruction of the Holy Roman Empire, the institution of new monarchies, and the redrawing of international borders were experienced as abrupt endings which completely severed the present from the past" (29).

hundreds of churches, convents and monasteries in Cologne and Venice alone” (Fritzsche 18). Creating a new calendar was also a way for republicans to turn all eyes to the future, making 1792 (the birth of the Republic) the First Year, or *l’an I* of a new, modern time.⁶¹ As Lynn Hunt points out in *Measuring Time, Making History*, republicans also demonized certain historical narratives, especially those that encouraged the kind of “feudal pride”(Hunt 66) that romanticized despotism. To encourage their followers to wipe out any reminders of the *ancien régime*, republicans replaced the past with what Hunt calls a “mythic present,” symbols and allegories such as the revolutionary tricolor and Marianne that gave the French people the “sense that they were... recapturing a kind of primal moment of national community” (69).⁶²

For Fritzsche, the most important change came with a new way of narrating history. “The most salient attribute of this narrative form was the consciousness of periodicity that distinguished historical epochs and characterized social customs, and sequentialized a view of history as a swift, comprehensive process of transformation in which differences over time assumed overriding importance” (Fritzsche 17, 18).⁶³ This new way of understanding

⁶¹ The Republican calendar also reformulated the measurement of weeks, which became ten days instead of seven, and renamed months. Republicans also attempted to decimalize the clock with what is often referred to as French Revolutionary Time. Instead of dividing a day into 24 hours, decimal time divides a day into 10 hours, which are divided into 100 decimal minutes, which are divided into 100 decimal seconds. Although the French calendar is still taught to French students and students of French, the decimal clock is often forgotten as one of the French Revolution’s legacies and attempts to influence the way we perceive time and space, as is the metric system.

⁶² Lynn Hunt goes on to suggest that modernity is the “byproduct of this conflict between proponents and opponents of the revolutionary rupture in time” (72). This conclusion is very similar to the argument Fritzsche makes in his book quoted above.

⁶³ Fritzsche points out that “although Europeans had known devastating upheavals before – the Reformation and Thirty Years’ War – these were not narrated in terms of fundamental and continual change and so did not drastically alter the temporal identities of contemporaries” (17). It is important to remember that French republican ideals were forced upon the rest of Europe and on France’s colonies overseas by Napoleon and republican administrators. Napoleon’s dissolution of the 800-year-old Holy Roman Empire in 1806, as

and writing history would coincide with a widespread mobilization of the victims of Napoleon's global ambitions. Soldiers left their homelands for faraway lands; refugees and exiles found themselves stranded in foreign countries; French administrators were deployed to occupied territories; and dissolved religious orders were displaced from monasteries and convents. The result of these massive temporal and spatial upheavals was twofold, Fritzsche observes. First, there was a renewed interest in history as an opaque, distant place that should be revisited; second, a melancholy grew out of the estrangement between past and present which took the form of "fantastic stories about national origins and tall tales of lost childhood" (Fritzsche 1).

The fact that Grellmann's *Historischer Versuch über die Zigeuner* was published just before this abrupt and traumatic dislocation from the past meant the Gypsy would not escape appropriation by writers looking to codify this temporal turmoil. Goethe, Achim von Arnim, Clémens Bretano, Wordsworth and other early romantics all used the Gypsy trope to explore what it meant to be disenfranchised from the past. On the one hand, this dislocation was seductive as it offered the freedom that comes with living "outside of history and beyond the reach of authorities" (Trumpner 853). On the other hand, it could lead to what many were feeling at the dawn of this new time : melancholy, estrangement, alienation or worse, oblivion.

In 1797, Jean-Guillaume-Antoine Cuvelier became the first French writer to use the Gypsy as a way to communicate France's post-Revolutionary relationship with the past, present and future. Set in fifteenth-century Westphalia (and therefore medieval before

Fritzsche suggests, would have led to the same kind of epistemological upheavals in German states experienced by the French after the Revolution.

Nodier and other early romantics declared the Middle Ages the ideal backdrop for their literature), *C'est le Diable, ou la Bohémienne* was produced for the Théâtre de l'Ambigu-Comique in Paris only three years after the Reign of Terror ended, four years after the King and Queen were beheaded and only two years after their ten-year-old son and heir, Louis XVII, died of neglect in the medieval fortress Tour du Temple.

C'est le diable, ou la Bohémienne is one of Cuvelier's first plays, and has been read as an early example of the fantastic in Romanticism.⁶⁴ It is also a transparent allegory of the events that left more than one generation stranded between remorse for a lost past and fear of an uncertain future that "appeared to contemporaries as an unmistakable if unknowable force, which upended, uplifted, and destroyed" (Fritzsche 30).⁶⁵ Cuvelier's play decodes the guilt France was beginning to internalize with regards to the terror and bloodshed of the previous five years. The hero or rather anti-hero, the young count of Westphalia, is tricked by his steward into killing his father (who he believes is responsible for his mother's death) and into abandoning his infant sister in the Moravian desert. Throughout the play, the young man is riddled with remorse, stating as if under a spell, « Je ne sais ce que je fais... Je ne sais ce que je veux... Ulric, Ulric ! Pourquoi ai-je suivi tes conseils » (Cuvelier 7). As the end of the play nears, and the young count's family tomb is blown into a million pieces and

⁶⁴ Charles Dédéyan, *L'imagination fantastique dans le romantisme européen (Angleterre, Allemagne, France)*. Very little critical work has been done on Cuvelier. I found some biographical information in the nineteenth century *Almanach des Spectacles* that tells how he became a playwright and writer later in life, after a military career in Napoleon's army.

⁶⁵ The title Fritzsche chose for his book is *Stranded in the Present*, which emphasizes post-Revolutionary France's inability to reconnect with the time before the Revolution and the fragile relationship this rupture instigates with the future which becomes a frightening and uncertain place since it no longer is the perpetuation of the past. According to Fritzsche, this is the French and Industrial Revolutions' legacy to future generations. "The early nineteenth-century moment of revolution, war, and industrialization profoundly shaped the way the West thought and still thinks about time and history" (5).

his chateau completely destroyed by a rival, Cuvelier illustrates the consequences of betraying the past. Homeless and alone, the young man must ride the devil's horse, or dragon in this case, into the dark and frightening unknown since "les ombres ensanglantées de son père et sa mère" (38) will never forgive his treachery.

As Cuvelier's title suggests, Gypsies play an important part in the young count's tragic story. However, their function in the dénouement of the plot has little to do with freedom or questioning authority as in the stories imagined around Preciosa, Zerbinette and Figaro. In this post-Revolutionary plot, the Gypsy is Lucifer's accomplice abetting him in a series of tricks that guarantee the count will betray his family and turn his back on the past. To ensure that none of the Gypsies reveal what Lucifer (Ulric) has planned, they are turned into the devil's mute slaves – their tongues literally ripped out so they cannot reveal the truth.

Because the Gypsy women are unable to put into words the *bonne aventure* that the young count anticipates upon their arrival, he is forced to consult Ulric who promises to deliver his much-desired happy ending if the young man promises to follow his orders.⁶⁶ Slaves to the devil, the Gypsies become the uncanny reminder of how the count broke from his past and lost his way. First, they reintroduce his long lost sister into the story, disguising her as a Gypsy and a member of their tribe. And when Munster doesn't recognize her (having abandoned her as a baby), he begins to desire her as his lover – a mistake which leads him further down the road to hell. It is the Gypsy's leader who ultimately guides the young count into his family tomb where Ulric forces him to sign a contract which causes the

⁶⁶ « Oui, ces Bohémiens m'aideront à bannir cette mélancolie qui me dévore... Ulric prétend que leur science chimérique n'est que pour l'ignorance, il me semble pourtant qu'il serait possible en consultant l'avenir, d'assurer sa tranquillité... La tranquillité n'est que dans la vertu, je ne puis plus y prétendre » (Cuvelier 8).

mausoleum to explode. Presenting the young count with a “livre enflammé” (Cuvelier 38) whose three-word message, “ASSASSINAT, INCESTE, PARRICIDE” (38), the Gypsy becomes the conclusion to this ghoulish tale, which reveals France’s past crimes and seals its infernal future.

The fact that the Gypsy now carries a book that has erased story and history and replaced it with the words patricide, murder and incest is an ominous foreshadowing of the role Gypsies will have to play in early nineteenth-century French texts.⁶⁷ As French writers and historians begin to mourn the fact that history would never be the same, they would seek revenge on a character whose freedom from these narratives had allowed it to play a subversive role in seventeenth and eighteenth-century literature.

As Cuvelier’s play illustrates, the Gypsy would unfortunately become a useful metaphor for the historical rupture that had made it impossible for post-Revolutionary generations to fully reconnect with a pre-Revolutionary past – a space and time that, according to Fritzsche, would always feel just out of reach. In fact, after the Revolution,

“historians... floundered in their attempts to find an explanation or to fit the revolution in larger conceptual streams. Henceforth, history would be contemplated from the standpoint of epistemological uncertainty, which made historical narratives less authoritative, but also more interesting and many-sided. An increasingly strange past came into view and became an object of both public and private desire” (Fritzsche 6).

The desire to reunite with a lost past became stronger than the desire to lie next to the Gypsy, or to listen to her tale of the future. And as the relationship with the past is increasingly scripted through desire in the nineteenth century, the Gypsy character becomes more often than not a dangerous and sinister figure whose ruses and tricks cause the young

⁶⁷ Incest refers to Munster’s passion for his sister, but also points to the trial that sealed Marie-Antoinette’s fate in which she was accused of sexually abusing her son, Louis XVII, the heir to the French crown.

hero or heroine to forget how his or her story began. As France's desire for the past teeters on pathological by the middle of the century, the punishment laid upon the Gypsy in literature is unforgiving, merciless and bound to the grave that the Revolution's rupture in time first opened.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Michael Roth observes that between 1820 and 1840, "there was an enormous amount of writing by medical doctors about nostalgia as a pathology resulting from an excess of desire for the past, from the longing to return to a specific and crucial place in one's past" (Roth 27). I will argue in the following chapters that nostalgia was a powerful political tool used by various sides of an ideological war that began with the Restoration and continued through Napoleon III's reign. There was an obvious confluence in aesthetics and politics, which as Roth points out, also found its way into medical texts.

Chapter Two

From Hayraddin to Esmeralda: How Victor Hugo Unpacked Walter Scott's Gift to France

- *Que veut dire ce mot: la Esmeralda?*
- *Je ne sais pas, dit-elle.*
- *A quelle langue appartient-il ?*
- *C'est de l'égyptien, je crois.*
- *Je m'en étais douté, dit Gringoire,*
vous n'êtes pas de France ?
- *Je n'en sais rien.*

Notre-Dame de Paris, 1482 (Page 124)

Uncertainty might as well be the name of Victor Hugo's Gypsy heroine in *Notre-Dame de Paris, 1482*. As Gringoire's questions to Esmeralda reveal, the young woman knows very little about her origins and doesn't place much importance on where she comes from or what her name could tell her or others about her story. "I think" is her strongest affirmation, which comes after "I don't know" and just before a nonchalant "I have no idea." What piques the poet here is Esmeralda's indifference with regards to her missing past. When he attempts to push through his new wife's real or feigned ignorance by asking if her parents are still alive, she begins to sing:

Mon père est oiseau,
Ma mère est oiselle,
Je passe l'eau sans nacelle,
Je passe l'eau sans bateau,
Ma mère est oiselle,
Mon père est oiseau.

Making metaphorical mischief instead of answering the poet, Esmeralda evades Gringoire's question by hinting that her parents have wings and have given their daughter the gift of

flight, or at least the capacity to pass over rivers and other obstacles that can prevent a traveler from crossing to the other side. Esmeralda's flightiness, as it were, leaves a gaping hole in the final paragraphs of a chapter titled "Une nuit de nocés," which should be the conclusion to the novel's Second Book, an important end in itself since the First and Second Books offer essential portraits of the story's most important characters. In an effort to fill the hole in his honeymoon chapter, Gringoire hastily begins to share the story of his own past, stating "vous m'avez conté votre histoire avec tant de confiance que je vous dois un peu la mienne" (*Notre-Dame de Paris* 125).⁶⁹

Exchanging a story for a non-story, the poet quickly tells the young woman (and Hugo's reader) how his own life began shortly after he was orphaned at the age of six. "Mon père a été pendu par les bourguignons et ma mère éventrée par les picards, lors du siège de Paris, il y a vingt ans" (125). Anchoring his life story to a historical event that represents both an end (Gringoire becomes an orphan) and a new beginning (and eventually a poet), the young storyteller continues to offer the nineteenth-century reader a peek into fifteenth-century French life despite the fact that revisiting this past evokes horrific memories. For the novel, Gringoire's story ensures that this very short chapter doesn't end before it begins, since Esmeralda's refusal to tell her own story or to consummate their marriage means the reader never gets the *nuit de nocés* the chapter's title promises.

Esmeralda's indifference to her husband's questions allegorizes what happens to plot and narrative when the past goes missing – a dilemma she brings to the heart of a novel whose primary purpose is the preservation of historical monuments, an ambition Hugo

⁶⁹ I will abbreviate *Notre-Dame de Paris* in parenthetical documentation as *NDP* in the pages that follow.

claims in an introductory note is not only “un des buts principaux de ce livre” but “un des buts principaux de sa vie” (*NDP* 33).

However, it is in this same 1832 note that Hugo confesses to leaving a similar hole in the 1831 edition of his novel. As Hugo explains to his 1832 readers, three chapters of his original manuscript mysteriously wandered off shortly before *Notre-Dame de Paris* went to print in the spring of 1831.⁷⁰ Isabelle Roche and others have suggested that the three missing chapters, which are didactic in tone, were held back by a very market-savvy Hugo so as to ensure his own financial success with subsequent editions. This is perhaps true, but what better way to allegorize what one risks losing in a historical novel when words become flighty.⁷¹

The lost chapters, which “se sont retrouvés” (32) in time for the second edition, are essential to the reader’s understanding of the novel since they carry the work’s “pensée esthétique” and the “philosophie cachée de ce livre” (32). Although Hugo insists that these chapters were written at the same time as the rest of the novel, that they are not a “greffe” or a “soudure,” (32) the fact that they go missing just before the novel goes to print leaves the reader doubting their origin, and uncertain about their beginning. The fact that Hugo’s « paresse recula devant la tâche de récrire trois chapitres perdus » (32) further frustrates the reader’s relationship to them since, like Esmeralda’s flightiness, Hugo’s indolence

70 « A l’époque où Notre-Dame de Paris s’imprimait pour la première fois, le dossier qui contenait ces trois chapitres s’égara » (32). *S’égarer*, the intransitive form of *égarer* puts emphasis on the subject who is responsible for losing their way, getting lost or in a more figurative sense wandering off. I use wander here because it communicates the mystery and Hugo’s innocence (real or not) behind the disappearance of these chapters that got lost or just wandered off.

⁷¹“Abbas beati martinit” and “Ceci tuera cela” make up the Fifth Book, which meant the 1832 edition had eleven total *Livres* instead of the original ten. “Impopularité” is a very short chapter (barely a page long), which is not didactic like the other two, but offers a transition into Claude Frolo’s strange world, where alchemy and other unholy beliefs make their home in the priest’s mind and heart.

undermines the chapters' significance and signification, even though he insists that it is only with these chapters that his story is finally complete, "telle qu'il l'a rêvée, telle qu'il l'a faite, bonne ou mauvaise, durable ou fragile, mais telle qu'il la veut" (*NDP* 32).

Because one of the missing chapters happens to be the much-cited "Ceci tuera cela," a historical look at the rise of printing alongside the demise of architecture, Hugo's flighty chapters also cast a shadow of doubt on how stable "l'édifice qu'élève à son tour l'imprimerie" (210) really is. If the chapter, now considered a pillar in Hugo's monumental novel, had wandered off to never come back, its author could have never made the now famous claim that « sous la forme imprimerie, la pensée est plus impérissable que jamais » (205).

Hugo admits in the same sentence that the printed word is « volatile, insaisissable » (205). And like his wandering chapters and wandering heroine, printed words can be like a "troupe d'oiseaux," scattering "aux quatre vents, et occupe à la fois tous les points de l'air et de l'espace" (205). Hugo the poet celebrates this flightiness, as it allows thought to evade capture and destruction and enables his words to become immortal, reaching out to readers in another time and space. But for the author of a historical novel, the printed word's reluctance to "s'emparait puissamment d'un siècle et d'un lieu" (205) is problematic. As Esmeralda and her winged parents prove, flightiness in historical narrative leads to gaping holes and the disintegration of writing that depends on a relationship with a specific time and space.

Hugo's hesitation as to whether printed words can hold onto "un siècle" or "un lieu" like the monument "écrit en pierre" (205) questions the foundation of his project, a novel whose title, *Notre-Dame de Paris. 1482*, suggests that the novel is about both a *lieu* and a

siècle. Some fifty years later, Hugo would deny ever writing a “roman historique,” and in an 1868 letter to his editor Lacroix states : « Le roman historique est un très bon genre, puisque Walter Scott en a fait; et le drame historique peut être une très belle œuvre, puisque Dumas s’y est illustré; mais je n’ai jamais fait de drame historique ni de roman historique »

(*Correspondance* 329).⁷² Because *Notre-Dame de Paris* is often cited as one of the most influential historical novels of its century, one has to wonder what Hugo’s ambition was in 1831, if it wasn’t to appropriate a form made popular by Walter Scott?

The fact that Hugo puts a Gypsy girl at the heart of his historical novel further complicates this question. As explained in the previous chapter, by the nineteenth century, the Gypsy was a literary figure who denied or at least frustrated linear narratives. Whether stealing, kidnapping children, tempting young nobles to leave title and wealth behind for a life on the open road, or telling wild *bonne aventures*, Gypsies in French literature had proven that the past’s power over the present and future was illusory. Before Heinrich Grellmann published his 1788 linguistic study, which rooted Gypsies to India, their own “histoire deviendrait un chaos... Pour apprendre ce qui est réellement, il falloit auparavant s’instruire de... ceux qui se sont trompés” (Bock 38).⁷³ In other words, because Gypsies, like Esmeralda, couldn’t answer the question, “*Where did you come from?*” their history remained obscured, a mysterious hole that writers, scientists and historians anxiously filled with speculation and hypothesis. For an author who already hesitated in rooting history in fiction, bringing the Gypsy into a historical novel seemed risky at best.

⁷² As Roche has pointed out, Hugo wrote this letter because he was upset Lacroix advertised his upcoming novel, *L’Homme qui rit*, as a *roman historique*. Unfortunately, in this short letter, Hugo does not develop his reasons for refusing this label, and merely points out that historical figures only have cameos in his works.

⁷³ Bock was the first to translate Grellmann’s text into French. See Chapter 1.

Walter Scott's French Novel: Translating the Gypsy for the French Imagination

But as followers of Walter Scott knew all too well, the Gypsy was already a staple of the historic novel, at least as the genre was imagined within nineteenth-century Britain's historical and political borders. In her book *Gypsies and the British Imagination, 1807-1930*, Deborah Epstein Nord attributes Scott's second novel *Guy Mannering, or, The Astrologer* as the "single most important literary influence on the nineteenth-century fascination with Gypsies" (Nord 25). As she sees it, the novel "became a source both for historians, who recycled Scott's account of Scottish Gypsies as though it were authoritative, and for novelists and poets, who used *Guy Mannering's* kidnapping plot and Gypsy heroine as prototypes for their own inventions" (25).

Nord's work on Scott primarily focuses on the wildly popular Gypsy character Meg Merrilies, who, after the 1815 publication of *Guy Mannering*, "had a life of her own outside Scott's novel" (25). Not only was she the inspiration for Keats' poem "Meg Merrilies" (1818), which school-aged children in Britain still recite, but she became the main character of a highly successful theater adaptation of the novel, also called *Guy Mannering*, which starred the celebrated actress Sarah Egerton as Meg Merrilies.

Hardly three years after Scott published *Guy Mannering*, Britain was caught up in what Nord calls "Meg-mania" – a celebrity cult of sorts that lasted well into the 1820s. What the British loved about Scott's old Gypsy woman, Nord argues, is how she personified a growing nostalgia that was suspicious of the new economic and social arrangements that were a product of the Industrial Revolution. Tied to Ellangowan, the estate where her "tribe"

of Gypsies had lived for generations, Meg is a very distant cousin of the freedom-loving Preciosa who refused to be tied down to any particular space.

As Nord sees it, the old Gypsy woman Meg is an “ancestral figure,” intimately tied to the estate where she lives and to the young laird to whom she becomes a surrogate mother “so constantly does she attend to him and watch over him” (30).⁷⁴ Like the ruins of the laird’s estate, the old Gypsy woman “connects Harry to an authentic and specifically local past” (36) while acting as Harry’s memory, which Nord correctly points out, is not only a personal memory, a lost and then found again identity, “but also historical, geographical, and essential to the restoration of a particular social order” (36).

In a chapter titled “Walter Scott’s Gypsies,” Nord concludes that “Scott uses a Gypsy as the mouthpiece for tradition and places her squarely in the center of the drama of both personal and cultural memory” (39).⁷⁵ This, of course, is a much-different Gypsy than Esmeralda and her nineteenth-century French descendants, who not only skirt memory, but frustrate the historical narratives that their nineteenth-century writers are attempting to

⁷⁴ *Guy Mannering* is the story of the noble Bertram family whose financial and political mistakes over several generations have left the family destitute. Meg Merrilies is a maternal figure for the youngest Bertram whose parents’ “inanity of character” (*Guy Mannering* 13) and general short-sightedness put his family on the “high road to ruin” (14). By removing young Bertram from his family and sending him to live part of his youth in Holland, Meg sews the seeds for his family’s prosperous future – a future in which Henry is unlikely to repeat the mistakes of his ancestors, as his ties to the past, although unbroken, are loosened. Reconnecting the young man with his past and with his estate becomes the old Gypsy woman’s final gift to the young heir, as she is the only one who knows Mr. Van Beest Brown is Harry Bertram, Ellangowan’s last laird.

⁷⁵ Nord’s choice to do an in-depth study of *Guy Mannering* addressed some of the problems in Katie Trumpener’s earlier study of the Gypsy in nineteenth-century British literature. While Trumpener admits that her article was only a cursory study meant to begin a very important conversation about the “literarization” (849) of the Gypsy in the West, her thesis (that the Gypsy is portrayed as timeless and is always placed outside of Western historical narrative), as Huub van Baar has pointed out, “does not do sufficient justice to the internal ambivalences of the Gypsy/Roma representations of the literary and intellectual histories that she has interrogated” (Van Baar 157). The fact that Meg connects the hero to “an authentic and specifically local past” (Nord 36) and then becomes a British hero of sorts (at least in popular culture) illustrates at what point the Gypsy trope evolves according to the time and place it is penned from. Also see my work on *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes* in Chapter 3.

construct. In fact, in reading Nord's chapter, one is led to believe that "Walter Scott's Gypsies" had little influence on the Gypsies penned by French Romantics, particularly Victor Hugo and Prosper Mérimée, whose works continue to haunt the French imagination.

But it's important to point out what Nord fails to mention, or rather, chooses not to write about in her chapter on Walter Scott's Gypsies: Scott's 1823 novel, *Quentin Durward*, a text whose wayward Gypsy is without a doubt the inspiration for Hugo's Esmeralda and her darker descendants. In Nord's defense, her book specifically addresses literary Gypsies that are part of the nineteenth-century British imagination, and *Quentin Durward* can hardly be called a British novel. Written at the suggestion of Scott's French wife, Charlotte Charpentier, *Quentin Durward* is an earnest attempt to recall a part of France's pre-revolutionary history that had been repressed by republican ideology and Napoleon's Empire. Because France's most influential Gypsy novel, *Notre-Dame de Paris*, is a response, if not a French translation of Scott's 1823 novel, it is important to take a moment to address *Quentin Durward*, both as a novel that spoke to early nineteenth-century France and as the first work that offers the Gypsy as a metaphor for France's historical crisis.

The forty years of revolution and war that France waged within its borders and without, had a place, of course, in the British imagination. But for Scott, the French crisis had gained an important and intimate place inside his home and within his heart since his marriage to Charlotte in 1797. Though the reasons Charlotte's mother sent her seventeen-year-old daughter to England in 1787 still remain a mystery, it is clear that Charlotte never completely severed her emotional ties with France. As many of Scott's friends and critics

were quick to point out, she never lost her French accent and never quite became the British Lady many wanted her to be.⁷⁶

According to Scott family legend, it was Charlotte who encouraged her husband to write a novel about fifteenth-century France, recognizing the potential such a story could have with audiences attempting to understand how the Bourbon Restoration was going to negotiate France's historical rupture. Published in 1823, *Quentin Durward* was initially one of Scott's least popular novels in England. British readers seemed disinterested in Louis XI's successful political ploys, which turned France into Europe's most powerful state by the end of the fifteenth century. However, when *Quentin Durward* was translated into French, it was met with an unparalleled fervor that made it one of the most celebrated novels of the 1820s.⁷⁷

Though *Quentin Durward* may have been Charlotte's idea, it is important to point out that it was just as much Scott's brainchild as it was his wife's. Only five months after he published *Guy Mannering*, Scott left for the Continent, eager to see the battleground where Napoleon made his last stand. He arrived in Belgium only a month after the Battle of Waterloo ended Napoleon's hopes of regaining his Empire and sent the French spiraling into what can only be called a national depression. In his letters to Charlotte, Scott describes the horrific devastation he witnessed while traveling through Belgium and France, and how he

⁷⁶ Herbert Grierson explains in his biography of Walter Scott that the family constantly tried to bring Charlotte Charpentier (who changed her name to Carpenter) higher esteem by romanticizing her story. In fact, he attributes her romanticized émigré story, that was wrongly attached to her, to their embarrassment of her dubious beginnings. During her lifetime, Charlotte had to endure criticism by Scott's friends and family, who were perturbed by the fact that "Lady Scott" never could or would master the English language.

⁷⁷ See Murray Pittock's edited collection *Reception of Sir Walter Scott in Europe*, specifically Richard Maxwell's article, which charts Scott's reception in France, "Scott in France."

and the friends who accompanied him on the trip were haunted by the stench of decaying bodies and the sight of entire villages ravaged by canon fire. Scott couldn't help but grieve for a country whose disillusioned residents were "suffering to the very hearts core" (*Letters* 140), or as he wrote in a letter to Charlotte on August 13, 1815:⁷⁸

In every town almost there are symptoms of bombardment or of storm... The few men you see look at you with a mixture of jealousy hatred & fear & you cannot talk to a woman but she falls a crying. The gaiety & spirit of the nation is for the present at least entirely gone & they have a most hopeless & dispirited appearance being as it were struck dumb by the extent of their misfortunes (*Letters* 140, 141).

While *Quentin Durward* is, for the most part, a fifteenth-century tale with a happy ending, Scott opens his novel with an Introduction that is an attempt to describe what he witnessed in 1815. The Marquis de Hautlieu, who loses his wife, only child, his stately home and fortune to the Revolution and Napoleon's wars, is a transparent personification of what Scott felt France had lost in its republican ambitions. As Quentin's nineteenth-century descendant, the Marquis de Hautlieu serves as both the unhappy introduction and tragic conclusion of the Scottish hero's French story.

While Quentin's fifteenth-century bravery lands him a position within the King's royal archers, and eventually allows him to wed the beautiful and wealthy Countess of Croye, his post-Revolutionary descendant is the unwilling victim of his time. Like most of the "pauvres revenants" who return to France after the Bourbon Restoration, the Marquis is doomed to wander "about the halls of our fathers, rather like ghosts of their deceased proprietors, than like living men restored to their own possessions" (*Quentin* 30). Because his only child died while living in exile, and his estate was destroyed by "popular fury"

⁷⁸ His early letters to Charlotte date from July 1815.

(*Quentin* 20) and the *Bande noire*, the Marquis is literally the end of Quentin's French story, which becomes a painful and uncanny reminder of what once was when remembered through the nineteenth century.

Speaking through his imaginary Marquis' nostalgic musings, Scott also clarifies exactly what was destroyed with the monuments, statues, palaces, chapels and libraries that were attacked along with France's nobility:

Who... would willingly destroy the terraces of the château of Sully, since we cannot tread them without recalling the image of that statesman, alike distinguished for severe integrity and for strong and unerring sagacity of mind? Were they an inch less broad, a ton's weight less massive, or were they deprived of their formality by the slightest inflections, could we suppose them to remain the scene of his patriotic musings? Would an ordinary root-house be a fit scene for the Duke... destroy the princely pavilion... and you remove from the mind the *vraisemblance*, the veracity of the whole representation (26, 27).

For Scott, France's thirty years of revolution and war had one tragic result – the destruction of those sacred spaces that ensured the *vraisemblance* of a historical event. In destroying its monuments to the past, France had made it difficult, if not impossible, to re-present and reconstruct the memories necessary to ensure history, at least the way Scott would have it, through what Maurice Samuels has described as “visual” and “spectacular” language.⁷⁹

In the absence of monuments and historical places, Scott does find a way to jog his reader's historical memory of France. By packaging his fifteenth-century hero's chivalric rise inside the story of the Marquis' tragic nineteenth-century fall, Scott employs nostalgia to incite his reader to look carefully for the traces of lost places and people whose voices and stories were buried or destroyed by three decades of war. At the same time, Scott insists on reminding the reader, especially the French reader, of the consequences of the recent past.

⁷⁹ Maurice Samuels describes Scott's language as “visual” and “spectacular” in his book *The Spectacular Past*. I will come back to Samuels and his important study again in this chapter.

While Quentin's story offers a much-desired happy ending, it is a French story that lacks a French romantic hero. Although the king would have been an appropriate choice, since his reign raised "France up to the state of formidable power, which has ever since been" (*Quentin* 39), Scott turns Louis XI into a perverted forefather of republican ideology, as he is a deceitful and villainous monarch who uses threats and cruelty to steal power from his nobles, while placing bourgeois or lower-class scoundrels in positions of power. And because most of the French nobles fear Louis XI, none dare to be heroic. Even Quentin, who is fully assimilated into the French court by the end of the novel, stifles his thoughts and quiets his tongue when he finally realizes what's at stake in defying Louis XI.

Quentin's evolution through the novel, from a wily Scottish youth who laughs in the face of kings and dukes with just "a leap over the frontiers" (52) to a domesticated French subject, is juxtaposed with another man's refusal to be anything but free, even if the consequence of freedom is death. An obvious personification of the republican motto *la liberté ou la mort*, Hayraddin first meets Quentin at the feet of a chestnut tree where his brother, who is less shrewd than Hayraddin himself, has been hung for betraying the king. This *marronnier*, which Scott purposely leaves in French, is a turning point in the novel, as it teaches the young Scot what happens to marooned French subjects or those who refuse to be bound/rooted to their king.

The *marronnier* also ties Quentin's story to Hayraddin's, since Quentin's ignorance of French myths and talismans lead him to make a grievous mistake that almost causes his own undoing. Unable to decipher the meaning of the fleur-de-lys etched on the chestnut tree's trunk, the young Scot scurries up to pluck Hayraddin's dying brother from the tree's strongest branch. Shocked to see the French peasants gathered below scatter in horror as he

cuts the poor man from the tree, Quentin's attempt to save the Gypsy man are in vain as he watches Hayraddin's brother fall to his death "in such a manner, that... the last sparks of life were extinguished" (97). Seeing the Gypsy die as he falls from the *marronnier*, Quentin begins to reevaluate his own ideas on freedom, deciding that freedom is a fair exchange for friends, loyalty, life and the protection of a powerful king.

The hero's evolution is juxtaposed with Hayraddin's stubborn attachment to freedom. Grateful to Quentin for what he did for his less-fortunate brother, the Gypsy follows the young Scot through the novel, professing a perverted form of brotherly love to the hero. Little more than halfway through the novel, Quentin can hardly recognize his former self in the Gypsy, who like the Scottish youth of the first chapters only has to leap over borders to escape the persecution of kings. Wholeheartedly rejecting a way of life he once admired, Quentin asks the Gypsy why he has "no law , no leader, no settled means of subsistence, no house or home" (223). In an uncanny reiteration of Quentin's own hesitation to pledge allegiance to a king or duke, Hayraddin replies :

I have liberty... I crouch to no one – obey no one – respect no one. I go where I will – live as I can – and die when my day comes... my thoughts... no chains can bind; while yours, even when your limbs are free, remain fettered by your laws and your superstitions, your dreams of local attachment, and your fantastic vision of civil policy. Such as I are free in spirit when our limbs are chained – You are imprisoned in mind, even when your limbs are most at freedom (224).

Scott's French Gypsy is what the British subject could never be, except in the naïve inexperience of youth. Even the Gypsy Meg Merrilies could not escape the "local attachments" (*Quentin* 224) that kept the British subject chained in mind and spirit to "house or home" (223). With republican ideals still floating in the air, Hayraddin was a much better fit for France, as he laughed at the kind of national nostalgia that tied Quentin to Scotland

(and then France) and the Gypsy Meg to Ellangowen. As Hayraddin points out in the quote above, the good “auld wa’s” that Meg and Quentin espouse in their loyalty to homelands are the very chains that bind the mind when the limbs are free.

Juxtaposing the journeys taken by Quentin and Hayraddin, Scott asks whether *liberté* can coexist with *fraternité*. This question is played out in the two men’s strained relationship, which is a misguided fraternity that Hayraddin defines and Quentin never agrees to. Scott compares Hayraddin’s brotherly love, which relies on lies and tricks and is always self-serving, to the altruistic fraternity of the courtly knights and the Scottish archers, who sacrifice life, limb, property and freedom to help each other.⁸⁰ The tension Scott builds between *liberté* and *fraternité* culminates in the conclusion of the novel when Quentin and the Countess of Croye must both sacrifice their freedom to benefit their countries and kinsmen. When the “wandering princess” (321) and “wandering adventurer” (40) come back to their respective communities, they are rewarded by their kings (and the author of the novel) with a marriage to each other.⁸¹ Their happy ending, which sews both young

⁸⁰ Examples of these sacrifices abound in the novel. However, the most memorable can be found in the final pages of the novel, when Quentin’s uncle gives him the Countess, after winning her hand for killing the Wild Boar of Ardennes. This marriage would have assured Le Balafre title and wealth, both of which he gives to his nephew instead. It is important to point out that Hayraddin is the only character to use the word “love” when speaking of Quentin. When he tricks Quentin in an attempt to match him with Lady Hameline, he explains his scheming to Marathon stating: “I loved the lad too, and would have done him a kindness: to wed him to this old woman, was to make his fortune: to unite him to Isabella, were to have brought on him De la Mark, Burgundy, France” (281). And as he tells Quentin himself just before his hanging, “Why, I loved you... for the matter that chanced on the banks of the Cher” (450). This is likely Scott’s way of reminding his reader that *fraternité* should not be based on passion, but on a social contract.

⁸¹ Although Scott paints Louis XI to be a sly and cruel monarch, he also makes allegiance to him believable by showing how he is a brilliant diplomat and the only character in the novel capable of seeing the big picture. The decisions he makes for the good of France are also admirable. “I will not give way, Dunois, to the headlong impetuosity, which, on some punctilio of chivalry, would wreck yourselves, the throne of France, and all. There is not one of you who knows not how precious every hour of peace is at this moment, when so necessary to heal the wounds of a distracted country; yet there is not one of you who would not rush into war on account of the tale of a wandering gypsy, or of some errant demosel, whose reputation, perhaps, is scarce higher” (139). It is Louis’ true love of France that, in the end, justifies the sacrifices of his nobles.

wanderers into the national fabric and into historical narratives like Scott's, becomes the prescribed alternative to the Gypsy's stubborn attachment to freedom, which not only causes him to betray Quentin, but ends with him hanging from the branches of the king's lynching tree.

It isn't until death is imminent, and Hayraddin recognizes that he has no chance to regain his freedom, that he becomes a true brother to Quentin. In a gesture that goes against Gypsy law, he professes the young Scot the "heir" (*Quentin* 453) to his final secret and of his only earthly possessions. The secret Hayraddin delivers is important because it assures peace between Burgundy and France, and allows Quentin to negotiate Louis XI within his own chivalric code, and to disrupt the king's deceitful plans while remaining a loyal subject.

By taming the Gypsy's "wild" freedom and bringing Hayraddin around to the kind of brotherly love shared by the archers and France's nobles, Scott criticizes the republican ideology that attempted to marry together "fraternité" and "liberté" while using the guillotine to forcibly break the "lien de parenté" and the "lien de solidarité et d'amitié" that Scott describes in his fifteenth-century French story.⁸² Hayraddin's final reformation, therefore, is Scott's gift to his imaginary émigré, the Marquis de Hautlieu, who the Revolution and republican ideology left "profoundly, permanently out of place" (Fritzsche 56). Illustrating what is lost when one sacrifices everything for freedom, Scott's first French

⁸² I quote "wild" here because Scott introduces "Chapter XVI: The Vagrant" (where Hayraddin announces his unabashed loyalty to freedom) with a quote from Washington Irving's *The Conquest of Granada*. "I am as free as Nature first made man, Ere the base laws of servitude began, When wild in woods the noble savage ran." Olympe de Gouges would address the hypocrisy of the republican definition of *fraternité* and was punished by death for doing so. As *Le Petit Larousse* defines it, *fraternité* is 1) « lien de parenté entre frères et sœurs, entre germains du même sexe ou du sexe opposé » 2) « lien de solidarité et d'amitié entre des êtres humains, entre les membres d'une société » For a detailed history of how this debate played out in France, see Mona Ozouf's article « Liberté, égalité, fraternité » in Pierre Nora's *Lieux de Mémoire*.

historical novel becomes a plea to recapture a past that he believed had been denigrated and mistreated – if not for its monuments, then for its social models.⁸³

Unpacking Scott's Gift in France

As stated earlier, *Quentin Durward* was a British novel that spoke French better than it did English. Its lessons befitted early nineteenth-century France, which was still suffering from an estrangement and alienation that were the result of a historical rupture violently instigated by the Republic, enforced by the Empire and only exasperated with the Bourbon Restoration.⁸⁴ Of course, some French writers were already addressing this rupture, attempting to reconnect their readers with the past by transforming it into an object of desire. In fact, three years before Walter Scott's Marquis argued in defense of his country's crumbling chateaux and churches, Charles Nodier began publishing *Voyage pittoresque et romantique dans l'ancienne France*, a multi-volume illustrated and descriptive inventory of France's lost and forgotten historic monuments whose primary purpose was to begin a political and social movement against the marauders and looters referred to as *la Bande noire*.⁸⁵ The final result of Nodier's work was a poetics of nostalgia, which breathed life into

⁸³ Though there is little room to explore Scott's political views here, it is important to point out his romantic admiration for feudal society, one in which a paternal nobility could care for its peasantry. This is nowhere more apparent than in the preface he wrote for his 1827 edited volume of *Memoirs of the Marchioness de La Rochejaquelein*, which is now available through Cambridge University Press.

⁸⁴ Scott's ambivalent betrayal of Louis XI was met with some criticism. Balzac, for one, decided to rewrite Louis in his short story, *Maître Cornelius*, which portrays the king as both a kind and loving father, and a man whose keen intelligence help him solve the biggest mystery of the plot – who is stealing from Maître Cornelius? Situated in Tours, the story does away with all of Scott's negative descriptions of Louis XI. Balzac published his short story in the *Revue de Paris* in 1831, the same year Hugo published *Notre-Dame de Paris*.

⁸⁵ The Bande noire referred to those who destroyed national and historical monuments for political or any other reasons. Nodier's work is very similar to the volume admired by Scott's fictional Marquis, *An Itinerary of Provence and the Rhone*, which was also a detailed description of France's historical monuments. It is impossible to know if Scott knew Nodier's work before writing *Quentin Durward*. The two men did meet, and Nodier was an important translator and cultural bridge between England and France, reinforcing what Margaret

the mostly gothic monuments he wrote about, while restoring respect to the men whose “arts” and “génie” constructed them.⁸⁶

As Eunice Schneck has pointed out, Nodier’s passion for monuments soon turned into a “vrai mouvement de propagande” (Schneck 29), as he pushed newspapers and literary reviews to publish snippets of *Voyages* and often made the monuments he described there, the backdrops and settings of his fictional writing. He also began to enlist other romantics into his cause, the most famous being a young Victor Hugo, who became Nodier’s disciple shortly after his 1823 publication of *Han d’Islande*. It was Nodier’s generous review of Hugo’s first published novel that encouraged the young writer “in his first venture, when everyone else was advising him to stick to poetry” (Oliver 147).⁸⁷ “This demonstration of goodwill,” (147) was repaid later that year with an ode titled *La Bande noire*, which Hugo

Cohen and Carolyn Dever have called the “literary channel.” Unfortunately, not enough work has been done on Nodier and his role in disseminating ideas across this “literary channel” and other borders.

⁸⁶ As Nodier states in the Introduction of *Voyages*, he and the friends who worked with him on this project felt they were working “à une époque où ces ruines finissaient de tomber pour ne se relever jamais” and that it was imperative to “rappeler à notre siècle que les siècles qui l’avaient précédé avaient eu leurs arts et leur génie.” Thanks to Gallica, all volumes of *Voyages* are numerized and downloadable with illustrations. However, because I worked from copies of a very old original, no page number was to be found on the quoted page above. However, the following is the sustained link where this volume can be found: <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k1040443d>.

⁸⁷ As A. Richard Oliver and other literary critics have pointed out, Nodier’s “demonstration of goodwill” (Oliver 147) led to a close friendship between the two men. Vincent Laisney has recently referred to this relationship as a father, son symbiosis. In his book *L’Arsenal romantique. Le salon de Charles Nodier*, Laisney explains how Victor came along just after Nodier lost his only son, Amédée. « Ne retrouve-t-il pas avec Hugo le fils que le sort lui a ravi? Il est indéniable que la rencontre-naissance de Victor, avec ses allures juvéniles, a comblé le désir de fils que Nodier portait en lui depuis dix ans » (Laisney 249). Nodier also filled a hole for Hugo, who had been « un jeune homme quasi orphelin » (256). The return of Hugo’s father in his life in the late 1820s, « loin d’effacer Charles, corrobore ce dernier dans le rôle de père substitutif. Une confusion, sinon une fusion, s’opère entre les deux figures paternelles. A la faveur de cette coalescence, Hugo vit donc sous une double tutelle pendant trois ans jusqu’à son interruption presque simultanée avec la mort foudroyante du général en 1828 et, quelques mois plus tard, la rupture tout aussi foudroyante avec Nodier » (256).

dedicated by way of an epigraph to his new friend and mentor Charles Nodier – “voyageur obscur, mais religieux au travers des ruines de la patrie... je priaï.”⁸⁸

Because more than 20 years separated the two friends, Hugo’s poem gave another voice to Nodier’s rally for historic monuments, one that spoke with the accent of youth.

Ô Français ! respectons ces restes !
Le ciel bénit les fils pieux
Qui gardent, dans les jours funestes,
L’héritage de leurs aïeux.
Comme une gloire dérobée,
Comptons chaque pierre tombée;
Que le temps suspende sa loi ;
Rendons les Gaules à la France
Les souvenirs à l’espérance,
Les vieux palais au jeune roi !...

With “espérance,” Hugo asks his generation to anticipate and hope for a future in which the past and present will be married together by a “jeune roi,” a monarch whose legitimacy is fortified by “les souvenirs” and the “vieux palais” of his forefathers. This can only be done, Hugo argues, if his generation, “les fils pieux,” reclaim and protect France’s stolen fame by preserving the “heritage de leurs aïeux.” As Nodier’s disciple, Hugo would have been well versed in the poetics of nostalgia, as a way of forcing “le temps” to suspend “sa loi” and of bridging the gap that separated “les fils pieux” from “leurs aïeux.”

Young Hugo’s poem was significant to Nodier’s cause, because it closed a generational gap in the aging romantic’s campaign to save France’s historic monuments.

Two years later, Hugo officially espoused Nodier’s cause as his own, publishing a political

⁸⁸ According to Oliver, Hugo published the poem in the September 1823 issue of *La Muse Française*. In his detailed study of Hugo and Nodier’s relationship, Vincent Laisney points out that this dedication does not appear in publications of the poem subsequent to the friends’ 1829 split, when Hugo begins to distance himself from his mentor. Unfortunately, I do not have time or space here to investigate this famous *rupture* and refer my reader to Laisney’s book *L’Arsenal romantique*, which looks at how Nodier and his literary salon influenced the Romantic movement and various nineteenth century writers and their work.

pamphlet titled “Guerre aux démolisseurs” in which he begs « la nouvelle France » to save « l’ancienne » (*Littérature et Philosophie mêlées* 347), arguing that soon there would be nothing left of France’s monuments except for the sketches, shadows and descriptions given by Taylor and Nodier in *Voyages pittoresques et romantiques*.⁸⁹ Like Nodier, Hugo felt it vital to save the “admirable monuments du moyen âge” (*Littérature et Philosophie mêlées* 348) as they were the sacred spaces where “la vieille gloire nationale” was inscribed along with “la mémoire des rois” (348). However, Hugo was also careful to make monuments spaces where “la tradition du peuple” (348) was inscribed and could be read. Including “le peuple” in these monuments’ stories was significant, as it addressed and attempted to heal the origin of France’s epistemological and historical rupture – the Revolution. For Hugo, the ideological divide that separated past from present could only be mended by turning *monuments historiques* into *monuments nationaux*, transforming the sacred places once possessed by the monarchy and the church into common spaces that could be shared and then protected by all French citizens. The alternative, Hugo objected, was too tragic to consider, since it would lead to the complete devastation of France’s monuments, either through neglect or disrespect, or because foreign opportunists were able to purchase “le droit d’emballer tout ce qui leur plairait dans les débris” (320).⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Graham Robb and critics who rely on his biography of Hugo claim that as a young man Hugo was haunted by ravaged monuments since his mother had chosen the defunct convent of the Petits Augustins as the family’s Parisian home. As Robb states, “Mme Hugo had made her home inside another history lesson. Like the Feuillantines, it had a monarchist moral. The room she slept in was the chapel of the defunct Petits Augustins convent. When he sat at his desk, Hugo looked out over a Parisian Valley of Kings : the convent cloisters were a repository for tombs which had been removed from the royal burial ground at Saint-Denis » (Robb 68). But Eunice Schneck, who takes a more literary approach, states: “je ne vois dans l’oeuvre de Hugo antérieure à 1823 ni l’amour patriotique du moyen âge français, ni l’amour esthétique du gothique” (Schneck 83).

⁹⁰ Hugo publishes a longer pamphlet in 1832, which is a revision of the first, also titled *Guerre aux démolisseurs!* I will come back to this later in this chapter.

Writing to a generation seduced by the new arts of industry and educated by republican ideals, Hugo had a hefty task ahead of him – that of convincing France’s younger generations that monuments were worth saving. Not only would he have to persuade the children of the nineteenth century that the past was a place interesting enough to (re)visit, but he would have to paint the past in a way that made it feel less like a strange and foreign land and more like home.

The question of how to represent France’s past for the post-Revolutionary generation is at the heart of *Notre-Dame de Paris*, which is Hugo’s attempt to seal a historical rupture left by thirty years of ideological war.⁹¹ As I point out in Chapter 1, nostalgia was by no means new to literature or to the nineteenth-century. But it was more often than not amorphous, its desire displaced from an alienated father figure to a mother, a sister, a lover or to any object that could distract the nostalgic hero’s attention from what was really missing from his story.⁹² If Hugo was going to use nostalgia for his new cause, he would need to repackage nostalgia, taming it as it were, by pinning its longing first and foremost to historical monuments. And if he was going to use the novel as the form for this monumental project, he would have to look beyond his mentor Charles Nodier whose fiction always took

⁹¹ Feeling “stranded in the present” is, according to Peter Fritzsche, the legacy of the French Revolution and Napoleonic wars, which left future generations feeling cut off from the past – an epistemological, historical and narrative rupture that made the past seem opaque and distant. While Fritzsche examines writers in whom this distance nurtured nostalgia or renewed interest in the past, it is important to remember that this opaqueness would have made it difficult for many to visualize/imagine this past (or have empathy for it), especially those born after the Revolution. In *Confessions d’un enfant du siècle*, Musset attempts to describe his generation’s estrangement from the past. Through the metaphor of the broken house, he points to the *mal* or *maladie* of his *siècle*. Whereas the Revolution left their fathers standing in crumbled houses, at least these men had a memory of what those houses used to be. Born into ruins, Musset’s generation found it difficult to imagine what that house used to be or what it could become.

⁹² Although Margaret Waller looks at “melancholy” as a discourse used to subjugate both women who wrote and women in male writing, her work on the “mal du siècle” was useful in my thinking here. As Michael Roth has pointed out, most scientific studies of nostalgia begin with the mother or the wet nurse as the nostalgic’s first object of longing, followed by *la nation*.

the form of the *fantastique*, sending its readers to faraway lands or to fantasy worlds where time either stops or its vestiges are blurred or erased.⁹³

Though Hugo proclaimed publically that Scott's first French novel was "pittoresque mais prosaïque" (*Littérature et philosophie* 251), he clearly admired *Quentin Durward* as an example of how writers could deploy nostalgia in a convincing way.⁹⁴ As he put it in a review of the novel in 1823, Walter Scott had forced "les lecteurs contemporains à reprendre, du moins pour quelques heures, l'esprit, aujourd'hui si dédaigné, des vieux temps, comme un sage et adroit conseiller qui invite des fils ingrats à revenir chez leur père" (246).⁹⁵ Of course, the readers and the past Hugo refers to here are French not British. Like most who read *Quentin Durward* in 1823, Hugo felt Scott's novel communicated a specifically French story of reconciliation that attempted to heal the divide that separated a French past from a French present.

Hugo's reading is, in part, the result of a highly stylized language that Charles Nodier once described as *la vraisemblance* and Maurice Samuels most recently called

⁹³ As Roche points out in her article, "Inscribing his Ideal Reader(ship). Victor Hugo and the Shaping of *le lecteur pensif*," the novelistic form, "punctuated rather than propelled [Hugo's] writing career" (Roche 21). The hesitancy of his first novels can be blamed on youth, but this doesn't explain why more than thirty years separate *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831) and *Les Misérables* (1862). In fact, Hugo only sat down and wrote *NDP* after Gosselin threatened sanction and fines.

⁹⁴ In his review of *Quentin Durward*, Hugo throws down the literary gauntlet, asking someone (presumably himself) to write a better novel: "Après le roman pittoresque, mais prosaïque, de Walter Scott, il restera un autre roman à créer, plus beau et plus complet encore selon nous. C'est le roman à la fois drame et épopée, pittoresque mais poétique, réel mais idéal, vrai mais grand qui enchâssera Walter Scott dans Homère" (251, 252). But as many of his contemporaries knew, Hugo's first two novels were flattering attempts to copy Scott's style. Nodier calls attention to Hugo's emulation of Scott in his review of *Han d'Islande*, where he warns the young poet not to use the same language as the older, wiser and more experienced Scott, as the latter could afford certain liberties that 21-year-old Hugo could not.

⁹⁵ Hugo's review was published in the first edition of *La Muse française*, which Vincent Laisney reminds us was "la voix du romantisme royaliste" (Laisney 153). Hugo only wrote five literary reviews in his career, and *Quentin Durward* was the only novel he ever wrote about critically. Although penning a literary review does not prove a particular disposition for a work, it does suggest that Hugo would have been intimate with Scott's book, since a literary review usually requires more than one reading.

“visionary” and “spectacular.” For both men, the power of Scott’s language lies in its ability to make the past visual by rooting words in a specific space, or as Nodier put it in an article for *La Quotidienne* in 1823, Scott’s words have a knack for rendering « avec une singulière exactitude la physionomie des localités » (Schenck 29). According to Samuels, Scott achieves this effect by way of descriptive ekphrasis, a visual language that collapses the “distinction between the visual and the verbal by forcing words to act like natural signs” and therefore “immediate substitutes for their referents” (Samuels 165). In locking language to a specific space, Scott deprives words of their inherent arbitrary nature, and instead of flying through space and time like Hugo’s poetic bird words, they “constitute a ‘still moment’ in the action of the story” (Samuels 166).

And while Scott’s descriptions of monuments made fiction more real, fiction helped memorialize monuments by painting them in a way that was more convincing than reality itself. By transporting his visionary language to fifteenth-century France, Scott had opened up a portal in space and time that would have felt threatening to the British but been a source of great pride for the French, as it was a time in history when Louis XI had finally rid France of the British and succeeded in making France a hermetic space dangerous to anyone unwilling to pledge allegiance to the political plot he was constructing.⁹⁶

The language Nodier and Samuels describe above plays a central role in *Notre-Dame de Paris*, which not only offers readers a detailed and very visionary description of monuments that still stand in Paris, but with the same kind of language, resurrects

⁹⁶ Describing Scott’s technique, Samuels states: “Of course, words will never function exactly like pictures; they will always require the added work of imagining, of translating the sign into a mental image. But the primary effect of Scott’s fiction is to reduce this work to a minimum, to create such vivid mental images with words that the referent is immediately called to mind. Scott’s verbal images function like visual ones; they make the reader see the past” (165, 166).

monuments that had been lost to war, time or politics. That said, Hugo recognized that he couldn't rely solely on Scott's descriptive language to ensure France's "fils ingrats" would "revenir chez leur père." He knew all too well that readers would feel pangs of nostalgia only when they were reminded of the terrible consequences of turning their backs on the past. So along with Scott's visionary language, Hugo also borrowed two important characters from *Quentin Durward*: the dispossessed Marquis and the Gypsy Hayraddin, both of whom personify the dangers of losing sight of the past.

Reading *Quentin Durward* and *Notre-Dame de Paris* together, one immediately recognizes the nostalgic Marquis, who charmed his Scottish visitor with his archival knowledge of France's historical monuments, in Hugo's narrator whose desperate descriptions of Paris's lost or crumbling monuments reveals more than a historic curiosity about the past. But in giving the Marquis a larger role, allowing his nostalgia to guide the reader through the entire novel instead of relegating his longing for the past to an introduction, Hugo swings open a door that Scott only left ajar in *Quentin Durward*. As someone who lives both in the past and in the present, Hugo's narrator doesn't paint the past out to be a foreign land to be visited, but demonstrates that it is a place that can be inhabited by the present just as the present is inhabited by the past. In other words, whereas Scott sustained the temporal rupture that alienated past from present in separating his fifteenth-century plot from his émigré's nineteenth-century story, Hugo attempts to close this gap by creating a bridge between both stories and times.

While the role of the Gypsy has often been overshadowed by the narrator of *Notre-Dame de Paris* in critical work, Hugo recognized the power of this character and the role it plays in a novel that deploys nostalgia to provoke a relationship with the past. While the

narrator shows readers how the past and present could and should coexist, the Gypsy character illustrates what happens when the door Hugo opens is shut, and there is no longer a *va et vient* between the past and present. In other words, as a foil to the narrator, the a-historical Gypsies are the nostalgic narrative's most important characters, since they demonstrate what happens if one chooses to ignore the past and live solely in the present or in the fanciful dream of the *bonne aventure*.⁹⁷

Notre-Dame de Paris: Encouraging Epic Constructions of the Past in the Present

If Hugo wanted his Gypsies to be a lesson to his readers, it was because he felt they had something in common with his Parisian contemporaries. Much like Esmeralda, his intended readers had turned their eyes and minds to the future, which made it difficult for them to see the importance of recapturing the past in the present. If he was going to save France's historical monuments, he would have to teach his readers what Esmeralda was unwilling to learn. Unlike Walter Scott, who addresses present problems by allegorizing them in the past, Victor Hugo attempts to reconstruct the past in his contemporary reader's imagination by creating a literary passageway that invites a reading between the fifteenth and the nineteenth centuries.

He opens this passageway on the first page of his novel, by asking his reader to participate in an exercise in counting backwards. « Il y a aujourd'hui trois cent quarante-huit ans six mois et dix-neuf jours que les parisiens s'éveillèrent au bruit de toutes les

⁹⁷ See Chapter 1 for more on the Gypsy's *bonne aventure*, which is how they and the French refer to their fortune telling, or the glance into the future they offer those willing to pay.

cloches sonnant à grande volée dans la triple enceinte de la Cité, de l'Université et de la Ville » (*NDP* 37). Because Hugo gives the year “1482” in the title of his novel, this counting exercise seems redundant at first. But then we remember that two dates anchor this first paragraph, *aujourd'hui* and January 6, 1482. If January 6, 1482 “n'est cependant pas un jour dont l'histoire ait gardé souvenir” (*NDP* 37) perhaps “aujourd'hui” is. Now counting forward 348 years, 6 months and 19 days from January 6, 1482, the reader is given another date : July 25, 1830, the same day riots broke out in Paris protesting Charles X, the last Bourbon king. Thanks to biographers and Hugo's wife Adèle, the modern reader knows that “aujourd'hui” is as fictional as January 6, 1482, since Hugo had to postpone writing *Notre-Dame de Paris* because riots “sent the Hugos running for cover... to a country inn at Montfort-l'Amaury” (*Robb* 156).⁹⁸ For the reader hoping to unlock the “philosophie cachée dans ce livre” (*NDP* 32), this first paragraph is important as it provides two temporal coordinates by which to navigate the story.

Unlike Scott, who closes the door to Hautlieu before beginning Quentin's story, Hugo insists the temporal door he opens on the first page remain open by constantly weaving his narrative in and out of the two centuries, inviting his reader to follow him in this journey and to make comparisons along the way. In fact, “aujourd'hui” is a word that appears at least 66 times in the text – four times in the 1832 Préface and at least 62 times in the novel itself. Most often “aujourd'hui” calls to the reader to look for something that has been lost to the nineteenth-century, [“Il reste bien peu de chose aujourd'hui... de cette

⁹⁸ July 27 is the date given by Hugo's wife in *Victor Hugo raconté par un témoin de sa vie*, but as Robb and other recent biographers have pointed out, this date is probably fictional, as are other details offered in this biography. Adèle, along with her husband, had specific intentions with regards to this biography.

première demeure des rois de France, de ce palais aîné du Louvre” (41)] or becomes a way for Hugo to translate the language of the past into something his modern (and perhaps a-historical) reader can understand [“comme on dit dans le style d’aujourd’hui” (67)].⁹⁹ With the narrator constantly bouncing between past and present, *Notre-Dame de Paris* turns into an unusual historical novel that refuses to remain in the past.¹⁰⁰

When Hugo’s narrator materializes in the present, it is to remind his reader what is missing from contemporary Paris: monuments and *lieux de mémoire* sacrificed to politics, war or bad taste. Pointing first to what is missing, the narrator then educates his reader as to what was put in its place: fetishistic architecture, modern and “gauche” (*NDP* 41), that prevents nineteenth-century Parisians from mourning what they’ve lost. Hugo encourages his reader to take slow walks through Paris, imagining what the city looked like *before* – a didactic exercise that always brings the reader back to the novel, yearning to learn more about what has been lost to time, ideology, war and bad taste. Hugo’s architectural and historical education prevents readers from alienating themselves from the past and from endangering, like the Gypsy girl did the night of her honeymoon, the integrity of historical narrative.

Though Paris was Hugo’s home, it was also a space that was important to the politics of nostalgia that he was attempting to knit through *Notre-Dame de Paris*. By situating his novel in the capital, Hugo could reposition nostalgia and the romantic call to save France’s

⁹⁹ Of course, “aujourd’hui” is used in dialogue between characters (about 15 times) and therefore takes place in the present of the past. However, these instances are eclipsed by the 50 or so times that Hugo uses “aujourd’hui” to incite nostalgia in the reader.

¹⁰⁰ This may be why Hugo told his editor in 1863 that he had never written a historical novel.

monuments. Nostalgia had long been a way for émigrés (and for those who attached themselves to their cause) to express their angst and grief in losing a way of life to the Revolution. But in the summer of 1830 when Hugo began thinking through his novel, he would have seen the writing on the wall and understood that the political tide was shifting once again in France.¹⁰¹ The urban bourgeoisie had proven itself a powerful political force when its protest of the July Ordinances led to popular unrest, the July Revolution and eventually the abdication of Charles X.¹⁰² If Hugo was going to use nostalgia as a way to rally support for historical monuments in the second part of the century, he would have to wrestle it away from the landed nobility who Walter Scott personified with his Marquis. By cultivating nostalgia in Parisians for a lost Paris, Hugo could make nostalgic longing an urban and modern *mal* that would touch more than one layer of France's social fabric by generating a collective mourning for a disappearing cityscape.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ As Graham Robb and Vincent Laisney both point out, 1830 marks a turning point in Hugo's politics and aesthetics. 1829 is when he officially breaks with Nodier, and turns to Saint-Beuve as friend and mentor. When the young author of *Hernani* was asked to give a statement after *Les Trois Glorieuses*, he pens the poem "A la Jeune France." As Robb puts it, this poem "salutes the noble students who had helped to restore freedom, but he also herded them all together, under the paternal umbrella of his rhetoric, with the other heroes of recent French history: the students were the fledglings of the great Eagle, Napoleon, himself a child of the Revolution. Nothing of the past should be erased... The iconoclast of *Hernani*... was intent on preserving idols" (Robb 156). As Robb, Laisney and others have observed, it was really Saint-Beuve's introductory note, not the poem itself, that claims Hugo's support of the rioters. "The expression Saint-Beuve later applied to his note is significantly brutal: 'I deroyalized him'" (Robb 157).

¹⁰² Charles X instated the July Ordinances in an effort to keep the bourgeoisie, who had become more hostile to his government, out of politics and from running for office.

¹⁰³ One has to wonder if Hugo didn't foresee the Haussmannization of Paris, or at least the immanent rethinking and planning of Paris as a commercial space where the bourgeoisie, through mass transit and wider roads, could draw "shoppers out of their neighborhoods" and enable "new stores to attract and channel buyers" (Perrot 77). As Philippe Perrot points out in *Fashioning the Bourgeoisie*, by 1840, there was a "progressive disappearance of an earlier domestic or artisanal production system" (Perrot 77). Big department stores like La Belle Jardinière were beginning to corner the market in France's major cities. By 1870, almost 18,000 kilometers of railroad track had been laid down between France's provincial areas and Paris, so that merchandise ordered through catalogs could be sent to smaller cities from the capital. "Accumulation of wealth and strengthening of power were impossible without an increase in speed" (77). The tiny roads and crowded

Of course, what hides behind this urban nostalgia is a history written by and for nobles, clergy and monarchs. In the novel's opening chapter "La grand'salle" (which with "Notre-Dame" and "Paris à vol d'oiseau" is one of Hugo's most detailed and intimate descriptions of a lost *lieu*), the narrator explains exactly what's at stake when a historical monument is besieged or destroyed in war or political intrigue. Explaining how the destruction of the Vieux Palais was most likely linked to Henri IV's assassination and the trial of his murderer Ravailac, Hugo calls to mind a more contemporary regicide while mourning what was lost when the home of France's first kings was destroyed:

Presque tout a disparu. Qu'est devenu la chambre de la chancellerie où saint Louis *consomma son mariage* ? le jardin où il rendait la justice... Où est la chambre de l'empereur Sigismond ? celle de Charles IV ? celle de Jean sans Terre ? Où est l'escalier d'où Charles VI promulgua son édit de grace ? la dalle où Marcel égorgea, en présence du dauphin, Robert de Clermont et le maréchal de Champagne ? le guichet où furent lacérées les bulles de l'antipape Bénédict, et d'où repartirent ceux qui les avaient apportées, chapés et mitrés en dérision, et faisant amende honorable par tout Paris ? et la grand'salle, avec sa dorure, son azur, ses ogives, ses statues, ses piliers, son immense voûte toute déchiquetée de sculptures ? et la chambre dorée ? et le lion de pierre qui se tenait à la porte... et les belles portes ? et les beaux vitraux ? et les ferrures ciselées qui décourageaient Biscornette ? et les délicates menuiseries de Du Hancy ?... Qu'a fait le temps, qu'ont fait les hommes de ces merveilles ? Que nous a-t-on donné pour tout cela, pour toute cette histoire gauloise, pour tout cet art gothique ? les lourds cintres surbaissés de M. de Brosse, ce gauche architecte du portail Saint-Gervais, voilà pour l'art (*NDP* 41).

While literary critics have often paused on Hugo's grievances against the aesthetic mayhem of restoration, it is important to point out that restoration, in Hugo's rhetoric, is most often the unfortunate patch and repair made to the scars of time, or the more destructive contusions, fractures and holes left by revolution. Or as he puts it in the famous chapter "Notre-Dame,"

neighborhoods of medieval Paris, which characterized much of the city's landscape before the mid-nineteenth century, could not support the commercial bourgeoisie's thirst for increased capital.

Trois sortes de ravages défigurent aujourd’hui l’architecture gothique. Rides et verrues à l’épiderme, c’est l’œuvre du temps ; voies de fait, brutalités, contusions, fractures, c’est l’œuvre des révolutions depuis Luther jusqu’à Mirabeau. Mutilations, amputations, dislocation de la membrure, restaurations, c’est le travail grec, romain et barbare des professeurs selon Vitruve et Vignole... Aux siècles, aux révolutions qui dévastent du moins avec impartialité et grandeur, est **venue s’adjoindre** la nuée des architectes d’école... dégradant avec le discernement et le choix du mauvais gout, substituent les chicorées de Louis XV aux dentelles gothiques pour la plus grande gloire du Parthénon. C’est le coup de pied de l’âne au lion mourant. C’est le vieux chêne qui se couronne, et qui, pour comble, est piqué, mordu, déchiqueté par les chenilles » (134, 135).¹⁰⁴

Hugo’s choice of *venir s’adjoindre à* instead of *s’ajoinde à* to describe restoration to monuments is important. Where the latter means “to join,” the former means “to come on top of” and points to what he feels is scandalous about restoration – its attempt to hide a missing piece of history. If his Esmeralda-like reader was going to fully recapture a lost past, Hugo would need to draw her attention to the battle scars and holes that were reminders of a traumatic event, or proved the age and authenticity of the monument itself.

As Hugo points out, gothic architecture and art, the Romantic’s declared origin of French culture, has suffered the most, as one generation after another has waged war on its monuments and history. Taking his readers back to the fifteenth century, Hugo forces them to stand inside, on top of and in front of monuments and parts of Paris that no longer exist, or to revisit corners, alleyways and monuments that have been forgotten in the everyday or hidden behind the new.¹⁰⁵ He does this by providing detailed coordinates as to where hidden monuments are in the city, or where destroyed ones used to stand, and then begins filling in

¹⁰⁴ I bolded « venue s’adjoindre » here. It is also obvious in this quote that revolution is a much more destructive force than time. Whereas the latter leaves moles, warts and wrinkles, revolution leaves contusions, fractures, brutalities.

¹⁰⁵ In his description of the “charmante tourelle” of the *place de Grève* Hugo reminds the reader where it is “l’angle nord de la place” and that it is “déjà ensevelie sous l’ignoble badigeonnage qui empâte les vives arêtes de ses sculptures.” He also warns that it will soon disappear « peut-être, submergé par cette crue de maisons neuves qui dévore si rapidement toutes les vieilles façades de Paris » (85).

historical and topographic holes with a descriptive language that brings the past into the present *and* the present back to the past, creating temporal and scenic layers that when read on top of each other bring fifteenth-century Paris back to life in a present and modern setting. As early nineteenth-century Parisians walked through their city, they could carry Hugo's map and descriptions in their minds and begin to see the past come alive before them. Hugo's ambition was to turn the flâneur's walk through Paris into an exercise in rebuilding the past. And his hope was to turn the reader who shared Esmeralda's historical forgetfulness into the kind of "Français" he calls to in his 1823 poem *La bande noire* – a "fils pieux" whose respect for and commemoration of the past and its "restes" honors France's "gloire dérobée" and mourns "chaque pierre tombée."

A walk in the past, like a walk in the present, isn't without its charms. As Hugo puts it three pages into his novel : « S'il pouvait nous être donné à nous, hommes de 1830, de nous mêler en pensée à ces parisiens du quinzième siècle et d'entrer avec eux, tirillés, coudoyés, culbutés, dans cette immense salle du Palais, si étroite le 6 janvier 1482, le spectacle ne serait ni sans intérêt ni sans charme... » (*NDP* 39). Through the descriptive language he borrows from Scott, Hugo makes this possible for his reader. But in rubbing shoulders with their fifteenth-century counterparts, nineteenth-century Parisians would have found their lives and problems strangely familiar. Unlike Quentin, whose bravado and happy ending distance him from his downtrodden émigré descendant, the characters of *Notre-Dame de Paris* tell stories of lost childhoods, estrangement, transience and homelessness – problems which came to define nineteenth-century France and especially nineteenth-century Paris.

As Anthony Vidler has pointed out, nineteenth-century Parisians were doubly estranged from the past, as they dealt with both the ideological changes that followed the Revolution and modernity's rapid changes to their urban space. Neighborhoods were rearranged to make room for the growing population the Industrial Revolution brought to the city, while streets were widened to increase speed, and jobs were taken out of homes and placed inside impersonal and alienating factories. "If one were to search for a common and often explicit theme that underlay the different responses of writers and social critics to the big cities of the nineteenth century," Vidler states, "it would perhaps be found in the general concept of 'estrangement': the estrangement of the inhabitant of a city too rapidly changing and enlarging to comprehend in traditional terms" (Vidler 11).¹⁰⁶

As both "a psychological and a spatial condition" (Vidler 11) of the modern city, estrangement became both symptom and cause of homelessness, a growing problem that had haunted France's cities since the Revolution.¹⁰⁷ Although some tenement-like buildings did offer respite, as Suzanne Nash has pointed out, "they became the symbol of the hearthless home, often more threatening than the streets from which they were meant to provide shelter" (Nash 10). Because *Notre-Dame de Paris* is a unique exercise in layering the present and the past, it is not surprising to find many of nineteenth-century France's

¹⁰⁶ Vidler goes on to explain how in the last quarter of the century, a "spatial pathology" emerged from the metaphors already present in romantic, realist and naturalist novels. With the emergence of disciplines such as psychology, psychoanalysis, sociology and political geography "the space of the new city was now subjected to scrutiny as a possible cause of an increasingly common psychological alienation – the Vienna Circle was to call it 'de-realization' – of the metropolitan individual, and further, as an instrument favoring the potentially dangerous behavior of the crowd" (Vidler 11).

¹⁰⁷ As Suzanne Nash has pointed out, between 1801 and 1846, the population in Paris almost doubled from 547,756 inhabitants to 1,053,897. Because the city made little investment in public works or in the infrastructure necessary to accommodate such numbers, building "churches, mansions or even elegant glass-covered arcades to protect pedestrians from the mud of the streets" (Nash 10), those seeking refuge or work in the city had to live in temporary lodging houses, scant shanties or the street.

problems in Hugo's portrait of late fifteenth-century France. Estrangement is woven into stories of lost childhoods and the wandering homelessness of many of the novel's characters. The hearthless homes of the *Cour des Miracles*, the *trou aux rats* and Notre-Dame herself would have felt all too familiar to nineteenth-century Parisians, who no doubt recognized an uncanny reflection of their own city and themselves in Hugo's descriptions of the fifteenth century. With a cast of characters who are unlikely doppelgangers for his contemporaries, Hugo turned his novel into a common ground for both past and present, so that the historical rupture that separated both could be dealt with once and for all.

Hugo's Gypsies, History's Truands

Ever since Cervantes gave literature Preciosa, the Gypsy character has personified a timely distraction that inevitably derails the hero from the path that should tie together his past, present and future. *Notre-Dame de Paris* is no exception, and as soon as the novel's narrator diverts his eyes from monuments and historical figures, he too loses sight of the past, diverted by the *truands* and *trous* that surround the Gypsy girl Esmeralda. Reminiscent of Helen of Troy, Esmeralda is the pretty face that leads fifteenth-century Paris into war. She is also the only object or character in the novel that escapes translation, refusing through her untranslatability to contribute to the meaning of Hugo's historical project.

The poet Gringoire (an obvious ironic gesture to Hugo himself) is the first to notice that *la Esmeralda* is a word difficult to capture or pin down. As the spectators turn their attention away from his *mystère* to watch her dance in the street, he asks "Qu'est-ce que cela

veut dire, la Esmeralda?” (*NDP* 79).¹⁰⁸ The word had “un effet magique” (79) on the fickle *foule*, who upon hearing it, began climbing walls and scampering up ladders to get a glimpse of the girl’s tiny feet dance. « Mais je veux que le diable m’écorce si je comprends ce qu’ils veulent dire avec leur Esmeralda! Qu’est-ce que c’est ce mot-là d’abord ? » Joining the crowd and seeing her spectacle for himself, Gringoire finally settles, at least temporarily, stating : « c’est de l’égyptiaque ! » (80) – a word that is still a non-word, since it is the bizarre marriage of Egyptian and the French pronoun *que*, which can mean anything between “that” or “what.” Even in the mouth of a lover, *Esmeralda* is a name that doesn’t want to stick. Phoebus, whose name can be found in the dictionary, hesitates between Smelarda, Similar and Esmenarda, until Esmeralda herself tells him to call her Goton, a name which means either “servante” or “une femme de moeurs dissolues.”¹⁰⁹

As I point out in the first pages of this chapter, part of this confusion stems from the fact that Esmeralda doesn’t know or care to know who she really is. As the reader finds out from a curious narrator who eavesdrops on a conversation between three bourgeois women, Esmeralda is not the young girl’s real name; it is her Gypsy name, or the name her Gypsy kidnappers give her shortly after they steal her from her mother’s home. Both a disguise and a clue to the young woman’s real identity, “Esmeralda” unfortunately is undecipherable, since none of the novel’s characters are able to translate or understand its meaning, and none are curious enough to open the green, camphor-smelling amulet that hangs around her neck.

¹⁰⁸ Gringoire was chosen by Claude Frollo to write the *mystère* to celebrate the *jour des Rois*. As the narrator points out, the only thing special about January 6, 1482 was the fact that it was “double solennité, réunie depuis un temps immémorial, du jour des Rois et de la Fête des Fous” (37). Littré defines *mystère* : « au moyen âge, certaines pièces de théâtre où l’on représentait quelque’un des mystères de la religion. »

¹⁰⁹ Littré. Dictionnaire de la langue française.

Therefore, Esmeralda becomes whatever can be found between “Je ne sais pas,” “Je crois” and “Je n’en sais rien” (124) – an emptiness that Hugo plays with until the end of his story, taking every opportunity to emphasize Esmeralda’s untranslatable name.

To draw attention to this narrative hole, Hugo offers a continuous list of other names when describing the mysterious girl : fée, ange, salamandre, nymphe, déesse, bacchante, folle, reine, fauvette, égyptienne, bohémienne, etc. A semiotic black hole that swallows up language as it attempts to cover it up, Esmeralda also brings the reader closer to the “tour de Babel” (105) that is the *Cour des Miracles*, a space where the freedom to be multiple is exchanged for origins, history, and even language, which are all lost in this “nouveau monde” (107) whose only borders are the “difforme” and “fantastique” (107). According to the narrator, the *Cour des Miracles* should be thought of as an

immense vestiaire... où s’habillaient et se déshabillaient à cette époque tous les acteurs de cette comédie éternelle que le vol, la prostitution et le meurtre jouent sur le pavé de Paris... Les limites des races et des espèces semblaient s’effacer dans cette cité comme dans un pandémonium. Hommes, femmes, bêtes, âge, sexe, santé, maladie, tout semblait être en commun parmi ce peuple ; tout allait ensemble, mêlé, confondu, superposé ; chacun y participait de tout (*NDP* 106).

Not only does this new world turn freedom into pandemonium, but it blurs limits of meaning, making identities, and the stories and histories they’re hinged upon, if not insignificant, at least difficult to read. Like the fake soldier who « défaisait en sifflant les bandages de sa fausse blessure » (108), the truands and Gypsies of the *Cour des Miracles* are a scandalous reminder of what’s at stake with *restauration*, whose purpose is also to mix, confuse and superimpose aesthetic styles so as to hide some historical “plaie” (133).¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ “Plaie” or wound is how Hugo describes one of the “mille barbaries de tout genre” made to Notre-Dame, which lost a “petit clocher” in 1787 when “un architecte de bon goût... l’a amputé et a cru qu’il suffisait de masquer la plaie avec ce large emplâtre de plomb qui ressemble au couvercle d’une marmite » (133).

Esmeralda, of course, is the most tragic victim of the Gypsies and thieves who make their home in the Cour. Like the fake soldier or the armless beggar, she has been made over to be something she isn't – a dark child of the Gypsies, whose disguise is so convincing that her own mother fails to recognize her.¹¹¹ While the narrator compares Esmeralda's beauty to light, « une beauté si rare... il sembla qu'elle y répandait une sorte de lumière qui lui était propre... comme un flambeau qu'on venait d'apporter du grand jour dans l'ombre » (267), she is often referred to by the novel's characters as the dark one, or as Phoebus declares by the end of the novel: “Comment peut-on aimer autre chose qu'une blanche?” (357) The omniscient narrator, of course, knows something Esmeralda and the other characters do not – the story of how Agnès was turned into the Gypsy girl Esmeralda the same week a monstrous and nameless Gypsy child was baptized Quasimodo.

What complicates Esmeralda's predicament is that, along with the Gypsies' strange language and way of life, she has also espoused their unique view of time, which as Gringoire points out, exists outside the laws of both God and King, and is more like a dream (and a bad dream at that) which ignores the laws of past, present and future.¹¹² In fact, it is Esmeralda's nonchalance with regards to her past that ultimately leads to her death in the final pages of the novel.

The importance of respecting one's past is played out in the story Hugo writes around Esmeralda's mysterious green amulet. As Gringoire tells Claude Frollo, Esmeralda

¹¹¹ Paquette, who has locked herself in the Tower of Roland out of grief for her stolen child, often curses and threatens Esmeralda believing she is part of the group responsible for her misery.

¹¹² The Cour des Miracles is, at first, “une sorte de rêve horrible” (105) for Gringoire, who later compares it to a “cabaret” (108). Both are places where the mind escapes time, becomes lost in fantasy, and in the case of the cabaret, in drink.

has been told that the amulet possesses a special power that one day will guide the young woman to her parents, unless she gives into temptation and loses her virtue beforehand. This is why, Gringoire argues, Esmeralda will not consummate their marriage. But as the romantic plot that ties the heroine to four different men unravels, it is revealed that she is more than willing to sacrifice her virtue and the identity of her parents, as long as her lover is the handsome soldier whose shiny sword has won her affection. As she puts it the night of their thwarted tryst, « Je ne retrouverai pas mes parents... l'amulette perdra sa vertu. – Mais qu'importe ? qu'ai-je besoin de père et de mère à présent ? » (*NDP* 312). Ending this reflection with “à présent” reveals what has really seduced Esmeralda or tricked her into giving up her “vertu.” In letting herself be seduced by Phoebus, the glimmering temptation of the present, she has willingly betrayed her past.¹¹³ Even when Phoebus' own curiosity brings her attention back to the amulet, she confirms her decision: “Que m'importe l'amulette! Que m'importe ma mère ! c'est toi qui est ma mère, puisque je t'aime ! » (317).

The story of Esmeralda's mother comes to the reader almost halfway through the novel, when a visitor from Reims shares the infamous tale of Paquette la Chantefleurie with some Parisian friends. The fact that Paquette's story never made it out of Reims confirms Hugo's central argument – that spaces and places not only serve as backdrops for history but are custodians to its memory. Though Paris has never heard of Paquette, she will never be forgotten in Reims where her story is written upon the *pavé* of the rue de Folle-Peine, etched upon the Porte de Braine and whispered by the waters of La Vesle, where most of Reims

¹¹³ Hugo mocks the reader looking for a romantic dénouement in his novel. The love scene between Pheobus and Esmeralda is laughable until it turns tragic. Esmeralda: “Il y a longtemps que je rêve d'un officier qui me sauve la vie. C'était de vous que je rêvais avant de vous connaître, mon Phoebus. Mon rêve avait une belle livrée comme vous, une grande mine, une épée. Vous vous appelez Phoebus, c'est un beau nom. J'aime votre nom, j'aime votre épée. Tirez donc votre épée, Phoebus, que je la voie » (313).

believes Paquette took her own life. Never to be forgotten, Paquette's story is why Mahiette, "la bonne bourgeoise" from Reims, runs away in fear when she hears "la petite Smeralda" is an "égyptienne" (*NDP* 231).

Paquette's story is disturbing, as it tells the heart wrenching tale of how a mother loses her only child to Gypsy kidnappers and murderers.¹¹⁴ Once "une jolie fille" (232), Paquette had turned to prostitution, suffering all of its abuses, in order to support herself and her penniless mother. It wasn't until "le bon Dieu eut donc pitié d'elle," making her the mother of a beautiful "petite fille" (234) that her fortune began to change. Recognizing that the child was her second chance, Paquette called her daughter Agnès, a name that would remind her how this little lamb was also her savior. As Mahiette points out, Agnès was "le nom de l'enfant, nom de baptême, car de nom de famille, il y a longtemps que la Chantefleurie n'en avait plus" (234), so although a savoir and a gift from God, Agnès was also a bastard, the fatherless child of a prostitute.

If Gypsies hadn't entered their story, Agnès and her mother may have lived happily ever after in their apartment on *rue de Folle-Peine*. But as Mahiette explains to her Parisian friends, Paquette, like the rest of Reims, willingly opened her door to the Gypsies.

Ils venaient à Reims dire la bonne aventure... Vous pensez bien qu'il n'en fallut pas davantage pour qu'on leur interdît l'entrée de la ville. Alors toute la bande campa de bonne grâce près de la Porte de Braine, sur cette butte où il y a un moulin, à côté des trous des anciennes crayères. Et ce fut dans Reims à qui les irait voir. Ils vous regardaient dans la main et vous disaient des prophéties merveilleuses... Les gens sages disaient aux fous : N'y allez pas, et y allaient de leur côté en cachette. C'était donc un emportement (235).

¹¹⁴ Playing with legends of cannibalistic Gypsies, Hugo's story states that most of Reims believes that Agnès was eaten by the Gypsies. « Le lendemain, à deux lieues de Reims... on trouva les restes d'un grand feu, quelques rubans qui avaient appartenu à l'enfant de Paquette, des gouttes de sang, et des crottins de bouc... On ne douta plus que les égyptiens n'eussent fait le sabbat dans cette bruyère, et qu'il n'eussent dévoré l'enfant en compagnie de Belzébuth » (238).

Parts of Hugo's description of the Gypsies in "Histoire d'une Galette au levain de maïs" are taken verbatim from *Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris*, which Walter Scott quotes at length in a note supplementing *Quentin Durward* titled "Gipsies or Bohemians." Like most Gypsies in Europe, the fictional Gypsies that come to Reims are forced to camp on the edges of town, near one of the city's gateways. And like the fifteenth-century Parisians described by the *Journal d'un Bourgeois de Paris*, the population of Reims found themselves pushed by a bizarre impulse to visit the strangers, who promised to give them a glance into the future.

Hugo is careful to place Paquette's Gypsies "sur cette butte où il y a un moulin, à coté des trous des anciennes crayères" (*NDP* 235). Situating the fortune tellers next to some of France's most important "anciennes crayères" (235), in a novel whose primary purpose is the preservation of historic monuments, was a clever way for Hugo to illustrate what's at stake when false prophecies and seductive promises distract from, or worse, disrupt history's foundation. As Hugo and many of his readers would have known, most of France's underground quarries were closed shortly after the Revolution, since republican ideology no longer saw a need for monuments, or their repair.¹¹⁵

But crayères are not the only holes in Mahiette's story of Reims. For if Agnès has a *prénom* but no *nom*, it's because she is the lost lamb of the *Cité des rois*, or the *Cité des*

¹¹⁵ Amarante Puget describes the *crayères* of Reims in her article « Les plus belles crayères de Saint-Nicaise » for *La Revue du vin de France* (May 2011). As she explains it, « plus de 300 crayères (anciennes carrières de pierre à bâtir) se nichent sous la colline Saint-Nicaise » in Reims (Puget 66). More than 20 meters below the surface, these quarries were "creusés dès l'époque gallo-romaine, au IIIe siècle" and were used "jusqu'à la Révolution" (66). Today, they serve as caves for some of the most distinguished vineyards in the Champagne region and are part of the "trios piliers de la candidature champenoise pour l'inscription au patrimoine mondial de l'humanité par l'Unesco" (66).

Sacres where France's princes, since the eleventh century, had gone for their official coronation. In 1830, only a year before Hugo penned *Notre-Dame de Paris*, Louis-Philippe decided to end this tradition, as he believed it a painful reminder of France's tumultuous relationship with the monarchy and the *droit divin* that had long legitimized France's kings through their fathers and God, the Father. Hugo, more than any other young romantic writer, would have felt a pang of nostalgia for what had been lost in Reims in 1830, since only five years before, he had proudly assumed the duties of the king's appointed poet, becoming the official spokesman for the sacred coronation of Charles X. Although Hugo was on his way to becoming a liberal in 1831, his Parisian novel's detour through Reims reveals a persistent doubt that monuments, or the kind of harmonious beauty that Esmeralda represents, can survive within a space without fathers, kings and God.¹¹⁶

If the holes in Reims are Oedipal, what's uncovered when Mahiette's story makes its way to Paris is maternal. Tucked away inside the *Trou aux rats* is the mother Mahiette and the rest of Reims believes is dead.¹¹⁷ Again, pointing to what is missing from Paquette's story, Hugo provides his reader with the history of the *Trou aux rats*, originally the Tour-Roland.

Cette cellule était célèbre dans Paris depuis près de trois siècles que madame Rolande de la Tour-Roland, en deuil de son père mort à la croisade, l'avait fait creuser dans la muraille de sa propre maison pour s'y enfermer à jamais, ne gardant de son palais que ce logis... La désolée demoiselle avait en effet attendu vingt ans la mort dans cette tombe anticipée, priant nuit et jour pour l'âme de son père (*NDP* 225).

¹¹⁶ Hugo's liberal leanings were brand new, as he had just come under the tutelage of Saint-Beuve. See my earlier note on his poem "La Jeune France".

¹¹⁷ "Noyée! reprit Mahiette, et qui eût dit au bon père Guybertaut quand il passait sous le pont de Tinqueux au fil de l'eau, en chantant dans sa barque, qu'un jour sa chère petite Paquette passerait aussi sous ce pont-là, mais sans chanson et sans bateau ? » (239).

While Paquette is mourning her child, not her father, the fact that Hugo places her in a monument built in honor of a dead father reminds the reader what went wrong in Paquette la Chantefleurie's story. Although "elle était de famille" (*NDP* 232), the young woman, the narrator suggests, lost her way when her father died leaving her with a mother who could teach her little besides the useless arts of "doreloterie" and "bimbeloterie." The fact that Paquette's father was the famous medieval musician Guybertaut, "qui avait joué devant le roi Charles VII, à son sacre" (232), reveals again what Hugo believes is lost when a father's poetry is replaced with a mother's bobbles and empty souvenirs.

As the origin of the novel's plot, Paquette's story is meant to illustrate how lost fathers eventually lead to a semiotic crisis, since without them, narrative fails to properly represent and sometimes disappears. Hugo allegorizes this semiotic loss, of course, through the crumbling and vanishing monuments that haunt his novel. But he also plays it out in the semiotic crisis caused by the thieving and kidnapping Gypsies and the mothers who become their unwilling accomplices. As Mahiette's story suggests, Paquette is partially to blame if Gypsies took her daughter. Not only did she take Agnès to see the *Égyptiennes*, allowing them to "admirer l'enfant, de la caresser, de la baiser avec leurs bouches noires, et de s'émerveiller sur sa petite main" (236) but she « profita d'un moment où l'enfant dormait... laissa tout doucement la porte entr'ouverte, et courut raconter à une voisine... qu'il viendrait un jour où sa fille Agnès serait servie à table par le roi d'Angleterre et l'archiduc d'Ethiopie" (236, 237). Foolishly celebrating the future the Gypsy women sell her, Paquette leaves her door "entr'ouverte" or cracked, creating what will become a much larger *brèche* in Hugo's historical narrative.

The Gypsies' calling card, Quasimodo, is a sign of what's to come in this novel of missing fathers and hapless mothers. Left by the Gypsies in exchange for Agnès, the child is described by Mahiette as "un monstrueux enfant de quelque égyptienne donnée au diable" who was "hideux, boiteux, borgne, contrefait" and "parlait une langue qui n'était point une langue humaine" (*NDP* 237). Known for his ability to decipher even the most hermetic of heavenly and earthly texts, Claude Frolo names the disfigured Gypsy child Quasimodo.¹¹⁸ Feigning ignorance as to the meaning of this name, the narrator asks the reader to come to his own conclusions, stating, « soit qu'il voulût marquer par là le jour où il l'avait trouvé, soit qu'il voulût caractériser par ce nom à quel point la pauvre petite créature était incomplète et à peine ébauchée. En effet, Quasimodo, borgne, bossu, cagneux, n'était guère qu'un à peu près » (170). As a clue, "à peu près" can be misleading since it is not a translation but a synonym for the French word *quasi*. If one translates the Latin *quāsī -mōdō* into French, the Gypsy boy's name literally means *comme récemment* or *comme maintenant*.¹¹⁹ In a novel obsessed with the present's relationship with the past, Quasimodo should be read as Hugo's allegory for *maintenant* – for an orphaned and disfigured nineteenth century, which like Quasimodo, many felt was "un milieu particulier" in which "les idées qui le traversaient en sortaient toutes tordues. La réflexion... était nécessairement divergente et déviée" (173). Nineteenth-century French readers would have recognized their own predicament in Quasimodo – a character whose heart is in the right place, but whose

¹¹⁸ Hugo's narrator describes Quasimodo as if he were an aesthetic object to read, often using the same language he uses to describe Notre-Dame to describe « cette organisation mal faite... cette créature opaque » whose « recoins obscurs... culs-de-sac absurdes » (173) are quite similar to the cathedral. "Non seulement son corps semblait s'être façonné selon la cathédrale, mais encore son esprit" (172).

¹¹⁹ Louis Quicherat's *Thesaurus Poeticus Linguae Latinae* (edited by Emile Chatelain) is the dictionary I used for most of the Latin translations in this chapter. The English definition given by Merriam Webster for the Latin *quasimodo* is "as if just now."

alienation leads him to blindly limp from one catastrophe into another as meaning fades on (his) deaf ears.

While the Gypsies are responsible for most of the mayhem that disrupts the progression of story, purposely or foolishly erasing or interrupting memory, Hugo makes it clear that the true impediment to the progression of narrative, historical or other, is the absence of fathers. Substitutes in the form of mothers or adopted fathers are unable to provide the paternal authority necessary to assure that homes are safe and that children, “la moelle de nos os” (*NDP* 238), are put on the proper path toward the future. While Claude Frollo fails as a father first to his brother Jehan and then to his adopted son Quasimodo, Paquette is unable to recognize that Esmeralda is Agnès, and therefore threatens to kill and eat the *Egyptienne* who is really her daughter.¹²⁰

When Paquette finally does recognize Agnès, she fails to reveal the very story that her daughter needs to survive her present predicament and to have a future. Falling into the same trap that led to her daughter’s kidnapping in the first place, Paquette fails to see the importance of the past in her family story. Reunited with Agnès, she can only fantasize about their future together, failing to reveal her own life’s lesson to her daughter, who is about to fall into a similar trap. Like her mother, Esmeralda has been seduced by the illusion of a bright and shiny future (Phoebus), who she believes is more important than her recently discovered past (her mother). The sad conclusion of Paquette’s failure to speak the past, or

¹²⁰ Hugo also turns Quasimodo into a fatal mother figure in the conclusion of the novel when he describes his horror in seeing Esmeralda hang from la Grève: “il se traîna sur les genoux hors de la cellule et s’accroupit en face de la porte, dans une attitude d’étonnement. Il resta ainsi plus d’une heure sans faire un mouvement, l’œil fixé sur la cellule déserte, plus sombre et plus pensif qu’une mère assise entre un berceau vide et un cercueil plein” (501). Like Paquette, Quasimodo’s efforts to save Esmeralda are misdirected and lead her closer to the grave, since he destroys Clopin and the other truands who were trying to save her.

to tell her daughter how she too was deceived by false promises of the future, is the hangman. The reader is left wondering as Esmeralda's body dangles lifeless in the Grève, if the conclusion would have been different if Paquette shared her "histoire" (NDP 497) with her daughter instead of saving it for "messieurs les sergents" who carry Esmeralda away.¹²¹ This question lingers in the final chapters of the novel and is Hugo's way of illustrating how a mother's incapacity to communicate the past is more dangerous than the kidnapping Gypsies.

Showing how mothers, and therefore women, fail to communicate the past would have been an important step in his transformation and reformation of a genre that had long been "female-oriented" (Samuels 153). In *The Spectacular Past. Popular History and the Novel in Nineteenth-Century France*, Maurice Samuels reminds twenty-first century readers of what is suppressed and subjugated when Walter Scott and Victor Hugo are referred to as the fathers of a genre – the women writers who originally made the historical novel popular in France. As Samuels puts it, "when Scott's novels came to France in the years following Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo, they did not arrive on virgin shores" (153). Since the seventeenth century, French women had used the historical novel as a forum from which they could explore inner psychology and matters of the heart, while using history and its characters "as a means of effecting moral change in contemporary society" (158). Historical novels were also a way, as Faith Beasley observes, for French women to reinsert themselves

¹²¹ In a final attempt to save Esmeralda, Paquette pleads, "messieurs les sergents, un mot! C'est une chose qu'il faut que je vous dise. C'est ma fille, voyez-vous? ma chère petite fille que j'avais perdue! Ecoutez. C'est une histoire... vous me laisserez mon enfant, quand vous saurez!" (497). Unfortunately, time has run out and Paquette's *histoire* only comes out in bits and pieces: "A Reims! La Chantefleurie! rue Folle-Peine! Vous avez connu cela peut-être" (497). Hugo again reminds the reader at how poorly history is communicated in the mouth of a mother.

into the annals and records men had excluded them from since enforcing Salic law. “By focusing on the secret history of behind-the-scenes romance and rivalry in which women played a leading role, these writers offered a corrective to the official male-authored historiography... that focused on the king and his battles” (Samuels 154).

In Hugo’s historical novel, both Paquette and Esmeralda are not only incapable of speaking the past, but become victims to their impetuous flight toward the Gypsy’s *bonne aventure* – futures that are nothing more than empty words. In fact, the only woman in Hugo’s story that is capable of communicating the full meaning of the past, present and future is his beloved cathedral, Notre-Dame. Along with the novel’s other monuments, she acts as an important bridge in time, offering messages to those who take the time to carefully read her. Juxtaposing the enduring stories of monuments to a mother’s incapacity to fully tell a story, Hugo suggests that monuments, whose meaning is fixed and held tight by stone and mortar, are the only messengers persistent enough to carry meaning forward to the future. It is no accident that Hugo’s most monumental chapter directly follows Esmeralda’s failed honeymoon night, when her nonchalance regarding the past almost leads Hugo’s story to collapse. Although the old lady has been degraded and mutilated by time, war and man, she still tells an 800-year-old story of France, “à partir de Childebert jusqu’à Philippe Auguste” (*NDP* 132).¹²²

Hugo’s monuments, while reminders of what romantics believed to be France’s more glorious past, also become prophets of the future. Unlike the Gypsies, whose *bonne aventure*

¹²² In the paragraph describing these statues, Hugo points out that “aujourd’hui” they are missing, an obvious iconoclasm of the Revolution.

leads characters astray, the futures scribbled on the inside and outside of monuments, Hugo claims, offer insightful messages about the future, if read in time.

While critics often pause before ANANKE, the fictional inscription inside Notre-Dame that was supposedly Hugo's inspiration for his novel, other monuments in the novel are also meant to be read as messengers of the past and harbingers of the future. In fact, ANANKE's message of *fatalité* is echoed in the less-studied inscription on the Tour-Roland – the Latin “TU, ORA” which is scribbled above the window of “cette horrible cellule, sorte d’anneau intermédiaire de la maison et de la tombe, du cimetière et de la cité” (*NDP* 226). As a waiting space between a beginning and an end, the Tour-Roland is, like Notre-Dame, a space which bridges past, present and future. Hugo laments the fact that his fictional Parisians, “dont le bon sens ne voit pas tant de finesse dans les choses” (228), don't take its message seriously, referring to the Tour as the *Trou aux rats*, bastardizing its Latin inscription. Of course, the modern reader would recognize “TU ORA” as a playful homonym for “tu auras,” or “you will have,” which like ANANKE is Hugo's way of provoking his contemporaries into reading the past as a timely lesson for the present and future.¹²³

Hugo's monumental scribbling becomes more political as he invites the reader to peek through the windows of the Bastille, which in *Notre-Dame de Paris* is both Louis XI's Paris home and the nineteenth century's most symbolic fortress. Whereas Walter Scott's

¹²³ The translation of the Latin TU, ORA, also reveals what really separates Esmeralda from her mother. TU is the second person singular, while ORA, which is separated from TU by a comma, can mean a shore, a coast, a border, an edge, a limit, a boundary. As the only space in the city Esmeralda dares not enter, the TU,ORA or *Trou aux rats* represents the divide western culture imposes, by way of the father, between women and their mothers. The fact that Esmeralda dies shortly after she is reunited with her mother, proves how dangerous it can be to challenge this taboo.

Louis XI is a monarch who relies on Gypsies and astrologers to see into the future, Hugo gives Louis the foresight to predict and plan for popular revolution. Once again bridging the past and the present, Hugo turns the fifteenth-century monarch into the uncanny and unlikely herald of republican ideology and revolution. The “lumière... la chandelle” (*NDP* 439) whose soul animates the Bastille (much like Quasimodo breathes life into Notre-Dame), Louis XI is meant to remind the nineteenth-century reader that the theater of present and future events was scripted and imagined in the past. As Louis XI dreams of ridding his kingdom of a parasitic nobility, he calls out “sauvez le peuple et tuez les seigneurs!” (443), a timely prediction of what was to come with the nineteenth century.

Further opening a narrative rip in time, Hugo’s anachronistic dialogue for Louis XI refers to France as “cette république” (464), a slip that foreshadows the fate of Louis XVI.¹²⁴ Like his poor descendant, Louis XI must also be told that what he believes to be a revolt against the city’s bailiff is really a revolution or attack against him.¹²⁵ But because Louis XI has his eyes wide open to the past, present and future, he knows what must be done for the time being. The misguided revolution that the Gypsies and thieves of the Cour des Miracles foolishly organize to free Esmeralda from her safe house must be squashed, and Esmeralda must be sacrificed to maintain the integrity of this historical narrative.

As Hugo re-establishes order in the final pages of *Notre-Dame de Paris*, those who tried to subvert time, by forgetting the past or by instigating popular revolution four

¹²⁴ Besides the Gypsies of Mahiette’s story, Louis XI is the only fortune teller in Hugo’s novel. Unlike the Gypsies of the Cour des Miracles, who cannot see the past, present or future clearly, Louis accurately predicts the future to come. “Oh! Je te brûlerais si tu savais ce qu’il y a dans ma tête!” (453).

¹²⁵ Hugo’s anachronistic Louis XI foreshadows the much-cited conversation between Louis XIV and La Rochefoucauld, in which the king asks if the storming of the Bastille is a revolt and Rochefoucauld responds telling him “ce n’est pas une révolte, c’est une révolution.”

centuries too soon, lay dead at the feet of Notre-Dame. It is also through detailed historical descriptions of medieval monuments that Hugo is able to breach the hole that the Gypsies originally opened, anchoring language to a *lieu* and a *siècle* by way of a new literary genre where monuments become narrative's reliable messengers of past, present and future.

Turning Esmeralda's mother into the Gypsy's accomplice, Hugo also wrestles a genre away from the French women who used historical novels to insert forgotten mothers, daughters, sisters and wives into the stories of kings. And in taking the historical novel away from French women, Hugo further reinforces his own paternal authority in a genre that had a long tradition of circumventing it.

Upon the graves of Gypsies and mothers, Hugo succeeded in creating a work that made nostalgia an effective political tool, as it translated part of France's history into a new kind of poetry. Soon after Hugo published the second edition of *Notre-Dame de Paris* in 1832, François Guizot began organizing efforts to restore the old cathedral to her former glory. As Minister of Instruction, Guizot also asked Hugo for help in a restoration campaign, which many of his contemporaries believed was the political progression of Louis-Philippe's Versailles museum, an aesthetic attempt to unite present and past so as "to promote loyalty to the state and to the regime" (Samuels 86).

Hugo was appointed to the *Comité historique des lettres, philosophie, sciences et arts* shortly after he published "Guerre aux démolisseurs" in 1832. His role was to convince local governments of the importance of saving historical monuments, so that their

architecture and stories would assure the perpetuation of a “*mémoire nationale*.”¹²⁶ It was also understood that Hugo would continue to pen the kind of passionate plea he wrote for Notre-Dame. Guizot knew that if French history and its monuments were to survive, it would be thanks to romantic writers like Nodier and Hugo, whose stories were helping France reconnect with its estranged past.

While the ideological war was left to Hugo, Guizot put the restoration of Notre-Dame in the hands of another *littéraire*, Prosper Mérimée, who had been France’s Inspector of Historical Monuments since 1834. Although one of French Romanticism’s most promising talents, Mérimée’s job was “the ‘scientific’ classification and comparison of monuments” and whose “method was ‘cold’ and impersonal” (Murphy 43) but necessary, if France’s monuments were to be saved from more than 40 years of forgetting. As I will explain in the next chapter, it is Mérimée’s unique position as Inspector of Historical Monuments that made his relationship to history “scientific,” “cold” and “impersonal,” and cause him to have an altogether different opinion of nostalgia as a political and aesthetic force. For Mérimée, the Gypsy and nostalgia were partners in crime, as both were guilty of intentional forgetting.

¹²⁶ Marie-Anne Sire’s book *La France du Patrimoine. Les choix de la mémoire* is an excellent resource on the history of Guizot’s efforts to create a national *patrimoine*. Also see Kevin Murphy’s *Memory and Modernity. Viollet-le-Duc at Vézelay*, which I quote here.

Chapter Three

The Danger in Claiming Carmen as Homeland: Prosper Mérimée's Warning to France

In *The Imp of the Perverse*, Edgar Allan Poe reminds us how common it is to have “some ordinary song, or some unimpressive snatches from an opera” continuously “ringing in our ears, or rather in our memories.” (Poe 274). For Poe, this tune torments and harasses as it haunts and possesses the mind it has made its home. In the twentieth century, psychologists have dubbed these haunting tunes “earworms” in their research that attempts to understand why some songs act as memory aids, while others become such a haunting distraction that they cause people to momentarily forget or disconnect from the present.¹²⁷ Musicians, of course, have long been aware of music's relationship with memory and understand that musical possession has various effects on our ability to remember or to forget. And while some songs are written to possess and be possessed, others evade control and custody by making their lyrics or their music difficult to grasp and hold onto.¹²⁸

Then there are songs that simply drown out others, as their tune is more intoxicating, and their lyrics too catchy to forget. The habanera, “L'amour est un oiseau rebelle,” from Bizet's opera *Carmen* is one such song. Its cyclical Afro-Cuban rhythm and simple yet seductive lyrics have made the Gypsy's aria the opera's signature piece – the song that pops

¹²⁷ Vicky Williamson made “earworms” a catchphrase after her TED talk on music and memory caught the media's attention. (Her NPR interview can be found at: <http://www.npr.org/2012/03/12/148460545/why-that-song-gets-stuck-in-your-head>) Her research originated in how, when and why music is a distraction for drivers. Her work includes a database of thousands of songs that people have reported as their personal earworms.

¹²⁸ An example would be what's now referred to as postmodern music. Acid Jazz is one example of a postmodern genre, as the mixes (often turned by a DJ) break down the structure and unity that makes songs easy to capture and repeat. See Judy Lochhead's edited collection, *Postmodern Music/Postmodern Thought*.

into mind when *Carmen* comes into a conversation. This was certainly Bizet's intent and bears witness to his talent as a composer, since his ode to freedom has overshadowed Prosper Mérimée's original novella in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.¹²⁹

When Bizet staged his operatic rendition of *Carmen* in 1875, Mérimée had been dead five years, and it had been 30 years since his novella first appeared in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. To those who respected Mérimée's work as *Inspecteur des monuments historiques*, Bizet's *Carmen* must have seemed a strange homage to a man whose home, most of his correspondence and unpublished historical papers were incinerated four years earlier during the 1871 Commune fires. The opera's metaphors of revolt and rebellion were not politics Mérimée supported at the time of his death in 1870. In fact, the Communards' attempt to pry Paris away from its past, by setting fire to the buildings which housed France's most important historical documents and artifacts, opposed the spirit of Mérimée's work as a historian – a career for which he sacrificed his health and a literary career so as to protect the very monuments and history the Communards waged war against.¹³⁰

Today, Bizet's *Carmen* is often confused or conflated with Mérimée's less popular novella even though Bizet and his librettists made significant changes to the original story.

¹²⁹ As Phil Powerie has pointed out in *Carmen on Film. A Cultural History*, more than 80 film versions of *Carmen* have been made over the past two centuries, many of which target American audiences and most of which are an adaptation of Bizet's *Carmen* and not the original novella.

¹³⁰ In an attempt to wrestle Paris away from a history written for and by kings, Communards set fire to many of the buildings and urban spaces they believed represented that history and helped it maintain a hold on France's imagination. Mérimée's home was one of many historic sites that either burned to the ground in 1871 or whose historic documents were lost to fire. The Hôtel de Ville, which housed the Bibliothèque historique de la ville de Paris (which contained more than 300 years of archives, birth certificates and marriage licenses) was targeted along with the Palais de Justice, the Palais des Tuileries, the Bibliothèque du Louvre et de l' Arsenal. In an attempt to recover these lost sites of memory, the Third Republic began its own politics of nostalgia. One such effort is the *Carnet de famille*. Pierre Nora's *Lieux de Mémoire* offers an interesting study of the *carnet* and its role in recovering what was lost during the Commune fires of 1871.

Some of these changes can be attributed to the difficulty in turning a sixty-page novella into a three-hour musical. However, as some critics have pointed out in recent years, Bizet and his librettists, Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy, had their own vision for *Carmen* – one that communicated specific social and political convulsions of the 1870s.¹³¹ Furthermore, their decision to cut the archeologist-narrator from the story cannot be read as the consequence of a time constraint, especially since their creation of an altogether new character, Micaëla, betrays their reasons for discarding the historian from the rewrite.

The archeologist, of course, was Mérimée’s way of inserting his own voice in the novella, and a means of maintaining narrative control over the “petite histoire” he offers his reader in exchange for the bigger *histoire* of the Battle of Munda.¹³² Because there are fifteen years between the narrator and the story he tells, the archeologist’s vantage point (from the present) give him omniscience and a unilateral authority over the people and places he narrates. Erasing the historian from his own story, Bizet and his librettists left an authoritative hole in their story, which they allow a new version of *Carmen* to fill. Sawing Mérimée’s original Gypsy character in half, Bizet and his librettists replace her with two women: a more seductive and less violent *Carmen*, and Micaëla, the hometown sweetheart who assumes the personality *Carmen* first disguises herself in to seduce her homesick lover.

¹³¹ Jean Sentaurens has done excellent work on the genesis and persistence of this conflation between Mérimée’s *Carmen* and Bizet’s *Carmen*. Also see Phil Powerie’s Introduction to *Carmen on Film*, already cited in this work. I believe this conflation comes from a desire to stitch both *Carmen* figures into the same “myth,” which is dangerous since the works were written at two very different times in France’s history.

¹³² I will refer to the narrator as the “archeologist” because he refers to himself as such, and to his “recherches archéologiques” (947). Mérimée considered himself an archeologist of sorts, as he had participated in numerous *fouilles* while Inspector. As Alain Schnapp has pointed out in *Faire de l’histoire* (edited by Jacques Le Goff and Pierre Nora), the archeologist has a different relationship to history than the text-based historian. The archeologist literally digs up the past, looking for “les témoignages résiduels d’une culture”(Schnapp 4) through artifacts instead of texts. Mérimée’s archeologist looks at texts (which is why he visits the Dominicans) and looks for artifacts (which is how he bumps into Don José) in his investigation.

In the original novella, Carmen was one of four or five hundred *demoiselles* working in Seville's cigar factory, all of whom were happy to trade their virtue in exchange for "une mantilla de taffetas" (*Pléiade* 957).¹³³ Wallowing in his homesickness, the hero claims he never took notice of the excessive temptation around him, his mind and heart too preoccupied with dreams of his hometown and with the young Basque girls whose "jupes bleues et... nattes tombant sur les épaules" (957) symbolize the innocence he lost when he had to flee Navarre. Unlike the Carmen character of Bizet's opera and its various translations, Mérimée's Carmen is a "minois enjôleur" (959), a pretty but not beautiful face, whose teasing tongue first piques the soldier's pride and then cleverly manipulates his homesickness.¹³⁴ Mérimée's Carmen also doesn't have to resort to sex to gain her freedom, instead twisting her tongue in a way that manipulates Don José's nostalgic sensibility. Speaking in his local dialect, Carmen knits together a story that not only appeals to the hero's *mal du pays*, but tricks him into thinking that her act of violence is patriotic.

Je travaillais à la manufacture pour gagner de quoi retourner en Navarre, près de ma pauvre mère qui n'a que moi pour soutien... Ah ! si j'étais au pays, devant la montagne blanche ! On m'a insultée parce que je ne suis pas de ce pays de filous... et ces gueuses se sont mises toutes contre moi, parce que je leur ai dit que tous leurs *jacques* de Séville, avec leurs couteaux, ne feraient pas peur à un gars de chez nous avec son béret bleu et son *maquila*. Camarade, mon ami, ne ferez-vous rien pour une payse ? (960)

¹³³ « Il y a peu de ces demoiselles qui refusent une mantille de taffetas, et les amateurs, à cette pêche-là, n'ont qu'à se baisser pour prendre le poisson » (957). I use Jean Maillon and Pierre Salomon's *Pléiade* edition of Mérimée's novels and short stories. *Théâtre de Clara Gazul. Romans et nouvelles*.

¹³⁴ A minois was used to refer to "une jeune personne plus jolie que belle" (*Littré*).

According to *Littré*, “une payse” is a « catachrèse » or trope used « populairement » to designate « celui qui est du même pays, du même canton. »¹³⁵ By appropriating a Basque persona for her story and speaking through nostalgia, Carmen transforms what had been the hero’s greatest strength into a fatal weakness, while turning herself into a dangerous metaphor for the homeland the young man will die or kill for. Or as he puts it,

Elle mentait, monsieur, elle a toujours menti... mais quand elle parlait, je la croyais : c’était plus fort que moi. Elle estropiait le basque, et je la crus Navarraise ; ses yeux seuls et sa bouche et son teint la disaient bohémienne. J’étais fou, je ne faisais plus attention à rien. Je pensais que, si des Espagnols s’étaient avisés de mal parler du pays, je leur aurais coupé la figure, tout comme elle venait de faire à sa camarade. Bref, j’étais comme un homme ivre (961).

It’s important to point out here that Carmen’s most seductive and dangerous weapon is her tongue, which not only has the capacity to speak Basque but deploys the hero’s language in a way that convinces her victim that he should help her escape imprisonment. As Don José points out while recounting his first encounter with Carmen, the Gypsy’s tongue not only manipulates but silences the voices that could oppose her. « D’abord elle ne me plut pas, et je repris mon ouvrage; mais elle, suivant l’usage des femmes et des chats qui ne viennent pas quand on les appelle et qui viennent quand on ne les appelle pas, s’arrêta devant moi et m’adressa la parole » (957). It is Carmen’s speech act, *sa parole*, that initially forces the hero to take notice of her, and it is her public teasing of him that leaves the soldier

¹³⁵ The example *Littré* gives is from Voltaire’s *Le pauvre diable*, « Mon cher pays, secourez-moi, lui-dis-je. » Voltaire, like Mérimée, also employs the word in a cry for help. Because I could only find the definition for catachrèse in *Littré*, I will provide it here : « Trope par lequel un mot détourné de son sens propre est accepté dans le langage commun pour signifier une autre chose qui a quelque analogie avec l’objet qu’il exprimait d’abord ; par exemple, une langue, parce que la langue est le principal organe de la parole articulée ; une glace, grand miroir, parce qu’elle est plane et luisante comme la glace d’un bassin ; une feuille de papier, parce qu’elle est plate et mince comme une feuille d’arbre. C’est aussi par catachrèse qu’on dit : ferré d’argent ; aller à cheval sur un bâton. »

speechless, powerless and dumbstruck before the Gypsy. “Je ne pouvais trouver rien à lui répondre” (958).¹³⁶

As explained in Chapter 1, late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century linguistic studies of Romani are what led to a renewed interest in Europe’s familiar stranger. In his much-cited study, *Historischer Versuch über die Zigeuner*, Heinrich Grellmann had finally answered the question, “Where are they from?” Claiming the Gypsy spoke a language similar to those spoken in Hindustan, Grellmann had given the nomadic Gypsy a point of origin, which would confirm their outsider status by rooting them to Asia and not to Europe. At the same time, Grellmann questioned the Gypsy’s use of European languages, which were used to evade national borders and pass through doors that otherwise remained closed to them. One of the central arguments of the German linguist’s text was that the Gypsy’s most useful science was their capacity to speak numerous languages, while their most dangerous art was keeping their own language a much-guarded secret.¹³⁷

An argument Mérimée makes in the fourth chapter of *Carmen*, which he adds in 1847, is along these same lines and expounds upon what Mérimée is most preoccupied with in the original three chapters of his novella – the Gypsy’s ability to use language as a disguise or as a tool to seduce and then plunder. Because Carmen is not a typical Gypsy, often traveling alone instead of with other Gypsies, she rarely uses Romani, spouting off a

¹³⁶ Again, I want to insist on the fact that Mérimée’s Carmen never promises Don José sex in exchange for her freedom. Bizet’s Carmen, on the other hand, who never pretends to be anything other than “bohémienne,” must seduce the soldier with something besides patriotism to get out of her predicament. Scene X, Acte I of the opera is a significant rewrite of the original novella. In this duo performed by Carmen and Don José, Carmen becomes a steamy seductress, offering the soldier a night of pleasure chez Lillas Pastia in exchange for her freedom.

¹³⁷ See Chapter 1 and my Introduction for more on Grellmann. He elucidates this theory in a chapter titled *Their Language, Sciences and Arts* in his 1783 study, which is still studied and cited by linguists, anthropologists and sociologists today.

few words here and there in Mérimée's text. Her secret language is Basque, which she uses first to escape from Don José and his men and then to trick the Englishman in Gibraltar. In transforming herself into Don José's "payse," Carmen uses her new Basque persona not only to turn the hero's dream of home against him, but to trick and ruse other characters in the novella.

Because Micaëla's voice takes on the role of "payse" in Bizet's opera, his Carmen is no longer a conflation between home and Other, and therefore is exonerated of her most despicable and dangerous crime – disguising herself in the hero's homeland.¹³⁸ Inserting Micaëla into the story also transforms Don José's passion for Carmen, which in the novella begins and ends with homesickness. Micaëla offers the opera's hero a choice: he can either return home with the woman his mother wants him to marry, or remain Carmen's lover.¹³⁹ When he chooses Carmen, Don José's unbridled and possessive lust for the Gypsy comes to represent a century-long struggle with freedom, which was slowly coming to a close as Bizet staged his opera and a new constitution made France a Republic in 1875. With the Third Republic came peace at home and a new desire emerged for the exotic Other. Bizet's *Carmen* was a brilliant translation of a transition in France's long nineteenth century, the celebration of a new beginning that would later be referred to as the *belle époque*.

¹³⁸ It is inside the space of her duet with Don José, "Parle-moi de ma mère," that the hero lingers in "souvenirs d'autrefois" and "souvenirs du pays."

¹³⁹ In the original dialogue of Bizet's opera, Don José explains that Micaëla is an orphan who "ma mère a recueillie, et qui n'a pas voulu se séparer d'elle." Because Micaëla is both Navarraise and sister (through adoption), she doubly represents home. In the Duo "Parle-moi de ma mère," she also acts as a stand in for the hero's mother – chastely kissing Don José's forehead for his mother. It is also important to point out that Bizet's Carmen never lies. When Don José tries to convince her to leave Escamillo in Act III, Scene II, she reminds him: "Carmen jamais n'a menti! Son âme reste inflexible; entre elle et toi... c'est fini! Jamais je n'ai menti ! entre nous c'est fini !" (Thanks to Opera Glass, Stanford's online effort to give open access to the original texts of many of Europe's operas, Bizet's original opera (with dialogue) can be found at <http://opera.stanford.edu/Bizet/Carmen>)

As I will show in the following chapter, Mérimée's *Carmen*, which was written at a much different time in history, tells a different story – one that questioned France's incessant need to relive the past. Because the novella is often forgotten for the sexier story of Bizet's opera, I will excavate and listen to what has been buried beneath more than a century of translations and rewrites of Bizet's opera, which during the 2012-2013 opera season was staged more than 470 times worldwide.¹⁴⁰ One only has to visit Seville to understand at what point *Carmen* the opera is a lesson in what is called, *traduttore, traditore*. Standing in stark defiance to the novella's original author, a statue of Carmen, dedicated to Bizet's opera, gazes over the Plaza de Toros de la Maestranza, proof that Bizet's Carmen will live long after Don José has murdered her on stage. With Carmen no longer in her grave, one has to wonder if Mérimée isn't turning over in his. After all, his novella was written so that the historian, and not the Gypsy, could have the last word.¹⁴¹

Before Carmen Went to Spain

As Jean Sentaurens points out, because literary critics also conflate Bizet's story (and its many interpretations) with Mérimée's original novella, Mérimée is often held responsible

¹⁴⁰ According to Operabase, an online database that collects the number of times operas are staged in one season, *Carmen* was staged 477 times in the 2012/2013 season, and was the second most popular opera of that year after Verdi's *La Traviata*. <http://operabase.com>

¹⁴¹ I have my friends from the *Institut des hautes études européennes* in Strasbourg to thank for steering me to Seville and to Carmen's statue. In Mérimée's original work, the bull fighter Lucas plays a minor role. At first, he is simply "un garçon... avec qui on peut faire une affaire" (*Pléiade* 984), just another victim for Carmen to rob. He also is not the hero or lover Bizet's opera turns him into. As Don José puts it, « le taureau se chargea de me venger. Lucas fut culbuté avec son cheval sur la poitrine, et le taureau par-dessus tous les deux » (985). There is nothing left of Lucas by the end of the novella, since Carmen loses interest in the bullfighter soon after he is broken and crushed. As she tells Don José, « oui, je l'ai aimé... un instant, moins que toi peut-être. À présent, je n'aime plus rien » (987, 988). Jean Sentaurens claims Bizet's opera has completely eclipsed Mérimée's original text in the Spanish imagination. In Seville, you can « contempler une statue de Carmen ; en revanche, vous ne trouverez nulle part dans la ville une rue ou une place portant le nom de Prosper Mérimée » (Sentaurens 165).

for the opera's fetishistic exoticism of Spain, or what has been referred to as "l'Espagne de Mérimée" (Sentaurens 147). Sifting through many layers of literary criticism, Sentaurens points out when and where Bizet's *Carmen* influenced the reading and reception of Mérimée's novella in Spain and Europe. He concludes by arguing that this « Espagne de Mérimée » (147) really belongs to librettistes Meilhac and Halévy who, in transforming the novella into a spectacle for the stage, "s'empresment d'oublier l'Espagne minimale, mais parfaitement véridique, de la nouvelle, au profit d'une Espagne mieux accordée aux fantasmes de leur propre public" (151).¹⁴²

After building a convincing argument that critics must try and separate the novella from the opera, Sentaurens concludes by conflating the works himself, claiming that the character of Carmen is an international myth. « Ce n'est pas la supposée 'nationalité' – gitane, andalouse, espagnole – de Carmen qui en transcende l'histoire à la hauteur d'un mythe : c'est ce que Carmen nous dit de la femme et de l'homme, de la vie et de la mort » (165). What Sentaurens forgets in his argument is that Mérimée's Carmen is never allowed to speak directly to "nous," the reader. Only the archeologist and Don José have the privilege of speaking through first-person accounts, and it is through their stories that the reader learns about Carmen and her clever tongue. It is Bizet who gives Carmen a voice, and allows her to tell a story and speak her mind on stage. Mérimée's Carmen, and Spain for that

¹⁴² Sentaurens quotes Jacinto Benavente as one of Mérimée's important naysayers. In his attempt to wrestle Mérimée away from what he believes is a misperception, he also cites Spanish writer Miguel de Unamuno as one of Mérimée's admirers, and musician/composer Rafael Mitjana, who stated "Il est indiscutable que pour un Espagnol et surtout pour un Andalou, la puissante nouvelle de Mérimée est, de toute la littérature française ayant trait à l'Espagne, la seule oeuvre qui... sente véritablement le terroir" (Sentaurens 155, 156). According to Sentaurens, it didn't help that Bizet's *Carmen*, which was first staged in Spain in 1887, coincided with a time in Spain's history "où l'Espagne, épuisée par les commotions d'un XIXe siècle chaotique, s'interrogeait sur elle-même, son empire perdu, ses retards économiques, ses scléroses sociales, sa place en Europe » (155).

matter, are a common ground, a narrative meeting point as it were, where two men can share a “petite histoire,” or a little story that becomes Mérimée’s conclusion to a bigger *histoire*.

The novella’s characters – soldiers, travelers, wanderers and Gypsies – give *Carmen*, as Sentaurens suggests, an international accent. However, Mérimée’s story is first and foremost a story about home, specifically the author’s home: France during the 1840s. What makes *Carmen* a French story is the relationship the main characters have with time, the precious commodity that Carmen steals from the French and Basque *étrangers* who narrate her story. As explained in Chapters 1 and 2, nineteenth-century France continued to suffer from both a real and perceived loss of time.¹⁴³

Those who were forced to leave France at the end of the eighteenth century came back in 1815 to find France felt more like a haunted house than like home. The Revolution and the Industrial Revolution had led France into modernity, a time that felt strange and alienating for those nostalgic for the feudal society upheld by the *ancien régime*. Though the Restoration heralded a return to a familiar government, many (especially the *émigrés*) continued to mourn the distance that the Revolution and Napoleon’s Empire imposed between the present and the past.

For those born after the Revolution, it was the intangible loss of a connection to the past. Louis XVIII’s government enforced the same politics of forgetting as republicans, attempting to erase the Revolution and the Empire from France’s history, just as the republicans and Napoleon tried to expunge the *ancien régime* from their stories. In the first part of the century, Victor Hugo and other romantics attempted to translate his generation’s

¹⁴³ See Chapters 1 and 2 where I discuss Peter Fritzsche’s study of this nineteenth-century estrangement between past and present.

unique historical predicament, communicating their own feelings of estrangement and nostalgia through historical narratives and metaphors of the uncanny. Born in 1803, Mérimée was a year younger than Hugo, also a Parisian, and therefore witnessed most of the same historical events: the fall of the First Republic, the rise of Napoleon's Empire, the fall of the Empire, the foreign occupation of Paris in 1814 and 1815 and the resulting Restoration. But as André Fermigier points out in Pierre Nora's *Lieux de Mémoire*, there was something different about Mérimée. His contemporaries often accused him of being "celui dont le caractère individuel est le plus purgé de toutes réminiscences doctrinales et sentimentales du passé" (Fermigier 594). In fact, some of his contemporaries were surprised when Mérimée was chosen to be France's *Inspecteur des monuments historiques* in 1834, since his strange disposition seemed antithetical to the premise of consecrating one's life to safeguarding the past and its monuments.

It's true that Mérimée was no François Guizot, Charles Nodier or Victor Hugo.¹⁴⁴ « Mérimée n'a élaboré aucune théorie, aucune analyse de la nature et de la légitimité des formes dans leur rapport avec les événements politiques, les faits d'économie ou de société » (Fermigier 596). Or as Mérimée once said looking back at his career, « lorsque je voyais ces monuments historiques, j'en étais le colonel. Je regrette de les avoir étudiés trop officiellement » (594).

It would seem for Mérimée, history was not a place for emotions. Although he agreed to command the troops that helped François Guizot enact his "doctrine de réappropriation du passé" (Morel 100), he never wrote the kind of impassioned polemical

¹⁴⁴ I refer here to Charles Nodier's influential *Voyages pittoresques et romantiques dans l'ancienne France* (See Chapter 2) and Hugo's, *Notre-Dame de Paris* (also Chapter 2). As explained in Chapter 2, François Guizot was responsible for creating the post of *Inspecteur des monuments historiques*.

pieces that made Victor Hugo famous.¹⁴⁵ This is likely why biographers and historians who tackle Mérimée feel it necessary to quote Hugo's denouncement of the "barbarie," the "brutalité," and the "vandalism" (Morel 102, 103) inflicted upon France's monuments when writing about Mérimée's work as Inspector of Historical Monuments. In Mérimée's own writing – fictional and historical – there is a conspicuous silence, a hole that is difficult to explain since Mérimée held a position in Louis-Philippe's government that justified and even warranted his public defense of the past and its monuments. In his private letters, Mérimée does rail against local governments, clerics and priests whose ignorance, greed or politics motivate them to deface or destroy monuments. But he never vented his anger in a public forum, which is no doubt why Ludovic Vitet felt it necessary to point out that « Mérimée admire les beaux monuments mais il n'a jamais senti ses yeux se mouiller à l'aspect de leur ruine" (Fermigier 594).

Before Mérimée put his pen to use describing France's monuments, he was a keen observer of human nature. Or as historian and art critic Hippolyte Fortoul put it in 1833, "tandis que... Hugo décrit les choses, Mérimée décrit les hommes" (Dubé 158). The tragedy of France's ideological war against the past would not have been lost on Mérimée, who witnessed day in and day out the effects of ideology on France's monuments. One has to wonder, then, if Mérimée's stoicism (or dry eyes as it were) wasn't a defense against the rhetoric of nostalgia that continued to embroil France in a political drama that, by 1840, was leading toward international war and possibly another revolution.

¹⁴⁵ See Chapter 2 where I discuss Hugo's polemical texts on vandalism and monuments, specifically his poem "La bande noire," his novel *Notre-Dame de Paris* and his essays, the most cited being the two "Guerre aux démolisseurs."

When Mérimée wrote *Carmen* in 1845, his literary endeavors were few and far between. Although he had been one of Romanticism's most promising young talents before 1834, literature was only an occasional distraction, "une petite affaire... dans son système de valeurs, académique et administratif" (Balsamo 95).¹⁴⁶ In the months leading up to *Carmen*, Mérimée's mind and most of his time were preoccupied with saving the Gothic church of Saint-Ouen. When he wasn't traveling to Rouen to oversee the church's restoration, he was meeting with various national and local committees and commissions, calling attention to the deteriorating condition of several other churches, abbeys and monuments. His weekly reports to the *Commission des Monuments historiques* were lengthy and always detailed his management of architects, archeological digs, and his campaign with this or that museum to purchase a piece of art that risked falling into foreign hands. The fact that Mérimée takes time in 1845 to take on the larger-than-life character of the Gypsy is surprising and should make critics pause and wonder why the historian felt it necessary to explore the Gypsy trope at that specific time in his career.

It is doubtful, as Evelyn Gould has suggested, that *Carmen* is a nostalgic celebration of the revolutionary zeal of 1830. By 1845, Mérimée held an important position in Louis-Philippe's government, and for more than ten years, had worked with and was even friends with some of the government's most important actors. Therefore, it is more likely that 1830 is a bookend for readers who recognized that Louis-Philippe's regime was in danger, if not quickly coming to an end.

¹⁴⁶ Just before Mérimée wrote *Carmen*, he was elected to the *Académie française*. Goethe had admired the theater he wrote under the pseudonym Clara Gazul, and his friends Stendhal and Victor Hugo admired both his fiction and historical prose, although the latter, as Morel points out, felt threatened by the eloquence of Mérimée's language.

Though Mérimée was never a political ally of Louis-Philippe, he does take space in his letters to express concern for François Guizot, who was Ambassador to England, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of the Interior for the July Monarchy. Mérimée had worked closely with Guizot as Inspector of Historical Monuments and “Guizot’s historical perspective had an important impact on Mérimée and provided a crucial political justification for a program of restoration” (Murphy 25). Protestant and a former member of the *doctrinaires*, Guizot did not want historical restoration to become synonymous with *the Restoration*.¹⁴⁷ “Guizot’s conception of history was notable for his effort to salvage some positive lessons from the Revolution,” and his notion of history “complemented the *juste milieu* politics of the July Monarchy... in its ability to absorb a diversity of opinion” (Murphy 25). What Guizot (and Mérimée) did not want was for the restoration of monuments to be “construed as indications of a suspect nostalgia for the *ancien régime*” (25).

In the months leading up to *Carmen*, which Mérimée supposedly wrote in the first weeks of May 1845, the Inspector is concerned for Guizot’s failing health and the political criticism he faces for the imaginary crime, “de trop ménager l’Angleterre” (*Correspondance IV* 224).¹⁴⁸ As Mérimée explains to his good friend the Countess of Montijo, Guizot had been crucified for doing his job. As ambassador to England, and then Minister of Foreign

¹⁴⁷ The *doctrinaires* was a small group of Royalists who opposed the Restoration, as they wanted to see France move toward the kind of constitutional monarchy that Britain had – the only way, they felt, that the monarchy and the Revolution could be reconciled.

¹⁴⁸ This quote is taken from a letter he wrote to the Spanish Countess of Montijo (née Kirkpatrick) on January 18, 1845 – exactly four months before he finished writing *Carmen*. The Countess of Montijo had been Mérimée’s close friend since he traveled to Spain in 1830. Her daughter, Eugénie, would become Empress of France in 1853 and was also a close friend to Mérimée. And as I will explain later, it is the Countess’s story of a Spanish bandit that inspires Mérimée to write *Carmen*.

Affairs, Guizot's pretended "politique anglophile" (Léon 39) was, in fact, an attempt to keep Louis-Philippe out of an international war that he would surely lose. But a new wave of nostalgia, one whose objects of desire were a dead Emperor and a defunct Empire, had blinded many to that reality. Thirty years after Waterloo, a growing number wanted revenge against those who had defeated the Emperor and dared to occupy Paris in 1814 and 1815.

In 1840 and again in 1843, a politics of nostalgia had led France into two close calls with England. The first originated in Adolphe Thiers' aggrandized ambition to pick up where Napoleon had left off in Egypt. He believed that in supporting Mehemet Ali's attempt to reorganize the Ottoman Empire, France would gain political influence in Northern Africa beyond Algiers.¹⁴⁹ France's dream of returning to Egypt, albeit in a very different role, enraged England and its European allies who had made it clear that they would no longer tolerate Mehemet Ali. By October 1840, as Paul Léon points out in *Mérimée et son temps*, Europe was ready to go to war with France if Thiers and Louis-Philippe continued to support the Pasha. Knowing war with England and its allies could only lead to a humiliating defeat and endanger his already fragile government, Louis-Philippe opted for peace, a decision which raised "de très vives réactions du sentiment national" (Léon 39). Guizot, who was ambassador to England at the time, had encouraged Louis-Philippe to acquiesce and soon after became a scapegoat in the French press for an international affair which only fed a growing nostalgia for a time when France was a powerful Empire.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ Algiers became a French territory in 1830 under Charles X.

¹⁵⁰ For more on Guizot's diplomacy and the Eastern Question in general, I highly recommend Letitia Ufford's *The Pasha: How Mehemet Ali Defied the West, 1839-1841*. Chapter 11 gives a very detailed, intimate portrait of the pickle Guizot found himself in as France's ambassador to England.

Only four months earlier, the frigate *La Belle poule* left Toulon with Louis-Philippe's blessing and headed to Saint Helena to claim Napoleon's remains. Napoleon would finally return to Paris, and the French could finally mourn their Emperor. As Lamartine warned Louis-Philippe and his government when they began to consider repatriation, bringing Napoleon back to France, dead or alive, could only hurt the current monarchy. "Ne séduisons pas tant l'opinion d'un peuple qui comprend bien mieux ce qui l'éblouit que ce qui le sert... N'effaçons pas tant notre monarchie de raison, notre monarchie nouvelle, représentative, pacifique ; elle finirait par disparaître aux yeux du peuple" (Quentin-Bauchart 71). As the political embarrassment that came out of Egypt proved, though the Emperor's body was still out to sea, his memory was well on its way to reconquering France.¹⁵¹

What is referred to today as the Tahiti Affair was Guizot's attempt to win back popular support for the July Monarchy. As Renaud Meltz has astutely observed, France's interests in Tahiti were dominated "par une forme de nostalgie impériale... l'opinion s'était... moins soucieuse d'acquérir Tahiti que de contester la supériorité anglaise au Grand Océan" (Meltz 42). Because Oceania was considered part of Great Britain's sphere of influence, any claim to territories in the South Pacific would represent a symbolic coup for those who had hoped Egypt would be France's revenge for Napoleon's defeat. Unfortunately for Guizot and Louis-Philippe, Tahiti became a sad repetition of Egypt and therefore another way for Napoleon's supporters to denounce the July Monarchy. Although the English did not object when France made Tahiti a protectorate in 1842, it vehemently

¹⁵¹ The *Belle poule* didn't reach Saint Helena until October, therefore Napoleon's remains were not in France before early December 1840. As I explain in the next chapter, there was a rush to celebrate the *Retour des Cendres*, in an attempt to alleviate political criticism with regards to the Eastern Question.

protested the 1843 attempt by French admiral Dupetit-Thouars to annex the island. Mérimée, like many of Guizot's friends and supporters, blamed the affaire on the admiral who precipitously pushed for annexation because he didn't want the British minister Pritchard meddling in his affairs. As Mérimée put it, again in a letter to the Countess of Montijo, the admiral was a man who was "fou à lier et parfaitement connu pour tel" (*Correspondance IV* 37). But what Mérimée doesn't confess is that Guizot had initiated the affair, sending the admiral to the South Pacific and then spinning France's first success in Tahiti (establishing the island as a protectorate) as a way of contesting "la supériorité anglaise au Grand Océan" (Meltz 42).¹⁵² As Tahiti gained more symbolic importance in both the British and French imaginations, the stakes increased. The French now pushed Guizot and Louis-Philippe to annex Tahiti, simply to get back at the British for Egypt, which three years later still had many nostalgically bemoaning the Emperor. As Meltz suggests,

Des deux côtés de la Manche, le centre de gravité de la discussion quitta l'Océanie pour revenir aux antagonismes traditionnels, sans crainte de multiplier les contradictions. Les journaux français hostiles au gouvernement réfutaient les périls de guerre encourus par l'annexion... mais ouvraient une souscription pour offrir une épée d'honneur au conquérant de ce modeste îlot – dont l'intérêt était ailleurs (48).

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The rampant chauvinism and nostalgia that the Egypt affair evoked in France would eventually culminate in the overthrow of Louis-Philippe's government and lead to yet another Napoleon appointing himself Emperor of France.

¹⁵² Guizot ratified Tahiti's status as a protectorate, but then did not support the admiral's request for annexation, which was born out of an attempt to keep the British minister Pritchard out of Tahiti and to prevent him from influencing Tahiti's indigenous government.

¹⁵³ As Meltz also points out, "La littérature de l'époque, qui porte témoignage de l'émotion cause par l'affaire... néglige largement l'enjeu tahitien. Flaubert évoque l'épisode dans presque tous ses romans, pour railler l'indignation cocardière des Français, au regard du mince motif tahitien. Hugo, pair de France par la volonté de Louis-Philippe, le blâmait vingt ans plus tard d'avoir payé Pritchard pour éviter la guerre. Mais il se lamentait sur la fierté française, humiliée devant l'ennemi héréditaire, plutôt que sur Tahiti » (43).

Although Mérimée had no way of knowing in 1845 where this wave of nostalgia for Napoleon and his Empire would lead in 1848 and then 1852, his novella *Carmen* attempts to examine how the past can be appropriated as a battlefield for the present. By exploring nostalgia as both a *maladie* and a means of manipulation, Mérimée asks his compatriots if they are willing to escape their own absurd need to relive the past, or if they preferred to be buried with it.¹⁵⁴

The Archeologist's Watch: It's About Time

The Gypsy can be found in the distant background of Mérimée's early writing, which owes much to Walter Scott and his historical approach to fiction.¹⁵⁵ His most developed Gypsy character before *Carmen* is Mila, a *grisette* who follows a troop of German soldiers through France in the first two chapters of *1572. La Chronique du règne de Charles IX*. Though the Gypsy girl's role in the novel is short-lived, her presence in Mérimée's first and only historical novel is important since she precipitously predicts the dénouement of its plot. Reading the hero's palm, she not only predicts Mergy's horrible fate, but sums up the tragedy of the Saint-Barthélemy massacre: "le pire, c'est que tu verseras ton propre sang"

¹⁵⁴ Napoleon III appointed Mérimée to his Senate in 1853. But as Elisabeth Morel has pointed out in her biography of Mérimée, this was Eugénie's doing. As explained earlier, Mérimée was a loyal and devoted friend to the young Empress and her mother, the Countess de Montijo. Initially against the idea of Eugénie marrying Louis-Napoleon, Mérimée, Morel suggests, performed his duties out of loyalty and love for Eugénie, not out of any political aspirations or allegiance to the Emperor. By the time he was appointed Senator, he had developed many health problems that made it increasingly difficult for him to perform the duties necessary (especially travel) as Inspector of Historic Monuments. The Senator position was Eugénie's way of making sure her old family friend was comfortable in his advancing years. That said, Mérimée could never completely give up his "habitudes monumentales" (Morel 233) and continued to perform many of his Inspector duties up until 1860, when the architect Émile Boeswillwald replaced him as Inspector.

¹⁵⁵ See Chapter 2, which looks at Walter Scott's use of the Gypsy in his historical novel.

(*Chronique* 31). Reminding the reader what he already knew about France's religious wars, the Gypsy girl calls into question the very act of narrating the past.

Fifteen years later, when Mérimée wrote *Carmen*, his relationship to historical narrative was different. As *Inspecteur des monuments historiques*, he would have understood how historical narratives could be used to preserve and remember, or conversely to manipulate and obliterate. The fact that Mérimée returns to the Gypsy in 1845 isn't surprising, considering the lingering public bitterness around Louis-Philippe's decision to choose peace over Egypt.¹⁵⁶ That is not to say that *Carmen* is an allegory of the diplomatic debacle of 1840. However, using the Gypsy, who many still believed came from Egypt, in a story that stages the tragedy of nostalgia, was an obvious way for Mérimée to force his contemporaries to contemplate how nostalgia had influenced and continued to influence France's story, specifically when it came to "les affaires d'Égypte" (*Pléiade* 970, 976, 978, 979).¹⁵⁷

"Une affaire d'Égypte," is *Carmen*'s code for the ruse or trick in which disguise and seduction allow her to obtain what she wants from her victim. In reading *Carmen*, one can't

¹⁵⁶ It is important to point out that in his 1829 preface to *1572. La Chronique du règne de Charles IX*, Mérimée writes about Méhémet Ali and Europe's blind support of his violent regime. «Nous traitons avec Méhémet-Ali ; il est même estimé des Européens, et dans tous les journaux il passe pour un grand homme : on dit qu'il est le bienfaiteur de l'Égypte. Cependant quoi de plus horrible que de faire tuer des gens sans défense ? » (4) Ten years later, the French were alone in supporting the Pasha's ambitions, which they believed aligned with their own. Though Mérimée's portrait of the Gypsy in *La Chronique* seems unrelated to his portrait of the Pasha in the preface, writing or rereading the two in the same text may have planted the seed for his later *rapprochement*.

¹⁵⁷ Bohémien is only used four times in *Carmen* to refer to the Gypsy (pages 950, 971, 974 and 983). Egypt in the context of "les affaires d'Égypte" or to refer to a Gypsy is used eight times. Don José tells Carmen, "Je ne suis Égyptien que par hasard" (980) and later calls the Gypsies of Gibraltar "les gens d'Égypte" (977). I bring this up because it has been argued that Mérimée's use of *Bohémien* to describe the Gypsy community is a way of allegorizing the freedoms celebrated by the Bohème artist movement. I would argue that Mérimée simply borrows the labels that were used in literature of the time, and therefore uses *Bohémien* and *Égyptien* interchangeably. That said, his insistence and repetition of "les affaires d'Égypte" would have been an obvious way of recalling France's recent *affaire* with Egypt.

help but make a comparison between the Gypsy and a much younger Mérimée, who published *Le Théâtre de Clara Gazul* disguised both as a translator and as the imaginary Spanish actress, Clara Gazul, whom he pretends wrote the works. Mérimée's trick, however, was in keeping with literary fashion, and therefore harmless and apparently transparent.¹⁵⁸ Carmen's ruses, on the other hand, are perhaps too convincing and almost always lead her victims on a path toward ruin or death. Succeeding in a way that Mérimée never did as Clara Gazul, Carmen is able to use language to disarm and ensnare her victims. As explained earlier, it is by way of the Basque language that she seduces Don José, who upon hearing Carmen speak his mother tongue forgets his duties as a soldier and allows her to go free. This "Satan de Milton" (*Pléiade* 943), as the archeologist calls him, wants nothing more than to return to the paradise he was exiled from, and easily falls for Carmen's trick, which exploits his homesickness and dupes the hero into thinking that sacrificing himself for her equates to sacrificing himself for his homeland. When the Gypsy is no longer convincing as a *payse*, she continues to abuse her lover's nostalgia by disappearing months at a time, which keeps Don José yearning for what he believes is just out of reach.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸ As Jean Mallion and Pierre Salomon explain in their edited edition of *Théâtre de Clara Gazul. Romans et nouvelles* for *Pléiade*, « Comme les mystifications étaient alors à la mode... il choisit d'attribuer ses pièces à une soi-disant comédienne espagnole » (*Pléiade* 1132). It seems Mérimée got the most enjoyment out of the frontispiece he had Delécluze draw, which is Mérimée dressed in drag, wearing a seductive bustier which reveals more than it hides, a mantilla and a rosary. The portrait would have immediately revealed the author's true identity, but as unfortunately "ce travail n'ayant pas réussi à l'impression" (1133) was not published in 1826 as it should have been. Goethe immediately recognized the trick stating, « Voilà un petit coquin qui se cache sous le génie d'une femme ; mais c'est bien un bel et bon génie d'homme fort qui doit aller bien loin » (1134)

¹⁵⁹ Carmen is rarely with Don José, since she is often away tending to her "affaires d'Egypte." Like his homeland, Carmen is just out of reach, as he is never able to fully possess her except at the end. I will come back to this later.

All of Carmen's tricks exploit and call attention to the fact that her victims are foreign. As the definitive foreigner, who is at home nowhere and everywhere, Carmen manipulates what she perceives to be each of her victims' national weaknesses.¹⁶⁰ As Don José puts it himself, the Basque possesses an overdeveloped love of home, to the extent that they do "tressaillir" (*Pléiade* 960) or jump for joy when they hear their language spoken in a foreign country. But Carmen doesn't just speak Basque, she couches her lover's language in a form that is familiar to him – one of national pride.

Laguna, ene bihotsarena, camarade de mon coeur, me dit-elle tout à coup, êtes-vous du pays? ...Ah ! si j'étais au pays, devant la montagne blanche! On m'a insultée parce que je suis pas de ce pays de filous... et ces gueuses se sont mises toutes contre moi, parce que je leur ai dit que tous leurs jacques de Séville, avec leurs couteaux, ne feraient pas peur à un gars de chez nous avec son béret bleu et son maquila. Camarade, mon ami, ne ferez-vous rien pour une payse ?

What Carmen manipulates here, by way of the hero's mother tongue, is his chauvinism, which has been inflated by his distance from home. Carmen's plea to Don José's national pride pushes the young soldier to betray his regiment, and as the Gypsy runs free, he bellows a Basque blessing upon the uncanny stranger: "Que Notre-Dame de la Montagne vous soit en aide!" (961). As Carmen takes Don José further away from home, eventually making him the kind of horrible criminal who can never go home, she turns the homesick boy into a nostalgic man, who in the end avenges the time and the home that the Gypsy steals from him when she pretends to be his *payse*.

¹⁶⁰ When the archeologist first meets Carmen, he believes she is from Andalusia. "Vous mademoiselle, ou madame, vous êtes probablement de Cordoue?" When she responds no, he responds "vous êtes du moins andalouse. Il me semble reconnaître à votre doux parler." Carmen gives the Frenchman several guesses, telling him "Si vous remarquez si bien l'accent du monde, vous devez bien deviner qui je suis" (950). But unlike with Don José who wears his accent proudly, the archeologist has to be told Carmen is a Gypsy. Don José explains why it is that Carmen speaks every language fluently *sans accent*, "les bohémiens, monsieur, comme n'étant d'aucun pays, voyageant toujours, parlent toutes les langues, et la plupart sont chez eux en Portugal, en France, dans les provinces, en Catalogne, partout; même avec les Maures et les Anglais, ils se font entendre" (960).

But before Don José punishes Carmen, two other men become victims of her *affaires d’Egypte*. Her second victim unsurprisingly is a British officer whose seduction she considers her “plus brillante” (*Pléiade* 978). « Cette maison est à moi, les guinées... seront à moi ; je le mène par le bout du nez ; je le mènerai d’où il ne sortira jamais » (978). In the portrait of the British “mylord” (978), Mérimée is sure to emphasize the victim’s “epaulettes d’or” (977), his “salon magnifique,” his “grand domestique anglais, poudré” (978), and the silk and jewels he bestows upon Carmen. Mérimée’s British soldier is the personification and sometimes the exaggeration of his nation’s successful Empire. Living in Gibraltar, one of Britain’s Overseas Territories, the officer is living the colonial dream. Unable to see the limits of his Empire’s power, he opens his door to “les gens d’Egypte” (977) who rob him of it all, turning the decorated soldier into a defenseless “écrevisse” (978). Bested by the native, or by a Gypsy disguised as a native, the British soldier not only loses his wealth and probably his life, but he loses control of the colonized space and the colonized Other. In a clever game of masquerade, Mérimée has disguised the Frenchman with a British accent, or at least spelled out to French readers what was really at stake in 1840 and in 1843.

This brings us back to Don José and the archeologist. Recent literary criticism tends to read the archeologist’s narrative as a frame for Carmen’s lover whose scandalous story must be quelled by the more scientific discourse of the historian.¹⁶¹ However, this interpretation ignores the fact that the archeologist is one of Carmen’s three victims, and if not for Don José, would have ended up with a story as disturbing as his. Because Don José recognizes him as the man he shared a meal with at the auberge, he escorts the archeologist

¹⁶¹ Most of this recent criticism references Evelyn Gould, who suggests such a reading in her book *The Fate of Carmen*.

out of Carmen's hovel and to safety, ignoring the Gypsy's demands to cut the Frenchman's throat.¹⁶² The archeologist escapes with his life, but loses the "belle montre à répétition" (*Pléiade* 954) to which Carmen had paid "une excessive attention" (951). This timepiece is important to the archeologist's story, first because of the value he puts on it, but also because the gold watch is what the locals remember most about him. The archeologist is the man who keeps time with every chime of his watch.¹⁶³

When the *corrégidor* confiscates the watch from Don José, it is quickly identified as the Frenchman's. The fact that the *corrégidor* knows exactly who the watch belongs to is a clue as to how rare such timepieces were in southern Spain. As Adolphe de Chesnel's 1858 *Dictionnaire de Technologie* points out, a *montre à répétition* not only chimes with every hour, but chimes every fifteen minutes – a sign that nineteenth century France (or at least Paris) was becoming a fast-paced and busy space. The watches were expensive, but useful to those who had somewhere to be at a specific time of the day. Businessmen or anyone else who had a train to catch or a meeting to attend should splurge on a *montre à répétition*. The fact that the French archeologist has such a watch reveals that, although he studies the past, he is very much in the present and particularly concerned about the future, at least the near future which promises places to go and appointments to keep.

¹⁶² « Il me sembla qu'elle le pressait vivement de faire quelque chose à quoi il montrait de l'hésitation. Ce que c'était, je croyais ne le comprendre que trop à la voir passer et repasser rapidement sa petite main sous son menton. J'étais tenté de croire qu'il s'agissait d'une gorge à couper, et j'avais quelques soupçons que cette gorge ne fût la mienne » (953).

¹⁶³ According to Maillion and Salomon "ce thème de la montre, proie favorite des voleurs, revient plusieurs fois sous la plume de Mérimée" (*Pléiade* 1574). Mérimée's own watch was similar to the one he describes in *Carmen*, and according to his correspondence was an expensive Breguet model. It was an early reading of Mérimée's 1829 novella *Mateo Falcone* that first brought my attention to the importance of timepieces in his work. Ten-year-old Fortuna is killed by his father when he betrays his family's honor in exchange for a beautiful new watch. The naïve passion of this child for a timepiece, and his father's cold-blooded punishment for accepting this gift, are no doubt Mérimée's early exploration of the dangers in borrowing time.

At this point, it is important to remember how the archeologist loses his “belle montre à répétition” (954) to Carmen. As Chapter 2 reveals, it was exchanged (or at least that is how Carmen saw it) for a *bonne aventure*, or a peek into the future. In fact, it is the archeologist’s curiosity about the future that first draws him into the Gypsy’s lair. “On sent qu’il eût été ridicule de se faire tirer la bonne aventure dans un café” (951). Remembering every detail of his night with Carmen, the archeologist withholds the most important:

Aussitôt l’enfant disparut, nous laissant dans une chambre assez vaste, meublée d’une petite table, de deux tabourets et d’un coffre. Je ne dois point oublier une jarre d’eau, un tas d’oranges et une botte d’oignons. Dès que nous fûmes seuls, la bohémienne tira de son coffre des cartes qui paraissaient avoir beaucoup servi, un aimant, un caméléon desséché, et quelques autres objets nécessaires à son art. Puis elle me dit de faire la croix dans ma main gauche avec une pièce de monnaie, et les cérémonies magiques commencèrent. Il est inutile de vous rapporter ses prédictions, et quant à sa manière d’opérer, il était évident qu’elle n’était pas sorcière à demi. Malheureusement nous fûmes bientôt dérangés... (*Pléiade* 952).

When Don José interrupts the archeologist and Carmen like a jealous lover, the archeologist tries to plead innocent stating, “vous avez interrompu mademoiselle au moment où elle m’annonçait des choses bien intéressantes” (952). Leaving the reader to wonder if Carmen’s “prédictions” (952) would lead to a different kind of *bonne aventure*, Mérimée reveals that the archeologist’s relationship to time isn’t only a love affair with the past.

Carmen, of course, takes her prize without asking. The archeologist is sure she is the one who stole his watch, because of the excessive interest she showed it. As they walk from the café to her home, « elle voulut connaître encore la marche du temps, et me pria de nouveau de faire sonner ma montre » (951). Mérimée’s choice of words to describe Carmen’s curiosity in the archeologist’s watch is playful and suggests that the Gypsy is interested in something more than the machinations of a timepiece. Whereas “la marche” can indicate the operation or functioning of a clock, such as “la marche d’une horloge”

(which is the example provided by Larousse), “la marche du temps” is how one describes the more abstract idea of the forward movement or progression of time, or what is often translated in English as “the march of time,” or as the cliché “time marches on.”

The story of the archeologist’s watch, how it is lost and then found, takes up a large part of Chapter 2, which Mérimée purposely devotes to time and how it influences our understanding and perception of events. The chapter opens with a description of Cordoba’s famous *baigneuses*, who every evening « quelques minutes avant l’angélus... se rassemblent sur le bord du fleuve, au bas du quai... Aussitôt que l’angélus sonne, il est censé qu’il fait nuit. Au dernier coup de cloche, toutes ces femmes se déshabillent et entrent dans l’eau » (*Pléiade* 948). As the archeologist tells it, this is a nightly ritual in Cordoba that depends on the ritualistic chiming of the Angelus. “On m’a dit que quelques mauvais garnements se cotisèrent certain jour, pour graisser la patte au sonneur de la cathédrale et lui faire sonner l’angélus vingt minutes avant l’heure... Je n’y étais pas. De mon temps, le sonneur était incorruptible” (948).

As Chapter 2 begins with the incorruptible timing of the *baigneuses* and then turns around the archeologist’s watch, it ends with the archeologist’s impeccable timing, which lands him in Cordoba two days before Don José’s execution. As the event that sets off Don Jose’s narration of Carmen, the narrator’s timely arrival marks the importance of time in humanity’s stories. With only a day and a half left to live, Don José spends his last moments telling his story to the archeologist, who is sent to him by way of the *belle montre* that was confiscated by the corregidor. In fact, it is because Carmen considered the archeologist’s watch curious or useful enough to keep, that the archeologist and Don José are finally

reunited. And with very little time left, Don José tells the archeologist-narrator how Carmen also stole time from him.

The fact that a timepiece brings the two men together is an obvious clue as to how Mérimée wanted his story to be read. Whereas Mérimée uses the first two chapters to explain the archeologist's relationship to time, Chapter 3 begs for a comparison between the two men, or rather what they lost to Carmen. As Mérimée tells us in Chapters 1 and 2, the archeologist is angry when the Gypsy steals his watch, but decides that he will not waste his time reporting the crime to the authorities. « Diverses considérations m'empêchèrent d'aller la réclamer le lendemain... Je terminai mon travail sur le manuscrit des Dominicains et je partis pour Séville » (*Pléiade* 953). In other words, Carmen's crime does not interrupt the archeologist's *marche du temps*. He continues to Seville, and then "après plusieurs mois de courses errantes en Andalousie," (953) heads to Madrid, stopping a day or two in Cordoba along the way. As he points out in the first paragraph of the first page, his time in Spain was well spent as he will soon publish his memoir on the Battle of Munda.

Don José, on the other hand, lets Carmen steal the little time he has left. As the archeologist tells it, the hero spends a good part of his last day recounting "les tristes aventures qu'on va lire" (956). Nostalgic until the very end, Don José relives the years he spent with Carmen, telling their story to the only man who will listen, the busy historian. Whereas Chapters 1 and 2 are narrated by the archeologist and therefore have his interests at heart, Chapter 3, which is the final chapter of the 1845 version, begins and ends with Don José's narrative *Je* and therefore are an expression of what is important to him. Unlike the archeologist, who doesn't take time to start at his beginning or even give us his name, Don José begins his story by stating "Je suis né... à Elizondo, dans la vallée de Baztán. Je

m'appelle don José Lizarrabengoa... je suis Basque et vieux chrétien. Si je prends le *don*, c'est que j'en ai le droit, et si j'étais à Elizondo, je vous montrerais ma généalogie sur parchemin » (956). The fact that Don José begins his story with *parchemin* or parchment would not have been lost on the archeologist. As the OED reminds us, parchment is “a stiff, flat, thin material made from the prepared skin of an animal and used as a durable writing surface in ancient and medieval times.” In French, *parchemin* is a word that has resisted evolution. Its spelling and meaning are exactly the same as the Old French *parchemin*. Beginning his story by way of parchment, Don José has chosen the Middle Ages as his initial *chemin* or starting point. As a nineteenth-century French historian, the archeologist would have recognized the symbolic importance of this beginning, as both French writers and historians had nostalgically looked to the Middle Ages as a way to authenticate and reclaim a history that had been devalued first by the Republic and then by Napoleon.

The fact that Don José, in twenty words, jumps from *parchemin* to the tennis court would have also been a *clin d'oeil* to French readers, who would have recognized *jeu de paume* as an important moment in their own timeline. In the story Don José's tells the archeologist, “la paume, c'est ce qui m'a perdu” (956).¹⁶⁴ Although he won the match, “un gars de l'Alava me chercha querelle; nous primes nos maquilas, et j'eus encore l'avantage; mais cela m'obligea de quitter le pays” (956). In France's story, the famous Tennis Court Oath is what sets off the Revolution. On June 20, 1789, Louis XVI locked the *tiers état* out of the Estates General meeting room as a way to choke their revolutionary efforts. When

¹⁶⁴ The following three sentences can be found at the beginning of the first paragraph of Chapter 3: « Si je prends le *don*, c'est que j'en ai le droit, et si j'étais à Elizondo, je vous montrerais ma généalogie sur parchemin. On voulait que je fusse d'église, et l'on me fit étudier, mais je ne profitais guère. J'aimais trop à jouer à la paume, c'est ce qui m'a perdu » (956).

they realized the doors to the assembly room were locked, the deputies made a makeshift conference room out of the King's *jeu de paume* court and swore to stay there until a constitution had been written. As Corry Cropper has pointed out,

This court becomes a vector for political and cultural tension, a symbolic playing field for the political games that would be fought throughout the century...after the Tennis Court Oath *le jeu de paume* can no longer be represented innocently. In literature of the nineteenth century, while the sport and its court continue to represent the nobility, for the first time they also represent a physical space connected with failed attempts at social and political ascension (Cropper 6, 7).

Don José is a character inspired by a true story the Countess of Montijo told Mérimée in 1830 during his first trip to Spain. Like Don José, José Maria was destined « par ses parents à l'Eglise, et il étudiait la théologie à l'université de Grenade; mais sa vocation n'était pas fort grande... car il s'introduisait la nuit chez une demoiselle de bonne famille... On parle de violence, d'un domestique blessé... José-Maria fut obligé de prendre la fuite et de s'exiler à Gibraltar » (*Lettres d'Espagne III*, 586). The fact that Mérimée makes a tennis match and not a rape the turning point in Don José's story reveals to what extent June 20, 1789 was a violent shock to France's timeline.

This is not to suggest that Don José is French, or an allegory of a one specific event or person in French history. However, his relationship to time, and specifically to the past, is French.¹⁶⁵ Like those who were dreaming of Napoleon and his Empire in 1845, Don Jose

¹⁶⁵ Cropper's work on the role of sports in nineteenth-century French is unique and thought-provoking. However, I do not agree with his theory that Don José is an allegory of Louis-Philippe. First, I do not believe what Mérimée is criticizing in *Carmen* is the July Monarchy (after all, his work as Inspector of Monuments is tied closely to the politics of this regime and to Guizot). I believe it is, as stated above, a critic of how nostalgia as a political force and a social *maladie* had led France into some very dangerous, risky conflicts. Reading Don José or *Carmen* as symbols or allegories of one regime or another is dangerous, since Mérimée himself skirted rigid or fixed identities. (See my comments above about the translator L'Estrange and Clara Gazul.) Mérimée's own life story is rife with political contradictions, especially when it comes to alliances and friends. When he wrote *Carmen* in 1845, he speaks in his correspondence about invitations from the king and one of his closest friends is a Countess. He also was working with the Minister of the Interior with regards to renovations of monuments, and every time there was talk of a regime change he worried about his position as Inspector of

can only experience the present through the past, and through his desire to return to a time before one traumatic event set him on the road to exile, alienation and Spain. His narration of events after the traumatic *jeu de paume* is fuzzy at best, blurred by his attempt to create an imaginary world where the present is read through the past and “in which memory, distortion, forgetting, and reorganization all play a role” (Phillips 66).¹⁶⁶ This gives Don Jose’s narrative a dream-like quality, whereas the archeologist’s narrative is fully present in the present. Whereas the archeologist gives specific temporal markers so the reader can situate his story in time, Don José does not or cannot narrate his life through time or by *la marche du temps*.¹⁶⁷ What Don José gives instead is a narrative where one event blurs into another.

Like with most fantasies and dreams, it is difficult to tell if the unfortunate events of the hero’s life happened within a matter of months, or if they unfolded over several years. The only two moments in the hero’s life that are defined by some kind of description of time are the day he meets Carmen, and the two days he spends with the archeologist before he is

Monuments. Again, I think what Mérimée condemned or found most dangerous in France’s story was the pervasive nostalgia in nineteenth century politics and culture which he allegorizes in this story. Nostalgia, as I show throughout this work, was a political tool used by different nineteenth-century regimes. But it was also, as Peter Fritzsche has pointed out, a symptom of several violent ruptures from the past.

¹⁶⁶ James Phillips discusses the effects of nostalgia on remembering in his article “Distance, Absence, and Nostalgia” can be found in Don Ihde and Hugh Silverman’s book *Descriptions. Selected studies in phenomenology and existential philosophy*, which is an excellent collection of articles on nostalgia that are referenced by Svetlana Boym’s most recent study. Cathy Caruth’s work on trauma (which relies heavily on Freud) also influenced my early thoughts on Don José and Stéphen (Sand’s character discussed in the next chapter). However, because both characters are also born out of a critique of political nostalgia, I felt it important to listen to what these texts say about nostalgia as an agent of force.

¹⁶⁷ The archeologist begins Chapter 1 by telling the reader that his Spanish story takes place « au commencement de l’automne de 1830” (*Carmen* 937). He also tells us that “Je passai quelques jours à Cordou” (948), that he spent « plusieurs mois » finishing up business in Andalusia, and then returned to Cordoba where friends and “quelques commissions à faire devaient me retenir au moins trois ou quatre jours dans l’antique capitale des princes musulmans” (953). Although these dates are not specific, they do situate the reader in time and give us an idea of the archeologist’s timeline.

executed. Of course, the latter is narrated by the archeologist and therefore is really a part of his story. As for the moment he meets Carmen, Don José can only remember that it was “l’heure où les ouvrières rentrent, après leur diner” and “c’était un vendredi” (*Pléiade* 957). He does not reveal or perhaps remember the year that they met, or exactly how long he had been with Almanza’s cavalry before Carmen manipulates his homesickness and tricks him into deceiving his comrades.¹⁶⁸

Manipulating the hero’s homesickness is Carmen’s fatal mistake. Like most suffering from nostalgia, Don José wants nothing more than to displace his desire for an actual home onto an imaginary one. By pretending to be his *payse*, an embodiment of his desire for Navarre, Carmen becomes the “phantom homeland, for the sake of which one is ready to die or kill” (Boym xvi).¹⁶⁹ In other words, if Don José cannot return home, he will possess a version of home by possessing Carmen, alive or dead. Unfortunately for Don José and for Carmen, she does not want to be possessed and as a Gypsy, represents what is most dangerous to the nostalgic dream: transience. Tending to her *affaires d’Egypte*, Carmen rarely stays in one place for very long and travels from one man to the next to ensure her ruses are successful. And as Don José puts it halfway through his story, “pour les gens de sa

¹⁶⁸ Don José’s time in prison is “un mois” (962) but it is a month-long punishment that floats in time, as there are no temporal anchors. The same can be said for the occasional “un jour,” “un soir,” etc. that appear in Don José’s story. “One day, but when?” is the question I found myself asking. My questions with regards to time began because several critics try and read *Carmen* as an allegory of the events of 1830, because this is the date the archeologist gives on the first page. But as one attempts to track down dates/time in Don José’s story, it becomes clear that, like most who suffer from nostalgia, Don José doesn’t care about time itself as he only wants to recapture an elusive point in time that will always escape him. Bizet’s introduction of Micaëla gives Don José’s story some temporal landmarks. Her first visit implies that little time has passed since the young soldier left home, and her trip into the mountains to find Don José suggests that only a few years have passed, since she is still wearing the braids of a young woman.

¹⁶⁹ As Svetlana Boym points out in her study of nostalgia, “the danger of nostalgia is that it tends to confuse the actual home and the imaginary one. In extreme cases it can create a phantom homeland, for the sake of which one is ready to die or kill. Unreflected nostalgia breeds monsters. Yet the sentiment itself, the mourning of displacement and temporal irreversibility, is at the very core of the modern condition” (Boym xvi).

race, la liberté est tout” (963). Or as Carmen puts it just before Don José stabs her to death, “Carmen sera toujours libre. Calli elle est née, calli elle mourra” (*Pléiade* 987).¹⁷⁰

Carmen’s entrance and exit from the hero’s life are marked by the sound of *cloches* or bells that announce a time of day that is never disclosed by Don José. “Voilà la cloche qui sonne” (956) Don José’s comrades state excitedly as the women reenter the tobacco factory, and Carmen enters the hero’s story. And just before he takes her life, Don José waits until “j’entendisse la cloche” (986) so he is sure a prayer has been said for her soul. While Carmen represents the transience that interrupts the hero’s romance with the past, she is also the fantasy or dream of an unobtainable home that floats in time. Because Carmen represents a contradiction that the nostalgic can never negotiate, she must become one or the other in the end. When she refuses to belong to Don José, he kills her Gypsy spirit and then makes her body a symbolic space that he can nostalgically dwell upon.

In the last paragraph of Chapter 3, which was the last chapter of the 1845 version, Don José takes Carmen’s body and buries it in a forest. “Je me rappelai que Carmen m’avait dit souvent qu’elle aimerait à être enterrée dans un bois” (988). The fact that Don José couches Carmen’s final request in an act of remembering is suspicious, and knowing Don José, the reader has to wonder if his « je me rappelle » isn’t part of his nostalgic fantasy to possess Carmen. The fact that he buries her with the ring that she angrily threw in the bushes before he stabs her also reveals at what point burying Carmen becomes a way for Don José to live out his fantasy of possessing his *payse*. « Je cherchai longtemps sa bague... Je la mis dans la fosse auprès d’elle, avec une petite croix. Peut-être ai-je eu tort. Ensuite, je montai

¹⁷⁰ Calli is Romani for “dark one” and was used by them to refer to other Gypsies.

sur mon cheval, je galopai jusqu'à Cordoue, et au premier corps-de-garde je me fis connaître. J'ai dit que j'avais tué Carmen ; mais je n'ai pas voulu dire où était son corps » (*Pléiade* 988). By keeping Carmen's whereabouts secret, and making her burial place a secret space that the Spanish authorities will never find, Don José finally succeeds in turning her into his *terrain*, rooting her to his fantasy of home.

Because Don José's nostalgia eventually leads to his own death, Mérimée's 1845 conclusion sheds light on the dangers of letting nostalgia dictate the present and future. As Don José is executed for the crimes he committed for his *payse*, the archeologist walks away, boards his train, goes on with his research, returns to his business. He is Mérimée's solution to nostalgia – a man who has successfully married the past with *la marche du temps*, creating a linear progression of time. For those who watched as Napoleon's ghost influenced the political events of 1840 and 1843, the archeologist would have been a welcome respite to current events that had France going in circles. His *montre à répétition* would have been a gesture to those who believed that technology and progress could pull France out of its romance with the past, and possibly prevent the French from falling into a continuous repetition of past political fiascos.

En close bouche, n'entre point mouche

But then we remember that the archeologist never published his memoir. As he tells it, his publication would finally resolve one of history's greatest uncertainties – the exact location, « le lieu mémorable » where « César joua quitte ou double contre les champions de la république » (937). Whereas geographers have always placed the Battle of Munda in

the Bastuli-Poeni region of Spain, the French archeologist hopes to prove “prochainement” that César’s famous battle actually took place in Montilla.

When Mérimée reedits *Carmen* for Michel Lévy in the early months of 1847, he replaces the promised historical memoir with a linguistic and ethnographical study of the European Gypsy. Substituting the French archeologist’s memoir about a forgotten “lieu memorable” is a clever *dernier mot* to *Carmen*, since forgetting something memorable is symptomatic of both nostalgia and being a Gypsy. As Don José’s example proves, the nostalgic only remembers what he wants to remember. While Don José can recall landscapes, songs, and the blue-skirted young Navarraises whose innocence lingers in his thoughts, his nostalgia only provides a setting from which the actors have been erased. His remembering is accompanied by distortion and forgetting, and therefore fills a need to recapture the past as he saw it. The Gypsy represents the same kind of historical problem, or as Mérimée points out in his 1847 supplement,

L’histoire des Bohémiens est encore un problème. On sait à la vérité que leurs premières bandes, fort peu nombreuses, se montrèrent dans l’est de l’Europe, vers le commencement du quinzième siècle ; mais on ne peut dire ni d’où ils viennent, ni pourquoi ils sont venus en Europe... Les Bohémiens eux-mêmes n’ont conservé aucune tradition sur leur origine, et si la plupart d’entre eux parlent de l’Egypte comme de leur patrie primitive, c’est qu’ils ont adopté une fable très anciennement répandue sur leur compte (992, 993).

Like Walter Scott and Victor Hugo, Mérimée finds the Gypsy’s disregard for origins troubling. When Don José states in the final pages of the novella, “je ne suis Egyptien que par hazard” (980), Mérimée suggests that in the brigand’s desire to recapture his *payse*, he has in fact transformed himself into a rootless Gypsy – which, as Chapter 4 points out, is no better than being nostalgic.

French readers coming to *Carmen* for the first time in 1845 or in 1847, would already equate the Gypsy with a literary figure who dislocates historical narrative by sabotaging origin stories. Their kidnappings in literature left families without heirs and heirs without family names, often erasing centuries of history as they took the swaddled baby from its crib. Their lies, betrayal and fortune telling, as Scott points out in *Quentin Durward*, were equally dangerous (at least in France) as they could lead dukes and kings down the wrong historical path. In the first part of the nineteenth century, the Gypsy became a criminal purveyor of the past in French literature – a figure that not only disrupted history, but who represented a historical rupture that many believed was the root cause of France’s *mal du siècle*.

In 1841, however, the Gypsy took on a different role as she was pulled into Léon Curmer’s *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes*, which was a nostalgic effort to capture France’s different *types* and a way of life that many felt “s’efface de jour en jour, et va peut-être disparaître pour jamais” (vi).¹⁷¹ The Gypsy was the ninth *type* to appear in Curmer’s *Province* series, and was penned by a young Amédée Achard, who had yet to become the prolific cloak and dagger novelist who wrote more than 50 novels and numerous theater pieces before he died in 1875. Achard’s Gypsy is part of a conversation encapsulated in Edouard Ourliac’s Introduction to *Province*, and which continues through most of the series.

¹⁷¹ The subtitle of Curmer’s project was *Encyclopédie morale du dix-neuvième siècle*. As Anne-Emmanuelle Demartini points out, *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes* should really be read as « Les Français peints par le Parisien » (Demartini 144). Although the series was sold as an auto-portrait, “quant aux rédacteurs des notices, quand ils ne sont pas Parisiens de souche, ils ont quitté leur province natale, en générale au moment de leurs études pour gagner la capitale” (144). Martini argues that the geographical and cultural distance between the portraitist and his subject makes the *Province* “types” a series of phantoms at best. I would add that these “phantoms” betray the nostalgia of the writers and illustrators, who, estranged from their provinces, are trying to recapture something they have lost but will never have again. It is important to point out that the series was mostly read by the urban populations of Paris and London.

For several of the artists and writers who contributed to the series, *province* represented a way of life that was dying and would most likely disappear in their lifetime because of the rapid effects of progress, which Ourliac believed was symptomatic of a bigger problem. The French « s’efforcent d’oublier quatorze siècles de durée et de gloire... ils effacent nos annales... ils fouillent dans les caveaux de leurs ancêtres, de leurs grands hommes, et... ils jettent leurs cendres au vent ! » (vii). It’s not surprising then that the Gypsy becomes a metaphor for those who dare to forget their past. “N’ayant aucune origine... vagabond qui ne sait d’où il vient” (*Français* 361), the Gypsy is the « enfant perdu » or the « aventureux bâtards » of Europe.

By pulling the Gypsy into a story where « les Français seuls ont droit de bourgeoisie » (361), a line is purposely blurred between the rootless Gypsy and the nineteenth-century Frenchman, who has already been accused by Ourliac of forgetting fourteen centuries of history. At the same time, Achard gives the Gypsy a very important role to play in France’s story, one that will change the course of history in Europe for at least 70 years. Playing with his reader’s superstition, Achard makes the Gypsy fortune teller Napoleon’s accomplice, as he recounts the legend of how a Gypsy woman planted the seeds of ambition in young Napoleon’s head:

On raconte qu’un soir... l’enfant qui sentait déjà peut-être dans son cœur les flammes de ce génie dont les grandes clartés devaient illuminer le monde, se trouve tout à coup, tandis qu’il rêvait, face à face avec une Bohémienne. L’enfant la regarda avec cet œil limpide et clair où l’intelligence rayonnait, et la Bohémienne lui prit la main. On ne sait pas ce qu’elle lui dit ; mais, lorsqu’il revint embrasser sa mère, l’enfant tressaillait comme le cheval qui entend sonner la trompette, son regard était plein d’éclairs, et il semblait qu’une espérance inconnue gonflait sa poitrine d’impatience et d’orgueil (370).

This anecdote would have surely caught the attention of readers in 1841, since political events and the recent repatriation of Napoleon's body had led to a resurgence of nostalgia for Napoleon and his time. Casting the Gypsy in this ghost story, Achard not only made her an influential actor in France's history, but pulled her into Napoleon's myth.

This portrait of the Gypsy would have caught Mérimée's attention, at least in 1843 when his friend, mentor and "maître en *chipe calli*" (tutor in the Gypsy language) visited Paris before publishing his own version of *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes*, titled *Los españoles pintados por si mismos*.¹⁷² Like Curmer, Serafín Estébanez Calderón wanted to include the Gypsy in his collection of Spanish *types*. Although Mérimée didn't write *Carmen* until 1845, Achard's portrait of the Gypsy most likely inspired the Inspector to pull Napoleon into his Gypsy story.¹⁷³ Though Mérimée was interested in Roman civilization and even published *Etudes sur l'histoire romaine* the same year as *Carmen*, the Battle of Munda, given the events of 1840-1845, would have been recognized by French readers as French history disguised in Roman clothing. Although only a political coup, the 18 Brumaire symbolically had much in common with the Battle of Munda.

It was a well known fact in the nineteenth century that Napoleon fancied himself a modern-day Caesar. Not only did he study and copy Caesar's battle strategies, but he appropriated many of the Roman Empire's insignia for his own Empire and army. One only has to look up at the Colonne Vendôme today to see Napoleon pretending to be Julius

¹⁷² Calderón's title is a word-for-word translation of the French work's title. As Maillon and Salomon point out, Mérimée met Calderón during his first trip to Spain in 1830, and when he returned in 1840 "Calderón était récemment marié ce qui ne l'empêchait pas de fréquenter avec Mérimée les mauvais lieux" (*Pléiade* 1562).

¹⁷³ As he tells the Countess of Montijo on May 16, 1845: "Je viens de passer huit jours enfermé à écrire, non point les faits et gestes de feu D. Pedro, mais une histoire que vous m'avez racontée il y a quinze ans et je crains d'avoir gâtée. Il s'agissait d'un jaque de Málaga, qui avait tué sa maîtresse, laquelle se consacrait exclusivement au public » (1558).

César.¹⁷⁴ The Battle of Munda was, as the French archeologist points out in the first paragraph of *Carmen*, the conflict that ended Rome's republic, as Caesar finally squashed "les champions de la république" (*Pléiade* 937) and became Rome's first emperor.¹⁷⁵ Unfortunately, as he also points out, certain details of the battle have been forgotten or remembered incorrectly, such as the "lieu memorable" (937) where the battle took place. As Lamartine had pointed out, forgetting something memorable, especially when it came to Napoleon, was dangerous. Yes, at one time he had the world in his hand, as the statue atop the *Colonne Vendôme* reminds us still today, but he also crushed, ruined and betrayed France's efforts to become a republic and many people to do so.

The fact that Mérimée's archeologist never gets back to his memoir on the Battle of Munda, but offers an ethnological study of the Gypsy instead, reveals what was at stake in reminding France what Napoleon, disguised as Caesar, had done to France, and Europe for that matter. Critics have tried to determine which ethnological, linguistic or historical studies influenced this supplemental chapter, which has a very different tone from the first three chapters originally published in 1845. As George Northup has pointed out, much of Mérimée's study borrows from George Borrow's romanticized accounts of the Spanish Gypsy: *The Zincoli* (1841) and the wildly popular *The Bible in Spain* (1843). Knowing Mérimée, he most likely read Grellmann, Friedrich Pott and other nineteenth-century

¹⁷⁴ The statue that is at the top of the column today is a duplicate of the original that was taken down and melted in 1814. Napoleon, dressed as Cesar, holds a globe in his right hand with a small statue of victory atop the globe. In 1833, Louis-Philippe placed a Napoleon dressed as a French corporal atop the column, and then Napoleon III later commissioned a duplicate be made of the original statue of Napoleon as Cesar to replace the statue Louis-Philippe commissioned. After Communards destroyed the column and the statue in 1871, another column and copy of the original were erected in 1874. What we see today is the second copy of the 1814 original.

¹⁷⁵ He was assassinated shortly after and officially never became Emperor.

linguistic and ethnographical studies of the Gypsy before beginning this chapter. However, his choice to borrow from Borrow was a deliberate choice to keep with the British author's "propensity for romancing" (Northup 18), a tendency Mérimée calls attention to in Chapter 4, slyly mocking Borrow's inaccuracies and superficiality, knowing that both had a role in his own characterization of the Gypsy.¹⁷⁶

Like Borrow, Mérimée had a literary intent for his Gypsy, who fears "*naturellement les coups comme Panurge*" (*Pléiade* 989) and for whom "le plus grand nombre est dans le cas de la laide d'Ovide" (990). Even though Mérimée takes a more scientific tone in this chapter, his Gypsy remains a child of literature's imagination, a metaphor of the lost origin, or in the case of the story's archeologist, his lost or unpublished historical research.

Mérimée's belated and awkward stitching of this supplementary chapter to the original novella in 1847 is a half-hearted attempt to remind his reader that there is a *trou* in his memoir. And the chapter's last sentence, or final words as it were, reveal why this *trou* is hidden behind the Gypsy. Concluding with the Romani proverb, "en retudi panda nasti abela macha," which Mérimée translates as "en close bouche, n'entre point mouche" (994), Mérimée's last words aren't words at all. They are a deliberate silence that reveals why the historian never gets around to publishing his memoirs on Caesar's last battle. "En close bouche, n'entre point mouche" is a common proverb (existing in many European languages)

¹⁷⁶ As Northup also points out, Calderón was also George Borrow's "master of chipe callí," which may be one reason Mérimée took a special interest in the British writer's work. With *The Bible in Spain*, Borrow was looking to obtain a wider audience than he could get with a linguistic or ethnological study. His romanticized autobiography succeeded in becoming one of Britain's most popular works in 1843. Northup also believes Mérimée, as a newly elected member of the Académie française, probably read at least the first volume of *Pott's Die Zigeuner in Europa und Asien*, which was published in 1844, since it was awarded the Prix Volney in 1845.

meant to remind us what happens when one says too much; the discomfort of flies hardly compares to the stings of criticism laid upon he who says something unpopular or foolish.

In the case of Mérimée, pretending to keep one's mouth closed is a way of leaving a conspicuous *trou de mémoire* in a story that stages France's tortured relationship with time. In other words, through his Caesar-sized narrative hole, Mérimée prods his reader to remember what is missing in these "affaires d'Egypte." For if nostalgia had led France full circle into a dangerous international conflict with Napoleon's foes, it's because the French had willfully forgotten, in their zest to recapture an Empire, exactly where their Caesar belongs – not in Monda, Marbella or in Montilla, but in the past. As Mérimée puts it in the first pages of his novella, Cesar and his epic battle are subjects to be deliberated by "tous les archéologues de bonne foi" (*Pléiade* 937), or those who know how to read the past and whose privileged perspective on time safeguards them from nostalgia and Gypsies.

Conclusion : Godard's Resurrection of the Archeologist

The popularity of Bizet's 1875 opera, and its overwhelming influence on reproductions and rewrites of *Carmen*, meant that Mérimée's archeologist all but disappeared in the twentieth century. It isn't until Jean-Luc Godard playfully reworks the story in 1984, that the archeologist is resurrected, albeit in a much-different form.¹⁷⁷ Like

¹⁷⁷ Vicente Aranda's 2003 film *Carmen* is the only other rewrite/translation that I know of that attempts to reinsert Mérimée's archeologist into the *Carmen* story. In the 1980s, at least three other films gave an interpretation of *Carmen*: Peter Brook's filmed version of his stage production *La Tragédie de Carmen* (1983); Francesco Rosi's *Carmen* (1984), which is a reprisal of the opera starring Plácido Domingo; and Carlos Saura's *Carmen* (1983) which reenacts Bizet's storyline by way of flamenco dancers. Evelyn Gould attributes this "revival" with "attempts to envision a new Europe or to further pan-European thinking in direct response to destructive nationalisms and attendant concerns regarding immigrants and their free movement (that bohemian "roving") across national borders" (Gould 11). Pointing to Jacques Delors and his "great push forward toward European unity during the early 1980s... the European Community (EC) was the news of the day" (11). Gould's book was published in 1996 and her ideas are obviously influenced by the Europe fervor

Mérimée, Godard writes himself into his story of Carmen, *Prénom Carmen*, playing Oncle Jean or Monsieur Godard, the story's cultural archeologist. A reflection of the director of the film, Monsieur Godard is a respected and well-known filmmaker, who must come to terms with the fact that he doesn't fit in with the new aesthetics of the eighties. Unlike Mérimée and his archeologist, however, it seems Oncle Jean is unable to escape the destructive force of nostalgia, for he can't help but mourn the disconnect between his life's oeuvre and the twenty somethings who occupy his films and the *salles de cinéma* that screen his work.¹⁷⁸ Hiding within the walls of a psychiatric hospital, he spouts off to a distracted Carmen "les grands livres marquent toujours," hinting at his own doubt that this is still true and that the authors of *grands classiques* – books, films or other – can survive the rapid ruin of art, which is allegorized by Carmen's bizarre accomplices, the young couple selling video cassettes in front of the bank. Screaming "vidéo, vidéo, qui veut de la vidéo? ... Tous les films... toutes les couleurs... Pal et Secam," the couple is supposed to foreshadow the dismantling of Oncle Jean's cinema, as movies are mass-produced and pulled out of the public and shared space of the cinema and into the bourgeois living room.

generated by the 1992 Treaty of Maastricht, which created the European Union, led to the creation of the Euro and called for further European integration. (See my conclusion.) It seems Glasnost and Perestroika, which culminated in the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, also would have been an important influence on the 1980s European imagination. And as Phil Powerie has pointed out in *French Cinema in the 1980s: Nostalgia and the Crisis of Masculinity*, feminism of the 1970s had led to important freedoms for women, which certain filmmakers celebrated in film of the early 1980s, and others nostalgically bemoaned.

¹⁷⁸ As Phil Powrie has pointed out, Godard even discussed this disconnect between he and his young actors in the press, complaining how they and his technicians refused to visit Rodin's sculptures as he asked them to. (He had hoped that Rodin's sculptures would give them ideas for love scenes.) He also lamented the fact that his young Dutch actress, Maruschka Detmers, refused to listen to the Beethoven quartets that were central to the film, for even ten minutes a day. In his article "Jean-Luc's Women," Powerie argues that *Prénom Carmen* is Godard's narcissistic mourning of past images and past women, which feminism and other postmodern criticism were attempting to dismantle in the eighties. I believe Godard's Carmen is more playful, and I will come to this soon.

Anticipating Paul Virilio's 1984 conclusion to *Guerre et Cinéma*, Godard plays out what happens as video, in all its forms, begins to replace cinema – a “guerre des images et des sons qui remplace la guerre des objets... au profit d'une volonté d'illumination généralisée, capable de tout donner à voir, à savoir, à chaque endroit, à chaque instant, version technique de l'œil de Dieu qui interdirait à jamais l'accident, la surprise” (Virilio v). Conscious of video's hold on her generation and its omnipresence in 1980s society, Carmen decides to take advantage of the fact that “ces trucs de vidéo” are “partout” to make her own film, a perverted version of a John Dillinger story she reads in a comic book (not in a *grand livre*) which pretends that the gangster successfully held up a bank by making his victims believe he was shooting a film.¹⁷⁹

By making a videoed film about her outfit's robberies and kidnappings, Carmen hopes to best her famous filmmaker uncle, who always hoped but failed to capture her in his movies. The fact that Carmen lays out her plans to become like her Uncle Jean in Trouville seems an obvious gesture to Flaubert, a *grand auteur* who confessed to disguising his tragic alter ego in the form of a woman, Madame Bovary. The fact that Carmen is in many ways as fragile, hurt, tragic and lost as her disturbed uncle (and therefore “celle qui ne devrait pas s'appeler Carmen”) forces one to ask if Godard isn't telling his audience “Carmen, c'est moi,” or what he could, “peut-être,” become.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹ In choosing Dillinger as Carmen's inspiration, Godard not only nostalgically sends his audience back to the 1930s, but reminds us of the strange series of events around Dillinger's death that blurred the line between cinema and reality. Dillinger was finally caught and killed by the FBI while exiting Chicago's Biograph movie theater after watching Clark Gable get the death penalty in *Manhattan Melodrama* for crimes similar to the ones Dillinger committed.

¹⁸⁰ Godard's Carmen is a very different woman from Mérimée's fearless Carmen and Carmen Jones, whom she unsuccessfully imitates in the Hotel InterContinental.

Carmen, if not suicidal, is apocalyptic. When her uncle refers to her as the “fille d’Electre,” he suggests that her life has been a trajectory of violence and destruction that began with her first relationship and will conclude with her own destruction. As Verena Conley has pointed out, *Prénom Carmen* is a reflection on apocalypse, but an apocalypse that always heralds new beginnings. “Following *2 ou 3 choses que je sais d’elle*, the notion of apocalypse refers to a world on the verge of extinction – the world of atomic bombs as well as of plastic cups – but also to problems of filmmaking. Godard implicitly criticizes dissolution of film into video, perhaps even of the disappearance (or the apocalypse) of a medium” (Conley 74, 75). However, as Conley observes, with every menace of apocalypse, Godard also shows how a door has been left open, how “every apocalypse seems to have its own *dehors* or its own dawn” (75) and therefore gestures toward a “possible renewal of filmmaking” (75).¹⁸¹

In the final moments of the film, Carmen, Godard’s alter ego, closes her story by pointing to this open door, as she forces the bell boy to finish the thought she and her uncle have been unable to complete since the beginning of the movie. “Comment ça finissait quand il y avait, tu sais, tous les coupables dans un coin, et puis, les innocents dans un autre?” her uncle asks during their awkward “dialogue” in the psychiatric hospital, a question she in turn asks her lover Joseph in Trouville and then the valet who finds her dying in the lobby of the InterContinental. In her final breath, she translates apocalypse in a way that gives it another, hopeful, meaning: “quand tout le monde a tout gâché, que tout est

¹⁸¹ Verena Conley’s article on Godard’s film, “A Fraying of Voices: Jean-Luc Godard’s *Prénom Carmen*” teases out all of Godard’s loose ends, and therefore I can only begin to evoke her brilliant arguments here. Unlike other critics, Conley does not fall into the trap Godard sets by casting himself in the film, and does not attempt to psychoanalyze Godard or his supposed *maladie* like other critics unfortunately have done.

perdu, **mais** que le jour se lève... et que l'air quand même se respire?"¹⁸² It's Carmen's "mais" that ultimately turns her into a different Elektra, she who is the "bright one" or "l'aurore," that announces a new beginning.¹⁸³

As breaking waves lit by the sunlight of morning close the film, one has to wonder if Uncle Jean's mourning wasn't a feigned excuse to introduce another *nouvelle vague*. As Conley astutely points out, *Prénom Carmen* is a call to a new aesthetics in film, one in which Godard "unlinks systematically image track and sound track, voice and body in a gesture that produces new ways of linking" (Conley 72). It is an altogether "different type of storytelling" (73), in which "different tonalities, vibrations and temporalities" allow "voices to lead toward each other, in a movement necessary for an affirmation of life and breathing" (73). Though *Prénom Carmen* ends with a nostalgic epitaph "In memoriam small movies," it also opens with what can only be described as a monumental tribute to Godard's new aesthetics. In fact, the first images the director throws at his audiences are three extreme close ups, given from three different angles, of the Golden Lion award he took home after *Prénom Carmen* won the Venice Film Festival's most prestigious prize in 1983, four months before the film's official release.

Because Jean-Luc Godard begins his film in such a confident way, Uncle Jean's nostalgia seems, if not feigned, almost absurd. Mérimée would have smiled at this trick, and at the filmmaker's translation of his archeologist, who, disguised as the nostalgic and washed-up Uncle Jean, ultimately reasserts himself as one of the twentieth century's master storytellers, by taking hold of beginnings and ends and proposing a new path for the future

¹⁸² I have bolded "mais" here.

¹⁸³ According to Britannica, Elektra means "bright one" in Greek.

of film. Like Mérimée, whose Gypsy proverb “En close bouche, n’entre point mouche” mockingly reminds France of its *trou de mémoire*, Jean-Luc Godard’s cultural archeologist ultimately gets the last word and the last laugh, as he leaves audiences wondering if Carmen is really dead, or if her iconoclasm lives on in the “petit coquin qui se cache sous le génie d’une femme” (Pléiade 1134).¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁴ In 1826, when Goethe realized Clara Gazul was actually Mérimée, he said in a review of the young romantic’s work: « Voila un petit coquin qui se cache sous le génie d’une femme ; mais c’est bien un bel et bon génie d’homme fort qui doit aller bien loin » (Pléiade 1134). Godard obviously plays with Mérimée’s *trous de mémoire*, which he himself blames on France’s 1980s youth. As Oncle Jean tells Carmen early in the film: “C’est fou, ces jeunes. Ils oublient tout, et ils ont que de la mémoire. Ils sont dans le trou noir.”

Chapter Four

George Sand's *La Filleule*: When the Gypsy Becomes France's Path to the Future

In the spring of 1853, George Sand began writing *La Filleule* for the republican newspaper *Le Siècle*, known at the time for its gutsy decision to publicly oppose Napoleon III and his December 2, 1852 *coup d'état*.¹⁸⁵ As an adamant spokeswoman for republican ideals and disappointed by Louis-Napoléon's ascension to power, Sand should have found *Le Siècle* a friendly forum to speak her mind about recent political events. However, as modern critics have pointed out, *La Filleule* is a strangely silent novel – at best a murky window from where Sand's readers can only catch glimpses of the historical, political and social problems that would have been nagging the writer as she began to pen what would be her first creative endeavor since Napoleon's *coup d'état*. Some critics have argued that this uncharacteristic silence is due to the strict censorship Napoleon III imposed in 1852 and in turn *Le Siècle* had to enforce on Sand. Just before she began writing *La Filleule*, the newspaper forced Sand to sign a contract that required her writing be “exclusivement littéraire... ne traitant aucune question politique, ni religieuse, ni sociale” (*Corr XI*: 157).¹⁸⁶ As Annabelle Rea has pointed out, these contractual obligations would have presented a professional and moral struggle for Sand whose “commitment to social change never wavered throughout her long writing career” (Rea 45). In other words, if Sand was to remain

¹⁸⁵ Roger Bellet's *Presse et journalisme sous le Second Empire* offers an insightful look at the role of certain newspapers, like *Le Siècle*, in French politics, society and art before and during the Second Empire.

¹⁸⁶ I would like to point out that some critics believe Sand finished writing *Les Maîtres-Sonneurs* before *La Filleule*. However, Sand had planned and was under contract to finish her Gypsy novel first. In fact, *La Filleule* appeared three months before *Les Maîtres-Sonneurs*.

within her contractual obligations, she would have to forgo being George Sand. If, on the other hand, she was to be faithful to herself, she would have to find a way to defy the gag order *Le Siècle* was forcing upon her.

La Filleule was born out of this difficult time in Sand's career, and as Franciska Skutta has astutely observed, is one of Sand's more frustrating novels as its fractured chronology subverts reader expectations and has more in common with the twentieth-century anti-roman than anything written in the romantic genre.¹⁸⁷ The novel's strange narrative collage also make it challenging to navigate as different voices are allowed to interrupt, contradict and constantly question each other. Even those closest to Sand apparently disliked *La Filleule* when it was read aloud at Nohant. Describing what must have been an unusual moment for the writer, Sand explains in a letter to her editor that if her friends and family didn't find the new novel entertaining, it would most likely be poorly received by the general public. Claiming she disliked *La Filleule* herself, Sand admits that she would have burned the manuscript, "si j'avais eu le temps de la remplacer" (*Corr XI* 707). But she did not destroy the manuscript, or try and replace it. And to Sand's surprise, *La Filleule* was very well received by her readers who no doubt were eagerly awaiting her comments on the recent events that had led to Napoleon III's ascension to power.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷ Franciska Skutta isn't alone in remarking that there is something strangely modern about *La Filleule*. Marie-Paule Rambeau, in her introduction to *La Filleule* for Editions de l'Aurore also remarks "ce décalage temporel, ces continuelles distorsions entre le temps du récit et celui de l'action, témoignent à cette date d'une conception résolument modern de l'écriture Romanesque volontairement éclatée" (8).

¹⁸⁸ In the same letter to Hetzel, Sand states "La Filleule a eu dans *Le Siècle* un succès étonnant. Placide a écrit pour m'en demander bientôt un autre, disant que *Le Siècle* était enchanté de cette affaire" (707). Obviously Sand had explored a subject that was timely and important to liberal readers of *Le Siècle*. Today, *La Filleule* is one of Sand's lesser read novels. Annabelle Rea and Franciska Skutta are the only two critics I know who have devoted serious time to studying this novel. *La Filleule* was last edited by Rambeau in 1989 for Editions de l'Aurore.

The novel's frustrating form communicates quite a bit about the time Sand was writing in and about. In 1853, France's history was both fractured and frustrating as three revolutions had heralded new beginnings, only to end exactly where they had begun – with a monarchist regime. *Le Siècle*'s liberal readers would have picked up on Sand's savvy embodiment of their time represented in the narrative fits and starts of *La Filleule*. Sand's readership would have also been quick to notice that she had appropriated the Gypsy to be the unlikely heroine of her new novel. As explained in previous chapters, by mid-century the Gypsy was a character synonymous with disruption and chaos in historical narrative, as Scott, Hugo and then Mérimée had turned her into a literary metaphor for France's own estrangement from its past. Resurrecting the Gypsy from the literary grave where Hugo and Mérimée so deftly buried her, Sand deploys her in an altogether different way. Sand's Gypsy not only achieves great artistic success, but becomes the author of her own story, a narrative whose relentless questions unravel the kind of paternal plots that had trapped France in a series of failed monarchies upheld by nostalgia.

Self representation through writing is an important lesson in *La Filleule* and becomes a way for the heroine to write her own future. Much like Aurore Dupin who became George Sand after publishing her first novel, Morena is a young woman whose identity evolves as writing becomes a tool for exploring exactly who she is and who she wants to become. What Morena discovers through her astute study of herself and those around her is that the past doesn't have to be a blueprint for the future, and that destiny is what one makes of it. As an adopted child whose past is her family's dirty little secret, Morena puts pen to paper even though she has no patronym, and is still trying to unlock the mystery of her family story. Unraveling the secrets and lies that surround her, Morena becomes the reader's passageway

to the unspeakable, or that which has been deemed taboo by Morena's father and godfather.¹⁸⁹ In novels such as *La Marraine*, *François le Champi*, *Isidora*, *La Filleule* and *Les Maîtres sonneurs* Sand employs the adopted child or godchild to challenge traditional family structures. Even in Sand's early work, non-traditional families become a way to shed light on what otherwise would remain in France's domestic closet, a literary device used to push the limits of "family plot" and to challenge reader expectations of what these *histoires* should be.¹⁹⁰ A reader unfamiliar with Sand's oeuvre would expect a bourgeois couple like Anicée and Stéphen to form and reform a Gypsy girl through indoctrination and assimilation. But *La Filleule* is a much different Bildungsroman. By the end of the novel, Morena not only escapes assimilation, but points out what is wrong with the family plot her godfather tries to construct around her. In fact, what makes *La Filleule* a timely novel is how Morena's adoption into a French family fails in almost every way.

La Filleule begins around 1830 and ends in August 1852, which invites the reader to compare Morena's family drama to the larger French family tragedy that acts as the story's backdrop. In doing so, the reader finds that both families are locked in an endless repetition of the past, unable to break free from ghosts that continue to haunt the present. If read as a commentary on the political events that led to the death of the Second Republic, *La Filleule*

¹⁸⁹ As Mary Douglas has pointed out in *Purity and Danger*, every society has its taboo – which she explains is a way for a particular group of people to organize, order and control the chaotic world around them.

¹⁹⁰ I use the French here because of its doubling meaning that suggests both story and history. Janet Beizer's book, *Family Plots. Balzac's Narrative Generations*, was instrumental in my early thinking. Also, I was surprised to find that Sand addresses nontraditional families in her first (unpublished) book *La Marraine* (1829), in which the heroine is a mother figure to the novel's misfit characters. Sand's writing on nontraditional families does not always end well for parents and children, as is the case with *Mont-Revêche*, a strange little novel about how a young women's step-daughters drive her to the grave. However, they inevitably push us to think about our own preconceptions about the family and how we write and read family plots. Although I do not agree with Annabelle Rea's conclusion on adoption in *La Filleule*, her detailed work on the strict laws regarding adoption in the nineteenth century is important and fascinating.

is also an examination of where nostalgia and betrayal had led France: nowhere. As the first fictional piece Sand publishes after Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte becomes Napoleon III, the novel is also a space in which a very political writer can vent her frustrations about the trajectory France had chosen, a path she later described as a “cercle vicieux” (Souvenirs 134) or a dangerous historical *boucle* in which one dictator led to another. Given the extreme danger of speaking one’s mind in 1853, Sand’s message is veiled, tucked between pen holes and hidden textual doorways waiting to be pried open by readers who shared her frustration. But if the success of *La Filleule* with 1853 readers proves anything, it’s that Sand was not alone in her fear that the past was becoming France’s future.

Parlant entre seuils

The twelve years between 1830 and 1852 constituted a period in France’s history that poignantly proved the old proverb “the more things change, the more they stay the same.” In little more than twenty years, the French had lived through two unsuccessful popular revolutions that eventually ended the same way – with a bourgeois king. Although discontent with the present, the French people were unable to see that in (re)turning to the past, they would end up exactly where they had started, in the same repressive situation they had been so eager to leave. As Annabelle Rea has pointed out, the exact date when Stéphen begins writing his memoirs is ambiguous, and therefore the date Sand chooses as a beginning for *La Filleule* can only be guessed at around 1830 – the year that the July Revolution “did not accomplish what many had hoped it would” (Brooks 649). Beginning her 1853 novel around 1830 would have been an obvious way of pointing out the heartbreaking *boucle* France had written itself into – a story where two revolutions (July

1830 and February 1848) became tragic copies of one another and instead of leading France forward, had only taken it backward. At the same time, by making her reader guess that *La Filleule* opens in 1830, Sand shed light on what was most disappointing in this *histoire*. In repeating the past over and over again, France had made beginnings trite as they had become boring replications that blurred present and past. *La Filleule*'s ambiguous beginning makes its first few pages unsettling for a reader who desperately wants to know when the novel begins, or what time period Stéphen is referring to. It is only after the reader is well into the novel that Sand gives us a clue, dating one of Stéphen's later journal entries September 27, 1832.

After leaving her reader to waiver in temporal limbo for more than forty pages and through the first few years of Stéphen's writing, Sand asks us to reflect on why this first chronological clue is special or important. Of course, 1832 is the year Aurore Dupin became George Sand, signing this pseudonym to her first novel *Indiana*. And as Pierre Laforge has pointed out, 1832 is also the year Sand became political as her novel was interpreted by many of her contemporaries as "une machine de guerre contre l'institution du mariage et, par-delà, contre la société, en tant que le mariage en est l'élément constitutif" (Laforge 88). Those who followed Sand's work in 1853 would have identified 1832 as a special year for the writer, who had recently commemorated the twentieth anniversary of *Indiana* by writing a third and final preface for the novel.

This third *Indiana* preface was well timed as it bookended a twenty-year conversation Sand began with her readers in 1832. It also gave Sand a space in which she could speak directly to her reader – a privilege she found more difficult to obtain since Napoleon had been elected president of the Second Republic. As Gérard Genette suggests in

Seuils, the stories writers choose to construct outside of their novels should never be ignored, as prefaces, introductions and other paratext and epitext are always a way to communicate with readers directly or indirectly. What is difficult to ignore in Sand's story is that she began writing the third and final preface for *Indiana* only months before she began writing *La Filleule*, the first novel she published without a preface or introduction in her twenty-year career.

The fact that Sand chose to write a third preface to *Indiana* testifies to the fact that she wanted her 1852 readers to revisit the conversation she started in 1832. In all three prefaces, she reiterates her hope that one day all men and women will be given the "liberté de la pensée, liberté d'écrire et de parler" (1832 Préface). Her tone in 1842 and 1852 is more cynical, as she notices little progress has been made over the past ten and then twenty years.

As she states in her 1852 preface:

Il est encore défendu à certains écrivains d'ouvrir la bouche, sous peine de voir les sergents de ville de certains feuilletons s'élaner sur leur œuvre pour les traduire devant la police des pouvoirs constitués. Si cet écrivain fait parler noblement un ouvrier, c'est une attaque contre la bourgeoisie ; si une fille égarée est réhabilitée après expiation, c'est une attaque contre les femmes honnêtes ; si un escroc prend des titres de noblesse , c'est une attaque contre le patriciat ; si un bravache fait le matamore, c'est une insulte contre l'armée ; si une femme est maltraitée par son mari, c'est la promiscuité qui est prêchée... Quel malheur qu'on ne songe point à établir un petit tribunal d'inquisition littéraire dont vous seriez les tourmenteurs ! Vous suffirait-il de dépecer et de brûler les livres à petit feu, et ne pourrait-on, sur vos instances, vous permettre de faire tâter un peu de torture aux écrivains qui se permettent d'avoir d'autres dieux que les vôtres ? (Préface 1852)

Constrained by the censorship she describes above and by the contract she signed with *Le Siècle*, Sand likely felt pressured to publish *La Filleule* without a guiding preface or

introduction, without paratext.¹⁹¹ However, if *La Filleule* is read as a way of continuing the conversation Sand began in the triptych of prefaces she finalized in 1852, the novel becomes a *mise-en-scène* of the absurd situation Sand found herself in – one in which a writer is “défendu... d’ouvrir la bouche”, the aristocracy is “un escroc” and having the lower classes “parler noblement” is “une attaque contre la bourgeoisie.”¹⁹²

With the help of the Gypsy character, Sand is able to overcome these obstacles and uncover the stories that society would prefer to leave buried as they expose the fact that “une fille égarée” isn’t much different from “les femmes honnêtes” and that sometimes the “ouvrier” has something intelligent to say to the bourgeoisie and the noblesse. Because *La Filleule* suggests that men and women should question the paternal plots that try and maintain a “passé qui s’écroule,” the novel should be read as politically and socially subversive. As the novel’s heroine becomes the master of her own destiny, she shows how to disrupt history’s viscous cycle by refusing to take her place in the paternal plots written around her. Morena’s efforts to free herself from enslaving narratives are not punished, as in *Quentin Durward*, *Notre-Dame de Paris* and *Carmen*. Rather, she is rewarded with love and a successful music career while her fathers remain stuck in a past which leads them nowhere.

¹⁹¹ As René Bourgeois points out in her article “L’art de la préface chez George Sand: un jeu de reflets,” Sand was not only known to write multiple prefaces and introductions for her own works but also for works that were not her own. According to Bourgeois, *La Filleule* (1853) is the first novel Sand published without a preface or introduction. Only three other works do not have a preface or introduction: *Le Marquis de Villemar* (1860), *La Ville noire* (1860) and *Nanon* (1872).

¹⁹² This kind of intertextuality would not have been foreign to Sand’s readers. As Jacinta Wright has pointed out, « ce qui frappe par-dessus tout chez Sand, c’est sa vision d’un texte perméable où se multiplient les références à d’autres textes. Pour Sand, le texte ne se clôt jamais ; mais se verra retravaillé encore et encore » (Wright 99). I also want to direct my reader’s attention to Richard Watt’s book *Packaging Post/Coloniality* in which he expands on Genette’s theory to show how paratext can serve as a space in which the periphery or outcast can be mediated, translated or retranslated.

This makes *La Filleule* a strange Bildungsroman with a nostalgic thread. As its title promises, the novel eventually tells the story of how a fourteen-year-old girl, raised by a French couple, learns that she is the illegitimate daughter of a Gypsy woman and a Spanish Duke – a family secret that she turns into an opportunity to reinvent herself. But while Morena’s quest to learn more about her mysterious parents pushes forward, leading to her *formation*, a second narrative pulls the reader and the novel’s characters backward into a story that has no other purpose than to romance the past.¹⁹³ Stéphen’s nostalgic longing for a time that no longer exists would be expected from a man who has reached the end of his life story. But as Morena points out, Stéphen is a young man who has become old before his time: “il est plus jeune que mamita, et ce qui est jeune plaît toujours mieux aux enfants. Pourtant... quand je demande son âge et qu’on me dit qu’il n’a que trente-quatre ans, je suis tout étonnée. Je me rappelle cependant qu’il avait les yeux un peu creusés, le teint pale et quelques cheveux blancs. Voilà tout ce que je peux me représenter de sa figure” (*Filleule* 150). His sunken eyes, graying hair and pale skin are harbingers of where nostalgia is taking Stéphen – toward premature senescence. His need to dwell on and in the past has made him an old man at the age of 34.

Refusing to live in the present or to imagine a future that isn’t a faded copy of the past, Stéphen continues to write about, relive and recreate his version of the past, forcing the

¹⁹³ Marianne Hirsch’s article, “The Novel of Formation as Genre: Between Great Expectations and Lost Illusions” helped me think through the juxtaposition or rather opposition of Morena and Stéphen’s life stories. Although “some works defy rigid classification” (299), the direction of a hero or heroine’s development can be helpful in analyzing exactly what the author wants to communicate about society. Because Morena’s story pushes forward while Stéphen’s pushes backwards, there is a strange wrinkle in *La Filleule*’s narrative time – a literary technique, I argue, that is Sand’s veiled commentary on where nostalgia had led France.

novel's other characters into a sad *répétition* of his family drama.¹⁹⁴ Obsessed with his mother who died while he was away at boarding school, Stéphen smothers any attempt to speak a story that isn't Madame Rivesanges. It's only thanks to a narrator who describes him or herself as "l'écrivain qui a recueilli les documents de cette histoire" (*Filleule* 181) that large rips and tears are made in Stéphen's narrative fabric, making room for others to speak.¹⁹⁵ The stories told through these holes speak about the future – the hope of becoming a mother, the desire to become a lover, the dream of becoming something other than a prisoner of the past. In her own letters, Sand made it clear why she felt it urgent to speak and dream about the future and why she was so intent on unraveling the nostalgic thread that was holding France prisoner. What she calls *engouement* for the past was responsible for her country's series of failed revolutions and continued political and social oppression. Only the future, an "inconnu" (*CorrVIII* 316) that at first would be chaotic and scary, could offer a much-needed alternative to France's tyrannical past. Writing to her cousin only days before the June Days sent France stumbling backwards, she warns what will happen if her countrymen continue to lag behind:

¹⁹⁴ I use the French *répétition* instead of the English repetition because of its multiple meanings. According to the *Petit Larousse*, *répétition* can mean: "retour de la même idée, du même mot; redite"; "réitération d'une même action"; "séance de travail au cours de laquelle s'effectue la mise au point d'un spectacle" and in psychoanalysis "processus inconscient et irrésistible qui replace le sujet dans des situations désagréables, analogues à des expériences anciennes" as in *compulsion de répétition*. Stéphen's nostalgic staging of the past is a way of deferring a disagreeable and painful present and future, and there is no doubt a tinge of trauma in his need to continually repeat the past.

¹⁹⁵ The narrator also describes him/herself as someone who knew "intimement les principaux personnages de cette histoire" (*Filleule* 69) and took the time to collect or *recueillir* (181) the various documents that make up this novel. Annabelle Rea has suggested the narrator may be Clet. But as someone who is never allowed into the family's most intimate secrets, this is unlikely. Although not important to my argument, I would suggest that the narrator or "écrivain" is either Rosario or Morena because (s)he knew "intimement" all the characters and because as a Gypsy s(he) would be typecast as a *glaneur* or someone who "ramasse" or "recueille" what others have left behind. See Chapter 1.

je crois que nous avons encore, vous et moi, la même chose à nous dire: Vous, *Pourvu que nous n'allions pas trop vite !* Moi : *Pourvu que tout n'aille pas trop lentement...* Nous voyons tout différemment, et j'ai peur d'avoir raison... J'ai peur que la majorité de l'assemblée ne soit extrêmement imprudente, à force de prudence. Vous savez que cela arrive quelque fois et qu'en reculant tout doucement devant une maison qui s'écroule, on est écrasé, tandis que ceux qui l'ont traversée au galop sont sauvés (*CorrVIII* 464).

The metaphor Sand uses in this 1848 letter is meant to remind her cousin how dangerous it is for the provisional government to “reculer” or go backwards instead of riding the momentum of the Revolution forward. The fact that Sand chose to put “une maison,” a house or home, at the heart of her metaphor alludes to the difficulty of moving past the emotions that bind us to what home once was, whether that be a time, place or people. Writing this letter from Nohant, Sand understood what was at stake emotionally in turning one's back on home. But as she points out here, living in a home that no longer offers safe abode is dangerous, as it risks collapsing under the aging foundations of the past. For Sand, the bourgeois government's reticence to move forward toward an “inconnu” not only killed the momentum of the revolution, but also the hope that France would evolve into something other than a house haunted by failed monarchies.

As Sand watched the bourgeois provisional government betray the lower classes during the June Days, she also began to understand that sentimentality was not at the heart of France's nostalgia. In other words, turning to the past was not a means to return to what was tried and true. It was both a symptom of and a means for the bourgeoisie to assume a new role in a perverse *répétition* of the past, one in which they would become France's new ruling class. As Sand puts it in a June 15, 1848 letter to Italian philosopher Giuseppe Mazzini: « La bourgeoisie veut régner » (*CorrVIII* 511). « Caste insensée, téméraire comme une royauté expirante, qui joue sa dernière partie, qui cherche son appui, comme les

monarques d'hier, dans la force matérielle » (516). In the letters she writes just after the June Days, Sand also predicts that one nostalgia, based on greed, would lead to another, based on betrayal and fear. Again in her correspondence with Mazzini, she states that the republican government's injustices would lead the French people to seek refuge in a « nom propre » (*CorrVIII* 514), an Adolphe Thiers or a Louis-Napoléon – men who knew how to exploit the past so as to convince the lower classes that a powerful name could be a formidable foe for the bully that the bourgeoisie had become.

By the time presidential elections came around in December, the Second Republic had proven itself more repressive than the monarchy it had replaced and as Sand predicted, the people retaliated, voting « contre les actes de cette fausse république » (*CorrVIII* 731) and for a “nom propre” (514). Explaining the situation to Charles Duvernet : « Pour le peuple de Paris, la république c'était la fermeture des ateliers nationaux sans ménagement et sans compensation, plus les *douceurs* de la répression de l'insurrection. Pour les paysans de toute la France c'était l'impôt et le resserrement de l'argent » (*CorrVIII* 731).¹⁹⁶ Seeking revenge for these injustices, the people (re)turned to Napoleon, an apparent reincarnation of a popular Emperor and whose only political ambition was to take France back to 1804. An advocate of socialism, Sand was empathetic to the people's predicament and understood why they had turned to Louis-Napoléon. But she also knew that by electing a Bonaparte as

¹⁹⁶ The italics here are Sand's and underline her apparent sarcasm and disgust with regards to the Assembly's treatment of workers. If I rely mostly on Sand's *Correspondance* here, it is because by May 1848, Sand had retreated to Nohant and published few political texts. As Michelle Perrot points out in her edited collection of Sand's political texts: « C'est dans la *Correspondance* qu'il faut dorénavant suivre l'évolution d'une pensée qui se fait plus subtile, attentive aux réalités sociologiques du temps, sans renoncer jamais à rien de ses convictions fondamentales » (Perrot 545). In fact, her famous article « A propos de l'élection de Louis Bonaparte à la présidence de la République » which was published December 22, 1848 in *La Réforme* is only an veiled sketch of the ideas that she elaborates openly in her correspondence with Mazzini and other socialists.

France's first president, the French were locking themselves in "un nouveau bail avec le passé" (*CorrVIII* 508), a renter's contract that would force them to live in the past for the next four years while the door to the future was locked and the keys hidden away.

In 1848, the name Napoleon became what Roland Barthes refers to in *Mythologies* as a "cadavre parlant" (Barthes 206), a signifier emptied of reality, colonized by myth and then used as a powerful conduit for ideology.¹⁹⁷ The message Louis-Napoléon and other Bonapartists propagated through the name Napoleon was a call to return to a mythical time in France's history, when the French were united in conquering the world – a rhetoric that used nostalgia and myth to successfully silence another story of how one man's personal ambition led to millions of deaths and years of suffering. For Sand and other socialists who refused to sign this "bail avec le passé," retreat and silence became the only possible means of survival. As she tells many of her friends facing prison or exile in 1852, "engagez-vous pour ce temps-là, à ne pas vous occuper de POLITIQUE. Ce n'est pas renoncer à vos opinions, c'est ajourner votre action. Ce n'est pas une humiliation que vous acceptez, c'est une nécessité que vous subissez" (*CorrXI* 273). Sand wrote this letter to Ernest Périçois in August 1852, only two months after she signed the contract with *Le Siècle* that prevented her from putting anything political, social or religious in her upcoming novel.¹⁹⁸ Reading

¹⁹⁷ In his description of how myth makes its home in language, Barthes claims that "le mythe" is a language "qui ne veut pas mourir: il arrache aux sens dont il s'alimente une survie insidieuse, dégradée, il provoque en eux un sursis artificiel dans lequel il s'installe à l'aise, il en fait des cadavres parlants" (12). Because myth and nostalgia use language in similar ways and for similar purposes, they often work together to transmit ideology. Similar to myth, nostalgia blurs/erases reality and history so as to make the past a more seductive place than the present and future.

¹⁹⁸ This quote is from a letter Sand writes to Ernest Périçois on August 2, 1852. Périçois was one of Sand's friends from La Châtre and was active in efforts to establish a socialist government after the February 1848 Revolution. Classified as "rouge," he was persecuted for his socialist ideas when the political tide turned conservative. According to Georges Lubin, Périçois would be "assigné à résidence en 1852, exilé en 1858" (*CorrVIII* 794).

this letter *à la lettre* could lead one to believe that Sand's silence on the political tragedies that marked the years that serve as her novel's backdrop is a sign of submission – “une nécessité” (*CorrXI* 273) or a means of riding out the political persecution that awaited those who dared speak out against the new Napoleon's regime. However, with Sand it is always important to read double, or twice as it were.¹⁹⁹ A first reading of her letter to Périgois could lead us to believe that she is trying to downplay POLITIQUE. But the fact that Sand puts this word and only this word in capital letters suggests otherwise and makes the reader hesitate before taking the letter's meaning at face value. As a novel whose silence is not only out of character but disturbing, *La Filleule* – like Sand's letter to Périgois – asks us to read or listen for what is not or rather *cannot* be said. What emerges from the other side of silence is Sand's condemnation of nostalgia as a way of forcefully quieting revolution and its promise of change. This double meaning, which seeps to the surface of the novel through several narrative rips and tears, becomes Sand's subversive way of defying the silence that had been imposed on her and therefore becomes her counterstrike on a past that was imprisoning France's future.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁹ Feminist critics such as Wendy Deutelbaum, Cynthia Huff, Maryline Lukacher and Elizabeth Harlan to some extent have argued that Sand's use of doubles is a way for her to work through her own family drama in which her aristocratic grandmother did not approve of her plebian mother, who was most likely a prostitute. Deutelbaum and Huff argue that Sand was always torn between respecting her grandmother and longing for her imperfect mother – a psychological scar, these critics argue, that becomes the limit of her feminism. However, Sand's frequent use of doubles and doubling also hints that, as a writer, she enjoyed playing with the duplicitous nature of language and, like most writers, reveled in making her reader struggle with a dose of uncertainty. Throughout her life, George Sand tried to eschew labels, always reveling in being *double* as both George and Aurore, both city (Paris) and country (le Berry), both feminist (as an advocate of divorce) and not. In fact, socialist and writer are perhaps the only labels she assumed throughout her long career and life.

²⁰⁰ As Sand points out in her *Correspondance*, nostalgia transgressed social lines, affecting the middle and upper classes along with the lower classes. In a letter to her friend Hortense Allart de Méritens, she sharply criticizes the writer/feminist for openly supporting Napoleon's campaign and ends by saying “je ne suis pas comme vous idolâtre des talents au point de confondre l'homme et son oeuvre, et de prendre pour phares des noms propres” (508). The “oeuvre” Sand refers to here is Napoleon's *Extinction du paupérisme*, a work which Sand read and had admired but did not confuse with Napoleon's ultimate goal of becoming Emperor of a

... *Or the Importance of Penholes*

As Franciska Skutta has pointed out in her comparative study of *Isidora* and *La Filleule*, the latter demands an active participation from the reader who must reconstruct the chronology, events, relationships and even dialogues of a narrative that is full of holes, or what Skutta calls “une faille à réparer, une lacune à combler, donc un ‘trou de mémoire’” (Skutta 332) that is left open to interpretation. As discussed in the first two chapters of this work, *failles*, *lacunes* and *trous de mémoire* played an important role in the Gypsy plot as it had been penned by Walter Scott in 1823, Victor Hugo in 1831 and Prosper Mérimée in 1845. Holes and rips in the chronological seams of *Quentin Durward*, *Notre-Dame de Paris* and *Carmen* were a way for the historian-writer to assert his authority over the text, as he sewed up and repaired the historic and mnemonic gaps opened by the Gypsy. By the end of their texts, Scott, Hugo and Mérimée are the heroes of their own stories, rooting an unwilling and uncertain present to a safe and familiar past by burying the Gypsy and her chaos in the conclusion of their works.²⁰¹ As society’s uncanny Other whose disrespect for unifying *histoires* perfectly personified the legacy of the Revolution, the Gypsy was an easy

bourgeois regime. As Eve Sourian has pointed out in “George Sand et le coup d’état de Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte,” by 1852 any admiration George Sand had for the author of *Extinction du paupérisme* had turned to “méfiance car elle ne croyait pas à son amour pour l’égalité” (Sourian 111). Sourian goes on to explain that what may appear to be respect in some of their correspondence was really “resignation” (113). Sourian’s astute study shows how Sand came to many of the same conclusions that Karl Marx outlines in his studies of the French Revolutions, stating in her conclusion: “Il est regrettable qu’on lui ait presque toujours accordé le coeur sans mentionner l’intelligence politique ou même la vision” (119). Part of my efforts here are in response to Sourian’s call for more political readings of Sand’s literature. I would also like to refer my reader to Michelle Perrot’s insightful work on Sand’s political activism.

²⁰¹ As explained in Chapters 1 and 2, both Hugo and Mérimée assert a strong narrative presence in their Gypsy plots through moments of metalepsis.

boogeyman and scapegoat for writers looking to punish and eradicate disorder from historical narratives.

Sand would have been aware of the political and symbolic sword she could wield with the Gypsy. And by making a Gypsy the heroine and not the protagonist of her 1853 novel, she had already given her readers a clue as to the intent of her novel. Deconstructing the model built in the first part of the century, Sand does not seek to discipline her Gypsy for disrupting *histoires*. Rather, she uses the Gypsy to open holes in one man's story, a prosaic narrative that relies on nostalgia to quiet the stories that could interrupt his romance with the past. It is thanks to Sand's Gypsy girl that plot even progresses in *La Filleule*, since Stéphen is unable to move past one traumatic event in his life: the death of his beloved mother. Without the holes, rips and tears that come with Morena's appearance in this strange family tale, *La Filleule* would read much like France's political drama – a story whose plot is so mired down in the past that it is stagnant and unable to move forward.

It is perhaps important to remember the story Stéphen feels compelled to tell. Writing in the first person through what is described at first as “mémoires” (*Filleule* 35) and then “souvenirs” (69), Stéphen opens the novel with ramblings about how miserable his life is after the death of his mother, a traumatic event that takes place years before Morena's birth and at first seems out of place in a novel whose title promises the reader the story of a goddaughter.²⁰² As Stéphen poetically puts it, he is suffering from an incapacity to let go of the past. He would prefer to “oublier l'avenir, afin de m'habituer au souvenir du passé”

²⁰² Many thanks to Janet Beizer whose insightful class discussions encouraged me to pause and look closely at the figure of the mother in texts and other cultural productions. It goes without saying, that I highly recommend her beautiful and brilliant book *Thinking Through the Mothers: Reimagining Women's Biographies*.

(*Filleule* 33). As Morena's godfather and the novel's primary father figure, Stéphen would be a nineteenth-century reader's trusted voice of authority and guide through the text – especially since Sand does not provide a preface, introduction or an omniscient narrator to direct our reading. But playing with the reader's desire to move forward toward a climax and resolution, Sand quickly undermines Stéphen's authority by making him the author of a narrative dead end. Turning round and round in a past that leads nowhere, the reader must then decide whether to remain faithful to Stéphen's dead-end, or to follow a Gypsy whose glimpse of the future offers a more interesting narrative trail.

To illustrate just how imprisoning nostalgia can be, Sand gives Stéphen several pages to describe the “cellule” (*Filleule* 7) that he builds around his grief. Sequestering himself in a tiny Paris apartment with objects that remind him of his mother, he spends most of his time fetishizing Mme Rivesanges, caressing or gazing upon her shawl, books, piano and the locks of hair she bequeathed to him on her deathbed. Unfortunately for the reader, these objects never generate a resurgence of memories for Stéphen, who longs for the past but is never able to imagine past events, places or people or describe them in his narrative. This means that the life of Mme Rivesanges is completely absent from her son's text, replaced with her son's fetishistic desire for something he doesn't really remember. As a result, Stéphen's story carries little meaning, since the only story he tells is one of desperate longing. As Stéphen's friend Edmond Roque puts it, the young man has literally mummified himself in his grief. “Te momifier” (*Filleule* 15) is an appropriate *jeu de mots* for Stéphen's nostalgic petrification or fossilization, since “momifier” is a close homonym to Maman and points to the danger of wrapping oneself up like a *momie* in Maman. Making the past an idol to worship rather than a mnemonic space to explore, Stéphen has not only

erased Mme Rivesanges from his writing, but his own autobiographical memoirs and souvenirs have become fetishistic blank pages that, much like the mummy's wrappings, hide the fact that nothing is inside.²⁰³

Because Stéphen must shut out the “va et vient” (*Filleule 7*) of the outside world to preserve his nostalgia, the reader is also deprived of the social upheaval that could have made his story interesting. In other words, the young man's need to shut himself away with the past prevents the reader from experiencing any part of the revolution, change and movement happening just outside his window. Afraid that the present may disrespect or disfigure the relics he obsesses over, Stéphen keeps his apartment shades drawn and door locked in hopes that friends and family will be discouraged from calling.²⁰⁴ His friend Roque finally convinces the young man to make a tiny hole in his hermetic prison – “un trou de la grosseur d'un tuyau de plume” (8) in his front door which will give him “un point d'observation” (10) if needed. Roque's suggestion to put a pen hole in Stéphen's door seems absurd to the reader who knows that the young man only needs to open a shade or a window to see what's going on in the outside world. But the absurd is an obvious literary maneuver meant to catch our attention, inciting the question: why is a pen hole important to this story? In a scene that shortly follows this one, it becomes clear why Sand suggests pen

²⁰³ As Susan Stewart has pointed out in *On Longing*, the souvenir has a structure similar to that of the fetish, which also relies on metonymy and distance from the original object of desire to create a relationship of longing with the substitution. In Stéphen's story, the mother is fetishized to a point that she becomes an empty signifier. Sand's choice of the mummy as a metaphor is clever, as it plays with the idea of hiding something that isn't really there. The mummification process always begins with removing the dead body's vital organs (including the heart and brain), and then wrapping the empty body with white, colorless linens.

²⁰⁴ Stéphen explains his fear of the outside world at one point, describing the only evening he did open his door to friends: “je les vis poser leurs cigares allumés sur le châle de ma mère et ouvrir son piano pour y jouer à tour de bras des contredanses... j'étais inquiet, agité” (*Filleule 7*).

holes as an antidote to Stéphen's nostalgia, which has been reinforced by his fetishistic writing.

When Stéphen finally leaves his Paris prison, he immediately encounters a dying Gypsy woman whose pale face “encadrée de longs cheveux noirs, représentait à mon imagination ma mère” (*Filleule* 24). Unable to leave his mother's ghost in Paris, this chance encounter with a dying Gypsy woman becomes a way for Stéphen to prolong his longing. Seeing the Gypsy's son cry over her dead body, Stéphen begins to compare the boy's grief to his own: “je sentis des ruisseaux de larmes couler sur mes joues, en même temps qu'un élan sympathique me portait à une commisération infinie pour cet être frappé d'une infortune semblable à la mienne” (24). But the more Stéphen tries to incorporate this Gypsy family into his nostalgic fantasy, the more its members evade him. As Roque points out, Madame Maranges' spooky doppelganger is no “Medina-Coeli” (26).²⁰⁵ The Gypsy woman was probably a thief, or at best “une diseuse de bonne aventure” or “danseuse de carrefour” (26). Her son also escapes Stéphen's attempts to pull him into his nostalgic narrative by running away the next morning. Unable to understand how the Gypsy boy could part from

²⁰⁵ The Medina-Coeli ducs were supposedly the illegitimate descendants of French royalty. Because Stéphen uses Morena's mother as a doppelganger for his own mother, Roque's “joke” is really on Stéphen, who through his romantic fantasy has made his mother something more than what she really is – the wife of a bourgeois farmer. “Mon père apporta en mariage une fortune de champagne... ma mère, une bonne éducation, des habitudes plus élégantes et un nom plus anciennement admis au rang de bourgeoisie » (4). As Stéphen sees it, his father's biggest sin is putting land above name and title, something his family never really possessed. After his father remarries “une paysanne” who “venait s'implanter de l'autre côté de la rue” (3), Stéphen believes his succession to the family estate is in danger because something may be given to this lowly peasant woman and her brood. As he puts it, « ce n'est pas tant le nom que la terre qui est l'idéal de ce bourgeois de campagne. Peu lui importe le sexe de son unique héritier. En cela, il diffère de l'ancien noble, qui tenait à la terre à cause du nom et du titre » (4). Again, nothing in Stéphen's family history makes him noble. He conflates his mother's name with the “ancien noble” and continues to do so throughout the novel – one reason he takes his mother's last name, Rivesanges, instead of using what he believes to be his father's less dignified name, Guérin.

his grief so abruptly, Stéphen's "imagination... se refroidit tout à fait" (28).²⁰⁶ The Gypsy boy's ability to move past his grief and his refusal to be part of Stéphen's nostalgic romance not only interrupts the story Stéphen is imagining around his family, but causes his narrative literally to fall apart. As he begins to recount this adventure to a friend, three black dots come together to make an ellipse in the middle of his memoirs – a pen hole that interrupts Stéphen midsentence so the narrator's voice can surface for the first time:

(Ici, nous trouvons une lacune dans le manuscrit de Stéphen Rivesanges, soit qu'il ne l'ait jamais remplie, soit qu'un de ses cahiers ait été perdu ou brûlé. Mais nous trouvons, pour nous renseigner sur la suite de son histoire, diverses lettres et fragments qui combleront cette lacune et qui ont sans doute été réunis à dessein par lui à ses mémoires) (34, 35).

The ellipsis, like the strange pen hole in Stéphen's door, is both an omission and an observation point. As an omission, it allows other texts – "diverses lettres et fragments" (*Filleule* 35) – to fill in the hole that the Gypsy family's uncanny presence ripped into Stéphen's text. As an observation point, the hole allows the reader to see or rather hear what has been left out of Stéphen's story until now.

The voice used to fill the gap in Stéphen's story takes the form of a letter, written by a daughter to her mother. The epistolary form of the writing allows one woman's voice to call out to another while telling the story of how a daughter would like to become a mother herself. It is the first time a woman is given direct address in the novel, and the story she tells is touching as Anicée not only explains to her mother how much she misses her –

« Mère chérie, dépêchez-vous de revenir. Savez-vous que c'est long, six mortels jours sans

²⁰⁶ As Stéphen states, « Pendant deux ou trois jours, j'avais rêvé une sorte d'adoption des deux orphelins que Dieu semblait avoir jetés dans mes bras. Mais la disparition ou plutôt fuite du petit garçon, qui me paraissait avoir épié dans mes yeux la pitié... s'être sauvé, sans rien dire... tout contribuait à me faire envisager les choses sous leur véritable aspect. Les bohémiens sont une race dégradée par la misère et l'abandon » (28).

vous voir ! » (35) – but how much she respects her advice – “je n’ai rien voulu faire sans votre avis” (38). While calling out to her mother, Anicée explains how their life together isn’t exactly enough to satisfy this thirty-something widow, who has an “envie désordonnée” (38) or wild urge to become a mother. A newborn is motherless in a neighboring village, and Anicée feels it is her duty to raise the poor child. “N’est-ce pas notre devoir, à nous autres qui sommes riches, d’empêcher les pauvres de se sacrifier les uns pour les autres? N’aurions-nous pas honte de les voir se dévouer quand nous croiserions les bras?” (*Filleule* 38).

Anicée’s writing calls attention to what seems out of sorts with Stéphen’s story. In seeking out her mother’s advice, Anicée’s letter is not only a lyric description of her wish to become a mother, but recognizes her mother as another subject. In other words, her letter becomes a space for mother and daughter to see “I” to “I” since Madame Marange’s absence makes it impossible for them to see eye to eye.²⁰⁷ Sand’s interruption of Stéphen’s first-person narrative with Anicée’s letter obviously asks the reader to compare the two writers and their writing. In doing so, it becomes evident that Stéphen’s nostalgic longing for his mother has made it impossible for him to tell her story or anyone else’s story for that matter. Admittedly, Mme Rivesanges dies on the first page, perhaps too soon and too suddenly for the reader to hear her story. But her son never attempts to reconstruct her through his writing where her voice and story could be given a space through letters, memories or flashbacks. It is as if Mme Rivesanges’ life is unspeakable and her son would prefer to preserve her like a

²⁰⁷ Lynn Huffer suggests in *Maternal Pasts, Feminist Futures: Nostalgia, Ethics and the Question of Difference* that reading and writing “I” to “I” is a way for the feminist critic to avoid fetishizing Mother or the Other woman in texts. Also, I want to point out that Sand was keenly aware of the power of letters to either memorialize/immortalize or destroy an image of oneself or others. See Anne McCall’s brilliant work on Sand’s epistolary work beginning with *De l’être en lettres. L’autobiographie épistolaire de George Sand*.

momie – emptying her of any meaning and covering her in a shroud of nostalgia, so that she can remain the perfect, yet dead and voiceless mother.

Because nostalgia perpetuates longing by perpetuating loss, Stéphen never allows himself to get over the death of Mme Rivesanges. Unlike the Gypsy boy, who continues his travels after losing his mother, or Anicée, who sees adoption as a way of stepping into the future after her husband's death, Stéphen has a difficult time assuming any role that isn't the forlorn son. His hesitation to be a lover and husband to Anicée and a father to Morena become the tragic consequences of his nostalgia. Unable to see past his past, he never recognizes that Morena could be his path to the future. Despite her talents and later success, Stéphen continues to see her as a lowly Gypsy whose "race dégradée par la misère et l'abandon" (*Filleule* 28) have predestined her to "abjection" and "mépris" (29). As he promises himself in the first pages of the novel, she remains "pour moi un objet de curiosité physiologique, de pitié naturelle, et rien de plus" (29).²⁰⁸ If read as a personification of his social and economic class, Stéphen becomes Sand's heartbreaking commentary on where the bourgeoisie's nostalgia and short-sightedness had led France. By the spring of 1848, the bourgeoisie had proven itself a false friend. Rather than build something new with the working men and women who helped oust Louis-Philippe from power, the bourgeoisie callously turned their backs on the lower classes and rekindled old alliances with conservatives and royalists – a decision, Sand laments in her letters and political writings,

²⁰⁸ Sand obviously seeks out to portray Stéphen's behavior as callous, since the other characters in the novel find Morena lovable. Even when she is an infant, he finds it difficult to have feelings for her. « Quand je rentrais le soir de mes longues courses dans la forêt, je regardais sur la litière fraîche et parfumée de l'étable, le groupe de la brebis noire allaitant ses deux nourrissons, l'enfant et l'agneau. J'admirais la maternelle sollicitude de ma vieille hôtesse et la débonnaireté du père Floche, qui détestait les marmots et à qui sa femme persuadait de bercer celui-là. Ces deux vieillards, rangés, probes et austères, me paraissaient alors bien plus dignes d'attention et d'intérêt que la problématique destinée de ma filleule » (29).

that would send France careening backwards in time.

Traversing Silence: When the Gypsy Begins to Write

As Sand points out in her 1852 introduction to *Indiana*, preserving the past requires work as it implies shutting down all discourses that dare stray into the uncharted territories of the present and future. This forced silence was a subject that weighed heavily on Sand in 1852, as she first began thinking through *La Filleule*.²⁰⁹ In her *Correspondance*, she investigates how nostalgia imposes silence so as to better communicate ideology. Describing France's situation to Mazzini in May 1852, she explains how the people's support of an obvious dictator stems from *engouement* – « Un peuple n'abandonne pas en si peu d'années l'objet de son engouement » (*CorrXI* 179). Her choice of *engouement* (instead of *infatuation*, *entichement*, *s'éprendre* or a handful of other words) to describe France's obsession with Napoleon is revealing, if one considers that in the nineteenth century *engouement* also referred to “un embarras dans le gossier” and was used as a medical term to describe an “obstruction d'un conduit ou d'une cavité quelconque par des matières accumulées.” According to *Littré*, it is only when the word is used figuratively that it means “sentiments favorable et excessifs que l'on conçoit sans grande raison pour quelqu'un ou quelque chose.”²¹⁰ Sand's choice of *engouement* to describe France's relationship with Napoleon was an obvious gesture to the word's other meaning – choking, gagging,

²⁰⁹ When Sand signed the contract with *Le Siècle* on May 18, 1852, she already referred to her novel as *La Filleule*.

²¹⁰ *Littré* lists infatuation as a third meaning for *engouement* after 1) embarras dans le gossier 2) obstruction d'un conduit ou d'une cavité quelconque – which the dictionary points out is the official medical and veterinarian use of the word.

obstruction. In other words, France's *engouement* for Napoleon had led to silence, silencing and a general incapacity to move forward. Unfortunately, the French people's inability to admit that they had been *derouté* or thrown off track by the bourgeoisie's treason (the people "ne se donne pas un démenti à lui-même") meant they had become the passive victims of a gag order whose primary purpose was to ensure that a new Napoleon ruled France.

Although extremely popular during its time, *La Filleule* is largely ignored by modern Sand critics who interpret the novel as saying very little about the political events of 1852. Most blame this silence on the gag order Sand was forced to sign before beginning *La Filleule* and choose to read the story as if it can be divorced from its time. Such readings usually take an either/or approach, choosing to focus on *either* the novel's form *or* its content. Such readings have interpreted *La Filleule* as a story of adoption, a *roman à clé* or a kind of *nouveau roman* whose message is purely aesthetic. But interpretations that ignore what the novel's form and content tell us about its time fail to recognize how Sand defiantly spits her gag order out in this novel, arguing that silence, especially political silence, should and can be broken.

As explained earlier, what Sand found most alarming about Bonaparte's politics was how effective it was in breeding complacency while creating a situation that lent itself to self-censure. In other words, *engouement* was not only a conduit for ideology, but a clever way of silencing dissension, as the French were too busy worshipping old idols to question their new politics. As historians are eager to point out, Bonapartists had spent the decade leading up to Louis-Napoleon's 1852 coup d'état experimenting with nostalgia as a political

force.²¹¹ Before 1836 “Bonapartism was an amorphous belief system, not a coherent political theory... it had no specific program – other than to put a member of the Bonaparte family in a position of power in France” (Driskel 29). But when Louis-Napoléon’s 1836 coup failed because he was unable to garner the necessary military and popular support needed to overthrow Louis-Philippe, Bonapartists began seeking out a more effective way of gaining political ground.²¹² They saw their opportunity just three years later when Louis-Philippe tried to avoid war with Britain, Russia and Austria in the Middle East. Manipulating the French people’s sense of chauvinism, they denounced Louis-Philippe for his cowardice, while rallying for vengeance in the name of Napoleon, who had been defeated by these same European powers decades before. As Michael Paul Driskel has put it, “the rampant chauvinism that the Eastern Question evoked proved that the myth of Napoleon could be appropriated and turned to dangerous ends” (Driskel 30).²¹³ Riding on a wave of nostalgia for the dead Emperor, Bonapartists continued to push for Napoleon’s repatriation to France and finally succeeded in bringing him home in 1840, turning his funeral procession into a national day of mourning that is still referred to as the *Retour des*

²¹¹ Along with Michael Paul Driskel’s book *As Befits a Legend: Building a Tomb for Napoleon, 1840-1861*, I found Jean Lucas-Dubreton’s classic *Le Culte de Napoleon* helpful in understanding the power of Napoleon’s myth through the long nineteenth century. I also refer my reader to Maurice Samuel’s very interesting chapter on the different theatrical representations of Napoleon and the evolution of his image in *The Spectacular Past. Popular History and the Novel in Nineteenth-Century France*.

²¹² His October 1836 plan to stage a coup d’état by reentering France through Strasbourg had ended in embarrassment when he was captured by Louis-Philippe and treated more like a prankster than a political conspirator or rival by the French press.

²¹³ Attempting to avoid global conflict that would have pitted France against the European nations who were victorious at Waterloo, Louis-Philippe opted for peace in the Middle East, trying to avoid the mistakes Napoleon had made thirty years earlier. In his biography of Flaubert, Frederick Brown gives a portrait of how the young writer’s graduation day in August 1840 became a grandstand or rather a standoff between a faculty member who lauded Louis-Philippe’s efforts to peacefully reconcile “freedom and authority” and the school principal who preached vengeance for Napoleon and for France.

cedres.²¹⁴ Encouraging poets, journalists and politicians to resurrect Napoleon in their writing and speeches, Bonapartists successfully breathed new life into a dead Emperor, who in the words of Alfred de Musset became “temps immortels.” In other words, Bonapartist politics had turned Napoleon into *time*, or what many French nostalgically referred to as the greatest time in France’s history.²¹⁵ By mid-century, Napoleon was the solution to what many poets and politicians believed was an ever-growing rift or *fêlure* in France’s historical narrative. As Hugo put it in his 1841 reception speech before the Académie française, in death Napoleon had become a “vision extraordinaire” or ghostly presence that hovered “au-dessus de l’Europe” and reminded France of her glorious past.²¹⁶ His memory, which was far removed from his reality, made him a demi-god who had “effacé les Alpes comme Charlemagne et les Pyrénées comme Louis XIV,” and therefore was a much-desired boucle or link who “était entré si avant dans l’histoire par ses actions, qu’il pouvait dire et qu’il disait : Mon prédécesseur l’empereur Charlemagne; et il s’était par ses alliances tellement mêlé à la monarchie qu’il pouvait dire et qu’il disait: Mon oncle le roi Louis XVI.” As Hugo points out here, by 1841 the Napoleonic myth had become a solution to the historical discontinuity that had left France feeling separated from and then nostalgic for its past.

²¹⁴ December 15, 1840 is the day that an elaborate funeral procession took Napoleon’s body to *Les Invalides*. For the cultural significance of this event, I refer my reader to Jean Tulard’s “Le Retour des Cendres” written for Pierre Nora’s *Les Lieux de mémoire*.

²¹⁵ Alfred de Musset’s poem *Napoléon* was published posthumously but written just after the *Retour des cendres*. Attempting to capture the fervor of Napoleon’s December 15, 1840 funeral procession, Musset allegorizes this event as a kind of *retrouvailles* between a child and “sa nourrice” in which the French people embrace Napoleon “comme fait d’un enfant sa nourrice.”

²¹⁶ The entire speech can be found on the Académie’s website: <http://www.academie-francaise.fr/discours-de-reception-et-reponse-de-m-salvandy>

If Sand was to convince readers that nostalgia was not and could not be a solution for their *mal*, she would have to do it in a way that would not compromise her contract with *Le Siècle* or worse lead to her imprisonment or persecution. The nostalgia that allows Stéphen to “oublier l’avenir, afin de m’habituer au souvenir du passé” (*Filleule* 53) would have felt familiar to French readers as it had been a way for most to cope with the tragedy that followed the February Revolution. Like France, Stéphen gets caught in his backward glance confusing nostalgia with passion, forcing every female character (except Morena) to wear the death mask of his beloved mother. First, it is Morena’s mother who wears the « face pale » of Mme Rivesanges « encadrée de longs cheveux noirs » that « représentait à mon imagination ma mère » (24). But when the Gypsy begins to escape his nostalgic fetishism, it is Mme Marange (whose patronym is oddly similar to Rivesanges) who becomes Stéphen’s object of desire: « cette mère, ô mon Dieu! C’est la mienne; elle lui ressemble, non pas trait pour trait; mais leurs âmes étaient semblables, puisque tant de signes extérieurs établissent dans mon souvenir une similitude qui me pénètre et me bouleverse » (40). Eventually, it is Anicée who becomes the permanent stand-in for Mme Rivesanges as the young man is unable to separate his longing for his mother from his desire for his lover. Describing a romantic moment with Anicée in his journal, “par moments, je revoyais le pale et doux visage de ma mère, cette ombre lumineuse qui s’attache au rayonnement de mon étoile. Je me laissais rassurer et consoler par elles deux... Mais la nuit se faisait autour de moi; elles s’envolaient ensemble vers l’empyrée” (*Filleule* 84). As his relationship with Anicée becomes a permanent fixture in Stéphen’s life, he describes his feelings for her as nostalgia and not love : « Ce n’était peut-être pas de la passion... Pour moi, c’était quelque chose comme la nostalgie. Rien ne pouvait me distraire, le matin, de l’impatience de la voir le soir,

et le soir passé loin d'elle était si aride, que mon travail avortait dans ma tête » (115, 116).

As a character who rarely speaks in Stéphen's writings whether they be journal entries, *mémoires* or *souvenirs*, Anicée is only present in her lover's text through his sentimental descriptions of her – descriptions that are only given when the lovers are far apart: the lonely days when Stéphen is in Paris, his evenings in the guest house or when he is traveling abroad. During the rare moments the lovers are together, Stéphen's thoughts inevitably drift to his mother.²¹⁷ The young man's confusion between lover and mother culminates halfway through the novel into an uncanny moment when Stéphen takes his lover into his mother's bedroom and turns what could have been a scene of seduction between two lovers into another opportunity to romance the past. When he writes in his journal about that day, he says « la joie de voir Anicée dans cette chambre... reposer à la même place où j'avais dormi sur le sein de ma mère, me rendit délicieux un passé qui, jusque-là, m'avait déchiré l'âme... » (138).

Keeping Anicée at a distance, never allowing her to become fully embodied or even a desired body in his narrative, Stéphen ensures that *her* story will never disrupt *his* story – the nostalgic dream in which he can conflate mother and lover, past and present. As a result, the reader never learns through Stéphen's writing how Anicée became Madame de Saule, why she remains a widow, how she becomes a mother to Morena, or if she ever becomes Stéphen's lover in the literal sense of the word. Like Mme Rivesanges, Pilar and Madame

²¹⁷ Stéphen's piano concert is not the only time in the text when he confuses Anicée with his mother. His description of their first encounter is also revealing: « Le premier jour que j'ai vu Anicée, c'est à ma mère que j'ai songé, c'est sa mère que j'ai regardée » (86). As Huffer explains in her study of nostalgia for the maternal, "What a nostalgic structure cannot include... is the possibility of a desire for another woman who is *not* the mother" (20). Although Huffer is speaking specifically of the possibility of lesbian desire, her analysis of nostalgic desire for mother can also be applied here, as Stéphen seems incapable of truly loving another woman who is not his mother. As I will explain later in this chapter, his nostalgia even prevents him from loving his goddaughter and from becoming the kind of father figure the heroine desperately seeks.

Marange, Anicée remains a ghostly apparition who hovers over Stéphen's text as a silent stand-in for his lost object. If it wasn't for the ellipses or what I call pen holes that become larger rips and tears later in the novel, the reader would never hear Anicée's story, or anyone's story for that matter, since Stéphen's longing for his mother consumes the text.

The fact that these narrative holes coincide with Morena's appearance in her godfather's story points to the powerful position she holds in the text. As a Gypsy in a nineteenth-century novel, Morena would stand for illegitimacy – or that which “stands against the king, against the priest, against the laws originating in the State” (Deleuze 354).²¹⁸ As explained in previous chapters, although it was the French who rid themselves of their legitimate King, vandalized historic monuments and ran off clerics and priests after the Revolution, their growing nostalgia for what *once was* made them uncomfortable with the freedom they had found in their departure from the past – a freedom they came to perceive as chaotic, alienating and criminal. Personifying the dark side of this freedom in the Gypsy, Scott, Hugo and then Mérimée created a boogeyman who could be sacrificed and then purged from their historical narratives, leading readers to believe that sacrificing certain (sinister) freedoms would enable them to repair the rupture disrupting their stories.

Making a Gypsy the hero instead of the tragic criminal of her 1853 novel, Sand was telling her reader she wouldn't give up the fight she began twenty years before. Her Gypsy role reversal was rebellious to say the least, since it symbolically legitimized a figure that Hugo and Mérimée made dangerous to both history and men, and then desperately tried to

²¹⁸ Deleuze and Guattari borrow heavily from nineteenth-century stereotypes of the Gypsy in their chapter about the subversive nomad, which is illustrated with a Gypsy caravan. Therefore, this section of their post-modernist manifest, which is heavily rooted in nineteenth-century linguistic and literary texts, is not as “rhizomatic” as their readers are led to believe. See Christopher Miller's *Nationalists and Nomads: Essays on Francophone African Literature and Culture*, specifically Chapter 6, “Beyond Identity.”

bury. Placing a pen in Morena's fourteen-year-old hand, Sand further bucks her predecessors' Gypsy plots by giving their scapegoat a chance to speak for herself. In other words, by allowing Morena to assume the position of author in *La Filleule*, Sand stages a very important symbolic revolution, as she finally allows the Gypsy to ask why nineteenth-century France was so eager to bury her in its past.

Stéphen, like the narrators of *Notre-Dame de Paris* and *Carmen*, has a privileged position in the first half of *La Filleule* when his "je" is the only voice of authority. But as Morena begins to occupy more space in the novel, as both a writer and as a character who is important to the narrator, Stéphen's stories and perspective are challenged. Through her relentless questions and doubt about the story she has been written into, the Gypsy girl slowly unravels her godfather's telling of their family drama.

As an illegitimate child and the illegitimate member of a bourgeois family, Morena is also an important foil to Stéphen.²¹⁹ Whereas the past is a comforting narrative to her godfather whose position in society is being threatened by social upheaval, only the future holds opportunity for Morena – a young woman whose illegitimacy has left her with no patronym, no inheritance and a past that is a wretched reminder of how easy it is for the upper classes (her father) to betray the poor (her mother).²²⁰ As their narrative threads pull in different directions, Stéphen's toward the past and Morena's toward the future, larger

²¹⁹ I want to remind my reader that Morena is never adopted by Anicée and Stéphen. She remains Ms. Hartwell until the end of the novel, despite her hopes that her mysterious father will one day claim her.

²²⁰ Stéphen legitimizes his position in society (and the novel) early in his memoirs by taking his mother's more noble name (Rivesanges) and claiming her fortune as his inheritance. What disturbs Stéphen most about his father's new wife is that he marries someone from the lower classes. Although he does inherit his mother's family home later in the novel, he spends the first half of the novel worrying that his father might leave his inheritance to this undeserving woman. Stéphen is an obvious personification of his social class – the bourgeoisie – and their unwillingness to share any economic or political power with the "undeserving" lower classes.

narrative rips and tears make a space from which a narrator-author can tell or allow others to tell the stories Stéphen is unwilling to speak. In other words, what Franciska Skutta reads as bizarre “trou de mémoire(s)” in *La Filleule* are in fact moments when Morena or the narrator break through Stéphen’s shroud of nostalgia, revealing the present, the promise of a future and portraits of a repressed past.

As stated earlier, the first time the reader hears the narrator’s voice is shortly after Morena is born, and it is through this first hole that Anicée is given space to describe her “envie désordonnée” (Filleule 35) to become a mother. This need to *become* something else is a chronological leap from the present to the future and foreshadows what lies ahead for Anicée and Morena – a story the narrator will resume through another narrative hole 35 pages later:

Dès le matin, Anicée s’occupait de Morena... elle n’avait jamais connu cette joie féminine de toucher adroitement à un petit être, de chercher à deviner ses désirs, à étudier le langage de ses vagissements et l’expression, chaque jour plus intelligible, de ses regards. Elle s’initiait, avec une amoureuse curiosité, à ces mille petits soins dont l’intelligence est révélée aux mères et qu’elle regrettait si douloureusement d’être forcée d’apprendre. Elle rougissait presque de son ignorance ; elle avait hâte de n’avoir plus le secours d’une étrangère entre elle et cet enfant, à qui elle voulait pouvoir s’imaginer qu’elle avait donné la vie (70).

Simple math shows that these two holes are carefully planned. The first hole which makes room for Anicée’s desire to become a mother is made on page 35. The second hole from which the narrator explains Anicée’s journey into motherhood is made at the bottom of Page 69 – almost 35 pages later. The deliberate spacing of these pen holes (35 pages) tells the reader what is missing or “ce qui manque” (Filleule 69) in Stéphen’s narrative, while pointing out that Stéphen’s writing is intentionally leaving out certain information, like Anicée’s life story. Giving the reader what’s missing from Stéphen’s text, Morena and the

narrator reveal what she suffered in her first marriage, why she remains an outsider in Paris social circles, and the happiness she discovers in becoming a mother. Through their narration, Anicée and other characters buried beneath Stéphen's nostalgia become legitimate characters, whose lives become worthy of telling.

Although the identity of the novel's elusive "narrateur" is never revealed, she or he serves the same purpose as the Gypsy in the text.²²¹ Both transgress Stéphen's silence and omissions by calling attention to the fact that something is missing from his story. While the narrator rips holes in Stéphen's first-person narrative to expose "ce qui manque," Morena asks questions that call attention to how and why certain information is missing from her story. As she puts it in the first pages of her journal:

J'ai aujourd'hui quatorze ans. Je ne suis ni grande ni forte; je ne sais pourquoi ceux qui me voient pour la première fois prétendent que j'en ai dix-huit ou vingt, et que ma bonne mère *cache* mon âge. Qui sait ? c'est peut-être vrai ! J'ai une destinée si bizarre, moi, et ma naissance est si mystérieuse ! (148).

Il y a des moments où je crois que mon parrain est mon père. Il y a des gens qui le croient aussi ou qui se l'imaginent. Pourtant... ma mère est morte. Oui, mamita me l'a dit si sérieusement, encore aujourd'hui, que cela est certain... Mais mon père ? (152)

C'était le cadeau mystérieux de tous les ans, le cadeau de mon père ; car il existe, celui-là, il s'occupe de moi, il me comble, il me pare, il me gâte... Dirai-je qu'il m'aime ? Hélas ! je ne l'ai jamais vu, je ne saurai peut-être jamais son nom. S'il m'enrichit et me protège, d'où vient qu'il se *cache* si bien ? (153)²²²

The repetitive use of the word "cacher" in Morena's questions points to what she feels is out of place in Stéphen's plot. As *Le Petit Larousse* reminds us, *cacher* has several meanings : « mettre, placer dans un lieu secret, pour soustraire à la vue, aux recherches » as in « *Cacher*

²²¹ As mentioned in a previous footnote (8), it is likely that the narrator and Gypsy are one in the same.

²²² I italicized and bolded "cache" here for emphasis.

un trésor » ; « empêcher de comprendre » as in « *Cette histoire cache quelque chose* »; « ne pas exprimer », as in to remain silent or to silence ; and « dissimuler » as in to dissimulate or to hide under a disguise or other false appearance. Morena, as we know from Stéphen's journal, is the treasure that allows him into the De Saule family. Knowing Anicée desperately wants a child, Stéphen uses the baby Gypsy girl to enter her home and then her heart. To prevent Morena's Gypsy family from ever finding her, Stéphen tells her brother Rosario that she is dead. And giving her the alias Anaïs Hartwell, Stéphen makes sure Morena's Gypsy origins are hidden from other family members and friends, who are told that she is the child of a British friend "qui l'avait envoyé de loin" (134).

Silence is Stéphen's preferred method for keeping Morena hidden, as he has no intention of revealing who she really is, or how she found her way into the De Saule family chateau.²²³ In his own memoirs, Stéphen claims that keeping Morena's Gypsy heritage a secret is in her best interest, the only way of shielding her from prejudices that he shares. Although skeptical that his project will succeed, he claims that Morena, if brought up in a proper bourgeois household (with discipline and education), will be able to assimilate into French society because « quoique très-brune, elle n'avait rien dans les cheveux, dans le type et dans la peau, qui ne fût acceptable à la race européenne » (107). As Sand opens a space in Stéphen's journal and memoirs, giving way to other voices, she not only dismantles his attempt to domesticate or tame the Gypsy, but challenges the social and political arguments against nomadism that had led to the linguistic and ethnological studies of the early nineteenth century.

²²³ Sand's choice of Anaïs as Morena's alias is likely an ironic gesture to Hugo's kidnapping plot, as Anaïs is almost a homonym of Agnès.

As Morena begins to question the little information given to her about her past, the holes in the text become larger and more frequent, until *La Filleule* is no longer Stéphen's story. The voice that most often answers Morena's is a Gypsy's voice, which first calls to her from the other side of the wall that encircles the home Stéphen made into her prison. Rosario is Morena's stepbrother, and the boy whose grief Stéphen unsuccessfully tried to assimilate into his own mourning in the first pages of the novel. While Stéphen refers to him as a "menteur" (125) in his writing, the narrator allows the Gypsy boy to speak in large sections of text labeled "narration," which is set apart from Stéphen's writing.

Rosario's primary role in the text is to tell Morena what Stéphen and others have kept from her: the story of her parents. If I use *parents* here, instead of mother and father, it's because Morena's confusion stems from the fact that she isn't quite sure which role each adult in her life plays in her "destinée si bizarre" (148). She knows her biological mother is dead – "mamita me l'a dit si sérieusement" (152) – and that Anicée is her "mamita." But she doesn't understand who her father is, why he hasn't revealed himself to her, or what role Stéphen plays in her strange story.

The fact that Rosario's version of events is much different from Stéphen's makes the reader wonder who exactly is the *menteur* in this story. And as Rosario answers Morena's questions, it becomes clear why Stéphen is eager to keep the two apart and why he had hidden certain facts from his goddaughter. Rosario has a keen memory and is able to tell Morena "tout ce qu'elle ignorait de sa propre histoire" (208) – who her mother and father are, and how and why she ended up in Stéphen's guardianship. In his eyes, Morena was stolen from her Gypsy family – an accusation that makes the steps Stéphen took to hide

Morena resemble a kidnapping. As is revealed in the fragments of Stéphen's "ancien journal,"²²⁴

Je fis ces dispositions avec beaucoup de mystère... et je fis plusieurs détours dans la forêt, m'assurant bien partout et avec soin que je n'étais ni observé ni suivi... J'entrai par la porte du parc qui touchait à la forêt. J'y rencontrai madame de Saule, qui m'aida à introduire avec mon précieux bagage dans la maison, sans être vu de ses domestiques, dont elle n'était pas parfaitement sûre. C'est ainsi que j'arrivai pour la seconde fois dans cet éden que j'avais quitté la veille avec peu d'espoir d'y revenir aussi vit que je le souhaitais (*Filleule* 58).

As is evident by the quote above, Morena was Stéphen's passport into Anicée's chateau – a garden of pleasure whose inhabitants were sweet reminders of the life he thought had perished with his mother. To ensure he is never exiled from Eden again, Stéphen hides the truth from Morena and others who could jeopardize his dream. Turning her Gypsy into the innocent victim of a bourgeois kidnapper whose main motivation is to romance the past, Sand twists the Gypsy plot even further, inversing and complicating the roles of Gypsy and French in this story.

As explained in Chapter 2, before *Quentin Durward* and *Notre-Dame de Paris* turned the Gypsy kidnapper into a dark and sinister character, she was often portrayed as a wiser, more experienced foil to a father or mother figure who lacked the wisdom necessary to properly raise his or her child.²²⁵ Sand takes this seventeenth-century plot one step further. By making her kidnapper a bourgeois man, who is attempting to seduce an aristocrat, Sand levees an obvious critique against the French bourgeoisie who, like Stéphen,

²²⁴ When Rosario accuses Stéphen of stealing his sister in the first part of the novel, Stéphen remarks on his "vive intelligence" and the "justesse de ses souvenirs" (119) which seems a strange slip of the tongue since Rosario's version of events is much different from his own. On the same page, Rosario accuses Stéphen of stealing his sister: "C'est vous qui m'avez volé ma soeur!" (119).

²²⁵ As pointed out in Chapter 1, the kidnapped child in seventeenth-century plots would often remain friendly with his/her Gypsy kidnapper, even after their assimilation back into the bourgeoisie or noblesse, valuing the education received from the Gypsy way of life.

had been willing to sacrifice anything (the Second Republic) and anyone (the lower classes) to preserve their personal Eden.

Giving Morena's Gypsy brother his own narrative turf is an important turning point in the novel as well, since it is thanks to Rosario that the plot progresses, and Morena and the reader are able to move on to the next chapter of her story. While Rosario's real, Gypsy name is Algénib, the Christian name Sand gives him is an important clue as to the role she wants him to play in her novel. Rosario, which in both Spanish and Italian means "rosary" or "string," is the character that literally strings together what Morena doesn't know about her past, present and future, revealing what Morena's not-so-loving fathers don't want her to know or understand.²²⁶ At the same time, it is Rosario who unravels the parameters Stéphen draws around his family's story, which keeps it spinning around his past.

Most importantly, in a *coup de force* against Morena's godfather and father, Rosario offers a portrait of Morena's mother that is much different from the one given by Stéphen and the Duke. It is important to remember that it is Stéphen who first introduces the reader to Pilar. In his memoirs, he describes her as "une femme affreusement belle de pâleur, de haillons pittoresques, d'expression farouche" (*Filleule* 17) -- a woman whose strange beauty incites both fear and desire in Stéphen and his friend when they stumble upon her in the Fontainebleau Forest. According to Stéphen, Morena's mother was in the advanced stages of labor and « ne pouvait pas ou ne voulait pas parler. Nous n'entendîmes pas un mot sortir

²²⁶ In the first chapters of the novel, Pilar and Rosario are Spanish Gypsies, which is how the Spanish Duke enters the story. The first translation offered for "rosario" in both Spanish and Italian is rosary, which refers to both the Catholic prayer beads and the prayer that help a devotee remember and recite the 20 mysteries or great moments of Christ's life. Both languages also use "rosario" in common phrases that want to suggest a string of events, circumstances or objects, such as "un rosario de circunstancias" (Spanish). It seems Sand is playing with both meanings as Rosario's role is both to speak about the mysteries that surround Morena's mother and to string together a past, present and future for Morena who, after breaking from her fathers, seeks out alternatives to the past, present and future they offer her.

de sa bouche scellée par la souffrance ou la fierté » (18, 19). Like the other women in Stéphen's story, Pilar has no room to speak. She dies shortly after giving birth to Morena, and becomes a nameless, lifeless and defenseless *bohémienne* the young men can wrap their fantasies around.²²⁷ Some of these fantasies are confirmed by Morena's father, the Duke, who gives Stéphen a portrait of Pilar that makes her the kind of Gypsy that Mérimée, and to some extent Hugo, made famous – a woman who could possess a man's mind and heart with a glance or her dance. Or as duc de Florès puts it, « malgré l'amour très-réel que j'avais pour la duchesse, j'eus le malheur, la déraison, je commis la faute de succomber à l'enivrement que la belle Pilar produisait par la grâce sensuelle de ses danses, par le charme étrange de ses chansons, par l'ardeur de sa bizarre passion pour moi » (130).

Despite her charm and inebriating beauty, Pilar is unable to keep the Duke under her spell. He ends their relation abruptly when his new wife begins to suspect her husband of adultery. According to the Duke, Pilar found it difficult to say goodbye,

Son désespoir fut extreme, presque tragique, et j'eus beaucoup de peine à l'empêcher de troubler mon ménage... Un soir, en revenant de la chasse, je la rencontrai, pâle, échevelée, errant sur la bruyère, couverte de guenilles, amaigrie, presque laide. C'était l'ouvrage de deux mois de désespoir et de découragement. Elle me demanda un souvenir ; je savais qu'elle repousserait ma bourse avec colère. Je n'avais sur moi aucun bijou. Elle avisa le collier de ma chienne et le demanda. Comme il était en or massif et de quelque prix, je fus content de le lui donner ; mais par je ne sais quelle jalousie ou quelle superstition inexplicable... elle tua ma chienne en lui détachant son collier. L'animal fit un hurlement de détresse. Il me fut impossible de voir si ce fut l'effet d'un poison violent ou d'une strangulation rapide ; mais il bondit comme pour mordre la bohémienne, essaya de venir se réfugier vers moi, et tomba mort à mes pieds » (131).

²²⁷ Just before she dies, Roque tells Stéphen while devouring his soup : « Sais-tu qu'elle est très-belle, cette misérable créature ! ...on voit bien en elle le spectre d'une de ces ravissantes gitanelles que Michel Cervantes ne dédaigna pas de chanter. C'est un pan ruiné d'Alhambra » (20).

The gold collar Pilar takes off the body of her lover's dead dog is central to Morena's story. Mistaking the heavy gold collar of a rich man's pet for the bracelet of a Gypsy woman, Stéphen names his goddaughter "Morena" after finding the name engraved on this token of affection. A Spanish word commonly used to describe a brunette or a dark-haired or dark-skinned person, Morena seemed an appropriate name to Stéphen, who spoke enough Spanish to know the word's meaning. Even when his friend Roque points out that the bracelet was probably "un collier de chien volé à quelque grande dame espagnole" (26), Stéphen insists on naming his goddaughter Morena, telling Roque that the word is an « adjectif qui peut qualifier sans profanation une créature de Dieu » (27). As an orphaned "créature" whose parents' names are lost when her mother dies, Morena becomes the namesake of her father's dog whose collar comes to symbolize what the young girl loathes most about her family circle – its lack of freedom.

What Sand allegorizes here is the moral of La Fontaine's fable "Le loup et le chien" which is meant to remind seventeenth-century readers that something must always be sacrificed to the comfort of wealth and belonging. Although the dog that wears a collar has a name and is well fed, he must always obey a master; he is never completely free like his cousin the wolf. Unlike Stéphen, who is seduced by the Duke's name, title and wealth, Morena endangers the privileges the Duke's favor could win her by demanding answers to the questions Stéphen fails to ask.²²⁸

²²⁸ The first time the men meet, Stéphen notices a mutual « affection » (132) in their exchange. Or as he strangely puts it « sa figure me plut, la mienne fit apparemment le même effet sur lui ; car, en nous toisant mutuellement, nous échangeâmes un sourire de bienveillance instinctive » (127). The Duke picks up on Stéphen's desire to be a *gentilhomme* with intellectual aspirations, and is quick to treat Stéphen with a disarming « familiarité polie » (127) remarking that the young man is a "jeune savant! c'est fort bien. Vous êtes plus que moi, qui suis un ignorant" (127). Mérimée also plays with La Fontaine's *chien* and *loup* fable, as

When Rosario finally explains what led to Pilar's untimely death, the reader learns that she was the victim of an abusive husband, and of a lover (the Duke) who abandoned her at a time when she was most vulnerable. Also, according to Rosario, Pilar is not the wicked Gypsy temptress the Duke and then Stéphen make her out to be. She is an imperfect woman who remains a perfect mother despite her desperate circumstances. « Quoique votre mère ait trompé mon père, je me suis souvenu aussi qu'elle m'avait adopté avec amour, qu'elle m'avait porté dans ses bras, qu'elle m'avait partagé son dernier morceau de pain avec moi comme avec l'enfant de ses entrailles... » (303). Pilar's sacrifices and unconditional love for her stepson stand in stark contrast to Stéphen's unwarranted disgust for his goddaughter and the Duke's harsh rejection of his only child. Like Anicée, the Gypsy woman chose to love and care for an orphaned child, despite the challenges this love might bring.

As the narrative string that brings one mother closer to another, Rosario encourages the reader to ask, *what is the difference between Pilar and Anicée?* Through Morena's misdirected passion for her godfather, we remember that Stéphen has omitted part of Anicée's story from his memoirs – thirteen years to be exact, and the part of her story that should have revealed how her romance with Stéphen unfolded. In Stéphen's writing, Morena's passion for him is vilified and diagnosed as yet another symptom of her “race dégradée par la misère et l'abandon” (28). She is, according to her godfather, “la vraie gitana, la créature paresseuse, hardi, fantasque, insoumise, inquiète, dangereuse aux autres, dangereuse à elle-même” (177). But as Morena gains more space in the novel, it is clear that her passion is rooted not in her Gypsiness but in Stéphen's secrets and lies.

Carmen tells Don José: « Sais-tu, mon fils, que je crois que je t'aime un peu ? Mais cela ne peut durer. Chien et loup ne font pas longtemps bon ménage » (*Pléiade* 967).

His story has prevented anyone, including his goddaughter, from knowing that he and Anicée are lovers and secretly married. Therefore, Morena has no idea that by falling in love with Stéphen she has become Anicée's rival. And because Stéphen has never wanted to be a father to Morena, his role in her life has been ambiguous at best. As Morena's first journal entries attest, she isn't exactly sure what role Stéphen plays in her life. Unlike Anicée who wholeheartedly assumes the role of *mère* and *Mamita*, Stéphen is sometimes *parrain*, never *père* and most often Stéphen.²²⁹ His imposed distance has made his role unclear, or as Morena states before falling in love with him : « Qu'est-ce que ça me fait, après tout, de ne pas être pour lui, comme pour mamita, une petite merveille? Il n'est ni mon père ni mon futur mari, et voilà les deux seuls hommes à qui je sois forcée de plaire ! » (164).

When Morena's passion finally forces Stéphen to reveal the truth, that he and Anicée are secretly married, she points to what is wrong with her godfather's story: « quoique je sois une petite fille, je sais qu'on ne doit pas trop aimer un homme dont on ne veut pas, ou dont on ne peut pas faire son mari » (199). As the only woman in the novel who has never had a father, never been a wife and does not carry the weight of a family name, Morena is free to call into question the plots men construct around their daughters and wives. Putting her finger on why Stéphen tried to bury the truth about his relationship with Anicée (“on ne doit pas trop aimer un homme... dont on ne peut pas faire son mari”), Morena reminds the

²²⁹ In the first pages of Morena's journal, she admits that at least two years have passed since she has seen her godfather, and that she has forgotten his face. Her writing reveals that Anicée is solely responsible for parenting – she embraces her motherly duties enthusiastically and is really the only character that offers unconditional love to Morena. Whereas Anicée has defined and determined her role in Morena's story, Stéphen's role is ambiguous at best.

reader that the line drawn between Pilar and Anicée, “une fille égarée” and “une femme honnête,” is arbitrary and depends on who is writing their story.

As Morena slowly begins to piece together the missing parts of her own story, she cuts through the shroud of nostalgia that Stéphen used to control his family’s various plots. What is uncovered is a history of bad fathers – men who let the past get in the way of becoming a *père* or even a *parrain*. The Duke’s devotion to name, title and emblems of a past that the social and political revolutions around him continue to challenge prevents him from assuming his paternal responsibilities to his only child. Or as he tells Stéphen, « je vous jure bien que jamais je ne donnerais mon nom à la fille d’une gitana, me ressemblât-elle trait pour trait, eût-elle toutes les grâces, toutes les vertus... » (131).

In Morena’s eyes, the Duke’s name, title and wealth are poor excuses for his cruelty and betrayal. When she learns of the events leading up to her birth, she condemns her father for treating her mother worse than the dog he accused her of killing. « Mon père est bien coupable, lui, puisqu’il l’a abandonnée à son Malheur, à son repentir, à la pitié d’autrui. Pauvre femme ! être renvoyée, oubliée, méprisée ainsi parce qu’elle n’était pas noble, parce qu’elle était pauvre ! Pourquoi l’avoir aimée, si elle n’était pas digne de lui ? » (Filleule 210). As Morena points out here, the Duke abandoned her mother, not because she was a Gypsy, but because she wasn’t noble and because she wasn’t rich. When Morena’s critical eye turns to Anicée’s situation a few pages later, she accurately points out that her mamita’s situation is hardly better. Anicée is also an “esclave” (216) to the social order that led to Pilar’s misery – as her first legitimate marriage chained her to a life that her second secret marriage refuses to free her from.

As discussed in earlier chapters, mothers and Gypsies were partners in crime in *Notre-Dame de Paris* and *Carmen*. In the absence of fathers, who go missing from these early Gypsy plots, mothers shoulder the responsibility of transmitting the past's lessons to their children. When they are unsuccessful in accomplishing this mission, unable to symbolically represent and communicate the past, they become as dangerous as the Gypsy characters. Their failure to give their children proper hindsight ultimately leads to their children's deaths. Esmeralda's mother, Paquette la Chantefleurie, is not only responsible for her daughter's kidnapping (because she leaves her front door open to Gypsies) but reveals her daughter's past much too late in the progression of the plot to save her life. By the time Esmeralda learns the story of the amulet she wears around her neck, she has already married herself to an unlikely future with Pheobus. Like Paquette, Don Jose's mother is also unable to keep her son looking backward. Although her memory makes him nostalgic for home in the first pages of his story, her voice is never a strong enough reminder of what he has left behind. Eventually, Don José turns his back on his past and his beloved Navarre to follow Carmen into a future of crime, murder and death. In both cases, Mother's incompetence becomes a narrative *fêlure* in which the historian-writer can insert his voice and assume *author-ity* over his text. In the absence of fathers, Hugo and Mérimée become the paternal voice in the conclusion of their texts, symbolically rooting an unwilling and uncertain present in a safe and familiar past. Their conclusions inevitably illustrate how important Father is, since mothers (and brothers in the case of *Notre-Dame de Paris*) are incapable of giving children the precious gift of hindsight – a necessary defense against the uncertainty of the present and future.

Sand's obvious twisting of this plot is subversive, since she not only unburies the Gypsy from her historical grave, but allows her to condemn her fathers for privileging the past at the expense of the future. At the same time, she gives new meaning to *mater certissima, pater semper incertus*. In *La Filleule*, a mother's certainty is never swayed by names, title, wealth or biology. Rather, mother is *certissima* because her love is constant and inexhaustible. As the only characters who truly love and care for children, mothers make up for fathers' uncertain status in this novel. Pilar cared for Rosario when his father abandoned him, and as Rosario reminds Morena, "votre mamita vous reprendra toujours" (216). Stéphen and the Duke, on the other hand, confirm how *incertus* a father's love and devotion is. Sand illustrates Stéphen's incapacity to assume his paternal duties in the last chapters of the novel, when Morena is imprisoned in a convent by her father, the Duke.

« Anicée... supplia Stéphen de courir à Turin, fin de pénétrer enfin le motif de la conduite de Morenita envers elle, de vaincre sa résistance et de la ramener avec ou sans l'assentiment du duc, celui-ci ne paraissant pas remplie avec intelligence ses devoirs de tuteur ou de père. Stéphen éprouvait une grande répugnance à se charger de cette mission. Il eût voulu la confier à Roque... » (284).

Anicée's devotion to Morena is unconditional and unwavering – a lesson Sand surely hoped to impart to France's upper classes who, like Stéphen and the Duke, had been unable to assume the role of tutor to the lower classes.²³⁰ Juxtaposed with faltering father figures, the certainty of mother's devotion in *La Filleule* also calls into question the patriarchal system

²³⁰ In a letter written to Mazzini on June 15, 1848, Sand expresses her despair in seeing the bourgeoisie turn away from the chance at being a leader for the lower classes in a new democratic government, since the lower classes, she felt, were still too immature to lead themselves. As she puts it, « je crains l'inintelligence du riche et le désespoir du pauvre. Je crains un état de guerre qui n'est pas encore dans les esprits, mais qui peut passer dans les faits, si la classe régnante n'entre pas dans une voie franchement démocratique et sincèrement fraternelle... il y aura une grande confusion et de grands malheurs, car le peuple n'est pas mûr pour se gouverner seul. Il y a dans son sein de puissantes individualités, des intelligences à la hauteur de toutes les situations; mais elles lui sont inconnues, elles n'exercent pas sur lui le prestige dont le peuple a besoin pour aimer et croire. Il n'a point confiance en ses propres éléments. »

that felt threatened when a writer like Sand “fait parler noblement un ouvrier” or allows “une fille égarée” to find a new path in life.²³¹

In the final pages of *La Filleule*, Morena not only escapes the chateau and convent walls in which Stéphen and the Duke try to imprison her, but transgresses the limits of the paternal plots that would pin her to the role of wayward Gypsy. By disassociating herself from the men who never wanted to be her father in the first place, she is free to write her own ending by the end of the novel, blossoming into the woman she has always wanted to be. With Anicée’s support and Pilar’s songs, she leaves France and becomes a successful musician in Vienna, refusing the roles her father and godfather had written for her. Unlike Anicée who believes a parent’s responsibility is to make sure children are “heureux à leur manière” (*Filleule* 318), Stéphen can’t help but criticize his goddaughter’s new life in Vienna “où notre jeune couple d’artistes fait fureur” (323). In his last journal entry dated August 1852, he sarcastically mocks Morena’s decision to find her own path in life, writing “A chacun sa destinée!” (323).

Stéphen’s words prove he is no longer in control of his goddaughter’s narrative, as she is now writing her own *destinée*. The general “chacun” is also Sand’s way of suggesting that everyone has the potential of controlling or writing his or her own destiny – a powerful political message for a beleaguered population who had recently turned to the past rather than face the challenges of (re)writing their future. At the same time, “A chacun sa destinée!” is a daring revision of the myth that *Notre-Dame de Paris* and *Carmen* used as a foundation, that fate is predetermined, and the future is always written by the past. Or as

²³¹ Quoted from Sand’s 1852 preface of *Indiana*.

Carmen puts it minutes before her lover plunges a knife in her chest, “c’est écrit!” – the same message (ANATKH) Hugo scribbles on the wall of Notre-Dame to remind readers that the future is predetermined and (pre)scribed. Letting her Gypsy write her own future, Sand breaks apart this foundational myth to expose the politics behind Fate’s scribbling, proving that those who want to control the future by way of the past have something to gain in doing so, whether it be preserving one’s personal Eden or maintaining control of an unruly present and future.

When Sand began writing *La Filleule* in 1853, she had experienced first hand how influential the past and its guardian nostalgia could be on future narratives. Fear of an uncertain future had killed the momentum of the 1848 Revolution and encouraged the French to look to the past as an example. Riding this wave of fear, Napoleon’s political party not only used nostalgia to breathe new life into a dead Emperor, but made the past a seductive solution to France’s difficult relationship with change. Embodying a generation unwilling to look forward to the future, Stéphen and the Duke nostalgically cling to narratives that were comforting to the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy, as they heralded a time before social and economic revolution threatened their identities and wealth. Unable to evolve, these men throw away their chance to become something other. In the Duke’s case, his inability to evolve means he never becomes the father he so desperately wants to be – which makes him a very lonely and desperate man at the end of the novel. Although less dramatic, Stéphen’s hardheaded refusal to be anything other than a forlorn son culminates into an equally heartbreaking ending. In the same journal entry in which he criticizes Morena’s decision to become a musician, he admits that one thing is missing from his romance with Anicée : “la joie d’avoir des enfants” (323). Stéphen’s strange admission

comes just after he reads (or has read to him) the letter Morena wrote to Anicée. Left out of the epistolary loop, Stéphen finally realizes that his romance with the past, his desire to be the son and never a father, jeopardized any chance for him to be part of this family's future. Having given up his chance to be a father to Morena, his nostalgia has engendered nothing new.

Still unable to look ahead, Stéphen ends his story with a long description of the *iucca filamenteuse* he planted for Anicée fifteen years ago on the day of their marriage. An exotic plant brought to France from the American colonies, the yucca has much in common with Stéphen's goddaughter. Like Morena, this "fleur mystérieuse" is a transplant and has had difficulty thriving where Stéphen put it – "Anicée la croyait inféconde et ne la regardait plus" (323).²³² But like the Gypsy girl, the yucca's root system travels and seeks nourishment far from home. On the same page where Stéphen's seemingly out of place admission reminds the reader of what his plot has not produced, the exotic plant's "épi s'est élancé enfin et s'est couvert d'une girandole de fleurs" (323). An obvious metaphor for the young woman whose letter to her mother speaks of her flowering success in Vienna, the yucca plant points to whom the *épi* or *épée* really belongs at the end of this novel – the young woman who has crept onto unfamiliar territory in hopes of writing her future. An obvious rewrite of Mérimée's metaphor that left Carmen buried and rooted to the foot of a tree, Sand's *yucca filamenteuse* not only celebrates her Gypsy heroine's courageous defiance of paternal plots, but shows readers that they too can escape the fate of their fathers by choosing to write their own destinies, instead of letting the past dictate them.

²³² Stéphen refers to Morena and her mother as mysterious, stating that "Les bohémiens... leur type étrange, leur mystérieuse origine, prêtent sans doute à la poésie" (28).

Conclusion

A Late Twentieth-Century Resurgence of a Nineteenth-Century Plot

C'est l'engouement pour le passé qui lui donne de temps en temps
la maladie de récriminer contre les morts
et d'ennuyer, par là, considérablement les vivants.

George Sand, *Les Beaux Messieurs de Bois-Doré*

In 1857, George Sand cast the Gypsy once again as an impetus for new beginnings. Those who had read *La Filleule* four years earlier would have recognized, at least in name, the Gypsy characters in *Les Beaux Messieurs de Bois-Doré*, who were now important actors in France's turbulent early seventeenth-century story. As in *La Filleule*, Pilar is a young Gypsy woman whose unrequited love eventually leads to her destruction, while Mario, an obvious amalgamation of Morena and Rosario (whose names Sand playfully marries together), is the novel's lost child. While it is unclear whether Mario is the Marquis' lost nephew or a Gypsy boy who ruses a gullible old man, Sand concludes that it really doesn't matter, since the Gypsies are meant to help the novel's other characters get out of a vicious cycle of repeating and literally dressing up in the past. Relocating an obvious concern for her own century into the seventeenth century, Sand turns *Les Beaux Messieurs de Bois-Doré* into a study of the religious and political narrow-mindedness that led France to repeat the mistakes of the sixteenth century, concluding in a more direct way this time that France's

patriarchs were guilty of maintaining a poisonous relationship with the past that can only lead to dead ends, sterility and war.²³³

By making the Gypsy an example of how to venture onto the unfamiliar turf of the future, first in *La Filleule* (1853) and then in *Les Beaux Messieurs de Bois-Doré* (1857), Sand successfully transformed a figure who Scott, Hugo and then Mérimée had turned into a trope for the *trous de mémoire* they believed ideology, war and even nostalgia had left in France's story – holes they feared would turn into blank pages, if they didn't tame their Gypsies' transience and bury them beneath historical narrative or nostalgia disguised as history. Allowing her Gypsy characters to become guides toward the future, Sand attempts to show her nineteenth-century compatriots that they can have a new relationship with time, one in which they, and not their forefathers, are the authors of their destiny.

Sand's 1853 and 1857 attempts to let the Gypsy question the past as a model for the present and future would have been gutsy, if not risky. Louis-Napoléon had shown just how far nostalgia, or what Sand calls an *engouement* for the past, could take a politician. With very little political experience, and addressing the French with a German accent, Louis-Napoléon successfully used nostalgia to win France's 1848 presidential election, and then paved the way for a reprisal of his uncle's story. By December 2, 1852, Louis-Napoléon was Napoleon III, an excellent impersonator of his uncle, as he was careful to shut down any discourse that interrupted the dream that Napoleon's Empire could rule over the present.

²³³ Lauriane's first husband dies during a religious war, and it is hinted that her father's extremism (as a zealous Huguenot) is why she hasn't remarried. Bois-Doré is different. Although he converted to Catholicism after Henri IV abjured the Protestant faith, he desperately attempts to relive the glory of the past, unable to see that clinging to past idols, fashions, etc. have kept him from moving forward. « Le temps avait marché, et c'était encore là une chose dont messire de Bois-Doré n'avait pas daigné s'apercevoir » (Bois-Doré 21). When the novel opens, he regrets being an old man without an heir, a fate the narrator blames on the Marquis' inability to recognize the forward movement of time.

Sand would have shuddered to know that a century later one of her risky attempts to challenge Napoleon's political nostalgia was turned into a twentieth-century nod to a by-gone era, promoting the kind of *passéisme* she argues against. Bernard Borderie's television adaptation of *Les Beaux Messieurs de Bois-Doré* was a wildly popular five-part miniseries that first premiered in 1976, and can be watched today thanks to the Institut national de l'audiovisuel, which has classified the miniseries as part of France's "patrimoine audiovisuel." Antenne 2 chose to air the first episode of Borderie's *Beaux Messieurs* on December 18, 1976 – a date which situated the series close to the anniversary of De Gaulle's first and second presidential elections, which took place on December 21, 1958 and then on December 19, 1965.²³⁴ Having an aging, yet very muscled and bellicose Georges Marchal play Sand's Marquis and act out several hand to hand combat scenes with German *reitres* was not only a significant rewrite of the novel, but was an obvious gesture to the larger-than-life politician France was still mourning. The last words of the film, although given to Georges Marchal, are De Gaulle's and a haunting reminder of his 1940 call to the Resistance. "La guerre n'est pas finie," George Marchal tells Philippe Lemaire, as they prepare to ride off into the sunset.

Perhaps the most memorable and quoted line from De Gaulle's London Radio broadcasts, "La guerre n'est pas finie" would not have been lost on audiences of 1976, especially those who could remember listening to or hearing about De Gaulle's July 1840 message. Putting these words into Marchal's mouth only six years after De Gaulle's death

²³⁴ De Gaulle stepped down as President of the Republic in 1969, a year after the student riots of 1968, and then died in 1970.

and upon the anniversary of his elections, Borderie also tells those who lived during this time: “retournons-y. Cela fait partie des plaisirs de notre âge.”²³⁵

Though Sand’s Gypsy characters are still present in Borderie’s remake of *Les Beaux Messieurs*, they do not pave the path toward a new beginning, since the miniseries ends exactly where it began, with violence and war. As the 1980s turn into the 1990s, the Gypsy character begins to take on the same meaning it had in the work of Walter Scott, Victor Hugo and Prosper Mérimée – a trope for France’s estrangement from its past that had been tackled and tamed to prevent narrative, especially historical narrative, from disintegrating altogether.

Faced with the challenges of new beginnings, France found itself once again trying to recapture a past at the end of the twentieth century. A new millennium meant France was moving closer to an economic and political integration with 14 other European nations, and would therefore have to rethink its own identity inside and outside this supranational organization.²³⁶ By 1999, French businesses and restaurants were already counting in euros, reminding themselves and their customers that they would soon be using a new currency. As Americans, we find it difficult to imagine the symbolic rupture that the disappearance of the franc represented for the French. Though the transition to euros went more smoothly than Eurosceptics believed, « l’abandon, en France, d’une monnaie vieille de 650 ans, utilisée

²³⁵ These are Georges Marchal’s exact words, shortly after he blurts “La guerre n’est pas finie.” This was also an important rewrite of Sand’s work, which ends with a marriage between the Protestant heroine and the Catholic nephew of the Marquis.

²³⁶ Though France had been part of the European Economic Community since 1951, the 1992 Treaty of Maastricht called for a more powerful political system, a joint military effort, and most importantly a common currency. It is also after the Treaty of Maastricht that the EEC became a political space called the European Union. Since the EU has repeatedly denied Turkey’s candidature, it can be argued that the EU is also designating geopolitical borders.

depuis deux siècles et symbole de la République a eu des conséquences indéniables... » (Jambu 141).

In a 2013 article titled “Liberté, égalité, morosité,” *Le Monde* published the results of a recent Gallup poll, which claimed the French were the “champions du monde du pessimisme, loin devant les Afghans ou même les Irakiens.” While the article teases out various reasons for France’s recent gloominess, its author, Anne Chemin, concludes that France’s latest *mal du siècle* originates in its incapacity to let go of the past.²³⁷ Quoting at length historian Christophe Prochasson from the *École des hautes études en sciences sociales*, the article states :

En 1945, la France faisait partie des perdants, mais cette réalité a été longtemps masquée par les discours politiques du général de Gaulle et de François Mitterrand : ils ont tous deux entretenu, chacun à leur façon, l’idée qu’elle resterait une grande puissance au destin exceptionnel... Après leur départ, les Français ont continué à vivre sur ce régime de croyances – le mental retarde souvent sur le social, qui lui-même retarde sur l’économique ! Aujourd’hui cette illusion se dissipe peu à peu. La France est un pays en deuil... Les Français, qui sont très attachés à l’Etat, ont énormément de mal à entrer dans l’ère postnationale qui se dessine... Pour eux, le démantèlement des Etats-nations est un choc. Leur pessimisme vient sans doute de ce désarroi.

While I will leave this *mal du vingt-et-unième siècle* for others to explore, I would like to suggest that France’s incapacity to close the door on the twentieth century is one reason the Gypsy figure, as imagined by Scott, Hugo and Mérimée, has made its way back into the French imagination and, unfortunately, into Sarkozy’s political rhetoric.

As the 1990s began to fade, filmmakers, writers and other artists began using the Gypsy to translate their malaise with regards to France’s future. In 1994, Didier van

²³⁷ Maureen Dowd’s op-ed piece, “Goodbye Old World, Bonjour Tristesse” responds to this article in a very America-centric way. The article can be found in the July 6, 2013 *The New York Times, Sunday Review* or online at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/07/opinion/sunday/dowd-goodbye-old-world-bonjour-tristesse.html>

Cauwelaert won the Prix Goncourt for *Un aller simple*, a twentieth-century spin on the Gypsy plot constructed by Hugo and Mérimée, in which Gypsies again become sinister thieves of origin stories. Their victim, Aziz, is left wandering between France and Morocco, unable to feel at home anywhere, eventually turning into a metaphor for what happens when a story no longer has a beginning. “Je me sens bizarre, abandonné, flottant, comme un personnage dans une phrase que l’auteur ne finit pas” (Cauwelaert 99).²³⁸ Reminding the late twentieth century how lost beginnings endanger history and story (much in the same way Hugo and Mérimée did), Cauwelaert has become one of French literature’s rising stars.²³⁹

While Cauwelaert showed how France’s nineteenth-century Gypsy plot could communicate late twentieth-century fears, the romantic plot’s most popular resurrection to date is Luc Plamondon’s musical, *Notre-Dame de Paris*, which premiered in the Palais des Congrès on September 16, 1998. Staging a rock opera version of Hugo’s monumental novel, the Canadian gave France its biggest “show” of the twentieth century. While little of Hugo’s medieval Paris can be found in Plamondon’s hip hop musical, it is particularly faithful to the nineteenth-century writer’s brilliant use of nostalgia, which Plamondon uses to arouse longing for both a fleeting present and more than five centuries of French history. As the musical’s title song, “Le Temps des cathedrales,” points out, this rewrite’s story falls somewhere between the first millennium and “l’an deux mille,” caught between 1482 and 1999.

²³⁸ Aziz was accidentally stolen by an old Gypsy man, who didn’t know a baby was in the Citroën, Ami 6 he was stealing. Aziz’s name is a bastardization of the name of the car he was found in, the “Ami 6.”

²³⁹ Though Cauwelaert’s work is rarely studied in the United States, he has come close to becoming a member of the *Académie française* both in 2009 and 2013.

Plamondon's outlook for the future, of course, is pessimistic as he reminds his French audience that the next millennium will not be the utopia some hope for. As the opening song states:

Il est foutu le temps des cathédrales
La foule des barbares est aux portes de la ville
Laissez entrer ces païens, ces vandales
La fin de ce monde
Est prévue pour l'an deux-mille
Est prévue pour l'an deux-mille

Plamondon's conclusion on *who* or *what* is responsible for "la fin de ce monde" is ambiguous, and must be translated by Claude Frollo, who like the priest in Hugo's story, is a careful reader and translator. Literally reading the writing that has been spray painted on a set prop made to look like the walls of Notre-Dame, Frollo points out how Plamondon cleverly replaces Hugo's ANANKE with ANARKHIA. When Gringoire asks him to translate the ancient graffiti, the priest shouts "Tu es un possédé ! Le grec 'Anarkhia' veut dire 'Fatalité.'"

Many have commented on this mistranslation and Plamondon's rewriting of Hugo, which I believe is a playful palimpsest or literary possession, which warns audiences, by scribbling ANARKHIA over the more famous ANANKÉ, of what is to come – a new millennium that will be ruled by anarchy and chaos. Anarchy obviously inspires the content and context of Plamondon's musical, especially with regard to time. Characters constantly make anachronistic political and cultural references, dancing around the question of what time they are really in. The musical's "sans papiers," who are a strange mix of Gypsies and other outsiders, are the musical's uncanny reminder of how close the twenty-first century is to Hugo's nineteenth-century *Cour des Miracles*. But like Hugo, Plamondon contains this

anarchy by the end of the musical, neatly tying up loose ends in the last scenes. By killing Clopin, Plamondon's king of the Gypsies, and hanging Esmeralda from a scaffold on stage, the Canadian offered his French audiences a solution, one in which the anarchy celebrated by the Gypsies' songs can be squelched and buried onstage.²⁴⁰ As the musical's script begins to impose itself on anarchy, France can mourn the loss of Clopin and Esmeralda while taking a nostalgic sigh of relief, knowing that some stories will remain the same, even when transported to a new millennium.

Plamondon wasn't alone in recognizing that *Notre-Dame de Paris* could be a seductive story for end-of-the-millennium audiences. In the late nineties, three different interpretations of Hugo's novel made it to the big screen within a period of three years. Disney released the first adaptation in 1996 with *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*, its fifth top-grossing movie to date. And a year later, the American television network TNT released *The Hunchback*, starring Richard Harris as Claude Frollo, Mandy Patinkin as Quasimodo and Salma Hayek as Esmeralda. Both of these American films have a humanist twist and an optimistic and positive outlook on the future. And in both stories, Esmeralda not only

²⁴⁰ Esmeralda's song is « Bohémienne, » and its refrain celebrates stolen beginnings and uncertain endings : « Nul ne sait le pays d'où je viens; Bohémienne, je suis fille de grands chemins... qui peut dire ce que sera demain. » Although a huge success in France, Plamondon's *Notre-Dame de Paris* didn't travel well and had a hard time winning audiences in Britain and the US. When the musical premiered in London's West End in May 2000, the British critics tore it apart, unable to understand how the musical had so much success in Paris. As Michael Billington of *The Guardian* put it, the musical was nothing more than “a rock concert in frocks spiced up with displays of muscular aerobics from performers purporting to be asylum-seeking refugees. The story sinks under the relentless barrage of Richard Cocciante's music, which has taken one of the world's best-known stories and turned it into a nonsensical, through-sung procession of Euro-pop ditties.” For many seasoned reporters of the British theatrical scene, the musical just didn't make sense. For Michael White, the show's London producer, the musical's incapacity to cross this cultural bridge could only be explained by Britain's Francophobia. In *Le Monde* he states, “cela ressemble au nationalisme lors des guerres napoléoniennes et ce goût qui consiste à décrier ces satanés Français. » White's comments reveal nostalgia's limits or borders as it were. Nostalgia doesn't travel well because it often ties itself to nationalism, patriotism and other narratives of belonging.

gets her happy ending, but becomes the kind of heroine reminiscent of Sand's Gypsy characters, as she paves the way for new beginnings.

In March 1999, Patrick Timsit released another French interpretation of Hugo's story with *Quasimodo d'El Paris*, a perverse romantic comedy set in a modern-day dystopia. Timsit's film, like Plamondon's musical, is a dark commentary on where many felt France was headed in the new millennium. His story's only likeable character is a mass-murdering Frollo, who adopts Quasimodo after his bourgeois parents disfigure him and then try and dispose of him. As Frollo tells Quasimodo shortly after they return from a cross-country trip in his 1963 Buick Skylark: "on vit dans un monde de dingue. Plus de valeurs sur rien. Plus de conscience de rien. Je ne sais pas où on va. Crois-moi, bien content d'avoir eu 20 ans dans les années 70. On savait s'amuser... C'était autre chose." With a wink, Frollo concludes that the evils that drive him to kill are symptoms of the moral decay of the late twentieth century, which is personified by the morally degenerate bourgeoisie, the dimwitted police and the lawless "Cubains" who fill in for Hugo's Gypsies in this strange parallel universe.²⁴¹

Because this conclusion can only open a door to a subject that should be studied as a twenty-first century phenomenon, I want to end by pointing out what I believe is one of the more unsettling resurrections of Hugo and Mérimée's plot. Tony Gatlif's 1997 film, *Gadjo Dilo*, is a Gypsy plot that presents itself as something other – an authentic portrait of a Roma clan in Romania. If I use the word "authentic" here, it is because the Algerian born, French film director Tony Gatlif was already known for his films on the Roma and discussed his

²⁴¹ Timsit was born in 1959, which means he was a teen in the 1970s, and turned 20 in 1979.

Romani roots while promoting his film. A romantic comedy starring France's teen idol Romain Duris, the movie was produced in France and marketed to a French-speaking audience, and was nominated for France's prestigious *César* award. And though Romania's Roma are a backdrop for the film, *Gadjo Dilo* is first and foremost the story of a young French man looking for a lost father. He believes that if he finds Nora Luca, the elusive Gypsy singer that his musicologist father was obsessed with, he will somehow come closer to knowing the man he never really knew in life.

Though Gatlif's film does expose Romania's prejudices toward and unfair treatment of the Roma, it dangerously casts the Gypsy woman as the saboteur of the young Frenchman's trip down memory lane. Ignoring the reality of Roma women, who live in a very strict paternal society, Gatlif turns Sabina (played by Rona Hartner) into the kind of Gypsy temptress reminiscent of Carmen.²⁴² She is solitary, willful and plays by her own rules – something an unmarried Roma woman would never be allowed to become. As Stéphen chases a naked Sabina through a desolate Romanian forest, it is difficult not to think of Don José and his final ride with Carmen through the forest that would become her grave. Like Don José, Duris, by the end of the movie, is intoxicated by the Gypsy woman's love bites, which cause him to forget how his story began or where it is going.²⁴³

²⁴² It seems Rona Hartner was born to an upper-class family in Romania, and grew up in a fashionable neighborhood in Bucharest. Since her role in *Gadjo Dilo*, she played a Roma woman in another Gatlif film and has borrowed the Gypsy persona for much of her musical career.

²⁴³ In the love scene between the Frenchman and Sabina, Gatlif turns the young woman into a dominatrix of sorts. Exposing her naked body before French audiences, Gatlif has Sabina begin the love-making scene by having her French lover kiss her feet. In another scene, she tempts her lover by literally biting his face. Sabina is not a portrait of a real Roma woman, whose body is covered and controlled by her family and elders. She is the exotic temptress that French audiences, in the tradition of Carmen, are expecting.

Gatlif closes his film with Duris destroying the cassettes he made of different Roma songs to commemorate his father's work. Playing off the nineteenth-century plot that casts the Gypsy as the enemy of historical narrative, Gatlif turns his Frenchman into an irreverent Gypsy, having him dance on top of the recorded music he has just destroyed. While I believe Gatlif's intention was to give Europe, and particularly France, a glimpse of the precarious situation of Romania's Roma, his attempt to romanticize this story by appropriating a plot made popular by nineteenth-century French writers, ends up casting the Roma, and particularly Roma women, as real-life purveyors of the past. And by the end of his movie, he unfortunately confirms a French plot that is just as dangerous to the Roma as Sarkozy's metaphorical baton.²⁴⁴

²⁴⁴ As stated in the Introduction, Sarkozy asserts himself as the father figure in France's family drama. In his July 30, 2010 Grenoble speech, he tells the French that he will use both "coeur" and "baton" to assert order and assure peace.

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