ATTITUDES TOWARD THE MIDDLE AGES IN FRENCH LITERATURE FROM THE
AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT THROUGH THE ROMANTIC MOVEMENT

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
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* * * * *

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PREFACE

On 16 August 1978, marking the twelve-hundred year anniversary of the defeat of Charlemagne's rear-guard in the Pyrenees, which has been immortalized in the Song of Roland, thousands congregated at Roncesvalles in the northern Spanish province of Navarra to commemorate an event of primordial importance not only to medievalists, clergymen, congressists, amateur savants, the military, and the curious, but also to persons of quite diverse backgrounds, from quite disparate countries. The unforgettable solemnity of the ceremonies, the moving service with Gregorian chant in the collégiale, the veneration communicated in the festivities demonstrated once more that interest in the Middle Ages is indubitably rooted in the Western world and far beyond.

But modern multidisciplinary interest in the Middle Ages is not simply a phenomenon which is attributable to Romantic rejection of classical and Renaissance veneration of Antiquity, nor does it constitute a continuation of the Romantic repudiation of the secular, a posteriori world view of the Enlightenment. Although the sixteenth century in general, led by the Pléiade,\textsuperscript{1} eschewed Christian eschatology and the form and content of its medieval heritage--apart from philologists and historians whose curiosity about the Middle Ages led to most valuable contributions to scientific knowledge--interest in the Middle Ages was primarily fostered outside of scholarly circles: Rabelais, for example,
owes his inspiration for Gargantua (1534) to chivalric romances and parodies of the same, just as Cervantes did in Spanish literature, and his perspective often did not distinguish between the late Middle Ages and his own century. Popular literature in particular continued to keep medieval literature before the public eye, but the fortunes of the Middle Ages were equally tied to philosophical theory.

Augustinian realism, which adhered to the neoplatonic theory of imperfect, temporal archetypes illustrating aspects of the Eternal, necessarily conceived of time as being of the moment rather than as a chronological entity whose past was of any relevance. In the second half of the thirteenth century, Aristotelian nominalism, which recognized the individual—albeit imperfect—in the particular and eliminated the intermediary Idea between individual objects and the Universal, was taught at the Sorbonne. But Aristotelian philosophy, which dominated the Middle Ages, retained the Augustinian conception of time; it continued to find acceptance in the Renaissance, especially among the Reformers, and even Descartes in the following century still conceived of time as a relation between two temporal durations or segments in which man, as a transient and imperfect esprit, is separated from the image of God. Descartes's philosophy stands in opposition to the classical, neoplatonic bel idéal moral which stressed the spatial over the temporal while suppressing the importance of the individual; but in either respect, the Middle Ages were of no philosophical importance.

A radical shift in the philosophical perspective of time occurred during the Age of Enlightenment which directly affected attitudes toward the Middle Ages—the theory of perfectibility. Authority and tradition
were renounced in addition to the systems upon which they were founded: man would be reinstated within a secular society based on rational principles and mechanistic laws in which, through personal liberty and the possibility to ameliorate his own existence, he would control his own destiny. The conception of time as static, which relegated the Middle Ages to a literary limbo except in the sphere of popular literature, was broken. Yet a theory of progress necessarily implies a dynamic conception of time involving continuity; hence the philosophes nevertheless continued the classical condemnation of the Middle Ages as "grossier," "barbare," and "ignorant," but for totally different reasons.

In restoring dignity and optimism to man, the Age of Enlightenment widened the breach between man and his medieval past in that the normative mentality of the philosophes toward the Christian millennium was intellectually and emotionally hostile to it; the Middle Ages were seen as a time of mental stagnation, superstition, and intolerance; and historiography was employed as a polemical agent against the medieval period. Thus France of the Pléiade, the Grand Siècle, and the Enlightenment disassociated itself from its medieval past in a way in which neither England nor Germany would ever do.

Changing attitudes toward the Middle Ages are reflected in the general use of the word gothic: in the seventeenth century, according to a linguistic specialist, it meant "archaic, uncouth, ugly, barbarous," while during the first half of the eighteenth century, behavior and manners were termed gothic; later in the century the word was used to denote ruins.² In the nineteenth century, gothic became synonymous with medieval in general. From the Humanists to the philosophes, Gothic
architecture was deprecated, but never more so than among the latter, for whom it was aesthetically displeasing and emblematic of "l'infâme." The term Middle Ages did not even exist before the seventeenth century; the earliest attested use is found in Pierre de Marca's Histoire de Bearn (1640), where the author debates the use of "coustumes du moyen temps," "auteurs du moyen temps," "cet escrivain du moyen age," and "annales du moyen temps," while twice employing the expression "auteurs du moyen age."³

In the spiral postulate of civilization expressed in his Scienza nuova (1725), wherein theocracy, aristocracy, and democracy follow one another in a cyclic pattern as in a medieval wheel of fortune, Vico was one of the first to recognize the Middle Ages in a nonpejorative sense; but his work remained on the borderline of Enlightenment philosophy until Rousseau's radical theories with respect to family, the free, responsible citizen, and society evolved in the 1760s. Especially following the 1789 Revolution, Vico's theories afforded a raison d'être to the proponents of change. In the nineteenth century the Middle Ages gained connotative, in addition to denotative, significance on both positive and negative levels, as a subjectivized political and social metaphor with contemporary application; Catholicism was intellectually rehabilitated in the aftermath of the Revolution; and the Christian world incarnate in the Middle Ages found new acceptance and was integrated into the doctrine of progress.

But this does not mean that the Middle Ages were ignored from the period of the Renaissance to Romanticism. Philologists and historians always retained a lively interest in the centuries preceding them,
and popular literature such as that of the Bibliothèque bleue continued to disseminate the themes and content of revised medieval literature, often for purposes of moral edification. Twentieth-century scholarship has proven—notwithstanding the silence of most classicists—that interest in the Middle Ages was, if not universal, very much alive in the seventeenth century, deriving from tendencies which neither originate nor end at any chronological point in time. And although the prevailing spirit of the philosophes remained unreceptive to medieval studies or to the Middle Ages in general, Enlightenment ideology was not a substantially formative influence on the century which followed, but rather provoked a reaction against it. The eighteenth century also demonstrated a sentimental idealization, a picturesque appreciation, and a political manipulation of the Middle Ages as an ideological construct, a tradition, a legislative and moral exemplum. The presence of the Middle Ages in French literature, which is an integral component of the Romantic movement, may thus be seen in a contiguous sense in the centuries which preceded it.

This study proposes to trace the diachronic fate of the Middle Ages in French literature from late Renaissance scholarship through Romanticism in a dynamic and linear sense, concentrating on the periods in which interest in the Middle Ages gained a powerful subjective value: the eighteenth century, and in particular the pre-Romantic and the Romantic era. Trends in literature will be analyzed according to political, social, psychological, cultural, and academic relevance in order to demonstrate that the Romantic "revival" of the Middle Ages per se is a fallacious assumption. Works of individual authors, movements, or
concerns will be examined synchronically in depth, but no attempt will
be made to provide an exhaustive critical compendium of all uses and
mention of the Middle Ages; this would exceed the terminus ad quem which
we have established.
Notes to the Preface

1Two exceptions must be noted. Ronsard's uncompleted epic poem La Franciade (1572), inspired by Virgil's Aenead but abandoned after the premature death of his protector, Charles IX, is medieval in decasyllabic form as well as in content: the hero, Francus (Hector's son Astyanax, who escaped from the siege of Troy), founds the first dynasty of French kings. It must be remembered, however, that the epic is a genre found in antiquity. Du Bellay's Défense et illustration de la langue française (1549), while condemning the literary genres of the Middle Ages, did recommend the incorporation of old words into the French language.


INTRODUCTION

Scholars were early attracted to the medieval past through the study of language and history. In fact, the first great medievalists of note, Estienne Pasquier and Claude Fauchet, were Renaissance scholars in the Humanist tradition. Pasquier's *Recherches de la France*, of which seven books were published during his lifetime from 1560 to 1607 and the remaining two in 1621, comprised an all-encompassing, encyclopedic, methodological work of fifty years, the purpose of which was nothing less than to "monstrer quelle fut l'ancienneté de nostre France, ains la faire toucher au doigt."¹

A jurisconsultant and magistrate by profession, Pasquier consecrated all of his spare moments to the study of French language and literature, constantly reworking his material. The impulsion for his research undoubtedly derived from his juridical studies: "Tout homme de bon entendement, sans voir une histoire accomplie, peut presque imaginer de quelle humeur fut un peuple, lorsqu'il lit ses anciens Status et Ordonnances."² Pasquier's exploration of national "anciennetez" was atypical for his time; as Gustave Lanson has succinctly observed, the sixteenth century experienced a divorce between erudition and literature: "L'esprit qui tendait à prévaloir abolissait le sens historique par l'attention exclusive qu'il donnait à la commune et immuable essence de l'humanité."³ Pasquier did not conceive of himself as a literary critic
as we know them today: "escrivant icy pour ma France, à non pour moy,"
he considered the goal of "ce présent que je faís à ma France" to inform,
rather than to judge; thus, although his approach was original, he
relied at times on second-hand knowledge of medieval literature to fill
the lacunae in his own erudition.⁴

Prior to Pasquier, only Fauchet and Henri Estienne had ever
undertaken anything remotely resembling the *Recherches de la France.*
Fauchet, the first president of the Cour des Monnaies, had published a
documentary study in the annalist style on the tongue and literature of
France, the *Recueil des antiquitez gauloises et françaises* (1579), in
which his objective was to demonstrate "qu'on en peut tirer quelque
cognnoissance de l'antiquité Françoise."⁵ In the *Recherches* Pasquier
passes in review all parts of medieval French history, as well as
customs and culture; but this was not the goal of annalists such as
Fauchet, whose methodology in the *Antiquitez* is to treat the Middle Ages
chronologically, asserting: "J'ai juré de dire la vérité, laquelle si j'
estargnoy je ne seroy historien."⁶ This led to a copious documenta-
tion, which for some modern scholars is rather overpowering; conversely,
a Fauchet specialist has claimed that the merit of the *Antiquitez* lies
precisely in this accumulation of facts and authentic texts, maintaining
that Fauchet's works would serve as a guide for literary studies of the
eighteenth century.⁷

The *Recueil de l'origine de la langue et poésie française: ryme et romans* of two years later, "estant fait pour la gloire du nom Frä-
çois," remains Fauchet's most original work. Here he proposes to
[ramener] à tire[r] quasi de la prison d'oubli, où l'ignorance les
tenoit pesle-mesle enfermés" countless kings, dukes, counts, barons, and chevaliers of the history of France.\(^8\)

Fauchet had an idealistic conception of chivalry, stating that it had been instituted "tant pour oster l'oppression (que l'Anarchie avoir engendrée sus les vefves et orphelins) que pour le règlement des moeurs dissolues et des mauvaises coutumes et désordonnées impositions."\(^9\) Today, faced with the possibilities which modern technology offers, the works of Pasquier and Fauchet are primarily of psychological value; but their contribution as pioneers in medieval studies cannot be underestimated.

At this time it is appropriate to mention the precious contribution of Nathan Edelman, *Attitudes of Seventeenth-Century France toward the Middle Ages*, to this study. Edelman's conclusion that the Middle Ages "survived" in seventeenth-century France in spite of hostile criticism is based on the discernment of three basic attitudes: enmity, a "willingness to view certain medieval achievements favorably," and a genuine empathy with regard to the Middle Ages.\(^10\) It is upon the latter category which Edelman concentrates, and into which he incorporates both laymen and savants drawn toward the Middle Ages through "the..love of legend, the love of research, national sentiment, respect for religious tradition" as well as "the interests of the crown and of social groups with claims of long date to defend."\(^11\)

Other great Humanist scholars such as the Hellenist and lexicographer Henri Estienne (1531-1598) and the historian François de Mézeray (1610-1683) had an impact on the seventeenth century, but the influence of Pasquier and Fauchet in particular on the promotion of medieval
studies is of singular importance. They certainly were in great part responsible for inspiring Du Fresne du Cange, the unparalleled medievalist of the seventeenth century, whose life work in linguistics qualifies him as the founder of medieval Latin studies in France. "Si l'on veut des recherches historiques, trouvera-t-on quelque chose de plus savant et de plus profond que celles de du Cange," Voltaire would later exclaim. Du Cange retired from a legal career at a very early age to devote his life to all branches of knowledge: "linguistique, philologie, législation, humanités, philosophie et théologie même, il aspirait à tout embrasser, tout approfondir, pour mieux comprendre le passé," one critic has remarked.

Du Cange was aware of the fact that medieval Latin was totally different from classical Latin, which led him to compile a summa of medieval Latin terms that was to be of primordial importance for scholars in the eighteenth century such as Sainte-Palaye and that remains a monumental work even today. He saw changes from Latin to "la langue romane," a mother tongue which in turn engendered French, Spanish, and Italian. Outlined in his most influential work, the Glossarium ad scriptores mediae et infimae latinitatis (1678), these theories earned for Du Cange the distinction of being not only the first French philologist and founder of a new discipline, but also the first philologist of comparative studies. Raynaud's work in the early nineteenth century, to be discussed later, owes its stimulus to this hypothesis.

Du Cange's editions of the works of Villehardouin (1657) and Joinville (1668) were undoubtedly given impetus by editions of the works of the theologian and scholar Alcuin and the collected works of Alain
Chartier (1617) by the eminent historian André Duchesne. Nominated royal
historiographer under Richelieu, Duchesne was one of the first savants
interested in an edition of historical sources, an enterprise which
culminated in the *Historiae Francorum scriptores coaeptanei ab ipsius
gentis origine ad Philippe IV tempora*. These five volumes (1636-1649),
interrupted by his untimely death, contain many manuscripts and other
documents of historical relevance. Duchesne's *Antiquitez et recherches
des villes, châteaux et places plus remarquables de toute la France*
(1609) and his work as a pioneer in historical genealogy also testify to
his vast erudition and make of him a link—with Du Cange—to the scholar-
ship of the eighteenth century.

A discussion of medieval scholarship in the seventeenth century
cannot overlook its indebtedness to the Benedictine scholar Jean
Mabillon, who devoted his whole lifetime to the foundation of the new
discipline of diplomatics, the science which studies diplomas and
official documents within the discipline of ecclesiastical history. In
his most important work, *De re diplomatica* (1681), Mabillon outlined the
art of distinguishing authentic documents and a paleographical method
for recognizing the date of orthography, seals, and other indicia.

One of the most learned men of his generation after his friend
Du Cange, Gilles Ménage promoted the cause of medieval studies in yet
another way. Ménage, a "Modern," had been asked to provide the etymolo-
gies of French words for the *salons* following the decision of the
Académie Française, with which he was at odds, not to include them in
its dictionary. These were finally assembled by Ménage into the first
It is probably not coincidental that a revised and larger edition appeared in 1694, the same year in which the Dictionnaire de l'Académie was published.

In the salon milieu Ménage had an archrival whose approach to the study of language was offensive to him: the Jesuit grammarian Dominique Bouhours, a partisan of the "Ancients," who wielded more influence due to his close association with Boileau and Racine. Ménage held Bouhours in contempt because he based his argumentation on current bon usage rather than on l'usage ancien and because his work lacked a scholarly, systematic methodology and was undocumented. Bouhours's interest in the language of the Middle Ages, however, was not rooted in a sympathetic attitude; the Académie Française, for Bouhours, had purged the language of "la grossièreté et de la rudess des siècles passés."

But Bouhours did advance the postulate that a mother tongue common to all Romance languages existed after Latin.

These giants of scholarly genius, Du Cange and Mabillon, who founded new disciplines; Ménage and Bouhours, who worked with language; Duchesne, the historian— all are but examples of scholarly interest in the Middle Ages during the seventeenth century. But in spite of their enthusiasm, the teaching of the erudites did not fall on fertile ground; savants were always considered as "outsiders" in the seventeenth century.

Chivalry, with a contemporary application to the nobility of the seventeenth century, was glorified as an institution for moral instruction. As Edelman points out, the characters of national heroes and heroines underwent extensive transformation: glorious or infamous, they "survived through a process of great simplification" which modernized
them and made of them a legend. The figure of the knight became a particular favorite. In 1648, following the Théâtre d'honneur et de chevalerie (1620) of the lawyer and érudit André Favyn, Vulson de la Colombière published the Vray Théâtre d'honneur et de chevalerie; ou, Le miroir héroïque de la noblesse in two volumes. "Mon dessein principal," he averred, "est de faire connoître à la noblesse la vertu de ses ayeuls et lui faire voir qu'ils apprenoient l'art de bien vivre dans les divertissements de leurs tournois; et mon principal but est de bannir l'oisiveté et la mollesse où la plupart des gentilshommes se plongent." La Colombière presented an ideal Middle Ages, recalling to the memory of the young nobles the chevaliers errants, King Arthur, the Holy Grail, the Knights of the Round Table, le bon vieux temps, and the merits of tournaments representing "la justice des anciens combats en camp clos" as opposed to "la détestable et enragée fureur des duels qui se pratiquent à présent." Both Favyn and La Colombière subscribed to the "Germanist" theory, which will be discussed at length in the following chapter, tracing the institution of chivalry to the conquering Franks, from whom they believed French nobility descended.

Medieval heroes such as Charlemagne, St. Louis, and Joan of Arc were also appreciated at this time, and indeed most had never lost their popularity. La Calprenède, for example, evoked the national past of France in a huge, panoramic epic situated in the fifth century, centering around the legendary first king of France: Faramond (1664). Dedicating his work to Louis XIV as the "neveu" or "successor" of Faramond, the author observes: "si vous regardez bien quels sont mes Héros, vous trouverez peu d'hommes de nos jours qui leur puissent
Edelman has noted that the "novel" is anachronistic: "the royal lineage is restated in terms of the Trojan legend; Ostrogoth characters become Huns; Pharamond becomes a sort of 'honnête homme,'" making of the work a mirror of the seventeenth century much as the medieval Romans of Enéas, Troie, and Alexandre reflected the time period in which they were composed. Amadis de Gaule, translated from the Spanish in 1540 by Herberay des Essars, achieved the greatest popularity of works in its genre, and seventeenth-century authors used it as a model for their novels of chivalry. Many popular epic novels and poems have as protagonists national heroes: Chapelain's Pucélle, Le Laboureur's Charlemagne, Père Le Moyne's Saint Louys are a few representative examples of the genre which had particular appeal for the précieux of the century.

The classicists almost unanimously applied timeworn clichés such as "barbare," "grossier," and "ignorant" to the Middle Ages; in the oft-quoted lines from Boileau's Art poétique, for instance, medieval literature to the time of Villon is deprecated:

Durant les premiers ans du Parnasse français
Le caprice tout seul faisait toutes les lois.
La rime, au bout des mots assemblés sans mesure,
Tenait lieu d'ornements, de nombre, et de césure.
Villon sut le premier, dans ces siècles grossiers,
Débrouiller l'art confus de nos vieux romanciers.

La Fontaine is the most notable representative of those who experimented with the language of the Middle Ages, so alien to that advocated by the Académie Française: at least seven of his Contes derive from the Cent Nouvelles nouvelles, noted as such by La Fontaine himself; furthermore, in the three principal collections of his Fables, which constitute a
lively reflection of the moeurs of his time, La Fontaine had recourse to the fabliaux and the Roman de Renart for inspiration. Of "Janot et Catin," for example, he states: "J'ai composé ces stances en vieil style, à la manière du Blason des Fausses Amours, & de celui des Folles Amours." But he does not offer an isolated instance of the employment of archaic words, syntax, or grammar; in 1682, for example, the Mercure Galant affords proof of this growing tendency: "Le voudrois moulte que ma mignarde ocelle / Voulut s'ébattre ès behours, ès tournois."22

Yet in spite of obstacles posed by the old language and the limited editions available, the Roman de la Rose, the Quinze Joies de mariage, the farce of Maistre Pathelin, the chronicles, and a few fifteenth-century works were read with interest at this time; the Roman de la Rose, which knew twenty-one different editions between 1480 and 1538, had been adapted to fifteenth-century French from the first edition of ca. 1481 and remained unparalleled in popularity.23

Still another pole of attraction centering around medieval heroes, whose influence may be traced through the nineteenth century, must be taken into consideration: the literature of colportage, directly derived from the chansons de geste and medieval romances (but as reworked prose texts bearing little resemblance to either), which, according to Robert Mandrou, constitutes "la meilleure information d'ensemble . . . pour reconstituer la culture populaire française sous l'Ancien Régime."24 As early as the thirteenth century, adaptations had been made in the form and content of the chansons de geste; recitation replaced singing and gestures, assonance gave way to verse, and legendary details were embellished or reworked. In the proportion that adventure and romanesque
elements became more and more in demand by the tastes of a changing audience, and Old French became obtuse and difficult to read, the adaptations were addressed less to the masses and more to the individual, with an ensuing adaptation into prose: "le moyen âge finissant tend vers le réalisme." Most of the prose versions appeared around the first half of the fifteenth century and were initially reproduced as incunabulae, with quite imposing titles. At the end of the century literature had become "pédantifiée," to use the neologism of Charles Nisard; medieval classification into three basic areas (i.e., chansons de geste, romances, and romans antiques) had collapsed, and all romans had shrunk into a single collection of entertaining romanesque literature in prose with a "rêve of the bourgeois spirit." The sixteenth century reduced the number of surviving romans from about sixty to thirty, all following a common formula which presented an ideal Middle Ages.

The literature of colportage was born of the growing demand for inexpensive adventure stories with a moralizing character. In the first years of the seventeenth century, Nicolas Oudot of Troyes conceived of the idea of using worn-out wooden printing letters to print editions of those medieval works which had proven acceptance. These texts, composed sur-le-champ by "des ouvriers d'imprimerie, typographes ou autres, qui se font écrivains--au premier sens du mot--aux ordres de leurs patrons." were published anonymously and sold by vendors as the Bibliothèque bleue, a series of little brochures or chapbooks ("cheap books") printed on inexpensive blue-gray paper. Due to the nonexistence of copyright laws, competition to the Oudot publishing concern was created by the rival printing firm of Garnier at Troyes, to the extent that at
the end of the seventeenth century, it was possible to discern a dozen small businesses in Troyes itself, not to mention those found in Lyon, Rouen, and other large cities.\textsuperscript{29}

According to Geneviève Bollême, the appeal of the Bibliothèque bleue was in great part psychological: "La pureté des thèmes, l'innocence, auront beau contrebalancer la pauvreté matérielle du livre, évoquer l'enfance"; but in spite of a certain disdain engendered by the Bibliothèque bleue, nostalgia for the "rêve enfantin" which it recalled cannot be excluded.\textsuperscript{30}

The literature of colportage assured the survival of the medieval past, however unfaithful historically, among the petits bourgeois, merchants and laborers: "toute cette mythologie des chansons de gestes, raccourcies au XVI\textsuperscript{e} siècle, remises en français moderne, pèse lourdement en faveur de la continuité," Mandrou attests.\textsuperscript{31} A similar lack of historical veracity has been observed in the theater of the seventeenth century. According to Raymond Lebègue, "on ne trouve guère de vérité historique que dans quelques pièces du début du XVII\textsuperscript{e} siècle, où les moeurs des Lombards et des Mérovingiens sont dépeintes dans leur brutalité."\textsuperscript{32}

The eighteenth century would pick up the thread of popular and scholarly currents, as well as that of national, medieval heroes; but yet another area of appreciation for the Middle Ages would be continued: troubadour poetry. The troubadours, it must be affirmed at the outset, were always recognized—with national pride—as an integral but distinct element of the Middle Ages in France, and their poetry was in general not subjected to the unfavorable epithets applied to the Middle Ages.
From 1150 through the thirteenth century, the aristocratic lyric poetry, which was created by troubadours from the _basse noblesse_ and marginal classes who were attached to courts in the Midi and which was sung by _jongleurs_ or ambulatory performers of the epoch in the _koine_ of the _langue d'oc_ (as opposed to the _langue d'oil_ of the north), celebrated the theme of _fin'amor_ and its values of _mezura_, _largueza_, _joven_, and _joi_. Doomed to extinction by the socio-political causes of the Albigensian Crusade (1208-1229), which eliminated the principal protectors of the troubadours, by religious prejudices against the "poets of the heretic Cathars," and by the linguistic weakening of the Occitan language, which, according to Pierre Bec, "s'entacha de gallicismes qui affectèrent, dès le XV^e_ siècle, sa graphie et, de plus en plus, sa structure," literature in Occitan would be composed for an ever-shrinking audience until the nineteenth century and the revival instigated by Frédéric Mistral.

A literary fraud which would not be discovered for several centuries, the _Vies des plus célèbres et anciens poètes provençaux_ (1575) by the Macpherson of the sixteenth century, Jean de Nostredame, purported to translate into French the _vidas_ (short biographies) of the troubadours, which often preceded their poems, and their _razos_ (explanations). A loyal Provençal, Nostredame could not resist the temptation to attribute an origin in Provence to many poets who were decidedly not from his region. "J'ay produit en lumiére, en esperance de faire chose qui puisse donner plus grand contentement au lecteur, si Dieu m'en donne la grace," Nostredame equivocates, for "nostre Provence a esté anciennement Renommée, pour le grand nombre des poètes qu'en sont sortis par grandes troupes, tellement que pour raison de ce l'ont appelée la
Boutique dels Trobadours." The easiest subterfuge was to change the place of origin; thus, Jaufre Rudel of Blaye (Gironde) becomes the "sieur de Blieux en Provence, bon poète provensal," and Peirol d’Alvergne is presented as the unrecognizable Peyre de Vernegue who "trepassa en Provence au service de la comtesse." Someone too well known often "se retira en Provence," or a simple substitution achieved the same purpose, as, for example, when the celebrated Bernard de Ventadour, "fils d’un pauvre homme de Ventadour [Corrèze], qui se vint habiter en Provence" becomes a monk at the famous Carolingian Abbey of Montmajour near Arles, and not that of Dalon in the Limousin. He even created fictitious vidas for persons who had hardly written a line of poetry—of Provençal origin, of course; in addition, he invented genres, used anachronisms, and falsified historical dates.

But no one questioned the authenticity of his work; it was immediately translated into Italian, and when in 1614 his nephew César published at the expense of the Parliament at Aix his impressive Histoire de Provence, in which he reproduced his uncle’s falsifications and embellished them with his own fraudulent genealogies—his allegation that "l’histoire doit estre pur & franc homme de bien, de condition honorable & noble, véreritable et non flateur" to the contrary—Provençal patriotism was at a height. After all, Joseph Anglade remarks, "quel Provençal du XVIIe siècle aurait eu le courage de faire la critique de cet ouvrage où tout flattaît son orgueil?" Only in the positivistic second half of the nineteenth century was the legendary glory of Provence created by these two notorious members of the Nostredame family dispelled. The immediate result of their work was hardly nefarious for
the survival of interest in the Middle Ages: it fostered a renewed interest in the troubadours—scholarly and pedestrian—which crossed social and cultural boundaries, culminating in the Quarrel of the Troubadours and Trouvères in the second half of the eighteenth century.

What then may be said about the attitudes of the seventeenth century toward the Middle Ages? Evidence is overwhelming, abundantly documented by Edelman in his excellent study, that the Middle Ages "survived." But except on a scholarly level, it was primarily not a realistic Middle Ages which commanded interest; in addition, analogies were already being made between selected parts of the medieval past and current socio-political situations. In the eighteenth century the Middle Ages increasingly acquired subjective connotation, despite the normative Enlightenment bias which was decidedly unsympathetic to the Middle Ages. We will examine both the Enlightenment position with respect to the Middle Ages and that which Georges Gusdorf has recently termed "l'autre XVIIe siècle." These views, whether positive or negative, lead in a direct line to the Revolution of 1789 and beyond, to the reacceptance of the Christian ethos and a growing nationalism in which the historical past—embellished, distorted, or veracious—became an integral component.
Notes to the Introduction


4Moore (p. 38) states that Pasquier "connaissait relativement peu le moyen âge littéraire et il a dû s'appuyer, pour les chapitres 3 et 4 du livre VII [la poésie française], sur des auteurs qui eux-mêmes en ignoraient bon nombre des plus grandes oeuvres." This refutes Léon Feugère's contention expressed in his "Essai sur la vie et les ouvrages d'Estienne Pasquier," in his edition of Pasquier's *Oeuvres choisies* (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1849), l:xci, that "toute notre littérature gauloise, tous nos vieux écrivains français ont trouvé en lui un appréciateur aussi éclairé que bienveillant."


7Espiner-Scott, pp. 235, 348.


11Ibid., p. 396.


13Ibid., p. 55.
14 According to Feugère (pp. 16-17, n. 4), Joinville's *Histoire de saint Louis* was used by Du Cange to establish parallels between *Saint Louis* and *Louis XIV*: Du Cange would have thought to "violuer toutes les lois de la justice, s'il ne l'eût offerte à celui qui travaillait avec une si noble application sur les desseins de saint Louis."


19 Ibid., p. 160.


29Ibid., p. 32.

30Geneviève Bollême, *Introduction to La Bibliothèque bleue: littéraire populaire en France du XVIIe au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Julliard, 1971), p. 10. Bollême fixes the size of the chapbooks from 14 cm. x 7 cm. to 21 cm. x 15 cm., their price at one to two sols each.


36Ibid., cf. the *vida* on p. 21: "Et En Bernartz, per aquella dolor, si s'en rendit a l'ordre de Dalon, et lai el definit." Camille Chabaneau discovered among Nostredame's papers a draft entitled *Promptuere des médailles* which contained a series of ready-made formulas for easy application, as, for instance, the following, which could be applied to a poet: "C'estuy estoit homme de riche taille de gracieux visage et d'apparence vénérable démontrant quelque dignité non commune" (Introduction to the Chabaneau-Anglade edition of Nostredame's *Vies*, p. 95).


38Introduction to Chabaneau-Anglade edition of Nostredame's *Vies*, p. 97.

39None less than Sismondi, Marchangy, Stendhal, and the méridionaux Fabre d'Olivet and Raynouard—all of whom will be discussed in this study—relied on certain aspects of this work. Doubts were expressed during the eighteenth century by Provençalists Caumont: "Jean
de Nostrédame a traduit ces vies en français, mais c'est un tissu de bêvues grossières” (Introduction to Chabanoau-Anglade edition of Nostré-
dame's Vies, p. 160) and the Abbé Millot: "Les vies des Troubadours,
écrites par Jean Nostradamus, sont un ouvrage également sec & superficiel,
où la plupart de ces poètes ne sont pas même nommés; d'ailleurs trop
plein de fables et d'erreurs grossières . . ." ("Discours préliminaire"
to Histoire littéraire des troubadours, [Paris: Durand, 1774], l:xiv--
Sainte-Palaye’s work, which Millot edited and published). Finally, in
the second half of the nineteenth century, papers composed at almost the
same time by Karl Bartsch and Paul Meyer exposed them for the fraudulent
concoctions that they are.

40Georges Gusdorf, Naissance de la conscience romantique au
CHAPTER I

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE MIDDLE AGES DURING
THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

The Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns, which intensified in the second half of the seventeenth century and in which reason and a theory of relativity struggled for emancipation from the doctrine of degeneration and the pinions of classical aesthetics, might indirectly have stimulated interest in the Middle Ages by dispelling the absolutist idea that man remains static throughout time, which principle had found inviolate literary incarnation in the perfection in the works of classical Antiquity. But while rejecting a static view of man for a progressive one based on time and experience, the very concept of progress contained within it an implicit imperfection in the past; thus, the Moderns bypassed their own medieval past and immediately concentrated on their own time, while the Ancients, spurning the Middle Ages for having fallen away from the perfection of former disciplines, clung tenaciously to the Greco-Roman tradition. Fontenelle, one of the leaders of the Moderns, also sided with the Ancients with respect to the Middle Ages for scientific reasons, since as a scholar he adhered to an empirical, unbiased approach. In his Digression sur les Anciens et les Modernes (1688), he compared the Middle Ages to a sick man who, after having made "de bons commencements des sciences, des belles lettres," fell prey to a
Fontenelle claimed that progress could rise above "l'ignorance et la barbarie des siècles précédants"; for him the "siècles barbares" were those "qui ont suivi celui d'Auguste, et précédé celui-ci."² Charles Perrault, the other leader of the Moderns, also sided with the Ancients where the Middle Ages were concerned. In his Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes (1688), he drew an analogy between a "gouffre" where two rivers might descend underground, only to "ressortir avec la même abondance qu'il y étoient entrez," and the fate of arts and sciences during the time when "on voye regner en leur place l'ignorance et la barbarie."³

Fénélon, too, was still inspired by the Ancients in his pedagogical Télémaque (1699); but in the Lettre à l'Académie, written in 1714 shortly before his death, he proposes medieval literature as a source of inspiration since he finds "fort peu d'excellents [livres]" in Antiquity, whereas "notre siècle, qui ne fait que sortir de la barbarie, a peu de livres français qui méritent d'être souvent relus avec un très grand plaisir."⁴ After a discussion as to how the first "architectes gothiques" surpassed the "simplicité greque," Fénélon dares to suggest, "changer seulement les noms; mettez les poètes et les orateurs à la place des architectes" and to "propose[r] seulement aux hommes qui ornent notre siècle de ne mépriser point ceux que tant de siècles ont admirez."⁵
Sainte-Palaye

Although the Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns was more or less settled in favor of the latter at the time of the demise of Louis XIV in 1715, the encyclopedic and Humanistic *homme de lettres* tradition which had characterized the Renaissance still prevailed. Into this multi-disciplined setting was born, three years before the turn of the century, La Curne de Sainte-Palaye, the foremost medieval scholar of the eighteenth century. A member of an old family of the *noblesse de robe*, which upheld the conservative political values of the Ancien Régime, Sainte-Palaye received an education in keeping with his patrician background as one of the leaders of the provincial society of Auxerre. The wealth and prestige of his family allowed him to nurture his serious intellectual pursuits comfortably in Paris, where he was able to ferret out manuscripts and, as a budding quasi *philosophe* and free thinker, to become a regular member of a number of *salons* and literary groups, such as the one composed of d'Alembert, Grimm, Maupertuis, and Bréquigny, who met on Sunday mornings at Falconet's for "la messe des gens de lettres." Not surprisingly, then, he was elected to the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres at the age of twenty-seven, before he had published a line.

Sainte-Palaye's interests, like those of the medieval scholars of his time and of those who had preceded him, did not lie in medieval literature or in the publication of medieval texts in the original, since the public was hardly equipped to read them. Rather, he was early absorbed by the historical study of the French language, which ultimately led to the most ambitious lexicographical undertaking of the
century, his *Glossaire de l'ancienne langue française*, the prospectus of which (published in 1756 after years of assiduous preparation) assured him of a seat in the Académie Française. The influence of Du Cange in Sainte-Palaye's French glossary—which remains even today a basic tool for the understanding of Old French texts—cannot be underestimated; but Sainte-Palaye was also inspired by Falconet, the first medievalist at the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, who had proposed such a glossary to the Academicians and who regarded it as "la clé nécessaire pour s'ouvrir le chemin à la composition des deux autres ouvrages" which he also proposed, namely, a bibliography of all works of literature, science, or learning written in French, and a geographical dictionary. In a paper of which Sainte-Palaye preserved a copy, Falconet issued the following challenge: "Envisagés le champ que fournit votre seule Patrie, vous le trouverez encore assez vaste pour y exercer tous vos talents et y déployer toutes vos connaissances."

A concomitant project to the glossary of Old French was Sainte-Palaye's *Dictionnaire des antiquités*, from which he extracted a series of papers, presented between 1746 and 1757, which were subsequently published in five volumes as the *Mémoires sur l'ancienne chevalerie, considérée comme un établissement politique et militaire*. "De toutes les parties de notre histoire, il n'en est pas de plus intéressante que celle qui nous rétrace les moeurs et les usages de nos pères," he here declares. Affirming that one of the traits which distinguishes France from all other nations is "ce goût si raffiné pour la galanterie, cet attachement pour le beau sexe, allié à une bravoure qu'aucun obstacle ne pouvoit arrêter, lorsqu'il s'agissait de servir les dames et de leur
plaire," Sainte-Palaye (a lifelong bachelor) concludes his introductory remarks with the wish that the ladies will "accueillir avec bienveillance ce dernier fruit d'une plume qui s'est toujours exercée de préférence dans un genre de littérature dont elles font leur plus cher amusement."  

The Mémoires, then, were ostensibly destined for the same aristocratic public which acclaimed his translation of Aucassin et Nicolette, subtitled Les amours du bon vieux temps (1752; republished in 1756 and 1760); being placid in the same category of reading material, the Mémoires undoubtedly passed censorship under these conditions.

Sainte-Palaye's professed objective was to "donner une juste idée de l'ancienne chevalerie" and to make known the nature and usefulness "d'un établissement, qui, regardé maintenant comme frivole, fut néanmoins l'ouvrage d'une politique éclairée, et la gloire des nations chez lesquelles il étoit en vigueur"; he then proposed to examine the causes of the "décadence et la chute de la chevalerie, et les inconvénients qui pouvoient contrebalancer les avantages de cet établissement."  

As Lionel Gossman has astutely observed in his indispensable tool to the understanding of Sainte-Palaye's work, the methodology which Sainte-Palaye employs in the Mémoires corresponds closely to that of Montesquieu in L'Esprit des lois in that each tried to explain the internal coherence within a system rather than its external composition.  

But this writer does not adhere to Gossman's rather restrictive view that the Mémoires provided a "kind of sentimental and imaginative rallying point for all those who wished to revitalize and modernize the ancien régime while maintaining, indeed even strengthening its essential character"; nor do I concur that in the Mémoires Sainte-Palaye only
"tried to reconcile, as did the Esprit des lois, the claims of the royal authority and those of the aristocracy, by pointing out that each required and depended on the other."\textsuperscript{14}

In substantiation of my view, I would call attention to the fifth Mémorie which, when seen in conjunction with the others, reveals a camouflaged political application which is just as implicit as Montesquieu's in the Lettres persanes (1721), the Considérations sur les causes de la grandeur des Romains et de leur décadence (1734), and the chapters devoted to the Middle Ages in the Esprit des lois (1748). Following Montesquieu, Sainte-Palaye even anticipates by several decades Beaumarchais's condemnation of the excesses of nobility personified in Count Almaviva in Le Mariage de Figaro (1784).

In the first four Mémôires, Sainte-Palaye presents a composite view of the Middle Ages which he has painstakingly recreated from all of the relevant documents and sources which were available to him, among them—to name but a few—Froissart, Joinville, Juvenal des Ursins, Monstrelet, Du Cange, Brantôme, Montluc, Fauchet, Aimoin, Duchesne, Godefroy. We must remember, however, that the medieval (Christian) historiography which he read was universal, providential, apocalyptic, and periodized, and that even Renaissance historiography, while no longer a priori and thus armed with a program, had no methods or principles to enable it to rediscover the past; according to R. G. Collingwood, whose terminology we have applied, history had become "the history of human passions, regarded as necessary manifestations of human nature."\textsuperscript{15}

References abound to medieval literature, of which the Histoire du chevalier Bayard, Perceforest, Gérard de Rousillon, Flor et
Blancheflor, and Lancelot du Lac are representative; but Sainte-Palaye's impeccable scholarship also notes the ordonnances of the Kings of France, the annals of Saint Bertin, diverse treatises of Ménestrier and La Roque, La Colombière's Théâtre d'honneur et de chevalerie, the Livre de la chasse et de la venerie, and a plethora of other names. At the end of each Mémoire follow page upon page of valuable notes which substantiate his conclusions and observations; for example, his description of the preparation for becoming a chevalier, from age fourteen (as an écuyer) to knighthood, plus the ceremony itself, is followed by fifty-nine pages of supporting data in the form of notes. This allows him to draw "le portrait de ces anciens temps comparés aux nôtres" in the fifth Mémoire—and therein lies the rub.

For Sainte-Palaye's fifth Mémoire is de la littérature engagée, for change. He is not a blind partisan of chivalry and its extension in the nobility of the Ancien Régime, nor does he conceive of it as le bon vieux temps: "On nous aura, sans doute, accusés plus d'une fois, ou du moins soupçonnés d'une prévention aveugle," he begins the fifth Mémoire, "lorsqu'en lisant tout ce que nous avons dit à l'honneur de la Chevalerie, on se sera rappelé que les siècles dans lesquels elle étoit la plus florissante, furent des siècles de débauche, de brigandage, de barbarie et d'horreur; et que souvent tous les vices et tous les crimes se trouvoient réunis dans les mêmes chevaliers qu'alors on érigeoit en héros."16

Constituting a rebuttal to the first four, the fifth Mémoire is quite explicit: speaking of the "inconvénients de la Chevalerie militaire par rapport au respect dû à l'autorité royale," Sainte-Palaye
demonstrates that, more and more engaged in war and less dedicated to justice, the chevaliers (by extension, nobility of his own time) became the "tyrans du peuple." A parallel with Montesquieu's **Considérations**, where the "tyran" is Louis XIV, is striking:

Quand un tyran, qui se livrait aux gens de guerre, avait laissé les citoyens exposés à leurs violences et à leurs rapines, cela ne pouvait non plus durer qu'un règne. . . . Il fallait donc songer à rétablir la discipline militaire. . . . Ainsi un tyran, qui ne s'assurait point de la vie, mais le pouvoir de faire des crimes, périssait avec ce funeste avantage que celui qui voudrait faire mieux après lui.

In Sainte-Palaye's most revealing quotation, found in an extension of note one to the fifth **Mémoire**, he cites the Occitan poet Peire Vidal in a manner which can be interpreted as a warning to the aristocracy of his own time. Referring to the chevaliers who followed King Henry II Plantagenet of England and his sons Henry, Richard, and Geoffrey, Sainte-Palaye observes that they are compared by Vidal to the "Marabotins" who,

ne songeant qu'à jouir des honneurs et des distinctions que leurs ancêtres leur avaient acquis, furent chassés par les Mamelus [Turcs], gens nés de rien, mais en qui la noblesse du coeur réparoit amplement celle de la naissance; 'Ainsi, dit-il [Vidal], la noblesse ou la Chevalerie qui avait perdu son antique valeur, sa générosité, sa magnificence et ses autres vertus, étoit-elle menacée d'une pareille révolution.'

But the aristocratic public which avidly read the **Mémoires** did not see in them a foreboding of events to come and apparently must have discounted—if indeed it comprehended—the entire fifth **Mémoire**, where such statements as "jamais on ne vit les mœurs plus corrompues que du temps de nos chevaliers, et jamais le règne de la débauche ne fut plus universel" are found in proliferation. It was rather the picturesque-ness and sentimentality of the ideal chivalric world evoked in the first
four Mémoires which appealed to the growing sensitivity which was characteristic of the second half of the eighteenth century.

Sainte-Palaye does not distinguish between nobility and chivalry. Even in "les siècles malheureux" or Dark Ages—which for Sainte-Palaye meant the twelfth century, normally considered the most optimistic and flourishing of the Middle Ages—chevaliers derived from "la jeune noblesse" of seven years of age. He fails to discern the diachronic development of chivalry, perceiving it rather as a static entity created by the early monarchy as a means of overcoming the independence of the fiefs; this is partly attributable to the fact that, with few exceptions, his documentation does not predate the thirteenth century. He thus conceived of the chivalric age much as Johan Huizinga would in our own century: as a closed world in which chevaliers treated their prisoners of war of the same station regally but oppressed the classes under them; a world in which military prowess was deified to the detriment of true knowledge. "Nos ancêtres ne savoient rien: ils raisonnoient peu; les exploits et le rang de ceux qui, parmi eux, faisoient trophée de leur ignorance, l'ennoblissoient aux yeux du peuple: ils aisoient la gloire, mais ils ne connoissoient pas la véritable," he pronounced.21 Of the anciens chevaliers he comments: "Leur goût n'étoit cultivé que par la lecture des ouvrages de leurs trouvères et jongleurs, gens grossiers et libertins, qui sans cesse courant le monde, n'avoient pas le temps de puiser dans les sources pures de l'antiquité, les principes raisonnés du bon goût et de la morale,"22 a view which we will see repeated throughout the eighteenth century. References abound to "l'ignorance profonde dans laquelle vivoient les chevaliers," "la barbarie de nos premiers siècles,"
"ces siècles si grossiers et si corrompus." "Si l'on juge des mœurs d'un siècle par les écrits qui nous en sont restés," he concludes, "nous serons en droit de juger que nos ancêtres observèrent mal les lois qui leur prescriverent la décence et l'honnêteté."23 Significantly, the fifth Mémoire closes with a quotation from "un auteur que tous les siècles et tous les hommes prendront pour arbitre":

On fairoit dans ces siècles grossiers le même cas de l'adresse du corps, que l'on en fit du temps d'Homère. Notre siècle, plus éclairé, n'accorde son estime qu'aux talents de l'esprit et à ces vertus qui, relevant l'homme au-dessus de sa condition, lui font fouler ses passions sous les pieds, et le rendent bienfaisant, généreux et secourable.24

The "auteur" is unnamed, but he would seem to be identifiable as Voltaire—although an extensive search has not yet revealed the source. Voltaire, in any event, must have been quite aware of Sainte-Palaye's royalist conception of chivalry, for he opposed it directly in the Essai sur les mœurs (1756):

... les inféodations, les droits de ressort et de mouvance, les héritages, les lois, rien d'essentiel n'avait rapport à cette chevalerie. C'est en quoi se sont trompés tous ceux qui ont écrit de la chevalerie: ils ont écrit, sur la foi des romans, que cet honneur était une charge, un emploi; qu'il y avait des lois concernant la chevalerie. Jamais la jurisprudence d'un peuple n'a connu ces prétendus lois: ce n'étaient que des usages.25

But the Mémoires had an immediate success both in France and elsewhere, also attracting a bourgeois audience, and remained for over a century the principal source of information about chivalry for both writers and historians.26 Seen objectively, they stand as a testimonial to Sainte-Palaye's Enlightenment mind: philologically oriented, empirically inclined, his work in these areas is without reproach; what the Mémoires and his literary work in general lack is precisely what his
scientific approach was unable to yield: an aesthetic appreciation and perspective for the periods which he investigated. In addition to our own observations, Gossman has noted that there are numerous references in his notes, papers, and printed works to the "grossness" and "barbarity" of the texts he had to deal with: "Que peut-on attendre des Siècles ténébreux dont j'entreprends de retracer l'image," he is known to have declared. 27 Commenting on the "style barbare" of "ces temps barbares," he preferred not to treat the texts with which he worked as literature: "on voit bien," he states, "que mon dessein n'est pas de disculper nos anciens Auteurs français de la Barbarie qui leur a été si justement reprochée." 26

In keeping with his rationalist, taxonomic mentality, when Sainte-Palaye undertook a literary history of the troubadours, he began an exhaustive search of all of the sources of the Provençal lyrics. This necessitated work on the manuscripts in Italian libraries since only four manuscripts were to be found in Paris and because great numbers of the more than four thousand texts plus vidas which he collated, verified, edited, and translated had been compiled in Italy by the troubadours at the fall of the Occitan civilization in the wake of the Albigensian crusade.

Sainte-Palaye was entirely responsible for supplying the material for the Histoire littéraire des troubadours (1774), the culmination of many decades of assiduous scholarship, which was published in three volumes by the Abbé Millot, who is often erroneously credited with the entire work. Millot, in fact, simply followed Sainte-Palaye's translations "en donnant au style une tournure plus libre & plus varié" by his
own admission. He concurred that the troubadours, as "les pères de la littérature moderne," were an extremely valuable source of moral edification because they could serve "sans péandisme" to characterize the moeurs of the chevaliers as well as "le vice haissable quand il trouble l'harmonie à les devoirs de la société." Millet acknowledged Sainte-Palaye as the only person in the position to "arracher les troubadours du tombeau, où leur renommé étoit ensevelie avec leurs ouvrages," prudishly adding that "jusqu'aux satires indécentes de quelques troubadours contre le clergé, ou contre la cour de Rome, tout devient matière d'instruction." In fact, the tendency to employ medieval literature, retouched to make it conform to an eighteenth-century mentality in order to use it for moral edification, became more and more widespread as the century advanced.

* * * * *

The Histoire littéraire des troubadours played no small role in promoting the cause of the Midi in the Quarrel of the Troubadours and Trouvères, which had supplanted that of the Ancients and the Moderns in the literary polemics of the eighteenth century, a phenomenon not without political relevance due to continuing tensions between the north of France and the Midi. It almost immediately elicited reserves bordering on diatribes from the pen of Legrand d'Aussy, a native of Amiens, former Jesuit, member of the Institut and later conservateur of manuscripts at the Bibliothèque Nationale, who also collaborated with Sainte-Palaye on his historical work, as well as with the Marquis of Paulmy of popular literature fame. Legrand's Fabliaux ou contes, fables et romans du XIIe
et du XIIIe siècle (1779), in translation and extract form, contains a defamatory preface of seventy-seven pages in which his own literary theories are expounded. When Legrand initially speaks of the "catacombes de nos anciens poètes, dans lesquelles personne n'est encore descendu, ou qu'on n'a fouillé seulement que fort superficiellement," his northern sympathies are already apparent. The long preface contains a vitriolic attack on Provençal poetry, despite his prevarication: "que n'importe à moi quel canton du royaume a produit, il y a six siècles, les meilleurs poètes?" For Legrand the origin of poetry is unequivocally in the north: "les Français avaient cultivé les premiers la poésie vulgaire en Europe." Tracing the etymology of the words troubadours and trouvères or trouveres to "le don de l'invention et du génie," he concludes that the word troubadour is nothing but a "nom flatteur" of false renown, attributable in great part to Italy, which "insensiblement" regarded the troubadours as "les seuls pères des lettres françaises." As justification, Legrand offers:

On vante tant d'imagination vive des provinces favorisées du ciel; et elles n'ont pas produit un seul roman de fée! l'histoire nous parle sans cesse de leur galanterie, et cette galanterie aboutit à des chansons! Pas un seul roman d'amour! pas un seul de chevalerie surtout, dans des siècles où toutes les imaginations ... ne respiraient que le fanatisme des grandes actions.

As to their content and form, Legrand's fabliaux, given the background of their "translator," simply do not capture the flavor of the period in which they were written, a fact which he even confirms himself:

Il faut en réformer le style, en retrancher beaucoup de longueurs et des choses de mauvais goût, en resserrer quelquefois la narration; en un mot, ce sont des métaux tirés de la mine, qui doivent être purgés de leurs scories, fondus et travaillés, mais
qu'il faut bien aussi se garder de dénaturer. . . . Leur langage étant devenu inintelligible, je me suis fait leur interprète. 37

To Legrand's bias may be added arguments from the Count of Tressan and Mallet (Introduction à l'histoire de Dannemarc, 1755), who also claimed that the origin of poetry was to be found in northern France or in Scandinavia. To counter the attack, partisans of Provençal poetry relied heavily on the Histoire littéraire des troubadours to justify an origin in Provence or Languedoc. The fact that Legrand's Fabliaux ou contes was in its third edition in 1829 should speak for the tenacity involved in the Troubadour versus Trouvère controversy, and it is evidence that a curiosity about the national past was widespread long before the nineteenth century. Sismondi's De la littérature du midi de l'Europe (1813) would take up the battle again, but Sismondi himself relied on the Histoire littéraire des troubadours of Sainte-Palays and Millot for information about the poets of the Midi.

* * * *

In our discussion of Sainte-Palaye's fifth Mémoire sur l'ancienne chevalerie we have advanced the theory that it contains a warning to the nobility of his time stemming from his royalist conception of chivalry: that by condemning the excesses and injustice of the nobles of the periods he had investigated, he hoped an analogy would occur in the minds of his aristocratic readers between their own conduct and principles and those of their medieval ancestors, between the fate of chivalry and the institution of nobility. Around the same time that Sainte-Palaye was establishing himself in Paris, there gained momentum in France a controversy as to the origins of French aristocracy, which
had immediate political relevance in the eighteenth century, namely, the question as to the origins of the French people, of conquering versus subjugated race in France, which J. H. Brumfit has called the most important historical controversy of the century.\textsuperscript{38} If a conquering race, i.e., the Franks, had indeed subjugated the indigenous Gallo-Romans (as history confirms in the defeat of the Roman general Syagrius by Clovis in 486), then, according to proponents of what came to be known as the "Germanist" theory, the place of the Franks in French society would be comparable to that of the aristocracy, heirs of the Frankish rulers, with respect to the Third Estate or vanquished Gallo-Roman serfs. In 1727 the posthumously published \textit{Histoire de l'ancien gouvernement de France} by the Count of Boulainvilliers acted like a bellows on a fire which had already burned in the sixteenth century. His thesis, supporting the origin of the French aristocracy in the Franks, was both anti-monarchic (since by extension the absolutist government of Louis XIV, based on the Roman imperium, repressed freedom) and antiplebeian (since he based his concept on the medieval feudal system). Boulainvilliers wished to incite the nobility of his own time to revolt against the prevailing monarchy and to reestablish Germanic freedom and ideals in France. It is interesting to note that Boulainvilliers was the first to employ the expression \textit{gouvernement féodal}, in another work published the same year.\textsuperscript{39}

Seven years later (1734) the Abbé Dubos, secretary of the Académie Française, countered with an equalitarian "Romanist" version of French history in the \textit{Histoire critique de l'état de la monarchie dans les Gaules}. Dubos formulated the hypothesis that the conquest of
Caul was a historical allusion, that the Franks were rather "called" by the indigenous Gallo-Romans, as allies and equals, to govern them. Dubos maintained that even within the Frankish institution of the clan itself equality reigned; thus nobility per se had never been existent, and the feudal system was only introduced a number of centuries later. Although pronomonarchic, since it demonstrated that from the Merovingian dynasties on the Kings of France were entitled to assume the throne relinquished by the Roman emperors, Dubos's supposition obviously championed the Third Estate, which under Boulainvilliers's theory consisted of the Gallo-Romans as a servile race. This controversy remained a politically "loaded" one through the Revolution of 1789 and beyond, with far-reaching implications which were of tremendous import in the Revolutions of 1830 and 1848, anticipated in particular a hundred years earlier in the work of Montesquieu.

**Montesquieu**

The Middle Ages did not hold a scientific attraction for Montesquieu as they did for Sainte-Palaye; of chivalry, for instance, he comments simply: "nos romans de chevalerie flatterent ce désir de plaire, et donnèrent à une partie de l'Europe cet esprit de galanterie, que l'on peut dire avoir été peu connu par les anciens . . . dans notre monde, un monde nouveau." But Montesquieu (1689-1755), although demonstrating an affinity for Antiquity, was deeply interested in medieval government from a contemporary point of view, and from this aspect he kept the Middle Ages before the public eye. Of all his works, *De l'Esprit des lois* (1748) is singularly important in tracing interest in the Middle
Ages during the eighteenth century, for this work—and the Middle Ages—directly serves the political purpose of the author, notwithstanding his vehement denial of any such intention in the preface, where his statement that he does not write "pour censurer ce qui est établi dans quelque pays que ce soit" was obviously included for political reasons. As an Aquitanian, he had few compunctions about assuming the role of a frondeur, but expediency forced him to resort to literary devices (epistolary novel, allegory, comparison) and publication of his works outside France to safeguard his freedom.

We must first establish a background against which to situate and explicate Montesquieu's use of the Middle Ages. The Esprit des lois contains a disguised attack against royal absolutism such as France had known under Louis XIV. This offensive was already apparent two decades earlier in the anonymously published Lettres persanes (1721), wherein Ubesk writes to Ibbon: "Le roi de France ... possède à un très haut degré le talent de se faire obéir: il gouverne avec le même génie sa famille, sa cour, son État," not to mention the analogous application of despotism in Isphahan. In the Considérations sur la grandeur des Romains et de leur décadence (1734), a prolegomenon to the Esprit des lois, Montesquieu sharpens his attack against Louis XIV. His unflattering portrait of Augustus, for example, makes a comparison with the Roi soleil unavoidable:

Auguste (c'est le nom que la flatterie donna à Octave) établit l'ordre, c'est-à-dire une servitude durable; car, dans un État libre où l'on vient d'usurper la souveraineté, on appelle règle tout ce qui peut fonder l'autorité sans bornes d'un seul; et on nomme trouble disension, mauvais gouvernement, tout ce qui peut maintenir l'honnête liberté des sujets.
The same analogy is obvious in his pronouncement of Justinian's "zèle entièrement indiscret" in matters of religion: "Il crut avoir augmenté le nombre des fidèles: il n'avait fait que diminuer celui des hommes." The fact that fifteen chapters of this work are dedicated to "décadence," while only a disproportionate eight are dedicated to "grandeur," again constitutes an analogous disapprobation applicable to his own time. In addition, the Considerations constitute a sharp divergence from generally accepted ideas, since, as Joseph Dedieu has pointed out, from the Renaissance to Voltaire the grandeur of the Romans had been allowed to dominate historical perspective.

In the Esprit des lois Montesquieu's emphasis is on "grandeur," which for the Romans had been principally found in a love of liberty, and on how to restore this "grandeur" to the throne of France through political moderation. If it is recalled that the drive for royal centralization began in the twelfth century under the Capetians, who recognized—to apply the formula of Petit-Dutaillis—that "the feudal spirit carried within it the germ of anarchistic violence," Montesquieu's unspoken conviction is that "L'Etat, c'est moi" represented royal centralization pushed to despotism. What Montesquieu proposes in the Esprit des lois is a return to the type of government found in the Germanic origins of the French monarchy, the "gouvernement gothique" which constituted "un bon gouvernement qui avait en soi la capacité de devenir meilleur . . . la meilleure espèce de gouvernement que les hommes aient pu imaginer." These statements were shrewdly placed by Montesquieu in a chapter innocently entitled "Pourquoi les anciens n'avaient pas une idée bien claire de la monarchie."
A return to the juridical national past thus does not constitute a reform: the basis for Montesquieu's thought remains an aristocratic conception of liberty inspired by that found in the English parliamentary system, antithetical to that later propounded by Rousseau within what Jean Starobinski has called a "liberté négatrice." For Montesquieu, a nobleman himself, who said, "point de noblesse, point de monarchie," the Frankish "gouvernement gothique" represented a system wherein "la liberté civile du peuple, les prérogatives de la noblesse et du clergé, la puissance des rois, se trouvèrent dans un tel concert, que je ne crois pas qu'il y ait eu sur la terre de gouvernement si bien tempéré." Such a government, where the nobility and a parliament counterbalance royal power and where the moi is collective, developed as follows:

Les nations germaniques qui conquièrent l'empire romain étaient, comme l'on sait, très libres.... Les conquérants se répandirent dans le pays; ils habitaient les campagnes, et peu les villes. Quand ils étaient en Germanie, toute la nation pouvait s'assembler. Lorsqu'ils furent dispersés dans la conquête, ils ne le purent plus. Il fallait pourtant que la nation délibérât sur ses affaires, comme elle avait fait avant la conquête: elle le fit par des représentants.

Such statements have led Louis Althusser to describe Montesquieu as "ce féodal ennemi du despotisme," but Althusser's conclusion that "en prenant parti contre le pouvoir absolu du roi, il prêtait la main à l'ébranlement de cet appareil d'Etat féodal qui était le seul rempart de la noblesse" seems revolutionary, to say the least.

The last four books of the Esprit des lois (28-31) expose the origins of feudal laws and their manner of composition, a subject which must have held the interest of the former magistrate: book 28 represents
a general study of French civil laws from the fifth to the fifteenth centuries; book 29, less important where the Middle Ages are concerned, discusses the "mani\'ere de composer les lois"; books 29 and 30, which continue the study of feudal laws, were added in extremis to the work under the encouragement of Jacob Vernet.\textsuperscript{51} In the last book (31) Montesquieu demonstrates the failure of the feudal system in France, which finally reduced royal authority to zero, emphasizing that a juste milieu between the two systems must be found.\textsuperscript{52} A manifest illustration of such a limitation can be seen in the following anecdote employed by Montesquieu, for which Robert Derathé has established the source in Duchesne's work:

On a dit que . . . Louis le Débonnaire ayant été trouver son père en Allemagne, ce prince lui demanda comment il pouvait être si pauvre, lui qui était roi: que Louis répondit qu'il n'était roi que de nom, et que les seigneurs tenaient presque tous ses domaines.\textsuperscript{53}

According to Marc Bloch, Montesquieu's error in the \textit{Esprit des lois} was to have understood the division of sovereignty between a multitude of small princes or even "seigneurs de villages" as the most striking singularity of the Middle Ages, and to have interpreted that "féodalité" expressed such a "morcellement." "Surtout il est permis de douter," Bloch continues, "qu'un type d'organisation social très complexe puisse être heureusement qualifié, soit par son aspect exclusivement politique, soit, si l'on prend 'fief' dans toute la rigueur de son acceptation juridique, par une forme de droit réel, entre beaucoup d'autres."\textsuperscript{54}

Unlike others of his century (notably Sainte-Palaye, Voltaire, and Rousseau), Montesquieu demonstrates no particular interest in the \textit{moeurs} of the medieval period, nor even in those prevalent at the time
of the early "gouvernement gothique": "Il ne faut pas douter que ces barbares n'ait conservé dans leur conquêtes les mœurs, les inclina-
tions et les usages qu'ils avoient dans leurs pays, parce qu'une nation ne change pas dans un instant de manière de penser et d'agir."55 He will not judge, he claims, because "transporter dans des siècles reculés toutes les idées du siècle où l'on vit, c'est des sources de l'erreur celle qui est la plus féconde"—a remark which must have been directed at Voltaire, whose Histoire de Charles XII (1731) would appear to be the immediate target.

Montesquieu is critical of the theories of both Boulainvilliers and Dubos, calling the first "une conjuration contre le tiers-état" and the latter "une conjuration contre la noblesse," but he especially attacked Dubos since the latter's hypothesis was a deterrent to the acceptance of an English parliamentary system in France, a theory "injurieuse au sang de nos premières familles."56 Dedieu is quite correct in his assessment of Montesquieu's position:


Montesquieu's interest in the Middle Ages was then pragmatic and of contemporary application and contains no adherence to the theory of perfectibility where the "gouvernement gothique" is concerned. Montesquieu was certainly much less biased than many others of his time: it was precisely this quality of independence which allowed him to find an
intermediary road between the postulates of Boulainvilliers and Dubos with respect to the medieval government of the Franks. This same independence of mind allowed him to view Gothic architecture with more objectivity than most of his contemporaries. In the incomplete and posthumously published "Essai sur le goût," written soon after 1748, his main criticism was directed primarily against the rich variety which he found in the Gothic:

L'architecture gothique paroit très variée mais la confusion des ornements fatigue par leur petitesse. . . . Un bâtiment d'ordre gothique est une espèce d'énigme pour l'œil qui le voit, et l'âme est embarrassée comme quand on lui présente un poème obscur.58

Since he was never a partisan of the theory of progress, Montesquieu achieved a historical distance and perspective which the philosophes never could claim.

Rousseau

In his first works Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) demonstrates a basic judgment of the Middle Ages not unlike that of his philosophe contemporaries. Already in his controversial essay on historical regress, the Discours sur les sciences et les arts, which earned for him the prize of the Académie of Dijon of 1750, Rousseau refers to the fact that man has lifted himself from the "néant" which followed the corruption of the moeurs of Antiquity through his own efforts and the "lumières de sa raison," a phenomenon which has occurred "depuis peu de générations." Prior to this time, Rousseau continues, "l'Europe était retombée dans la barbarie des premiers âges. Les peuples de cette partie du monde, aujourd'hui si éclairée, vivaient, il y a quelques siècles, dans un état pire que l'ignorance."59 In his "Lettres sur la musique
française" (1752), his opinion of the Gothic—whether pertaining to music or architecture—is decidedly negative:

A l'égard des contrefugues, double fugues . . . ce sont évidemment des restes de barbarie et de mauvais goût qui ne subsistent comme des portails de nos églises gothiques, que pour la honte de ceux qui ont la patience de les lire.60

It is interesting to compare Montesquieu's positive conception of "gouvernement gothique" to Rousseau's adamantly disapprobation of what he termed gouvernement féodal in the Contrat social (1762). Rousseau saw inherent dangers in government by representation: his ideal, a sovereign people, is ruled by the general will (or moi commun) in the function of its sovereignty:

La souveraineté ne peut être représentée, par la même raison qu'elle ne peut être aliénée; elle consiste essentiellement dans la volonté générale, et la volonté ne se représente point; elle est la même, ou elle est autre; il n'y a point de milieu.61

Members of a parliament can never represent—indeed, do not possess the capacity to do so—for Rousseau; they are only the "commissaires" of the people, which, once representation has been elected, forfeits its freedom and becomes the slave of those whom it has elected. Rousseau, like Montesquieu, sees the origin of government by representation in the Middle Ages, but from an antithetical point of view:

L'idée des représentants est moderne: elle nous vient du gouvernement féodal, de cet inique et absurde gouvernement dans lequel l'espèce humaine est dégradée, et où le nom d'homme est en déshonneur.62

Inspired by the theory of relativity, Rousseau affirms that "toute forme de gouvernement n'est pas propre à tout pays,"63 that the type of government should be determined by practical and moral reasons. Sparta, not the English parliamentary system dear to Montesquieu, is Rousseau's model
community, a totalitarian collectivity.

The Middle Ages for Rousseau are unimportant from a theoretical point of view; they do not serve as a political metaphor as they did for Sainte-Palaye, Montesquieu, and others of his time. But virtue, the underlying principle of democracy for Montesquieu in the *Esprit des lois*, constitutes the basis on which Rousseau's ideal society is formed: the little community at Clarens in *Julie; ou, La nouvelle Héloïse* (1761), is in essence feudal in structure. The title itself is a direct indication as to the content, for the protagonists Julie and Saint-Preux are, as Héloïse and Abélard of the twelfth century (who also had no recourse but to an epistolary expression of their love), to be united in Heaven as a result of the virtuous conduct which ultimately separated them on earth.

Recent articles by David L. Anderson and Bernard Bray have confirmed that the motif of Héloïse and Abélard was quite common in the eighteenth century. Between 1669 (the *Lettres portugaises* of Guillerague) and 1761, the date of publication of *Julie; ou, La nouvelle Héloïse*, dozens of translations, prose versions, poems, plays, and relatively accurate journalistic accounts of the *Historia calamitatum* were published; 64 Beauchamps's *Lettres d'Héloïse et d'Abailard* (1714, 1721, and 1737) and Pope's *Eloïsa to Abelard* (1717) and its translation into French by Fiquet du Bocage in 1751 (which was paraphrased by Feutry and Colardeau) were complemented in 1759 by Dorat's "heroïde," *Julie, fille d'Auguste, à Ovide*, in which the character of Julie was substantially softened. 65 Dorat's work was first printed in "L'Année littéraire" of 1758 under the title *Nouvelle réponse d'Abailard*. Rousseau, who began composing his novel in 1756, could hardly have been unaware of
the popularity of this theme; and, in addition, it held an even greater attraction for him because it offered the possibility for moral instruction. "In a very broad sense," writes Anderson, "the convent of Héloïse literature represents both a spatial pole, or opposite of worldliness, and a sacrificial ritual, or an imaginative, symbolic form." Clarens is the actualization of Rousseau's contention in the Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité parmi les hommes (1755) that "l'habitude de vivre ensemble fit naître les plus doux sentiments qui soient connus des hommes, l'amour conjugal et l'amour paternel"; an ideal, simple, "transparent" life far removed from the "opaque" artificiality of society, to borrow the terminology of Starobinski.

"Ce recueil avec son gothique ton convient mieux aux femmes que les livres de philosophie," Rousseau announces in the short first preface to the novel, which statement has led one specialist to conclude that Rousseau refers back to what he has called "les fautes de langue, . . . le style emphatique et plat, . . . les pensées communes rendues en termes ampoulés" in the preceding paragraph. This writer does not agree, for Rousseau is much more explicit in the second preface: "S'il y a quelque réforme à tenter dans les moeurs publiques, c'est par les moeurs domestiques qu'elle doit commencer." It is not happiness which should be sought in life, but virtue. To demonstrate this idea, as well as the instructional value which can be found in the novel, the dialogue in the second preface continues:

Par exemple, si votre Héloïse [i.e., Rousseau's Julie] eût été toujours sage, elle instruirait beaucoup moins; car à qui servirait-elle de modèle? C'est dans les siècles les plus dépravés qu'on aime les leçons de la morale la plus parfaite.
The analogy is even more meaningful when it is recalled that the moeurs of Héloïse and Abélard, which Rousseau upholds as a model worthy of emulation in Julie and which in Starobinskian phraseology are pure "pour avoir parlé le langage du sacré au sein même des voluptés," were inspired by the most optimistic and idealistic century of the Middle Ages.

Another medieval element in Julie has been brought to our attention recently by Paul De Man: the influence of the love garden of Deduit in Guillaume de Lorris's portion of the Roman de la Rose on Rousseau's description of Julie de Wolmar's garden retreat. "Far from being an observed scene or the expression of a personnal état d'âme, it is clear that Rousseau has deliberately taken all of the details of his setting from the medieval literary source, one of the best-known versions of the traditional topos of the erotic garden," De Man concludes. We might add, however, that in the Roman de la Rose the garden is not a reality, but a dream.

Yet just as the garden contains a paradox, in that it appears to flourish in a natural state whereas in reality everything is ordered and controlled, the structure of the little utopian community at Clarens—in appearance egalitarian—is deceptive. Rather than independence, a feudal dependence reigns at this "idéal moral de l'autarcie." Starobinski resolves this contradiction with the argument that "Rousseau est prêt à accepter un monde où n'existe qu'une pseudo-égalité sociale, à condition qu'il soit possible quelquefois de faire en sorte que l'égalité
consistait dans le sentiment d'être égal." An example of the latter is surely seen in the "heureuses vendanges" passed with the "bons villageois," of which Rousseau declares: "Tout vit dans la plus grande familiarité; tout le monde est égal, et personne ne s'oublie." Conversely, Barbéris views Clarens (which for him "n'est pas clair") as an "utopie passéiste" where "on ne forge pas une humanité nouvelle; on sauve une humanité menacée par des folies qu'elles se nomment passions individuelles, ou société mondaine, ou société moderne, les passions individuelles n'étant en un sens que le produit de cette société."

Clarens is not a universe in expansion, "c'est de la société féodale qu'on se prépare, en force, à sortir, mais sans pour autant que le moi puisse se reconnaître dans cette société civile qui s'installe et qui va se faire légitimer." Barbéris's opinion, which reflects a particular twentieth-century perspective, is certainly based on statements by M. de Wolmar such as: "N'instruissez point l'enfant du villageois, car il ne lui convient pas d'être instruit. N'instruisiez pas l'enfant du citadin, car vous ne savez encore quelle instruction lui convient." Lester G. Crocker has pointed to the dual function of M. de Wolmar in the novel, the establishment of order in his realm and the maximum utilization of its human resources. Wolmar has created a cooperative society that absorbs all its individual components, harnessing the energy of their natural instincts to the collective enterprise and its indivisible goals.

All of these observations are certainly valid. Clarens, then, is representative of life controlled by convention and ordered by reason—which in itself is inherently dissimilar to the contemplative life advocated in the Rêveries d'un promeneur solitaire, to cite but just one example of the paradoxes which characterize Rousseau's philosophy. Such
paradoxes, according to a recent article, are primarily unresolvable yet cannot be called unreasonable simply because they are contradictory.\textsuperscript{80}

Rousseau's theories about the theater of his time, already expressed in the \textit{Lettre à d'Alembert sur les spectacles} (1758), find further expression in \textit{Julie} with a direct relationship to this study. The subjects of classical tragedies no longer have meaning, Saint-Preux writes to Julie, but those taken from the historical past are infinitely more useful:

Qu'on représente à Berne, à Zurich, à la Haye, l'ancienne tyrannie de la maison d'Autriche, l'amour de la patrie et de la liberté nous rendra ces pièces intéressantes. Mais qu'on me dise de quel usage sont ici les tragédies de Corneille, et ce qu'importe au peuple de Paris Pompée ou Sertorius.\textsuperscript{81}

One must have "le coeur vide et l'esprit frivole" to appreciate the "vaine apparence" of the Parisian "vie bruyante et tumultueuse" where such \textit{spectacles} are appreciated; but, unlike Voltaire, Rousseau stops short; he will not use the theater as a propagandizing mechanism. Where the theater is concerned, there is no "medievalism."

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The \textit{philosophes} in general, committed to the theory of perfectibility and a historically secular perspective, saw the Middle Ages as a stage of "barbarie" through which man had passed; d'Alembert, for instance, referred to the Middle Ages in the \textit{Discours préliminaire} (1751) to the Encyclopédie; \textit{ou, Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers} as "ces temps ténébreux" and "les siècles d'ignorance," concluding that "en sortant d'un long intervalle d'ignorance que des siècles de lumière avaient précédé, la régénération des idées, si on
peut parler ainsi, a dû nécessairement être différente de leur génération primitive." D'Alembert apparently made little qualitative distinction between centuries of the Middle Ages, finding that one left "la barbarie" and "les siècles d'ignorance" when the study of language and history was "abandonnée par nécessité" only in the Renaissance, while Voltaire claimed that "la barbarie" continued right until his own century.

In the *Encyclopédie*, the article "France," written in 1757 by the Chevalier of Jaucourt (who alone was responsible for twenty-eight percent of the text of the *Encyclopédie*), demonstrates again the normative Enlightenment attitude with respect to the Middle Ages. In addition, it contrasts sharply with Montesquieu's support of a "gouvernement gothique":

Les peuples furent absolument esclaves en France, jusque vers le temps de Philippe-Auguste. Les seigneurs furent tyrans jusqu'à Louis XI, tyran lui-même, qui ne travailla que pour la puissance royale. . . .

Aussi pendant neuf cents ans, les Français sont restés sans industrie, dans le désordre & dans l'ignorance: voilà pourquoi ils n'eurent part ni aux grandes découvertes, ni aux belles inventions des autres peuples. L'imprimerie, la poudre, les glaces, les téléscopes, le compas de proportion, la circulation du sang, la machine pneumatique, le vrai système de l'univers, ne leur appartenaient point; ils faisaient des tournois, pendant que les Portugais & Espagnols découvraient & conquéraient de nouveaux mondes à l'orient & à l'occident du monde connu.

For Jaucourt, a friend of Montesquieu, Mably, and Condillac, France only flourished in the second half of the seventeenth century, under Colbert; the opinion expressed in the *Encyclopédie* thus conceived of the Christian millennium of the Middle Ages as a barren wasteland.

The late historian J. B. Bury finds the view of Condorcet, one of the youngest Encyclopedists, representative of that of the eighteenth-century philosophes in general; his view of the Middle Ages is slight
indeed, since the only contribution to social amelioration that Condorcet
could determine in a period of almost a thousand years, Bury points out,
was the abolition of domestic slavery. More recently, Peter Gay has
observed that the Enlightenment's view of the Middle Ages is "a carica-
ture, a tendentious misreading of massive evidence: two centuries of
scholarship have exposed the philosophes' blindness to the beauty, the
learning, and the variety of the Christian millennium." But as narrow
as this view was, Gay continues, it contained a paradoxical victory:
"hidden behind a tissue of erroneous detail and prejudiced judgment
stands a major historical truth . . . the Middle Ages were different in
vital essence from the ages that preceded and followed them," above all
because they "introduced—or rather, reinstated—religious myth as the
deepest motive power and final purpose of civilization."86

Voltaire

Voltaire's attitude toward the Middle Ages is certainly the most
tendentious, the most explicit, the most consistent, and the most damming
of any writer of his century, and perhaps the most representative of
those who moved in the circles of the philosophes. It was indeed
startling to discover that the Chevalier of Jaucourt's article "France"
(1757) in the Encyclopédie was extensively plagiarized from Voltaire's
introduction to Le siècle de Louis XIV, published six years earlier. It
was virtually impossible for Voltaire, as a firm believer in anthropo-
centrism, an enemy of Christianity, and an adherent to the principle of
perfectibility, to admit any redeeming qualities in the Middle Ages;
thus, in the introduction to his Siècle de Louis XIV, Voltaire names
four great ages: that of the Greeks, that of the Romans, the Renaissance under the Medicis, and that of Louis XIV, which he found most approximate to perfection. Since the forefathers of the French "joignaient la galanterie romanesque des Maures à la grossièreté gothique," and as the decadence of the family of Charlemagne precluded any type of "bon gouvernement," Voltaire observes, "les peuples furent esclaves jusque vers le temps de Philippe Auguste; les seigneurs furent tyrans jusqu'à Louis XI, et les rois, toujours occupés à soutenir leur autorité contre leurs vassaux, n'eurent jamais ni le temps de songer au bonheur de leurs sujets, ni le pouvoir de les rendre heureux." The nature of our discovery of Jaucourt's plagiarism necessitates the inclusion of several lengthy quotations from Voltaire's text which parallel those of Jaucourt, for which we ask the reader's indulgence:

Ainsi, pendant neuf cents années, le génie des Français a été presque toujours rétréci sous un gouvernement gothique, au milieu des divisions et des guerres civiles, n'ayant ni loi ni coutumes fixes, changeant de deux siècles un langage toujours grossier; les nobles sans discipline, ne connaissant que la guerre et l'oisiveté; les ecclésiastiques vivant dans le désordre et dans l'ignorance, et les peuples sans industrie, croupissant dans leur misère. . . .

Les Français n'eurent part ni aux grandes découvertes ni aux inventions admirables des autres nations: l'imprimerie, la poudre, les glaces, les télescopes, le compas de proportion, la machine pneumatique, le vrai système de l'univers, ne leur appartenaient point; ils faisaient des tournois, pendant que les Portugais et les Espagnols découvraient et conquêtraient de nouveaux mondes à l'orient et à l'occident du monde connu.

We see confirmed in the above lines the justification for Fernand Vial's contention that "Voltaire, presque à priori et en vertu surtout d'idées préconçues, englobe tout le Moyen Age dans une universelle réprobation." Such generalizations are found in abundance in his Essai sur
les moeurs (1756), which contains his most vehement appraisal of the Middle Ages.

At the outset it must be reiterated that—in line with the prevalent philosophical attitude which characterized his time—Voltaire (1694–1778) perceived history from the vantage point of his own century. "Si l'on écarte certaines de ses réactions de méchante humeur, c'est à 'un historicisme progressiste' qu'il adhère le plus constamment," René Pomeau maintains—and no other premise is indeed tenable. Voltaire advised Madame du Châtelet, at whose instigation the Essai was written, that he would begin at the period in time where Bossuet stopped in his Discours sur l'histoire universelle (1681); but since Voltaire vigorously opposed the Providential philosophy of "cet éloquent écrivain ... [qui] paraît avoir écrit uniquement pour insinuer que tout a été fait dans le monde pour la nation juive," he chose to commence his Essai with the "anciens peuples" of the Orient. The Essai thus becomes a subjective reconstruction of the past in which chance, not divinity, is the generative power in history.

We are reminded of Fénélon's "sick man" and Perrault's "underground river" when we read:

Que la nature humaine ait été plongée pendant une longue suite de siècles dans cet état si approchant de celui des brutes, et inférieur à plusieurs égards, c'est ce qui n'est que trop vrai.91

Brumfitt's remark that Voltaire has no "hero" whose personal achievements must be stressed, as in the Siècle de Louis XIV—which often led to a more realistic interpretation of factors determining the course of events92—is well taken; the Middle Ages as depicted by Voltaire have to be seen in this perspective. The Church, as a prime and obvious example,
is placed in the role of oppressor for all time, tarnished by the forces of superstition which characterized the medieval period. Of Charlemagne's reign Voltaire declares: "La rouille de la barbarie était trop forte, et les âges suivants l'épaissirent encore." France in the time of Hugues Capet was "ces temps barbares"; he speaks of "l'ignorance de ces siècles" with reference to the tenth and eleventh centuries, a time of "confusion, tyrannie, barbarie, et pauvreté"; and he proclaims that "le seul fruit des chrétiens dans leurs barbares croisades fut d'exterminer d'autres chrétiens," while "la France, démembrée, languit dans les malheurs obscurs" from Charles le Gros to Philippe le Bel. The thirteenth century marked the passage from "de l'ignorance sauvage à l'ignorance scholastique," but the age of chivalry fared slightly better: the fourteenth century, "ces temps de grossièreté, de séditions, de rapines et de meurtres," was nevertheless "le temps le plus brillant de la chevalerie," and "servait de contrepoids à la férocité générale des mœurs."

Science and Beaux-Arts in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries do not offer better; after all.

... un malheureux pays, dépourvu de lois fixes, agité par des guerres civiles, sans commerce, sans police, sans coutumes écrites; un pays dont la moitié s'appelait la langue d'Oui ou d'Oul, et l'autre la langue d'Oc, pouvait-il n'être pas barbare?

He calls the era of Louis XI one of "des mœurs fières et barbares"; but what is more revealing than Voltaire's overall judgment of "les temps grossiers qu'on nomme le moyen âge"?

Although the justification for some of these observations cannot be denied, Voltaire's bias is striking when compared with Montesquieu's
more objective treatment of the Middle Ages in the *Esprit des lois*. A comparison of the manner in which they both perceived Charlemagne is quite revelatory of Voltaire's static *parti pris* and illustrative of his penchant for manipulating history in a utilitarian fashion. Montesquieu, speaking of the Emperor, comments: "Tout fut uni par la force de son génie. ... Jamais prince ne sut mieux braver les dangers; jamais prince ne les sut mieux éviter. ... Ce prince prodigeux était extrêmement modéré; son caractère était doux, ses manières simples."\(^{104}\) Not so for Voltaire: "La réputation de Charlemagne est une des plus grandes preuves que les succès justifient l'injustice, et donnent la gloire."\(^{105}\) Although on one occasion he grudgingly acknowledges Charlemagne as "le plus ambitieux, le plus poétique, et le plus grand guerrier de son siècle," Voltaire severely reproaches the historians Daniel (who "ne dit pas un mot") and Velly (who called the Emperor *religieux monarque, ornement de l'humanité* [Voltaire's italics]) for not having mentioned wicked atrocities under Charlemagne's reign, such as the Cour Veimique or Court of Westphalia, where totally innocent persons were condemned and executed in order that their possessions be seized "sur des délétions secrètes, sans appeler les accusés."\(^{106}\) Furthermore, he does not overlook the Emperor's repudiation, banishment, and probable murder of his sister-in-law and two young nephews, nor the fact that he cast off his own wife, the daughter of the Lombard king Didier, nor his sexual excesses even with his own daughters ("on a dit que ... "); in short, after having decimated the reputation of the ruler, Voltaire demands, two chapters later, "qu'on juge des moeurs des peuples par celles des princes,"\(^{107}\) after which he shrewdly points to the example of the famous
caliph Aaron-al-Raschild [sic] who "le surpassa beaucoup en justice, en science, en humanité."\textsuperscript{108} The Middle Ages, then, also served Voltaire as a source of examples for moral edification.

Although he did not make use of the Middle Ages as political metaphor and disclaimed involvement in the "Germanist" versus "Romanist" theories, which had gained great socio-political relevance, it was almost impossible for Voltaire to remain objectively out of the melee. In the ninth letter ("Sur le gouvernement") of his Lettres philosophiques (1734), Voltaire praised the "mélange heureux dans le gouvernement d'Angleterre, ce concert entre les Communes, les Lords et le Roi" and condemned the feudal system: "Il a fallu des siècles pour rendre justice à l'humanité, pour sentir qu'il était horrible que le grand nombre semât et que le petit nombre recueillît";\textsuperscript{109} and in his Dictionnaire philosophique (1764), he proclaimed:

Je n'entrerai point dans la discussion de l'ancien gouvernement des Francs, vainqueurs des Gaulois; dans ce chaos de coutumes toutes bizarres, toutes contradictoires; dans l'examen de cette barbarie, de cette anarchie qui a duré si longtemps, et sur lesquelles il y a autant de sentiments différents que nous en avons en théologie. On n'a perdu que trop de temps à descendre dans ces abîmes de ruines; et l'auteur de l'\textit{Esprit des lois} a dû s'y égarer comme les autres.\textsuperscript{110}

Nevertheless, two pages later, he significantly admits that "Montesquieu a grand tort de se moquer tant de l'abbé Dubos, et de faire semblant de le mépriser."\textsuperscript{111} In his article "Franc ou Franq; France, François, Français," also in the Dictionnaire philosophique, Voltaire categorically refutes a theory of races, much as Michelet would do in the following century:

Qui étaient et d'où venaient ces Francs, lesquels, en très petit nombre et en très peu de temps, s'emparèrent de toutes les Gaules,
que César n'avait pu entièrement soumettre qu'en dix années? Je viens de lire un auteur qui commence par ces mots: Les Francs dont nous descendons. Hé! mon ami, qui vous dit que vous descendez en droite ligne d'un Franc? 112

What then of Voltaire's Pucelle, of which the official date of "publication" is 1755, but on which he worked intermittently since 1730, and in which the protagonist is a national, medieval heroine? Inspired by Chapelain's Pucelle, Ariosto's Orlando furioso, and, most likely, Pope's Rape of the Lock, 113 Voltaire's travesty is an irreverent monument to popular belief, in which the victim has much more medieval credulity than the Maid of Orleans:

Je suis né pour célébrer les saints:
Ma voix est faible, et même un peu profane.
Il faut pourtant vous chanter cette Jeanne
Qui fit, dit-on, des prodiges divins.
Elle affermit, de ses pucelles mains
Des fleurs de lis la tige gallicane,
Sauva son roi de la rage anglicane,
Et le fit oindre au maître-autel de Reims.
Jeanne montra sous féminin visage,
Sous le corset et sous le cotillon,
D'un vrai Roland le vigoureux courage.
J'aimerais mieux, le soir, pour mon usage,
Une beauté douce comme un mouton;
Mais Jeanne d'Arc eut un coeur de lion;
Vous le verrez, si lisez cet ouvrage. 114

The fictitious adventures of Joan of Arc, Agnès Sorel and Charles VII, La Trémoïlle, Dunois, and others, sparked with numerous apparitions of Saint Denis and the génie railleur of Voltaire, are interspersed with comments such as:

Heureux cent fois qui trouve un pucelage!
C'est un grand bien; mais de toucher un coeur
Est, à mon sens, un plus cher avantage.
Qu'importe, hélas! d'arracher une fleur? 115

Joan's ridiculous exploits, such as drawing three fleurs de lys on the bare buttocks of a page (appropriately named Monrose) in the service of
John Chandos, while the "bon Denis voyait, se pâmant d'aise, / Les lis français sur une fesse anglaise,"116 set the stage for the author to offer sarcastic platitudes such as "Que cette histoire est sage, intéressante! Comme elle forme et l'esprit et le coeur!"117

But it was not the Maid whom Voltaire ridicules in these escapades: it was rather the Middle Ages as an entity in itself, into which Voltaire dipped his acerbic pen. William Calin rightly points out that Voltaire's obsession with nudity in the Pucelle forms an antithesis to the qualities which are usually stressed in heroic romances of the Middle Ages:

Stripping off armor, and clothes, points to the reality of life behind the literary mask, indeed symbolizes the unmasking which is central in Voltaire's craft . . . thus for Voltaire's characters to go about their day's activities in the nude is the ultimate in comic rigidity. Such rigidity is not entirely inappropriate in what Voltaire considers to be a barbarous age, however.118

From Voltaire's perspective, Calin continues, "the Middle Ages were as primitive as the Garden of Eden, and the innocent nakedness of Adam and Eve projected onto Joan of Arc proves to be a pitiful absurdity."119 Voltaire's private correspondance pinpoints another target, the good Saint Denis: "Je veux bien qu'on rie de saint Denis, et je ne veux pas qu'on insulte Dieu."120

Calin's realistic observations form a sharp contrast to widely accepted assessments of the Pucelle which have tended to exonerate Voltaire of anything but good-hearted fun. Theodore Besterman, for example, defends Voltaire by prefacing his remarks with a reminder to the reader that "a poet's views are not to be determined by what he says in a mock-heroic epic," observing that "Voltaire more than once wrote
seriously about Joan of Arc, with feeling and understanding," citing his condemnation of her barbarous execution in the *Eclaircissements historiques* (this is of course to be expected, given his campaign against "l'infâme"). For Besterman, the main theme, the mystical importance of her virginity, is a joke to Voltaire.\textsuperscript{121} This is not questionable but provides only a partial explanation.

The *Pucelle*, as a title, however, is most revealing: the fact that Joan is not referred to by name implies indirectly that a *pucelle* is precisely what she is not, and the repeated attacks on her *pucelage* by both men and animals in Voltaire's cantos reinforce this implication. In her nameless capacity Joan can be seen as an eighteenth-century Marianne. The *Pucelle* could represent a revenge on France by Voltaire as a bitterly antinationalistic émigré who sees the France which rejected and banished him in the same way he sees his Joan--as a whore.

Since not only the content, but also the form, considered by his contemporaries as impeccable, made it a choice piece of reading, parts of the *Pucelle* were secretly copied and published on various occasions, to the author's feigned--but nevertheless frightened--dismay. According to Besterman, Voltaire remarked in 1755 that six thousand manuscript copies existed in Paris; independent evidence has tended to corroborate this figure.\textsuperscript{122} "Les gens du monde, des femmes même et des princesses s'y récréaient sans scrupule," it has also been noted.\textsuperscript{123} At the time of the Belle Époque, however, the *Pucelle* was seen by conservative critics as an "énorme amas d'ordures" of which "on dirait les imaginations d'un collégien vicieux."\textsuperscript{124} Even more surprising was our discovery that even in 1834 the *Pucelle* was seized in Marseilles as an immoral work.\textsuperscript{125} It
thus becomes evident that the objectivity afforded by time is a key to
the message of the work where the Middle Ages are concerned.

Voltaire's attitude toward the Middle Ages is manifestly differ-
ent in the six tragedies which, at least in part, employ the national
medieval past as a setting. With Zaïre (1732), Voltaire's earliest,
most Shakespearean, and perhaps most Cornelian tragedy, he resuscitated
a cadre which had not been used in France since the mystères. Zaïre
takes place at Jerusalem at the time when Saint Louis was in Cyprus
preparing to attack Egypt; but Voltaire's only concession to historical
"fact" is found in the names of the protagonists, all totally fictitious:
the "brave Nérestan, chevalier généreux," the "illustre Châtillon," the
aged Lusignan—names which evoke historical glories of France. On one
occasion Nérestan refers to "la cour de Louis" and his participation in
the battles

... aux bords de la Charente,
Lorsque du fier Anglais la valeur menaçante,
Cédant à nos effor ts trop longtemps captivés,
Satis fait en tombant aux lis qu'ils ont bravés,

to which Lusignan responds:

Hélas! de cette cour j'ai vu jadis la gloire.
Quand Philippe à Bouvaine enchaînait la victoire,
Je combattais, seigneur, avec Montmorency,
Melun, d'Estaing, de Nesle, et ce fameux Couci.126

Nérestan and Châtillon are imbued with concepts of chivalry and honor in
the best tradition of the thirteenth century:

... tout digne chrétien, tout digne chevalier,
Pour sa religion se doit sacrifier;
Et la félicité des cœurs tels que les nôtres,
Consiste à tout quitter pour le bonheur des autres.127
Thus, we are in total agreement with Sylvia Vance that, in his plays, Voltaire's use of history was generally subordinate to his dramatic aims.128

This phenomenon is also true of Adélaïde Du Guesclin (1734), a "sujet tout français"—according to Voltaire—which followed in the wake of the enthusiastic reception given to Zaire. Based on an incident which was reported in the Annales de Bretagne,129 Voltaire's tragedy centers around a love triangle consisting of the niece of the celebrated hero of the Hundred Years War and the Dukes of Nemours and Vendôme—who in actuality lived in different centuries. The Duke of Nemours is a historical personage (Gaston III Phoebus, Duke of Foix, 1343–1391) who, in this tragedy, opposes Charles V because of the latter's support of the Duke of Vendôme; but historically, the first Duke of Vendôme was the illegitimate son of Henri IV and Gabrielle d'Estrees (1594–1665), born in the château of Coucy (which perhaps supplied the name of another character to Voltaire through association of ideas). Although the action is set at Lille, as Adélaïde confirms, the national past is superficially treated, at best; but patriotism is much more emphasized here than in Zaire, as, for example, when Vendôme asserts: "D'un bras vraiment français, je vais dans nos remparts, / Sous nos lis triomphants briser les léopards."130 The tragedy, which ends in a happy reconciliation of all three, was nevertheless a failure; only in 1765, when the spirit of the time was more receptive, did it meet with success.

In 1751, while in Prussia, Voltaire completed rewriting parts of the play, set it in the seventh century, and retitled it Amélie; ou, Le Duc de Foix; the following year it was staged successfully in Paris.
At the request of the King of Prussia, who wished to see it performed, Voltaire transformed the play once more, this time into a three-act version with all female parts suppressed to accommodate the lack of actresses; it was presented with success in 1765 as *Le Duc d'Alençon* or *Les frères ennemis*. In *Amélie*, Adélaïde is replaced as protagonist by Amélie, the Duke of Nemours becomes the Duke of Foix (a title to which he was already historically entitled), and Vendôme is replaced by Vamir as his brother; in *Le Duc d'Alençon*, Vendôme becomes Alençon, and an undoubtedly fictitious nephew of Du Guesclin, called Danseste, is added as Adélaïde's brother. Apart from these reworkings of the same tragedy, Voltaire abandoned the theatrical setting of the French Middle Ages for almost three decades, until *Tancrède* (1760).

The title of *Tancrède* leads one to anticipate the famous Sicilian prince of the First Crusade, Tancrède of Hauteville, as hero in this tragedy; but in accord with his observation in his personal correspondence of a few years later that "les sujets tirés de l'histoire de son pays sont très-difficiles à traiter," Voltaire's Tancrède is a fictitious character in the form of a Byzantine chevalier, and the action precedes the First Crusade by almost a century. It has been argued that the inspiration for this tragedy was furnished by a popular novel, *La Comtesse de Savoie*, in which it is said that "Mendoce [the hero] était en Sicile, où il rendait son nom aussi fameux que celui des Tancrède." but it is much more probable that Voltaire's keen literary sense encouraged him to believe that such a subject could be exploited and well received, given the increase in sensitivity and appreciation for chivalric times which characterized the period in which it was written, to
which may be added a growing national patriotism fueled by the interest which numerous philosophes fostered with their "Germanist" approach to history. This opinion is supported by Ronald S. Ridgway, while Besterman, who finds that Tancred "shows nothing Voltairean, nor does its treatment," points also to a possible secondary purpose: Voltaire hoped to attract favorable attention at court through his glorification of chivalry. A third interpretation points to the element of pathétique present in Voltaire's tragedies, which he used to invigorate the genre. All of these postulates are, of course, possible, and even compatible.

In Tancred Voltaire again creates history. Aménalde, the heroine (with a quasi counterpart in history as Constanza, legitimate heir of King Roger II of Sicily, himself grandson of Tancred of Hauteville), is required by her father Argire to marry a man she does not love (as Constanza's father forced her to wed Henry VI, son of Barbarossa). But Aménalde, in love with the banished Tancred and beloved of him, cannot fulfill her chevalier's Racinean-Cornelian devise "l'amour et l'honneur" because of a misunderstanding which causes him to believe her heart unfaithful. The compromising, ambiguously worded note which is at the base of the misunderstanding causes her father and all of Sicily to find her a traitor. "Je suis son chevalier," Tancred declares to his rival, Orbassan, and to save his lady's honor and life he throws his glove to the ground before Orbassan with: "Je jette devant toi le gage du combat." After having vanquished his competition, the disconsolate Tancred seeks death in further battle for his country; and at the end of the tragedy, when the "noble chevalier percé de nobles coups" is
brought before a swooning Aménaïde to perish, the "victime innocente," now recognized as such, beseeches him, "Dans le même tombeau souffre au moins ton épouse," and expires next to him of a broken heart. Marie-Antoinette later wept at such a performance and expressed a wish to meet and embrace its author. Voltaire himself often delighted in playing the role of the father at Ferney, aided by his niece, Madame Denis, as Aménaïde.

Such "tearjerking" melodrama emanating from a chivalric Middle Ages is hardly consistent with the prejudices which are apparent in the Essai sur les moeurs, published only four years previously, which certainly represent Voltaire's true feelings about the Middle Ages. How then do we reconcile them? Vance points to a "successful 'reach into the present'" seen in the contemporary application of some passages to eighteenth-century society, particularly with regard to legal injustice, as she recalls that in 1762 the play was even closed down temporarily after the audience had shouted "Broglie, Broglie" and applauded the line "C'est le sort d'un héro d'être persécuté."136 Her observations are indeed valid. But we, nevertheless, cannot erase from our mind the image of the elderly Voltaire enjoying himself immensely as the "noble chevalier" who is "percé de nobles coups" (italics mine) expires on stage to the lacrymose lamentations of the audience. Whether the pathos is really bathos is immaterial here: Voltaire's use of the Middle Ages in his tragedies was totally peripheral to historical veracity and mainly concerned with providing local color. The well-known verses of "Le Mondain" (1736), which celebrate "le bon temps que ce siècle de fer!" clearly indicate a static prise de position:
The consistent restrictions placed on the theater by official censure were detrimental to the development of the national tragedy in France. Louis XV, who refused to be compared to any other monarch, even disallowed the representation of a politically innocent play about Henri IV, the favorite national hero all the more entrenched in this position since Voltaire’s Henriade (1724). After the demise of Louis XV in 1774, the new king relaxed censorship temporarily. His reign was greeted with Sébastien Mercier’s Childéric Ier (1774), full of political overtones: instead of expressing the hope and enthusiasm of the French people for their new monarch through a portrait of Henri IV, as was often done, Mercier abandoned his stated goal of painting "sous ses véritables traits une nation brillante, guerrière, généreuse, brave, fidèle à ses rois, ayant le besoin de les aimer, oubliant l’adversité, et plus sensible aux bienfaits qu’à l’offense" and created an unflattering Henri IV.

The advancement of political partisanship was hardly new to the theater, where machinations were often accomplished from within on the order of the government. Condemning a practice which did not even
terminate at the Revolution, Marie-Joseph Chénier wrote in 1790:

Il était impossible de traiter dignement des sujets nationaux sous le règne absolu du cardinal Richelieu. Les malheurs de la France, occasionnés presque toujours par la faiblesse des rois, par le despotisme des ministres et l'esprit fanatique du clergé, auraient nécessairement rempli de véritables pièces nationales. Le gouvernement n'était pas assez raisonnable pour les permettre, et les Français n'étaient pas encore capables de les sentir. 

And if orders could be issued against productions, they were also given to create them. Favart's comedy _L'Anglais à Bordeaux_ was composed on demand to celebrate the reestablishment of peace at the end of the Seven Years War; De Belloy's _Siège de Calais_ (1765), quite likely also written on "official request," became a huge popular success. "On a grand soin dans notre enfance," the author wrote, "de nous instruire aussi peu de notre histoire que de notre langue; nous savons exactement tout ce qu'ont fait César, Scipion, Titus; nous ignorons parfaitement les actions les plus fameuses de Charlemagne, de Henri IV, du grand Condé." 

Du Belloy proposes a new genre in which to "dresser des monumens aux vertus de nos compatriotes"; thus, he glorifies in particular the six bourgeois of Calais, whose heroism ultimately so moves the English King (Edward III) that he grants them their freedom, in a panegyric of noble resolution:

> De la paix soyez les premiers gages;  
> Allez ... Si vos vertus ont aigrí mon courroux,  
> Du roi que vous servez on peut être jaloux:  
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 
> En vain depuis trois ans la fortune l'accable:  
> Un peuple si fidèle est un peuple indomptable.  
> Lorsque sur les Français je prétendis régner,  
> Je cherchais leur amour que j'espérais gagner;  
> Mais il faudroit les vaincre en tyran sanguinaire:  
> S'il n'est un don des cœurs le sceptre peut-il plaire?  
> Je renonce à leur trône.
The acclaim of the Siège de Calais in Paris, the provinces, the colonies, and even outside France was electrifying. "Le succès de cette pièce est unique dans les fastes du théâtre. Jamais tragédie n'a excité dans la nation un enthousiasme aussi vif," wrote one critic; the eulogies of the others, without much exception, were caught up in the wave of popular enthusiasm which showered the author with honors. It was hardly prudent to do otherwise, since the King had decorated Du Belloy and rejoiced openly in the play. Not even Voltaire, who wrote the author that his play made one love France and the dramatist, received as many laurels following the success of his Tancrede.

* * * * *

Scientific interest on the part of the erudites of the eighteenth century, concern with a contemporary application of "gothic" government or mores on the part of some philosophes, politically motivated historical tragedies—these hardly presented the ideal, sentimental Middle Ages which would captivate readers of the latter eighteenth century. Sainte-Palaye's Mémoires sur l'ancienne chevalerie can be seen as a bridge between the chevaleresque and sentimental literature and the popular literature of the eighteenth century; but since Sainte-Palaye and the Abbé Millot were specialists, a more credible link would be Louis, Count of Tressan (1705-1783), whose literary liberties certainly made of him the Alfred Delvau of his century. Tressan was the principal collaborator with the Marquis of Paulmy, an amateur who, according to Jacoubet, was one of those who contributed the most "à vulgariser le Moyen Age." Paulmy and Tressan worked conjointly on the Bibliothèque universelle des
romans, a collection of reworked romans and other medieval literature to which Tressan added the fruits of his own imagination.

A partial listing of Tressan's literary production is in order here to demonstrate the extent to which it revitalized the Middle Ages for its readers. In 1776 the two collaborators published Tristan de Léonois, Artus de Bretagne, Isaïe le triste, and Perceforest; 1777 saw Flores et Blanchefleur, Cléomades et Claremonde, and the Chanson de Roland; in 1778 Doolin de Nayence, Ruon de Bordeaux, Ogier le Danois, Meurvin, and Guérin de Montglove appeared; and in 1779 Don Ursino de Navarrin (a largely imaginative creation of Tressan) came out.

The Bibliothèque universelle des romans appeared on the basis of one or two volumes per month. When the extensive library of Paulmy had made its last contribution, the collaborators turned to that of Sainte-Palaye. In 1781 Tressan published the works of the Bibliothèque universelle des romans separately under the title Corps d'extraits des romans de chevalerie. The Bibliothèque universelle des romans continued past Tressan's demise until its interruption in 1789, and it was resumed as the Nouvelle Bibliothèque des romans in 1795, incorporating in all 112 volumes. Tressan's Oeuvres choisies were published in 1791.

Unlike Paulmy, who sometimes worked with original texts, Tressan relied exclusively on secondhand sources. His most knowledgeable critic has remarked:

Même ainsi remaniées en effet, ces œuvres ne lui ont pas paru pouvoir être livrées telles qu'elles à ses lecteurs. Son goût—et le leur—du naïf, et du naturel, leur conception du bon vieux temps et de l'héroïne chevaleresque sont encore trop mêlés d'éléments factices pour qu'ils acceptent, sans une dernière mise au point, des situations et des moeurs qui s'éloignaient déjà passablement de la simple et forte nature et satisfaisaient les
courtisans raffinés de François Ier et de Henri II... Tressan les a encore accommodés et retouchés pour plaire aux contemporains de Louis XV et Louis XVI et plus tard à ses disciples en goût troubadour.\textsuperscript{146}

Before the presentation of each work, Tressan indicated his sources and some brief background information, formulating, in addition, theories about the language and history of the material which he presented: "notre littérature française ne peut remonter plus haut que le douzième siècle; et jusqu'à la fin nous n'avons aucun ouvrage digne de quelque estime, écrit dans l'idiome que nous parlons aujourd'hui," he declared.\textsuperscript{147} The spirit of chivalry which "s'était amorti, presque éteint même depuis les dernières croisades" caused authors of the fourteenth century to have recourse to original manuscripts which were "pillés, tronqués" and often destroyed by them for fear that their plagiarism might be revealed, his preface declares. Tressan certainly must have been inspired by what he read, because he accomplished much the same in his own fashion; in Artus, for example, he transformed single episode into the central thrust of the work, created a new heroine, and arranged the denouement to conform to the role of the heroine.\textsuperscript{148} For Flores and Blanchefleur he even used the intermediary of the Spanish novel translated in 1554 by Jacques Vincent.\textsuperscript{149} Jacoubet's careful examination of the works in question reveals that "non seulement il a adouci le Moyen Age, l'a réduit autant qu'il pouvait aux règles du devoir classique, et aussi adapté au goût, timide encore, des premières générations romantiques,"\textsuperscript{150} while Edmond Estève, who also examined the works in question, notes that the tone of the extracts which form the Bibliothèque universelle des romans is uniformly "d'une assez fade
galanterie, relevée ça et là de libertinage."151

With Tressan the popular element which characterized the litera-
ture of colportage was given a new editorial infusion, although—as
previously mentioned—the Bibliothèque bleue had made historical legends
and stories available to the lowest social classes as early as the
beginning of the seventeenth century. The audience for whom the Bibli-
othèque bleue was designated is clearly evidenced in the Preface to the
1783 edition, where we find the following anecdote:

Madame de N... sonna sa femme de chambre et lui demanda
l'histoire de Pierre de Provence. La soubrette étonnée se fit
rêpêter jusqu'à trois fois, et reçut avec dédain cet ordre
bizarre: il fallut pourtant obéir; elle descendit à la cuisine,
et rapporta la brochure en rougissant.152

The Bibliothèque universelle des romans, the Nouvelle Biblio-
thèque universelle des romans (sanctioned by Voltaire) which succeeded
it, and especially the Bibliothèque universelle des Dames offered reworked
medieval literature to more sophisticated levels of society. The last-
named series, in octavo, twenty-four volumes in total published with the
"Approbation et Privilège" of the King, appeared on a monthly basis
during the period 1785 to 1791 "soit brochés, soit reliés en veau fauve
ou écaillée, & dorés sur tranche" at fifty-four or seventy-two livres the
set; the publisher, listed only as "Paris, Rue d'Anjou, la seconde porte
cochère à gauche, en entrant par la rue Dauphiné" in the beginning
volumes and as Cuchet of the same address in later volumes, advised that
the series may be mailed to the provinces for seven livres and four
francs postal charges.

The series first establishes that a "Bibliothèque des Dames ne
serait pas complète, si on n'y trouvait point de Romans. De tous les
ouvrages de littérature, ce sont ceux qui doivent les intéresser davantage." Volumes one through eight are devoted to mythical antiquity; volume nine is of great interest to an investigation of the presence of the Middle Ages in eighteenth-century literature: the series will now "faire parcourir" the most esteemed chivalric romans, of which most contain the same degree of charm and "instruction," because one learns from them "tout aussi bien & avec plus de plaisir que dans les longues dissertations de nos Erudits, les usages & les moeurs des anciens Chevaliers. Leur loyauté, leurs prouesses, leurs galanteries forment une galerie de tableaux curieux dont l'Histoire elle même ne présente souvent que des esquisses." From the "ideal" Middle Ages, then, lessons can be derived which apply to the present.

What a surprise to learn in the Discours préliminaire, following much laudatory commentary on the style of the Count of Tressan, that "ce sont les ouvrages de cet aimable Académicien que nous encadrons dans cette Bibliothèque!" Bailli, Tressan's successor at the Académie Française (which seat he obtained thanks to the success of the Bibliothèque universelle des romans), proclaims that Tressan "sentit que son talent étoit de peindre ces moeurs [antiques]; son style en reçut l'empreinte, & il transporta dans notre Langue perfectionnée le ton naïf et la grace naturelle du Langage Gaulois." As for the content of the romans themselves, we find Tressan's "translations" from his secondary sources interspersed for diversity and flavor with Middle French quotations which appear in italics. At the commencement of each extract there is an introduction which explains, comments, and even judges, as in the comment from Tristan de Léonoi
that "personne ne sera tenté de plaindre le roi Marc." The total effect is charming. At times, when doubt exists as to the reader's possible comprehension, an explanation is enclosed in parentheses immediately following the word or phrase:

Qui est-il? dit le Roi. Sire, c'est Tristan. Je m'en suis de pièce (dès long-temps) apperçu; ains ne vous le ai-je pas voulu dire, pour que cuidoye (croyois) qu'il s'en chastlât (corrige-roit); en cette heure, en votre propre chambre, si les trouverez céans seul à seul.156

As in the Bibliothèque universelle des romans, Tressan's pen was quick, expurgating, interpolating, interpreting, revising; he often justified or explained his actions, as in the Preface to Gérard de Nevers:

On a peine à pardonner à l'Auteur de ce Roman plusieurs absurdités, dont le titre de son ouvrage est le plus inexcusable. Comment ose-t-il donner pour maîtresse à son héroïs Gérard une Princesse de la Maison de Savoie, & sur-tout en plaçant la scène de son Roman sous le règne de Louis le Gros? . . . Je préviens donc les Lecteurs, que non seulement j'ai dû supprimer l'auguste nom de Savoie, en substituer un autre; mais que, pour donner quelque vraisemblance à ce Roman, je me suis trouvé force d'en changer le début.157

He found Petit Johan de Saintré "le Roman le plus instructif, le plus national que nous ayons" and regretted that he could not reproduce more.158 Retention of an older language moves the reader and transports him (or her) back in time as no modern French adaptation ever could, e.g., in Tristan's farewell and death scene:

Haa, douce amye, à Dieu vous command'; jamais me vèarez, ne moy vous. Dieu sait garde de vous! Adieu, je vous salue. Lors, bat sa coule, et se commande à Dieu; & le cœur lui crève, & l'ame s'en va.159

* * * * *
Yet another literary manifestation of medieval nature, stemming from a nostalgic wish for the bon vieux temps, can be remarked even in the first part of the eighteenth century, uniting with Tressan's works to culminate in what is known as the genre troubadour. As early as 1712, a distinction between "cet âge heureux" when "un rien désespéroit l'amant" and the present was cultivated: "Aujourd'hui, c'est tout autrement; / Sur un rien, le galant espère." According to Fernand Baldensperger, the growing taste for sentimentality which evidences itself in the poetry and prose of the second half of the eighteenth century becomes little by little "doucereux" and "pleurard." Inspired by the work of Sainte-Palaye and Millot, the literary production of Paulmy and Tressan, and the Quarrel of the Troubadours and Trouvères which still continued, the genre troubadour as a "hybride de l'érudition et de l'imagination" constitutes a continuation of this taste for gallantry in the last quarter of the eighteenth century and first part of the nineteenth century. It was created by self-styled "troubadours" who attempted to employ the lexicon, orthography, syntax, grammatical forms, and literary genres (especially ballads and romances) in pastiches of the works of the original troubadours and trouvères, who were uniquely singled out from what was still considered the "barbaric" Middle Ages. The gods of classical Antiquity, which had dominated the world of poetry, were slowly replaced by the chevalier and châtelaine. "Il me semble," volunteered the conservative critic l'abbé Geoffroy in 1781, "que les moeurs des chevaliers sont bien aussi poétiques que celles des guerriers de l'antiquité." The aged Fontenelle wrote at mid-century: "Au milieu de la grossièreté du douzième et treizième siècle, il se répandit dans
toute la France un esprit poétique," although he believed that "ces sortes de vers-là se faisaient sans étude et sans science." 164

The superficial, pseudo-medieval content of the *genre troubadour* deified the ideal Middle Ages of chivalric themes and chanted its glories, which has appropriately earned for it the label of "l'époque précieuse du romantisme." 165 In essence, one might say that the same type of mentality which wept at performances of Voltaire's *Tancred* had the potential to appreciate literature of the *genre troubadour*. Up to the time of the Revolution the taste for gallantry, closely tied to the national past and even fostered by the monarchy, was in vogue; obviously, with the events of 1789 and from the Convention Nationale (1792) through the Directoire (1795-1799), the *genre troubadour* was considered inimical to the revolutionary spirit, since it was deemed representative of certain values and concepts inherent in the Ancien Régime. One of the duties imposed by the first French constitution on 19 May 1802 was to "combattre tout entreprise tendant à rétablir le régime féodal." 166

Tressan's works also fell into disfavor around the time of the Revolution, as symbols of what had been overthrown, but were reread again in France around 1795 with renewed interest. Paradoxically, a neoclassic imitation of Antiquity prevailed at the same time, fostered by Danton and Robespierre and their conception of a neo-Roman Republic, and finding its greatest proponent in Napoleon's imperialistic ambitions.

But nostalgia for the fallen grandeur of France contributed to the continuation of the *genre troubadour* in the royalist literature of the émigrés; even the official poet of "littérature consulaire," Louis de Fontanes (1751-1821), employed the troubadour theme in a
collection of poems entitled *Le Vieux Château*, which has led one critic to comment that "Napoléon patronnera, comme lointain héritier de Charlemagne, les réminiscences médiévales";\(^{167}\) but although Bonaparte's tacit indulgence allowed the genre troubadour to gain momentum to the point that it reached its apogee during the Consulat and First Empire, its motivation remained counter to his goal of emulating the Roman Empire in France.

It was at this time that two literary hoaxes, directly related to the genre troubadour, made their appearance. In 1803 the first volume of a collection of poems attributed to Marguerite-Éléonore-Clotilde de Vallon-Chalys, later Madame de Survillé, presumed poetess of the fifteenth century (who claimed literary disputes with none less than Christine de Pisan and Alain Chartier), was published by Charles Vanderbourg. The collection *Clotilde de Survillé* was published after the death of the Marquis Joseph-Étienne de Survillé, an émigré who was shot as a royalist emissary in 1798 while on a mission for Louis XVIII in France; he had allegedly found copies of the poems among the archives of his family, but in actuality he had composed them in exile, probably around 1792.\(^{168}\) The second volume of the collection was published in 1826; but as early as 1811 Charles Nodier had denounced the fraud, demanding how it was possible in the poem "De la nature et de l'univers" for Clotilde to have quoted Lucretius, whose works had not yet been discovered, or how she could have had knowledge of Saturn's seven satellites (of those perceived at the time) when the first was only observed in 1655 and the last in 1789.\(^{169}\) In addition, Clotilde had referred to the system of Copernicus a century before it was formulated. Denunciations by
Raynouard, Daunou, Villémain, and Sainte-Beuve were to follow, but the public cared little about the authenticity of the verses; Sainte-Beuve even praised the poems for "l'art, la forme véritable, non pas seulement la première couche, mais le vernis qui fixe et retient ... l'image fréquente, heureuse, presque continue." But it was the grace of the reconstituted old language, poetically rendered in such verses as the "Verselets à mon premier-né," which captivated the emotions of the period. One stanza of the poem, set to music by Bertin, should suffice to demonstrate its appeal:

0 cher enfantelet, vrai pourtraict de ton père,
   Dors sur le sein que ta bouche a pressé!
   Dors, petiot; clos, ami, sur le sein de ta mère,
   Tien doux oeillet par le somme oppressé.171

At approximately the same time that the first volume of Clotilde de Survile appeared, the talented Occitan poet Fabre d'Olivet (1767-1825), enemy of the Empire and friend of Madame de Staël, published Le Troubadour: poésies occitaniques du XIIIe (1804), a two-volume compilation of Occitan which he supposedly had translated from the original. But as one Occitan critic asserts, "c'est à peine si deux d'entre elles rappellent assez fidèlement deux poèmes plus ou moins adaptés de l'ancienne littérature d'oc." In actuality, they were mostly of his own creation, but he had incorporated some real fragments into his own work, the tone of which had been adjusted to blend with them. The Troubadour was of course perfectly suited to the prevailing mentality in France; but Fabre, whose erudition, Occitan culture, and knowledge of the Occitan language and dialects made him an opponent of his Parisian contemporaries such as the Abbé Millot (who could not read Occitan), had fabricated
something quite disparate from the Surville poems: in the words of Charles Camproux, a "mélange d'intelligence critique, d'anachronismes archéologiques, de romanesque seiziémiste, d'ossianisme tumultueux."\textsuperscript{173} Interestingly, Fabre d'Olivet himself had "borrowed" a part of his fiction from Jean de Nostredame, notably from the \textit{Cours d'Amour}.\textsuperscript{174}

The \textit{genre troubadour} was now the mode in Paris, but for Occitan scholars it was a restoration of former glory and honor attached to their language. At the fall of the First Empire, with, as Paul Van Tieghem puts it, its "sentimentalisme niais qui se paraît d'une fausse érudition,"\textsuperscript{175} the \textit{genre troubadour} was no longer an adequate vehicle to express the new ideas which had developed in the growing Romantic movement; its pastiches of the old language were far removed from reality. The role of Romanticism would be to "dévêtir ce Moyen Age de son costume troubadour et de lui rendre ses atouts archéologiques."\textsuperscript{176} Why then did not the events of a decade later take place after the fall of Napoleon? Van Tieghem's argument as to why the \textit{genre troubadour} was not more quickly discarded is on solid ground: "Geijer et d'autres remarquent au lendemain de 1815," he advances, "que l'Europe se trouve après la chute de l'Empire dans un tel état de fatigue qu'elle cherche à se reposer, à se recueillir en revenant à son passé: d'où l'intérêt nouveau pour les antiquités nationales, la poésie populaire."\textsuperscript{177}

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At the height of infatuation with the Middle Ages, attempts were made to reframe a medieval atmosphere in the realm of everyday life by means of balls, attire, furniture, décor, and language. "De 1825 à 1835,
le gothique règne en maître," an éminent medievalist and art historian has observed.\textsuperscript{178}

Ah! rendez-nous le moyen âge,
Ses mœurs et son naïf langage,
Ses fiers donjons et ses châteaux
Que peuplèrent preux et vidames,\textsuperscript{179}

clamored an eager public. It was during this period that, under the influence of Walter Scott's historical novels and especially after Quentin Durward (1823), the Middle Ages "faisait fureur" in its new mode of expression in France: "C'était tous les matins chez les librairies une avalanche de chroniques des XIII\textsuperscript{e}, XIV\textsuperscript{e} et XV\textsuperscript{e} siècles," Louis Maigron writes.\textsuperscript{180} In 1827 a Mercure de France article proclaimed: "Châtelains et châtelaines qui étiez nos aîeux, qui viviez dans nos livres, vous avez eu votre règne. Nous disons adieu aux siècles chevaleresques. Ils sont beaux mais ils sont morts... Soyons de notre temps!"\textsuperscript{181} A year later the Mercure du XIX\textsuperscript{e} siècle saluted the writers of historical novels:

Honneur donc aux écrivains qui, ayant su reconnaître quelle sauce littéraire il faut aux appétits bourgeois de l'époque, savent cependant concilier ce qu'exige la raison perfectionnée, arrivée aujourd'hui à un si haut point avec les ornements descriptifs dont on ne saurait se dispenser.\textsuperscript{182}

In art, the "classiques d'obéissance davidiennne et ingrienne abomaient l'art rococo, et les romantiques ne juraient que par le Moyen Age et adoraient le style troubadour, à l'est-à-dire le faux gothique." In an article of 1836 on the subject of "ces grands projets que nous avions tous, il y a quelques années, pour essayer de renouer les traditions de la belle société française," Gérard de Nerval noted that

c'était d'abord le moyen âge qu'on ressuscitait tout entier; le moyen âge des varlets, des ponts-levis et des tourelles, ce moyen âge religieux et chevaleresque, que les deux siècles qui
and E.-J. Delécluze noted that after 1830 the craze for the Middle Ages "s'empara des poètes, des historiens, des romanciers, du théâtre, des peintres et des sculpteurs, et bientôt les joailliers, des ébénistes, voire même des horlogers qui firent des pendules en forme de cathé-drales." When Louis-Philippe became king in 1830, his ascension was compared to that of William of Orange assuming the throne of the Stuarts.

New dimensions in literature, to be discussed in the next chapter, contributed to the rage for the Gothic, but already opposition to it was mounting. In 1823, Philarète Chasles thought it necessary to defend the Middle Ages, reproaching critics: "Chaque heure de votre existence prouve que vous êtes ingrats. Il n'est pas une qui ne soit aujourd'hui embellie par quelque découverte utile dont la source et le perfectionnement appartiennent au Moyen Age." Other attacks against the engouement for the Gothic took the form of verse; two years later, for example, we find in the Pandora a mediocre travesty of Voltaire's "Le Mondaïn":

Ah! le bon temps que ce temps d'autrefois!  
Tout allait bien! on avait équipage  
Porte à la cour, château, terres et bois,  
Meute, vassaux et bailli de village  
Qui faisait pendre et jugeait selon nos lois.  
Ah! le bon temps que ce temps d'autrefois!  
Mais de nos jours, hâlas! tout dégénère.  
Tout paysan a son arpent de terre,  
Sème, récolte, empoche son argent  
Sans qu'un Seigneur en puisse rien distraire  
A-t-on chez soi son fossé, curage à faire.  
Plus de corvée . . .  
Siècle pervers! Race dégénérée!  
Elector un marquis! que ce titre est flatteur:  
Enfin le croirait-on? je n'ai dans la contrée  
Que mon valet Gros Jean qui dise: Monseigneur!186
In July 1830, breaking with the Jeunes-France and Hugolian Romanticism, Alfred de Musset mocked the zealots of the Middle Ages (as well as new partisans of Antiquity) in the *Revue de Paris*:

Salut, jeunes champions d'une cause un peu vieille,  
Classiques bien rasés, à la face vermeille,  
Romantiques barbus, aux visages blêmis!  
Vous de qui des Grecs défuntz balayez le rivage,  
Ou d'un poignard sanglant fouillez le moyen âge,  
Salut!187

And near 1835, the same year that the ninth edition of Marchangy's *Gaule poétique* came off the press, Théophile Gautier ironically renounced the "brillant moyen âge et la chevalerie" of his earlier poetry in the most deprecatory terms:

—Encore du moyen âge, toujours du moyen âge! qui me délivrera du moyen âge, de ce moyen âge qui n'est pas le moyen âge? Moyen âge de carton et de terre cuite qui n'a du moyen âge que le nom. . . . Comme ils m'ont gâté mon moyen âge, mon moyen âge si fier et si coloré! . . . Ah, barbouilleurs ignorants, . . . vous n'avez pas deviné l'âme du moyen âge.188

The *genre troubadour* has then come full circle. As a precursor of Romanticism, it has fed the nostalgia for a heroic, courtly, naïvely religious youth which has been touched neither by the scepticism of the Enlightenment nor by the egalitarian passion of the Revolution;189 but it is also an offshoot of Romanticism, since it has not made a dynamic contribution to literature.

* * * * *

Except in the area of popular literature, where interest has intensified, we have seen, in a period of a hundred years, a radical change in attitudes toward the Middle Ages. The Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns, wherein both sides viewed the Middle Ages negatively,
has been replaced with the Quarrel of the Troubadours and the Trouvères, in which the preeminence of medieval literature is only subservient to geographical location. For adherents to the theory of perfectibility, the Christian millennium of the Middle Ages was, of necessity, a period of abasement and floundering in man's progress toward self-amelioration, after a fall from the perfection of Antiquity. On a political level, a historical controversy raged as to the origins of the Franks and the nature of the Frankish conquest in Gaul, and the Middle Ages became a metaphor for those who adhered to the "Germanist" or "Romanist" theories of the origins of French nobility and the Third Estate—or, in the case of Montesquieu, as a model for a salutary form of government. For Voltaire and Rousseau, with the exception of the former's tragedies, the Middle Ages were a fruitful source of respective bad and commendable examples for moral edification. A nostalgic wish for the bon vieux temps and accompanying moeurs intensified as the century progressed; medieval literature was reworked to conform to eighteenth-century taste; and it became increasingly reflective of an idealized, chivalric Middle Ages, which, in turn, gave rise to the genre troubadour. Scientific interest made the medieval period accessible to nonerudites. From discredit to approbation: this is the path which we have followed in tracing the fortunes of the Middle Ages throughout the eighteenth century.
Notes to Chapter I


5 Ibid., p. 144.

6 Lionel Gossman, Medievalism and the Ideologies of the Enlightenment: The World and Work of La Curne de Sainte-Palaye (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1968), p. 53. This excellent study cannot be recommended too highly, and our own work owes him an enormous debt of gratitude with regard to Sainte-Palaye.

7 Cf. Pierre LeGrand d’Aussy’s Preface to his translation (1779) of the Fabliaux cu contes, fables et romans du XIIe et XIIIe siècle, 3d ed., 5 vols (Paris: Jules Renouard, 1829), 1:62, where he states: "De bonne foi, peu-on se flatter qu’il se trouvera des gens assez courageux pour entreprendre une lecture dans laquelle, dix fois à chaque phrase, il leur faudra consulter un Vocabulaire. Ce n’est pas connaître les lecteurs français que de leur présenter un pareil travail."

8 The Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, founded in 1633 by Colbert as the Petite Académie, received permanent status in 1701 and was approved by Louis XIV. Forty academicians, forming four categories, were named: ten as honorary members (of whom two could be foreigners), ten pensioners, ten associates, and ten students. Among its goals relevant to this study was the task of occupying itself with all French history; at the same time the Académie was to research, explicate, and comment on anciens monuments and all types of antiquités. The Académie was again reorganized in 1803.

9 Quoted in Gossman, Medievalism, pp. 165, 164.

10 Lacurne de Sainte-Palaye, Mémoires sur l’ancienne chevalerie, ed. Charles Nodier, 2 vols. (Paris: Girard, 1826), preface to vol. 1, p. 1, originally placed before the third Mémoire. The repositioning by Nodier appears to lend these words more importance.
11Ibid., preface to vol. 1, p. i j.


13Gossman, Medievalism, p. 281.

14Ibid., pp. 283-84.


16Sainte-Palaye, Mémoires, 1:337.

17Ibid., p. 352.


19Sainte-Palaye, Mémoires, 1:375. The authenticity of this passage is doubtful. It cannot be found in the critical edition of Peire Vidal's work and biography by Joseph Anglade, Les Poésies de Peire Vidal, 2d ed. (Paris: Champion, 1966), p. vii, which reflects recent scholarship. Anglade states that manuscripts attribute to Peire Vidal "un nombre de pièces plus grand que celui de la présente édition. Diez appelait notre troubadour un des poètes les plus féconds du moyen âge provençal et lui attribuait environ 60 pièces ... Chabaneau dit que ses poésies sont au nombre d'une cinquantaine environ ... C'est de ce chiffre que nous rapprochons dans la présente édition." Sainte-Palaye, however, acted in good faith when he included it.

20Ibid., 1:351.

21Ibid., 1:370.

22Ibid., 1:369.

23Ibid., 1:390, n. 16.

24Ibid., 1:371.


26Gossman, Medievalism, p. 273.

27Ibid.., p. 255.

28Ibid.

Ibid., 1:ix.

Ibid., vol. 1, pp. iij, ix.


Ibid., 1:45.

Ibid., 1:70.

Ibid., 1:41-42.

Ibid., 1:29.

Ibid., 1:63.


Ibid., 1:239-40, bk. 13, ch. 15.


Ibid., ch. 21, p. 118.


Montesquieu par lui-même (Paris: Seuil, 1953), p. 64. Starobinski contends that Montesquieu's *moi* is collective and social, never subjective and solitary.

49Ibid., 1:180.


52Ibid., see 2:555, n. 1 to bk. 31.

53Ibid., 2:316, bk. 30, ch. 7, n. 1.


56Ibid., 2:345, bk. 30, ch. 25.

57Dedieu, p. 4.


60Quoted in Frankl, p. 480.


62Ibid. The word "homme" here has the meaning of "vassal" or "inferior."

63Ibid., title of ch. 8.


65Ibid., p. 23.


68 Holbrook, p. 500.


70 Ibid., p. 583.


74 Starobinski, *Rousseau*, p. 130.

75 Ibid., p. 125.


84 *L'Encyclopédie; ou, Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers* (Paris, 1757), 7:282a. Jaucourt, best known for his *Histoire de la vie et des oeuvres de Leibnitz* (1734), wrote the articles pertaining to psychology, chemistry, botany, pathology, poetry, and history for the *Encyclopédie*. 


88Ibid., 1:37-38.


90Introduction to Pomeau's edition of Voltaire's Essai sur les moeurs, 1:1, wherein he also states that the formula is that of Furio Diaz, Voltaire storico (Rome: Einaudi, 1958).


92Brumfitt, Voltaire Historian, p. 62.

93Voltaire, Essai, ed. Pomeau, 1:336, ch. 16.

94Ibid., 1:444, ch. 37.

95Ibid., 1:489, ch. 65.

96Ibid., 1:448, ch. 39.

97Ibid., 1:585, ch. 57.

98Ibid., 1:448, ch. 39.

99Ibid., 1:638, ch. 63.

100Ibid., 1:729, ch. 76.

101Ibid., 1:775, ch. 81.

102Ibid., 2:7, ch. 94.

103Ibid., 2:804, ch. 197.


105Voltaire, Essai, ed. Pomeau, 1:324, ch. 15.

106Ibid., 2:326-28, ch. 15.
Ibid., 1:339, ch. 17.

108Ibid.; Aaroun-al-Raschild, a protector of the arts, reigned from 786 to 809.


111Ibid., 20:13.


113Gloria Marion Russo, "La Pucelle de Voltaire: A Study of Motifs and Metaphors" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1976), p. 2. This judgment is based on textual footnotes supplied by Voltaire in the 1762 edition, as well as on various letters.


115Ibid., 9:40, canto 2.

116Ibid., 9:49.


119Ibid.


122Ibid., p. 390, n. 10.


Ibid., 2:568.


Voltaire stated that the plot for Adélaïde Du Guesclin was taken from the history of Brittany (Moland, Œuvres complètes de Voltaire, 42:398, as cited by Henry Carrington Lancaster, French Tragedy in the Time of Louis XV and Voltaire, 2 vols. [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1950], 1:184).


Voltaire, "Avertissement" to Tancrède, in his Théâtre, pt. 4, in his Œuvres complètes, vol. 5 (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1877), p. 489. The novel in question was written by Madame de Fontaines.


Besterman, pp. 417-18.

Vance, p. 15. Lancaster (2:413) concurs: "Voltaire was not writing a thesis play in defense of chivalry. He was accepting the institution as it was . . . to serve as background for a love story."

Vance, p. 24.


"Discours préliminaire" to Charles IX, quoted in Brenner, p. 206.


Ibid., p. 242.

Année littéraire, 1779, quoted in Brenner, p. 260.

Cited in Lancaster, 2:484.

René Lanson (Le Goût du moyen âge en France au XVIIIᵉ siècle [Paris and Brussels: Architecture et Arts décoratifs, 1926], p. 15) writes of Sainte-Palaye: "Erudit, La Curie a découvert et étudié de nombreux manuscrits; vulgarisateur, il a formé le passé pour le rendre acceptable à ses contemporains." This judgment, however, does not take into consideration the content of the fifth Mémoire.


Henri Jacoubet, Comment le XVIIIᵉ siècle lisait les romans de chevalerie (Grenoble: Drevet, 1932), p. 31.

Ibid., p. 40.

Idem, Le Genre troubadour, p. 37.

Edmond Estève, "Le Moyen Age dans la littérature du XVIIIᵉ siècle," Revue de l'Université de Bruxelles 28 (1922-23):380. This paper was originally delivered 12 May 1923 at the Institut des Hautes Études de Belgique.

Mandrou, Culture populaire, p. 13. For an extensive treatment of the Bibliothèque bleue as a social, historical, and literary phenomenon in France, with particular attention to its impact on the minds of its readers and with extracts of some representative texts, see Bollème, La Bibliothèque bleue.


Dames, 9:i-i^j.
155 Ibid., 9:iiij.

156 Tristan de Léonois, in Dames, 10:69-70.

157 Gérard de Nevers, in Dames, 15:4-5.

158 Petit Jehan de Saintré, in Dames, 14:8-9.

159 Tristan de Léonois, in Dames, 10:249-50.


161 Baldensperger, "Le 'Genre troubadour,'" pp. 119, 123.

162 Jacoubet, Le Comte de Tressan, p. 351.


166 Bloch, La Société féodale, p. 3, n. 1.

167 Baldensperger, "Le 'Genre troubadour,'" p. 130.


170 Ibid., p. 495.

171 Ibid.


Paul Van Tieghem, p. 124.


Louis Maigron, *Le Roman historique a l'époque romantique: essai sur l'influence de Walter Scott* (Paris: Hachette, 1898), p. 371. The influence of Walter Scott on French literature has been covered so thoroughly in this excellent book that we can only refer the reader to it.


*Mercure du XIXᵉ siècle* 23 (1828), quoted in Maigron, p. 371.


CHAPTER II

MEDIEVALISM AND NEW DIMENSIONS:

THE PRE-ROMANTICS

Chateaubriand

Chateaubriand, the chevalier of Saint-Malo, was the first of the literary titans to initiate new perspectives in art and literature through his use of the Middle Ages. Despite his failure to contribute to a Romantic political credo through manipulation of the Middle Ages as a symbol, the contribution of Chateaubriand (1768-1848) to the promotion of medievalism in the nineteenth century is fourfold: creation of the cult of the Gothic, actualization of a post-Revolutionary ubiquitous neocatholicism rooted in the medieval period, an infusion to the chivalric spirit already in vogue, and an antiquarianism which antedates Charles Nodier's campaign for the preservation of ruins and national monuments in the form of a poetic asseration.

His personal life is so closely associated to his interest in the Middle Ages that the latter may not be seen in perspective without a consideration of its motivating forces. The "Je," while not a phenomenon of medieval literature in general, becomes medieval in his work. Combourg was his Ithaca: the "rude et assez rébarbative demeure féodale" with its towers "surmontées d'un toit pointu, comme un bonnet posé sur une couronne gothique," its vestibule "à voûte ogive" to which the boy
was brought in an enormous "berline à l'antique" at the age of nine years, exuded a mysterious and hidden Gothic existence; the ghost of the old count "à jambe de bois, mort depuis trois siècles" reputedly haunted the castle at night. His "donjon" was the tower where his saturnine, elderly, tyrannical father required him to sleep, fighting the trepidation of his isolation, which fortified his courage at the expense of his sensitivity. The family reinforced the heritage of the past: his "grand et sec" father, fearful seigneur ancien-régimiste, avare dans l'espoir de rendre à sa famille son premier éclat, hautain aux états de Bretagne avec les gentilshommes, dur avec ses vassaux à Combourg, taciturne, despotique et menaçant dans son intérieur,² addressed the last of his ten children by his title of the ancienne société, "M. le chevalier"; but for him the child's "volonté ne fut point portée bien froide" (note the connotation: "bien"). The tardillon perceived his father in medieval terms: "M. mon père aurait volontiers, comme un grand terrier du moyen âge, appelé Dieu le Gentilhomme de là-haut." The romanesque, pious, superstitious mother, "formée à la lecture de Fénélon, de Racine, de madame de Sévigné, et nourrie des anecdotes de la cour de Louis XIV," who knew all of Le Grand Cyrus by heart, and who unknowingly infused much of herself into François-René, her second surviving son, preferred the eldest and placed all of her hopes in him; she would die of chagrin (Chateaubriand later claimed) over the impiety of his youthful Essai sur les révolutions (1797). Combourg, peopled by the youth's imagination with beings from the past, meant solitude, to the point that, in Paris prior to the Revolution, he would unconsciously seek the same:
... si mes bois me manquaient, les temps passés, au défaut des lieux lointains, m'avaient ouvert une autre solitude. Dans le vieux Paris, dans les enceintes de Saint-Germain-des-Prés, dans les cloîtres des couvents, dans les caveaux de Saint-Denis, dans la Sainte-Chapelle, dans Notre-Dame, dans les petites rues de la Cité, à la porte obscure d'Héloïse, je revoyais mon enchanteresse; mais elle avait pris, sous les arches gothiques et parmi les tombeaux, quelque chose de la mort: elle était pâle, elle me regardait avec des yeux tristes; ce n'était plus que l'ombre ou les mènes du rêve que j'avais aimé. 

Chateaubriand's background, conservative, royalist, aristocratic, combined with an independence of spirit, led him—impelled more by honor than by conviction—to leave France as an émigré with most of the nobles at the height of political turbulence in April 1791. The young Breton, under the advice of the poet Fontanes, whom he met in 1789 and who would later become his mentor and friend, spent almost a year in North America. Having returned to Paris "pour offrir mon épée à Louis XVI, non pour m'associer à des intrigues du parti," he found "un peuple marchant ivre à ses destins, au travers des abîmes, par des voies égarées"; he joined the seventh company of nobles from the Armorican province and fought to "rétablir les monuments de saint Louis," adding his voice to the famous refrain from the Sedaine-Grétry comic opera Richard Coeur-de-Lion (1784) sung by his company: "O Richard! ô mon roi!"

Next followed seven years in London and Suffolk as an émigré, of which period one event is important for this study: the publication of the Essai sur les révolutions, a work which Sainte-Beuve has called "un livre incohérent, mais vaste et curieux," to which view one can certainly subscribe. The Essai is the alpha to the omega found in the Génie du Christianisme of 1802, a work bordering on the impious which raises the objections of a skeptic to the Christian dogma and discipline,
a testament to an absence of faith which predicts the fall of Christianity and discusses its replacement (the chapter entitled "Quelle sera la religion qui remplacera le christianisme," for example). Priests in France "nous prenoient au sortir du sein de nos mères, et ne nous quittoient plus qu'après nous avoir déposés dans la tombe"; among them there are "des hommes qui font le métier de vampires, qui vous sucent de l'argent, le sang, et jusqu'à la pensée." On Chateaubriand's private exemplaire confidentiel the words are even more acerbic, the negation even more damning. The Essai does not extol the Middle Ages as an age of faith and would appear to be superfluous to this study, but it must be read in conjunction with the Génie du Christianisme in order that the medievalism of the latter stand out as a Gothic bas-relief. At this point one might ask if the Génie is a grandiose equivocation, inimicable with the veracity of the Essai, or conversely if the puerile political agoraphobia of the Essai (e.g., "Le mal, le grand mal, c'est que nous ne sommes point de notre siècle") is mitigated in the Génie. Certainly, as Pierre Moreau has pointed out, there exist three types of Christianity: that which one "receives" through family or heredity, that which one "conquers" through a religious crisis or personal drama, and that which one "lives" in daily life. For Moreau these form a triptych in the soul of Chateaubriand: the Essai belongs to the second category; the Génie, "ce n'est pas le livre d'un converti; c'est le livre qui le convertira." Sainte-Beuve sees a "social Christianity" already in the Essai: by separating himself from the Encyclopédistes, by questioning the rationale for the destruction of Christianity, Chateaubriand unknowingly prepares the terrain for the Génie. The
importance of Christianity cannot be underestimated: ochlocracy breeds medievalism through apostasy.

In the preface to the first edition of the Génie, Chateaubriand attributes his inspiration for this work which was so valuable for the fate of the Middle Ages in literature to a renewal of faith upon learning of the demise of his elderly mother (through the intermediary of a sister who soon joined her); both deaths were the result of the harshness of their imprisonment at the time of the Revolution. "Ces deux voix sorties du tombeau . . . m'ont frappé. Je suis devenu [N.B., not "redevenu"] chrétien. Je n'ai point cédé, j'en conviens, à de grandes lumières sur-naturelles; ma conviction est sortie du coeur: j'ai pleuré, et j'ai cru."9 Research has revealed that his "conversion" was analogous to the circumstances, since he already had a manuscript of the Génie prior to receiving the funereal news, and that word of her death was actually communicated to Chateaubriand verbally much in advance of the letter "d'outre-tombe" from the pen of his sister, Madame de Farcy.10 As part of his motivation Chateaubriand claims to be an "obscur Israélite" bringing his grain of sand in order to hasten the "reconstruction du Temple," an allegation already professed in the preface to the first edition of Atala (1801), wherein--exaggeration apart--Chateaubriand presented himself as "couvert de sang de mon frère unique, de ma belle-soeur, de celui de l'illustre vieillard leur père; ayant vu ma mère et une autre soeur pleine de talents mourir des suites du traitement qu'elles avaient éprouvé dans les cachots."11

In the Génie may be established a number of categories which have a direct relationship to the Middle Ages: feudal and chivalric.
moeurs ("le beau idéal moral," "la vertu"); medieval architecture, sites, and appreciation for the Gothic church; Christianity of the Middle Ages as a benefactor of the arts; chivalry itself and the ideal incarnate in the chivalric code; crusades; ruins and tombeaux; medieval atmosphere; and nostalgia for a medieval, national past. Chateaubriand was especially impressed with Gothic architecture:

Ces voûtes ciselées en feuillages, ces jambages qui appuient les murs et finissent brusquement comme des troncs brisés, la fraîcheur des voûtes, les ailes obscures, les passages secrets, les portes abaissées, tout retrace les labyrinthes des bois dans l’église gothique; tout en fait sentir la religieuse horreur, les mystères de la divinité, 12

which for him was irrevocably inseparable from the moeurs of the people:

"Il n'y a rien de merveilleux dans un temple qu'on a vu bâtir, et dont les échos et les dômes se sont formés sous nos yeux." 13 In the cathedral he sensed the lessons to be learned from the dusty sepultures. Medieval France seemed to come alive for him upon entering:

On ne pouvait entrer dans une église gothique sans éprouver une sorte de frissonnement et un sentiment vague de la divinité. On se trouvait tout à coup reporté à ces temps où les cénobites, après avoir médité dans les bois de leur monastère, se venaient prosterner à l'autel... L’ancienne France semblait revivre: on croyait voir ces costumes singuliers, ce peuple si différent... Plus ces temps étaient éloignés de nous, plus ils nous paraissaient magiques. 14

He sensed the "présence des âges" at Saint-Denis, where in the profound silence the "spectres des rois" rose up ex cathedra in macabre and pristine profusion. The royal sepulture is "comme un trésor où l'on déposait les débris du temps," the repository of microcosmic and macro-cosmic souvenirs, of grandeur and néant. The detailed notes taken by a nun of the Abbey of Saint-Denis during the exhumations in 1793 were well known to Chateaubriand; they contain an objective accounting of even the
most nauseating details respective to the condition of the mortal
remains. When it is recalled that Chateaubriand was only twenty years
old at the time of the Revolution and that even his own father's remains
were unearthed and desecrated, when the sad aftermath of the Terreur on
the rest of his family is recollected (it was continued even under
Napoleon, who ordered his cousin Armand de Chateaubriand shot in 1808),
his tears at the sight of the "autels brisés" and "tombeaux vides et les
souterrains dévastés," his impression of inhaling the "poussière des
temps passés" appear convincingly sincere— notwithstanding the sardonic
iconoclasm of critics such as Manuel de Diéquez (for example, his
trenchant "l'amour de la gloire appelle le néant à la rescousse afin que
le cri et l'éveil se fassent entendre jusqu'aux confins de l'univers"16)
and Pierre Barbéris (for whom Chateaubriand is a "pourrisseur" and a
"pourri" who "n'a aimé que les choses mortes et bien mortes, et notamment
les monarchies"17). The savagery of these events drove Chateaubriand to
a new veneration of "les seuls temps poétiques de notre histoire, les
temps chevaleresques."

There is no doubt that he was familiar with the Mémoires sur
l'ancienne chevalerie or that he incorporated some of their contents
into the Génie. One critic has proven, through the use of facing
paradigms, that the chapter entitled "Vie et moeurs des chevaliers" is
entirely based on Sainte-Palaye's Mémoires.18 Today we know that
Chateaubriand's references to chronicles and philologists were mostly
derived from secondary sources. In the chapter "Beau côté de l'histoire
moderne" Chateaubriand certainly has Voltaire's Essai sur les moeurs in
view when he affirms the following:
But contrary to Voltaire, who for him "eut l'art funeste, chez un peuple capricieux et aimable, de rendre l'incredulite a la mode," Chateaubriand proclaims that "la grande vue a saisir pour l'histoire moderne, c'est le changement que le christianisme a opere dans l'ordre social."²⁰

But was medievalism in the Génie a political tool as it would be in the Martyrs? Did Chateaubriand draw a parallel between chivalry and Ancien Régime as we have seen in the eighteenth century? Parts of the Génie were retouched by Lucien Bonaparte and the police to reflect the First Consul's politics: a passage referring to rulers as "athées pour eux seuls et religieux pour le peuple," for instance, was removed.²¹ In the preface to the 1826 edition of his complete works, Chateaubriand argues that the Génie "respirait l'ancienne monarchie tout entière," contending that at the moment of his fall Bonaparte "avoua que l'ouvrage dont la publication avait le plus nui à son pouvoir était le Génie du christianisme."²² Barbérès, existentialiste évolué (cf. Sartre's De la littérature: "le faire est révélateur de l'être"), who sees Chateaubriand as "le Malraux du XIXe siècle, à qui il n'a manqué qu'un de Gaulle"²³ (cf. La condition humaine: "tout homme rêve d'être Dieu"), maintains that Chateaubriand rejected both the Ancien Régime and the new, basing his contention in particular on the following passage in the Essai sur les révolutions:

Le mal, le grand mal, c'est que nous ne sommes point de notre siècle. Chaque âge est un fleuve qui nous entraîne selon le
Barbérès sees the Génie as both political and existential; thus, the "restaurateur de la cathédrale gothique" des dissertations est d’abord un historien et son moyen âge est d’abord politique. ... Un moyen âge de 'moeurs' et de rapports sociaux." The Middle Ages for Barbérès falls into the category "moyen âge décor"; thus the Génie is "langage et pratique de l'existence (contre l'apologétique essentialiste), langage et pratique néo-religieuse (contre les essences révolutionnaires)." Paul Bénichou affirms that Chateaubriand "ne partagea guère, en aucun temps, les illusions de ses amis politiques sur la possibilité de rétablir l'ordre ancien," that neither the Génie nor the Martyre established any ties between the Christian faith and the political doctrines of the Romantic era, while Castries recently remarked of the Génie that its conclusion, pushed to the extreme, "débouche à la fois dans le style troubadour et dans les horribles effigies de Saint-Sulpice." For our part, although the Génie du Christianisme cannot escape political relevance due to the period in which it was written, in which a cult of the past could not help but create associations with the Ancien Régime, we feel that no sub rosa political motivation is implicit. The fact that Chateaubriand dedicated the 1803 edition of the Génie to Bonaparte in gratitude for his having reintegrated religion into French life is supportive of our conclusion: "la France, agrandie par vos
victoires, a placé en vous son espérance, depuis que vous appuyez sur la Religión les bases de l'État et de vos prospérités."^{30}

This is most definitely not true of his epic narrative *Les Martyrs*, which appeared in 1809. By the time the *Martyrs* was composed, Chateaubriand considered Napoleon a tyrant; thus, although he ostensibly wanted to offer further proof of the superiority of the Christian religion, set in the era of Diocletian and Constantine, he implied that Bonaparte-become-Napoleon was also a Diocletian persecuting Christians, who bear a strong resemblance to those oppressed in Chateaubriand's time. Fouché, Napoleon's minister of police until 1810, is painted brilliantly in Hiéroclès ("un prétendu sage qui corrompt, au nom des lumières, un homme qui règne sur les hommes... un de ces hommes que les révolutions introduisent au conseil des grands, et qui leur deviennent utiles par une sorte de talent pour les affaires communes, par une facilité peu désirable à parler promptement sur tous les sujets.... Enivré de son pouvoir, Hiéroclès ne peut gouverner ses passions."). Chateaubriand had submitted his manuscript to his friend Fontanes, who convinced him to remove certain details in the portrait of Diocletian in which allusions to the Emperor were too obvious (for example, the analogy as a son of the clerk of the court).^{31} In the 1826 edition of his works the author alleged that "les allusions étaient si frappantes dans le portrait de Galérius et dans la peinture de la cour de Diocletian, qu'elles ne pouvaient échapper à la police impériale,"^{32} an anticipation of his speech at the Académie Française upon his election in 1811, which, "barré d'un bout à l'autre de la main de Bonaparte,"^{33} he was not permitted to read.
The Martyrs, a clever mixture of historical facts from the fourth century through the conquest of Gaul by the Franks to the battle between the Franks and the Romans, is largely autobiographical: Eudore, the hero (Barbêris's "anti-René" because he dies for his cause) is in many respects Chateaubriand himself, as he would have liked to have been; he is a Mathieu Delarue (but Christian) as in La Mort dans l'Âme, the last book of Sartre's trilogy. The work is full of anachronisms. In the fifth chapter Eudore leaves Rome in exile to join the Roman army on the banks of the Rhine at Agrippina (Cologne), where it prepares to battle the Franks. The Franks are identified with the Republicans, and the corps des Gaulois in the Roman army, headed by Vercingétorix (!) represent the corps des émigrés in the battalions of the Franks. The Roman army meets the Franks in Batavia (Holland) where Vercingétorix (dead in 46 B.C.) is vanquished by Mérovée (dead in A.D. 577), son of Clodion, the king of the Franks; Eudore becomes the slave of the legendary king Pharamond. Setting aside Clovis's defeat of the Romans under their general Syagrius at Soissons in 486, the Frankish kings Pharamond, Clodion, and Mérovée are all present at the battle.

A moving moment occurs in the sixth chapter when the "bardit" of the Franks, or chant guerrier, is accompanied by the lowering and raising in cadence of the shields of forty thousand warriors:

"Pharamond! Pharamond! Nous avons combattu avec l'épée."
"Nos pères sont morts dans les batailles, tous les vautours en ont géri: nos pères les rassasiaient de carnage! Choisissons des épouses dont le lait soit du sang, et qui remplissent de valeur le coeur de nos fils. Pharamond, le bardit est achevé, les heures de la vie s'écoulent; nous sourirons quand il faudra mourir!"

This passage is responsible for inspiring young Augustin Thierry to work
with the history of France. It should be recalled that the dit is a medieval creation, but these bardits are certainly not medieval: they rather refer in quite a definite way to Fénelon's Télémaque, and they are even in the avant-garde of ossianisme in France. Eudore is subsequently named commander of the Armorican peninsula (Chateaubriand's native Brittany).

Both Léon Cellier and Herbert J. Hunt denounce with reason what Hunt terms the "incorrigible mania for parallelism" which characterizes the work and which renders its design "wearisomely symmetrical." But Hunt concludes that Chateaubriand had "la tête épique," while Cellier, pointing to the fact that the subject itself is not epic material, denies him this distinction.35

Barbéris's final judgment that Chateaubriand "n'a livré la clé de rien, affirmé, proclamé finalement, malgré Les Martyrs (et encore!) nulle certitude, religieuse et nationale aussi bien que laïque et obligatoire,"36 is quite simply unacceptable. The Martyrs demonstrates a deliberate use of an anachronistic Middle Ages to suit contemporary political purposes.

The Aventures du dernier Abencérage, first published in the 1826 edition of his works, also presents the pagan versus Christian conflict of which Chateaubriand was so fond; it must also be seen as an example of Chateaubriand's polemical use of the Middle Ages with contemporary application. Aben-Hamet, the last survivor of the powerful Moorish tribe which ruled fifteenth-century Granada before its fall to Ferdinand and Isabella, returns from Tunisia twenty-four years after the defeat (thus in 1524). The late Middle Ages of the Abencérages represent again
an ideal world in which Chateaubriand identifies with the protagonist. Like Eudore, Aben-Hamet has the courage of his convictions, in which honor and loyalty triumph in a Cornelian manner over the heart. Aben-Hamet is an émigré: "Les Abencérages surtout conservaient le plus tendre et le plus fidèle souvenir de la patrie. Ils avaient quitté avec un mortel regret le théâtre de leur patrie." Chateaubriand himself confirmed that "cette nouvelle est l'ouvrage d'un homme qui a senti les chagrins de l'exil, et dont le coeur est tout à sa patrie." Claiming that the work had been composed about twenty years prior to its publication, Chateaubriand explained that

le portrait que j'ai tracé des Espagnols explique assez pourquoi cette Nouvelle n'a pu être imprimée sous le gouvernement impérial. La résistance des Espagnols à Buonaparte en 1808 [when the Spanish king Charles IV had to abdicate in favor of Joseph Bonaparte] ... excitait alors l'enthousiasme de tous les coeurs susceptibles d'être touchés par les grands dévouements et les nobles sacrifices. Les ruines de Saragosse fumaient encore et la censure n'aurait pas permis des éloges où elle eût découvert, avec raison, un intérêt pour les victimes. La peinture des vieilles moeurs de l'Europe, les souvenirs de la gloire d'un autre temps, et ceux de la cour d'un de nos plus brillants monarques, n'auraient pas été plus agréables à la censure, qui d'ailleurs commençait à se repentir de m'avoir tant de fois laissé parler de l'ancienne monarchie et de la religion de nos pères: ces morts que j'évoquais sans cesse faisaient trop penser aux vivants.  

In the Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe Chateaubriand no longer conceives of the Middle Ages as the ideal world of faith found in the Génie or as the symbolic world of the Martyrs and Dernier Abencérage. He occasionally speaks critically of the Middle Ages, commenting on "la civilisation imparfaite, les croyances superstitieuses, les usages étrangers et demi-barbares" of the fourteenth through seventeenth centuries; but his own time easily surpasses the barbarity of the Middle Ages, as seen
in his description of the arrival of Louis XVI in Paris on 5 October 1789:

On tirait des coups de fusil et de pistolet; on criait: Voici le boulanger, la boulangère et le petit mitron! Pour oriflamme devant le fils de saint Louis, des hallebardes suisses éveilentaient en l'air deux têtes de gardes-du-corps, frisées et poudrées par un perruquier de Sèvres.⁴¹

The cold exigencies of reality have taken their toll, professional disappointments have lent him a pragmatic sagacity:

Respectons la majesté du temps; contemplons avec vénération les siècles éculés, rendus sacrés par la mémoire et les vestiges de nos pères; toutefois, n'essayons pas de rétrograder vers eux, car ils n'ont plus rien de notre nature réelle, et si nous prétendions les saisir, ils s'évanouiraient.⁴²

In 1833 he wrote to Napoléon Didron, Secretary of the Committee on Historical Monuments: "Oh mon Dieu! . . . on l'a déjà trop étudié ce moyen âge, on a trop fait de poésie là-dessus."⁴³ For Chateaubriand, the "poetry" was found in an ideal Middle Ages with which he could identify, a chimerical Camelot. When this world collapsed, its function--by cognizance or intuition, or even both--lost its raison d'être, and there is no more medievalism in his works. Thus, although the Génie du Christianisme is of utmost importance in tracing the presence of the Middle Ages in Chateaubriand's writings, it is by no means the only work which should be considered; it should rather be seen as a component of a subjectivized Weltanschauung: the first which we have encountered in this study and a new dimension in French literature of the early nineteenth century.
Madame de Staël

A "return" to the Middle Ages as a time of faith next received impetus from Madame de Staël's *De l'Allemagne*, which can be seen as a counterpart opposing a protestant "progressist" orientation to the neocatholicism of the *Génie du christianisme*. Before we explore its contents as they pertain to the Middle Ages, a brief summary of the external factors which exerted influence on it will help situate it in time. For documentary purposes, *De l'Allemagne* appeared in 1810 but had no readers at that time: the editor Nicolle was so convinced of the success of the work that he began printing it prematurely without the final decision of the censors. The unfortunate man's shop was almost immediately closed by the police, acting under direct order of Napoleon, for whom, as one critic has succinctly observed, "*l'Allemagne* instituait l'Europe à l'état de binôme, déléguant l'Allemagne à la place de tête de l'un des deux termes du binôme, de la dualité classique et romantique, social et individuel." The five thousand copies already printed were confiscated without explanation; ironically, the ultimate decision of the censors was to allow publication with the stipulation that eleven pages be suppressed, to which condition Madame de Staël certainly would have acquiesced in the interest of her work.

*De l'Allemagne* could not help but provoke imperialistic disfavor in 1810, since it was deemed antinationalistic at a time of national restoration: "Votre dernier ouvrage n'est point français," the Duke of Rovigo (minister of police, formerly known as General Savary) replied to Madame de Staël's protestations. "Il m'a paru que l'air de ce pays-ci ne vous convenait point, et nous n'en sommes pas encore réduits à
chercher des modèles dans les peuples que vous admirez." As Philarète Chasles would later remark: "Sous Louis XV, tout était moral; sous Louis XVI, tout était vertueux; sous Napoléon Ier, tout était français." We must recall that extracts of the work and ideas contained therein had been the subject of much salon conversation long before the first proofs were off the press.

Ordered to leave the manuscript which had served as a basis for the 1810 printing with customs officials, Madame de Staël nevertheless managed to smuggle it past credulous officers at the French-Swiss border on her way to Coppet, leaving a draft in their hands; the salvaged manuscript served as a basis for a London publication in 1813, since she did not dare to publish it on the Continent for fear of reprisals. The 1813 edition thus hardly penetrated France, but it was avidly read in England as the work of an enemy of the Emperor rather than for the theories which it contained. With the relaxation of rigid censorship in 1814, the climate became suitable in France, and a French edition of that year immediately elicited a strong reaction, both positive and negative.

In essence, Madame de Staël proposed a return to an indigencous, ideal Middle Ages which would give a Modern—as opposed to Ancient—literary infusion to French literature under the influence of its German counterpart, a national and chevaleresque heritage. "Dans le moyen âge l'imagination était forte, mais le langage imparfait; de nos jours, le langage est pur, mais l'imagination est en défaut," she claimed. Establishing dichotomies between "classic" and "romantic," pagan and Christian in her important chapter "De la poésie classique et de la poésie romantique," Madame de Staël points out that "le nom de
romantique a été introduit nouvellement en Allemagne, pour désigner la poésie dont les chants des troubadours ont été l'origine, celle qui est née de la chevalerie et du christianisme." Those who are the most educated in the knowledge of languages and the works of the ancients, she maintains, are led by their character, habits, and reasoning power to prefer a literature "fondée sur les souvenirs de la chevalerie, sur le merveilleux du moyen âge" over that which derives from Greek mythology. Finding this only in German literature, she deduces that "la poésie des Germains est l'ère chrétienne des beaux-arts," from which she concludes that since classical poetry was based on perfection, "la littérature romantique est la seule qui soit susceptible encore d'être perfectionnée, parce qu'ayant ses racines dans notre propre sol, elle est la seule qui puisse croître et se vivifier de nouveau; elle exprime notre religion; elle rapporte notre histoire; son origine est ancienne, mais non antique."50

She makes a sharp distinction between the content of such an indigenous literature and the classical tragedy. In the chapter "De l'art dramatique" she stipulates what constitutes an indigenous literature:

"Il y a dans les moeurs chevaleresques une simplicité de langage, une naïveté de sentiment pleine de charme; mais ni ce charme, ni le pathétique qui résulte du contraste des circonstances communes et des impressions fortes, ne peut être admis dans nos tragédies: elles exigent des situations royales en tout, et néanmoins l'intérêt pittoresque du moyen âge tient à toute cette diversité de scènes et de caractères dont les romans des troubadours ont fait sortir des effets si touchants."51

Chivalry was born in the north, but it is in the south of France that "elle s'est embellie par le charme de la poésie et de l'amour." The
Minnesinger cannot compare to those of France, "et c'était peut-être à cette source que nous devions puiser une littérature vraiment nationale."\textsuperscript{52} The spirit of chivalry is at the heart of enthusiasm, the elevation of the soul, which she develops at length in part four from the Greek definition of "Dieu en nous": "l'enthousiasme est à la conscience ce que l'honneur est au devoir."\textsuperscript{53} The basis for this statement is in great part already developed in her earlier chapter entitled "La chevalerie," wherein she affirms that with the disappearance of the spirit of chivalry which accompanied the abolition of the feudal regime under Richelieu, and up until the Revolution of 1789, the French (unlike the Germans) have totally lacked a source of enthusiasm.\textsuperscript{54} Importantly, then, Madame de Staël is at antipodes with the conviction that the Middle Ages were a time of barbarity and grossièreté. On the contrary, writes Paul Bénichou,

Le moyen âge est, dans l'univers romantique, ce que le temps des patriarches est dans le monde chrétien: une époque antérieure aux normes modernes, un magasin sacré de thèmes et de figures doués d'une primordiale autorité.\textsuperscript{55}

Critics of Madame de Staël (1766–1817) have applied her affirmation that imagination is dominant over reason in the Germanic people to herself; but whether one is in agreement or not, this in no way disparages the enormous effect of De l'Allemagne. A propos of its influence, Gustave Lanson remarks that "Mme de Staël a fourni aux romantiques ses idées, des théories, une critique; de Chateaubriand, ils ont reçu un idéal, des jouissances, et des besoins; elle a défini, il a réalisé."\textsuperscript{56} Madame de Staël and Chateaubriand were, Lamartine confirmed in 1834, as
deux protestations vivantes contre l'oppression de l'âme et du coeur; contre le dessèchement et l'avidissement du siècle; ils furent l'aliment de nos toits solitaires, le pain caché de nos âmes refoulées; ils prirent sur nous comme un droit de famille, ils furent de notre sang, nous fûmes du leur, et il est peu d'entre nous qui ne l'eu lieu doive ce qu'il fut, ce qu'il est, ou ce qu'il sera.\footnote{57}

and De l'Allemagne was "ce souffle lointain de morale, de poésie, de liberté que nous ne pouvions respirer sous la coupe pneumatique de l'esclavage et de la médiocrité."\footnote{58}

* * * * *

Impetus for a rehabilitation of the national past through inspiration from other literatures was emanating at roughly the same time from Coppet, "le creuset du romantisme européen,"\footnote{59} which centered around the person of Madame de Staël but had as its alter soul the theorist of Romanticisme and later professor of general and comparative literature at Bonn, August Wilhelm von Schlegel. "Littérairement, à partir du Consulat, Coppet deviendra presque un Hambourg français,"\footnote{60} Albert Thibaudet has exclaimed.\footnote{60} The groupe de Coppet, which sometimes consisted of up to thirty persons,\footnote{61} formed a strong opposition to Chateaubriand's Génie du Christianisme, which it considered a "galimatias double."\footnote{62}

As the brilliant daughter of the Genevese banker Necker, twice Minister of Finances under Louis XVI, Madame de Staël had been in contact since her youth with intermediaries between France and Germany in the salon of her parents in Paris; later we have seen that she maintained her own liberal salon in the quartier Saint-Germain, where prevailing ideas countered those of the lettrés in the groupe d'Auteuil. The rivalry between the two salons has been in a historical perspective:
Influriated by her political manifesto *De l'influence des passions sur le bonheur des individus et des nations* (1796) and by her continuing liberalism, Napoleon ordered Madame de Staël into exile in 1803; already embued with German language and literature, she chose to travel to Germany rather than to her family home in the canton of Vaud in Switzerland.

During this first excursion she made the acquaintance of Goethe, Fichte, the Schlegel brothers, Tieck, Novalis [Hardenberg], Schiller, Wieland, Ancillon, and others—all of whom stimulated her interest in German literature, but none as much as A. W. Schlegel, whose unfailing adoration and support during the fourteen years until her untimely death would lead him to champion her cause long after, to settle her estate, and to remain close to her surviving children for thirty-five years.

At the end of the 1803-1804 voyage, she persuaded Schlegel to accompany her to Coppet to become the preceptor of her three children. Schlegel offers proof of a chivalric commitment to his "adorable amie," who consistently did not treat him as he hoped and needed, in a pathetic letter of 1805 in which he declared that

... vous avez tous les droits sur moi et ... je n'en ai aucun sur vous. Disposez de ma personne et de ma vie, ordonnez, défendez, je vous obéirai en tout. Je n'aspire à aucun autre bonheur que celui que vous voudrez me donner; je ne veux rien posséder, je veux tenir tout de votre générosité. Je consentirois volontiers à ne plus penser à ma célébrité, à vouer exclusivement à votre usage particulier ce que je peux avoir de connaissances et de talens,

and which closed with the plea: "ne bannissez jamais d'auprès de vous votre esclave."64
We may certainly wonder if Schlegel's profound knowledge of German medieval literature influenced Madame de Staël's own positive theories with respect to the Middle Ages. A recent invaluable study on Schlegel's relationship to France points to fundamental differences between the two: Madame de Staël still basically adheres to an Enlightenment view of progress, whereas the theory of perfectibility is totally absent in Schlegel's work; conversely, Schlegel stressed the superiority of the Germanic tribes over the conquered countries of the Mediterranean, which is never found in the work of Madame de Staël. Her own attitude toward the Middle Ages is best formulated in her criticism of Schlegel: "il ne s'agit pas de faire reculer l'art, mais de réunir, autant qu'on le peut les qualités deverses développées dans l'esprit humain à différentes époques."66

In 1808 Schlegel delivered a series of fifteen lectures in Vienna, arranged by Madame de Staël, which proved to be highly controversial since he in essence rejected the supremacy of French literature. Published in 1814 as the Cours de littérature dramatique, it proved also to be quite influential in the evolution of Romantic thought: Nodier, for example, spoke of Schlegel's course in an article in 1820, and Hugo, who had read it in translation, avidly followed the debate provoked by Racine et Shakespeare (1825), wherein Stendhal continued the debate of "classic" versus "romantic." Madame de Staël reiterated in De l'Allemagne Schlegel's theories with regard to the improbability of the three unities: Voltaire's Tancredé and Zaire (which were performed at the château in Coppet) had to rely on misunderstandings in order that the plot conform to the unity of time, and Raynouard's Templiers (1805)
is a chef-d'oeuvre considering that the Templars were accused, judged, condemned, and burned—all within twenty-four hours. Nevertheless, although it was Schlegel who compiled the library at Coppet—and in spite of their close relationship—his literary influence on Madame de Staël was perhaps not as great as has generally been believed, given her strong will, independence, and domineering character.

Madame de Staël's return to Paris in 1814 and the diffusion of De l'Allemagne were accompanied by violent literary polemics; for her adversaries she was inseparable from the "foreigners" Schlegel and Sismondi. But although it elicited a strong resistance at first, "la fureur des attaques immédiates des classiques montre de bonne heure que Mme de Staël a frappé juste." The classicists of the salons tried desperately to refute the validity of this new work, and their efforts even led to the composition of "Stances sur le dernier ouvrage de Mme de Staël," which were recited by heart with much glee. The reproduction of the first two stanzas should demonstrate why:

De Copet [sic] la docte héronêne
Prépare un volume nouveau:
Ciel! que je tremble pour Racine,
Et pour Molière et pour Boileau!

Madame, dans sa poétique,
Réglant, jugeant, déplaçant tout,
Voit du Léman à la Baltique
Régner ses charmes et son goût.

According to Ian Henning, the influence of Madame de Staël was never as profound as in 1820 (the date of Lamartine's Méditations) when, three years after her death, her son Auguste published an edition of her complete works: "Chateaubriand offre de nouveaux exemples de son romantisme à lui, mais on commence à distinguer très nettement entre ce
romantisme et celui de Mme de Staël. . . . Plus encore que Chateaubriand, Mme de Staël peut servir de guide aux aspirations des jeunes esprits."71

In effect, the direct influence of this work was to continue up to 1827 or 1828. By proposing a new manner of thinking and feeling to a population weary of the materialism and artificiality in the Roman emulation of the First Empire, the work complemented the Génie du Christianisme in exhorting the public to a new inspiration deriving in great part from the Middle Ages.

Sismondi

De l'Allemagne was but one of three books published in 1813 which were to have a profound consequence on the promotion of the Middle Ages through the study of other literatures. The second was the work of an erudite Genevese historian and economist associated with the groupe de Coppet, Simonde de Sismondi, whose authoritarian treatise, De la littérature du midi de l'Europe (developed from a course offered at the Académie in Geneva in 1812), complemented Madame de Staël's two main works on a more scholarly level. "C'est demeurer dans un état de demi-connaissances, que de s'arrêter à l'étude de notre littérature seule,"73 Sismondi advanced in justification of his work, proposing an investigation into "les circonstances historiques, le milieu social, le goût d'une époque et d'un peuple" with a totally impartial orientation. Such an enterprise implied the conception of an aesthetic relativity, a "poétique générale" of which Sismondi proposed to disengage the laws: "nous avons voulu partir de toutes ces poétiques nationales, pour nous élever à une poétique générale qui les comprît toutes."74 From this he postulated a
general characteristic of Romantic literatures to be the reflection of Romantic civilization: these literatures were therefore Christian, chivalric, national, and popular in character, all presenting the "mélange d'amour, de chevalerie et de religion, qui a formé les moeurs romantiques."\textsuperscript{75}

Proceeding from a brief analysis of the formation of southern European languages in general (which forms chapter one), Sismondi establishes the origin of chivalry in the Arabic world; this gave "une impulsion toute nouvelle à la littérature de l'Europe, et a changé la direction de l'esprit humain."\textsuperscript{76} Then is passed in review each literature of southern Europe, evidencing an impressive erudition. The Arabic imagination, he continues, is easily distinguished from the chivalric imagination; but it is easy to see how many similarités are found in each: the supernatural world is the same for both, but the moral world is different.\textsuperscript{77} He then refutes Madame de Staël's contention that chivalry derives from the north:

\begin{quote}
En vain chercherait-on dans les moeurs ou dans les fables des Germains l'origine de la chevalerie; ces peuples, quoiqu'ils respectassent les femmes, et qu'ils les admisssent dans les conseils, et le culte des dieux, avoient pour elles plus d'égards que de tendresse; la galanterie leur était inconnue, et leurs moeurs braves, loyales, mais rudes laissaient peu prévoir un si sublime développement du sentiment et de l'héroïsme; leur imagination était sombre; les pouvoirs surnaturels auxquels la superstition les faisait croire étaient tous malfaisants.\textsuperscript{78}
\end{quote}

Interestingly, Sismondi is the first to the writer's knowledge to advance the modern theory that the feudal world represented reality, and that the chivalric world was an ideal one as it existed in the imaginations of writers of romances:
Il ne faut point confondre la féodalité avec la chevalerie; la
féodalité est le monde réel à cette époque, avec ses avantages et
ses inconvenients, ses vertus et ses vices; la chevalerie est ce
même monde idealisé, tel qu'il a existé seulement dans l'invention
des romanciers.79

For Sismondi the chivalric world was not the bon vieux temps:

Dans le midi de la France en particulier, la paix, la richesse et
la vie des cours [referring to Nostredame's cours d'amour, which
are later mentioned by name] avaient introduit parmi la noblesse
un extrême relâchement. On aurait dit qu'on ne vivait que pour
la galanterie: les dames . . . avaient donné à tout le midi de la
France un mouvement de carnaval, qui contrastait singulièrement avec
les idees de retenue, de vertu et de modestie que nous attribuons
au bon vieux temps.80

He found in Provençal poetry a harmonious symmetry which made it
far superior to that of the poets of France, Italy, England, and Germany
of the time; but "l'imagination romanesque elle-même était fort rare
chez les troubadours,"81 a quality which he appreciated in the poetry of
the trouvères. Poetry for Sismondi was the only light in the darkness
of the Middle Ages; yet "la lumière boréale, comme la poésie des trouba-
dours, n'a point de chaleur, et ne répand point de vie."82 Nevertheless,
he cautions,

abstenons-nous de les juger trop sévèrement d'après le peu
d'impression, le peu de trace brillantes qu'ils ont laissé dans
notre mémoire; n'oublions point que le siècle dans lequel ils
ont vécu était celui d'une ignorance et d'une barbarie univer-
selle.83

French literature for Sismondi was completely separate from
Romantic literature, having adopted "une autre législation, un autre
caractère, la littérature de la langue d'OIl et des trouvères."84 The
thrust of his argumentation is then an inspiration from this chivalric
heritage:

Nos habitudes, notre éducation, les morceaux touchants de
notre histoire, peut-être même faudrait-il dire, les contes de
nos nourrices, nous ramènent toujours aux temps et aux moeurs de la chevalerie; tout ce qui s'y rapporte agit sur notre sensibilité; tout ce qui tient aux temps mythologiques et à l'antiquité n'agit au contraire que sur la mémoire. 85

For the purposes of this study, in tracing the lines of interest in the Middle Ages, it is also of interest to know that Sismondi consulted the works of Millot, Fabre d'Olivet, Sainte-Palaye, 86 Nostredame, and Legrand d'Aussy for his treatise; he mentions them all by name.

Sismondi's work immediately met with unfavorable press: an editor of the Gazette de France proclaimed that "M. de Sismondi a écrit l'histoire de ses hérésies," professing a fear "qu'il ne pervertisse bien du monde, malgré mes efforts pour détruire son ouvrage." 87 The Journal de l'Empire expressed the strongest disapproval by demanding,

quels sont les trésors, ensevelis et cachés, que l'on espère découvrir et produire au grand jour en secouant la poussière de nos siècles barbares, et en se traînant sous les ronces du moyen âge? 88

Almost conjointly, commenting on Friedrich Bouterwek's Histoire de la littérature espagnole (1812), P. A. Stapfer added some interesting commentary to the theories expressed by Madame de Staël and Sismondi. Warning against "des littératures hybrides ou décolorées" which only offered a "littérature grêque en caractères occidentaux, un mauvais calque de la littérature des anciens," and attempting to explicate what Bouterwek meant by poésie romantique," Stapfer proclaimed that

la poésie moderne lui [Bouterwek] paraît avoir, dans son enfance, reçu de l'esprit de la chevalerie un caractère particulier très-différent de celui de la poésie antique.... Cette poésie naquit vers la fin des croisades.... Une nouvelle poésie se forma pour chanter une nouvelle manière d'aimer. 89

Practically paraphrasing ideas from De l'Allemagne even before its publication, he stated that in Germany "poésie romantique" or "romantique
tout court" had acquired a more extended meaning, namely, "un genre de poésie né du génie même des nations modernes, ayant pour base la bible, la légende, l'histoire héroïque et merveilleuse de nos aieux, se nourrissant de l'esprit local et inhérent au terroir, et peignant les maux, les aventures, les hauts faits indigènes." This work and Sismondi's, however, written on a more scholarly level, did not have the appeal for the general public which we have observed in the case of De l'Allemagne.

Marchangy

The year 1813 was important in the promotion of interest in the Middle Ages with the publication of yet a third work—one which exerted a marked and immediate influence on the literature of its time, the first of eight volumes of Marchangy's Gaule poétique, a work of poetic prolixity praised by Charles Nodier for "une érudition puisée dans les sources les plus sèvères et toutefois extrêmement fleurie, une élocution dont la richesse va jusqu'au luxe, une manière de narrer vive, orative, pittoresque; un coloris plein de chaleur et d'originalité." Inspired by Chateaubriand's Martyrs and Sainte-Palaye's Mémoires sur l'ancienne chevalerie, which served as a fruitful source of documentation for his work, Marchangy (1782-1826) did not conceive of La Gaule poétique as a history of France. Its principal objective, he relates in the first of forty récits, is to "extraire enfin du moyen âge, comme d'une mine féconde et trop peu connue, des trésors qu'apprécieront également le poète, l'annaliste, le législateur et l'archéologue." He challenged poets and artists to seize the lyre, the palette, and the chisel and to follow him back in history "dans les fêtes et les cours plénières de nos
monarques, dans les joûtes et les carrousels de nos paladins" into the "cloîtres du cénobite, la grotte du solitaire, les sombres églises, les manoirs féodaux, les castels hospitaliers où les pèlerins, les preux, les écuyers, les pages, les damoiseaux contaient leurs aventures de guerre et d'amour à la lueur des brasiers," where they would learn of "les faits célèbres, les grandes vertus, les grands crimes, les usages curieux, les fables nationales, les moeurs simples et la vie privée de nos âgeux." 93

As a loyal magistrate under the First Empire, future procureur royal under the Restoration, avocat général at the Cour de Cassation, and virulent ultra, Marchangy's political orientation is clear early in the récit:

Enfin après les années honteuses d'une révolution où la terreur, le carnage, la famine et tous les fléaux creusaient l'effrayant tombeau de la France, on voit luire l'aurore, qui, dissipant tant de nuages, enfante un astre de victoire; la patrie refleurit à son éclat. 94

But his goal is not to create political propaganda; La Gaule poétique is a rather curious blend of well-documented erudition and sentimental Blut und Boden: an idealistic, romanticized, poetic "history" of France deriving from both history itself and historical legend in which the author reconstructs historical situations as a stylistic device. Since the "grande magie" of the narrator is to transport one back in time, he explains, one can only create this illusion by recreating with care the customs and the moeurs in question. Unlike Voltaire, who viewed history from the vantage point of his own century, Marchangy attempts to return to the "beauté vierge encore" and the "grâces ignorées" of the past: to "prononcer avec impartialité" one must "sortir du siècle présent et
Marchangy manages to keep an open mind; thus, for example, the épreuves of the eau bouillante and the fer ardent are hardly praised but are presented in an objective manner.

The work traces only those portions of French history, from the origin of the Gauls to the time of Louis XIV, which Marchangy deems capable of inspiring his compatriots. "Cloire et honneur au pays de la vaillance, de l'esprit, de la politesse, des vertus hospitalières! au pays qu'ont défendu tant de héros, qu'ont embelli de si grands talens!" is a refrain which echoes throughout the episodes which constitute the format of the work.

The stylistic means employed by Marchangy are quite varied. A favorite device is to recreate the past by dialogue: the superstitious Louis le Débonnaire, told that a comet is approaching, cries out: "O mon peuple! ô ma famille! voilà donc le signal de mon trépas! Je voulais quitter l'empire, il me faut à présent quitter à la fois l'empire et la vie." He attributes an exhortation of his own invention to Charles Martel, addressing the troops: "Dès ce jour, vous aurez une patrie que vous chérirez comme votre ouvrage, comme le prix de vos sueurs et de votre sang. Mais si vous reculez d'un pas, il n'y aura pas de France." Secondary sources, such as Dupuy's Histoire des Templiers, are often employed to furnish speeches to central characters, in this instance to Jacques de Molay. Often he reiterates the opinions of those knowledgeable in the area being discussed, as when he cites Commines's judgment that Charles VII "était si bon qu'il n'est point possible de voir meilleure créature." To illustrate the "sage coutume d'alors" when
seigneurs sent their children as pages to the court of a prince, count, or baron to learn the laws and practices of chivalry, Marchangy utilizes the *Histoire du chevalier Bayard*:

Le jour de la séparation étant venu, le père, vieux gentilhomme blanchi dans l'honneur et la loyauté, faisait appeler l'héritier de son nom, et lui disait . . . ,

immediately followed by the admonition of the father in *Perceforest*:

Cher fils, c'est assez t'amuser aux cendres casanières; il faut te rendre aux écoles de prouesse et valeur; car tout jeune damoisel doit quitter la maison paternelle pour recevoir bonne et louable nourriture en autre famille, et devenir moult expert en toutes sortes de doctrines.

Marchangy had a particular predilection for the times of chivalry, finding them one of the most prolific sources of poetic history with which to embellish his narrative. The twenty-seventh récit, "De la chevalerie," treats the origins of this institution in a manner dissimilar to that of Sainte-Palaye, although the latter is often cited; from a political point of view it is interesting to learn that the Franks and the Gauls "ceignaient l'épée à leurs enfans au milieu de la famille" in a solemn ceremony which marked the adolescent's attainment of "une vie civile, militaire, morale et politique"; religion supported chivalry because it upheld the faith; and sovereigns did likewise in the belief that it was expedient to do so. He concurs with Madame de Staël that chivalry was essential to the French, "car alle créait en eux ce patriotisme, ami du trône." Chivalry itself is a noble subject: it has "vingt fois sauvé la France, soit en écrasant les factions, soit en donnant à nos soldats l'exemple de fidélité, de la patience et du courage." For Marchangy the age of chivalry, commencing at approximately the twelfth century, was the first epoch of the *Renaissance des*
lettres following a "longue nuit d'ignorance," reminiscent of the views of Voltaire, d'Alembert, Joucourt, and others mentioned in this study; but if Voltaire's judgment of Charlemagne (see chapter 1 above) is compared with that of Marchangy, the romanticized exuberance of the latter is strikingly apparent:

De même qu'un phare placé au milieu des ténèbres, pour rallier à sa lumière les nations turbulentes et barbares, Charlemagne s'élève au-dessus de ses prédécesseurs, de ses contemporains, de ses descendants, et paraît sur les limites qui séparent les temps anciens des temps modernes comme pour être vu de tous les âges. Crée, non pour son siècle seulement, mais pour tous les siècles, son génie qui jette tant de rayons dans la nuit de l'ignorance, n'est point éclipsé par le flambeau de la civilisation actuelle; et si ce héros vivait de nos jours, il serait encore Charlemagne.103

Marchangy obviously enjoyed the composition of the Gaule poétique. At one point, overcome by his own eloquence, he digresses totally to create his own attempt at an epic, "ce genre de poésie nationale" to which he will adapt with scrupulous fidelity "les usages, les moeurs, les maximes des temps, quelques faits éparcs ça et là dans de vieilles chroniques françaises sur le règne de Charlemagne, et dont aucun poète n'avait encore parlé."104 Then follows the fifteenth récit, "Le siège de Narbonne; ou, Les amours de France et d'Arable," for a total of 154 pages—as opposed, for instance, to the three and one-half pages devoted to Hugues Capet (the fifteenth récit derives from the cycle of Guillaume d'Orange). Once into the Renaissance period (volume seven), the narrative loses the verve which has previously characterized it, and the author seems to rush through history as if through open doors, e.g., "sans donc nous arrêter aux règnes éphémères de Henri II et de François II, non plus qu'à ceux trop connus de Charles IX et de
Henri III, nous nous hâterons d'arriver à Henri IV . . . le meilleur des rois."105

On the positive side, Marchangy's minute documentation in numerous areas attests to a broad erudition. Literally hundreds of sources are cited. The popularity of the work is certainly evidenced by the fact that it was in its fifth edition in 1834, charmingly illustrated by Camille Rogier, eight years after the author's death. In a sense, Marchangy's Gaule poétique is the actualization of principles inherent in the genre troubadour, which, as we have seen, was still very much alive even at the time of the fifth edition. One critic has commented that Marchangy's work, "n'ayant rien d'agressif ni de provocant, ne soulève pas de contestations et reste au second plan de l'actualité littéraire, tandis que ceux de Sismondi, Schlegel et Mme de Staël suscitent des discussions très vives."106 There certainly is nothing controversial about the work. But we shall see that Lamartine, Gautier, and most of the young Romantics devoured its pages. In the words of Gautier,

Nous étions simplement moyenâgeux. Et tous . . . Un républicain, nous ne savions pas ce que c'était. Nous étions tous contre les libéraux et pour Marchangy. Nous représentions le parti mâchi- coulis, et voilà tout.107

La Gaule poétique is no longer read, but its contribution to Romantic medievalism cannot be stressed enough.

Raynouard

Although Voltaire was the first to use the Middle Ages as a setting for his tragedies, Raynouard (1761-1836) with Les Templiers (1805) was the first to recreate an eminently French past (as opposed to
a universal past) in a historically faithful play set in the Middle Ages. Although the action transpires in 1307, Raynouard's motivation for writing the tragedy might have derived from an identification with the Templars: as a méridional, he might have equated the Templars with the Midi, since the city of Albi was in the center of their possessions, and since an antagonism on the part of méridionaux always remained after the Albigensian Crusade destroyed the Occitan civilization in the thirteenth century and sent its poets fleeing into Italy and Aragon. It might additionally by conjectured that Raynouard felt France would fare better under Napoleon (crowned Emperor in 1804) than it had done in the post-Revolution era. The Templars, in their fortress at Paris, represented an ideal which Philippe le Bel had conquered in the same manner that the Bastille, the symbol par excellence of the Ancien Régime, had fallen in 1789; Napoleon, a nineteenth-century counterpart of Philippe le Bel, also wanted to extend his power. Thus seen, the sympathetic qualities in Raynouard's Philippe le Bel are not surprising. The application of a hypothetical Blut und Boden theme in the Romantic tradition, however, can only be gratuitous, since no proof is available to lend credence to this contention except for the King's supplication to God in the last four lines of the play:

\begin{verbatim}
Grand Dieu! si j'ai commis une funeste erreur,
Je ne demande pas que ta bonté pardonne:
Frappe-moi, mais épargne et mon peuple et le trône.\end{verbatim}

The King is nevertheless portrayed with factual honesty: for example, following his presentation of the King's irritation with the Templars, Raynouard adds the notation that the day in which the Templars
were arrested the King seized the Temple, lodged there, and also
installed there his treasures and the Chartres of France; furthermore,
he does not attenuate Pope Clement V's pact with the King to destroy the
Templars.

Raynouard demonstrates a keen sensitivity for the medieval men-
tality prevalent in the early fourteenth century. The Grand Master,
Jacques de Molay, opts for a noble death in the last scene by refusing
to salvage the King's pride and reputation: "Demander un pardon, c'est
avouer un crime. / L'innocence à ce point ne peut s'humilier."

The Templiers won for Raynouard a seat in the Académie Française
in 1807, evidencing the manner in which the tragedy was received; the
drama is the attestation before-the-fact of Madame de Staël's contention
in De l'Allemagne that "la tendance naturelle du siècle, c'est la
tragédie historique,"109 and the precursor of Romantic dramas of two
decades later.

Barante

Prosper de Barante (1782-1866), son of the préfet at Geneva who
befriended Madame de Staël through his leniency in enforcing imperial
orders, encouraged interest in the Middle Ages as the first Romantic
historiographer. His Histoire des Ducs de Bourgogne, published between
1814 and 1826, quickly became the Bible of the young Romantics who wished
to write historical dramas. Dumas père, for instance, reveals in his
Mémoires that, totally ignorant of the history of his country, he began
to
découper, à raconter et à dialoguer des scènes historiques tirées
de l'Histoire des Ducs de Bourgogne. Elles étaient empruntées à
l'une des époques les plus dramatiques de la France, au règne de Charles VI; elles me donnaient la figure échevelée du roi fou, la poétique figure d'Odette, l'impérieuse et adultère figure d'Isabel de Bavière, l'insoucieuse figure de Louis d'Orléans, la terrible figure de Jean de Bourgogne, la pâle et poétique figure de Charles VII.110

Barante's work gave Dumas the advantage of "un théâtre connu où faire mouvoir mes personnages,"111 and resulted in his Charles VII chez ses grands vassaux (1831).

As one of the first historians of the Romantic school, Barante opposed the eighteenth-century philosophe historians (e.g., Voltaire's interpretative historiography). The value of history for historians of the Enlightenment, as Gossman observes, "had lain not so much in the historical record itself as in the comments and reflections of the historians."112 For Barante, Voltaire was often "entrainé par ses préjugés frivoles."113 In his long Preface he speaks directly to the gentleman of Ferney: "On est las de voir l'histoire... se prêter à toutes les preuves que chacun en veut tirer. Ce qu'on veut d'elle, ce sont des faits"--and the latter must speak for themselves. The Preface affords a precise definition of Barante's conception of the role of the historian. He should "peindre plus qu'analyser," and "abstraire des événements historiques une histoire que le vulgaire ne saurait pas y démêler." History should then be recounted in a continuous récit, employing no direct discourse or attempts to recreate the language of the period in question; all three of these precepts stand in direct rebuttal of Marchangy's emotional and subjective historiography: for Barante, "ce que je pense de ce qui se faisait il y a quatre cents ans importe peu."114 It would almost appear that he has Marchangy in mind
when he states:

L'historien . . . doit laisser à la vie chevaleresque son éclat et son charme; mais il faut aussi ne la point présenter d'une façon théâtrale et romanesque; il faut qu'elle se montre dans sa rudesse et sa cruauté pour qu'on puisse voir combien de calamités faisaient le fonds de ces moeurs épiques.₁₁⁵

In Barante's work the facts are indeed presented in a continuous, straightforward, and natural manner, leaving to the reader the task of imagining dialogues if he so desires; if Barante personally found in the fifteenth century an "activité encore toute barbare" as opposed to the next century when "l'esprit humain prit son essor, ou l'intelligence et les opinions commencèrent à s'emparer d'un si grand rôle dans les affaires du monde,"₁₁⁶ the reader must draw these conclusions. For Barante, remarks Stephen Bann, "the individual parts of the picture must have just enough distinctive colouring to show that they are not simply reflecting an overall pattern of light and shade, yet not so much colouring that they break up the unity of the composition."₁₁⁷

It has been commented that almost all of Barante's history of the Dukes of Burgundy is based on the works of four chroniclers (Froissart, Chastellain, Monstrelet, and Commines), which Barante merely arranged "en beau français,"₁₁⁸ but in his edition of 1839, J. Marchal notes a plethora of material extracted from such disparate sources as the anonymous Religieux de Saint-Denis, the Journal de Paris, Pasquier's Recherches, the Chronique de la Pucelle, a letter of Louis XI to the Pope, the Registres du Parlement, the Histoire de Bretagne, and works by Juvenal des Ursins and Alain Chartier—to cite but a few. Nevertheless, Barante did not work with documents; and Gossman even remarks that Barante did not achieve a success of long duration because the texts
which he translated from Latin to French were often livelier than his own. "Far from eliminating ideology from his history," he continues, "Barante's attempt to disguise his own role as writer made his history, if anything, more ideologically loaded."119

These considerations established, the question should be posed as to why Barante would choose to write a history of the Dukes of Burgundy—and here political considerations may have relevance. The fact that he is writing about the anachronistic feudal society created by the Dukes of Burgundy in their appanage to suit their own political ambitions might imply that Barante's choice of subject matter was not fortuitous, because he himself opposed Napoleonic centralization. This, of course, must remain a gratuitous speculation. In any event, Barante's influence as the first Romantic historian, who activated patriotic and historical interest in the Middle Ages, is without question: Bertrand's Gaspard de la Nuit probably would not have been written without it; Nerval used it for his Prince des Sots; and it provided the material for more historical novels and dramas than will ever be realized.

* * * *

As it has been demonstrated in this chapter, medievalism in the first decades of the nineteenth century, through a multiplicity of approaches, through exploration of new media, and through expression of a new message, prepared the terrain for the new generations of the Romantic movement. We have seen the effects of the fall of the Ancien Régime on the family of Chateaubriand, as well as its personal and political influence on him; his Middle Ages are an ideal world, closely
tied to a religiousity which is none the less sincere. In Madame de Staël, Schlegel, and Sismondi we find varying approaches, all with a cosmopolitan orientation: they are the theorists who will exhort the people—especially the "enfants du siècle"—to new literary heights. Barante and Raynouard are each innovators, one in history and the other in tragedy, and even Marchangy's poetic history contains an expression of subjectivity which is totally new. Never before have the Middle Ages been approached with as much sincerity.
Notes to Chapter II


3 Ibid., p. 11.


5 Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve, Etude littéraire sur Chateaubriand, in his Œuvres complètes, vol. 1 (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1861), p. 14. Only the first volume of the Essai sur les révolutions ever appeared, since the author's convictions had ostensibly undergone a radical change, not only with respect to faith, but also concerning the theory of perfectibility: in the Essai Chateaubriand conceptualized life in cyclic patterns and history as a closed world, an opinion he would later reverse.


8 Sainte-Beuve, Etude littéraire, p. 19.


10 According to Castries, p. 115, a letter from M. de Bédée, Chateaubriand's maternal uncle, which was recently found in the archives at Combourg attests to this fact. See also Moreau, "L'Auteur du Génie," pp. 93-94.

13Ibid., 1:400.
14Ibid.
15Ibid., 2:314–29, n. 46.
19Chateaubriand, Génie, ed. Reboul, 1:443, pt. 3, bk. 3.
20Ibid., 1:55, pt. 1, bk. 1.
22Chateaubriand, Oeuvres complètes, ed. Ladocat (1826), as reproduced in Reboul’s edition of the Génie, 1:44. Interestingly, to counter rumors that he was afraid to publish the Essai, Chateaubriand allowed it to be published for the first and only time in the 1826 edition.
24Chateaubriand, Introduction to the Essai, 1:270.
25A reference to Théophile Gautier, who said in his Histoire du romantisme (Paris: Charpentier, 1874), p. 4, that Chateaubriand "a restauré la cathédrale gothique."
26Barbéris, À la recherche d'une écriture, p. 519.
27Ibid., p. 141.
29Castries, p. 42.


36 Barbéris, *À la recherche d'une écriture*, p. 691. But the fact that Barbéris includes an anecdote related by Simone de Beauvoir in *La Force de l'Age* in the "Post-Face Aujourd'hui" of 1975 to his *À la recherche d'une écriture*, in which she describes how Sartre urinates on the tombeau of Chateaubriand at the Grand-Bé to demonstrate his contempt for the "false simplicity" of the "ridiculous pomposity" of the tombeau, is indicative of the orientation of this nonetheless brilliant study.


39 Ibid., 2:1359.


41 Ibid., 1:173-74, bk. 5, ch. 10.

42 Ibid., 1:251-52, bk. 7, ch. 11.


For a thorough discussion of this and other related events, see Pauline Pange, Comtesse de Broglie, Auguste-Guillaume Schlegel et Madame de Staël (Paris: Editions Albert, 1938), especially the chapter entitled "Chaumont-sur-Loire" (pp. 261-75). The Broglie archives furnished the material for this study, originally a doctoral dissertation, written by a fourth-generation descendent of Madame de Staël through her daughter Albertine.

Letter of 5 October 1810, which extended the grace period prior to her exile to eight days, quoted in the Preface (dated 1 October 1813) to the British edition of Madame de Staël's De l'Allemagne, reproduced in her De l'Allemagne (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1878), p. 3.


Reaction to Madame de Staël's De la littérature (1800) had already cast her in the role of "non-French." Pange (p. 192) notes that the critic Geoffroy defended classicism against attacks from "étrangers" in 1804.


Ibid., pt. 1, ch. 4, pp. 28-29.

Ibid., pt. 4, ch. 10, pp. 574-75.

Ibid., pt. 1, ch. 4, p. 29.


C. Lanson, Histoire illustrée, 2:211.


Ibid., 1:10.

Paul Van Tieghem, p. 129.

Thibaudet, p. 11.


63 Thibaudet, p. 49.


66 Ibid., p. 102.

67 Schlegel could very well be asserting a newly established emancipation from his "uxorious" relationship with Madame de Staël, who represented for him the "essence" of France.


70 *Mercure de France* 60 (August 1814):215ff., quoted in Henning, p. 44.

71 Henning, p. 289.

72 Ibid., p. 343.


74 Ibid., 2:294.

75 Ibid., 2:685.

76 Ibid., 1:6, and ch. 2.

77 Ibid., 1:40.

78 Ibid., 1:168.

79 Ibid., 1:56.
80 Ibid., 1:58.
81 Ibid., 1:127.
82 Ibid., 1:160.
83 Ibid., 1:159.
84 Ibid., 1:188.

85 Sismondi, 1813 edition of De la littérature du midi de l'Europe, 2:158, as quoted in Dackyns, p. 3. This quotation cannot be found in the 1826 edition (at the Library of Congress—the only copy in the U.S.), but since Sismondi advises in the "Avertissement" to this 3d ed. that he has corrected it to the best of his abilities, "soit pour les idées, soit pour le langage" (1:iii), it is obvious that he must have expurgated such tendencies to 

86 Sismondi (1:51) remarks of Sainte-Palaye's vast efforts with respect to Provençal poetry: "Rien n'y est terminé, rien n'y est mis en ordre; les pièces de plusieurs centaines de poètes s'y trouvent entremêlées dans chaque volume, et le travail de les classer et d'en faciliter l'intelligence est tout encore à faire."


88 Journal de l'Empire, 29 September 1813, quoted in Eggli and Martino, 1:70.


90 Ibid., pp. 48-49.
91 Quoted in Jacquot, Le Genre troubadour, p. 82.


93 Ibid., 1:26.
94 Ibid., 1:25.
95Ibid., 6:130.
96Ibid., 3:131.
97Ibid., 2:46.
98Ibid., 7:226.
100Marchangy, 4:361-62.
101Ibid., 2:325.
102Ibid., 4:354.
103Ibid., 1:149.
104Ibid., 2:340.
105Ibid., 7:314.
106Eggli and Martino, p. 45.
107Quoted in Bénichou, Le Sacre, p. 453.
111Ibid., 9:131.
114Ibid., 1:24, 28.
115Ibid., 1:25.
116Ibid., 1:28.

118 Thibaudet, p. 271.

CHAPTER III

THE ROMANTIC MIDDLE AGES

At this point an increasingly active multiplicity of elements has been at work which may be seen in chronological perspective following the events of the Terreur, with some overlap, contributing to an increased interest in the Middle Ages in France. These are a rise in patriotism and historiography, gaining impetus as a reaction to the "Roman republic" of the Directoire, in full revolt under the First Empire; an accompanying political manifestation in literature in which the Middle Ages served as an expedient mode of expression via contrast with the pseudoantiquity of that Empire; a neocatholicism which exalted the faith and moeurs of the Middle Ages in literature while a neoprotestantism inspired by the North proclaimed the virtues of an indigenous, chivalric, Romantic literature; a growing "cult of ruins"; and the refutation of any remaining pejorative connotations attached to the word "gothic."

Realism and objectivity with respect to the historical Middle Ages has now become desirable, whereas in literature the Middle Ages have gradually become a subjective phenomenon, tied to the present time and the individual. Reworked medieval texts are no longer perused, for they offer instruction rather than inspiration; but vestiges of the genre troubadour are still in evidence, for any
period is a composite of that which has preceded it and that which is still to come. The Middle ages, scorned by the philosophes, have been transformed for many into a Baudelairean "or," for others into a lode-stone to the repository of the mysterious. Prometheus is not yet unchained, but a Dionysian spirit increasingly prevails. The Middle Ages will inspire innovation; the anachronism will distort the source.

Hieroglyphics of the national past, forming an "épopée en pierre" long antecedent to Hugo's grandiose and poetic creation, were eagerly explored by the enfants du siècle, new Champollions, in the Musée des Monuments français. The museum, founded by the young archeologist and painter Alexandre Lenoir in 1796 and destroyed in 1815 by the government of the Restoration, contained works of art confiscated by the Revolutionary government and "toutes sortes de sculptures, fragments d'architecture, pierres tombales," forming what a modern critic has termed a "pêle-mêle de pierres"; 3 Michelet, however, who visited it often as a child with his mother, would remember the museum as a "sanctuaire de l'art national," generator of the "étincelle historique," to the point that, four decades later, he could still say:

Je me rappelle encore l'émotion, toujours la même et toujours vive, qui me faisait battre le coeur, quand, tout petit, j'entrais sous ces voûtes sombres et contemplais ces visages pâles, quand j'allais et cherchais, ardent, curieux, craintif, de salle en salle et d'âge en âge. 4

Post-Revolution pillaging and destruction of the biens de l'Eglise such as we have seen described in Chateaubriand's Génie du Christianisme elicited a horrified reaction on the part of many young Romantics. A
movement to preserve the historical past as reflected in Gothic architecture was fostered by the Académie des Inscriptions after 1809, while at the same time the code pénal (article 257) prescribed correctional penalties to those who defaced public monuments. 5

Nodier

The preservation of national monuments became a cause célèbre championed by none less than the author and mentor of many young Romantics, Charles Nodier (1780-1844). His predilection for the fantastic, coupled with a nostalgia for the charm and primitivism of the national past, made Nodier a natural partisan of the Middle Ages. Prior to 1816, he had demonstrated little enthusiasm in this area; but the knowledge which he gained from reading Benoîton de Châteauneuf's Essai sur la poésie et les poètes français aux XIIe, XIIIe et XIVe siècles (1813) and Roquefort-Flaméricourt's prize-winning essay on the same subject (1815) was particularly instrumental in his "conversion." 6 Philologically oriented, Nodier found in Raynouard a kindred spirit, and avidly read the latter's Choix des poésies originales des Troubadours (in total six volumes, 1816-1821), Recherches sur l'ancienneté de la langue romane (1816), and the Nostredame-inspired Troubadours et des cours d'amour (1817). Raynouard stimulated Nodier's budding interests as an antiquarian, furnishing through his works what one critic has called a "véritable encyclopédie de nos vieux monuments littéraires, puisqu'il a composé ou aura bientôt achevé leur histoire, leur dictionnaire, leur grammaire, et le recueil de leurs auteurs." 7 Nodier even went as far as to agree with Raynouard's erroneous
hypothesis that the origin of the French language could be found in that of the Troubadours.

We have seen that Nodier waxed enthusiastic over Marchaugy's *Gaule poétique*. When volumes five through eight appeared in 1817, Nodier extolled the author's "idée heureuse... que de porter le flambeau de l'imagination dans les ténèbres de nos antiquités historiques, d'interroger les vieux monumens de la monarchie, ... d'évoquer au sein de ses immenses ruines les grands souvenirs et les grandes renommées de la patrie." As Max Milner has observed, "ceux qui répudient le rationalisme nivelleur du XVIIIᵉ siècle s'efforcent de montrer que les époques les plus décriées par les philosphares avaient leur charme, leur art de vivre, leur système de valeurs," a position to which Nodier certainly adhered. A new historical consciousness had developed.

In 1817, also the year of his first article on Walter Scott, whose historical novels actualized the above ambition, Nodier's devotion to the "cult of ruins" was actively seeking a vehicle of new expression:

Comment peindre en effet [he queried] ces siècles solennels dont la redoutable obscurité enveloppe tout le berceau de la monarchie, ces superstitions étranges et merveilleuses, ces institutions gothiques si fières, si colossales, qui imposent encore par leur majesté quoique dépouillées de toutes les illusions qui les entouraient alors? Comment exprimer la grandiosité ingénue des moeurs chevaleresques sans recourir à des moyens, à des instruments inconnus ou dédaignés de l'écrivain perfectionné des siècles classiques?

Increasingly, "medieval" became synonymous with "national" for Nodier, and his activities on this behalf intensified. In 1820 he
published a pastiche of Commines and a series of three articles on medieval subjects which appeared in 1822 in *La Foudre*¹¹. By 1820, Nodier had discovered and actualized the vehicle: with the collaboration of J. Taylor and Alphonse Cailleux, he published the first of three volumes entitled *Voyages pittoresques et romantiques dans l'ancienne France*, a vast undertaking befitting the above quotation, rich with lithographic reproductions by such talented artists as Fragonard and Antenor Joly. The first of these large (34" x 24" x 4") volumes, *L'Ancienne Normandie*, established Nodier as the leader of the opposition to the bande noire or vandals who destroyed Christian and medieval monuments, three years before Hugo published his ode "La Bande noire," and more than ten years before Hugo's manifesto against the démolisseurs published in the *Revue des Deux-Mondes*.

Nodier proposed, in principle, to eliminate most paysages from consideration in the *Voyages pittoresques*, due to their transitory state. His conception of "historical travels" is dependent on the "gloire de l'ANCIENNE FRANCE," on impressions and souvenirs which could become "des objets d'émotions nouvelles aux lecteurs sensibles" rather than on history faithfully recounted in the manner of historiographers:

> Ce n'est pas en savants que nous parcourrons la France, mais en voyageurs curieux des aspects intéressants et avides de nobles souvenirs. Dirai-je quel penchant plus facile à sentir qu'à définir, circonscrit ce voyage dans les ruines de l'Ancienne France. Quelque disposition mélancolique dans les pensées, quelque prédilection involontaire pour les moeurs poétiques et les arts de nos aîneux, le sentiment de je ne sais quelle communauté de décadence et d'infortune entre ces vieux édifices et la génération qui s'achève; ce besoin peut-être assez général d'ailleurs à
tous les hommes, de jouir de l'aspect fugitif d'un tableau que le temps va effacer.\textsuperscript{12}

Volume three, on his native Franche-Comté (1825), is perhaps of even more importance in establishing Nodier's goals as an antiquarian: here he speaks also for his collaborators when he proudly affirms that,

premiers investigateurs des ruines de la patrie, à une époque où ces ruines finissaient de tomber pour ne se relever jamais, nous avons eu le bonheur de rappeler à notre siècle que les siècles qui l'avoient précédé avoient eu leurs arts et leur génie.\textsuperscript{13}

Nodier states that it was necessary to express clearly "cette théorie des arts du moyen âge que l'âge brillant de la RENAISSANCE avoit fait oublier, et que ne paroissoit que trop exposée à partager l'injuste mépris dont nous accablons en France tous les souvenirs de la même époque, à défaut de la connoître et de la définir."\textsuperscript{14} In describing the ruins of Normandy, he claims, he has demonstrated that "les monuments auxquels nous imposons avec tant de dédain le nom de gothique, et dont nous rapportons la construction aux siècles de barbarie, n'étoient ni sauvages ni si barbares," and even surpass the monuments of ancient Greece by their religious solemnity and "mystérieuses harmonies."\textsuperscript{15} He is happy to have inspired the "new career of historian" to a "génération ingénieuse" which will realize his goals, whose thoughts are already turning towards "les vieux souvenirs de la vieille patrie" and the old monuments whose charm has impressed him with their newness. The organization of the three volumes is commendable: for each lithograph (of ruins, grottos, valleys,
chapels, fountains, old inns, convents, and the like), there is an accompanying description by Nodier.

The following year Nodier himself was able to make a **voyage pittoresque** to Scotland with Taylor, Cailleux and another friend, Isabey. In an article in the *Quotidienne* a few years later, he defined his motivation as an antiquarian quite precisely: "Nous nous sommes avisé [sic] tout à coup que nous n'étions pas tombés comme les pierres de Pyrrha sur un sol sans souvenirs, que nous avions des âges, des monuments, une religion et chose merveilleuse, il y avait dans tout cela de la grandeur, de l'héroïsme, de la poésie."\(^{16}\)

But Nodier's role as an opponent of the **bande noire** never precluded his goal of rehabilitating the national literature of the Middle Ages. By 1823, at the height of his appreciation for the novels of Walter Scott, he had become a strong partisan of the historical novel in France, praising Scott's influence and lexical fidelity to the Middle Ages and lamenting that "l'époque de ce genre d'inspiration ne paraît pas encore être arrivée en France."\(^{17}\) A year later, commenting on the historical novel *Blanche d'Evreux* in the *Quotidienne*, he remarked that

> le charme de ces souvenirs nationaux se fait sentir si puissamment aujourd'hui dans toutes les productions de l'esprit que le lecteur le plus frivole en a contracté l'habitude et le besoin. Ce n'est pas la vogue passagère d'une mode locale, c'est l'instinct universel d'une nécessité morale et littéraire.\(^{18}\)

The opening of Nodier's salon at the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal in 1824 provided him with the opportunity to promulgate his ideas about the Middle Ages to the next generation of writers, whom he encouraged to use medieval themes in their work.
Influences on Nodier's strong support of the national past in its various forms have been outlined by Jean Larat as stemming from a distaste for the assumed rationalism of the Enlightenment, his sensitivity with regard to the romanesque, inspiration which he derived from Walter Scott and the English inclination for exotisme, his penchant for philology, and his interest in the preservation of national monuments, qualities which have led P.-G. Castex to see in him the fundamental opposition of "romantique par le tempérament, classique par le goût." To the above could be added the astute observation of a recent critic who points to Nodier's experience in bringing about a national consciousness in today's Yugoslavia a hundred years before it was recognized as a geographical fact. In 1812, thanks to his future brother-in-law who was at that time the secretary-general of intendance in Illyria, Nodier obtained the post of librarian and the directorship of the Télégraphe illyrien in the city of Laybach (now Ljubljana), a position he was to hold only nine months. To this may be added the fact that Nodier had such an effect on Croatian nationalism that he indirectly inspired Ivan Mažuranić, the leader of the Croatian Romantic movement, to write The Death of Smail-aga Cengić (1846), a medieval epic about the fight with the Turks.

"La chevalerie, les châteaux en ruine, les chroniqueurs, les vieux livres, les vocables désuets, les vieilles légendes, voilà ce qu'il défendra ou se plaira à orner des grâces de son style, de 1830 jusqu'à la fin de sa vie." What did Nodier think of chivalry? Enough that in 1826 he brought out a new edition of Sainte-Palaye's Mémoires sur l'ancienne chevalerie, to which he added an introduction
and historical notes. The seventeen-page introduction is of primordial importance in determining Nodier's conception of chivalry, which was for him the key to the Middle Ages. "Il n'est aucune institution qui ne doive son origine à des besoins sociaux," Nodier explains; thus "la chevalerie explique le moyen âge; elle en est à la fois l'expression et l'image, comme elle est le résultat de la féodalité." He traces the origins of chivalry to the tenth century, when

quelques nobles pauvres unis par la nécessité d'une légitime défense, épouvantés des excès que devait entraîner la multiplicité des pouvoirs souverains, prennent en pitié les misères et les larmes du peuple.22

The naïve and credulous joy of the people, who equated their liberators with the power of divinity, created an immense renown for the chevaliers according to Nodier; but the Crusades and emancipation of the communes which marked the apogee of the feudal government were the two events which contributed the most to destroy it. Nodier concurs with Sainte-Palaye that royalty was the first to see what it could gain from an armed association which would maintain a balance between the crown and those vassals in power; from this moment on, chevaliers were created by kings, those who possessed large fiefs did likewise in imitation of royalty, and the title became hereditary. But he adds that Sainte-Palaye arrived at these conclusions from "l'ensemble de son travail et de ses recherches" rather than from his own convictions—as if he felt it expedient to justify the Academician.23

Notwithstanding, and despite his friendship with many young royalists, this does not testify to such a commitment on the part of Nodier. Although the young Romantics who gathered at the Bibliothèque
de l'Arsenal tended to be monarchists, Nodier was at this time very much occupied with works of his own composition, with—in his words—"ce monde des esprits où il n'appartient qu'au poète de pénétrer"; his essay "Du Fantastique en littérature" (published in 1830, but certainly discussed at the Arsenal long before), as has now been established, predates the famous manifesto of the Romantic school contained in the Preface to Hugo's *Cromwell* (1827) and contains many striking parallels. It should also be noted as supporting evidence for this conclusion that Nodier declined to become involved in the controversy between factions in the Romantic movement. His satirical poem "Adieux aux romantiques," published in the *Muse française* in 1824, certainly affords proof:

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Je vous le dis d'un coeur contrit,
Adieu, messieurs les romantiques!

Pourquoi, poètes infidèles,
Pourquoi ces coupables accents
Qui séduisent l'âme et le sens?
Vous aviez de si bons modèles
Pour faire des vers innocents!
Règlez votre sage délière,
Prenez l'essor à pas comptés,
Et puisqu'il vous faut une lyre,
Chantez les airs qu'on a chantés. 26
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What Nodier is interested in accomplishing in his introduction to Sainte-Palaye's *Mémoires*, and what is far more suited to his probing intellect, is an examination of the fate of the Middle Ages throughout the centuries which followed. In the sixteenth century the search for origins was pushed to extravagance, he claims, but there was neither a sureness in taste nor a true discernment in literature. For the seventeenth century, the "civilisation énergique du moyen âge
n'existoit plus." He concluded that the total ruin of the feudal government caused what was left of l'ancienne chevalerie in the moeurs of the court and nobility to disappear; nobility thereafter only used the titles for public consideration and honor; from that moment on, the institution of chivalric nobility only survived in books.27

Finally, in a sic et non demonstration, Nodier presents three hypotheses as to the origins of chivalry: 1) that chivalry, like feudalism, is intimately tied to the conquest of Gaul, and thus derives from the spirit and moeurs of the North (he mentions that the Franks fought on foot in the fourth century until the wars with the Romans [sic]; 2) that chivalry was born under the reign of Charlemagne, since some persons believe that all of the traditions of the Middle Ages seem to attest to this (Nodier cannot subscribe to this view, either); and 3) that the Scandinavians introduced chivalry to the French, since the Edda (two collections of legendary and mythological traditions) and Odin's divine speech contain a plethora of precepts followed by the chevaliers. To the last Nodier adds that "si les Scandinaves ne furent pas les fondateurs de la Chevalerie, ils peuvent être comptés parmi les causes directes de son établissement," since they usually adopted the customs established prior to their ravages or in effect at that time. One thing cannot be denied, he concludes: la chevalerie est née sur le sol de la France." The study of the history of chivalry found no appreciation a half a century ago, he wrote, but in the measure that civilization has exceeded all of its limits, the customs of our forefathers seem less barbarous, and the naïveté of expression and simplicity of moeurs during the Middle
Ages recall the "rêves charmants" of man's inexperience and credulity.28

These "rêves charmants" of medieval times represent for Nodier in "Du Fantastique en littérature" the power of imagination of the Middle Ages, the merveilleux in poetry. Conversely, the characters "accoutrés" by the Count of Tressan "ressemblent à peu près à leur type héroïque et naïf, comme la lanterne du clown dans le Songe d'une nuit d'été ressemble au clair de la lune."29

Nodier's interest in the Middle Ages, whether literary, historical, as an antiquarian or mentor, was then sincere and authentic. Disassociating himself from those who equated ruins and the past with faith, Nodier actively participated in the culte des ruines in order to stress historical and nationalistic aspects of the heritage of France. His sensitivity forced him to reject a literary distortion of the past as well as what he perceived as the limited, rationalistic approach to the Middle Ages of the eighteenth century philosophes: for the latter he advocated the substitution of a dynamic, intuitive stimulus applicable to his own time, inspired by the medieval imagination.

Hugo

"Victor Hugo, lisant les oeuvres de Charles Nodier avant même de le connaître, commence déjà à s'en inspirer," Charles Dédéyan has observed.30 Attracted by the marked propensity for the macabre, the fantastic, the onirique and the insolite in Nodier's work, Hugo was soon his staunch disciple, friend, and companion on antiquarian
travels. Hugo's personal contact with Nodier began with the latter's article on *Han d'Islande* in *La Quotidienne* of 12 March 1823 and Nodier's participation in the *Muse française*, the literary review of short duration founded that same year in the wake of the defunct Conservateur littéraire by Emile Deschamps, the Hugo brothers, Vigny, Guiraud and Soumet, a review which promulgated an aristocratic, catholic, royalist romanticism; it was given further impetus in the gatherings at the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, where Nodier has assumed the direction in 1824. A leading Nodier critic maintains that the salon at the Arsenal was in no way a Cénacle, for "Nodier y laissa tout loisir aux jeunes enthousiastes de déclamer leurs plus récents poèmes et de se congratuler de la façon la plus touchante." Nodier and the "brave chevalier armé," as he called his young companion, traveled together to Reims in May 1825 for the coronation of Charles X, to which Hugo was an invited official guest, during which time Hugo's observations to his young wife that

> la cathédrale . . . est admirable comme monument d'architecture gothique. Les portails, la rosace, les tours ont un effet particulier. . . . On n'a point commis la faute faite à Saint-Denis, les ornements sont gothiques comme la cathédrale, et tout . . . est d'assez bon goût. . . .

attest to a pronounced preoccupation with Gothic art. Nodier, Mme Nodier and their daughter Marie even traveled to the Alps with Hugo, his wife and tiny Léopoldine in August 1825.

Hugo's *Odes et Ballades*, 1824 and 1826, represent the first literary attempt within the new Romantic school to employ medieval themes, but do not evidence the creative genius of which Chateaubriand's
"enfant sublime" would shortly afford proof. Pierre Albouy is certainly correct in his evaluation that the "Odes royalistes, 'vendéennes,' apparaissent ... comme la partie la plus vieillie de son oeuvre"—especially where his medievalism is concerned, it should be added—for none of the brilliant antitheses of the grotesque and the sublime are yet discernible. While subscribing to J.-B. Barrère's statement with regard to the Odes and Ballades of 1826 that "aucune de ces compositions n'apportait, soit dans l'inspiration, soit dans la technique poétique, un renouvellement quelconque," it should be noted that the metric onomatopoeia achieved in later poems of medieval setting such as the ballad "Le Pas d'armes du roi Jean" (published in the definitive edition of 1823), with its ternary syllabic structure in eight-line stanzas, conveys the effect that the chevalier is on horseback:

Ça, qu'on seile
Ecuyer
Mon fidèle
Destrier.
Mon coeur ploie
Sous la joie,
Quand je broie
L'étrier.

Par saint-Gille
Viens-nous-en,
Mon agile
Alezan;
Viens, écoute
Par la route,
Voir la joute
Du roi Jean.

It has been pointed out that the Paris described in this ballad is that of François Ier, since Hugo mentions such sixteenth century figures as Gaspard de Saulx-Tavane and Guy Chabat: this "tendency to
couple the sixteenth century with the Middle Ages is a curious aspect of the Romantic desire to learn about the past which will become apparent in the works of many other Romantics.

Meter is equally predominant over meaning in the ballad of medieval setting "La Chasse du burgrave" (1828), where the uneven couplets in 8-1-8-1 produce an analogous uneasiness in the reader, deriving from suspense created in the octosyllabic lines; the anticipation is suddenly shattered by each monosyllabic word in the line which follows, itself a repetition of the last phonetic syllable of the preceding word:

"Daigne protéger notre chasse,
"Chasse
"De monseigneur saint-Godefroi,
"Roi!

En chasse!--Le maître en personne
Sonne.
Fuyez! voici les paladins,
Daïms.

Il n'est pour vous comte d'empire
Pire
Que le vieux burgrave Alexis
Six!

Le cerf, s'échappant de plus belle,
Bête;
Un bois à sa course est ouvert,
Vert.

Il entend venir sur ses traces
Races
De chiens dont vous seriez jaloux,
Loups; . . .

When the lexicon employed by Hugo in these poems is examined, it becomes apparent that any medievalism in these ballads derives from what Paul Zumthor has called a double series of "mots décoratifs" and
"mots typiques"; for example, "ecuyer," "destrier," "burgrave," "paladins," "joute." The Ballades, then, do not actualize their epigraph: "Renouvelons aussi / Toute vieille pensée" (DU BELLAY).

Without entering into a discussion of each ode containing a medieval motif, which would lend an imbalance to this study, let us comment on several which will illustrate the overall characteristic of this collection within the confines of our subject. "La Bande noire" (1823), with as epigraph a quotation by Nodier, is an impassioned plea with obvious political overtones (a feature found even in the non-political poems) to save the "débris glorieux," the "Eglises où priaient nos mères,/ Tours où combattaient nos âieux," the "Maisons de Dieu! manoirs des rois" and the antique honor of France:

"O français! [sic] respectons ces restes!
Le ciel bénit les fils pieux
Qui gardent, dans les jours funestes,
L'héritage de leurs âieux,
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!"

The ode "Aux ruines de Montfort-l'Amaury" (1825) was inspired by Hugo's visit of September of that year, but does not contain the militant tone of "La Bande noire." A melancholic nostalgia for the past, suggestions of the genre troubadour, a detachment from the present lend an air of credibility to the poem, as seen in the lines:

Là quelquefois j'entends le luth doux et sévère
D'un ami qui sait rendre aux vieux temps un trouvère.
Nous parlons des héros, du ciel, des chevaliers,
De ces âmes en deuil dans le monde orphelines;
Et le vent qui se brise à l'angle des ruines
Gémît dans les hauts peupliers!"
In short, Hugo's preface to the 1826 edition of the *Ballades*, which expresses his intention to "donner quelque idée de ce que pouvaient être les poèmes des premiers troubadours du moyen-âge," is not supported by the poetry—all too conventional—which follows. Indeed, Hugo's knowledge of troubadour poetry (if he had any at all) was derived from secondary sources, unlike the later integration of several medieval texts into his *Légende des siècles* (1859) which, according to Jacques Truchet and others, Hugo seems to have read in the original—albeit in extract form—as published by Achille Jубиналь. The 1824 preface to the *Odes* had proclaimed: "Il faut en convenir, un mouvement vaste et profond travaille intérieurement la littérature de ce siècle"; but Hugo must have realized that the *genre* troubadour, too closely tied to political events as a vehicle for pro-monarchy expression, was not suitable for the revolutionary literary ideas which he was to expound in the Préface to *Cromwell* (1827). Thus, in the words of J.-B. Barrère, "le temps des tâtonnements paraît terminé à la fin de 1826."

The Préface is an important attestation to the extent to which the Middle Ages had become integrated into Hugo's poetic theories. It is the grotesque, he contends, "qui sème à pleines mains dans l'air, dans l'eau, dans la terre, dans le feu, ces myriades d'êtres intermédiaires que nous retrouvons tout vivants dans les traditions populaires du moyen âge." Drawing on Madame de Staël's distinctions of "classic" and "romantic," perceiving Christianity as the most abundant source of poetic inspiration, the Préface represents the germination of several essential arguments to which both *De
l’Allemagne and the Génie du Christianisme had contributed: a catholicism, a Pascalian ange/bête dichotomy in which the grotesque is dominant ("Le beau n’a qu’un type, le laid en a mille"). For Hugo the grotesque, absent from Antiquity, reached its apogee in the Middle Ages, its best expression in Gothic architecture. To this extent the Préface is an expression of his medievalism. As to its influence, can we not see it in Théophile Gautier’s observation that "La Préface de Cromwell rayonnait à nos yeux comme les Tables de la Loi sur le Sinaï, et ses arguments nous semblaient sans réplique."48

During the period 1827-1829 preceding Notre-Dame de Paris, significant changes occurred which affected Hugo’s attitude towards the Middle Ages. Sainte-Beuve was now his friend, his relationship with Nodier had cooled since the publication of the Préface, wherein Nodier recognized a great many of his own ideas49 and was shocked at the audacity of others. Nodier’s attack on "nos orientalistes," without naming Hugo’s Orientales (1829), in which he asked "Où est l’ordonnance qui permit l’importation de la pensée et qui affranchit l’imagination des prohibitions de la douane,"50 earned Nodier a "Et vous aussi, Charles! . . . ce que vous avez voulu rompre est rompu. . . ." from the pen of Hugo.51

By this date a Cénacle had formed whose meetings centered around Hugo, "nouveau Ronsard soutenu par son Du Bellay,"52 in his new apartment on the rue Notre-Dame-des-Champs. In late 1828 Hugo had already envisioned Notre-Dame de Paris and had already chosen a title and an editor, although the work--interrupted by the July Revolution and the birth of his youngest daughter--was not to be
completed until early 1831. Hugo's affinity for the grotesque and the
flamboyant Gothic had become more and more intensified; the preface to
the original edition of the *Orientales* affords the proof in a magnifi-
cent, minute description of an old Spanish town à vol d'oiseau as to
how well he had integrated Gothic architecture into his poetic vision:

au centre, la grande cathédrale gothique avec ses hautes
flèches tailladées en scies, sa large tour du bourdon, ses
cinq portails brodés de bas-reliefs, sa frise à jour comme
une colerette, ses solides arcs-boutants si frêles à
l'œil; et puis, ses cavités profondes, sa forêt de piliers
à chapiteaux bizarres, ses chapelles ardentes, ses
myriades de saints et de châsses, ses colonnettes en
gerbes, ses rosaces, ses ogives, ses lancettes qui se
touchent à l'abside et en font comme une cage de vitraux,
son maître-autel aux mille cierges; merveilleux édifice,
imposant par sa masse, curieux par ses détails, beau à
deux lieues et beau à deux pas.  

Conjointly, the irony with which he treats the devotees of the trouba-
dour style in the preface to the third edition of his *Dernier Jour
d'un condamné* (1829) attests to a considerable evolution in his atti-
tude towards the Middle Ages: here a poet who has just read some
verses in the troubadour tradition is criticized for his Romantic
affinities and for having employed the word *gothique* instead of
*antique*, to which he replies that he is a Romantic, "mais modéré."  

*Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831) reflects a grandiose vision of the
decaying Middle Ages, resplendent with local color, the grand exterior
spectacle of fifteenth-century Paris as the center of life and metaphor
for man himself, supported as with flying buttresses by the inner
psychological spectacle of the unfolding drama. Hugo had conceived of
the cathedral, a "vaste symphonie en pierre" of which "le temps est
l'architecte, le peuple le maçon," as a personal epic indigenous to
the people in an ideal, romantic medieval world structure as we have seen in Chateaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme* and *Martyrs*. The cathedral is situated "presque en marge du temps," the eternal within the temporal, "comme type absolu de l'art-roi dont le poète s'est institué le découvreur."  

From a period of glamour when all was flourishing, Fritz Peter Kirsch has brilliantly observed, the path of Notre-Dame leads into prosaic periods which negate and deform the petrified poetry of the past, without destroying its charm; the knowledge of the world of symbols which characterized the creative periods of the Middle Ages is not yet entirely lost, but is only the concern of the initiated, since the naïve faith of the olden times has given way to a restless, superficial worldliness, the godless egotism whose incarnation is Louis XI.  

The latter defends the cathedral only as a symbol of his power, and does not hesitate to desecrate it to his own advantage by the violation of the right of asylum.

The novel is the work of a visionary who has worked into the multiplicity of its plots his broad, historical perspective as an omniscient narrator. This is particularly striking in the contiguous chapters of the third book, "Notre-Dame" and "Paris à vol d'oiseau," and in the famous second chapter of the fifth book, "Ceci tuera cela," wherein the fifteenth century is seen as a transitional period between two worlds, of "parole construite" and "parole écrite," the "bible de pierre et la bible de papier."

Hugo's fascination with sinister aspects of the Middle Ages is nowhere more apparent than here: satanism, alchemy, superstition,
the merveilleux, mystérieux and grotesque occur and reoccur in the collective and individual form of the characters, in the symbolism of "l'art merveilleux" found in the "monstrueuse cathédrale," in the ange/bête antitheses with which Hugo peoples his action. The characters are archetypes: Quasimodo incarnates the Devil, the bohémienne is an angel, Claude Frollo is Superstition; but the hunchback is also pure, la Esmeralda is thought to be a witch, and the archdeacon, "prêtre infernal," represents both medieval learning at its zenith and carnal sensuality at its basest level.

What inspired Hugo to write a novel in which a Gothic cathedral is the eponymic hero? Nodier's influence during Hugo's formative years certainly cannot be excluded; a note added to the 1832 edition of Notre-Dame reiterates Hugo's intention to denounce the "profanations" and "impiétés," avowing that "c'est une chose affligeante de voir en quelles mains l'architecture du moyen âge est tombée et de quelle façon les gâcheurs de plâtre d'à présent traitent la ruine de ce grand art." But Hugo's use of the Middle Ages in Notre-Dame is not without application to his own time. In a discussion of the manner in which Hugo's historical and political consciousness evolves, Patricia Ward confirms that "in 1829 and 1830 the Middle Ages were a metaphor for Hugo's own desire to overcome the disharmony he sensed in French society," adding later that "Hugo envisions a deterioration of the medieval order on the social level" of his own time. These statements are quite applicable to Notre-Dame. However, it is difficult to subscribe to her view that Don Carlos' celebrated soliloquy
before the tomb of Charlemagne in Hernani (1830) in which he cries "Roi! regardez en bas! / --Ah! le peuple!--océan!--onge sans cesse émue" (act IV, scene 2) represents a "metaphor for the national unity Hugo would like to see in France."58 The royalist of the first Odes is now a dedicated liberal, partisan before the fact of the political events to follow in but a few months. The battle over Hernani took place on February 25, 1830; the greatest national disunity was yet to come.

In spite of the fact that it is centered in early sixteenth century Spain, Hernani presents a panorama of the feudal Middle Ages; but the setting is superseded by the realization of Hugo's poetic theories as advanced in the Preface to Cromwell as well as the preface to Hernani itself, inasmuch as the latter extols liberalism in literature, liberty within art, liberty within society, and proclaims: "au peuple nouveau, art nouveau." Paul Berret tells us that "le moyen âge avait, depuis 1829, cessé d'être considéré par Victor Hugo comme une matière poétique,"59 which statement may be extended to the dramatic verses of Hernani; its medievalism is integrated into—but not an integral part of—the plot. Conversely, in Notre-Dame the cathedral and the Middle Ages are inseparable elements of a temporal and spatial vision. Hugo's last attempt to balance lyricism and historical realism, in the content of Cromwell, has been obliterated in Hernani, where he "opte ... pour le lyrisme et dit adieu à l'histoire."60

The Middle Ages do not figure prominently in Hugo's work again until his trips along the Rhine in 1839 and 1840, which resulted
in the collection of twenty-five letters subsequently edited and published (with names removed) as Le Rhin (1842). One of Hugo's goals in Le Rhin was to treat the historical development of four periods which he outlined in letter fourteen: first, an "époque anté-diluvienne"; next, antiquity under Julius Caesar; thirdly, the "époque merveilleuse où surgit Charlemagne"; and lastly, the period encompassing the quarrels between France and Germany which were dominated by Napoleon. Charlemagne, deceased in 814, and Bonaparte, "mort" in 1814, already equated in the ode "À la colonne de la place Vendôme" (1827), are seen as the giants around which a thousand years of history are unfurled, incorporating legendary as well as factual figures of history. "De là, une nouvelle conception dramatique: plus de grotesque, plus d'étude psychologique, mais des héros symboliques et épiques" who are nevertheless "très proches de nous," Charles Dédéyan has concluded.61

Le Rhin cristalized in Hugo a fascination with the burgraves, the mighty titans who militarily controlled entire cities in Germany during the Middle Ages, and with the "Jupiter" against whom they fought, Frederick of Hohenstaufen—emperor of Germany from 1152 to 1190, popularly known as Barbarossa ("red beard")—who becomes for Hugo a legendary figure of the thirteenth century in his drama Les Burgraves (written during autumn 1842, and performed 7 March 1843), having miraculously escaped his actual death by drowning in 1190. It is, in Zumthor's words, a "monde d'avant la lumière, d'avant l'ogive. D'avant Hugo. Un autre monde, et pourtant notre source lointaine."62
In the preface to the *Burgraves*, Hugo comments that "il y a aujourd'hui en Europe un lieu qui, toute proportion gardée, est pour nous, au point de vue poétique, ce qu'était la Thessalie pour Eschyle, c'est-à-dire un champ de bataille mémorable et prodigieux."

This is the Rhine valley, where

"tout est foudroyé, désolé, arraché, détruit; tout porte l'empreinte d'une guerre profonde, acharnée, implacable. Pas un rocher qui ne soit une forteresse, pas une forteresse qui ne soit une ruine; l'extermination a passé par là; mais cette extermination est tellement grande, qu'on sent que le combat a dû être colossal. Là, en effet, il y a six siècles, d'autres titans ont lutté contre un autre Jupiter. Ces titans, ce sont les burgraves; ce Jupiter, c'est l'empereur d'Allemagne."

Hugo's recollection of the Rhine trips, of the "lieux peuplés de souvenirs" where he had lived "beaucoup plus parmi les pierres du temps passé que parmi les hommes du temps présent," where each day he explored "quelque ancien édifice démonté" and "déchiffrait une inscription romane ou mesurait l'écartement d'une ogive" are his inspiration for *Les Burgraves*. "Il y a eu jadis les géants, il y a aujourd'hui des fantômes." His stated objective will be to "reconstruire par la pensée, dans toute son ampleur et dans toute sa puissance un de ces châteaux où les burgraves, égaux aux princes, vivaient d'une vie presque royale."

The action, set in the burg of Heppenheff, revolves around four generations within a family, the oldest being the aptly-named centenarian Job, "l'excommunié" and "le Maudit" who must expiate the crime of fratricide. As his *Doppelgänger* Fosco, recalling the monk Medardus of E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Die Elixire des Teufels* (1816), he believes he has killed his brother Donato in a crime of passion over
the Corsican girl Ginevra who was subsequently sold by him into slavery for her rebuke. But Donato, whose name means "he who is given [to his parents] by God"—certainly not a fortuitous choice of alter ego for Barbarossa—will return in his real identity as the Emperor, the "providence" who will faire briser la fatalité represented by Claude Frollo's feminine counterpart Guanhumara (the Doppelgänger of Ginevra).

In featuring Barbarossa as the epic hero of this drama, although the Emperor is known to have drowned in the river Selef during the Third Crusade, Hugo demonstrates a knowledge of medieval German legend which holds that the Emperor awaits the awakening of a unified, powerful Germany in the caverns of Mount Kyffhäuser in Saxony (today's East Germany), where he sits totally immobile on a marble table through which his red beard has grown, surrounded by his knights, in order to return and save his country. The Kyffhäuser legend became very well known around 1840 when the poet Emmanuel von Geibel incorporated it in his Friedrich Rotbart; Hugo, who was travelling in Germany at this time, very likely heard of it there.

Hugo's Barbarossa condemns the decadence of the medieval world in a crushing invective against the burgraves:

Sans doute vous croyez
Etre des chevaliers! Vous vous dites:—nous sommes
Les fils des grands barons et des grands gentilshommes.
Nous les continuons.—Vous les continuez?

Vous, comme des chacals et comme des orfraies,
Cachés dans les taillis et dans les oseraies,
Vils, muets, accroupis, un poignard à la main,
Dans quelque mare immonde au bord du grand chemin,
D'un chien qui peut passer redoutant les morsures,
Vous épiez le soir, près des routes peu sûres,
Barbarossa, having expiated his own sins, frees the slaves and substitutes for them the burgraves; having pardoned Fosco/Job, he leaves him to rule over the Rhine.

Fosco represents the evil side of an ange/bête duality whose redeeming half is Job, a totality which ultimately rules over the greater forces of evil. Job's hundred years can be equated with the two-hundred year legendary age of Charlemagne. But Fosco's name also contains a modern application: that of Ugo Foscolo (1778-1827), the Italian poetic counterpart of André Chénier, harbinger of Hugo himself, who dreamed of a united, free Italy just as Hugo aspired to a united, powerful, free France. The exact phonetic duplication seen in Ugo/Hugo must have struck the latter, who certainly had to have seen it as compatible with his own aims and ideas.

The political implications of the Burgraves are already apparent in the preface, evidencing once more the thematic use of the Middle Ages in a contemporary application. Just as there existed in the time of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides a Greek nationality, Hugo advises, "il y a aujourd'hui une nationalité européenne." The poet who tells the story of the burgraves "fait aujourd'hui pour l'Europe une œuvre également nationale, dans le même sens et avec la même signification," for "toutes les nations policiées appartiennent au même centre et sont indissolublement liées entre elles par une"
secrète et profonde unité."  Job and Barbarossa provide "la grande leçon d'une hégémonie morale et spirituelle franco-allemande, pour la paix, et la reconciliation de l'Europe" which Hugo wants to preach in the historical context of the quarrel of the Rhine. "Oeuvre émissaire, comme le bouc."  

It is in fact possible to see Chrétien de Troyes' Arthurian romance Lancelot symbolically represented in the characters of the Burgraves, where King Arthur's kingdom of Logres has become Barbarossa's Germanic realm. Just as King Arthur does not die in La Mort Artu, but mysteriously disappears while praying in a chapel after the collapse of his ideal world, Hugo's Barbarossa has also inexplicably vanished and is presumed drowned; King Arthur is carried away to Avalon by his sister, Morgan the Fay, while according to the legend surrounding Barbarossa he awaits in the caverns of the Kyffhäuser.

Barbarossa's alter ego Donato can be identified as Lancelot du Lac, one of the knights of the Round Table, who redeems himself through a series of tests and variants before he is considered worthy of the love of Queen Guinevere. Fosco, whom we have established as Ugo Foscolo, becomes Gawain, the idealistic knight eternally on quest who somehow went astray, the chevalier who never achieves his goals nor finds the Queen (alias unity) in his quest. Since Foscolo died in 1827, thirty-two years before Italy was basically unified (apart from Rome), he never saw the realization of his dream. The two characters are thus compatible, and the Ugo/Hugo dichotomy may be incorporated into the latter's scheme since the "rêveur sacré" hopes to
rule, as Job, over the conquered chaos of his country—but with the word.

The duality Ginevra/Guanhumara is also explainable as that of Queen Guinevere of the Arthurian legend, Ginevra being the obvious Italian form of the French "Guenièvre"—but "Guenièvre" is also the French form of the Celtic Guenhuvar (who was a goddess), and indeed the name Guanhumara (a variant) is attested in medieval French manuscripts. The writer's discovery of a mise en abîme of the Arthurian legend in Hugo's Burgraves is indeed startling, and demonstrates a knowledge of medieval literature and folk saga on the part of Hugo; that he should make use of it to express his own political philosophy demonstrates again that the Middle Ages were increasingly a manipulative metaphor for him.

Notwithstanding Hugo's intentions, the Burgraves failed miserably at its premiere in 1843, marking the "official" end of the Romantic period. Maxime Du Camp described it as one of "les absurdités où s'étaient laissé entraîner les derniers dramaturges romantiques," a "drame romantique avec le bric-à-brac du Moyen Age." Even when Du Camp's lifelong bias against the Middle Ages is taken into consideration, it would seem clear that the greater part of the responsibility for the failure is attributable to Hugo himself: Du Camp aptly describes the play as "bien plus un poème qu'un drame, qui par la longueur des développements avaient fatigué les spectateurs," whose "invraisemblance de conception" had required of human credibility more than it could tolerate, "malgré des vers d'une beauté supérieure." As Patricia Ward has noted, but for additional reasons,
the Middle Ages are here a metaphor for Hugo's own belief in the
close alliance between France and Germany. 71 Hugo's goal as stated in the
preface to the Burggraves, "le théâtre doit faire la pensée de la
foule," was too obvious.

The failure of the Burggraves demonstrated to Hugo that the
theater was no longer an appropriate vehicle for his subjective,
politically-oriented view of the Middle Ages, and that a Romantic
Middle Ages no longer had appeal for a public whose taste was once
more appreciative of Antiquity. In 1846, however, while reading the
Journal de Dimanche, he discovered an article by Achille Jubinal,
"Quelques romans chez nos aîneux," which contained extracts of several
chansons de geste (Girart de Roussillon, Aymeri de Narboune, and
Raoul de Cambrai). 73 Hugo had already created an "épopée en pierre"—
now he would create "des pierres, une épopée," one might say. He felt
within him the desire to "constater la portée de la légende," by
demonstrating "l'épanouissement du genre humain de siècle en siècle,
l'homme montant des ténèbres à l'idéal." 74 Each stone, to continue
this analogy, would represent a step in the progress of mankind. The
Légende des siècles (1859, 1877 and 1833) is not an objective epic,
as Paul Berret has pointed out: it is, with few exceptions, the
"cahier des doléances et des confidences de l'exil," the continuation
of the Châtiments. 75 Hugo is the Cid in exile, the medieval tyrants
have contemporary counterparts in France. A Voltaireian theory of
perfectibility prevails, and the darkness of the Middle Ages finds
alleviation only in the chivalric ideal, in the "spectres de l'honneur,
du droit, de la justice" who "flamboyaient ainsi que des éclairs
soudains, / Puis s'évanouissaient, laissant sur les visages / La
 crainte, et la lueur de leurs brusques passages..."76 The Middle
Ages are here, in the words of one critic, the "noeud des forces
folles, que défera l'avenir; l'heure du cauchemar où les parcelles
mêmes de lumière restent emprisonnées dans la compacité de la tyrannie
et du dogme."77 The section "Seizième siècle" is indeed a rebirth:
 tyrants are defied, not deified: Hugo is the satyre, the voice crying
from the wilderness who proclaims: "Place à Tout! Je suis Pan; Jupi-
ter! à genoux."78 Man is a "navire impossible," but he is a "navire
en marche."

The Middle Ages have more place than any other period in the
Légende des siècles, but no longer does Hugo restrict himself to his
own national past. According to Berret, four factors precluded such
a narrow scope: 1) abusive use of the Middle Ages in the development
of romances, troubadour epics, and history à la Walter Scott had
created a "genre stérisisé"; 2) the Second Empire had vulgarized the
Middle Ages through the interest of Napoleon III in cathedrals and in
the architectural restorations of Viollet-le-Duc; 3) most importantly,
in my opinion, one could no longer be haphazard in presenting histori-
cal details (the influence of the positivists in this respect must
be weighed); 4) Hugo had never abandoned his flair for the exotic.79

Although we are no longer dealing with the Romantic world in
the Légende, it contains a good portion of what has been termed the
"negative medievalism"80 of Notre-Dame de Paris: sinister and grotesque
elements predominate, but the potential for the sublime (through
progress) remains; the greatest antithesis of all, that between good
and evil, has evolved into an epic vision of which the Middle Ages form only a part. The political metaphor is now metonymy; in a sense, content has become form. The Middle Ages no longer exist separately.

How then do we explain the fact that Hugo was able to write in 1877, the same year as the second edition of the Légende, the unsettling phrase: "J'aime la cathédrale, et non le moyen âge?" The answer lies in the "satanism" of Victor Hugo, a phenomenon which becomes more pronounced as he advances in age. Maximilian Rudwin has called Satan the "fil d'Ariane" in the work of Hugo, the vehicle of expression for his anticlericalism and denunciation of royalty (kings being gods with demons for ministers). With this in view, let us situate the quotation in context:

Pape, Dieu, ce n'est pas le même personnage, J'aime la cathédrale, et non le moyen âge.

Qu'est-ce qu'un dogme, un culte, un rite? Un objet d'art. Je puis l'admirer; mais s'il égare un soldat, S'il grise un fou, s'il tue un homme, je l'abhorre. Plus d'idole!82

The implication is clear: the service is over, the candle of medievalism has been snuffed out.

Mérimée

Born in Paris a year after Hugo, at the time of Madame de Staël's exile to forty miles from the capital of France, Prosper Mérimée (1803-1870) experienced quite different influences than others of his generation. The son of liberal but classicist-oriented parents who raised their only child in a calm, reflective, academic atmosphere away from the turmoil of political events, Mérimée was never attracted
to the troubadour craze. "Les traits qu'il emprunte à la génération de 1818 sont proprement des traits voltairiens: une sécheresse volontaire, une croyance tolérante, un persiflage impitoyable, une indifférence plus affectée que réelle," Pierre Trahard remarks. These same characteristics would inspire his motto: "Souviens-toi de te méfier." Always an individualist, Mérimée hardly demonstrated a proclivity for the ideal Middle Ages; intrinsically elitist, he sought the truth.

The baccalauréat and licence achieved at the early age of twenty, Mérimée experienced several important personal influences during the next years, the most notable of which was Stendhal who exerted an authority on his young disciple not unlike that of Nodier on Hugo—despite the extreme heterogeneity in their backgrounds and personalities: "avec le même fond de sensibilité vive, Beyle est l'excès en tout et Mérimée la mesure en tout," Trahard rightly observes. Although already a seasoned anglophile thanks to his maternal ancestry and the entourage in his home, Mérimée's interests in this regard became even more pronounced due to his association with Stendhal; conversely, the latter's interest in—and even knowledge of—Gothic architecture would be fostered and encouraged by Mérimée. Cultured and self-disciplined, the student of law accompanied his mentor in the liberal salons where the predominant theme of conversation and debate centered around everything English; in particular the literary cénacle of E.-J. Delécluze, future enemy of Gothic architecture and chivalry and uncle of Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, where many young Liberals including J.-J. Ampère, Albert Stapfer, Victor Jacquemont,
Ludovic Vitet, Charles de Rémusat, Auguste Sautelet, the Baron de Mareste, Adrien de Jussieu, Edouard Monod and the future statesman Adolphe Thiers were regulars. Sundays at the salon of Delécluze were reserved for literary discussions, in which Mérimée actively participated.

These connections, particularly that of Stendhal, gave impetus to Mérimée's already strong partisanship for Shakespeare. His future antiquarianism was apparently latent at this date; thus the moderate romanticism of the Musée françois had no appeal for him. The newly formed Globe, founded in 1824 and as yet non-political, tried to maintain an equilibrium between the liberal classicists of the Constitutionnel (dating from 1815) and the Minerve française, while the liberal Romantics found in Mérimée an active confrère. Factions became clearly defined in April 1824, when the Académie Française charged the permanent secretary and most ultra of its members, Louis-Simon Auger, to read a manifesto against the Romantic movement whose growing liberalism was increasingly held in contempt. Protected by the tripartite power of the ultras, the Académie Française, and the Church, classicism was upheld by the conservatives: thus Romanticism could only be liberal. Since December 1821, when the ultras assumed control of the government, the press had been subjected to rigorous laws. L'Académie, ou les membres introuvables (1826), a satirical comedy by the young Gérard Labrunie (later Gérard de Nerval) provides an interesting commentary on the political electricity which charged the air at this time. "Had Mérimée not thus made common cause with the Liberals under Louis XVIII and Charles X," A. W. Raitt writes, "it
is doubtful whether he would have been so readily taken into govern-
ment service after 1830 and achieved such rapid promotion to the
Inspectorship of Historic Monuments."86

Mérimée was first enticed by the vogue for the exotic, which
led him to use Spain and the Orient in the Théâtre de Clara Gazul
(1825) and La Guzla (1827); but once having experimented in this
direction, he turned his attention to the national past. Sainte-
Palaye's Mémoires su l'ancienne chevalerie and Barante's thirteen-
volume work on the Dukes of Burgundy (in its fourth edition in 1826)
found an avid reader in Mérimée; but elements for his first foray into
French history, the historical drama La Jaquerie [sic], subtitled
Scènes féodales, were found in Buchon's Collection des chroniques
nationales françaises (1824–1829) and in the chronicles of Froissart.
The latter contained for him "peu de détails et beaucoup de
partialité," leading to the conclusion that a "révolte de paysans
semble inspirer un profond dégoût à cet historien, qui se complait à
célebrer les beaux coups de lance et les prouesses de nobles
chevaliers."87 Thus it follows that his use of Froissart is marginal.
But while obviously unsympathetic to Froissart's evident bias for the
aristocracy, Mérimée's goal in setting his drama in fourteenth-
century France was realism rather than idealism or patriotism. He
will hardly extol the virtues of the chivalric code, and states so in
the preface: "J'ai tâché de donner une idée des moeurs atroces du
XIVe siècle, et je crois avoir plutôt adouci que rembruni les
couleurs de mon tableau."88
Motivation for his inspiration can be traced to the second Racine et Shakespeare (1825), written as Stendhal's response to Auger's pronunciation against Romanticism. In the sixth letter of Stendhal's treatise, dated 30 April 1824, the attack is sharpened on the "pauvre Académie, qui se croit obligée de persécuter d'avance la tragédie nationale en prose"; today in France, it continues, no one is aware of history, for "avant M. de Barante, elle était trop ennuyeuse à lire; la tragédie romántique nous l'apprendra, et d'une manière tout à fait favorable aux grands hommes de notre moyen âge." 89

Mérimée certainly must have had Stendhal's dramatic theories in mind, even though the result, La Jaquerie (1828), is not a tragedy but a semi-dramatic prose sequence of thirty-six separate scenes--replete with battles, a fire, massacres, a rape, a hanging, and no less than nineteen murders--an emotional fresco coldly reminiscent of Goya's painting "The Third of May 1808 in Madrid: the Shooting on Príncipe Pío Mountain ("Los fusilamientos de la Moncloa") which was never meant to be staged. One critic has seen it as analogous to a fifteenth-century painting where an "infinité de petites têtes apparaissent, placées sur le même plan et tournées toutes dans le même sens." 90 The Revue Française of July 1828 called it a "tragédie à tiroirs." 91 According to Trahar, "Mérimée va si loin dans la voie de la liberté absolue [dans la Jaquerie] qu'il aboutit à un déséquilibre complet. L'absence de règles entraîne le manque d'unité." 92

Mérimée's objective was not historical accuracy, rather the creation of character types which would embody the forces--social and
others—of the Jacques, or peasants in revolt. "Ce n'est pas la Jacquerie qu'il raconte: il imagine, à sa guise, un épisode sur la Jacquerie," one editor notes. Thus the clergy of the Middle Ages is represented by the positive force of the "digne et révérénd" Frère Jean, a medieval homme engagé actively committed to the "noble entreprise" of the peasants, and by his stereotyped antithesis, the rigid and unworldly abbot for whom Frère Jean is "l'impie" and "l'anté-christ." Nobility is characterized by the Baron d'Apremont (aptly named), cruel, ignorant, but courageous, and his children: the beautiful and proud Isabelle, a Mathilde de la Mole before her time to whom her father can confide: "Mon Isabelle, toi seule ici as le coeur d'un homme"; and her sadistic, malevolent ten-year old brother Conrad, a "petit vaurien" even for his father, who would whip dogs and invoke the question for pleasure, and would "flamber" a condemned peasant while he is being hanged. The d'Apremont family, together with the ignominious Baron de Montrauil, Isabelle's cousin and fiancé, symbolize the blind prejudice of the nobility, the ignorance and brutality of the seigneurs who function in a closed world in which peasants are hardly considered human.

The peasants themselves each typify qualities and traits which were present in the revolt, from the decent and upright Simon, whose pregnant wife and unborn child have died from "un grand coup de pied dans le ventre" given to her by d'Apremont's seneschal, to her brother Renaud who vows to avenge her and does (for which he is hanged). Pierre is the conventional figure of the "pauvre vilain" hopelessly in love with the noble Isabelle, whose only fault is that "il sait lire
et écrire"; the drunken Gaillon, pusillanimous Morand and ominously-named Barthélemy, who ultimately accuse Frère Jean of having pushed them to revolt against "nos bons seigneurs," along with the good Simon who, unaware of where his true interests lie, calls for the monk's death "comme il a tué le baron d'Apremont." To these should be added the English opportunists, captains Brown and Siward, and their counterpart among the Jacques, Loup-garou.

This Middle Ages, so unlike the nostalgic ideal of le bon vieux temps, was also a polemical agent for Mérimée's liberalism: Railt is certainly correct in pointing out that the presentation of a "sympathetic analysis of the uprising of the lower classes against the oppression of the clergy and the nobility" under the reactionary monarchy of Charles X was the act of a "militant liberal." One might add that, with the failure of Hugo's Cromwell in 1827, the Romantic movement still lacked a drama which would put into practice the principles of its manifesto. La Jaquerie has rightly been criticized for its melodramatic excesses of local color and violent presentation of medieval mores, for a lack of historical accuracy with regard to the events it depicts; nevertheless, it accomplished the goal of its young author, and should be seen as a step in Mérimée's evolution toward the nouvelle, in which genre he was to "find" himself.

La Chronique du règne de Charles IX (1829), which has been called "une œuvre de circonstance née de la mode et assujettie à la mode" by Traharde and which the author himself would privately label a "méchant roman," was Mérimée's contribution to the historical novel, growing in popularity in France since the discovery of Walter Scott;
it must be included in this study even though set in the sixteenth century because of the very fuzzy distinctions made at this time between the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The *Journal des Débats* immediately observed that the author "a mis un peu d'histoire dans son roman, mais parce qu'il faut aujourd'hui de l'histoire, sous peine de n'être pas lu."\(^{96}\) In effect, if Mérimée indeed wrote the *Chronique* under the influence of Scott, he would three decades later privately repudiate the impression which the latter had made on him in his youth:

> Je vois avec peine que vous [une amie] faites grand cas de Walter Scott. Je l'ai beaucoup aimé, maintenant je ne puis le relire. Il a des rabâches qui m'excèdent et c'est un petit esprit et une nature basse... Dans la temps où les romans historiques sont revenus à la mode, il a exploité habillement ce genre bâtarde et il a fait de détestables disciples. Il a donné des idées fausses sur l'histoire.\(^{97}\)

unjustly disregarding Scott's main preoccupation, the impact of history and the possibilities for heroic action in the modern world.\(^{98}\)

The "hero" of the *Chronique*, which centers around the massacre of Saint Bartholomew's Day in 1572, is not Charles IX at all, but a character named George de Mergy; in fact, the King hardly makes an appearance in the novel. Like Voltaire and others we have studied, Mérimée is interested in presenting a picture of the *moeurs* of the time; but in accordance with the new tradition established by Harante, Mérimée attempts to achieve an objective view of history. Aware of the dangers of centering his action around an actual historical personage, Mérimée relates the tale of two fictitious brothers: George, who has espoused Catholicism for political reason, earning him the label
of a "Voltairien qui se trompe de siècle," but not inflexible—brother Bernard. At the time of its publication, Mérimée announced in the popular Journal des Débats that he had scrupulously avoided encroaching on the terrain of history by according roles to "des personnages dont la vie est trop connue pour qu’il soit permis d’y changer ou d’y ajouter quelque chose." Mérimée’s method is precisely enunciated in the preface to the Chronique. "Je n’aime dans l’histoire que les anecdotes," it proclaims, "et parmi les anecdotes je préfère celles où j’imagine trouver une peinture vraie des mœurs et des caractères à une époque donnée." Therefore he will not judge, for

les actions des hommes du XVIe siècle ne doivent pas être jugées avec nos idées du XIXe. Ce qui est criminel dans un état de civilisation perfectionné n’est que trait d’audace dans un état de civilisation moins avancé, et peut-être est-ce une action louable dans un temps de barbarie. Le jugement qu’il convient de porter dans la même action doit, on le sent, varier aussi suivant les pays, car entre un peuple et un peuple il y a autant de différence qu’entre un siècle et un autre siècle. Thus we see the results of fanaticism and the wars of religion, but not the causes. His major sources for the work were consulted for their style as much as for their content: "Ce n’est point dans Mézeray, mais dans Montluc, Brantôme, d’Aubigné, Tavannes, La Noue, etc. que l’on se fait une idée du Français au XVIe siècle. Le style de ces auteurs contemporains en apprend autant que leurs récits," he averred.

The topic is not surprising: as Raïct has again rightly observed, it was a favorite subject for liberal and anti-Catholic authors under the reign of Charles X, both categories of which apply
to Mérimée himself; moreover, the Renaissance period was strongly appreciated by Mérimée's friend Stendhal. George Mergy, "ce railleur impitoyable de toutes les cérémonies du culte catholique," as Mérimée describes him, stuns Parisian society with his "newfound" religious fervency, "même tremplant ses doigts dans l'eau bénite, ce que, peu de jours auparavant, il aurait considéré comme un sacrilège horrible," since it accorded him "le droit de serrer en public une jolie main qui tremblait toujours en touchant la sienne." But Mergy resigns his commission as captain when ordered to take part in the massacre of Saint Bartholomew's Day, proclaiming that he would rather live "au milieu des bêtes sauvages que de vivre parmi les Français." Mergy is obviously a mouthpiece for Mérimée himself: as Candide, he would rather cultivate his garden than become involved in the religious fanaticism of his time; his "convictions" are an expedient which he hopes will allow him to live in peace. Yet life is not so, as Mérimée astutely recognizes: George is ultimately shot in an ambush by his brother's men, identified by Bernard de Mergy too late to stop the bullets. The dying George refuses to confess to either a monk or a minister, crying out that he wishes "ni de vos messes ni de vos psaumes" and proclaiming that he still adheres to atheistic beliefs—whereupon Mérimée the atheist, omniscient author cannot refrain from a raillery that "les diables répondirent par un hurlement de triomphe en emportant l'âme du capitaine George."

Mérimée's view of this period, while perspicacious, was then certainly not totally objective. He would soon discard the Romantic ideas of his youth and reassume the classical heritage inculcated in
him by his parents, aided by an acerbic tongue which he kept until his
death in 1870; his emancipation from early Romantic ties can already
be seen in the dry, ironic humor which pervades some of the most
serious moments in the Chronique. In the latter, then, as well as in
the Jaquerie, Mérimée's use of the Middle Ages is quite divergent from
that of most of his contemporaries--but it is never a pivotal component
of his literary production, since after 1829 his interest in the Middle
Ages took altogether another form.

An often totally ignored function of Mérimée which is in rap-
port with his objective conception of the medieval period is his
activity as the highly respected Inspector-General of Historical Monu-
ments (1834-1852) and secretary of the Commission on Historical
Monuments, founded in 1837, the former to restore and consolidate
national monuments of great artistic value--a position which led to
eighteen years of archeological "tournées" in France--and the latter
which concentrated its efforts upon the classification of national
monuments in order of importance. According to one critic,

la compétence de Mérimée en matière d'architecture
historique ... ne s'étendait pas seulement à la con-
naissance des dispositions et des diverses époques de
construction des monuments, à celle des formes et des
décorations caractéristiques des divers membres qui les
composent et qu'il dessinait exactement d'après nature,
mais elle allait jusqu'à comprendre la technique de
l'architecture qu'il avait étudiée sur place, dans ses
tournées d'inspections. 107

At the time of his appointment in 1834 as a replacement for Ludovic
Vitet, for whom the post of Inspector had been created in 1830, and
in spite of his intelligence, interest, and other talents, Mérimée
lacked a knowledge of architectural technique. "Il s'en faut de
beaucoup,” wrote his father, “qu’il ait les connaissances nécessaires pour remplir sa mission, mais il est jeune, observateur, et s’il peut suivre jusqu’à nos âges la carrière où on l’a fait entrer, il sera un antiquaire d’une force respectable dont les futurs Winckelmann parleront avec éloge.”108 This prophecy was certainly accurate.

Mérimée had the good fortune to have encountered Viollet-le-Duc at the salon of E.-J. Délecluze, the latter’s uncle, following which the young architect would become Mérimée’s "alter ego et éveiller parmi les architectes la connaissance, le goût, la passion du moyen âge qui avait gagné les archéologues."109 Mérimée’s motto found its vehicle in his new charge: “Proscrire l’imagination est le premier devoir de l’archéologue. Il faut remplacer la divination par l’analyse scientifique. . . .”110 Mérimée’s influence in this respect has been considered so great that at least one other critic has commented: “Si V. Hugo n’avait pas écrit Notre-Dame de Paris et si Mérimée n’avait pas provoqué la formation de la commission des monuments historiques, on aurait rasé tous nos vieux édifices pour construire des Madeleines et des Bourses.”111

The eminent art historian Lionello Venturi has assessed the Romantic view of the art of the Middle Ages as follows:

The basis of the revaluation of the primitives was due . . . to moral and religious sentiment. Theoretical insufficiency was the reason of weakness in that criticism, and afterwards was the reason of the disfavor into which it fell . . . instead of making a rational criticism of mystical art, there was a mystical criticism of art . . . and the Middle Ages were studied not in order to understand them in their reality, but to present them as a model of noble feeling, chivalry and religion, to chant
the marvels of fidelity, loyalty and generosity. In which ideas not only aesthetics but also history was lost.112

It was against this that Mérimée fought to establish a realistic approach to medieval architecture.

The art historian Harry Bober provides invaluable insight into Mérimée's contribution to the restoration of medieval art, pointing to the fact that the latter may not be treated as an "undifferentiated aggregate," and convincingly demonstrating that

... it was in his espousal of the cause of Romanesque art that his contribution to medievalism is so especially remarkable. Beyond those of his contemporaries who were still freshly enthusiastic over the Gothic, no longer terra incognita by then, Mérimée was venturing to probe new mysteries of art... side by side with the great pioneers of medievalism.113

Mérimée, Bober notes, was incredulous that the architect of reparation at St.-Savin believed the church to be Gothic, and was shocked that the Gothic cathedral at Bourges had been willingly restored while for the Romanesque abbey church at Vézelay the inhabitants could not even raise enough funds to stop the progress of destruction, much less allow for any other repairs.114 It is directly due to Mérimée's tireless efforts, often traveling and lodging under the poorest conditions, that St.-Lazare at Autun, the abbey of St.-Savin, Cahuvigny, St.-Nectaire, the cathedral at Laon, the basilica of Wignory, Ste-Foy in Conques, Chambon, Vic-le-Comte, Notre-Dame-du-Port, and Saint-Paul d'Issoire—to name but a few—owe their survival to Prosper Mérimée. After a recent visit to the beautiful Romanesque church and monastery at Conques in the Auvergne, on the pilgrims' route to Santiago, where Mérimée was able to stop destruction of the partially demolished cloister and spare the church—and where a moving
testimonial to his efforts is found next to the main entrance--one can only conclude that his efforts to save the medieval heritage of France must be seen as primordial. In addition, his work on the Commission on Historical Monuments was responsible for numerous publications, such as articles in the *Revue archéologique* on the restorations of Lyons and Saint-Denis (1848), instructions to the committee on historical monuments entitled "L'Architecture au moyen âge" (1843), and the "Rapport sur l'isolement de la Sainte Chapelle" (1849).

Mérimée, then, found the expression of the essence of the medieval spirit in art, rather than in literature. The Middle Ages certainly ceased to be a polemical agent for him after the political events of 1830. As for the unswerving "classicism" which Mérimée specialists Léon and Raitt attribute to him, and under which traditional art criticism has classified him due to the terminology which he employed, let us perceive it as Bober does: as the "'fossil index' of the nascent medievalism of his age."115

**Stendhal**

Stendhal (1783–1842) has previously been mentioned in connection with his association with Mérimée, principally deriving--where this study is concerned--from theories outlined in *Racine et Shakespeare* (1823–1826). But two works by Stendhal in which the Middle Ages figure in some respect must also be taken into consideration: his treatise *De l'Amour* (1822), which he considered all his life to be the most significant of his literary productions, and the volumes
entitled *Mémoires d'un touriste* (1838), scarcely known except to Stendhal specialists today. It must be specified at the outset, however, that the Middle Ages do not constitute a particular perspective for Stendhal, nor was the medieval period of much importance to him. Stendhal was a man of action, or at least his aspirations carried him in this direction; the past ceased to exist on a subjective level when he became a partisan of the "glorieuse Révolution," a move designed to antagonize his "establishment" father with whom he never had any basis of understanding. This preoccupation with the future induced his metamorphosis into "Arrigo Boley, Milanese," Liberal and exceedingly ardent advocate of Italian unity.

Jean-Pierre Ricard has demonstrated that it is almost impossible to define the duality within Stendhal, a man of "sécheresse" and "tendresse"; a man of inner freedom and outer restraint as his protagonists Julien Sorel and Fabrice del Dongo; a man who, like Chateaubriand, viewed his childhood as a "private golden age" according to Victor Brombert, but who—unlike his predecessor—was Voltairian enough (as his "excellent grand-père" Gagnon) to accept the collapse of his austere Camelot, realizing it to be such; a man who has been described as a "paradoxical mixture of Saint-Preux and Valmont."

This is the future Henri Brulard—"Henry who burns himself out," with pejorative connotations—who fell hopelessly in love at the age of thirty-five with Madame Mathilde Viscontini, the estranged wife of the General and Baron Dembowski, and ardent champion of Italian liberation: in one word, Milanese, but Milanese of stature,
through birth and character. In the words of Henri Martineau, Stendhal cherished everything in her: "sa beauté lombarde, son attitude fière, son orgueil, son goût poétique, son mépris du prosaïsme, son dédain du vulgaire et surtout son âme si noble aux aspirations généreuses, toute tendue vers la délivrance de son pays." Signora Dembowska, who for Stendhal would always be "Métilde" (as he delighted in calling her in what he believed to be the English fashion), is known to have received Ugo Foscolo, who saw in her "un caractère bien trempé, une âme ardente, un esprit méditatif et résolu," in her home; she herself would be arrested for suspected pro-Italian loyalties.

In 1818 Stendhal still had not taken a side in the debate over "romantic" and "classic"; already in Milan since 1814, he was working on a life of Napoleon when he met "Métilde," having read Madame de Staël, Schlegel, and Sismondi and finally having made his debut in the literary polemics at Milan. Stendhal was not a novice at love, but this time his passion was quite unrequited; the lovesick Lothario languished in a limbo of lethargy, incapable of any thoughts except those of his beloved, unabashedly following her to Volterra, ultimately being rationed to one visit every two weeks. Finally the admirer of the Code Civil and despiser of style troubadour decided to codify his emotions, to systematize the abstract. The result was De l'Amour, begun in late 1819, the nucleus of which is contained in Chapter IX which is reproduced here in its entirety:

Je fais tous les efforts possibles pour être sec. Je veux imposer silence à mon cœur qui croit avoir beaucoup
Love is like a fever, the new Ovid declared: "il naît et s'éteint sans que la volonté y ait la moindre part." In a comparison of Don Juan and Werther (the eternal dichotomy in Stendhal), with obvious implications of Julien Sorel in the former, Stendhal arrives at the conclusion that the "vrais don Juan finissent même par regarder les femmes comme le parti ennemi, et par se réjouir de leurs malheurs de tous genres"; the Werthers of the world create realities "qui se modèlent sur ses [leurs] désirs," while the Don Juans (as Julien Sorel) think like generals of the success of their manoeuvres; but the latter kill love rather than derive any enjoyment from it, the Werthers are the happiest. Such a realization affords ample proof that any illusions which Beyle may have nursed have crumbled: "l'amour voit toujours à ses côtés le désespoir d'être quitté par ce qu'on aime, et il ne reste plus qu'un dead blank pour tout le reste de la vie." One can only conclude with Victor Brombert: "De l'Amour, on the surface an ideological essay that explicitly threatens to treat the alluring subject of love . . . is in fact simultaneously a sentimental justification, a self administered therapeutic treatment, and a Stendhalian Vita Nuova." Passion becomes an "unrealizable" desire rather than an actualization which reality might taint: Mélilde is a Nervalian Jenny Colon, a Baudelairian Mme de Sabatier, all the more so since she died in 1825; and what was considered a "bizarre traité" following its publication becomes the key to the prison where, like
Julien Sorel and Fabrice del Dongo, the soul of "Arrigo Beyle, Milanese" is confined.

It is within the context just described that we may speak of the medieval aspects of De l'Amour. In actuality, only two chapters are of relevance in this study, both necessary because the subject demanded it: "De l'amour en Provence jusqu'à la conquête de Toulouse en 1228, par les barbares du nord" (LII), and "La Provence au XIIIe siècle" (LII). The Middle Ages form a part of De l'Amour to the extent that a particular way of love was in evidence in the Midi during this period. Stendhal, too, was duped by the Vies of the troubadours compiled by Jean de Nostredame in 1575, with regard to the cours d'amour, on which he comments at length. His discussion of the latter betrays his conception of the Middle Ages in general, which he separates into North and Midi: the people of Occitanie were more advanced than others in that, "à peine sortis des horreurs du moyen âge, et de la féodalité où la force était tout, nous voyons le sexe le plus faible moins tyrannisé qu'il ne l'est légalement aujourd'hui; nous voyons les pauvres et faibles créatures qui ont le plus à perdre en amour et dont les agréments disparaissent le plus vite, maîtresses du destin des hommes qui les approchent."\(^{127}\) Stendhal distinguishes sharply between the two civilizations, between the "barbaires" who "tuaient et saccageaient tout" and "détruisaient pour le plaisir de détruire ce qu'ils ne pouvaient emporter," and the moeurs "fort avancées sur la route de la véritable civilisation" of the Midi: "Quand aux barbares, c'étaient nos pères."\(^{128}\) But he observes a retrogradation in "Provence" after the conquest of Toulouse; scarcely twenty years
later, the "Provençaux" were "presque aussi barbares et aussi grossiers que les Français, que nos pères." 129

For the observant reader, however, it is clear that these two chapters recount manifestations of "l'amour-goûtr" which, along with "l'amour-passion," "l'amour-physique," and "l'amour de vanité" represent the four types of love of which Stendhal conceives. The writer totally concurs with Victor del Litto that the last chapter, "Werther et don Juan" (LIX), provides the key to the work; that it was destined to demonstrate, "par le contraste de deux conceptions opposées de l'amour, que l'auteur savait aimer d'amour-passion." 130 This is what renders the two chapters devoted to love in the Midi rather insipid, for in Stendhal's own words, "l'amour-passion nous emporte au travers de nos intérêts," while "l'amour-goût sait toujours s'y conformer." As he wrote to Métilde after the aborted visit in Volterra, where she had traveled to be with her two young sons, "l'idée de l'amour est mon seul bonheur." 131 Stendhal was a carbonaro in love.

The Mémoires d'un touriste (1838) are so dissimilar to De l'Amour that it is not possible to find a single point of reference in the two with regard to the Middle Ages. The word which comes to mind when searching for a means to express Stendhal's reaction to the gothic art which he saw on his travels is—and must remain—distance. Although Stendhal had instructed the young Mérimée in the principles of art criticism, it was the latter who initiated Stendhal into Gothic art; the two even went together to visit the Gothic cathedral at Laon (1836) and to La Charité (1937). Mérimée instructed his literary
mentor "avec croquis à l'appui, des principales formes de l'architecture", but in truth, Stendhal's observations carry no fervor. It is here appropriate to reproduce the commentary of Louis Royer, who four decades ago put into writing the writer's reaction after having read the Mémoires:

En réalité, Stendhal n'a jamais senti l'architecture romane, ni l'architecture gothique, et comme pour tout ce qu'il ne comprend pas, il se méfie, il a peur d'être dupé; la plupart du temps il ne veut voir dans le goût régnant pour l'art national qu'un snobisme que se donne la bonne compagnie. Toute la partie archéologique des Mémoires est donc extrêmement faible: Stendhal se sert très gauchement d'un vocabulaire qu'il connaît mal, et quand il abandonne la partie, c'est pour transcrire purement et simplement Millin [an archeologist, author of Voyage dans les départements du Midi de la France, 1807-1811] ou Mérimeé.

Supposedly written by a Mr. (Philippe) L., "commis voyageur pour le commerce de fer" who has asked Henri Bayle (H.B.) to correct his style, Stendhal obviously speaks to the reader. His impressions of the cathedral at Bourges are perhaps the most imposing: here he felt a "sensation singulière: j'étais chrétien, je pensais comme saint Jérôme que je lisais hier"; a "noble poussière" covers him during his climb to the tower. He contrasts the complexity, "l'étonnant, le minutieux" of the Gothic cathedral to the simplicity of Greek temples; the "voyageur qui erre entre ses immenses piliers est saisi de respect: il sent le néant de l'homme en présence de la divinité.

S'il n'y avait pas l'hypocrisie qui révolte, et la fin politique chachée sous la parole pieuse, ce sentiment durerais plusieurs jours." He moves us deeply when he remarks of the royal court where Jacques Coeur formerly resided: "Au milieu de cette délicatesse
noble du quinzième siècle, éclate toute la grossièreté du nôtre."136 At the church of St.-Nazaire in medieval Carcassonne, which Mérimée would have restored by Viollet-le-Duc, he has never "mieux senti l'élegance charmante du gothique," although his description contains only one supporting detail.137 The cathedral at Clermont invokes an ubiquitous dilemma of the nineteenth century: "Le problème à résoudre est celui-ci: En entrant dans une église, pouvoir lancer ces mots d'un air inspiré, ou mieux encore, d'un air grave, modeste et légèrement gémissant: Telle partie est du onzième, telle autre du quatorzième,"138 which leads to a discussion of the development of medieval architecture including an "Histoire du gothique." An art historian, however, would find it sorely lacking, as seen in the following passage selected at random:

Une grande révolution marqua la fin du douzième et le commencement du treizième siècle: la témérité s'empara des esprits en fait d'architecture, on méprisa le genre solide, et l'on n'eut plus de goût que pour la hardiesse; en d'autres termes, la solidité romane se vit remplacée partout par les longues colonnes grêles et par les voûtes placées à cent pieds de terre, triomphe de l'architecture gothique.139

But, unlike Mérimée, his preference is for the "grands monuments gothiques, le seul ornement des paysages de France."140

On a number of occasions he feels impelled to dissert again on the differences between the forms of art which he has viewed. At Moulins, for example, prior to his visit at Bourges, he attempts to explain "gothic" and "romanesque" architecture:

Le style gothique, qui lui [style roman] succéda lorsque le clergé fut encore plus riche et put faire travailler les paysans en les payant avec des indulgences, veut surprendre avant tout et paraître hardi. . . .
... Le style gothique cherche à surprendre l'imagination du fidèle qui est dans l'église; mais à l'extérieur, il n'a pas honte d'entourer son édifice d'arc-boutants qui lui prêtent appui dans tous les sens et, si l'œil n'y était fait, lui donnerait l'apparence d'un bâtiment qui menace ruine. La toute-puissante habitude nous empêche bien de voir l'évidence qu'on nous apprend à nier dès l'enfance.\textsuperscript{141}

Stendhal's explanations are then generally detached, although he does use a discussion of the Gothic to launch a diatribe against the clergy, who employed the menace of Hell as the basis of Christianity.\textsuperscript{142} Compared to Hugo's descriptions in \textit{Notre-Dame de Paris} and Mérimée's explicit reports and drawings, Stendhal's remarks evidence a lack of imagination: "Tant que le public n'aura pas adopté un petit dictionnaire contenant les noms des cent principales parties d'une église gothique, il sera tout à fait impossible de faire comprendre ce qu'on a vu par de simples paroles; une gravure est indispensable."\textsuperscript{143}

The medievalism of the \textit{Mémoires d'un touriste} should be seen as the expression of a contagion in which Stendhal participated, the actualization of a vogue which his contemporary Nodier, an avid antiquarian, seemingly predicted ten years before their publication:

\ldots ce siècle [XVIII\textsuperscript{e}] était à la fois trop prosaïque et trop vain de lui-même pour avoir l'intelligence des grands monuments du moyen âge, pour conserver une idée complète de de l'art.\textsuperscript{144}

In their innocence, by keeping the Middle Ages in the mind of the public, they stand as a representative harbinger of future political use of the Middle Ages under the regime of Louis Napoleon.\textsuperscript{145}
Gautier

In order to understand the fleeting, conventionally-inspired medievalism of Théophile Gautier (1811-1872), followed by a lifetime of antagonism with regard to the Middle Ages, we must return to 25 February 1830, to the first representation of Hugo's *Hernani*, that "soirée [qui] décida de notre vie!" For Gautier this would always be the greatest event of the century, the triumph of the *flamboyants* over the *grisâtres*, "le flamboiement farouche et météorique de notre pour-point écarlate à l'horizon du Romantisme"; for the nineteen-year old Gascon raised in Paris, it was the creation of the legend of the *gilet rouge* so movingly communicated shortly before his death in the *Histoire du Romantisme*. An older Gautier, repudiator of the Gothic since 1833 and longtime advocate of *l'art pour l'art*, would reconstruct the memory of those years:

Quel temps merveilleux! Water Scott était alors dans toute sa fleur de succès; on s'initiait aux mystères du *Faust* de Goethe, qui contient tout, selon l'expression de madame de Staël, et même quelque chose d'un peu plus que tout. On découvrait Shakespeare [sic] ... et les poèmes de Lord Byron. ... Comme tout cela était jeune, nouveau, étrangement coloré, d'enivrante et forte saveur!

Of that fateful evening he recalled:

Nous voulions la vie, la lumière, le mouvement, l'audace de pensée et d'exécution, le retour aux belles époques de la Renaissance et à la vraie antiquité, et nous rejetions le coloris effacé, le dessin maigre et sec, les compositions pareilles à des groupements de mannequins, que l'Empire avait légués à la Restauration.

This was the Romantic Gautier, son of a passionate royalist ruined by the July Revolution, the Gautier who for a short period of his life may be called an idealist, before pessimism, disenchantment and—
above all—consolation in le plaisir du beau, culminating a trip to Athens and Constantinople in 1852, would lead him to aver that "la vue du Parthénon m'a guéri de la maladie gothique."  

In actuality, Gautier never experienced many symptoms of such an "illness": his earliest Poésies, written between the age of fifteen and nineteen years and published in 1830, employ the conventional medieval themes in vogue but attest to no craze for the "moyen âge qui n'est pas le moyen âge," the "moyen âge de carton et de terre cuite" which he deplored in the preface to Mademoiselle de Maupin (1834), parts of which have been quoted in Chapter One of this study. Like Stendhal, but for disparate reasons, he did not feel the Middle Ages, but rather perceived them with the eyes of a painter. This is particularly apparent in the poem "Moyen Age" in the 1830 collection, where colors and words denoting plasticity are strikingly apparent:

Quand je vais poursuivant mes courses poétiques,
Je m'arrete surtout aux vieux châteaux gothiques;
J'aime leurs toits d'ardoise aux reflets bleus et gris,
Aux faîtes couronnées d'arbustes rabougris,
Leurs pignons anguleux, leurs tourelles aiguës,
Dans les réseaux de plomb leurs vitres exiguës.  

Gautier goes on to express his love for 'leurs murs verdis," the courtyards "où l'herbe croît à travers les pavés," the weathercocks "au sommet des donjons . . . / Que la blanche cicogne effleure de ses ailes," and the "ponts-levis tremblants," the "portails blasonnées, / De monstres, de griffons, bizarrement ornés," terminating the poem in a dreamlike, fairy tale evocation of the "brillant moyen âge et la chevalerie." The future author of "Symphonie en blanc majeur" (1849) is already in evidence.
In "La Basilique" Gautier's attention to plastic qualities and color is again discernible: pigments, hues, and prisms are seen in the "murs moussus et noircis," the "vitraux coloriés, / Où les feux du soleil teignent / Les reflets errants qui baïment / Les plafonds armoriés."153 The poem "Soleil couchant," which describes dusk at the cathedral of Notre-Dame, communicates texture to the reader rather than a glimpse into the spirit of the medieval past, as seen in the "tours au front orné de dentelles de pierre" and the "pignons tailladés que surmontent des anges / Aux corps roides et longs, aux figures étranges, / D'un fond clair ressortaient en noir..."154 In "Veillée" the same phenomenon is apparent, to which has been added more than a modicum of nodieresque fantastique à la Jeunes-France, but we nevertheless find visual qualities competing with the "sons sournaturels" and "bruit étrange" in the description of the "lourd in-quarto" whose marge ancique, / Couverte d'ornements, de fantastiques fleurs" shines "comme un vitrail, des plus vives couleurs."155 The Smarra-like "Cauchemar" speaks of "morts au teint bleuâtre," a "gibet noir" and an "église gothique."156 René Jasinski finds the forty-two poems which make up this collection (later retouched) pale in originality except for the form, but nevertheless totally sincere: from his models Gautier "n'a pris que ce qui correspondait à son sentiment intime."157

Between the fateful night when hernanisme exploded in full artistic liberalism and the publication of his Jeunes-France in 1833, Gautier discarded the fantasies of his youth as well as his conventionality. The means to this end was the Petit Cénacle, formed during
the latter half of 1830 and continuing until 1833, a group consisting of Gautier's school friend from the Collège Charlemagne Gérard de Nerval, Pâtrus Borel (in Gautier's opinion "le plus parfait spécimen de l'idéal romantique," possessor of a magnificent beard which according to Gautier was an anomaly as well as an aesthetic delight, Augustus MacKeat (Auguste Maquet), Alphonse Brot, Jules Vabre, the engraver Célestin Nanteuil, Joseph Bouchardy, Napoléon Tom (Thomas), Philothée O'Neddy (Théophile Dondey), and the sculptor Jehan Du Seigneur at whose residence they convened: the companions Gautier would immortalize in his posthumously published Histoire du Romantisme. Jasinski has demonstrated how, in spite of its declared principles (some of which were designed for shock purposes), the Petit Cénacle remained the refuge of a fervent youth, faithful to the concept of l'art pour l'art.\textsuperscript{158} The Petit Cénacle, differentiating from the Cénacle which centered around Hugo, whom they venerated, became the Jeunes-France, another world for those whose disappointment in the July Monarchy left them only art as an ideal, "né du jour où la peinture a fait alliance avec la littérature romantique."\textsuperscript{159} The Petit Cénacle, which Paul Bénichou has described as "les porte-parole avancés de la classe pensante,"\textsuperscript{160} engendered Gautier's Jeunes-France, a collection of portraits which reflect his new philosophy.

"Elias Wildmanstadius ou l'Homme Moyen âge" is one of the paintings in this gallery of excesses deplored by Gautier. Of the symbolic Wildmanstadius, now dead, Gautier states "c'était mon ami, et il fut sincère dans sa folie."\textsuperscript{161} The name itself is an ingenious caricature: "Elías, or Elijah, who did not die (but was carried to
Heaven in a chariot of fire); Wildmanstadius ("man in a wild or primitive period"). Elias Wildmanstadius represents the battle between être and paraître within Gautier himself, the Jeunes-France who—as his satirical effigy—"se sentant gauche et déplacé dans cette société [i.e. falsely gothic, and politically disappointing] pour laquelle il n'était pas fait," had "pris le parti de s'isoler en lui-même et de se créer une existence à part." Wildmanstadius is as anti-bourgeois as Gautier, the extravagant Jeune-France who sipped wine from a skull which Nerval had managed to procure from his father's medical practice and who watched Alexandre Dumas, a guest at one of the festivities, eat custard from a human cranium. Wildmanstadius, ancien in a dual application of the adjective, is a Gothic being in a liberal world: he resides in the oldest, most incommunicado house in the city, furnished with the oldest antiques he could find; he wears medieval garments, has no printed books in his library, eats medieval food, appreciates medieval paintings, music, and art (as opposed to the classical ideal); he even writes in a Gothic style. Suffocated by the contemporary bourgeois (by extension, Louis-Philippe) world, he never goes out except to visit his "bonne vieille cathédrale." His conversation is anachronistic, "hérissée d'expressions vieillies, de tours tombés en désuétude, si bien que chaque phrase était une énigme, et qu'il fallait un commentaire."

Gautier here certainly satirizes the craze for medievalism which we have previously observed as the last progeny of the genre troubadour, but the Middle Ages must be seen as both a subjective and objective metaphor. "La cathédrale, c'était sa maîtresse à lui,"
Gautier remarks of Wildmanstadius, whose world is thus sterile and static. Jasinski maintains that it was indeed in the *Petit Cénacle* that Gautier finally broke with the "traditions légitimistes and catholiques dans lesquelles il avait été nourri" in his family circle. Another critic sees an "ironic detachment" in "Elias Wildmanstadius," but it is hard to adhere to such a conclusion, all the more so since Gautier acknowledges that the character was directly inspired by his friend Célestin Nanteuil, "qu'on eût pu appeier 'le jeune homme moyenâgeux.'" "Elias Wildmanstadius" is a commitment, in some respects Gautier himself, and more than he would like to admit, for he is now a bohemian, a "bougingo" but not a "bousingot." "Nous étions simplement moyenâgeux. ... Un républicain, nous ne savions pas ce que c'était. ... Nous étions tous contre les libéraux et pour Marchangy. Nous représentions le parti mâchefoulis, et voilà tout," he professed.

At this point we must also mention *Les Grotesques* (1833), published during the same year as *Les Jeunes-France*, a collection of essays in which Gautier tried to rehabilitate Saint-Amant, Scarron, and others, and in which François Villon figures. Jasinski, however, has offered convincing proof that this material was almost all plagiarized from sources such as the *Bibliothèque universelle* and résumés in various collective editions, the latter mostly paraphrased by Gautier (who did not even bother to consult the 1832 edition of Villon's works by Prompsault). The fact that Nerval was working on a play entitled *Villon l'écolier* (lost) during this time might have provided his friend with the stimulus to include this poet of the late
Middle Ages in *Les Grotesques*; but whatever its motivation, this collection can have no relevance for our study.

Later, after an 1840 trip to Spain had further broadened his horizons, Gautier would wrap himself in what he termed the "linceul d'ennui nonchalant et affaissé" which would lead him to write articles such as that which appeared in *La Presse* in 1843, subsequently incorporated into the chapter "Pochades et paradoxes" of his equivalent of Stendhal's *Mémoires d'un touriste*, the *Caprices et Zigzags* (1852).

Here he confirms part of our hypothesis:

> Moi-même, j'ai eu pour les cathédrales gothiques et les galeries de tableaux un goût désordonné. Que d'ogives, que de colonnettes, que de trêfles, que de clochetons, que d'absides, que de jubés, que de transepts, que de portails, que de roses de vitraux, que de pendentifs, que de lancettes j'ai écrits tant en prose qu'en vers! ...
> Mais toutes les descriptions de cathédrales finissent par se ressembler.170

It is also in the *Caprices et Zigzags* that we learn of his adventurous ascent to the top of the bell tower of the cathedral at Antwerp, in Belgium, with his traveling companion "Fritz" (Gérard de Nerval), the first voyage that he had ever undertaken—and that in 1836. For Gautier the beauty of the cathedral is found in the "trois Rubens miraculeux," the elaborate carved wooden pulpit and its ascent dating from the sixteenth century, and other "bons tableaux." The climb is both a "caprice" and a literal "zigzag," where one hilarious event follows another: "il faisait une bise carabinée, une bise à décorner les bœufs"; "je me retournerai pour voir si Fritz me suivait, et je lui fourrai le pied dans l'œil, ce qui vous donnera une idée suffisante de la douceur de cette rampe"; "nous nous mêmes à dégringoler
l'escalier en colimaçon, les oreilles couchées sur le dos comme des lièvres qu'on poursuit"; yet the visual artist remains, the platform gave a view "magnifique au delà de toute plume et de toute palette."  

Until 1854 Gautier admitted "des rechutes" into his "anciennes agitations"; only after a visit to the cathedral at Strasbourg, where Goethe had earlier rhapsodized over the beauty he found there, did Gautier really recoil from all aspects of the Middle Ages. That year, in an article written for La Presse, it is clear that the cathedral as a symbol is now only an empty shell:

Autrefois, nous passions un vif enthousiasme à l'endroit des cathédrales, enthousiasme qui s'est changé en admiration douloureuse depuis que nous avons vu sur le trépied de marbre de l'acropole les purs chefs-d'œuvre du génie grec... Quel aspect sinistre présentent les hauts murs de grès rouge verdi par place comme du cuivre oxydé; avec quel effort haletant la flèche se dresse vers le ciel; quel élancement rigide dans ces nervures fuselées qui montent grêles et droites; quelle tristesse glaciale, quelle ombre noire sous les ogives du cloître!

Jamais nous n'avions senti à ce point l'intime souffrance, le désespoir secret et l'idéal nostalgique du moyen âge; les statuettes du porche s'allongent dans leurs niches comme des cadavres dans leur bière, dessinant à peine quelques plis cassants sous leurs draperies pareilles à des linceuls...  

The "pauvres vierges folles du portail" present the skeleton of a "grâce morte," the "coquetteries d'outre-tombe." Rather than the classical ideal and serenity inspired by the artists of ancient Greece, the Gothic represents misery:

Quelle vie horrible, convulsée de terreaux, hantée de fantômes, suppose cette architecture sépulcrale, aux fondations cimentées d'ossements, au fait peuplé de corbeaux, aux épouvanlements combinés pour agir sur le système nerveux!  

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Gautier's "idéal nostalgique," incompatible with the concept of l'art pour l'art, is buried in that "architecture sépulcrale." The article of 1854 is a necrologie for his Romanticism; a realist and Hellenist like his English counterpart Matthew Arnold, who changed the Tristan legend by adapting it to a nineteenth-century perspective, Gautier never forgot that he had "l'honneur d'être enrôlé dans ces jeunes bandes qui combattaient pour l'idéal, la poésie et la liberté de l'art, avec un enthousiasme, une bravoure et un dévouement qu'on ne connaît plus aujourd'hui." 174

Dumas

The drame national in France, an inevitable consequence of the Revolution, has been defined by Hippolyte Parigot as "une imitation de Shakespeare d'après Schiller et Walter Scott." 175 The historical dramas of Alexandre Dumas (père) which are pertinent to this study would seem to more or less fit this definition. Following his success as the author of Henri III et sa cour (1829), critically acclaimed as the first "drame populaire et original, sinon national et historique" 176—a work which he admittedly composed "non suivant un système, mais suivant ma conscience" 177—Dumas avowed that

ce sont les hommes, et non pas l'homme, qui inventent, chacun arrive à son tour et à son heure, s'emparé des choses connues de ses pères, les met en œuvre par des combinaisons nouvelles, puis meurt après avoir ajouté quelques parcelles à la somme des connaissances humaines, qu'il lègue à ses fils; une étoile à la voie lactée. Quant à la création complète d'une chose, je la crois impossible. Dieu lui-même, lorsqu'il créa l'homme, ne put ou n'osa point l'inventer; il le fit à son image. 178
Dumas (1802-1870), raised in the small provincial town of Villers-Cotterets by his widowed mother, never received the equivalent education of his peers in the Romantic school. At twenty years of age, sole support of his mother, he was in Paris working eight hours a day in an office where he later returned, devoting at least three of the nocturnal hours which followed to the studies which he had not previously undertaken:

Alors commença cette lutte obstinée de ma volonté, lutte d’autant plus bizarre qu’elle n’avait aucun but fixé, d’autant plus pérseverante que j’avais tout à apprendre... Cette vie intérieure, qui échappait à tous les regards, dura trois ans, sans amener aucun résultat, sans que je produisissie rien, sans que j’éprouvasse même le besoin de produire.179

He compared himself to an "aveugle-né auquel on rend la vue," to "Adam s’éveillant après sa création." In his Mémoires, which stop at May 1833, he relates his devastation upon the awful realization that even in 1831 he had believed Clovis and Charlemagne to be ancestors of Louis XIV; it was only after reading Thierry’s Lettres sur l’histoire de France (1827), to be discussed in Chapter Four, that he understood the extent of his lacunae: "j’eus honte de mon ignorance, et je serrai presque convulsivement ma tête dans mes deux mains," he relates.180 We have seen in Chapter Two that he read Barante’s Histoire des Ducs de Bourgogne during the same year, and that he used it to create character types in his drama Charles VII chez ses grands vassaux (1831). His first years in Paris were in fact a Rabelaisian quest for knowledge; this uncertainty is why his first literary productions are much more faithful to history than his later works, when
he had acquired the confidence necessary to take more historical liberties. "Il n'a guère compris Shakespeare; seulement, il s'est découvert en lui," Parigot confirms. Indeed, ideas borrowed from Othello, Romeo and Juliet, A Midsummer Night's Dream, and other Shakespearian plays abound in the theater of Dumas; but at the same time, Henri Clouard remarks, "il n'a pas toujours résisté non plus à un autre instinct [que celui de "faire plus pathétique" ou "plus drôle"], l'instinct populaire qui déforma les personnages dont la grandeur jadis coûta cher." 

The subject for Henri III et sa cour, first drama by Dumas to be staged at the Comédie Française, was strictly a fortuitous one. Called to the office of La Ponce by his administrative duties as a bookkeeper for the Duke of Orléans, Dumas relates that he noticed Anquetil's Histoire de France (1803) open on the desk at page 95, where the love between Catherine de Guise and Saint-Mégrin was discussed. Piqued in his curiosity, Dumas next checked the Biographie universelle, which in turn referred him to Pierre de l'Estoile's Mémoires-journaux, an excellent recounting of the second half of the sixteenth century published after the author's death in 1612. From the latter he found "la copieuse enluminure du sujet," according to Lanson: each word in this "orgie de couleur locale" was an historical "tidbit": "état des partis, état des finances, intérêts des princes, passions des bourgeois, topographie du vieux Paris, astrologie, nécromancie, jurons, bilboquets, sarbacanes, sabliers, pourpoints tailladés, les quatre sous que l'on payait au spectacle des Gelosi, toute l'histoire politique et toute la chronique de la
mode..."

For his scene centering around the fatal letter which the Duke of Guise forces his wife to write, designed to entice Saint-Mégrin to her apartments, Dumas had recourse to a scene in Walter Scott's *The Abbot* (1820) in which Marie Stuart is forced to sign her abdication. Dumas, who prided himself on writing "tout d'un jet, sans ratures ni retouches," completed the drama in two months. Although it takes place 20-21 July 1578, it may still be considered a drama about the Middle Ages given the Romantic failure to properly delineate between the Middle Ages and the sixteenth century. Dumas was quite aware that the Middle Ages were in vogue.

*Henri III et sa cour* (1829), a drama of passions and moeurs with a definite Cornelian influence in both the vocabulary and conception of the plot, a drama which recalls vividly to mind Don Diègue's celebrated line from *Le Cid*: "L'amour n'est qu'un plaisir, l'honneur est un devoir" (act three, scene six), does not really present the Middle Ages (or Renaissance) at all, least of all in an historical sense. Henri III has a marginal role; the action centers around a love triangle between the Duke and Duchess of Guise and the Count of Saint-Mégrin, the latter a mignon of the King whose empire over the latter is such that the Queen mother, Catherine de Médicis, conspires to arouse the jealousy of the Duke in order to silence the threat. The "affair" ends tragically in an Othello-inspired strangulation as the Duke employs the hankerychief of his wife, evidence of the extra-marital involvement, to basely put an end to the heroic Saint-Mégrin. One critic finds that "cette conception de l'histoire à la mode de Figaro est peu scientifique," but affirms that "ce que le peuple de
France demandait au passé, une image aggrandie de lui-même et toutes les puissances ravalées à son niveau, Henri III et sa cour le réalisait sous ses yeux, par vives couleurs, mouvement, passion, et avec verve.  

Charles VII chez ses grands vassaux (1831), contemporary in everything but its setting, was Dumas' next foray into the history of France, but in verse. Charles VII and Agnès Sorel serve the same function as Henri III in the drama just examined, namely as a source of local color and authenticity in an otherwise imaginary setting. Dumas himself acknowledges this in the preface: "Yaqoub, Bérangère, le comte, voilà le tissu; Charles VII et Agnès, voilà la broderie... Yaqoub était pour moi la représentation de l'esclavage d'Orient; Raymond, de la servitude d'Occident; le comte, c'était la féodalité; le roi, la monarchie." The action is simple, and may be resumed in two significant lines from William Congreve's The Mourning Bride (1697): "heaven has no rage like love to hatred turned, / Nor hell a fury like a woman scorned" (act three, scene eight). Bérangère, wife of Count Charles of Savoisy, repudiated by him because she is barren, is replaced that very day as his spouse; the otherwise noble Bérangère, literally devoured by jealousy, manipulates the love which the slave Yaqoub bears for her as a tool of revenge. Yaqoub indeed does kill the count, but Bérangère immediately poisons herself to deprive the unwitting slave of his promised reward. In actuality, a little arithmetic will demonstrate the improbability of the action; Charles VII (1403-1461) became king of France in 1422, the year in which Agnès Sorel was born; thus it was totally impossible for the
couple to have come to the castle of Seignelais, in the Berry, shortly after his coronation: Agnès Sorel would have been a babe in arms. Bérangère is Chimène become Phèdre, and the modern reader simply cannot possibly take her seriously. Théophile Gautier points to a source in Nerval's *Dame de Carouge*, on which he himself had collaborated, but bore Dumas no malice: "Nous nous trouvâmes très honorés qu'un personnage de notre invention [Yaqoub] ait été jugé digne d'être mis au théâtre et de servir de pivot à un drame de l'auteur d'Henri III et de Christine à Fontainebleau."

La Tour de Nesle (1832) already evidences Dumas's penchant for cape et épée: Dumas himself called it a "drame d'imagination." Without entering into a discussion as to the authenticity of authorship, which filled many newspaper articles and resulted in none less than six trials and a duel with Frédéric Gaillardet, the "pretender to the Tour,"

let us examine it as a representation of the fourteenth century. The sinister escapades of Marguerite de Bourgogne, wife of Louis X le Hutin, and her sisters Blanche and Jeanne, the nightly orgies, the bodies found in the Seine each morning: this is the gothic novel on the stage, legend become a momentary reality. The *Revue de Paris* pushed exaggeration to the extreme when it commented that "le poignard, le gibet, le poison ... varient agréablement la mort des victimes; puis entre les assassinats commis sous nos yeux, le récit de forfaits plus atroces encore tient le spectateur en haleine," complaining that the play contained "assez de parricides, d'infanti-cides, d'incestes, etc., pour défraayer tout un répertoire de mélodrame,
et occuper tous les juges d'instruction du royaume."191 We would rather concur with Parigot, who remarks that "la légende se moque de l'histoire, ou plutôt c'est une histoire plus contemporaine que se mêle à la fantasmagorie de la légende."192 The Tour de Nesle is more medieval than Dumas' other dramas, because it evokes emotions which one associates with the Middle Ages: superstition, legendary beliefs, the fantastique.

The year 1836 saw the Dumasian variation on the Faustian theme:

Don Juan de Marana, ou la chute d'un ange, a "mystère" in five acts, nine scenes, and verse. The legend of Don Juan Tenorio dates from the sixteenth century and Tirso de Molina's El Burlador de Sevilla y convidado de piedra; but if it is seen as a Faustian offshoot, its roots are indeed much deeper. Don Juan de Marana is not a seducer of women, only of his brother's fiancée; at the end of the drama he repents, and is saved. Just as there are two brothers, the legitimate Juan and the bastard José (archetypes of evil and good), there are also two angels: the "bon" and the "mauvais." "C'est le plus extraordinaire mélange que le Romantisme ait conçu dans sa folie ou son imagination puérile. Il aborde en fantasmagories, en apparitions, en changements à vue, en scènes effrayantes et ridicules," one critic decries.193 Once more the personality of Dumas confronts the reader, as it confronted the spectator in his own time: the "mystère" is not really a mystère, in any event. One wonders if Dumas' association with Gérard de Nerval had any influence in this play.194

Don Juan de Marana was not Dumas' first dramatic fantasy; apart from the Tour de Nesle, in 1834 he had already created Catherine
Howard, the title of which (at least) was inspired by the history of England. But Dumas' comments with regard to this drama are very revealing as to the manner in which he treats history in general:

"Catherine Howard est un drame extrahistorique, une oeuvre d'imagina-
tion procédée par ma fantaisie; Henri VIII n'a été pour moi qu'un clou
auquel j'ai attaché mon tableau," Dumas admitted. We have seen
that there were many such "clous" in the theater of Dumas.

Four other dramas should be mentioned. L'Alchimiste (1838),
written in collaboration with Nerval, will be discussed in Chapter
Five. Lorenzino (1842) represents a direct borrowing of subject from
Musset's Lorenzaccio (1834), a play which Musset had not meant to be
staged. In his version, five acts in prose, Dumas has incorporated
numerous elements from his own Fiesque de Lavagna, a drama which he
had written in 1827 but never published, and which bears the marked
imprint of Schiller. La Reine Margot (1845) bears the mark of Auguste
Maquet (1813-1888), whom we have already had reference to as Augustus
MacKean, member of the Petit Cénacle, later a professor at the Lycée
Charlemagne in Paris. Dumas had already reworked Maquet's Bathilde
(1839), and after this date the two worked in collaboration; it was
Maquet, for example, who conceived of the idea of the Count of Monte-
Cristo. Le Reine Margot (Marguerite, sister of Charles IX and bride of
Henri de Navarre on Saint Bartholomew's day in 1572, date of the
infamous massacre) demonstrates many liberties taken with history, the
greatest being the accidental poisoning of Charles IX by his mother,
Catherine de Médicis, who had intended the arsenic (carefully applied
to the pages of a book, to be carried to the mouth by the fingertips
when moistening them to turn the pages) for Henri de Navarre. We may
again apply the remark made by Pierre Moreau with regard to
Chateaubriand's *Génie du Christianisme*: it is "l'oeuvre d'un temps,
et faite pour un temps."

The last drama which we will consider is *La Tour Saint-
Jacques* (1856), for which the setting is 19 January 1413. Composed
the year following Nerval's death by hanging (in January 1855), this
drama is a curious mixture of Nerval's *Nicolas Flamel* (1830), a pro-
jected three acts of which parts were published in 1831 and 1835, and
the *Alchimiste*, written conjointly with Nerval in 1838. The central
characters in Dumas' drama are Maître Nicolas Flamel, who has been
made head physician to the King, Charles VI "le fou," his wife
Isabelle of Bavaria, and John the Fearless, the King's brother and
Duke of Burgundy; the Dauphin, future Charles VII, has a minor role.
We shall see that Charles VI is a pivotal figure in Nerval's *Prince
des Sots*, a *diablerie* in two acts written in 1830 but never presented,
and his historical novel of the same name which met an identical
fate, both published after the deaths of Dumas as well as Nerval. It
is very probable, if not almost certain, however, that Nerval had com-
municated the substance of his thought to Dumas, given their collabor-
ation on *Piquillo* (1837), *L'Alchimiste*, and the 1838 voyage to Ger-
many. Nevertheless, Dumas' drama is not a *calque* of Nerval's work:
in *La Tour Saint-Jacques* the mad king regains his sanity thanks to
Flamel's care; he blesses the Dauphin, and refuses to sign a treaty
with Henry V of England (who had defeated the French at Azincourt in 1415). Historical accuracy, of course, is out of question; but we must always keep in mind that Dumas never claimed to be faithful to history.

What then can be said of the medievalism of Alexandre Dumas" In essence that such a phenomenon did not exist. Although Dumas incorporated the Middle Ages and the sixteenth century as a single entity in his work, and without in any way disparaging the inventive genius which he displays, he must be considered a literary opportunist where the Middle Ages are concerned: the Middle Ages had no political or personal relevance for him. The Middle Ages do not dominate his thoughts, nor does he have a particular perspective which he incorporates into his works. Dumas saw in the Middle Ages a means to an end, namely financial remuneration and dramatic acclaim, but the Middle Ages mean no more to him than the time of Richelieu. In Don Juan de Marana, the mauvais ange declares: "Le corps meurt, mais l'âme survit; or, l'âme, ce sont les passions, et chaque homme a eu une passion dont il a fait son âme."196 This passion for Alexandre Dumas was romanticized history, with all of its liberties and invention. We must remember that Dumas, in his Mémoires, declares that he felt himself to be an historian "de ses yeux." Dumas, one might say, was original in his lack of purpose where the Middle Ages are concerned.

Lamartine

The Middle Ages have little place in the literary production of Alphonse de Lamartine: only three chants of Les Chevaliers, forming
part of his uncompleted epic poem *Les Visions*, his *Voyage en Orient* (1835), and his *Vies de quelques hommes illustres* allow us some modicum of understanding as to what the Middle Ages represented for him.

Following the impulses of his generation and in the wake of Chateaubriand's *Martyrs* (1809), Lamartine first dreamed of composing an epic poem which he planned to entitle *Clovis*. To prepare himself for the enormous task which he proposed, he purchased a copy of Marchangy's *Gaule poétique*: "peut-être y trouverais-je de nouvelles pierres fondamentales à ce grand édifice dont je veux, un jour ou l'autre, être l'architecte," he explained. The immediate success of his *Méditations* in 1820, however, temporarily distracted him from pursuing his proposed project; but in December 1823 he drafted a first plan of the poem, and in the next few months he completed the first chant, of descriptive nature, which allowed him to continue in whichever direction he pleased. Lamartine chose *Les Chevaliers*.

It is significant that, in a poem which in a moral sense depicts l'homme intérieur, Lamartine chose the age of chivalry. In order to understand why, we must first see the broad plan of *Les Visions* as a sequel to Milton's *Paradise Lost*, for Lamartine admitted that he could not read without an "éblouissement d'admiration les scènes amoureuses et pathétiques" of Milton's great work. Henri Guillemin's invaluable critical edition of the texts, diverse plans, notes, chants, and fragments of chants composed over the period 1823–1829 reinforces the tremendous magnitude of the projected undertaking
which Lamartine envisioned as a "poème métaphysique, religieux, épique."\textsuperscript{199} \textit{Jocelyn} (1836) and \textit{La Chute d'un ange} (1838) fit into this framework.

A captatis benevolentiae would here be in order: in view of the fact that few persons are familiar with the content of \textit{Les Visions}, a brief summary of the portion relevant to this study seems necessary to the writer. In \textit{Les Visions} Lamartine would relate the progressive redemption through purification of Eloïm, a fallen angel from pre-Genesis time who had been accorded human life by God because of his carnal desire for a "daughter of Eve," but who was concomitantly condemned never to possess the object of his love, and never to rejoind her in Heaven until he had led several meritorious lives; thus for Eloïm "la mort n'est qu'un court sommeil, un intervalle à ses maux, car il a été condamné à mourir, renaître et revivre jusqu'à ce qu'il fût pur aux yeux de Dieu," Lamartine wrote to a friend in 1823.\textsuperscript{200}

In \textit{Les Chevaliers} Eloïm takes the form of Tristan, brought as an infant to the castle of the noble Béranger in a cradle carried by two swans who deposit him at the feet of the seigneur's expectant wife. The lovely lady accepts him, names him:

\begin{quote}
Triste, hâlas! est son père et plus triste sa mère, 
Que Tristan soit son nom!\textsuperscript{201}
\end{quote}

and vows to raise this gift from God with her own child. When she dies in childbirth the grieving Béranger honors her request, and the boy is raised as a page and brother to his daughter Hermine. Scarcely twelve years had passed when the "féroce Salmour," a chevalier and contender for Hermine's hand, avenges the father's refusal and scorn
of the threats which he has made by an abduction of Béranger's only treasure; but Tristan defends her staunchly and holds her fast, is also captured, and ultimately succeeds in rescuing her at great peril. Although the young girl confesses to him her love, as a true chevalier —in contrast to the beastly Salmour—Tristan dares not to touch her in spite of an ardor which inflames him:

... réprimant en moi ces songes de mon coeur,
Des transports de l'amour le respect fut vainqueur. 202

The desolate father, reunited with the "seul objet qui consolait ses jours," is about to reward his adopted son with the gift of his daughter when Tristan's father arrives: a beggar. Béranger now may only make Tristan the châtelain of the tower of Idlefroi, its domain, fields, and vassals, wherein he might give refuge to his aged father. During the three days of celebration for Hermine's safe return, Béranger obliges the young couple to sing the adieux in the ballads of Amadis. Both respect the will of the father and seigneur, but at night Hermine steals from her room to say one last goodbye to her only love and offer him her mother's wedding ring as a gage of her loyalty; the irate father, who catches them in a first—and last—embrace, aims an arrow at Tristan. But

le perfide oiseleur, qui voit battre leurs ailes
Perce d'un même trait les deux ciseaux fidèles,

killing both, unaware that his daughter has promised:

Jamais me main n'aura d'autre appui que la tienne,
Jamais mon coeur n'aura d'autre maître que toil,

receiving as reply:

--Je jure, dit Tristan, d'obéir à mon maître,
De respecter le rang où le ciel vous fit naître,
De refuser toujours le nom de votre époux
Pour vivre et pour mourir moins indigne de vous! 203

These chants of Les Visions, faithful to the chivalric code, demonstrate that Lamartine was thoroughly imbued with the spirit of chivalry which Sainte-Palaye did so much to further a century before him. Henri Guillemin points to the fact that Lamartine appreciated highly the Clotilde de Survile poems, and that the names Béranger, Tristan, and Hermine all derive from the poems in this collection, 204 furthermore, similar themes are found in Marchangy’s Gaule poétique and in Millevoye’s poem (1808) about Emma and Eginhard. But Lamartine here transcends the nationalism which pervaded the period in which he lived in favor of an "épopée de l’humanité."

Lamartine has been accredited with commenting, in front of the Parthenon: "Adieu pour jamais au gothique." 205 But the Voyage en Orient, written in 1832 and published in 1835, reveals he found Athens
"sombre, triste, noir, aride, désolé; un poids sur le coeur; rien de vivant, de vert, de gracieux, d’animé; nature épuisée, que Dieu seul pourrait vivifier: la liberté n’y suffira pas." 206 In front of the Temple of Thésée, convinced through what he had read that the monument was beautiful, Lamartine remarks,

j’étais étonné de me sentir froid et stérile; mon coeur cherchait à s’émouvoir, mes yeux cherchaient à admirer.
—Je ne sentais que ce qu’on éprouve à la vue d’une œuvre sans défaut, un plaisir négatif. 207

As for the Parthenon, he indeed found it of the "type unique et exclusif du beau, dans les arts de l’architecture et de la sculpture," a type of divine revelation of "la beauté idéale"; but it does not seem to replace Gothic architecture for him, rather it represents
something pure and eternal:

J’erre tout le jour, muet, dans ces ruines, et je rentre
l’œil ébloui de formes et de couleurs, le cœur plein
de mémoires et d’admiration. Le gothique est beau; mais
l’ordre et la lumière y manquent; —ordre et lumière,
ces deux principes de toute création éternelle!208

His *Vies de quelques hommes illustres*, which include essays
on Héloïse and Abélard (1854), William Tell (1863), Gutenberg (1853),
Joan of Arc (1863), and Christopher Columbus (1862), published together
in the 1863 edition, are difficult to evaluate in terms of any
"medievalism" because they are all in narrative form, and show no
sources. Nevertheless, Lamartine's guiding principle, strongly
religious, reveals itself easily:

Dieu se cache dans le détail des choses humaines, et
il se dévoile dans l'ensemble. Aucun homme sensé n'a
jamais nié que les grands événements qui composent la
vie historique de l’humanité ne fussent reliés et
coordonnés secrètement par un fil invisible suspendu à
la main toute-puissante du souverain ordonnateur des
mondes, pour les faire concourir à un dessein et à
un plan.209

he begins his chapter on Columbus. Directing his comments at Vol-
taire's *Pucelle*, which we have examined in Chapter One, Lamartine
maintains that

s’il [l'historien sérieux] réprouve le sarcasme, cette
impléité contre l'admiration, dont un grand homme a pro-
fané son génie en cherchant à profaner cette pauvre
martyre de la patrie, il n’introduit pas les puérilités
de l'imagination populaire.210

Of the feat of William Tell, he observes:

La Providence semble ainsi se complaire à donner à
chaque peuple libre, pour fondateur de son indépendance,
un héros fabuleux ou réel, conforme aux sites, aux moeurs,
au caractère de ces peuples. . . .211
He often offers facts of unusual interest for this study. Although we had seen the statues gisantes of Héloïse and Abélard at the Père-Lachaise Cemetery, for example, we did not know that their mortal remains were moved from the Abbey of Le Paraclet to Nogent to Alexandre Lenoir's Musée des Monuments français in 1800, under the authorization of Lucien Bonaparte. There they remained until the government of the Bourbons, in an effort to reinforce ties to the past, hoped to move them to the Abbey of Saint-Denis in 1815; but public opinion insisted that they belonged to the people, and in 1817 they were transferred to the Père-Lachaise where they now lie.

The printing press, Lamartine observes, is the "telescope" of the soul: "il en sort sans doute du papier, de l'encre, des caractères, des chiffres, des lettres qui tombent sous les sens; mais il en sort en même temps de la pensée, du sentiment, de la morale, de la religion, c'est-à-dire une portion de l'âme du genre humain." Gutenberg, for Lamartine, "spiritualized" the world. Hugo, we have seen, expressed quite a different opinion in Notre-Dame de Paris (1831): "depuis l'origine des choses jusqu'au quinzième siècle de l'ère chrétienne inclusivement, l'architecture est le grand livre de l'humanité," he remarks in his great chapter "Ceci tuera cela"; the discovery of the printing press will have a nefarious effect on the cathedral: "l'imprimerie tuera l'architecture." Lamartine's conception of the printing press much more resembles that of Gérard de Nerval as expressed in his drama L'Imagier de Harlem (1851), to be discussed in the next chapter: as a means of moral enlightenment, a
"clarté nouvelle" following which the "univers n'aura plus de nuit."  

There is then no doubt: Lamartine's Middle Ages are an intangible entity in which realism is often repressed in an effort to attain a reflection of the eternal. This explains his attitude towards architecture, this is a key to both his life and his work.

**Vigny**

Even less than in the work of Lamartine do the Middle Ages figure in that of Alfred de Vigny (1797-1863): only three of his earliest poems, of which the most famous is undoubtedly "Le Cor," are of medieval inspiration or setting. We will see that only a brief influence from the pervasive medievalism of the time in which he lived can be attested, a phenomenon of short-lived duration which was eclipsed by a philosophy stemming from personal experience.

"La Neige" (1820) is the most innocuous of these three poems from a philosophical point of view.

> Qu'il est doux, qu'il est doux d'écouter des histoires,  
> Des histoires du temps passé,  
> Quand les branches d'arbres sont noires,  
> Quant la neige est épaisse et charge un sol glacé!  

Vigny both begins and ends the poem, reminiscent of medieval ballads or a _chanson de toile_ with a happy ending. Then follows a snow tale: young Emma, "princesse de Gaule," is carrying her lover, "le page Eginard, qu'à ses genoux le jour / Surprit ne dormant pas dans la secrète tour," away from the royal abode, chinking to bring him to safety while leaving only her tiny footprints in the snow. But unknown to her, Charlemagne is there "[qui] regarde et ne voudrait pas voir." Apprehended, his daughter and her lover next appear before him and the
twelve peers, on bended knee, expecting an "orage" or worse; not so:

L'Empereur souriait en versant une larme
Qui donnait à ses traits un ineffable charme;
Il appela Turpin, l'évêque du palais,
Et d'une voix très douce il dit: "Bénissez-les." 219

The unexpected humanity of the poem adds to the genre troubadour charm which it exudes. This air of "bon vieux temps," surprisingly associated with the Carolingian dynasty, will not be found again in Vigny's poetry.

Written in the Pyrenees while Vigny's garrison was stationed there in 1823, "Dolorida" is also in the vein of the genre troubadour -- but one of Vigny's basic attitudes toward life, incarnated in the proud Dolorida ("Douleurette"), is already present:

. . . l'amour d'une femme est semblable à l'enfant
Qui, las de ses jouets, les brise triomphant,
Foule d'un pied volage une rose immobile,
Et suit l'insecte ailé qui fuit sa main débile. 220

Vigny, too, would soon be "foulé" by the "pied volage" of fate.

Dolorida's young, unfaithful husband returns to her in the middle of the night to bid her farewell: he is dying, beseeches her pardon, and swears that he has always remained loyal to her in his heart:

"L'infidélité même était pleine de toi." Dolorida listens with a hardened heart. The dying "cavalier" soon discovers why:

. . . Mais quel est ce blanchâtre breuvage
Que tu bois à longs traits et d'un air insensé?

--Le reste du poison qu'hier je t'ai versé. 221

Though medieval in setting, the source was not: the poem was inspired by an anecdote related in the eighteenth century by Grimm, and in 1823 by Les Lettres champêtres; Vigny has only changed the location to Spain. 222
The grandiose view of the cirque de Gavarnie in the Hautes-Pyrénées, a vertically-walled amphitheater of huge rocks where among others the Cave of Pau cascades down 450 meters, inspired the composition of "Le Cor" (1825). For a long time Vigny had been haunted by Roland's story, and had even begun a tragedy based on this subject in 1821. To document his work, since the Chanson de Roland as we know it today (manuscript Digby 23 of the Bodleian Library at Oxford, England) was only discovered in 1837—and since a knowledge of Old French would have been required to read the Paris manuscript—Vigny, as Lamartine and so many others of their generation, read Marchangy's Gaule poétique as background. The sound of a horn evokes the death of the "Paladins antiques" for the poet, who asks:

Ames des Chevaliers, revenez-vous encor?
Est-ce vous qui parlez avec la voix du Cor?
Roncevaux! Roncevaux! dans la sombre vallée
L'ombre du grand Roland n'est donc pas consolée?

The tragedy of Roncevaux is recreated in the mind's eye of the poet, and—the sound now charged with meaning—the song is no longer pleasing to his ears: "Dieu! que le son du Cor est triste au fond des bois!" The horn, which has transcended its physical presence as denoted in the capitalized word, is a symbol of désespoir: despair and despondency, for, as he wrote in his diary, "L'espérance est la plus grande de nos folies." Despair in love, since his marriage of reason brought him only a disinheritied and invalid wife and his Eva, the actrice Marie Dorval, was repeatedly unfaithful to him; despair in his career, since the "de" in his name was worthless and tuberculosis forced his discharge from the army in 1827, putting an end to his plans
for a military career; despair in his family, as he lost his father at age nineteen, his beloved mother before he was forty, his three brothers had died before his birth, and his marriage was childless; despair because he could not accept the political situation of his time.

Vigny, too, dreamed of composing an épique mystique, consisting of short narrative "mystères" such as "Eloa," "Moïse," and "Le Déluge." Of this project Paul Bénichou has observed: "C'est le destin de l'épopée romantique de passer les bornes du possible, et, Bible nouvelle en puissance en même temps que poème, d'exister davantage comme projet géant et multiforme que comme œuvre accomplie."226

In the preface to his historical novel about a conspiracy under Richelieu, Cinq-Mars (1826), Vigny explains the Romantic penchant for history:

Dans ces dernières années (et c'est peut-être une suite de nos mouvements politiques) l'Art s'est empreint d'histoire plus que jamais. Nous avons tous les yeux attachés sur nos Chroniques, comme si, parvenus à la virilité en marchant vers de plus grandes choses, nous nous arrêtions un moment pour nous rendre compte de notre jeunesse et de ses erreurs. Il a donc fallu doubler l'INTERET en y ajoutant le SOUVENIR.227

But Vigny was aware of the dangers of historical novels: "Dans l'art la vérité n'est rien, c'est la probabilité qui est tout; de mauvais romans historiques ont été faits où l'on copiait les chroniques et les dialogues des inconnus. Tout était vrai, l'on n'y croyait pas."228

The historical novel had nothing to gain from historicity, from the vantage point of the author.
In summation we may say that, of the three early poems which we have examined, only "Le Cor" has relevance for this study—for it alone evidences a subjective attitude. It is not the Middle Ages which is responsible, rather an association which Vigny makes with the events of 778. In 1826 he wrote in his diary: "Voir est tout pour moi. Un seul coup d'œil me révèle un pays, et je crois deviner, sur le visage, une âme." Upon seeing the cirque de Gavarnie, the defeat of Charlemagne's rear guard became alive for him, and through a cype of poetic synesthesia he has verbalized the emotion which he felt. This is the extent of Vigny's medievalism.

Musset

Lamartine aspired to the ideal in the eternal, Gautier sought it ultimately in art, while Hugo ambitioned it in both; antithetically, Vigny accepted the imperfectibility of both the finite and the infinite, and Mérimée acknowledged and mocked it. Alfred de Musset (1810-1857), before Stendhal, endeavored to find the ideal uniquely in the temporal: in love, or rather in the idea of love. Finding that "les rêves absolus ne se réalisent presque jamais; ou que réalisés, ils flétrissent et meurent au contact des choses de ce monde," Musset incorporated into his theatrical production a world of eternal "jeunesse dorée" based on a chimerical ideal which his poetry betrays. Realization of the impossibility of returning to former times within his own lifetime drove him into poetic sterility and destroyed him. Octave of La Confession d'un enfant du siècle (1836), from the vantage point of a "siècle blasé et corrompu, athée et crapuleux," where an
"affreuse désespérance" has worked as a pestilence in the youth, sees a "passé à jamais détruit, s'agitant encore sur ses ruines"; Lorenzaccio has drunk "dans les banquets patriotiques le vin qui engendre la métaphore et la prosopopée"; and the personification of debauchery, Jacques Rolla (Rolla, 1833), taunts before his suicide:

Regrettez-vous le temps où nos vieilles romances
Ouvraient leurs ailes d'or vers leur monde enchanté?
Où tous nos monuments et toutes nos croyances
Portaient le manteau blanc de leur virginité?

Must we conclude that the time of chivalry, an ideal Middle Ages, would hold an appeal for him?

An examination of Musset's early poetry reveals that, like most of what he calls the "fils de l'Empire et petits-fils de la Révolution," Musset expresses a flirtation with certain aspects of the Middle Ages which he will shortly abandon. Such is the case in "Stances" (1828), decidedly in the genre troubadour tradition:

Que j'aime à voir, dans la vallée
Désolée,
Se lever comme un mausolée
Les quatre ailes d'un noir moutier!
Que j'aime à voir, près de l'austère
Monastère,
Au seuil du baron feudataire,
La croix blanche et le bénitier.

In the same poem he expresses a pleasure in the "vieux clochers" of the abbey, in the "rosaces d'or des couvents" and the "voûtes gothiques," the "vieux saints de pierre athlétiques / Priant tout bas pour les vivants." In "Le Rêve" of the same year, the first work Musset ever published (which made its appearance in Le Provincial, a small paper of Dijon where Louis Bertrand was editor-in-chief), the poet is haunted in Nodieresque fashion and Hugolian style by the
"noirs manoirs,"\textsuperscript{237} an image which repeats itself in "La Morte" (undated, published in 1842) where he speaks of the "sombre chapelle."

And in "Le Lever" (1830) a young girl is summoned from her sleep to her waiting horse:

\begin{verbatim}
Vois écuyers et pages
En galants équipages,
Sans rochet ni pourpoint,
Têtes chaperonnées,
Traîner les haquenées
Leur arbalète au poing.\textsuperscript{238}
\end{verbatim}

But these seem to be the inevitable experimentaion of most of his generation, and do not adumbrate his true feelings about the anachronistic Middle Ages of his own time which characterized his adolescence and young adulthood. For this we must have recourse to "Les Secrètes Pensées de Rafael, gentilhomme français"(mid-1830), in which he launches a diatribe against those authors who participate in the gothic craze as well as those who would baver over the Parthenon and other architectural wonders of ancient Greece following its liberation from the Turks in 1827:

\begin{verbatim}
Salut, jeunes champions d'une cause un peu vieille,
Classiques bien rasés, à la face vermeille,
Romantiques barbus, aux visages blêmis!
Fous qui des Grecs défunt balayez le rivage,
Ou d'un poignard sanglant fouillez le moyen âge,
Salut!\textsuperscript{239}
\end{verbatim}

His generation is the "moral troupeau" of regenerated children of an immortal mother [France] who know how to "parler vers, prose et naïf [e.g. medieval] dans l'art." In \textit{La Confession d'un enfant du siècle}, Octave and Brigitte decide not to travel to Florence which is "triste, c'est le moyen âge encore vivant au milieu de nous" with its
fenêtres grillées et cette affreuse couleur brune dont les maisons sont toutes salies." 240

Musset wrote a "Jeanne d'Arc" (1859) and a "Charles Quint au monastère de Saint-Just" (published in 1859, but one of his first poèmes de jeunesse), as well as a Shakespearian-influenced play André del Sarto (1833) which is set in the Renaissance, but there is nothing medieval about these works. His only historical drama, Lorenzaccio (1834), considered the masterpiece of French Romantic theater, uses the Renaissance period as an affirmation of contemporary political bias: "Côme de Médicis' speech, the last words of the play, echoes the early "platform" of Louis-Philippe in a sincere, non-pejorative manner—and it is precisely Philippe Strozzi who incarnates le bien in Lorenzaccio, as opposed to le mal which Alexandre Médicis represents. 241 These are, in fact, the two sides of the coin with which Musset identified: the ideal to which he nevertheless somehow aspired, and the harsh reality. One must concur with Maurice Rat: Lorenzaccio is still a vehicle for the exposition of the moi of Musset himself; and despite its historical accuracy, the history related is really a subjective one. 242

In the Lettres de Dupois et Cotonet, published between 1836-1837 in the Revue des Deux Mondes, Musset again observes the medievalism of his own time with tongue-in-cheek. When Louis XVIII died (in 1824),

Le moyen âge était alors très bien portant, et à peu près remis de la peur qu'il avait eue de se croire mort pendant trois siècles. Toute la journée on lui tissait des pourpoints, des manches longues, des pièces de velours, des drames et des culottes. 243
For Musset, perhaps the least engaged of all the Romantics, self-identification was the condition sine qua non of his literary muse. That is why his fate was to sombrer: in essence, there never was an attitude, and there never was any medievalism.

Balzac

Apart from occasional use of medieval argot for purposes of local color, the presence of the Middle Ages in the work of those whom we have thus far considered has almost exclusively been found in content. Honoré de Balzac alone of the great writers of his generation attempted to innovate with language in a complete enterprise in a manner relevant to this study, but in a work which does not belong to the series of novels which constitute his Comédie Humaine: the Contes drolatiques. In these stories—decidedly not Romantic (!)—Balzac (1799–1850) hoped to establish himself as the Rabelais of the nineteenth century in a fashion worthy of his inimitable predecessor from the Touraine.

The plan of the Contes drolatiques, in the vein of the Cent Nouvelles nouvelles and Marguerite de Navarre’s Heptaméron, was to compose a hundred stories divided into series of ten as Boccaccio had done in his Decameron; but of the hundred tales projected, only three dixains were published: in 1832, 1833, and 1837. The prologue to the first dixain, written 1830–1831, contains an invocation to Rabelais and demonstrates the scope of Balzac’s undertaking:

Cacy est ung livre de haute digestion, plein de déduicts de grant goust, épicez pour ces goutteuxx très-illustres et beuueurs très-prétieulx auxquels s’adressoyt
neste digne compatriote, esternal honneur de Tourayne, Françoys Rabelois; non que l'autheur ayt l'oultere-
cuydance de vouloir estre aultre chose que bon
Tourangeaud, et entretenir en joye les amplexes lippées
des gens fameux de ce mignon et plantureux païs,
alsoy fertile en cocçu, coquardz et raillardz que pas
ung...244

Composed by a "bon Tourangeaud" who thus opposes a Valois-
Antoulême dynamism to the sterility of the Bourbons, the Contes
drolatiques are of enormous political and literary relevance when
situated in the period following the July Revolution. In a long
article published in February 1831, "Complaintes satiriques sur les
moeurs du temps présent," Balzac protested loudly against "l'espèce
de protestantisme moral" in France and affirmed the "le public demande
à sortir des catacombes où le mènent, de cadavre en cadavre, peintres,
poètes et prosateurs," adding that "c'est faire acte de citoyen que
de s'opposer à cette tartuferie."245 The Contes drolatiques are
Balzac's reaction, stimulated by the July Revolution, against what he
considered a sterility in language prevalent in France since the
foundation of the Académie Française in 1634 by Richelieu, a stagna-
tion which was the result of the Academy's efforts to "épurer" the
French language and maintain it as a static entity. The Grand Siècle
(we recall Boileau's "enfin Malherbe vint...") wanted to
"dégasconner" the French language of all that was superfluous, to
establish le mot juste; to make precise all existing distinctions in
the lexicon, to restrict the number of words and forms employed to
convey an idea, and to eliminate words which were considered too
"realistic" or "disagreeable" in a euphemistic sense. Ironically, it
was another Balzac (J.-L. Guez de, 1594-1654) who was the first to put into practice the principles advocated by Malherbe. The 1789 Revolution contributed greatly to the continuation of these goals by the systematic suppression of patois. Hugo's revolutionary declaration in the Preface to Cromwell, "la langue française n'est point fixée et ne se fixera point," was acclaimed "comme les Tables de la Loi sur le Sinaï" by the young Romantica; but until the overthrow of Charles X the machinery which labored against liberty in art continued to function.

Stimulated by the hopes for the future which the July Revolution offered, the Contes drolatiques—significantly begun in November 1830—advocated a return to the "bon vieux temps" in a quite different sense than we have experienced it thus far: to the originality and potency of a Rabelais, whose lexicon was of such a diversity that no one, not even Hugo, would surpass him, with an accompanying extension of subject matter to include the grivois and that which had been considered "inappropriate," gleaned from the "heures rieuses de bons vieux moynes" in the fabliaux tradition. In the graphic formula of Albert Béguin, Balzac "s'est littéralement grisé de langage ancien" in the Contes drolatiques. The author himself unabashedly proclaimed:

"j'ai eu cure à mon grand despit de sarcler, ès manuscrits, les vieulz mots qui eussent deschiré les aurreilles, esblouy les yeux, rougi les ioues, deschiqueté les lèvres des vierges à braguettes et des vertuz à trois amans; car il faut aussy faire aucunes choses pour les vices de son temps, et la périphrase est bien plus guallante que le mot!"
Balzac even asked "l'Etrangère," Madame Hanska, to refrain from reading the Contes, and when she disregarded his request an anguished Balzac protested her "audacity," explaining:

Il faut si bien connaître notre littérature nationale, la grande, la majestueuse littérature du XVe siècle, si étincelante de génie, si libre d'allure, si vive de mots, qui, dans ce temps, n'étaient pas encore déshonorés, que j'ai peur pour moi.250

In the prologue to the first dixain Balzac anticipated a response from the "critiques enragés"—and it was not long in materializing. The Revue de Paris decried the temerity of the "débauche d'esprit de M. de Balzac," admonishing: "La mère en défendra la lecture à sa fille,"251 while the Revue des Deux Mondes found the tales obscene but not even lecherous, the product of a "débauche réfléchie, froide, calculée et qui n'a rien de libertin."252 The second dixain (1833) elicited a howl from the Revue Britannique that the author "pousse la gaudriole gauloise à son dernier degré d'indécence et d'audace," to the point that he "ferait rougir un dragon" and "étonnerait un roulier."253 Only after Balzac's death were the merits of the Contes drolatiques really recognized. Barbey d'Aurevilly, for example, praised the "naïveté" and "bonhomie" of the tales: "Dans ses Contes, Balzac est donc supérieur, par la continuité du sentiment et le naturel de l'expression, à ce qu'il est dans La Comédie humaine."254 It is obvious that his contemporaries did not recognize that the Contes drolatiques might contain Balzac's hope of liberation from the yoke of tyranny perpetrated by the Restoration.
Balzac's Swedenborgian alter-ego Louis Lambert, who preferred "la pensée à l'action" and analyzed natural laws in order to understand the plethora of phenomena which until that point had remained incoherent to him, wrote of the Middle Ages that

. . . les sorciers, les possédés, les gens à seconde vue et les démoniaques de toute espèce, ces victimes du Moyen-Age étaient l'objet d'explications si naturelles, que souvent leur simplicité me parut être le chachet de la vérité.255

It was the Balzac who identified with his protagonist Eugène Rastignac, too committed to the present and future, too harrassed by the exigencies of everyday life and the fight for survival to be attracted to an artificial Middle Ages in his own time, who composed the Contes drolatiques.

Ever the realist, Balzac could only have been inspired by the realistic in the past. He believed it a "chose patriotique en dyable de publier une drame de joyeulsetz":256 in this respect he revived an integral part of the Middle Ages and Renaissance which had been ignored far too long, and contributed in a most unique way to keeping the spirit of this time before the public eye. Balzac alone worked with language: this is the extent of his "medievalism."
Notes to Chapter III


2 Although Barante's Histoire des Duca de Bourgogne was allegedly written with impartiality, his political use of the "neo-feudal" period inherent at the time in which he situates his work is less than problematic. See discussion in Chapter two above.


6 Ibid., pp. 168-69.

7 Ibid., p. 171.

8 Journal des Débats, 27 November 1817, quoted in Larat, p. 173.

9 Milner, Le Romantisme I, p. 87.


11 Dorothy W. Doolittle, The Relations between Literature and Mediaeval Studies in France from 1820 to 1860, Ph.D. dissertation, Bryn Mawr College, 1931 (Bryn Mawr: By the Author, 1933), p. 11. (This work was of negligible use in this study since, apart from its different orientation, it overlooks many areas and treats others marginally.)


14 Ibid., 3:4.

15 Ibid., 3:5.

17 Quoted in Larat, p. 187.

18 Nodier, review of *Blanche d'Evreux* by Mme Pétrie-Candelle, which appeared in *La Quotidienne*, 4 March 1824, quoted in Larat, p. 162.


21 Larat, p. 445.


23 Ibid., 1:xij.

24 *La Quotidienne*, 23 August 1826, quoted in Schenck, p. 48.

25 See Schenck's chapter "Les trois essais de Nodier postérieurs à la Préface," pp. 113-23. We will return to this question in our discussion of Victor Hugo.


28 Ibid., 1:xvij-xxiv.


31 The *Muse française* failed in 1824, following Chateaubriand’s forced resignation from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs because of the machinations of Villèle (head of the royalist *ultras*).

32 Larat, p. 399.


Hugo, Oeuvres poétiques, ed. Albouy, 1:528-29.

Patricia A. Ward, The Medievalism of Victor Hugo (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1975), p. 27. Cf. Robert F. Cook's review of this book in Nineteenth-Century French Studies 7 (1978):289-91. The writer concurs with Professor Cook's assessment that, "despite numerous clear and sensible allusions to Hugo's assimilations and misunderstandings... Ward never seems to come to grips systematically with the question of what one actually discovers in Hugo under the medieval label." For the purposes of this study, the book was certainly useful, but not indispensable, as it only analyses the surface evolution of Hugo's medievalism.


Zumthor's highly interesting, semiotically oriented essay ("Le Moyen Age de Victor Hugo") concentrates on the "énorme imagerie moyenâgeuse" which makes Hugo's Middle Ages for him a "défrisée démodée--mais pas de rideaux," an "idée force, émanée d'elle-même." He perceives four layers of successive or simultaneous motivation behind Hugo's propensity for the Middle Ages: anecdotal and rhetorical (which dominate his work); thematic (after 1830); and the deep psychological layers which consist of personal obsessions (a vehicle for the other categories at first, later blending with them). Once animate, situated in history in a metaphorical sense, and placed in a subjective perspective, the images become allegory for Zumthor. He classifies the lexicon into three general categories: 1) "mots décoratifs"—words with semantic architectural attribute, such as belfroi, salle d'armes and technical terms like arceaux; terminology with suggestive connotation as têtes de granit, ruines; and words having general meaning as manoir, château, tour; 2) "mots typiques"—those with emotional connotation, such as amour, aimer, joie, souffrance, and sensorial words as funèbre, ténébre, noir; and 3) words with moral resonance, such as vieux, guerrier, infâme, etc. Among the Ballades, he finds "Le Mêlée" and "Les Deux Archers" the most heavily charged with "mots décoratifs."

Hugo, Oeuvres poétiques, ed. Albouy, 1:343-44.
42 Ibid., 1:475-76.
43 Ibid., 1:279.
46 Barrère, 1:114.
48 Gautier, Histoire du romantisme, p. 5.
49 Schenck (pp. 108-23) alleges that Nodier's "fantastique" is Hugo's "grotesque"; that the essay "Du Fantastique en littérature" is "presque une récapitulation des idées de la Préface, mais Nodier avait bien le droit de s'en servir après Hugo. Elles lui avaient appartenu d'abord" (p. 114).
50 La Quotidienne, 1 November 1829, quoted in Schenck, pp. 115-16.
51 Hugo, Oeuvres complètes: Correspondance, 1:460.
52 Larat, p. 408.
53 Hugo, Oeuvres poétiques, ed. Alouiny, 1:579.
54 Ward, Medievalism, p. 33.
55 Zumthor, "Le Moyen Age," p. iii.
57 Ward, Medievalism, pp. 5, 65.
58 Ibid., p. 58.
60 Baschet, p. 190.
61 Dédéyan, Victor Hugo, 1:523.


64 Ibid.

65 Ibid., p. 684.

66 Ibid., p. 706.

67 Ibid., p. 685.


70 Ibid.

71 Ward, Medievalism, p. 68.

72 Hugo, Oeuvres dramatiques, ed. Bouvet, p. 685.

73 Berret, pp. 11, and 27, n. 2.


75 Berret, p. 387.

76 Hugo, "Les Chevaliers errants," in his Légende, ed. Truchet, p. 211.

77 Zumthor, "Le Moyen Age," p. xxi.


79 Berret, pp. 76-77.

80 The expression is that of Ward, Medievalism, p. 6.


84Ibid., p. 75.

85Mérimée first frequented the salon of Delécluze in March 1825, when he read parts of Clara Gazul prior to its publication. See Baschet.


88Ibid.


90Augustin Filon, Mérimée et ses amis (Paris: Hachette, 1894), pp. 41-42.

91Quoted in Trahard, 1:319.

92Ibid., 1:309.


94Raitt, p. 86.

95Mérimée's letter of 16 December 1829 to Albert Stapfer, quoted in Filon, p. 43.

96Journal des Débats, 30 April 1829, review of Mérimée's Chronique du règne de Charles IX, quoted in Trahard, 2:11.

97Mérimée, letter of 15 August 1859 to Mme de la Rochejacquelin, quoted in Trahard, 2:392.

98See David Daiches, 1948 Introduction to Walter Scott, Heart of Midlothian (New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1969), p. viii. In Scott's Quentin Durward (1823), although the unscrupulous treachery of Louis XI is depicted, Scott demonstrates an understanding for the role of the King with regard to the Dukes of Burgundy; his victory over Charles the Bold and the end of the anachronistic feudal system in Burgundy is not seen as nefarious.

99Filon, p. 44.

100Journal des Débats, 5 March 1829, quoted in Trahard, 2:16.


Raitt, p. 89.

Mérimée, Chronique, ch. 18, pp. 229-30.

Ibid., ch. 22, p. 289.

Ibid., ch. 27, p. 356.


Quoted in Léon, pp. 295-96.

Ph. Burty, L'Age du Romantisme, quoted in Filon, pp. 121-22.

Venturi, p. 163. He does not include Mérimée, however, in his chapter "Romanticism and the Middle Ages."


Ibid., p. 65.

Ibid., p. 58.


Ibid., p. 21.
119 Henri Martineau, "Avertissement" to his edition of Stendhal, 

120 Quoted in Henri Martineau, *Le Coeur de Stendhal: histoire de 
1:423. Foscolo's *I sepolcri* (1806-7) asked all Italians to rise from 
their graves and fight for Italian independence.

121 Victor Del Litto, *La Vie intellectuelle de Stendhal: genèse 
et évolution de ses idées, 1802-1821* (Paris: Presses Universitaires, 
1959), pp. 613-55, for a discussion of Stendhal's manuscript of the 
unpublished and subsequently destroyed "L'Italie en 1818."

122 Martineau ("Notes" to his edition of Stendhal, *De l'Amour*, 
p. 422, n. 56) has observed that Stendhal never better defined "la 
double tendance de son esprit ... qui le portait à la fois à bâtir un 
système logique et à s'appuyer constamment sur son expérience sentimentale 
et sur la rêverie."

123 Stendhal, *De l'Amour*, ed. Martineau, ch. 5, p. 16.

124 Ibid., ch. 59, pp. 231-33.

125 Ibid., ch. 41, p. 140.

126 Brombert, p. 42.


128 Ibid., p. 183.

129 Ibid.

130 Del Litto, p. 676.

131 Martineau, *Coeur*, 1:405.

pt. 1, 26:xxi.

133 Ibid.

134 Ibid., pt. 1, 26:346.

135 Ibid., pt. 1, 26:347.

136 Ibid., pt. 1, 26:356.

137 Ibid., pt. 3, 28:172.
138Ibid., pt. 1, 26:313.
139Ibid., pt. 1, 26:315.
140Ibid., pt. 1, 26:311.
141Ibid., pt. 1, 26:60-61.
142Ibid., pt. 1, 26:327.
143Ibid., pt. 1, 26:347. Such a dictionary soon became available, for instance, Viollet-le-Duc's Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XIe au XVIe siècle, 10 vols. (1854-1869).
145For a discussion of medieval architecture and society under the Second Empire, see Dakuyna, pp. 44-91.
146Gautier, Histoire du Romantisme, pp. 99, 93, 98.
147Ibid., p. 5.
148Ibid., p. 93.
149Edmond de Goncourt attributes to Gautier the following: "Je suis une victime des révolutions. Lors des glorieuses de juillet, mon père était très légitimiste, et il a joué à la hausse sur les Ordonnances. Vous pensez comme ça a réussi. Nous avons tout perdu: quinze mille livres de rente. J'étais destiné à entrer dans la vie en homme heureux, en homme de loisir; il a fallu gagner sa vie." (Preface to Émile Bergerat, Ça que je tiens à dire, p. xiv, quoted in Jasinski, p. 64.
152Ibid.
153Ibid., 1:32.
154Ibid., 1:77.
155Ibid., 1:45.
Ibid., 1:19.

Jasinski, pp. 42, 53.

Ibid., pp. 70-80.

Ibid., p. 77. Bénichou (Le Sacre, p. 428, n. 36) notes that it received the label of Jeune-France from an article in Le Figaro, 10 September 1831.

Bénichou, Le Sacre, p. 461.


Ibid., p. 198.

Ibid., p. 201.

Jasinski, p. 81.

Dakyns, p. 111. Her discussion of Gautier, however, cannot be termed an analysis, as it remains on a surface level.

Gautier, Histoire du romantisme, p. 53.

Jasinski (p. 89) relates that one evening at the Petit Moulin-Rouge cabaret, after having improvised a ronde on the rhyme of "go" or "goth" supplied by Hugo to the point that all possible rhymes were exhausted, the Jeunes-France invented words at random; the word "bousingo," particularly current because young Republicans after the 1830 Revolution were called "bousingots" (deriving from the "chapeau de cuir verni" which they wore), led them to invent a new song with a refrain that was quite alarming to the bourgeois present in the cabaret: "nous avons fait du bousingo" or "nous ferons du bousingo." The Jeunes-France, who abhorred banality and everything bourgeois, were of course delighted. Paul Robert attests that the word bousin (1808), from the English "to bozos," came to mean "cabaret" or "mauvais lieu," adding more significance to this jeu de mots.


172Quoted in Dakyns, pp. 111-12.

173Ibid., p. 112.


176Ibid., p. 159.


178La Revue des Deux Mondes, 20 December 1833; later used as a preface to editions of Dumas's complete theatrical works, as in his Théâtre complet, ed. Bassan, 1:49.

179Ibid., 1:47.


181Parigot, p. 55.


183Anquetil (1723-1806) composed his Histoire de France (1803) when he was eighty years old, at the invitation of Bonaparte.

184G. Lanson, Histoire illustrée, 2:38.


187Parigot, p. 429.


189Gautier, Histoire du romantisme, p. 79.


192 Parigot, p. 275.


202 Ibid., p. 1451.

203 Ibid., p. 1466.


205 Léon, p. 297.


207 Ibid., 6: 129.

208 Ibid., 6: 131.

Ibid.,

Ibid.,

Héloïse was abbess at this Benedictine abbey founded by Abélard in 1129. When he died in 1142, he was buried there, joined by his wife 22 years later. In 1792, when the Paraclet was sold as ecclesiastical property, the city of Nogent accepted their mortal remains; from there, they were transferred to Lenoir's museum.

Lamartine, *Vies*, in his *Oeuvres complètes*, 25:42-43. At the end of this essay, Lamartine accredits the research of three persons (Jung, Schneegans, and Dédot) with the material on which he based his narrative.

Ibid., 25:85.


Ibid., p. 148.

Ibid., p. 150.

Ibid., p. 115.

Ibid., p. 118.

Ibid., p. 305, notes.

Ibid., p. 306, notes.

Ibid.

Ibid., p. 152.


Alfred de Vigny, 1827 Preface to his *Cinq mars; ou, Une Conjugation sous Louis XIII*, in his *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 2, ed. Fernand Baldensperger (Paris: Callimard, 1948), p. v. This is from his treatise
"Reflexions sur la vérité dans l'art," which was added to the third edition (published by Balzac).


229 Ibid., 2:883 (6 November 1826).

230 Alfred de Musset, Letter of 31 March 1837 to Aimée d'Alton (with whom he had an affair that year and who later became the wife of his brother Paul), quoted in his La Confession d'un enfant du siècle, ed. Maurice Allem (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1968), p. xxxvii.


236 Ibid., p. 94.


241 Cf. Musset's latter praise of the King as a courageous "roi populaire / Qu'on voit depuis huit ans sans crainte et sans colère, / En pilote hardi nous montrer le chemin." ("Sur la naissance du Comte de Paris," 28 August 1838, in his Poésies complètes, ed. Allem, p. 368.)


249 Balzac, Prologue to *Contes drolatiques*, ed. Massant, in *Oeuvres complètes*, 18:140.


CHAPTER IV

SCIENTIFIC APPROACHES TO THE MIDDLE AGES

The Romantic Middle Ages, we have seen, reflect a state of constant fluctuation, largely influenced by political events in France. The genre troubadour found its way into the work of most of the noteworthy young Romantics: Hugo, Gautier, Lamartine, Musset, Vigny, and—because of his interest in chivalry—their mentor Nodier. A concomitant interest in preserving national monuments was fostered by Nodier, Hugo, then Mérimée, stemming from the recognition that medieval architecture represented the soul of France: a new nationalism was born. But just as soon, a reaction against the neomedievalism or pseudomedievalism in vogue, fostered by repression under the Restoration, combined with a political manipulation of the Middle Ages in a metaphorical and realistic sense: Mérimée (always an extrinsic observer of the Middle Ages), Hugo, Balzac, and Musset rejected the ideal Middle Ages. The July Revolution, "les Trois Glorieuses," in essence sounded the death knell for the ideal Middle Ages; and like the mère-Eglise of the medieval sotte, the Middle Ages was stripped of its outer garb and stood nude, with all its defects apparent.

The Middle Ages, which had represented a religious or personal ideal, became in turn carliste and Republican, traditional and liberal, or non-political at all, as we have observed in the Petit Cénacle. Dumas
wrote historical dramas because they were in vogue, while Stendhal investigated chivalric love for the sake of love, not chivalry. With the liberation of Greece in 1827, interest in the Gothic abated as the classical ideal of Antiquity began to cast aspersions on Gothic architecture.

The Romantic Middle Ages, in short, became a literary theme in which most of the Romantics found some elements which allowed for self-identification. The Middle Ages became many things: less and less a picturesque entity, more and more a metaphorical political extension of the period for those who did not choose to refute the anachronism. But the Middle Ages in the literature of the Romantic movement was not solely responsible for the continued interest in the Middle Ages which characterizes the nineteenth century: the same circles in which the literary giants of the time moved gave evidence of a new discernment with regard to the medieval period. Scientific interest in the Middle Ages, dating back to the late Renaissance scholars, intensified; and although a posteriori historicity in literature is not characteristic of the Romantic movement, scholarly investigation remained constant in spite of flux and reflux which occurred within the movement itself vis-à-vis the Middle Ages. The contributions of Fauriel, Ampère, Sainte-Beuve, Michelet, and Thierry stand as a harbinger of the drive for empiricism with respect to the Middle Ages which crystallized in the second half of the century.

Fauriel

"Fauriel est, sans contredit, l'homme du siècle qui a mis en circulation le plus d'idées, inauguré le plus de branches d'études et
aperçu, dans l'ordre des travaux historiques, le plus de résultats nouveaux," Renan said in 1855 of this exceptionally brilliant man who, more than any other of his time, advanced the cause of the Middle Ages on a scientific level and brought it before the public eye. The work of Claude Fauriel, rare for his period in its exactitude, coupled with his universal curiosity, makes him a precursor of modern science; and none less than Augustin Thierry referred to him with reason as "le père de la réforme historique."

A native of Saint-Étienne, but with ancestry in the Ardèche, his heritage played not a small part in the scope of his orientation. From his knowledge of Occitan he developed an interest in all Romance languages, and ultimately knew all of the Indo-European languages including Sanskrit except choles of the Slavic branch—certainly an incredible achievement.

It is little known that Fauriel (1772-1844) was employed in the secretariat under Fouché, Bonaparte's minister of police, a position which he renounced due to Republican pride in 1802; it is mentioned here because it helps to situate Fauriel in Paris at this time. In actuality, the elusive bachelor from the Midi and the widow of Condorcet began their twenty-year liaison at around this period (i.e. 1800-1802); at this time he wrote to a friend that the foreigners whom he found in Paris were more original thinkers and had more simplicity of character than he was accustomed to expect, and that he found "plusieurs de ce genre dans la société de Mme de Staël qui est celle que je fréquente le plus et une de celles où je suis reçu avec le plus d'amitié et d'estime."

In his highly interesting book devoted to Fauriel, J.-B. Galley
has briefly outlined the intellectual movements prevalent in France and located in Paris, from the Revolution of 1789 to the July Monarchy. It is expedient to enumerate them here, expanding Galley's comments, in order to determine in which milieux Fauriel moved. In Chapter Two we have already discussed the rivalry between the salon d'Auteuil, centering around the widow of Helvétius—a salon which may be qualified as conservative due to its Enlightenment orientation—and the strong liberal and republican opposition to it found in the salon of Madame de Staël. Galley includes Cabanis, the doctor of materialist principles (and adoptive son of the widow of Helvétius) in the former, as well as Antoine Destutt de Tracy (the philosopher who replaced Cabanis in the Académie Française in 1809), and other lettrés. Since Cabanis was the brother-in-law of the Marquise of Condorcet, and since she compiled and published the complete works of her famous philosopher-mathematician husband with the latter's collaboration, Fauriel was certainly exposed to the ideas expressed in this intellectual circle by virtue of his association with her. We have seen, however, that he also frequented the salon of Madame de Staël; furthermore, he maintained a sincere admiration for her. It was here that he became the friend of Benjamin Constant and made the acquaintance of Pierre Daunou, an historian, archiviste, and founder of the Institut.

A third literary group, which Fauriel did not frequent, had as its leader Chateaubriand. Following the young émigré's return to France he was active in the salon of his dear and faithful friend Pauline de Beau- mont, who even accompanied him to Paris for his reconciliation with Bonaparte in 1803; but his own literary circle, in which he read parts of the
Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe, was formed at a later time.³

Young liberals geared to historical doctrine and philosophy, "aristocrats of the mind," formed a fourth group: these included Thierry, Guizot, Victor Cousin, Thiers, and Mignet. Of these, Thierry and Cousin in particular were close friends of Fauriel; Thierry even traveled with him to the south of France in 1825, and Cousin considered him "notre maître à tous."⁴

Lastly, we may consider a group of medievalists interested in history at around the time of the July Revolution, some obviously much before this time: Raynouard, Pardessus, Hauréan, Guérard, Victor Le Clerc, Littré. We have previously discussed Raynouard's theories with respect to the Occitan language and literature; it is appropriate at this time to note that Fauriel's historical perspective with regard to Occitan preceded that of Raynouard, a fact attested to by Raynouard himself.⁵

According to Galley, Fauriel's work led him in two directions: toward philology and the history of early literature, and toward a history of the civilization of the Midi; his conclusions unfortunately led to his classification as a méridional "un peu en marge des historiens de France."⁶ He explained the civilization of the Midi by the fact that Greek and Roman education had left its imprint there: the Franks, according to Fauriel, brought only ruin and destruction to Gaul; but the Gallo-Roman spirit resisted because the Midi was more Latin, and because the Franks only penetrated the Midi on expeditions of conquest.⁷ The Middle Ages, for Fauriel's expansive mind, formed a large part of this perspective.

In 1830 a chair was created for Fauriel in foreign languages and
literatures at the Sorbonne at the instigation of Jean de Broglie (husband of Albertine de Staël), and from December 1830 until July 1832 Fauriel offered a course on Provençal poetry which was to earn him remarkable acclaim. It is extremely regrettable that of this course only two mémoires remain: an article published in the Revue des Deux Mondes which was written by Fauriel himself, and a résumé of the course attributed to Jules Mohl (actually by Madame Jules Mohl, Mary Clarke, who attended the course and who maintained sentimental ties with Fauriel until his death). Renan has perhaps best expressed the fate of most of Fauriel's research:

Ce fut le sort de M. Fauriel de devancer sur presque tous les points des investigations de la critique moderne vers le vaste champ de l'histoire littéraire et de ne recueillir presque jamais, aux yeux du public, le bénéfice de ses créations. Passioné pour la recherche, plus soucieux de trouver que de mettre en oeuvre, il reculait trop souvent devant le pénible travail de la composition, et, entraîné par son ardente curiosité, il ne songeait guère à se faire lui-même l'interprète de ses propres découvertes. 8

In 1836 Fauriel was made a member of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, and the same year his Histoire de la Gaule méridionale sous la domination des conquérants germains was also published. Although articles and translations and several works of smaller magnitude were published, this remains the only principal work in his plan of vast design which ever reached print in his lifetime. But the material which he contributed to the Histoire littéraire de France, published after his death, contains an enormous amount of his work: volume 22 alone, published in 1895, contains his articles on the Troubadours (pp. 167-258) and Trouvères (pp. 259-946). Fauriel loaned out his texts; and although he wrote out all of the lessons which he ever prepared for delivery and
never improvised, the greater part of what this brilliant man had to offer has been lost forever.

Nevertheless, he contributed in a most unique manner to the continuity of interest in the Middle Ages on a scientific level in France: the Middle Ages would remain in the minds of those connected with academe. Even more importantly, Faúrriel was in the avant-garde of the positivistic approach to the Middle Ages which characterized the second half of the nineteenth century. For the first time impeccable scholarship combined with a genuine understanding of the periods in question and an appreciation for all that the Middle Ages could offer to erudite in literature, linguistics, and history. These qualities allowed the Middle Ages to come alive in a realistic way.

_Ampère_

"Comparer, c'est comprendre," Jean-Jacques Ampère believed. This he did, devoting his life to history and literature, especially that of the Middle Ages. His star rose rapidly: a course which he offered on the history of poetry, given at the Athénée at Marseilles in 1830, focused attention on him and his new approach to literature. Ampère (1800-1864) was a comparatist both within his own literature and extrinsic to it: of Shakespeare, for example, he said that one should look for the "vieux théâtre anglais qui l'a précédé et toute la poésie du moyen Âge qui l'a préparé." For Ampère absolute originality was an impossibility: everything had to be situated, in a temporal fashion. Doubtless he would have elicited a violent reaction from modern structuralist critics with the statement: "Un poème n'est pas un cadavre qu'il faille dissaquer froide-ment, une machine qui n'offre d'autre intérêt que la disposition de ses
rouages; c'est un ouvrage d'art qu'il faut contempler dans son ensemble et qui est appelé à nous donner l'impression du beau."\textsuperscript{10}

Ampère became a highly respected replacement for Faurel and François Villemain in their courses at the Sorbonne during the years 1831-1832. In his course "De la littérature française dans ses rapports avec les littératures étrangères au moyen âge" (1832-1833), Ampère reiterated his comparatist view: "la littérature française n'a pas été sans rapport avec les autres littératures. . . notre langue n'a pas exercé une moindre influence en Europe que nos moeurs, nos idées et nos armes. De leur côté, les lettres étrangères ont agi sur nous à plusieurs reprises: faire l'histoire de cette mutuelle influence, en déterminer les causes, en apprécier les résultats, tel est le sujet de recherches qui m'a semblé concilier le mieux et la nature de ce cours et la direction de mes études."\textsuperscript{11} Ampère upheld Faurel's theory that the literature of the North of France was inspired by the poetry of the Midi;\textsuperscript{12} in addition, he advanced that the "génie chevaleresque" extended from France to the countries of the North. His courses brought the Middle Ages to the attention of both auditors and readers: he proclaimed that chivalric poetry "forme la portion la plus considérable, la plus originale et, à quelques égards, la plus intéressante de la littérature du moyen âge."\textsuperscript{13} Chivalry, for Ampère, was not a phenomenon restricted to France; it was, however, Christian in its "complete" sense. He animated the past through the use of penetrating images: "Si l'on comparait la chevalerie à un grand arbre, Villehardouin en serait la racine et le tronc, Joinville la fleur, Froissart le feuillage."\textsuperscript{14}

His lectures attracted numerous literary persons: Sainte-Beuve,
for example, attended his lectures at the Ecole Normale and was a regular auditor at his lectures at the Collège de France in 1834 and thereafter; the latter's "Origine de la langue française" in the Premiers Lundis owes a great debt to his friend Ampère. Reading the pages of Ampère's presentations, one is struck by his little reliance upon the theories of others and the verve and brilliance of his rhetoric and the communicability of his enthusiasm. He is not afraid to attack where no one has dared to question before:

L'influence de la chevalerie sur les imaginations et les âmes se continue lors même que la chevalerie cesse d'exister; cette influence survit au moyen âge. Supprimez la chevalerie de l'histoire, et . . . vous aurez retranché de notre gloire dramatique la plupart des chefs-d'oeuvre de Corneille et de Racine, vous aurez enlevé à Voltaire Zaïre et Tancredé.15

He attributes a medieval influence on the Grand Siècle which no one has dared to suggest previously:

Le siècle de Louis XIV n'a pas su combien ce moyen âge qu'il connaissait peu a fourni de matériaux à ses œuvres immortelles; il n'a pas su par quel chemin lui est arrivé cet ensemble de sentiments, d'idées, de poésie qu'il a mis si admirablement en œuvre; il est naturel aux grands siècles comme aux grands artistes de s'ignorer eux-mêmes, de ne vouloir connaître que l'inspiration qui les conduit, de ne pas savoir, et de ne pas se soucier de savoir à quelle source puisse leur génie.16

The Revolution, by its obliteration of the past, "a frappé tout ce qui venait de lui, dans la littérature et dans la société, et la chevalerie comme le reste." Only once, since the Revolution, has a voice been raised "comme un harmonieux écho de la poésie chevaleresque dans le Dernier des Abencerrages [sic]; but since 1830 "tout s'enfonce avec une effrayante rapidité. . . . Les derniers restes de la chevalerie se sont abîmés dans ce grand naufrage; elle-même ne trouve plus d'expression dans la littérature."17
Ampère defined three medieval periods which correspond to the three centuries which he perceives as the Middle Ages. The twelfth century for him is heroic, the time of the epic; the thirteenth century, "plus polie, plus élégante, est représentée par celui qui en est l'historien, ou plutôt l'aimable conteur, Joinville; c'est le temps des fabliaux, c'est le temps où naissent les diverses branches du Roman de Renart, c'est-à-dire ce que la littérature française a produit de plus achevé, comme art, au moyen âge." The fourteenth century, pedantic and prosaic, saw the introduction of chivalric feelings in prose: "l'idéal de la chevalerie déchéoit et se dégrade," to be revived briefly by Froissart before it fades away. To these three literary stages, Ampère equates three periods within Gothic architecture: strong and majestic, elegant and nearing perfection, ornate and flamboyant. Chivalry has not only affected the outer world, it has also enormously influenced "la civilisation intérieure" or "la civilisation psychologique du moyen âge."19

In every course, Ampère had new insights to offer, striking observations to proffer: Boileau, for example, must never have read Villon: he proves it by the verses "Villon, l'un des premiers, /Debrouillera l'art /confus de nos vieux romanciers." He dismisses Boileau's prejudices with a "Villon n'a pas plus de rapport avec les vieux romanciers français que Béranger avec Walter Scott."20 Comparative literature, considered today as a modern discipline, was already a fait accompli for Ampère. "Il faut donc pour goûter un poète se dépayser entièrement, et s'établir par l'imagination dans le cercle d'habitudes au sein duquel il a vécu... Madame de Sévigné est un excellent commentaire de Racine, et le château de Kenilworth de W. Scott une fort bonne préparation à Shakespeare."21
In addition to his professorial activities, Ampère published the *Histoire littéraire de la France avant le XIIe siècle* (1839) and the *Introduction à l'histoire de la littérature au moyen âge* (1841); he was appointed to the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres in 1842, six years after Fauriel. In essence, Ampère did for French literature of the Middle Ages what Fauriel did for the Midi and the poetry of the troubadours, always conserving a liberty of judgment and independence of mind. In the words of Ampère: "Je crois qu'il est bon de connaître d'où l'on vient pour savoir où l'on va."²²

**Sainte-Beuve**

Sainte-Beuve's indebtedness to Ampère with respect to knowledge about medieval literature was quite substantial. Of the lectures which he attended at the Ecole Normale and later at the Collège de France (1834), Sainte-Beuve later wrote in the *Nouveaux Lundis*: "J'étais un auditeur fidèle de ces cours et je dois dire que bien qu'appartenaient moi-même à très peu près à la même génération, je suis à certains égards un élève d'Ampère. Combien n'ai-je point eu à profiter de lui!"²³ [italics by Sainte-Beuve]. But their methodology differed radically: as Sainte-Beuve himself would remark privately, "Ampère étudie l'histoire littéraire par couches et par zones; je l'étudie plutôt par individus que je rapporte ensuite à des groupes."²⁴ Raphaël Molho has called to our attention the fact that Sainte-Beuve used the seventeenth century as a method of expression, transforming proper names of the Grand Siècle into symbols in order to arrive at rapid conclusions: thus Boileau for Sainte-Beuve meant satirical verve, Bossuet signified grandeur, La Rochefoucauld
represented moral pessimism, La Bruyère coupled precision with moral judgment, La Fontaine equaled realistic wisdom and pragmatism, and Fénelon was equated with "douceur idéaliste un peu chimérique,\(^{25}\) these judgments also extended to other disciplines, applying the same formulae. This "symbolism" constitutes Sainte-Beuve's approach to criticism: as Molho has remarked elsewhere, "tout texte beuvien possède son symbole, symbole global qui a précédé l'analyse détaillée de chaque sujet d'étude et qui en domine le développement."\(^{26}\) All relationships to centuries other than the seventeenth are thus nevertheless found in the interior of the latter; "toujours le nom connu, le nom classique, sert à donner du prix au moins connu."\(^{27}\)

We know that this was not always the case with Sainte-Beuve, and this distinction colors the manner in which he perceived the Middle Ages in a given period of time. Closely associated with Victor and Adèle Hugo in the days of the Cénacle, Sainte-Beuve passed through a period of Romanticism before becoming an empiricist; in 1843 the Journal des Savants appropriately referred to his positivism as a "passion refroidie."\(^{28}\)

In essence, the Sainte-Beuve of the Vie, Poésies et Pensées de Joseph Delorme (1829), Les Consolations (1830) and Volupté (1834) returned to principles of classical perfection and the concept of a beau idéal. But in his youth in Paris, we recall that Sainte-Beuve was a member of the Globe coterie with Mérimée, Ampère, and others to whom we have previously referred; the Globe, we recall, was founded in 1824 to oppose the Mémorial catholique (established by two priests during the same year to proclaim the independence of church and state). At the
instigation of Daunou, a fellow Picardian who had even been born in the same city (Boulogne-sur-Mer), Sainte-Beuve devoted himself to the preparation of a Tableau historique et critique de la poésie française au XVIᵉ siècle (1828); it was this work, more than any other, which properly delineated between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance and helped dispel a long-standing literary confusion. In August 1826, the Académie Française had announced the subject for its prix d'éloquence of the following year: a Discours sur l'histoire de la langue et de la littérature françaises depuis le commencement du XVIᵉ siècle jusqu'en 1610. "C'est ce qui donna naissance à l'ouvrage qu'on va lire," Sainte-Beuve advises in the 1838 preface. Gérard de Nerval entered the same competition, but the prize was accorded to neither: the Académie chose to divide it between Philarète Chasles and Saint-Marc Girardin.

In his articles in the Globe Sainte-Beuve had not manifested much admiration for the poets of the Pléiade, an attitude which he reversed in the Tableau historique of 1828. Due to his changing orientation, he reworked his remarks in future editions, expurgating his text of any youthful Romantic tendencies. This is very apparent in the 1842 "Dédicace," wherein he defines the Pléiade as "notre première poésie classique avortée"; but in 1829, Sainte-Beuve still neglected the classicists: he even commented of the great theorist of the Grand Siècle that "Boileau ne voyait guère dans une cathédrale que de gros chanoines et un lutrin." 30

Whatever tender feelings he might still have had for the Middle Ages and its fleeting association with his youth prior to the 1848 Revolution disappeared at that time. During the year 1848-1849 he taught at Liège, where he offered a "Cours d'ancienne littérature" consisting of
sixty-seven lessons of which twenty-four concentrated on the Middle Ages; the course also devoted almost as much time to the Renaissance period, and again as much to the seventeenth century. At this time, it has been established, Sainte-Beuve did not have a firm command of the literature of the Middle Ages; he asked Edelstand Duméril, a specialist in medieval literature, for advice. Not surprisingly, in a letter to Duméril two months before the commencement of his course, Sainte-Beuve commented: "il ne faut pas être trop arrière et ne pas retarder trop honteusement sur les connaissances récemment acquises." He labored assiduously to compile the material for his course, and later developed his Causeries du lundi from this reservoir. As he felicitously expressed it at that time, "Mes Causeries n'ont été que la monnaie de ce que j'avais amassé pendant ma retraite d'une année et de ce que j'aurais tôt ou tard donné en un volume, mais il m'a été bien commode de trouver aussitôt un aussi facile débit."

It has been noted that in 1854 Sainte-Beuve defended French Crusaders of the twelfth century against Daunou's Voltairian denigration of them in his Histoire littéraire de la France (1832), and that in 1860 he expressed a regret that Romantic poets did not have the chansons de geste at their disposal; but such statements do not constitute a positive reaction, as has been claimed: "Au lieu de se créer un Moyen Âge de fantaisie et presque tout d'imagination," Sainte-Beuve contended, "on aurait pu . . . sauver, ressaisir, reproduire et remettre en circulation bien des beautés caractéristiques, sobres et mâles." It is thus clear that by mid-century Sainte-Beuve categorically rejected the ideal Romantic Middle Ages. This is also apparent in his Chateaubriand et son groupe
littéraire sous l'Empire (1860), which he developed from another course
offered at the University of Liège:

L'année 1848 a été une année folle et fatale. Puisque le
monde était en démence, j'ai saisi ce moment aussi de faire mes
follies à moi, c'a été d'aller dans un pays ami vivre toute une
année avec les illustres et aimables morts, Villehardouin, Join-
ville, Froissart, Comynes, Montaigne, tous en foule et à la
fois, jusqu'à Buffon et Chateaubriand; de les accueillir en moi,
de les entendre, de les interpréter, de me mêler plus intimente
que jamais à eux et d'oublier, s'il se pouvait, dans leur com-
merce, les sottises et les misères du présent.35

We then see that the Romantic ideal Middle Ages, a youthful
folly, were at best an échappatoire from the present during Sainte-Beuve's
most formative years. Classicist by taste and temperament, he was always
repulsed by inexactitude and extremes. A modern critic has observed an
"acceptation de la multiplicité des métamorphoses" within Sainte-Beuve,36
which formula may certainly be applied to Sainte-Beuve's reaction to the
Middle Ages. But in final analysis, we may speak with Pierre Moreau of a
"nostalgie de poète, et aussi de romancier" which caused him to look for
the man behind each author. The perfect critic, Sainte-Beuve commented
in one of his Derniers portraits littéraires, is one who "aurait la facul-
té d'être tour à tour, ne fût-ce qu'un moment, artiste dans tous les
genres, et de nous offrir en lui amateur universel."37 Although the Mid-
dle Ages fared quite differently in the works of each, both Sainte-Beuve
and Ampère were ultimately precursors of the twentieth-century focus on
comparative literature.

Historiography underwent a radical change during the Romantic
movement which directly affected the historical perspective of the Middle
Ages. Closely tied to political events and philosophy, the historical view of the Middle Ages which developed in the first part of the nineteenth century cannot be explained without a consideration of what it replaced. The claim by some modern historians that Enlightenment historiography was basically antihistorical derives largely from the eighteenth-century belief in perfectibility, which conceived of history as a process of amelioration in which causality played an objective role in the regular development of civilizations. J. H. Brumfitt refutes this allegation, pointing to the universality of Enlightenment orientation; but he would doubtless agree with Stanley Mellor that "history, for the philosophe, is still largely the dark ages, the Gothic past, an accumulation of errors and misery." Nineteenth-century historians, faced with the problem of explaining the events of 1789 and confronted with the Conservative version of French history which tended to seek the cause of the Revolution in the eighteenth century, tried rather to relate it to the total history of France: in this manner Liberal historiography was born. In the words of Paul Bénichou,

Le libéralisme, et c'est là son originalité, a tendu à faire dépendre de l'intervention du libre vouloir humain cette rencontre des causes et des fins dans le Progrès.

Madame de Staël was one of the first to furnish an historical "deep structure" to the 1789 Revolution: in her *Considerations sur la Révolution française* (1817), she proclaimed that liberty has roots in the past. Nineteenth-century historical theorists, while accepting the assumed doctrine of progress and an "optimistic" conception of history, could not accept the Enlightenment propensity to perceive the past in its own image and judge preceding centuries according to its own system of
values. A new emphasis, a reworking of history, was needed: as Lionel Gossman has remarked, "the value of history for the historian of the Enlightenment had lain not so much in the historical record itself, as in the comments and reflections of the historian."\(^{40}\)

Borrowing Northrup Frye's critical terminology, Hayden White categorizes the Enlightenment treatment of history as essentially "Ironic" in that it maintained a distance between history and fiction; but he adds that "certain of the philosophes, and most notably Voltaire, continued to exercise a profound influence during the period of Romanticism, and Voltaire himself was regarded as an ideal worthy of emulation by even as Romantic an historian as Michelet."\(^{41}\) But while Voltaire has been criticized for a lack of psychological imagination and insight and an inability to understand how actions and thoughts could differ radically from his own,\(^{42}\) Jules Michelet excelled in self-identification with the past in the "Réurrection intégrale" of both men and events. This is where Romantic historiography begins.

**Michelet**

"J'ai défini l'histoire Réurrection," Michelet affirmed in the preface to his *Histoire de France*.\(^{43}\) White explains this "Réurrection" as as historiography explained as metaphor and emplotted in narrative form as Romance, in order to "make sense out of the historical process conceived as a struggle of essential virtue against a virulent, but untimely transitory, vice."\(^{44}\) The only influence actually acknowledged by Michelet was that of the philosopher and founder of the modern discipline of philosophy of history Giambattista Vico, whose *Principi di una scienza*
nuova (1725) he translated in 1827: "Je n'eus de maître que Vico. Son
principi de la force vive, de l'humanité qui se crée, fit et mon livre
et mon enseignement." Vico's motto, "l'humanité est son oeuvre à
elle-même," was adopted by Michelet and incorporated into the 1865 pre-
face to his *Histoire de France*. The doctrine of "Résurrection intégrale"
of the past is an expression of Michelet's faith in action and in the
future, from which it ensues that, as one critic has expressed it,
history for him becomes a manifesto: a "call for action which can create
a better future." Gaëton Picon concurs:

Si l'histoire est l'esprit comme praxis, et s'il n'y a pas d'action
possible sans une conscience du passé, ni de conscience du passé
qui ne débouche sur un acte, c'est à la fois parce que le passé
manifeste le travail d'une force qui nous assure que tout peut être
transformé, et parce que cette force est loin d'avoir terminé son
oeuvre.

Like Vico in his theory of corsi-ricorsi, Michelet perceived
history in three cyclical stages. Although he would later repudiate
his earlier view, most notably in *La Sorcière* (1862), Vico's "Age of the
Gods" may be seen symbolically as the Middle Ages for Michelet in the
early volumes of the *Histoire de France* (beginning in 1833) and the
*Introduction à l'Histoire universelle* (1831). Roland and the douze pairs
de France, for example, are equated with Christ and the twelve apostles
in the former, and Charlemagne is likened to God: "... comme Christ,
il [Roland] est vendu avec ses douze compagnons; comme Christ, il se voit
abandonné, délaissé. De son calvaire pyrénéen, il crie, il sonne ... 
et le traître Ganelon de Mayence, et l'insouciant Charlemagne ne veulent
point entendre." Michelet's "Age of Heroes" is found in the aristocracy,
while the "Age of Men" would apply to his own democratic period following
His conception of Gothic art and medieval thought as formulated in 1833 affords proof that the Middle Ages may be seen as a static component of such a cycle at that time: "L'art gothique est surhumain. Il est né de la croyance au miraculeux, au poétique, à l'absurde."\(^{51}\) Middle Ages and Christian faith are synonymous for Michelet: "La pensée du Moyen Age . . . est contenu[e] entièrement dans le christianisme";\(^{52}\) but Christianity did not keep its promise: "Le Moyen Age ne pouvait suffire au genre humain."\(^{53}\) In this last sentence will be shown the key to Michelet's evolving interpretation of the Middle Ages which is so representative for his time.

Michelet devoted ten years to the six volumes of the *Histoire du France* which cover the Middle Ages, the inspiration for which he attributed to the "éclair de juillet" of 1830; significantly for his research, it was also at this time that he assumed the direction of the historical section of the National Archives under Daunou. By his own admission, he was the first historian of his time to rely on primary sources for his documentation:

\[\text{Jusqu'en 1830 (même jusqu'en 1836) aucun des historiens remarquables de cette époque n'avait senti encore le besoin de chercher les faits hors des livres imprimés, aux sources primitives, la plupart inédites alors, aux manuscrits de nos bibliothèques, aux documents de nos archives . . . . Aucun historien que je sache, avant mon troisième volume [1837] . . . n'avait fait usage des pièces inédites.}\(^{54}\)

Janine R. Dakyns has amply demonstrated that Michelet's initial attitude toward the Middle Ages underwent a radical transformation over a period of three decades, passing from a tender appreciation and regret to scathing condemnation.\(^ {55}\) To reflect this change, he later expurgated
early editions of the *Histoire de France* of sentimental and idealistic references to the Middle Ages, as may be seen in the following discussion of the Sainte-Chapelle:

2nd edition (1835)
Un monde de religion et de poésie, tout un Orient chrétien est en ces vitraux, fragile et précieuse peinture qu'on néglige trop et que le vent emportera quelque jour . . . . 56

1861 revised edition and subsequent editions
Un monde de religion et de poésie, tout un Orient chrétien est en ces vitraux, dans cette fragile et précieuse peinture. 57

Michelet abandoned the *Histoire de France* for a period of ten years following his treatment of Louis XI, in order to devote his labors exclusively to the *Histoire de la Révolution française* (1847-1853). White attests that, applying Vico's philosophy (although not attributing his conclusions to an influence by Vico), "Michelet located the macro-historical point of resolution at the moment when, during the Revolution, perfect freedom and perfect unity are attained by 'the people' through the dissolution of all the inhibiting forces ranged against it." 58

Michelet's diary entries of the middle 1840s evidence a growing disapprobation with respect to the Middle Ages, coupled with an increasing propensity for realism. In 1846, for example, he wrote: "Mon regret, je ne dis pas mon remords, car j'étais de bonne foi, c'est d'avoir donné l'idéal de cet affreux Moyen Age. Idéal vrai, telle fut sa poésie, son aspiration, mais combien peu en rapport avec la réalité!" 59 But already in 1844, in the opening remarks of his course at the Collège de France, Michelet remarked that "Le moyen âge s'est cru l'élu, l'enfant gâté de Dieu. Le temps moderne est plus humble; il ne croit pas que rien lui soit dû. C'est un modeste ouvrier." 60
By 1855 and his introduction to the volume on the Renaissance in
the Histoire de France, which he had now resumed, Michelet could speak
of "L'état bizarre et monstrueux, prodigieusement artificiel, qui fut
celui du Moyen Age."61 In the 1869 preface to the entire edition, as
justification for the benevolent attitude toward the Middle Ages which
he had expressed in the first two volumes (1833), Michelet commented:

Voulez-vous bien savoir pourquoi j'étais si tendre pour ces
dieux? c'est qu'ils meurent. Tous à leur tour s'en vont.
Chacun, tout comme nous, ayant reçu un peu l'eau lustrale et
les pleurs, descends aux pyramides, aux hypogées, aux catacombes.
Hélas! qu'en revient-il?62

The historian Edmund Wilson, who finds the volumes on the Middle
Ages the least satisfactory of the Histoire de France, remarks that,
instead of the virtues cultivated by the chivalrous and Christian cen-
turies, Michelet really admires "the heroisms of the scientist and the
artist, the Protestant in religion and politics, the efforts of man to
understand his situation and rationally to control his development.
Throughout the Middle Ages, Michelet is impatient for the Renaissance."63
Vico's theories are certainly compatible with this statement, as well as
Jean Gaulmier's conclusion that "Le Moyen Age, au total, demeure pour
lui le temps de l'immobilité et de la matière . . . et le christianisme,
dévié par la méchanceté humaine, a finalement échoué dans ses ambitions
libératrices."64

A diary entry of 1867 delineates Michelet's gradual change in
attitude: "En 1847, posé le principe: contre moyen âge; en 1855, la
critique du moyen âge; en 1855-60, le positif naturel. . . ."65 Writing
his Révolution française, he referred to "le Moyen Age, cette terreur de
mille ans."66 La Sorcière (1862) evidences on almost every page a
virulent attack on the Middle Ages, whose real character is labeled "l'Anti-Nature," totally alien to that expressed three decades earlier.\textsuperscript{67} "L'incertitude de la condition, la pente horriblement glissante par laquelle l'homme libre devient vassal,--le vassal serviteur,--et le serviteur serf, c'est la terreur du moyen âge et le fonds de son désespoir. Nul moyen d'échapper," he vituperates.\textsuperscript{68} "Que de siècles en vain! Une érudition patiente retrouve bien ceci et cela. Mais vraiment, comment n'en rougir? Quoi! si peu pour mille ans!... Mille ans! mille ans!" he protests in La Bible de l'Humanité (1864).\textsuperscript{69} The preface to the 1869 edition of the Histoire de France refers to "mon Moyen Age, cette mer superbe de sottises," and proclaims: "Qu'on supprimât le Moyen Age, à la bonne heure!"\textsuperscript{70}

It would appear that Michelet was initially drawn to the Middle Ages through an appreciation for the art of the national past. We have seen in the introductory remarks at the beginning of Chapter Three how favorably his youthful sensitivity and imagination reacted to the Musée des Monuments français which Alexandre Lenoir installed in the cloister of the Petits Augustins. In his preface to Le Peuple (1846), Michelet reiterates that one of the strongest impressions of his impoverished childhood was this museum: "c'est là, et nulle autre part, que j'ai reçu d'abord la vive impression de l'histoire."\textsuperscript{71} In the preface to his volume in the Histoire de France on the Renaissance (1855), Michelet again refers to medieval art:

\textit{Alors (en 1833), quand l'entraînement pour l'art du Moyen Age nous rendit moins sévère pour ce système en général, nous déclarâmes pourtant que son principe était sujet à la loi universelle de toute vie, qu'il devait passer, comme nous tous, par utile épuration de la mort.}\textsuperscript{72}
In 1869 he would still write: "Je suis né peuple, j'avais le peuple dans le coeur. Les monuments de ses vieux âges ont été mon ravissement." 73

The extent to which personal events in the life of Michelet were influential in effecting his repudiation of the Middle Ages was considerable. He spent the first nine years of his life near the Père-Lachaise cemetery, his "seule promenade," then lived close to an industrial region near the Bièvre River "au milieu de grands jardins de couvents, autres sépulcres. J'avais une belle maladie qui assombrirait ma jeunesse, mais bien propre à l'historien. J'aimais la mort. . . . Je menais une vie que le monde aurait pu dire enterrée, n'ayant de société que celle du passé, et pour amis les peuples ensevelis," he explained in the 1869 preface.

"Puisque enfin tout doit mourir, commençons par aimer les morts," he noted in his diary in January 1839: "Aimer les morts, c'est une immortalité." 75 Michelet would soon learn to hate death. Little did he realize that before the summer would end his first wife, Pauline Rousseau, would succumb to pulmonary tuberculosis, aggravated by an alcoholic condition to which he had contributed in no small manner through absence and neglect. "Hélas! c'est aux dépens de son bonheur et de sa vie que j'ai fait tout ce que j'ai fait. Si j'avais quelque gloire, ce serait à ses dépens," he noted the evening of her demise. 76 With a morbid sense of duty, overwhelmed with guilt, Michelet accomplished the death vigil of three days: "l'odeur était déjà forte. . . . A force d'attendre et regarder, je me convainquis que je ne quittais qu'une chose. . . . Quelle révélation que la mort! Elle dévoile tout à coup le bien qui était caché dans l'homme." 77 Then followed his involvement with
Madame Dumesnil, mother of one of his pupils at the Collège de France (his future son-in-law and collaborator, Alfred): spiritual and romantic intimacy in the face of languishing death, and again the Père-Lachaise where the earth received "une misérable petite rose qui, seule aussi de son côté, doit languir et mourir. . . . drame cruel, d'une cruelle unité." 78

The solitude chosen for research was now supplanted by solitude forced upon him by destiny: "C'est bien moi qui suis mort. Où vais-je donc moi-même dans cette maison veuve et vide?" 79 Two days after his daughter Adèle's marriage the following year, Michelet confided to his diary: "Adieu, passé! adieu, douces années solitaires! adieu, Adèle, adieu, Pauline! Tout cela fini. Mes rêves du Moyen Age aussi. A moi donc, ô avenir." 80

These remarks seem as echoes of the past as expressed in the second volume of the Histoire de France, which had adumbrated the personal histoire by ten years: "il faut que le vieux monde passe, que la trace du Moyen Age achève de s'effacer, que nous voyions mourir tout ce que nous aimons." 81 When Michelet moved this passage to an appendix in 1861, he had lost two of his three children, two of the three women he had ever loved, as well as his mother (1815) who perhaps eclipsed them all, and his father (1846). From this solitude evolved a secular humanism, a sense of fraternity which would cause him to repudiate the ideal, fictional Middle Ages for the harsh reality underneath that historical veneer. After rereading his volumes on the Middle Ages in 1855, he wrote: "ce que nous écrivîmes alors est vrai comme l'idéal que se posa le Moyen Age. Et ce que nous donnons ici, c'est sa réalité
But this constitutes only one element in the factors which caused Michelet's révirement with regard to the Middle Ages. The gradual replacement of Christian faith by the will of \textit{le peuple} and another religion, that of \textit{patrie} (in which individual and collectivity unite): \textit{le peuple}, omnipotent and omnipresent, achieved the rest. Already in 1833 he wrote that "l'Eglise est peuple elle-même"; but, as Bénichou points out, Michelet believed that this identification ended in the thirteenth century. Bénichou is totally correct that "ce qui est propre à Michelet, c'est le refus radical d'accepter un héritage chrétien dans la foi nouvelle, de voir dans la Révolution l'Evangile enfin compris dans son vrai sens et réalisé. La Révolution, selon lui, n'a pas accompli le christianisme, elle l'a condamné."\textsuperscript{83} Michelet proclaimed in \textit{Le Peuple} (1846): "Le moyen âge posa une formule d'amour, et il n'aboutit qu'à la haine. Il consacrait l'inégalité, l'injustice, qui rendait l'amour impossible,"\textsuperscript{84} The Middle Ages is here equated with deception, having condemned man with original sin before he lived: "Voici venir le temps des combats... Le moyen âge d'abord, où j'ai passé ma vie, dont j'ai reproduit dans mes histoires la touchante, l'impuissante aspiration, j'ai dû lui dire: \textit{Arrière}!"\textsuperscript{85}

Still, the concept of \textit{patrie} did not evolve from experience or maturity: it was already present in the 1833 volumes of the \textit{Histoire de France}. Michelet's treatment of the Hundred Years War and the traditional conflict between France and England places the French king in the role of "le roi du bon Dieu;" the English king is the illegitimate son, "le fils de violence," and the two are compared to Ishmael and Isaac. Gossman
sees in Michelet's cultural manipulation of medieval history

. . . a political opposition of two societies, one aggressive aristocratic, imperialist, exploiting, the other just, democratic, peace-loving and pious, in the Virgilian sense, one a capitalist and industrialist society, the other a predominantly peasant and artisanal one. 86

France, not England, is the land of equity: le peuple, c'est la France; le peuple is a composite of liberté, égalité, fraternité and unity. The ideal must of necessity mutate, for it has been exposed as a fiction. He now revolts against the Middle Ages: "O temps dur! temps maudit! et gros de désespoir!" 87 Michelet must revolt against the Middle Ages: with Camus in L'Homme révolté a century later, he could say: "Je me révolte, donc nous sommes." 88

**Thierry**

"Lorsque je commençai, un livre de génie existait, celui de Thierry," acknowledged Michelet in the preface to the Histoire de France: "Sagace et pénétrant, délicat interprète, grand ciseleur, admirable ouvrier, mais trop asservi à un maître. Ce maître, ce tyran, c'est le point de vue exclusif, systématique, de la perpétuité des races." 89 Almost a hundred years later, Jacques Barzun called Thierry "perhaps the greatest French racial historian," whose career demonstrates "how impervious to fact or logic is the political idea of race." 90 Barzun's judgment of this eminent historian may appear to be too severe, but one can certainly subscribe to the view that Michelet's contemporary and most formidable rival perceived all history, whether consciously or unconsciously written, as ideology; 91 as such, history had political rather than academic relevance.
But Augustin Thierry (1795-1856) did not "revive" the question of subjugated versus conquering race in France, the polemics of which carried important political and social implications. We recall briefly, from our discussion in Chapter One, that Count Henri of Boulainvilliers formulated a "Germanist" theory of ancient feudal aristocracy in France deriving from the conquering Franks, posthumously published in his Histoire de l'ancien gouvernement de la France (1727), a thesis both antimonarchic and antiplebeian which had as its objective the instigation of a revolt on the part of the nobility against the prevailing monarchy, in order to reestablish Germanic freedom and ideals.

The Abbé Dubos answered Boulainvilliers in 1734 with an egalitarian "Romanist" version of French history in the Histoire critique de l'état de la monarchie dans les Gaules, formulating the hypothesis that the conquest of Gaul had never occurred, since the Franks were rather "called" by the Gallo-Romans, as allies, to govern them. Even among the Franks themselves, Dubos insisted, all had lived in equality within the clan; thus, according to his premise, nobility per se had never actually existed. Such a theory, of course, supported the Third Estate, which under Boulainvilliers' postulate consisted of the Gallo-Romans as a servile race—with distinct contemporary application.

In the Esprit des lois (1748), Montesquieu criticized the hypotheses of both Boulainvilliers ("une conjuration contre le tiers-état") and Dubos ("une conjuration contre la noblesse") as being unsound, but he especially attacked Dubos since a "Romanist" view was incompatible with his own advocacy of the English system of government. Finally, the economist and political theorist Abbé Mably, a precursor of those who
championed the Revolution and even socialism, stimulated by Rousseau's *Contrat social* (1761), entered the "Germanist" versus "Romanist" controversy in 1765 with a "republican" view of the conquest of France. Combining the theories of Boulainvilliers and Dubos, and basing his own view on that of Montesquieu, Mably stressed the democratic system which characterized Frankish rule in France. The *philosophes*, we have noted, were all "Germanists" except for Voltaire and Rousseau, who chose not to enter the debate. Nevertheless, Voltaire's sympathies were certainly not with the Franks (cf. *Essai sur les moeurs* and his *Dictionnaire philosophique*), not to mention the fact that he criticized Montesquieu's scorn of Dubos's "Romanist" theory and his participation in the discussion in general.

Following Mably's work, numerous other attempts were made to explain the origins of the Third Estate, culminating in the Count of Montlosier's *De la monarchie française*, which was commissioned by Napoleon as a history of France that would paint him in colors à la Jean-Louis David. Montlosier's work was found unacceptable under the Empire because it favored a return to an aristocratic regime; it was, however, modified after Napoleon's fall, and ultimately published with considerable success. Napoleon himself promoted the rise of Celtism in France by claiming ancestry with both Caesar and Charlemagne, while simultaneously holding the French in contempt for their Gallic (i.e. Celtic) frivolity and inconsequence.

It is ironic that the two competitors for recognition in historiography, Thierry and Michelet, both were staunch proponents of
the Third Estate; but, unlike his rival, Michelet avoided the politically symbolic question of race by adhering to a theory of fusion of races which certainly has its counterpart in twentieth-century Gaullism and among proponents of centralization in France. "S'interrogeant sur les origines de la France, Michelet ne peut manquer d'intervenir dans le débat qu'Augustin Thierry a ouvert en soutenant que l'histoire d'un peuple perpétue la lutte initiale des races dont il est composé," Picon observes. But, he continues, Michelet reacts with authority: he refuses to consider the French people as a simple racial complex. "Quand on a constaté, observe-t-il [Michelet] qu'il descend des Celtes, des Ibères, des Germains et des Latins, on n'a pas abordé l'essentiel. En effet, la France s'est fait elle-même de ces éléments dont tout autre mélange pouvait résulter," a mixture which is superior. Michelet confirms this in the preface to the Histoire de France, where he observes: "La France a fait la France, et l'élément fatal de race m'y semble secondaire. Elle est fille de la liberté." 

For Thierry, the "étincelle historique" as Michelet experienced it occurred at the Collège de Blois at age fifteen, when a copy of Chateaubriand's Martyrs, newly published and brought in from the outside, circulated among the collégiens. The effect which Chateaubriand's moving narrative had upon Thierry's developing mind is recounted in the preface to the latter's Récits des temps mérovingiens (1840):

Ce fut un grand événement pour ceux d'entre nous qui ressentaient déjà le goût du beau et l'admiration de la gloire. Nous nous disputions le livre; il fut convenu que chacun l'aurait à son tour, et le mien vint un jour de congé, à l'heure de la promenade. Ce jour-là, je feignis de m'être fait mal au pied, et je restai seul à la maison. Je lisais, ou plutôt je dévorais les pages, assis devant mon pupitre dans une salle voûtée qui était notre salle
d'études, et dont l'aspect me semblait alors grandiose et imposant. J'éprouvai d'abord un charme vague, et comme un éblouissement d'imagination, mais quand vint le récit d'Eudore, cette histoire vivante de l'empire à son déclin, je ne sais quel intérêt plus actif et plus mêlé de réflexion m'attacha au tableau de la ville éternelle, de la cour d'un empereur romain, de la marche d'une armée romaine dans les fange de la Batavie, et de sa rencontre avec une armée de Franks.  

Under the spell of the moment, Thierry stood up and began to read aloud, adding to the power of the prose with the cadence of his heels as he strode up and down the room repeating: "Pharamond! Pharamond! nous avons combattu avec l'épée" and other passages of the bardit of the Franks. "Ce moment d'enthousiasme fut peut-être décisif pour ma vocation à venir," Thierry acknowledges: up to that moment, all of his "archéologie du moyen âge consistait dans ces phrases et quelques autres de même force que j'avais apprises par coeur. Français, trône, monarchie, étaient pour moi le commencement et la fin, le fond et la forme de notre histoire nationale." In effect, Chateaubriand's Martyrs "rehabilitated" the Franks following the postulate of the Abbé Mably and the Revolution of 1789, and brought the three races, Gauls, Romans, and Franks, before the public eye once more—no doubt deliberately, since Chateaubriand (although a political conservative) opposed a michelettiste conception of a unified France to the France of imperial design which Napoleon upheld.

Thierry was also drawn to historiography through a wish for reform: he saw history as the creation of the historian, and did not approve. But Thierry's liberalism is antithetic to Chateaubriand's conservativism, as will be demonstrated shortly. Thierry is a child of the Revolution: "L'histoire qui porte le nom de notre pays n'est point la vraie histoire du pays, l'histoire nationale, l'histoire populaire;
cette histoire est encore ensevelie dans la poussière des chroniques contemporaines, d'où nos élégants académiciens à pension n'ont eu garde de la tirer."98 There is not one child in the nineteenth century, he would later claim, who does not know more about rebellions and conquests, revolutions and restorations, than did Velly or Mably, or even Voltaire himself.99

Thierry first became the journalist defender of the vanquished Gauls, Jacques Bonhomme, and popular and provincial traditions. In 1817-20 he published a series of articles in the Censeur européen, a liberal daily edited by Charles Comte and Charles Dumoyer,100 which were later published as Dix ans d'études historiques. When the Censeur européen was dissolved by ministerial decree in 1820, Thierry joined the staff of the Courrier français and began a series of ten controversial articles published as "Lettres sur l'histoire de France." Here he expounded his own theories as to the origins of the French monarchy and medieval municipalities—or communes—in France; but his bias for the Third Estate was already glaringly evident. He was consequently persuaded to desist by the management of the paper, which was alarmed because of complaints it had received with respect to long articles "bons pour le Journal des Savants."101 Thierry, states Jacques Barzun, "spoke for those to whom the status quo was but a wretched compromise between liberalism and reaction."102

His interest in conquered races and racial antagonism is next apparent in his work about the Norman conquest of England, L'Histoire de la conquête de l'Angleterre (first published in 1825-1826). Thierry's sympathies are—as always—with the oppressed; he thus identifies with
the defeated Saxons. Throughout the dramatic narrative, reference is made to the French (or descendants of the Franks) of the Middle Ages. Smithson remarks that "Thierry's Franks of 1825 are filled with a Rousseauist contempt for Gallo-Roman civilization," since they devastate the Roman cities and colonies with fury and indifference;¹⁰³ but although Thierry was charged with being biased (Sismondi called him "en quelque sorte le généalogiste du malheur"),¹⁰⁴ the work was generally acclaimed as a masterpiece. Sensitive to criticism of his partiality, Thierry made numerous attenuations in the editions of 1826 and 1830, and in general increasingly chose to temper his political preoccupations. His failing eyesight and declining health were in no little sense responsible: by the time Thierry received the Gobert Prize in 1840 (and thereafter each year until his death) for his Considérations sur l'histoire de France and Récits des temps mérovingiens, due in large part to the genuine support of his friend Chateaubriand, Thierry had been totally blind for years.¹⁰⁵

In the Considérations Thierry returns again to the problem of race and the origin of the Third Estate. He first provides an exegesis of the writings of his predecessors, from the independently conceived Franco-Gallia (1574), "curieux livre" of François Hotman (a Protestant jurisconsultant and teacher of Pasquier) to the Gesta veterum Francorum of Adrien de Valois (1646–1658), a "commentaire perpétuel des documents originaux," and the seventeenth century historians to--inevitably--the theories of Boulainvilliers ("un homme d'un savoir médiocre et préoccupé de regrets et de prétentions aristocratiques"), Dubos ("un homme d'un talent mûr, d'un esprit subtil et réfléchi"), Montesquieu, Mably, others
of lesser importance to this study who wrote during the same period such as Mlle de Lézardière, Bréquigny, Joseph Sièyes (author of Qu'est-ce que le Tiers État?, 1789), and the Count of Montlosier. When Montesquieu finished his Esprit des lois, Thierry writes, Dubois had just died and Boulainvilliers had been dead for more than twenty years; "mais ces deux hommes, personnifications de deux grandes théories d'histoire et de politique, semblaient encore des figures vivantes assises sur les débris du passé dont elles expliquaient, chacune en sens contraire, la loi et les rapports avec le présent. . . ."105 With Montesquieu, "la conquête a repris sa place . . . avec sa véritable couleur, avec ses conséquences politiques";107 but according to Thierry, Montesquieu erred in not examining two texts closely enough. Mably, the "premier de ces avocats de la société moderne," a "logicien froid, mais intrépide," resolved to transform history itself. As for Montlosier, a writer of "un talent inégal, un savoir confus, peu de logique, mais une certaine force inculte et un accent déclaratoire capable de faire impression"—not to mention the fact that he worked from secondary sources, a procedure which Thierry condemned—, his method was to "glisser, pour ainsi dire, entre tous les systèmes antérieurs," borrowing here and there "avec un certain art de logicien."108

The Considérations owed its popularity to its conjoint publication (in two volumes) with the Récits des temps mérovingiens, six narratives which had been published separately (1833-1837) in the Revue des Deux Mondes. It is perhaps this last work for which Thierry is the most renowned today.

In the 1840 preface to the Récits, Thierry observes that the
second half of the sixth century offers an original character which has never been studied with art, a feature which derives from "un antagonisme de races non plus complet [than that described by Chateaubriand in Les Martyrs], saillant, heurté, mais adouci par une foule d'imitations réci-proques nées de l'habitation sur le même sol." The principal source is the Historia Francorum of Gregory of Tours, supplemented at the completion of each volume with numerous pièces justificatives; his methodology is "le récit par masses de taches, ayant chacune pour fil la vie ou les aventures de quelques personnages du temps." The récits themselves, imaginative, passionately and poetically narrated, are largely reminiscent of the Martyrs and Marchangy's Gaule poétique. Smithson (chapter XII) provides an interesting comparison of passages which demonstrate Thierry's dramatic representation and embellishment of the succinct, terse, matter-of-fact Latin version by Gregory of Tours. It is no accident that Thierry dedicated his Récits to his friend and champion Chateaubriand in the words with which Dante honored Virgil: "Tu duca, tu signore, et tu maestro."

In awarding the Gobert prize (which Michelet also coveted) to Thierry for his combined Considérations-Récits, the Académie Française described them as "le morceau le plus éloquent sur l'histoire de France." While not intending to do so, Thierry himself has formulated the explanation for this statement at the end of his sixth récit:

Bien que remplis de détails, et marqués de traits essentiellement individuels, ces récits ont tous un sens général, facile à formuler pour chacun d'eux. L'histoire de l'évêque Praetextatus est le tableau d'un concile gallo-frank; celle du jeune Merowig montre la vie de proscrit, et l'intérieur des asiles religieux; celle de Galeswinthe peint la vie conjugale et les moeurs domestiques dans les palais mérovingiens; enfin, celle du meurtre de Sighebert
présente, à son origine, l'hostilité nationale de l'Austrasie contre la Neustrie.\footnote{112}

In the first issue of the Revue Historique in 1876, the eminent medievalist Gabriel Monod accredited Thierry with having "restitué aux temps barbares et au moyen âge leurs véritables couleurs,"\footnote{113} which confirms Gossman's contention that "for Thierry himself, in the end, history is the domain of evil. The good and the true are synonymous with reason, and history stands for the accidental, the discontinuous."\footnote{114} With Leudaste, the evil parvenu who appears in the last two récits, son of a gaulois serf who through chance was elevated from slavery to acceptance as the Count of Tours by the conquering race, and who adopted their corrupt values only to be destroyed by them, Thierry (who called himself "le serf de la science") has created a political and ideological metaphor in addition to an archetype for the Merovingian period. In the Récits, the Middle Ages come alive, but are condemned: the character of Leudaste, a traitor to the Third Estate which he has betrayed, symbolizes Thierry's repudiation of the eighteenth century static "Germanist" theory of conquered versus conquering race. The Considérations afford the proof:

Contre le nouveau système qui, rattachant la roture à la foule sans nom des tributaires de toute race, lui attribuait une origine ignoblement servile, nous relevâmes l'opinion de l'asservissement par la conquête, le système de Boulainvilliers; je dis nous, parce que je suis l'un de ceux qui, vers 1820, firent de la polémique sociale avec l'antagonisme des Franks et des Gaulois. [italics mine]\footnote{115}

Thierry then points to the paradox inherent in the fact that the system of Boulainvilliers had become accepted not only "par des plébéiens défenseurs des droits populaires, mais soutenu par eux [including himself]
dogmatiquement," whereas Dubos's negation of the conquest of Gaul itself had been incorporated by Montlosier in a "théorie ultra-aristocratique."

Thus, he summarizes, "toutes les deux se trouvaient au service de passions politiques diamétralement contraires à celles que, dans l'origine, elles avaient servies ou flattées. Cet étrange revirement devait être et fut, en effet, leur dernier signe de vie."\textsuperscript{116}

Conversely to Michelet's approach, the Middle Ages were obviously part of an ideological construct which was superseded by Thierry's own evolution as an historiographer. Rather than the static "Germanist" theory, Thierry now perceives history as a dynamic structure: "En politique, cela voulait dire que ceux qui trouvaient bon de s'intituler fils des vaincus du Ve siècle étaient les vainqueurs de la veille, sûrs de leur cause pour le lendemain. . . ."\textsuperscript{117} The ruling class will be ruled, the Third Estate will have its triumph: Thierry is predicting the events of 1848 and 1871, and indeed the prevalent system in France--and most of the occidental world--of the twentieth century.
Notes to Chapter IV


2Letter to Arnaud, 21 Ventôse an IX (11 March 1801), quoted in Galley, pp. 82-83.

3This circle was composed of his closest friend, the poet Louis de Fontanes, Joubert, Madame de Custine, Chândollé, Guénéau de Mussy, Madame de Mouchy (Nathalie de Nouailles, with whom he had an amorous adventure, the fruit of which was the Dernier Abencéragé), and Juliette Récamier. See in particular volume 2 of Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve, Chateaubriand et son groupe littéraire sous l’Empire, rev. ed., 2 vols. (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1889), originally a course in French literature given at the University of Liège in 1848.


5Galley (p. xii, n. 2) cites Guigniaut and Le Clerc to this effect.

6Ibid., p. xiii.

7Ibid., p. xiv.

8Quoted in Galley, p. xix.


10Ibid., 1:59.

11Idem, "Discours d’ouverture" to a course entitled "De la litté- rature française dans ses rapports avec les littératures étrangères au moyen âge" delivered 17 December 1832 at the Sorbonne; reproduced in Revue des Deux Mondes, 1st ser., 1 January 1833, p. 23.

12Ibid., p. 25.


15Ampère, "De la chevalerie," in Mélanges, 1:261.
16 Ibid.

17 Ibid., 1:264–65.


19 Ibid., 1:281.


22 Idem, "De l'histoire de la littérature française," lecture delivered at the Collège de France on 14 February 1634, in Mélanges, 1:127.


24 Cahier Brun, 1854, quoted in Fayolle, p. 27.


29 For a lively discussion of the creation and purposes of the Globe and Sainte-Beuve's role as to both, see Molho, L'Ordre et les ténèbres, chapter 2.


32From Sainte-Beuve et l'Université de Liège, no. 132, quoted in Dehousse, p. 46.

33Causeries du lundi, 9, quoted in Dakyns, p. 33.


36Molho, observation made in the discussion following Fayolle's presentation at the Colloques (Fayolle, p. 41).


42Brumfit, pp. 101, 163.


44White, pp. 149-50.

45Michelet, 1869 Preface to Histoire de France, 1:51. Vico (1668-1774) radically rejected the prevailing Cartesian, static concept of history and rather looked for recurring patterns in historical events. He saw history as a continuous process characterized by a rise and fall in civilizations, whereby each nation passes through three states, as outlined. After the third stage, civilization degenerates again into barbarity and the cycle begins anew. These three stages correspond to three phases of intellectual development: a sense of feeling, a sense of realization, and understanding. Nan, for Vico, is a historical and social being seen as a series of "peoples" civilizations, rules by laws;


49 Milner (Le Romantisme I, p. 92) disagrees, claiming that Vico's theory of cycles seems to contradict Michelet's experience as a historian.


51 Ibid., 4:517.

52 Ibid., 4:501.

53 Ibid., 4:519.

54 Ibid., 1869 Preface, i:45, 61.

55 Dakyns, pp. 43-57. Not much attempt is made, however, to explain the shift in Michelet's view of the Middle Ages.


58 White, p. 152.


62 Ibid., 1:56.

63 Edmund Wilson, To the Finland Station: A Study on the Writing and Acting of History (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1947), p. 11.


66Quoted in Picon, p. 41.


68Ibid., 1:35.


76Ibid., 1:306 (24 Juillet 1839).

77Ibid., 1:309.

78Ibid., 1:406 (2 June 1842, date of the burial).

79Ibid., 1:407.

80Ibid., 1:516 (5 August 1843).


82Ibid., 5:24.


85Ibid., p. 246.


88 The essential difference, of course, is that the word *history* has become in the twentieth century "le devenir humain" in all of its possibilities—past, present, and future. See Pierre-Henri Simon, "L'Être dans l'histoire: conscience du XXe siècle," Introduction to his *L'Esprit et l'histoire* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1954).


98 First "Lettre sur l'histoire de France," 8 July 1820, published in the *Courrier français*, quoted in Smithson, p. 82.


101 Quoted in Smithson, p. 92.


103 Smithson, p. 115.
Revue Encyclopédique 28 (October 1825), quoted in Smithson, p. 111.

His first visual disorder appeared in 1823, and already in 1824 his blurred vision necessitated the hiring of a secretary—no little expense for a man of Thierry's modest means.

Thierry, 1:105.

Ibid., 1:111.

Ibid., 1:208.

Ibid., 1:5 (Preface).

Ibid., 1:7.

Ibid., 1:25.

Ibid., 2:384.

Revue Historique 1 (1876), introduction by Gabriel Monod, "Du progrès des études historiques en France depuis le XVIème siècle," p. 31, quoted in Smithson, p. 244.


Thierry, 1:224.

Ibid., 1:227. K. J. Carroll thus errs in concluding that what Thierry wrote in the Considerations is attributable to the progress of historical studies between 1820 and 1840.

Thierry, 1:227.
CHAPTER V

TWO DEVIANT INTERPRETATIONS OF THE MIDDLE AGES

Bertrand

"Il n'y a là ni psychologie, ni symbole, ni pensée, mais seulement des jeux d'ombre et de lumière, de la couleur et surtout un style précis, évocateur et qui stimule fortement l'imagination," a twentieth-century editor has remarked of Gaspard de la Nuit, the unique, finely chiseled Gothic edifice of pierre écrite bequeathed by Louis Bertrand to his friends David D'Angers and Sainte-Beuve, who arranged its publication in conjunction with Victor Pavie a year following his death. Such a conclusion does a grave injustice to Bertrand, for beneath its medieval veneer the psychology, the symbol and the thought in Gaspard de la Nuit unite a tricolore inherent with republican undertones, a world which has escaped critics to date, and for which the key is to be found in the title and two contiguous prefaces.

The medieval element in Gaspard de la Nuit is directly inspired by the city of Dijon, whose fourteenth and fifteenth century golden age of the Dukes of Burgundy was assimilated into the consciousness of Louis Bertrand, Bourguignon by adoption, Burgundian of spirit, during the two years preceding his entry into its Collège Royal. During this time he roamed its streets and surroundings, exploring the architecture and fantasizing about its historical past, assimilating what he saw to the
extent that he later wrote: "J'aime Dijon comme l'enfant sa nourrice
dont il a sucé le lait, comme le poète la jouvencelle qui a initié son
cœur."² Gaspard is a paean to Bertrand's quest of the absolute in art
as formulated in the first preface, signed Louis Bertrand: that which is
sentiment ("Dieu et Amour"), and that which is idée, or "l'art dans la
nature." But much more remains to be said: the Middle Ages in the work
of Bertrand are not only the Freudian "vision morbide qu'Aloysius tenait
de son adolescence,"³ as a recent critic has claimed; they are the sym-
bolic representation of an internalized, subjective, yet liberal and
historical view: they are, in essence, Bertrand himself.

To date no one has attempted to decipher this medievalism, except
on a corollary, psychological level. Yet the title alone, under histor-
ical dissection, reveals itself as an index to the author's motivation
and intent—despite one critic's claim to the contrary that the title is
merely a "simple artifice littéraire pour placer le lecteur dans l'atmo-
sphère fantastique que le poète voulait créer autour de son oeuvre..."⁴
It is hardly a fortuitous choice, for Bertrand—who never wrote impul-
sively—researched his words with great care, constantly reworking his
previous efforts right until the moment of his demise. Frédéric Bertrand
relates that his older brother's little table was "jonchée de brouillons,
raturés, déchiquetés et couverts d'une écriture fine et illisible. On y
voyait des strophes entières, des vers épars, dix fois effacés et dix
fois remplacés..."⁵ In his last written communication, composed at
the Necker Hospital shortly before his death and addressed to the sculptor
David d'Angers ("Mon cher David, mon bienfaiteur"), Bertrand expressed in
a faltering hand a last wish to retouch his manuscript which he considered
"un vrai fouillis" and an "oeuvre en déshabillé dont mon amour-propre . . . . ne pouvait souffrir qu'on examinât les nombreuses imperfections, lacunes, etc., avant que je ne l'eusse remis dans ses habits décents."6 He felt that too many concessions had been made at the insistence of the publisher Eugène Renduel, in whose offices the manuscript of Gaspard had collected dust since it was accepted for publication in 1836: "Le manuscrit a besoin d'être réduit au tiers au moins [he wanted to suppress book four, containing the chroniques] et la première préface [signed Louis Bertrand, in which Gaspard is mentioned as the devil] doit être entièrement supprimée."7

Once changed from Bambochades, under which title the unfortunate Bertrand had attempted to publish some of his prose poems in 1829, the title remained constant. Why then Gaspard "de la Nuit"? And why the name Gaspard? It is first paramount to establish that since La Fontaine, night has been a possible metaphor for the Middle Ages, la nuit des temps,8 a millennium which dates from the fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476 to the capture of Constantinople in 1453: Gaspard "de la nuit" can thus be interpreted to mean "of the Dark Ages." But more importantly, night for the Romantics in general was an accepted symbol for misery and human destiny9—a metaphor not without great relevance for a "pauvre diable" who wrote his mother and sister from Paris shortly after his arrival there in November 1829: "Pour moi, le sort est toujours de fer, et la place dont je vous parlais n'est point encore arrivée... j'ai à peine de quoi me nourrir et me blanchir; je dois un mois de ma chambre, et n'ai plus que 15 francs devant moi."10 Eight months later his situation had undergone no amelioration.
Oh! ce n'est point seulement de faim et de froid que j'ai souffert. J'ai maintenant acquis toute la science du monde et du malheur. . . . Les Bambochades dont vous me parlez dans plusieurs de vos lettres sont maintenant sous les scellés avec les meubles d'un libraire qui a fait faillite et avec qui j'étais en marché. . . . Hier un Bourguignon qui logeait dans l'hôtel et qui m'avait prêté 5 francs est parti, et j'ai eu la mortification de lui avouer que je ne pouvais les lui rendre. 11

As for the name Gaspard itself, we find it to be of exceptional significance, for it contains five concrete referents heretofore unexplored, of which the characteristics of at least three have been deliberately blurred by Bertrand in what will be shown to be the example par excellence of his historical and legendary manipulations as a mystificateur—a literary device also totally ignored in Bertrandian criticism. It is Bertrand himself who is Gaspard, poète méconnu and médiéval, whom he describes in his preface as a "pauvre diable dont l'extérieur [and--ominously--"la toux"] n'annonçait que misères et souffrances": a poor devil in a "redingote râpée," a "feutre déformé que jamais brosse n'avait brossé," his "cheveux longs comme un saule, et peignés comme les broussailles, ses mains décharnées, pareilles à des ossuaires, son physionomie narquoise, chafouine et maladive. . . ." 12 Bertrand's familiarity with the "Chanson du Pauvre Diable," as demonstrated in a quotation which lists it as the source and which forms the epitaph to his prose poem "Les Gueux de nuit," leaves no doubt as to a possible play on words here.

The Gaspard who almost assuredly gave Bertrand the initial impetus to exploit the historical relevance of his name so well suited to him derives from the name of an incarnation of the devil in Carl Maria von Weber's Romantic opera, Der Freischütz, libretto by Johann Friedrich Kind, first staged in Berlin in 1821. Der Freischütz premiered in Paris
in 1826, where it received such far-reaching acclaim that it could hardly have escaped the attention of Bertrand, a budding journalist, even in Dijon. Evidence for such an assertion is overwhelming, for in Der Freischütz the character of Kaspar-Gaspard is the evil huntsman who seeks the destruction of his comrade and rival Max, the personification of good, through the magical power of demoniac natural forces. A nocturnal being who does not require any sleep, Kaspar-Gaspard has pledged his soul to the mysterious "Black Hunter," Samiel. The latter's name is of extreme etymological significance: since Antiquity, "Sami" has meant "blind," and "el" has been the word for God in Hebrew, thus formulating "the blind god" as it even appears in several Gnostic works. Furthermore, "Samiel" is one of several simple but meaningful variants for "Samael," which from the Amoraic period (ca. 200-500 A.D.) has been the major name for Satan in Judaism, and in tradition regarding the rebellion of the angels in heaven, Samael is considered the leader of the rebels: l'ange déchu so popular in the Romantic tradition.

The devil figure called Gaspard in this opera, however, is not the first: the librettist Kind found it, conjointly with his colleague J. A. Apel, in the Unterredungen von dem Reiche der Geister [Conversations from the Empire of the Spirits] (1730), which is based on the minutes of a trial which took place in 1710 in Bohemia. Apel used this material in combination with old legends for his tale Der Freischütz, which he published in 1810 in a widely read collection of horror stories that served as Weber's source for the subject. But Kind's variation of the Freischütz employs the figure of Kaspar-Gaspard to illustrate the ancient conflict between good and evil, reminiscent of medieval mystery plays.
Like the character Samiel of Weber's opera, Bertrand's Gaspard also requires no sleep: "Six heures sonnent à la cathédrale; elles chassent le soleil qui s'esquive le long de ces lilas. Je vais m'enfermer pour écrire mon testament. Bonsoir." He insists that the devil does not exist, that art (by extension, l'azur) is only to be found "au sein de Dieu." In an impassioned outburst, Bertran's Gaspard—a mouthpiece for Bertrand himself—negates the possibility of achieving an absolute in art on earth, an absolute which he has sought in medieval Dijon:

Nous ne sommes, nous, monsieur, que les copistes du créateur. La plus magnifique, la plus triomphante, la plus glorieuse de nos œuvres éphémères n'est jamais que l'indigne contre-façon, que le rayonnement étente de la moindre de ses œuvres immortelles. Toute originalité est un aiglon qui ne brise la coquille de son œuf que dans les aires sublimes et foudroyantes du Sinai. --Oui, monsieur, j'ai longtemps cherché l'art absolu! O délie! Ô folie! Regardez ce front ridé par la couronne de fer du malheur! Trente ans! et l'arcane que j'ai sollicité de tant de veilles opiniâtres, à qui j'ai immolé jeunesse, amour, plaisir, fortune, l'arcane est, inerte et insensible, comme le vil caillou, dans la cendre de mes illusions! Le néant ne vivifie point le néant."

The quest for this absolute, the fruit of which would be success, finds a plaintive echo in one of the last of Bertrand's compositions, a prose poem found in his portfolio addressed to "M. David, statuaire" which must be reproduced in its entirety to demonstrate why Bertrand's apparently harmless "pauvre diable" is his Luciferian antithesis:

Non, Dieu, éclair qui flamboye dans le triangle symbolique, n'est point le chiffre tracé sur les lèvres de la sagesse humaine!

Non, l'amour, sentiment naïf et chaste qui se voile de pudeur et de fierté au sanctuaire du coeur, n'est point cette tendresse cavalière qui répand les larmes de la coquetterie par les yeux du masque de l'innocence!
Non, la gloire, noblesse dont les armoiries ne se vendirent jamais, n'est pas la savonnette à vilain qui s'achète, au prix du tarif, dans la boutique d'un journaliste!

Et j'ai prié, et j'ai aimé, et j'ai chanté, poète pauvre et souffrant! Et c'est en vain que mon coeur déborde de foi, d'amour et de génie!

C'est que je naquis aiglon avorté! L'oeuf de mes destinées, que n'ont point couvé les chaudes ailes de la prospérité, est aussi creux, aussi vide que la noix dorée de l'Egyptien.

Ah! l'homme, dis-le-moi, si tu le sais, l'homme frêle jouet, gambadant suspendu aux fils des passions, ne serait-il qu'un pantin qu'use la vie et que brise la mort?17

Bertrand's Gaspard must be Satan for he dares to suggest a nihilistic existentialism. "Gaspard de la Nuit est un ouvrage ébauché dans beaucoup de ses parties, et j'ai bien peur de mourir entier," Bertrand reiterated before his death.18 The work Gaspard de la Nuit posits an optimism and last hope to the pessimism of the character Gaspard: this is why the preface signed Louis Bertrand must expose him for what he is. Stopping a vigneron, a deformed creature "nabot et bossu," to ask where he might find a certain Gaspard de la Nuit after previous inquiries have elicited both incredulity and mockery, Bertrand meets with the following:

—Que lui voulez-vous, à ce garçon-là?

—Je veux lui rendre un livre qu'il m'a prêté.

—Un grimoire!

—Comment! un grimoire! ... Enseignez-moi, je vous prie, son domicile.

—Là-bas,19 où pend ce pied de biche.20

—Mais cette maison ... vous m'adressez à M. le curé.
The figure of Kaspar-Gaspard in Weber's opera leads to a second consideration which must have occurred to Bertrand through association of ideas, namely, the mysterious king or priest by this name who since the ninth century is traditionally viewed as being one of the Magi (Kaspar, Melchior and Balthasar) who visited the Christ child with gifts. Bertrand had a brother named Balthazard, one year younger than himself; and although the name is not common in France, it was fairly often bestowed (as Baldassarre) in the native Peimontese region of their mother, who as a good Catholic and northern Italian certainly knew that the relics of the Magi had been enshrined in Milan during the Middle Ages, and must certainly have communicated this fact to her children. A Gaspard brother-of-Balthasar, a Kaspar who is generally viewed as being a Moor (thus "of the night," deriving from his skin color), an
unsuccessful Gaspard-Kaspar compared to his brother Balthazard (an important industrialist of Versailles), which would make of Louis Bertrand the proverbial "black sheep" of the family: this series of coincidences could not have failed to escape the first-born son, who even mentions "les Rois et leur fête" as an anticipated event in his prose poem "Octobre." Seen in this light, Gaspard-Louis brings his gift to posterity as a poet: the gold which the legendary Kaspar offered as a gift is the metaphoric symbol of the poet's golden laurels, a mark of success since the time of Petrarch. Bertrand's allusion to the devil as "la grande brune" in the above quotation adds further credence to this argumentation, but the best proof for the association to Kaspar the Magus lies in Gaspard's indirect reference to this possibility found in the first preface: "N'est-ce pas le diable qui a bâti la cathédrale de Cologne?" 26

Yet another possible source for the name Gaspard is found in German folklore: "Dans le Faust primitif qui se joue en Allemagne, sur les théâtres de marionnettes," Gerard de Nerval relates, "le diable s'appelle Caspar." 27 The character of Olivier le Daim in Nerval's Imagier de Harlem (1851) follows this tradition, and is presented in a note to scene 3, act 4 as a devil who assumes several different roles in order to achieve the perdition of the poor imagier, Laurent Coster. This source remains problematic, however, since we have no knowledge of Bertrand’s familiarity with the folklore of Germany.

In the preface signed "Gaspard de la Nuit" (there is a second preface, signed "Louis Bertrand"), Bertrand stresses the conviction that
"l'art a toujours deux faces antithétiques": Gaspard's double would then be a Gaspard "du jour," a Gaspard "de la lumière"—Bertrand's dream of success. In addition to the legendary king Kaspar, such a dream did exist historically: in fact, there are two, both of whom lived in the fifteenth century. It is inconceivable that Bertrand, who employs surnames frequently, deliberately, and with intent to mystify, and who knew Burgundian Flanders so well, was not also familiar with the historical Kaspar Van Weerbeke (or Kaspar of Alemania), a Flemish composer-priest (ca. 1440-1515) who was the Kapellmeister from 1495 to 1497 for the German emperor Philip the Handsome (father of Charles V and son of the last legitimate Burgundian heir, Marie, daughter of Charles the Bold). This Kaspar, who spent most of his adult life in Italy, was concomitantly—and intermittently—active at the court of the Sforza family in the duchy of Milan, for which Bertrand must have had a special sympathy given his Italian origin and its political destiny in his time. Under Italian influence this Gaspard "du jour" became famous for his clear, rational, and harmoniously simple style in music, surely not an insignificant fact for a young poet of half-Italian ancestry who wished to create a new genre, and who composed poems in ballad form.

But there also existed a poet named Kaspar von der Rhön, whose Heldenbuch [Book of Heroes] (1472), deriving from German heroic legend of the fourteenth century and thereafter, forms one of the two collections of this name. The possibility that Bertrand might have been familiar with this Kaspar, however, must also, for lack of evidence, remain problematic.

It is the writer's contention that Bertrand has fused three—if not
four—of the historical and legendary Gaspards into one, of which Kaspar
the musician is by far the most noteworthy because of his connection
with Flanders and Burgundy. The county of Flanders, we recall, fell to
the control of the second house of Burgundy, founded in 1384 by Philip
the Bold. 28 Although the Dukes of Burgundy chose to make Dijon their
capital, they preferred to live in Flanders; as a result, even the
Gothic city of Dijon and its celebrated Jacquemart from Courtrai were
the creation of Flemish artists. This Kaspar contains associations to
both parts of a dichotomy which we will see emerge in Bertrand: Burgun-
dian-Italian, which in his perspective were both symbols of liberty. 29
The opening words of the second preface (signed "Caspard de la Nuit"),
"l'art a toujours deux faces antithétiques," now acquire much more
relevance.

The counterpart to Bertrand's subjective dichotomy, as seen in the
various names—or "pseudosynonyms"—which Bertrand adopted, now becomes
meaningful. We must here have recourse once again to historical facts,
our lead being the musician Gaspard. On the orders of Loñovico Sforza
(who was Duke of Milan 1494–1499), Gaspard traveled three times to France
and even to his native Flanders in order to hire singers. Since Lodovico
Sforza is the only famous historical personage to bear this name, and
since Louis Bertrand replaced his Christian name with Ludovic between
1832 and 1834, 30 Ludovic Bertrand's association with Lodovico Sforza is
quite probable in view of the latter's ties with Gaspard the musician.
Lodovico Sforza's alliance with Charles VIII of France was a notable fac-
tor in starting the Italian Wars, in which the different states of
Renaissance Italy were disputed by other great powers, in 1494. Although
the overtones of such a pact could not have pleased the staunchly anti-
establishment Bertrand, he could have accepted a cultural alliance.

While critics are unanimous to stress the importance of late
medieval Dijon on Bertrand, no influence is ever attached to the Italian
part of his heritage stemming from his maternal lineage. Jacques-Louis-
Napoléon Bertrand was born at Ceva in 1807 to Laura Davico, fourth child
of six and first daughter of the mayor of this small Piemontese city in
the then French département of Montenotte, and her husband, a lieutenant
in the French gendarmerie impériale. The growing Bertrand family moved
from garrison to garrison in Italy until 1815, when, upon Captain Bert-
rand's forced retirement on a meager pension, it joined close paternal
relatives in Dijon. As the first-born "bien-aimé fils"\(^3^1\) of a young
Italian mother whose childhood had been spent in an intellectual and
politically-oriented milieu, a mother who later related "notre jeunesse
d'Italie" to her children,\(^3^2\) who must have embraced the cause of
Italian independence which enflamed liberals throughout Europe during
the first half of the nineteenth century, and who certainly must have
reminisced about the beautiful first years of her marriage with her
husband in Italy, Louis Bertrand was exposed to the struggle for Italian
independence from within as well as from outside the home.

Yet another historical consideration attached to Gaspard de la
Nuit derives from the so-called pseudonym Aloysius which had replaced
Louis as the author's Christian name following the 1842 edition, despite
the fact that Bertrand signed his preface as Louis Bertrand. The name
Aloysius is used repeatedly by critics, both modern and of the nineteen
century;\(^3^3\) yet a 1926 thesis for the doctorat-ès-lettres has established
beyond a doubt that Louis Bertrand only employed the name Aloysius in three unpublished letters composed in 1840 and on the registers of the hospital Notre-Dame de la Pitié in 1838, where out of shame he also sought anonymity under the sheet of his bed so that David d'Angers would not recognize him, all when he was already dying of tuberculosis, and four years after his manuscript had been accepted by Renâuel for publication under the name Louis Bertrand. 34 Significantly, and supportive of the argumentation that Aloysius is simply a variant of his own name, two days after Bertrand's discharge from Notre-Dame de la Pitié after a stay of eight months, Bertrand entered the Hôpital Saint-Antoine (15 May 1839) as "Jacques Bertrand, étudiant," 35 where he remained another six months; the registers of the Necker Hospital, where he expired on 29 April 1841, a month after his admittance, list him as "Jacob Louis Napoléon Bertrand, étudiant." 36 It is clearly evident that Aloysius was but one variant of his real name which Bertrand assumed to camouflage his illness.

One critic has claimed that Aloysius was a troubadour name, 37 but this form could not have been linguistically possible in the Midi—nor was there ever a troubadour or trouvére who bore the name Aloysius. It rather has an origin in Italy, for Aloysius (in itself containing the name Louis) is the name conferred upon the Italian saint Luigi Gonzaga (1568-1591, canonized in 1726), the oldest son of the Marquis of Castiglione (near Mantua, in Lombardy), also close to Milan, which was the recognized center of Italian resistance in Bertrand's time: the Milan with which many such as "Arrigo Beyle, Milanese" identified. Bertrand must have known that Luigi Gonzaga, who renounced his birthright to enter the Jesuit order in
Rome, dedicated himself to the care of sufferers of the plague from 1591 until his death almost a year later from the same scourge. The use of the name of a saint who died of the plague, when Bertrand himself was dying of phthisis, the "plague of the nineteenth century," is too striking to be coincidental. That Bertrand paid close attention to names cannot be denied: in the first book of Gaspard, "L'Ecole flamande," sixteen proper names appear in the nine prose poems comprising this section; the two-page preface signed "Gaspard de la Nuit" which immediately follows Bertrand's own lengthy preface contains thirteen proper names.

The poèmes en prose themselves offer more irrefutable evidence that Bertrand deliberately fused historical personages, as seen in the composite title figure of Gaspard: in the prose poem which Bertrand most preferred, "Le Maçon," it is Louis Bertrand himself who, analogical "truelle à la main," chants "échafaudé" the "vers gothiques" of his literary "bourdon" in the person of Abraham Knupfer. In this instance Bertrand has fused the student Nicolas Knupfer (1603-1660), a painter of medieval material and classical Antiquity, with the latter's master Abraham Bloemaert, in whose atelier Knupfer was active until his death. Knupfer's Flemish city is transformed into medieval Dijon before the ravages wrought upon it by Louis XI. Knupfer thus furnishes another example of Bertrand's tendency to brouiller les pistes of history.

Likewise, contrary to the opinion of at least one other recent critic, who did not even recognize that Rembrandt is a first name, Bertrand's reference to "Paul Rembrandt" in the second preface and in the poem "Harlem" is obviously deliberate. Bertrand was an ardent devotee of art: his notebooks, which contain lists of subjects which he spent
his time studying, attest to a profound preoccupation with art and old monuments; the instructions which he left for the illustration of the Gaspard text further substantiate his understanding of art. A letter to David d'Angers of 1837 reveals that he spent his time in Paris "plongé dans une vie contemplative, cloîtré dans l'étude et dans l'art, isolé, méconnu à tous..." Thus Rembrandt Harmanszoon van Rijn, master of the dramatic science of chiaroscuro (which stresses the strong expression of emotions) and leader of the reaction against Italian influence in the Netherlands; Peter Paul Rubens, who translated Italian Renaissance painting into Flemish art; and the lithographer Jacques Callot (Bertrand's "lansquenet fanfaron et grivois") form in triptych an ensemble of Bertrand's own artistic aspirations: a Rembrandt through emotion evoked, a Rubens through color and description, a Callot with whom he identified through their mutual love of the satanic and the fantastic.

Apart from the influence of art on his work in general, we may inquire as to what contributed to Bertrand's vision of the Middle Ages which is actualized in Gaspard. As an adolescent and young adult in Dijon, Bertrand came in contact with Barante's highly popular Histoire des Ducs de Bourgogne (1814-1826), the historical novels of Walter Scott, as well as the works of Chateaubriand, which were studied with Barante's volumes by the Société d'Etudes of Dijon (a literary group of which Bertrand was a member). The epitaphs to each prose poem are an invaluable source of Bertrand's knowledge: they indicate, for example, that Bertrand read the important Mémoires of Olivier de la Marche, written ca. 1490 for his pupil Philip the Handsome, which significantly praise the deeds of the Dukes of Burgundy. They also reveal that he knew La Parenté de Jean
de Nivelle, a work also tied to the Burgundian past, since Jean de Nivelle refused to march against the Duke of Burgundy in the fifteenth century in spite of his father's orders to do so. References are also made to the Mémoires of Joinville, the hermetic works of Raymond Lulle, and to such sixteenth-century writers as Brantôme, Jean Bodin, the astronomer Nostradamus (brother of Jean), and to Romantic literature which dealt with the late Middle Ages. But, much more importantly, Bertrand was overwhelmed by the Gothic vestiges of the Burgundian duchy. "Dijon n'a pas toujours parfumé ses heures oisives aux concerts de ses philharmoniques enfants," Gaspard observes: "... tout atteste deux Dijon, --un Dijon d'aujourd'hui, un Dijon d'autrefois." Bertrand's Dijon is le Dijon des XIVe et XVe siècles, autour duquel courait un branle de dix-huit tours, de huit portes et de quatre poternes ou portelles, --le Dijon de Philippe-le-Hardi, de Jean-sans-Peur, de Philippe-le-Bon et de Charles le Téméraire, avec ses maisons de torchis à pignons pointus comme le bonnet d'un fou, à façades barrées de croix de Saint-André; avec ses hôtels embastillés, à étroites barbacanes, à doubles guichets, à préaux pavés de hallebardes; --avec ses églises, sa sainte chapelle, ses abbayes, ses monastères, qui faisaient des processions de clochers, de flèches, d'aiguilles, déployant pour bannières leurs vitraux d'or et d'azur, promenant leurs reliques miraculeuses, s'agenouillant aux cryptes sombres de leurs martyrs ou au reposoir fleuri de leurs jardins. ...

That Dijon had been free, alive, attractive, dramatic, dynamic, sinister: "Dijon expiré, conserve encore quelque chose de ce qu'il fut" for Gaspard, as for Bertrand; "Dijon se lève; il se lève; il marche, il court!" Dijon is a "cadavre galvanisé." The Dijon which captured Bertrand's imagination and heart was the anachronistic feudal Dijon which incarnated liberty and violence—just as Milan, which had been the leader of the free commune movement against the German emperor Barbarossa in the twelfth
century, and which was leading the fight for independence in Bertrand's time, symbolized republican independence.

Bertrand's activities must be considered in this light. In May 1828, at the age of 20 and recently fatherless, he became one of the founders of the *Provincial*, a Dijon paper published thrice weekly: an enterprise blessed by Chateaubriand, Hugo, and Nodier. Bertrand served as editor-in-chief until its "demise" in October of that year, and it was in the *Provincial* that he first published some of his poems and prose poems. In November, taking advantage of the connections which he had acquired through this association and that of the Société d'Études, Bertrand went to Paris; here he read his *bamboches* (as he called his prose poems) at a Sunday evening reunion at the Arsenal, and occasionally frequented the cénacle at Hugo's apartment. By April 1830 he was back in Dijon, and soon became involved in politics as editor-in-chief of the *Patriote de la Côte-d'Or* (of which the first issue appeared 15 February 1831). Bertrand's growing disenchantment with the increasingly conservative government of Louis-Philippe and his concomitant commitment to regionalism can be seen in the political polemics and bitter invectives exchanged between the *Patriote* and the monarchist *Journal de la Côte-d'Or* and *Spectateur*. To the préfet of the Côte-d'Or he wrote an impassioned:

La Côte-d'Or n'a jamais été une province conçue; nous ne sommes point des Dalmates; nous vivons libres sous un roi citoyen, et non pas esclaves sous un proconsul. . . .

Oui, nous avons crié: *À bas les carlistes*; à bas le juste milieu! et nous le crions encore! . . . Nous répudions une Chambre qui répudie la révolution de Juillet, un ministère qui répudie la gloire national.

Voilà, Monsieur le Préfet, notre réponse à votre proclamation du 25 avril et notre profession de foi politique. 46
Referring to Bertrand (who signed his articles as Ludovic) as the "Commis Rédacteur du Patriote," the Spectateur decried his former connection with the Provincial in the face of his moderate liberalism, citing the sometime motto of the defunct newspaper, "Dieu et le Roi."

The visit to Dijon in August 1832 of Louis de Cormenin, a famous anti-monarchic pamphleteer and député of the département of Ain, elicited a series of mordant invectives against Bertrand on the part of the Spectateur, to which he replied that "l'accueil fait à M. de Cormenin dans notre ville a été... pour votre journal le texte d'une Guizotine contre l'honorable député." The quarrel actually ended in a duel between Bertrand and one of the owner-editors of the Spectateur, in which no one was hurt. Evidencing a zealous commitment to "liberté" and "patrie," Bertrand obviously felt that the July Revolution had been betrayed; we recall that Jacques Laffitte had already left the government of Louis-Philippe in 1831 for these same reasons.

In his prose poems Bertrand uses Flanders (last bastion of liberty against French centralization under Louis XI) and Milan (foremost opponent of the nineteenth-century centralization emanating from Vienna) to express his convictions. We have only to look at "Le Maçon," previously referred to, in order to see a nineteenth-century relevance in its "medievalism"; the "troupes impériales se sont logées dans le faubourg," the references to a "chapeau à trois cornes" and "aiguillettes de laine rouge," to the "cocardes traversées d'une ganse" and the "village incendié par les gens de guerre" all attest to what Bertrand has seen and heard in his own time. For Henri Corbat, who has worked with the text of Gaspard de la Nuit itself, the themes and obsessions of Bertrand consist of destruction,
satanism, death, the night, le rêve, the cloister, the past, gold, and love. But Corbat has completely overlooked the political symbolism of the Middle Ages for Bertrand: if his vision of the Middle Ages is "toute de violence, de destruction et de massacre," which Corbat rightly discerns, it is not a vehicle to liberate him of a Freudian fear of the past; Dijon is more than "la pierre angulaire du rêve." 

Gaspard, the mysterious stranger of the first preface (which is signed Louis Bertrand), relates his fascination with the antique horloge of Courtrai which was sent to Dijon by Philip the Bold, and his attraction to its Jacquemart: "L'exactitude, la pesanteur, le flegme de Jacquemart seraient le certificat de son origine flamande, quand même on ignorerait qu'il dispensait les heures aux bons bourgeois de Courtrai, lors du sac de cette ville en 1383." The Jacquemart is a symbol for the freedom of medieval cities and their burghers in the Bertrandian optic, for even if Jacquemart is governed by the hours, it is nevertheless he "dont la main affûtée d'un allumoir distribuait la flamme aux chandeliers du maître-autel," who with sacerdotal and alchemistic automatism affords light to the ominous shadows of Notre-Dame de Dijon in Gaspard's dream. In the notes which Bertrand composed for the mise en pages of Gaspard, one of his first preoccupations was to insist that

l'artiste placera dans son dessin, au milieu ou dans un coin de la bande du haut de la page, le Jacquemart de Dijon qui se trouve gravé dans la 2e année du Magasin Pittoresque. Cela est important. 

From the pulsating past of which Jacquemart is emblematic, Bertrand paints a Middle Ages which is totally disparate from the ideal Middle Ages which we have seen in vogue around 1830. Max Milner is correct:

Ce serait donc une erreur de rattacher purement et simplement
Gaspard de la Nuit au courant médiéval et fantastique de 1830
et de considérer comme un anachronisme fortuit sa date de publi-
cation tardive. We feel, however, that he errs in concluding that "... cette oeuvre,
apparaissant conforme à un idéal démodé, était en réalité en avance sur
son temps." Bertrand's Gaspard is a spokesman for his time, as well
as a harbinger of Baudelaire and Mallarmé.
Likewise, Suzanne Bernard's statement that
Bertrand n'est pas seulement un romantique en mal de pittoresque
qui cherche à tout prix la couleur locale; il est aussi, il est
vraiment un homme du Moyen Age pour qui le Dijon du XIVe siècle
est une réalité substantielle; un cerveau hanté de visions et qui
vit dans une étrange accointance avec le diable (Gaspard). ... ,
a judgment to which Corbat would certainly subscribe, is simply not
compatible with Bertrand's journalistic activities. An incorrect reading
of material published by Jules Marsan in 1925 leads Bernard to erroneously
attribute to Bertrand a letter actually written by Victor Pavie to Hugo
in which Pavie--not Bertrand--accredits Hugo with the genesis of
his (Pavie's) art:

Vous m'avez communiqué une passion d'architecture gothique. ...
Ma ville natale se présente toute neuve; et je marche dans les
rues, épelant chaque maison comme un homme qui commence à lire.
Louis Bertrand did not need a sojourn in Paris; he had learned to
"épeler" in his youth, in the school of art in nature. As Bernard
herself points out, the revisions which Bertrand affected in his work
tended to remove the local color from it. This leads to one last
consideration, namely, his motivation for doing so.
The answer lies in our conception of Bertrand: we must not only
see him as the champion of medieval Burgundy; we must also be aware that
he is equally a Bourguignon--the Bouguignon who applauded the initial
liberal period of Louis-Philippe's regime. Even while Bertrand was negotiating with Renduel for the publication of "ce livre de mes douces prédilections, où j'ai essayé de créer un nouveau genre de prose," he had already recognized the futility and fallacy of his former dedication. The government of the roi citoyen was veering towards conservatism when Bertrand returned to Paris in 1833, and many liberals had already been removed from its structure; Guizot, who opposed the aggressive nationalist policies of Thiers, was dismissed in 1837; Thiers himself fell from power in 1840.

Therein, we feel, lies the explanation as to why Louis Bertrand expressed a last wish in 1841 to eliminate the first preface, in which the character of Gaspard is the dominating force: with Gaspard's removal, all personal bonds which tied Gaspard de la Nuit to the "pauvre diable" who created it would be erased. Progressively unable to cope with historical reality, Bertrand pledged a total commitment to l'art pour l'art; to achieve this, he would detach l'azur from the realm of personal experience. The "pages souffreteuses, humble labeur ignoré des jours présents," will not add "quelque lustre à la renommée poétique des jours passées." Why then "restaurer les histoires vermoulues et poudreuses du moyen-âge?" The answer can be seen in the prose poem "La Nuit après la bataille," where it is expressed in particularly poignant terms:

Une sanglante bataille a été livrée; perdue ou gagnée, tout sommeille maintenant; mais combien de braves ne s'éveilleront plus, ou ne se réveilleront demain que dans le ciel!

The medievalism of Louis Bertrand is the most subjective which we have encountered in this study to this point, because the Middle Ages were totally assimilated to his consciousness.
Nerval

While a conscious use of the Middle Ages can be found in the works of the other Romantics whom we have discussed in this study, the role of the Middle Ages in the work of Gérard de Nerval, primarily deriving from a subconscious impulsion to establish his own identity—as much for himself as for posterity, and as such inherently mystic—demonstrates several radically different and highly unique qualities.

Fascination with Germany and a Germanic past, given impulsion by German literature, is so closely interwoven with Nerval's medievalism that it must be considered concomitantly. The young translator of the *Poésies allemandes* (1830) is unknowingly speaking of himself in the introduction when he states that "chez nous c'est l'imagination qui gouverne l'homme, contre sa volonté, contre ses habitudes, et presque à son insu."63 Eager to cross the Rhine at Strasbourg in 1838 and to set foot on German soil for the first time, an excited Nerval wrote in his diary: "Mais de l'autre côté, là-bas à l'horizon, au bout du pont mouvant de soixante bateaux, savez-vous ce qu'il y a? ... Il y a l'Allemagne! la terre de Goethe et de Schiller, le pays d'Hoffmann: la vieille Allemagne, notre mère à tous! ... Teutonia ..."64 Germany plays such an important role in Nerval's life that Charles Dédéyan, the specialist on Nerval and Germany and the Faustian theme in European literature, has called it "sinon la source, du moins le moteur de son inspiration, de sa création littéraire."65

That Nerval should consider Germany the archetype cosmic Mother is not surprising: his own mother, whom he never knew, died in 1810 at the age of twenty-five in Silesia, where she had accompanied her husband,
a surgeon-general in the Grande Armée, having left the infant, now two years old, in the care of a nourrice at Loisy in her native Valois. Her son would always remain inconsolate. Nerval relates that, forced to rejoin the Army at Moscow, his father lost her letters and jewels in the icy Berezina (a tributary of the Dnieper) during the perilous retreat in November 1812. Nerval's writings attest to the fact that his mother, whom he always associated with the mysterious Germany where she died, whose letters to her family were read and reread to him as a small child, transcended her own existence and became for the son who had never even seen a portrait of her a part of the pantheistic view of woman which dominated his life: "la mort" and "la Morte," the Eternal Féminine as seen in Jenny-Aurélie-Adrienne-Marie-Isis-mère, the "déesse" of Aurélia (1855) who appeared before him shortly before his death to announce: "Je suis la même que Marie, la même que ta mère, la même aussi que sous toutes les formes tu as jamais aimée. A chacune de tes épreuves, j'ai quitté l'un des masques dont je me voile mes traits et bientôt tu me verras telle que je suis."67

His first recollection of his father, Etienne Labrunie, dates from the doctor's return from Prussia where he had made a lengthy convalescence from his wounds, during which time the boy's family thought him to be dead. In an anecdote well known to Nerval specialists, Nerval relates:

J'avais sept ans, et je jouais, insoucieux, sur la porte de mon oncle [Antoine Boucher], quand trois officiers parurent devant la maison; l'or noirci de leurs uniformes brillait à peine sous leurs capotes de soldat. Le premier m'embrassa avec une telle effusion que je m'écriai:

"Mon père! ... tu me fais mal!"68

It was this stoic parent so unlike himself, a veteran of Smolensk who
had been taken prisoner at Vilna, who took the boy to Paris away from
the vie champêtre he had shared with his maternal great-uncle in the
Valois, and who there taught him "ce qu'on appelait mes devoirs." He
also taught him the German language, and to his father Nerval gave all
the credit for "le peu de gloire que j'ai retiré de mes traductions." In an article written in 1850, Nerval revealed the method which his
father used to teach him:

J'ai appris cette langue comme on étudie une langue savante,
---en commençant par les racines, par le haut allemand et le vieux
dialecte souabe [Middle High German], de sorte que je ressemble
ici à un de ces professeurs de chinois et de thibétain que l'on
a la malice de mettre en rapport avec des naturels de ce pays...
Peut-être pourrais-je prouver à tel Allemand que je sais sa
language mieux que lui, ---mais rien ne me serait plus difficile
que de le lui démontrer dans sa langue.

The doctor apparently hoped to prepare his son for a diplomatic career
in the countries where he had served during his military career. Jean Richer has deciphered a complex genealogy of "caractère
mythomaniaque" that Nerval composed shortly after his first crise de
folie in 1841 which proves that Nerval believed in a Germanic origin of
the Labrunie family and had traced his paternal ancestry back to one of
three chevaliers under the German emperor Otto II (973-983), which
chevaliers settled in the South of France in the tenth century on the
banks of the Dordogne River. Although Nerval does not make the
association, it is quite possible here to equate the "trois officiers"
who appeared at the door of his uncle's home at Mortefontaine when he was
seven with the three chevaliers of the Middle Ages. Furthermore, it
does not seem coincidental that Otto II, by virtue of conquests in
France, may be regarded as the German Napoleon, having entered France to
quell a rebellion in the Lorraine and even reaching Paris in 980, where he forced the penultimate Carolingian king, Lotharius, to abandon his rights to that territory—facts certainly known to someone who had thoroughly researched, distorted, and fabricated his own genealogy. At different times during the crises de folie which ultimately led to his death in 1835, Nerval claimed himself to be a descendant of Napoleon: "je suis fils de Joseph, frère de l'Empereur, qui a reçu ma mère à Dantzig," he claimed in 1841, while Arsène Houssaye relates that Gérard once contended that he was the son of Napoleon himself, conceived after the Emperor saved his mother from the icy Berezina. At other times, all following his first bouts with madness, he claimed to be the King of Rome (the Duke of Reichstadt, Napoleon's legitimate son by Marie-Louise of Austria, who was three years his junior), and Count Walewski, Napoleon's illegitimate son by Marie Walewska; he once signed a letter "Il cava [lière] G. Nap. della torre Brunya e Pallaza," followed by "Gérard de Nerval." Although Nerval assumed a pseudonym primarily to avoid paternal recriminations with respect to his chosen career as an homme de lettres, since the doctor had nourished the hope that his son would also pursue a medical career until he left the paternal residence in 1834—and apart from suppositions that the name derived from Nerval's desire to associate himself with the Emperor Nerva or the Clos de Nerval (maternal family land in the Valois to which the remains of his maternal grandparents and his mother's only sister were transferred in 1836, which Nerval ultimately proposed to purchase a year and a half before his death)—the pseudonym Nerval has been seen as representative of his double identity.
Spelled backwards, it becomes his mother's surname (Lauren[t]); it also partially contains the anagram of his surname, Labrunie, since according to Gérard his mother "reçu le nom de Marie-Antoinette avec celui de Laurence," and since Richer has confirmed that, the night before Nerval's birth, his father expressed the desire that his young wife name the baby Laurency after herself.

Jean Starobinski has observed: "Lorsqu'un homme se masque ou se revêt d'un pseudonyme, nous nous sentons défiés. Cet homme se refuse à nous." In Nerval's case, one might add, the refusal is to himself rather than to others. Painfully aware of the dichotomy within himself, unable to feel close to his only surviving parent, who had thrown his first poems into the fire while delivering a diatribe against poets in general, young Gérard's first poetry, published under the name *Élégies nationales* when he was only seventeen and still a student at the Collège Charlemagne (later disavowed except for one poem), represents a rather gauche attempt to identify with his father, a méridional from Agen, through the doctor's association with the fallen Emperor. "Notre passé et notre avenir sont solidaires. Nous vivons dans notre race, et notre race vit en nous," he would later write. Although he referred to himself as a "petit Parisien," Nerval did not feel himself to be one: "Un homme du Midi, s'unissant là par hasard à une femme du Nord, ne peut produire un enfant de nature lutécienne," he proclaimed. Consciousness of his double identity established in Nerval an internal battle between the self and the other self, which he defines in *Aurélia* as "un spectateur et un acteur, celui qui parle et celui qui répond." The Middle Ages, we shall see, fit into the "spectator" part of Nerval's personality,
closely interwoven with his faustisme as an intrinsic part of this
duality.

From the heritage of the Ile-de-France region of his mother and
the paternal Midi, Nerval remained torn between essence and existence,
Christianity and paganism, the esoteric and the exotic. His trips to
Germany in 1838, 1850, and 1854, ostensibly for documentary purposes,
should not be seen as excursions, but rather as a mystical quest into
the past for the self: it is not coincidental that his first voyage to
Germany dates from a few months after his muse, the actress Jenny Colon,
moved someone else—even though there is not conclusive—or even in-
conclusive—evidence that Nerval ever seriously contemplated marriage
with her or any other woman; nor is it insignificant that during his
last voyage to Germany he attempted to locate his mother's grave. In
1852, composing Lorely, he still wrote of his "chère Allemagne" and his
travels "jusqu'en cette froide Silésie, où reposent les cendres de ma
mère, jusqu'à cette Berezina glacée où mon père lutta contre la mort,
voyant périr autour de lui les Braves soldats ses compagnons."84 Thus
Nerval the poet, translator, storyteller, novelist, and prosateur sought
his past in the present and the present in the past, while Nerval the
journalist and playwright used his pen to meet the exigencies of everyday
life.

The legends and superstitions of the Middle Ages were certainly
known to him in his youth. Until Dr. Labrunie's return, Nerval was raised
by his deistic, Swedenborgian great-uncle Boucher, whom he believed to be
his real father. It was his uncle Boucher who initiated the boy into the
occult and cabalistic sciences during later summer vacations spent in the
Valois, and taught him that "Dieu, c'est le soleil." Nerval's delicate sensitivity was naturally drawn toward the late Middle Ages, the era of mysticism, alchemy, the supernatural, and satanism. George Humphrey offers an interesting observation with much relevance where Nerval is concerned: "Pour ceux qui voulaient se rapprocher le plus possible du climat de culture du Moyen Age les spectres, les sorciers, l'alchimie parurent aussi significatifs que les cérémonies de l'Eglise ou les interminables guerres des féodaux contre le pouvoir grandissant de la Couronne." Indeed, a "foule d'ouvrages" that his uncle had relegated to the attic of his home provided young Gérard with substantial reading material. He relates that,

"ayant fureté dans sa maison jusqu'à découvrir la masse énorme de livres entassés et oubliés au grenier, -- la plupart attaqués par les rats, pourris ou mouillés par les eaux pluviales passant dans les intervalles des tuiles, -- j'ai tout jeune absorbé beaucoup de cette nourriture indigeste ou malsaine pour l'âme; et plus tard même, mon jugement a eu à se défendre contre ces impressions primitives."

The boy's fantasies were fed by his exploration of German literature when he entered as an externe libre at the Collège Charlemagne in Paris in 1820, the same year in which his uncle Boucher died. "L'oeuvre de Nerval n'est pas née d'un système, mais du contact d'un tempérament avec les circonstances extérieures ou avec les livres," it has been observed. Certainly the works of Goethe and Hoffmann made an indelible impression on the adolescent, the latter through the conception of the Doppelgänger which Nerval incorporated into his own work, the former through his Faust which became a recurring leitmotif in the Nervalian literary production. As for Madame de Staël's De l'Allemagne, Nerval found it the work "qu'il faut lire et relire, pour se faire une idée
juste du mérite des poésies allemandes; car il y a peu de chose à dire après elle et autrement qu'elle; aussi ne s'étonnera-t-on pas que je la cite plutôt que de la répéter."\textsuperscript{89}

In 1828 Nerval published a translation of Goethe's first \textit{Faust} which, although primarily in prose, immediately became the definitive translation in France, eclipsing two uninspired or inept versions of 1823 by Frédéric Albert Stapfer and the Count of Sainte-Aulaire. Goethe's secretary and confidant Eckermann recounts that his master recognized a superiority in Nerval's translation:

"Im Deutschen," sagte er, "mag ich den Faust nicht mehr lesen; aber in dieser französischen Übersetzung wirkt alles wieder durchaus frisch, neu und geistlich."\textsuperscript{90}

Gautier's recollection in the \textit{Histoire du Romantisme} that "le Jupiter de Weimar, lisant cette version qui est un chef-d'oeuvre, dit que jamais il ne s'était si bien compris"\textsuperscript{91} is then not quite accurate, but understandable in view of the many years which had passed since that date; Nerval's modesty would have prevented him from inflating Goethe's remarks when communicating them to his lifelong friend from the Collège Charlemagne days.

Faust, the genius of the late Middle Ages in quest of the absolute in knowledge and love, made an indelible impression on Nerval from the moment when, as an adolescent, he was drawn to an illustrated copy of Maximilian Klinger's \textit{Faust} in translation at an open-air bookdealer's in Paris and began to peruse it, attracted at first by the enormous figure of a leviathan, its mouth vomiting flames, which held the limp, dead body of Dr. Faust between the index finger and thumb of his right hand before dashing it to the ground and carrying Faust's soul to Hell. Unable
to meet the exorbitant price demanded by the uneasy bookseller, Nerval passed by each day to read further in the book; the peculiar old man finally locked it up in a glass case, and the desperate écolier determined to somehow amass the inordinate sum of fifteen or twenty francs which he demanded. Nerval's friend Charles Monselet, in whose "humble bibliothèque" he finally located the book some thirty years later, relates that,

lorsqu'au bout de quinze jours il reprit le chemin du boulevard Beaumarchais, l'étalage & l'étalagiste avaient disparu. Il repassa le lendemain, même absence. Il s'informa de la demeure du vieux libraire, on l'envoya à la rotonde du Temple; là, après avoir visité plusieurs galetas, il finit par apprendre que le bouquiniste était mort subitement, les livres avaient été envoyés à l'hôtel Bullion et vendus par lots. Depuis lors, Gérard de Nerval n'avait jamais oublié les Aventures du Docteur Faust et le léviathan au pourpoint allemand... En retrouvant ce livre chez moi, Gérard assouvissait un de ses premiers désirs, un de ces désirs d'adolescent, le plus impérieux de tous; on comprend sa joie. Il me demanda la permission de l'emporter, je fis mieux, le lui donnai, & c'est avec les Aventures du docteur Faust & sa descente aux Enfers qu'il écrivit peu de temps après son drame de l'Imagier de Harlem.

It is interesting to note that, due to the controversial nature of its content, Klinger's Faust was first published anonymously in French in 1798, an edition which we have seen and which Nerval must have found at the bookdealer's in Paris. A version by de Saur and Saint-Genès was published in 1825, but Gérard was already seventeen at the time.

In his excellent analysis of the poetic aesthetic in Nerval's work, George Humphrey contends that it is the scholastic, theological aspect of Goethe's Faust, concerned with man's imperfection and perfectibility, which appealed to Nerval, since both the thought expressed and the art of the first Faust are of a "gothic" character, which for Nerval as well as the German Romantics meant a metaphysical and aesthetic
The appeal of the first *Faust* following its translation into French in 1823 stemmed from a fraternal bond with the tragic hero on the part of the "enfants du siècle," from the presence of the supernatural and the fantastic made popular by the English Gothic novel, and from "ce décor fantasmagorique qui plaisait tant aux imaginations: une cité du Moyen Age avec ses ruelles tortueuses, ses tavernes, sa cathédrale gothique, son cabinet d'alchimiste." Even in Aurélie Nerval speaks of "nous, nés dans des jours de révolution et d'orages, où toutes les croyances ont été brisées."

We know that Nerval was drawn to Goethe's first *Faust* at precisely the time when he studied Italian, Greek, Latin, and German: "Le Pastor fido, *Faust*, Ovide et Anacreon étaient mes poèmes et mes poètes favoris," he writes of that period. In the preface of his edition of Jacques Cazotte's *Diable amoureux* (1845), Nerval remarks that during the lifetime of Cazotte (1719-1792), "Les livres traitant de la cabale et des sciences occultes inondaient alors les bibliothèques, les plus bizarres spéculations du moyen-âge ressuscitaient sous une forme spirituelle et légère, propre à concilier là ces idées rajeunies en faveur d'un public frivole." The product of those years is defined by Nerval in his 1828 preface to his translation of *Faust*: it contains "une puissance de sorcellerie, une pensée du mauvais principe, un énigme du mal, un égarement de la pensée, qui fait frissonner, rire et pleurer tout à la fois."

A number of excellent analyses and comparisons have been made of Nerval's translations and the original texts, but these have little relevance with regard to the Middle Ages in the work of Nerval. What is of interest to this study is the fact that Nerval published four more
editions of Goethe's *Faust* after 1828 (1835, 1840, 1850, and 1854); beginning with the 1840 edition, he also translated the Second Faust which had appeared after Goethe's death in 1833. The introduction to the 1840 edition is highly illuminating with respect to Nerval's metamorphosis into the figure of Faust himself. Charles Dédéyan's view that Faust is the tragic legend which ultimately cost Nerval his life by revealing to him his "moi inspiré" is irrefutable: "Le vrai Faust est l'amant malheureux de Jenny Colon, le chercheur d'absolu, le fou inspiré qui descend aux Enfers, et dans l'interrimtance et les répits de ces crises, comme dans ses crises, cherche désespérément Eurydice deux fois perdue, sa mère et son amante, l'Hélène ou l'Isis éternelle."  

But Nerval is not only Faust through an unrequited love of the Eternal Feminine, he is also Faust "par la recherche orgueilleuse de la science, par la quête occultiste."  

Faust, for Nerval, is "l'homme du moyen âge, qui en porte dans son front tout le génie et toute la science, et dans son coeur tout l'amour et tout le courage." Maxime Du Camp, Nerval's contemporary, makes a mockery of these noble values: for him Nerval was a "petit homme inculte et dépênaillé" who furnished his lodging with "de vieux bahuts, de chaises gothiques, de stalles épiscopales et de prie-Dieu Moyen Age," and Jenny Colon was his Dulcinea.

Curiously, Nerval could not seem to come to grips with Goethe's Second Faust: he regretted that "la seconde partie de Faust n'ait pas toute la valeur d'exécution de la première," and "de n'avoir pu y répandre peut-être toute la clarté désirable": since the author's thought itself in the Second Faust is often "abstraite et voilée comme à dessein ... l'on est forcé alors d'en donner l'interprétation plutôt que
Such a judgment allowed him to justify the substitution of analyses for what he termed several "parties accessoires" of the new Faust:

Une analyse détaillée, mêlée des scènes les plus remarquables, entièrement traduites, nous a paru suffire pour guider le lecteur, du dénouement du premier Faust à ce magnifique acte d'Hélène, qui est véritablement la partie la plus importante.

These "parties accessoires" were, however, most of the Second Faust, a scandalous procedure for a translator despite the fact that Goethe himself had published the "act of Hélène" separately in 1827.

Nerval's inability to translate the Second Faust derives precisely from his inability to identify with the character of Faust once he has transcended his guilt and despair; the Second Faust is permeated with the philosophy of Kant and Hegel, and is the older, wiser, classical Goethe's response to the Romanticism of the first Faust. At the end of the first Faust, good and evil are inseparable; Mephistopheles represents Faust's own powers of self-temptation, bogged down in egocentricity. It is highly significant that Nerval should omit the final chorus which constitutes the final lines of the Second Faust, in which the nucleus of Goethe's philosophy is found:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alles Vergängliche</th>
<th>All that is transient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ist nur ein Gleichnis;</td>
<td>As symbol is known;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Das Unzulängliche,</td>
<td>The erstwhile deficient;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hier wird's Ereignis;</td>
<td>Perfected is shown;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Das Unbeschreibliche</td>
<td>The indescribable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hier ist's getan;</td>
<td>Here it is done;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Das Ewig-Weibliche</td>
<td>The Ever-Womanly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zieht uns hinan.</td>
<td>Still draws us on.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only Charles Dédéyan has commented on this omission which "peut paraître étrange," but he attempts to explain it through the fact that Nerval was working against time to complete the Second Faust (another translation,
by Henri Blaze de Bury, appeared in 1839) and Nerval's admitted preference for the first Faust. Of more importance for this study is the fact that the Second Faust is no longer medieval: Faust's union with Helen, queen of Antiquity, and the birth of Euphorion, product of the ultimate in both knowledge and beauty, removes him from the temporal and spatial, and Faust is no longer "l'homme du moyen âge" with whom Gérard identifies. "Man's adequacy," Morse Peckham comments with regard to Goethe's Faust, "lies in his power to face his inadequacy; his tragedy lies in his inability to accept that inadequacy." Applied to Nerval, this statement finds an actualization which led to the tragic events of the rue de la Vieille Lanterne in January 1855, where, in the tradition of his German heritage, Nerval the noctambule found his destiny in the night.

With the great exception of Dédéyan, the Faustian legend in the work of Nerval has largely been ignored. Criticism has tended to concentrate on exegeses of the hermetic aspect of his poetry, on the esoteric, alchemistic, and occult elements in his work, on the Nervalian opposition of the universal and particular, on the metamorphosis of Gérard Labrunie into Gérard de Nerval; as such, his first works—that is to say, all those before 1841, and consequently most of those which deal with the Middle Ages—are treated precursory if at all. According to Richer, who more than any other scholar has devoted his life to the work of Gérard de Nerval, "les essais de récits historiques de Nerval peuvent être considérés comme des tentatives de dépaysement, ils correspondent à la recherche d'une autre vie dans le passé." He and Dédéyan insist that the Faustian vocation of Nerval intensified—if not crystallized—after
his first crise de folie in 1841 and the death of Jenny Colon in 1842, after which she became a Proustian Albertine for Nerval. R.-M. Albérès goes as far as to affirm that "avant 1840, tout le fantastique nervalien n'est que romantisme d'atelier," a view which is more or less generally shared by most critics. The legend of the first Faust was easily internalized by Nerval early in his career as a writer: such an identification was both natural and easy, for his mother's name was Marie-Antoinette Marguerite Laurent, the actress Jenny Colon's real name was Marguerite, and Faust's Gretchen becomes Marguerite in French translation.

Nerval himself, unaware that his ideal was a syncretic absolute, does not define it in his early work. Consequently, the Prince des Sots, a posthumously published historical novel set in the late Middle Ages, is dismissed by Richer in three and one-half pages (including a discussion of his own discoveries relevant to the manuscript) in his highly acclaimed Nerval, expérience et création. Albert Béguin insists that the manuscript of the Prince des Sots (dated by Richer 1831-1836, by Milner 1832-40, but by himself much closer to the July Revolution), "compose avec les oeuvres connues de Nerval le témoignage d'un destin, d'une vocation, d'une lente et admirable naissance." Milner, too, stresses the satanic aspects of the Prince des Sots in his brief discussion. Another interpretation, however, is possible: one which is compatible with the Faustian legend, Nerval's past, and the period in which he lived at the time of its initial composition as a diablerie in 1830:

C'était un mystère à la façon gothique qui avait pour décoration une gueule d'enfer toute rouge, surmontée d'un paradis bleu tout constellé d'or. Un ange, descendu des voûtes bleues y jouait avec
le diable des âmes aux dés. Nous ne nous rappelons plus quel était l'enjeu de l'ange. Par excès de zèle, et pour ramener plus d'âmes au ciel, l'ange trichait. Le diable se fâchait et le menaçait, s'il récidivait, "de lui plumer les ailes," ce qui l'empêcherait de remonter chez son patron. La querelle s'envenimait, et il en naissait un tumulte dont l'amoureux, protégé par le Prince des Sots, profitait, pour enlever sa maîtresse. Le mystère était écrit en vers de huit pieds, comme les anciens mystères. 115

Gautier claims to have composed a prologue to the diablerie at the request of Félix Harel, director of the Odéon, to "préparer le public à l'étrangeté du spectacle," since, according to Gautier, plays in this vein were no longer in vogue at the time. 117 But Nerval himself wrote to his friend Papion du Chateau on 16 January 1831: "La petite pièce que vous savez que je devais lire à l'Odéon a été reçue, samedi même, par acclamations et à la seule condition d'y joindre un prologue pour préparer le public aux innovations qui s'y trouvent." 118 It would appear, then, that Gautier composed the prologue for his friend. Harel nevertheless refused to accept the play, and suggested that Nerval compose a drama in five acts about Charles VI. 119 It is obvious that Nerval must have devoted some thought to the matter.

Nerval's fascination with the character of Charles VI even before he became his figurative counterpart in 1841 is evident already in the title of the historical novel, for the Prince des Sots is not only the leader of the Enfans sans Souci, he is also his alter ego, the figurative prince of fools: Charles VI "en démence." The personage of Charles VI continued to haunt Nerval, and his identification with the mad king is strikingly apparent in his poem "Rêverie de Charles VI" (1847), of which the last four lines contain the presage of his own death:

Il semble que Dieu dise à mon âme souffrante:
Quitte le monde impur, la foule indifférente,
Henri Lemaître points to the fact that the manuscript (in the Lovenjoul Collection at Chantilly) contains the number 52 above the word NUIT, which allows the supposition that Nerval predicted his own death in accordance with the Pythagorean ten-year cycle, thus projecting his own death for 1852\textsuperscript{121} and making his suicide in 1855 more plausible. Then, in the minus-zero hours of a bleak January nuit blanche, Nerval tied a blue apron string around his neck and hanged himself from a window grill across from a maison borgne on the rue de la Vieille Lanterne, described by a contemporary as "une ruelle du Moyen Age semblable à celles qui longent les murailles de Saint-Jean-d'Arc,"\textsuperscript{122} where the Théâtre de la Ville now stands. He had left for his devoted paternal aunt, into whose care he had been relinquished upon his discharge from the clinique of Dr. Blanche, a note which ended: "Ne m'attends pas ce soir, car la nuit sera noire et blanche."\textsuperscript{123}

In Nerval's historical novel, the character of Charles VI is central to the plot, and is of extreme psychological importance. Beginning in 1392, the action terminates in 1407 with the assassination of Louis, Duke of Orléans and brother of the King, by supporters of John the Fearless, Duke of Burgundy. Nerval chose to adapt parts of the diablerie to the form of his "chronique," but never published it during his lifetime. Louis Ulbach, a friend of Nerval, published a Prince des Sots under Nerval's name in 1887 and 1888; but Richer, whose assiduous research traced the manuscript to the Bodmer Library at Cologny (near Geneva), was startled to discover that Ulbach had taken extensive liberties with the
text, often deliberately suppressing what Richer terms "les remarques, souvent fines et intéressantes, qui donnent à l'oeuvre son accent nervalien." These for the large part constitute the commentary which repeatedly opens and concludes the various chapters. In fact, Ulbach did acknowledge some alterations, justifying them by attributing the manuscript to a "copiste inhabile." Claiming that he had had to deal with a copy "surchargée de corrections de l'écriture de Gérard de Nerval qui creuse, fouille, évide comme un bois à sculpter, le texte épaissi," Ulbach admitted only the correction of spelling errors, completion of some unfinished sentences, and the ominous "occasional" attempt to "faire filtrer un peu d'obscurité dans le récit." The "copiste inhabile," Richer and handwriting experts have categorically affirmed, was none other than Nerval himself. The maladroit features in the style and grammatical errors in the text have been a deterrent to research. The few critics who have bothered with the Prince des Sots ignore the socialistic, centralistic tone of the novel and its strong support of a constitutional monarch, a phenomenon only found in this particular work of Nerval; yet the Prince des Sots upholds the absolution of all social classes, and the triumph of the Third Estate over nobility and the clergy. In contrast to the autonomic, feudalistic system, it constitutes a plea for a unified France: for not just le peuple, but le peuple français.

The impetus for a novel about Charles VI is easily discernible in Nerval's family history. We have already noted that Nerval claimed a genealogy deriving from a chevalier under the German emperor Otto II, the Napoleon of Germany, and that Nerval's admiration for Napoleon himself, fostered by his father, found an early expression in his Elégies
nationales, which chant the glory of the fallen Emperor. Nerval is quick to point out in the first paragraph of his novel that it deals with the Valois branch of the Capetians:

Les rois de France des deux premières races, Mérovingiens et Carolingiens, n'habitèrent jamais Paris; ce ne fut que la troisième race, Capétienne, qui y résida, dans l'édifice appelé maintenant Palais de Justice. Charles V, de la branche de Valois, ayant horreur de ce palais ... l'abandonna pour aller habiter une maison de plaisance.¹²⁶

The Valois kings, we know, continued the same ideals and values—especially with respect to centralization—as the Capetians had upheld, and Louis XI, archenemy of feudalism, was only the executor of a Valois ambition which was interrupted by the Hundred Years War. Thus, through associations to both his paternal and maternal lineage, Nerval was ineluctably drawn to the subject.

Jean Richer sees the fictitious Maître Gonin, the literal Prince des Sots who is the Nervalian Gringoire, and a semi-fictitious character in the novel named Aubert le Flamenc as the "dépositaires de certains rêves de l'auteur."¹²⁷ Yet Nerval as omniscient author remarks in the text itself: "Quand Charles VI n'est pas le plus fou, il est le plus sage de son royaume."¹²⁸ For Nerval, it would seem that a monarch is capable of the right kind of direction, if not guided by erroneous advice such as that personified in the characters of the King's wife and brother; Charles VI was, after all, also called "le bien-aimé." Louis of Orléans, his brother, is used as an exemplum of how a prince may be led astray: the semihistorical amorous exploits of Orléans provide Nerval with a rather farfetched plot, including escapades with Queen Isabeau of Bavaria, Marguerite of Hainaut (wife of John the Fearless), and innumerable women,
in particular two of the lower classes whom he has seduced, and from whom two illegitimate sons were the fruit of his pursuits. The Château de Beauté, in which the King's brother kept the nude portraits of every woman he had ever seduced—painted by himself—is a symbolic of the dissipation of Louis of Orléans which is detrimental to the interests of the Throne, while the ambitions of the Burgundian Dukes represent a different type of threat.

Apart from his fascination with the mystical Middle Ages, which is not present in this work except in naive superstitions such as are found in the scene of the "chaudière des damnés," Nerval's personal view of the Middle Ages as a whole—hardly an idealistic Romantic one at this time—is glaringly evident here:

En généralisant, on trouve que les générations éteintes du moyen âge vécurent dans une ignorance superstitieuse et barbare, sans exception même pour le siècle de la Renaissance qui, en donnant à la France une pléiade d'hommes illustres dans tous les genres, n'en laissa pas moins le peuple dans l'ornière.

Contrary to Montesquieu and Bertrand before him, who saw in feudal society an ideal form of government, Nerval sees feudalism as a closed world. This is best expressed in the words of Maître Gonin, the Nervilian Doppelgänger of Charles VI:

--Mais comment parvenir? quand on est... d'extraction et de fortune basses... Tout dans notre société féodale n'est-il pas établi et basé sur le principe de l'héritage... Depuis le Roi jusqu'au plus infirme des hobereaux? Et si quelque idee se fait, si quelque espce s'ouvre, n'est-il pas aussitôt bouché par les cadets, les neveux et les bâtards?... Oui, cela est ainsi et doit ainsi demeurer, car dès qu'il y sera dérogé, tout ce grand édifice féodal choira d'un seul coup, comme une tour, si l'on arrache quelques pierres de ses fondements... l'Esprit supérieure à la classe où il est né, le corps mal organisé pour un état, le coeur que l'ordre social a froissé et meurtri, n'ont de refuge qu'en deux conditions: celle de moine ou celle de larron!
After the July Revolution, the Middle Ages for Nerval are no longer a "bon vieux temps," but rather its contrary: a time when "la muse romane s'amusait à tresser des guirlandes de roses poétiques, quand les édits tissus d'épines aiguës, nœuds coulant au cou du populaire, l'étranglaient à lui faire rendre gorge." Since "tous les siècles, tous les hommes se ressemblent en général et ne se différencient que par de légères nuances dues aux circonstances mobiles qui accidentent la vie," it follows for Nerval that

la lutte des Bouguignons et des Armagnacs fut aussi stérile que le furent toutes les luttes du moyen âge; il ne pouvait en être différemment, nul principe chez le peuple, nulle immersion politique, aucune idée avancée d'amélioration des basses classes par les lois, le système féodal rivait le peuple à la glèbe et si la bourgeoisie de certaines villes acheta des franchises, ces villes affranchies n'allaient pas au-delà de quelques privilèges insignifiants, en regard de la féodalité basée sur la propriété nobiliaire et ecclésiastique, dont les manoirs élevaient leurs enceintes crénelées et primaient de leur cime tout le territoire.

As the action in the novel progresses, Nerval becomes increasingly more and more subjective in his judgments, more critical in his condemnations:

A ce temps de moyen âge le monde allait de mal en pire, et l'humanité tâtonnant dans les ténèbres, n'évitant la gueule béante de la féodalité que pour tomber dans celle non moins affamée des moines et toutes les couleurs . . . .

Il fallut donc plus tard un Louis XI, un Richelieu sous le nom de Louis XIII travaillant pour le despotisme royal préparant sans se douter l'émancipation des masses que quatre-vingt-neuf commença et quatre-vingt-treize scheva avec la hache de la Terreur, frappant à mort l'hydre féodale.

In fact, the hope which Charles VI offers in his sane moments resembles very much that offered by Louis-Philippe, roi-citoyen, former Duke of Valois, in the beginning years of his reign; it seems to the writer that the Prince des Sots could only have been composed at that time. To
Louis of Orléans, if he were present, and to his nineteenth-century counterpart in some respects, the Valois king would say:

prênez-garde, mon frère, nous ne sommes plus au temps de Charlemagne où il n'y avait en France que des nobles et des serfs; les serfs se sont peu à peu rachetés, les communes se sont formées, la bourgeoisie a acquis richesses et franchises; si bien qu'aujourd'hui Noblesse et Bourgeoisie sont deux grandes dames et que la royauté n'a plus d'autre office que de les maintenir en parfait équilibre, car la moindre prépondérance de l'une entraînerait la complète ruine de l'autre, et jugez laquelle de ces deux puissances a le plus à craindre, de celle qui a successivement acquis, ou de celle qui a successivement perdu.\(^{136}\)

The book is filled with other recriminations directed against the feudalistic Middle Ages: "nos seigneurs hautains et fainéants" knew only how to gamble, "tourmenter leurs vassaux, boire et se battre"; the "droit du seigneur" and "droit de prise" as practiced by Orléans denied their basic humanity, and "nos pères, gémissant sous le joug féodal," endured.\(^{137}\) Maître Gonin observes of the French dynasties of the Middle Ages that they are "Eteintes! Seulement pour mémoire on dit: Mérovingien, Carolingien, Capétien et Valois... Et tout cela se résume par sottise, dilapidation et crime."\(^{138}\) Nerval the omniscient author comments that la France avait vu sur le trône des modèles d'horreur, de férocité et d'infamie réduits aux maximes justifiant tous les crimes par le mot Politique. Elle avait vu bien avant Bourgogne des ambitieux, avant d'Orléans des débauchés, et avant Isabeau de Bavière des adultères. Mais il était réservé à cette trilogie: ambition, dépravation, prostitution, de s'étayer sur la démence royale servant de base, de piédestal à la politique qui fit douze ans entiers de la France la proie et le patrimoine de la couronne d'Angleterre.\(^{139}\)

Richer, who has traced possible sources for the Princes des Sots, points out that "les erreurs matérielles et chronologiques, les anticipations, les fautes de perspective, les entorses données à la vérité historique moyenne ne manquent pas."\(^{140}\) Certainly Nerval's imagination finds fertile ground in this epoch of history. The Duke of Orléans, for
example, is killed by one of his bastard sons while another illegitimate son comes to his rescue and dies with him, notwithstanding the fact that the crime is committed at the instance of John the Fearless. Among Nerval's historical sources, some of which are quoted in the text, were the Chronique de Charles VI by Juvenal des Ursins, the anonymous Latin chronicle by the Religieux de Saint-Denis, the works of Molinet, Monstrelet, Froissart, and Alain Chartier; he also reread the poetry of Christine de Pisan and Eustache Deschamps.\footnote{Béguin alone rightly comments that "on n'est certainement pas loin de l'époque Jeune-France, des dernières poèmes de jeunesse, du temps où chez Gérard les souvenirs napoléoniens, associés à la mémoire déjà mythique de sa mère, se mêlaient d'inflexions littéraires et de réminiscences de la Grande Révolution."} We recall Nerval's participation in the Jeunes-France, the "petite Bohème" which he shared on the rue du Doyenné with Gautier, Houssaye, and Célestin Nanteuil, the "bal des truands" hosted by them, the "eau des mers" sipped from the skull procured from Dr. Labrunie's medical practice at a gathering one evening at the Petit Moulin Rouge, to which should be added the windfall of 30,000 francs which Gérard inherited from his maternal grandfather in 1834, which allowed him to leave the paternal residence and officially withdraw from medical school, which fortune was quickly decimated by a journalistic adventure founded by Nerval in great part to further the career of his great passion, the actress Jenny Colon, whom he met for the first time during that fateful 1834. Nerval even purchased a Renaissance bed in which Marguerite of Navarre (happy association of name!) reputedly had slept, but there is no evidence that his lady ever shared it with him. Nerval's review, Le Monde dramatique, collapsed the
following year, leaving him deeply in debt à la Balzac. We have seen
Gautier's description of this âge d'or in a previous chapter, the "temps
merveilleux" which he would forever recall with nostalgia. Houssaye
also glorified "la Bohème" in his memoirs:

Radieuses années! jours de soleil où nous nous sentions des rayons
sur le front, nuits éloquentes qui nous couronnaient d'étoiles . . .
paradis de la jeunesse quand la jeunesse croît au lendemain. . . .143

The impasse Doyenné is the "premier château" recalled by Nerval in his
Petits Châteaux de Bohème (1853):

C'était dans notre logement commun de la rue du Doyenné que
nous nous étions reconnus frères--Arcades ambo, --dans un coin du
vieux Louvre des Médicis, --bien près de l'endroit où exista
l'ancien hôtel de Rambouillet. . . .

Quels temps heureux! On donnait des bals, des soupers, des
fêtes costumées, --on jouait de vieilles comédies. . . . Nous
étions jeunes, toujours gais, souvent riches. . . .144

"En ce temps, je ronsardisais," Nerval remarks. And of these Odelettes,
first published in 1832, several have relevance to this study. The poem
"Nobles et valets" compares the "nobles d'autrefois dont parlent les
romans, / Ces preux à fronts de boeuf, à figures dantesques" to the
contemporary "héritiers de leurs noms immortels," the nobles of 1830
whom he criticizes as a

Race de Laridons, encombrant les hôtels
Des ministres, --rampante, avide et dégradée;
Etres grêles, à buscs, plastrons et faux mollets....145

The poem "Notre-Dame de Paris" is unusual in that it predicts that the
cathedral will probably endure longer than the city which saw its creation,
but that in time it, too, will crumble; visitors from faraway lands,
rereading "le livre de Victor," will reconstruct it by means of their
imagination. Humphrey reads even more into the poem: the cathedral will
die, and its death is the symbol of another death: that of religion
Nerval's *Odelettes* testify to a social perspective which is not present in his more youthful—and less skillful—poems such as "Autre," where he laments the passing of the "temps heureux" of chivalry and the "Tems fortunés de la galanterie" where the chevalier exposed his life for his country and his beloved: "Depuis longtemps nous sommes abrutis." It is interesting to note that, at the height of his passion for Jenny Colon, he wrote to her:

Vous me parlez de fidélité sans récompense comme à un chevalier du moyen âge, chevauchant à quelque entreprise dans sa froide armure de fer. J'ai bien un peu de ce sang-là dans les veines, moi, pauvre et obscur descendant d'un châtelain du Périgord; mais les temps sont bien changés et les femmes aussi!

But Nerval never again spoke out politically in his works. An explanation for his lack of political commitment is found in "Sylvie," loveliest of the *Filles du feu* (1854):

L'ambition n'était cependant pas de notre âge, et l'avidé curée qui se faisait alors des positions et des honneurs nous éloignait des sphères d'activité possibles. Il ne nous restait pour asile que cette tour d'ivoire des poètes, où nous montions toujours plus haut pour nous isoler de la foule. A ces points élevés où nous guidaient nos maîtres, nous respirions enfin l'air pur des solitudes, nous buvions l'oubli dans la coupe d'or des légendes, nous étions ivres de poésie et d'amour.

Indeed, the legends would always remain: Lusignan, Biron, the "prince d'Aquitaine à la tour abolie" of "El Desdichado," perhaps the most well-known and appreciated of the *Chimères*, afford the proof. To the best of our knowledge, Françoise Gaillard is the only critic to verbalize the basic contradiction in Nerval: "entre les exigences totalitaires du moi, héritées de l'individualisme, et une soif d'harmonie qui ne trouve à s'abolir que dans une intuition onirique de la communauté humaine, de cette société primitive sans classes." The road inevitably leads
back to Faust.

Milner has labeled the years 1830-1835 a "pandémonium romantique," the "âge d'or du satanisme." If Nerval had completed his Faust, for which a date of composition is difficult to establish,\textsuperscript{151} it would not have been an anomaly on the theatrical scene. The one completed act and opening monologue of the second act do not offer much upon which to formulate a judgment: "trop vieux pour rechercher de vains amusements" and "trop jeune pour être sans désirs," Nerval's Faust is penniless. The fact that he has spent all of his inherited fortune is strongly reminiscent of Nerval's own unhappy experience: "Hélas! oui, mon père m'avait laissé quelque fortune; mais qu'elle s'est vite écoulée!" his Faust exclaims.\textsuperscript{152}

At about the same time, Nerval composed three scenes of a "drame-chronique" in a projected three acts (never completed) entitled Nicolas Flamel, of which the first two fragments were published in the Mercure de France du XIX\textsuperscript{e} siècle of 1831, and the last part (scene 3) adapted to Le Rêve et la Vie (1855). It was not Goethe's Faust, however, which gave the initial impetus for this drama to Nerval; according to a note on the manuscript, it was rather a story entitled "Le Trésor" in a collection of historical tales entitled Soirées de Walter Scott à Paris, published in 1829 by the Bibliophile Jacob (Paul Lacroix, a germanophile who himself translated Goethe's Werther), who knew Nerval at this time.\textsuperscript{153} Of "Le Trésor," Nerval nevertheless only retained the medieval setting during the reign of Charles VI, who is mentioned by name, and one element of the action. Milner's analyses afford proof that, although he might not actually have possessed a copy of the coveted Faust by Klinger, he
certainly was at least indirectly familiar with the French translation. Of the character of Flamel, a public scrivener at the University of Paris (1330-1418) and legendary sorcerer and alchemist, Nerval creates an illuminé reduced to the basest poverty, nevertheless strong enough to ultimately resist an anachronistic medieval Lucifer who mocks him:

SATAN—Mon ami, se peut-il qu'une âme comme la tienne soit imprégnée de toutes ces terrets d'enfants, de tous ces préjugés de vieilles? ... Des flammes, des chaudières! ... tu crois à tout cela? As-tu donc une idée si basse et si mesquine de celui qui fut un instant le rival de Dieu, et qui entraîna la moitié du ciel dans sa cause?155

Nerval attempts to give a medieval flavor to the third act through the use of medieval argot in a drinking song sung in a cabaret, where Flamel changes water to wine by the use of mysterious powders:

Entervez, marpeaux et moins
Que je rouscaille ma chanson
J'aime l'artie
J'aime la vie
J'aime la croûte de parfond.156

Richer's discovery that in December 1830 Nerval borrowed the same book from the Bibliothèque Nationale which Hugo used as a source for the language of the truands in Notre-Dame de Paris (1831) offers an interesting insight into the methodology of that period. Significant also is the fact that a restaurant called Nicolas Flamel existed in Paris in Nerval's time in the region of the Châtelet. Although Nerval abandoned Nicolas Flamel, the underlying idea did not leave him.

In 1838, while in Frankfurt with Alexandre Dumas, the two collaborated on a drama in five acts which as L'Alchimiste was offered to the public under the sole name of Dumas the following year. It has been established that L'Alchimiste is a free adaptation of a German play
entitled Fasio, and that it also bears a strong resemblance to Bulwer Lytton's Eugène Aram (1832). Richer attributes the first act almost entirely to Nerval, but finds that acts two through five are "trop bien versifiés" to have come from the pen of Nerval, and consequently has only reproduced the first act of L'Alchimiste in his edition of Nerval's Oeuvres complémentaires, while Dédéyan has included the complete text in volume three of his Gérard de Nerval et l'Allemagne; we were also able to examine it in an 1864 edition of Dumas' Théâtre complet. The idea would nevertheless seem to be that of Nerval: is it not Nerval himself, with a few modifications, who could say with Lélio (scene 3, act 2):

La mère, qu'on citait comme sainte en tout lieu,  
A l'âge de trente ans fut appelée à Dieu,  
Et laissa, pour descendre en un sépulcre vide,  
Son enfant au berceau près de sa couche vide!  
Hélas! le pauvre enfant, si petit qu'il était,  
Avaient déjà compris que sa mère emportait  
Le bonheur avec elle, et, dans sa peine amère,  
Sans cesse, en bégayant, redemandait sa mère,  
Sa mère qu'à cette heure il se rappelle enco  
Comme un ange entrouv dans un nuage d'or!160

Or again, in the last act (scene 9), expecting to be decapitated shortly, the innocent Fasio, would-be orfévre who has been caught in a web of circumstantial evidence, lauds and magnifies his wife Francesca who in his eyes has transcended human experience as Madame Labrunie ultimately also did for her son:

O Vierge, épouse et mère! ô trinité d'amour!  
Triple coeur réuni pour faire une seule âme,  
Un pied sur les degrés de l'échafaud infâme,  
À la face du ciel où nous serons unis,  
Au nom de Dieu vivant, femme, je te bénis!161

P.-G. Castex’s statement that "Nerval a probablement conçu et modelé à sa ressemblance le personage de Fasio, qui, dans la belle courtisane
Maddalena, croit reconnaître un ange," seems much more plausible. Since Dumas had no knowledge of German, it must have been Nerval who brought the German play to his attention. The content of L'Alchimiste evokes Nerval's Faust, Nicolas Flamel, and the Imagier de Harlem which will next be considered; but the composition is basically the work of Dumas. Dumas' dédicace of L'Alchimiste to Madame Ida Ferrier (later Madame Alexandre Dumas) reveals: "Et vous, vous m'avez dit de votre voix chérie: 'Faites vite pour moi ce drame.' — Le voilà!" And Gérard, writing to Auguste Maquet in November 1838 with regard to Maquet's play Un soir de Carnaval, relates: "Il y a un acte et demi de très bon, et un acte et demi à refaire. Dumas n'en a pas le temps, à cause de l'Alchimiste qu'il lui faut finir d'ici à quinze jours." Nerval would not pursue the Faustian theme in literature again for well over a decade.

After the commencement of Nerval's crises de folie in 1841, which Richer has labeled collectively a "délire sacré" because they led to a mystical reconstruction of his life on simultaneous levels, Nerval's literary production occupied itself more with vie antérieure and vie intérieure than with legends of the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, he remained impregnated with the Faustian legend. Sometime after he made the acquaintance of Charles Monselet in 1846 and his 1850 voyage to Germany, where he wrote to Dumas:

Nous avions si souvent discuté ensemble sur la possibilité de faire un Faust dans le goût français, sans imiter Goethe l'inimitable, en nous inspirant seulement des légendes dont il ne s'est point servi. . . .

Nerval discovered a copy of Klinger's Les Aventures du docteur Faust et
sa descente aux enfers in Monselet's library and was given the book by his friend. Two years earlier, in 1844, Nerval had applied for a patent under the name Labronie de Nerval for a "machine à imprimer au moyen de rangées alphabétiques mobiles" which he called a "stéréographe." In a technical notice written by Nerval which accompanied the request for a patent, this was:

un appareil destiné à simplifier le travail de la composition typographique, au moyen de disques ou anneaux de métal enfilés sur un axe commun, formant cylindre: chaque disque présente, sur son épaississeur, un cordon de lettres et les lignes destinées à l'impression n'occupent qu'une moitié de la circonférence de l'anneau.

In effect, a recent technical study of this invention has concluded that "Gérard de Nerval avait prévu l'invention de la linotypie plus de quarante ans avant que Ottmar Mergenthaler ne la réalise." The patent, valid for a period of fifteen years, was granted, and the idea of this invention must have remained with Nerval. His fascination with the discovery of the printing press, of which the concretization is the Imagier de Harlem (1851), derives perhaps from the fact that he himself was an apprentice typesetter for a short period of time at around the age of twenty; in addition, his interest was very probably stimulated by the role of the printing press in "le livre de Victor," Hugo's Notre-Dame de Paris. In 1841 he published a lengthy article in the Journal des Débats, "De la propriété littéraire," which bemoaned the fact that lifetime copyrights were not available and affirmed that "la découverte de l'imprimerie a changé la face de la société française." In 1849 Nerval wrote in the Almanach cabalistique:

... faut-il attribuer à l'ignorance de certains moines du moyen âge la supposition qu'ils firent que ce diable avait inspiré
toutes les découvertes illustres qui firent la gloire du XVᵉ siècle? Souvenons-nous que c'est un moine nommé Berthold Schwartz qui a inventé la poudre, et si Lucifer l'a inspiré, ce ne peut être que par ressouvenir de ses anciens exploits d'artilleur au service de Satan; --mais ce fait n'est nullement prouvé; tandis qu'il est assez reconnu que ce fut lui qui inspira au Docteur Faust l'idée de l'imprimerie. . . .169

It was undoubtedly these thoughts and the 1850 voyage to Germany, where he heard part of a presentation of Spohr's opera Faust at Frankfurt, which made him realize that a Faust in the "goût français" was still possible. He wrote to Dumas:

Strasbourg célèbre Gutenberg; Mayence célèbre Faust. Quand à Schoeffer, il n'a jamais passé que pour le serviteur des deux autres. Faust était orfèvre à Mayence; Gutenberg, simple ouvrier, l'aida dans sa découverte, et cette union du capitaliste inventeur avec le travailleur ingénieux produisit ce dont nous usons et abusons aujourd'hui.

Faust était, dit-on, le gendre de Laurent Coster, imagier à Harlem. Ce dernier avait déjà trouvé l'art d'imprimer les figures des cartes. Faust eut l'idée, à son tour, de tailler sur bois les légendes, c'est-à-dire les noms de Lancelot, d'Alexandre ou de Pallas, qui, jusque-là avaient été écrits à la main. Cette pensée en fit naître encore une autre chez Faust, ce fut de sculpter des lettres isolées, en bois de poirier, afin d'en former facultativement les mots.170

Nerval had already researched the matter thoroughly. The result was L'Imagier de Harlem, a "drame légendaire" in five acts written in collaboration with Joseph Méry (and, to a small extent, Bernard Lopez), of which Nerval wrote: "La pièce est religieuse au fond comme un mystère du Moyen Age."171

In the play Faust has become Laurent Coster, a name with connotations dear to Nerval since, as we have observed earlier, Laurent contains his own name spelled backwards and was the maiden name of his mother. "Il y a beaucoup du Faust dans la pièce et même du 2ᵉ Faust ce qui ne contribue pas à l'éclaircir. Mais vous savez que c'est une manie
chez moi," Nerval wrote to the critic Jules Janin the day of the premiere in an attempt to explain the play:

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L'idée est tirée d'une légende allemande de Klinger représentant les difficultés qu'ont éprouvé [sic] les premiers inventeurs de l'imprimerie pour faire triompher leur pensée; cela se promène dans différents pays où ils éprouvent des obstacles et cela forme une sorte de tableau du 15e siècle découpé en quatre ou cinq figures historiques.172
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Marguerite's counterpart is Catherine, Coster's chaste and devout wife, a "femme bourgeoise qui ne le comprend pas et le fait souffrir, mais qui le sauve par le sentiment religieux," while "la femme idéale, son rêve, le rêve éternel du génie dominé par l'amour-propre et que l'auteur de Faust avait symbolisé par Hélène, ici c'est Alilah,"173 who assumes the various forms of Aspasie, the Countess of Bloksberg, the Dame of Beaujeu, and Impèria. Satan assumes the role of the Count of Bloksberg, chamberlain to the Archduke of Austria,174 who tempts Coster with the goal of seizing his invention in order to use it to further his evil purposes; but, recalling Bertrand's Gaspard, he also becomes "Caspar sous la forme d'Olivier le Daim," which in nineteenth-century argot meant "le sot" (thus the opposite of Olivier "le preux"), and even becomes Nicolas Machiavelli. Louis XI, who is portrayed as an evil king who would stop at nothing to obtain what he wants (often with the help of the mysterious Olivier le Daim), is a defender of Coster until Satan makes use of the printing press to compose a nefarious pamphlet injurious to the King in order to compromise Coster.

Coster, who is accredited in Holland with the discovery of the printing press, follows almost step-by-step the path followed by Klinger's Faust. Nerval has incorporated thirty years and five countries
into the plot, with a consequent paucity of psychological development. Coster sells his soul to the devil to save his daughter's life, rather than for his own elucidation or profit; but, notably different from Klinger's Faust, Coster is saved at the end of the play by the love of his child and the prayers of his deceased wife. Conversely, Klinger's Faust, whose first success was the "découverte à jamais mémorable de l'imprimerie," comes to the realization that, if crime and foolishness make people happy, "la vertu n'est qu'une sottise, puisqu'elle ne peut protéger ceux qui lui dévouent leur vie"; and that it is "dans un fol espoir, dans un orgueilleux délire que nous levons les yeux vers le ciel."\textsuperscript{175}

Of all of Nerval's works which deal with the Middle Ages, \textit{L'Imagier} had the most chance of success. For the starring role of Satan the celebrated actor Mélisio was obtained; but from the outset, complications began to arise. First, enough parts of the play were censored to cause Nerval to worry that "tout ne soit pas bien compris";\textsuperscript{176} next, the director at the Forte-Saint-Martin, Marc Fournier, was not in a financial position to provide the type of sets which the authors would have desired; lastly, although the play knew an immediate success, before two weeks had passed the drama was incurring an increasing deficit at each performance, causing its cancellation at the end of the third week. Lulled into a false sense of optimism through its initial success, Nerval was this time caught off guard: confronted with the funereal letter of cancellation, he laughed nervously, then tears streamed down his face. The opinion of the critics had been divided: Janin, who had been chilled in the insufficiently heated theater, entitled his review: "\textit{L'Imagier de}
Harlem, rondeau en cinq actes, en dix tableaux, en bonne prose, en méchants vers, par MM. Méry et Gérard de Nerval,"177 while Jules de Prémolay described it as a "mystère du quinzième siècle, avec le style du dix-huitième et les splendeurs de l'Opéra."178 Théophile Gautier's review, compatible with his view of the Middle Ages, is doubly relevant to this study:

Selon les auteurs, et nous sommes de leur avis, l'imprimerie représente la lumière morale ... Quand cette lampe fut allumée pour la première fois sur le monde, toutes les ignorances, tous les fanatismes, toutes les tyrannies, tous les abus eurent peur; ils sentirent que leur règne allait finir. L'imprimerie est donc une invention divine ... L'imprimerie fit succéder au chaos barbare du moyen âge l'aurore splendide de la Renaissance, cette époque climatérique du genre humain. ...177

Méry explained the failure from a different perspective:

Le public est un mot qui n'a pas de pluriel, et il en méritait plus qu'un autre. La langue française a de ces erreurs inexplicables. Il y a cent couches superposées de publics, et un decrescendo d'intelligence de la première à la centième. A mesure que les représentations de l'Imagier élevaient leur chiffre, les morceaux les plus saillants perdait de leur valeur.180

With the failure of L'Imagier, Nerval's last hope of theatrical success vanished; and this, coupled with the lack of recognition given to his definitive version of the Voyage en Orient in June of 1851, led to another crise de folie and a convalescence of two months.

Varying reasons have been given to explain this defeat of the work which was to have been Nerval's Faust, among them a glaring lack of concern for some semblance of historical accuracy, too narrow a dependence on the Fausts of Klinger and Goethe with an accompanying loss of mystical and symbolic attraction resulting from inadequate adaptation, an unequal form (but here Méry's verses, and not Gérard's prose, were
at fault), and changes made at the insistence of the censors.\textsuperscript{181} To this Dédéyan adds:

\textit{Fallait-il s'étonner de cet insuccès? . . . Malgré ses efforts, son vrai faustisme n'est pas là dans la partie qu'il veut lucide et équilibrée de son être, dans sa tentative d'égaler Goethe et Klinger. Le drame, disons-nous, est en lui et non sur le papier.}\textsuperscript{182}

In determining the role of the Middle Ages in the work of Gérard de Nerval, no better phraseology than Dédéyan's could be applied. For Nerval, the Middle Ages indirectly became an inseparable part of his own quest for identity. The young Nerval knew the literature of the Middle Ages well enough to write a satirical comedy on a contemporary subject in the form of a \textit{sottie}, \textit{L'Académie; ou, Les membres introuvables},\textsuperscript{183} at the age of eighteen (1826), and a \textit{mémoire} which he submitted the same year upheld the conviction that a national literature prior to Ronsard existed which was "capable par elle-même, et à elle seule, d'inspirer des hommes de génie, et d'alimenter de vastes conceptions."\textsuperscript{184} But it was precisely not French medieval literature which inspired Nerval within the scope of this study: apart from the political overtones in the unpublished Prince des Sots, even his participation in the medievalism of the Jeunes-France must be seen as an effect, rather than a cause; the Middle Ages, "la nuit des temps," is for Nerval "le temps de la nuit," where his \textit{moi} became reunited with the universe.
Notes to Chapter V


2Aloysius Bertrand, Gaspard de la Nuit, ed. Bernard Guégan (Paris: Payot, 1926), p. 3. This text rigorously follows the original established by Bertrand, which was published posthumously in 1842. See also p. 236, statement by Henri Chabaud that his preface was "méditée au collège, remaniée sans cesse," attaining its final form between 1832 and 1834.


4Bertrand, Gaspard, ed. Guégan, p. 4.

5Letter of 1866 to Henri Chabaud in reply to inquiries about his brother, quoted in Sprietsem, p. 234. But Frédéric, who was raised by his paternal aunt Lolotte away from his immediate family, had little appreciation for his older brother, whom he found "étrangerment épris du moyen âge et de ses légendes," of an "enfantine superstition," a "sensibilité excessifs," and a "tempérament mal équilibré"; moreover, he found him "morose, insociable effarouché de son ombre, mécontent de lui, injuste envers les autres." In short, this letter reveals a probable long-suppressed jealousy of the love and attention lavished on Louis by their mother and sister, who ultimately joined him in Paris in 1833, and a total lack of confidence in the poetic ability of his brother.


7Ibid., p. 230.


9Robert, 4:834.


11Letter of 1 August 1829, quoted in Marsan, pp. 323-26.

12Bertrand, Gaspard, ed. Guégan, p. 4.

14Kindlers Literaturlexicon (Zurich: Kindler Verlag, 1967), 2:278.

15Bertrand, Gaspard, ed. Guégan, first preface, p. 23.

16Ibid., pp. 21-22.

17One of thirteen prose poems added to Bertrand's manuscript by Victor Pavie (who published Gaspard de la Nuit at Angers, at his own expense), which formed part of the "pièces détachées" of the original 1842 edition. According to Sprietsma (p. 204, n. 3), it was composed in 1838. Sainte-Beuve was responsible for the removal of all dates from Bertrand's prose poems: "Indiquez les dates, si vous le voulez, en manière de renvoi; mais, je vous en supplie, n'intercalez ni dates ni autre chose, se serait tout brouiller. Le mieux même serait peut-être de ne rien indiquer du tout." (Letter to Victor Pavie of late July 1842, quoted in Bertrand, Gaspard, ed. Guégan, p. 234.)


19Synonym for Hell, since the word enfer derives from the Latin "inferi," or "lieu bas."

20Stith Thompson (Motif-Index of Folk Literature, 2d ed. [Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1956], 3:318, no. 6303.3.3.28) states that the devil is often seen in the form of a deer in Western literature; thus, the reference to a "pied de biche" refers unmistakably to the cloven hoof of the devil.

21This will be shown to indicate Moorish ancestry.

22Cf. the seductive character of Biondetta assumed by the devil in Jacques Cazotte's Diable amoureux (1772), who even succeeds in inducing the unwary protagonist, Alvare, to sleep with her.

23Saint Anthony is the patron saint of the vigneron.


25The Gospel narrative does not mention the Magi either by number or by name, and the first reference to them by name appears only in the eighth century. In the fourth century the relics of the Magi were purportedly brought from Persia to Constantinople and then to Milan; the German emperor Barbàrossa had the relics of the "holy three kings" transferred from Milan to the cathedral of Cologne in 1161, where they are still venerated. See New Catholic Encyclopedia (1967), 9:62-64.

26Bertrand, Gaspard, ed. Guégan, p. 18.

28 Fourth son of John the Good, Philip the Bold (1342–1404) received the duchy of Burgundy as an appanage from the king, his father. See chapter 2 above for a discussion of Barante's *Histoire des Ducs de Bourgogne*.

29 The Burgundian fight against French centralization ended with the death of the last Duke of Burgundy, Charles the Bold, at Nancy in 1477, following which Louis XI, the archenemy of feudalism, annexed Burgundy to the French Crown. Dijon itself held associations with northern Italy when the Bertrand family established itself there in 1815, for that city had just been liberated from Austrian control, while at the same time Milan had been given to Austrian rule under the terms of the Congress of Vienna.

30 Spietsma, p. 4, n. 4.

31 Letter of 7 February 1856 from Bertrand's maternal uncle, Jean-Baptiste Davico, to this nephew Balthazard; in it he refers to his sister's letter of 30 November 1841, wherein she communicated the news of Louis's death to him.


34 Bertrand actually signed the register at Notre-Dame de la Pitié as "Jacques Aloysius Bertrand" (Archives de l'Administration générale de l'Assistance publique, as quoted in Spietsma, p. 203, n. 3). Renduel apparently signed a contract with Bertrand in 1836 and the following year gave him 150 francs as an advance on his author's rights for the first printing of *Gaspard*, envisioning a deluxe edition with "vignettes, culs-de-lampe, arabesques, etc." But he constantly postponed publication and finally abandoned the idea; Bertrand's friends purchased back the manuscript for 150 francs after his death. See "Le Manuscrit de *Gaspard de la Nuit*" in Bertrand, *Gaspard*, ed. Guégan, pp. 225–31.

35 Archives de l'Administration générale de l'Assistance publique, as documented by Spietsma, p. 205, n. 3.

36 Ibid., quoted in Spietsma, p. 206, n. 2.
37Bertrand, Gaspard, ed. Picard, p. 8. Picard compares the "pseudonym" of Aloysius to those assumed by the Jeunes-France: "C'était l'époque où Auguste Maquet se travestisait en Augustus MacKeat, Théophile Dondey en Philotée O’Neddy et Pierre Boral en Pétrus le Lycanthrope." The analogy would rather seem to be seen in the poetic doctrine of "l'art pour l'art."

38Bertrand did not abandon his religion in Paris; in a letter of 20 January 1829 to his family he relates, "... je me glissais à cinq heures du soir, lorsque la nuit tombait, dans l'Église Saint-Roch; j'épanchais mon âme devant Dieu; je le suppliai de ne pas nous abandonner." (Quoted in Marsan, pp. 321-22.)

39Laurent Lesage, "A Gothic Romantic: Aloysius Bertrand," American Society of the French Legion of Honor Magazine 48 (1977):101-11. This article has nothing at all to do with the Gothic; it is more an attempt at a biographical sketch.


41Olivier de la Marche (1425-1502), a Burgundian by birth and a very important chronicler, was in the service of Charles the Bold; his Mémoires cover the period 1435-1488. Bertrand quotes the Mémoires in the epitaph to "Les Flamands."


43Bertrand, Gaspard, ed. Guégan, pp. 10-11.

44Ibid., pp. 12, 17.

45Spietsma places the Provincial between the extremes of ultra-liberal and ultraroyalist (p. 87); see his chapter on the Provincial (pp. 88-103). Sainte-Beuve compares the Provincial to the Globe in his notice to the 1842 edition (Bertrand. Gaspard, ed. Guégan, p. xiii). Chateaubriand praises it: "Le Provincial croit que l'on peut être libre et chrétien, royaliste et constitutionnel; il ne dédaigne point le passé, ne calomnie point le présent, et met son espérance dans l'avenir." (Letter of 11 August 1828, quoted in Spietsma, p. 101.) Saluting it as a "belle et courageuse entreprise," Hugo lauded its regionalism: "... il seroit temps en effet que la province cessât de recevoir de Paris des opinions toutes faites; il seroit temps qu'elle eût ses livres et ses journaux, qu'elle se sentit vivre par elle-même. ... La centralisation produit à la fois deux effets opposés, deux maladies contraires pour la province et pour la capitale." (Letter of 8 May 1828 to Charles Brugnot, quoted in Spietsma, p. 100.)

47 Letter of 6 August 1832 addressed to the manager of the Spectateur, which had criticized Bertrand's spontaneous, elaborate words of praise for the politician, whom he had called an "apôtre de la liberté" and spokesman for the people, as quoted in Spijtsma, p. 163.

48 Corbat, pp. 103-30.

49 Ibid., pp. 105, 171.


51 Bertrand, Gaspard, ed. Guégan, p. 17.

52 Ibid., p. 19.

53 Ibid., p. 265.

54 Milner, Le Diable, 2:199.

55 Ibid., 2:198.

56 Bernard, p. 56.

57 Ibid., p. 54, n. 194. The date of the letter in question, 25 August 1827, more than a year before Bertrand's arrival in Paris, should have told her to look more closely for the referent in Marsan's text, not to mention the fact that Dijon is not Bertrand's "ville natale."

58 Ibid., p. 62. The prose poem "Octobre," Bernard observes, was first descriptive and anecdotal; later all allusions to Dijon were removed.


62 Bertrand, Gaspard, ed. Guégan, p. 211.


68 Idem, Promenades et Souvenirs, 1:135.


73 Remark made to Alexandre Weill, a friend and fellow journalist, when Weill visited him in March 1841, as reported in Richer, Nerval: expérience et création, p. 61. See chapter 2, "Napoléonide," pp. 53-93.


76 Gérard was actually enrolled in the School of Medicine at Paris for two years, and in 1832 during the cholera epidemic he made over fifty visits to persons ill, either alone or accompanied by his father. Only in 1834, when he inherited almost 30,000 francs from his maternal grandfather's estate, did he destroy the illusion and withdraw officially from the School of Medicine.

77 See Richer, Nerval: expérience et création, p. 47.


81Nerval, *À Aurélia*, 1:368.


88Jean Richer, *Gérard de Nerval et les doctrines ésotériques* (Paris: Griffon d'or, 1947), p. 188.

89Nerval, Introduction to his 1830 translation of *Poésies allemandes*: Klopstock, Goethe, Schiller, Burger, in his *Vie des lettres*, p. 4.


93Humphrey, pp. 30-31.


95Nerval, *À Aurélia*, 1:386.


100 Dédéyan, Le Thème de Faust, 3:446, 482–83.

101 Ibid., 3:484.

102 Nerval, Faust et le Second Faust, p. 18.

103 Du Camp, p. 227.

104 Nerval, Faust et le Second Faust, p. 9.

105 Ibid., p. 20.

106 Ibid.

107 Ibid., p. 192 ("Avertissement").


109 Dédéyan, Nerval et l'Allemagne, 1:147.


113 Marie, p. 91.


116Through a bizarre coincidence, Harel died in a *maison des fous* in 1846 after having been ruined by the interdiction of Balzac's *Vautrin*, which was deemed nefarious with respect to Louis-Philippe. See Richer's Preface to Nerval's *Variétés et Fantaisies*, p. xi.


118Ibid.


120Ibid., 1:41.


122Du Camp, p. 124.


125Ibid., p. xvii.

126Nerval, *Prince des Sots*, p. 3.

127Richer, Introduction to Nerval's *Prince des Sots*, p. xxiii.


129The Château de Beauté at Nogent-sur-Marne, at the extremity of the Bois de Vincennes, was built by Charles V, who later died there. It was actually used by Louis of Orléans. Upon his death the castle was given by Charles VII to Agnès Sorel, who took the title "Dame de Beauté" from it. Louis XIII caused it to be razed in 1622. (See Nerval, *Prince des Sots*, Richer's notes, p. 326, n. 7.) Nerval uses the Château de Beauté again in the *Imagier de Harlem* (1851) as a creation of the deviī.


131Ibid., pp. 213-14.

132Ibid., p. 163.

133Ibid., p. 161.

134Ibid., pp. 162-63.
135Ibid., p. 163.
136Ibid., pp. 265-66.
137Ibid., p. 254.
138Ibid., p. 234.
140Richer, Introduction to Nerval's *Prince des Sots*, p. xxiii.
142Séguin, 1948 preface to Nerval's *Prince des Sots*, p. xii.
145Ibid., 1:15.
146Humphrey, p. 111. Both of these poems appeared in the *Almanach des Muses* of 1832.
152Nerval, *Théâtre I*, p. 357.
155Nerval, *Théâtre I*, p. 357.
156Ibid., p. 348.
157 Ibid., p. 353, "Notes" to Nicolas Flamel.

158 Marie, p. 149.

159 Marie, p. 138; and Dédéyan, Nerval et l'Allemagne, 2:437.


161 Ibid.


164 Idem, Lorsly, 2:778.

165 Marie, pp. 211-12.

166 Ibid., p. 212. A complete description (several pages long) of the machine, written by Nerval, is found in Richer, Nerval: expérience et création, appendix to ch. 4, pp. 158-60.


168 Nerval, La Vie des lettres, p. 189.


172 Ibid., 1:1026, 1025.

173 Ibid., 1:1026.

174 The original character was Frederick III, Emperor of Germany from 1440 to 1493, but in view of possible associations with Louis-Napoleon, censorship forced the authors to change the character's name to Frederick III, Archduke of Austria.


177 As related by Richer, Preface to Nerval's L'Imagier de Harlem, p. xxii.

178 La Patrie, 29 December 1851, quoted in Richer, Preface to Nerval's L'Imagier de Harlem, p. xxiv.

179 La Presse, 30 December 1851, quoted in Richer, appendices to Nerval's L'Imagier de Harlem, p. 225.


181 See Richer, Preface to Nerval's L'Imagier de Harlem, pp. xvii-xxv; and Marie, p. 235.

182 Dééyan, Le Thème de Faust, 3:481.

183 L'Académie, consisting of one act and composed in alexandrine verse, was occasioned by the fact that Pierre-Edouard Lemonetey, a member of the Académie Française, died on 28 June 1826, followed by the death of Abbot Vilar on 28 August 1826; no one stepped forward to take their places. In the play, which was destined only to be read, the Académie is an invalid who is sick in "tous les membres." After a bleeding has been ordered by the attending physician, the Académie dictates a will, only to be "saved" by the fact that three new candidates are available. Thereupon the doctor pronounces that the Académie must go to the hospital for a rest; she agrees and is sent to the incurables. The text is found in Nerval's Théâtre I. See also Marcel Francon, "A propos du concours d'éloquence (1828) organisé par l'Académie Française," Studi francesi 18 (1962):487-88.

184 Nerval, essay entitled "Les Poètes du XVIe siècle," in La Vie des lettres, first published as an introduction to Choix de poésies, Bibliothèque choisie, 5th Section (1830); reprinted in the Bohême Galante (L'Artiste, 1852), ch. 6. In 1826, the Academy of Dijon proposed a contest on the subject "Discours sur la marche et les progrès de la langue et de la littérature française depuis le commencement du XVIe siècle jusqu'en 1610." The mémoire which the young Gérard Labrunie submitted has not been located in the archives of the Academy, but it served as the basis for three separate publications.
CONCLUSION

In tracing interest in the Middle Ages diachronically throughout several centuries, across diverse disciplines, and synchronically within the works of individual authors, movements, and given periods of time, one consideration has repeatedly come to mind: what were the Middle Ages for those who dealt with them? Certainly not the least of the appellations which could be applied to the Middle Ages should be that of a simple chronological entity in time: the Middle Ages as such comprise a millennium which encompasses all events from the end of the western Roman Empire (476) to the capture of Constantinople in 1453, yet these centuries were always perceived from the vantage point of those which followed. A historically objective perspective was thus virtually impossible to achieve.

Whether philosophical, political, scientific, historical, philosophical, musical, architectural, artistic, literary, or pedestrian, the "je," or subjective self, did not exist in the medieval world. It was this heritage which the late Renaissance scholars explored, and this is precisely the moment when subjectivity awakened; for, in their investigation of the particular in the universal, savants explored those areas of a medieval world picture which were of relevance to them. Since the sixteenth century, then, it is possible to state that the Middle Ages began to acquire connotative distinction.
Precisely because of a diversity of approach, methodology, and intent, attitudes expressed with respect to the Middle Ages increasingly reflected the orientation of those who wrote about the Middle Ages. For the classicists, the Middle Ages had no equal in the beau ideal of Antiquity, nor in their own Grand Siècle of Louis XIV which surpassed it. The medieval past as reflected in literature about the Middle Ages during the eighteenth century presents a plethora of images: the chivalric ideal world, offering models for moral instruction; the Christian world of mysticism, superstition, and faith; nostalgia for le beau vieux temps; but also the temporal in the spatial; a violent, crude, licentious, cruel, and sinister world; a cachet within the consciousness of the mind. The Middle Ages became synonymous with an allegorical, authoritarian utopia in the optic of those who associated them with the Ancien Régime, as well as a vehicle charged with political symbolism. The Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns had resolved itself in favor of progress, but the resultant Enlightenment mentality continued to deprecate the Gothic and all that it represented.

A nascent socio-political, "feudalistic," bourgeois mentality grew out of the political events which toppled the very Ancien Régime which supported it. The Revolution looked to the present and future, but it unleashed a backlash against the excesses which accompanied it that drove the recently emancipated back into the national past. Slowly, "national" became synonymous with "medieval" in an attempt to forge ties with time and to reinforce identity.

The nineteenth century, through the Romantic movement and increasingly beyond it, adapted the past to the present for subjective
purposes: what had been formative in the eighteenth century became normative; the Middle Ages became a dynamic metaphor, and the "je" became medieval, albeit pseudomedieval.

With the exception of scholars who sought veracity for veracity's sake, each movement, individual, or time period has sought in the Middle Ages that which it wanted to find. Thus are the Middle Ages explored today, for, as the eminent historian Georges Duby has recently affirmed ("Aujourd'hui le moyen âge," L'Express, 16 December 1978, p. 92), objectivity with respect to the past is an impossibility:

L'idée qu'on peut arriver à considérer d'un oeil froid toutes les réalités du passé est un mythe de l'Histoire positiviste. Je suis persuadé, au contraire, que toute Histoire, toute bonne Histoire est subjective. Elle est l'oeuvre d'un homme qui choisit les problèmes qu'il veut traiter et qui les considère en fonction du modèle idéologique qui est le sien. Il participe, par conséquent, à l'actualité.

The purpose of this study has been to contribute to the delineation of this subjectivity.
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