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From *La Reine Margot* (1845) to *La Dame pâle* (1849): Affect and Visual Memory in Dumas' Representations of History

This article exemplifies some of the theoretical reflections presented in the introduction of this issue: Referring to Jon Beasley-Murray's theoretical approach, I analyse Dumas' historical novel *La Reine Margot* and his novella *La Dame pâle* (in *Les Mille et Un Fantômes*) as two different examples of the use of affect and visual memory in narrative representations of history before and immediately after 1848. *La Reine Margot* stages the transformation of the destructive affects of the multitude into the structured emotion of an all-inclusive future state. The novel thus tells a foundational story of a reunited French nation. Via the "Margot"-character represented as a unifying force, Dumas seems to make use of the visual memory of the Revolution's female allegory of the nation, coupling it with the figure of the future Henri IV. He thus telescopes distant and more recent national history and produces a novel ready for consumption for the supporters of diverse political parties. Asking what escapes in such representations, I focus on *La Dame pâle*, a vampire-story with constellations comparable to those of *La Reine Margot*. This novella, I argue, accounts for the affects that have not yet been contained and transformed into stabilised, constituted emotion and that may lead to the death of the newly founded Second Republic. The Republic, just like the narration, seems to be "overwhelmed by the affects it sets out to exclude", to borrow an expression from Beasley-Murray (2010: xv): an 'archaic' attachment to the Empire and to an affective experience associated with it.

1 Affect into Emotion: *La Reine Margot*

As Maurice Samuels writes in his book on *The Spectacular Past*, visual, 'spectacular' history was born in the early 19th century. During the Romantic period, the historical genre became visual: history books were illustrated, phantasmagorias and wax figures represented historical characters and scenes, and the public space of Paris was full of historical panoramas that were to attract visitors (2004: 4–7, 13). The spectacle, Samuels writes, "acts on history by rendering it as a static image that is then offered for consumption as entertainment" (*ibid.*: 13): history is commodified; it becomes an object for sale. This applies not only for the public space invaded by visual re-presentations of history, but also for the private space of reading: with Walter Scott's novels arriving in France, the historical novel became a quasi-visual medium where spectacular verbal images "generate the effects of visual representation" (*ibid.*: 15). The romantic historical novel makes large use of ekphrastic descriptions "that, like pictures, point to certain pre-established configurations in a reader's visual memory." (*Ibid.*: 165) "[T]hey make the reader see the past." (*Ibid.*: 166)

Alexandre Dumas' novel *La Reine Margot* (1844/45) is a good example for this kind of commodification of history and its use during the French July Monarchy: not just because the novel, published in the feuilleton, relates to a great amount of spectacular historical (splatter) scenes, such as primarily the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre, but also because of the use it makes of visual memory. The novel tells the prehistory of the modern state that tries to reunite the French people after the profound schism of the religious wars. While the Catholic royal family attempts to consolidate its power by coercion and violence against the Protestants – that is, by eradicating the 'others' – the novel tells the story of a mythical unity emerging around the future Henry IV. The narration activates and makes use of affect through melodramatic polarisation (cf. Sluhovsky 2000: 196): phobic descriptions of a malicious Catherine de Médicis and of a royal palace full of intrigues (shall) create emotional distance, whereas a sympathetic representation of Henry de Navarre supports the foundational myth of the Bourbon monarchy (cf. Garrisson 2009). At the same time, the story of those who had to submit to an abusive power but who never gave up their liberty, those who finally managed to escape and who will come back to replace another corrupted state follows the 'commonplace' of 19th-century historiography that links Protestantism to a republican or liberal spirit.¹ It thus contributes to the construction of the Revolution's mythical origin. *La Reine Margot* represents the transformation of a violent, barbarous multitude, whose members are allied to various feudal lords, into a unified people. The narrator takes sides with Henry and suggests that he will reign for the sake of a united nation, thus following voices such as those of Voltaire (cf. Viennot 1994: 4, 13–14) or Charles Labitte, who, in 1841, celebrated Henri IV as the figurehead of the reunited France.² However, the

¹ Cf. Engler (1998: 140), whose source is Baubérot (1992). Claude Nicolet cites Madame de Staël and Benjamin Constant as examples for formulations of this "lieu commun" (Nicolet 1994 [1982]: 49–50). Balzac refers to the idea in the second part of *Illusions perdues* (1839), where his protagonist Lucien describes his historical novel, *L'Archer de Charles IX*, in the following words: "mon livre est très sérieux, il s'agit de peindre sous son vrai jour la lutte des catholiques qui tenaient pour le gouvernement absolu, et des protestants qui voulaient établir la république." (Balzac 1977: 303) The association can be traced back to the religious wars, when Protestants as well as Catholics contributed to the thesis of a Protestant republicanism (see Gojosso 1998: 206–208) and when, for the Parliament, "protestantism and revolution went hand in hand" (Holt 1988: 516). Michael Hohmann asks if the title of Dumas' *Essay on revolution, Gaule et France* (1833), alludes to the Huguenot François Hotman's pamphlet *Franco-Gallia* (1573) with its legitimization of resistance against tyranny (Hohmann 1992: 131, note 280). Such an allusion would be congruent with an implicit association of Protestantism and revolution in *La Reine Margot*.

² In his *De la Démocratie chez les prédicateurs de la Ligue* (1841), Labitte reflects upon the possible origins of democracy in the movement of the Catholic Ligue. He rejects this hypothesis and rather idealizes Henri IV: "Jamais roi n'a eu le tour d'esprit plus national que Henri IV : N'est-ce pas lui

real unifying force is shown to be Marguerite de Valois. The king's sister, who is forced to marry Henry de Navarre, does not love him, but nevertheless becomes his ally, so that he will say: "La reine Marguerite, dit Henry, eh bien ! Elle est le lien qui nous unit tous." (RM: 290) – she is the link that unites us all.

The unification around Marguerite is represented through the exemplary couple of the Protestant Comte de La Mole and the Catholic Comte de Coconnas. In the beginning of the novel, the violent Coconnas tries to kill La Mole during St. Bartholomew's night, and the Protestant almost dies in Marguerite's chamber. Coconnas' personal thirst for revenge, his loyalty to the Catholic camp and to the de Guise family and his refusal to submit to the project of marrying the two enemy Christian branches first make of him a part of the "multitude, the ambivalent and treacherous social subject that refuses all pacts and all solidarity" (Beasley-Murray 2010: xix). La Mole is a similarly ambivalent social subject: After having recovered, he superficially, and out of political prudence, converts to Catholicism. But then, Catherine de Médicis organises a procession to the mutilated body of the Protestant admiral Gaspard de Coligny in order to see who will join it and thus prove his loyalty to the royal family and to Catholicism (see RM: 222). This 'pilgrimage' is cynically announced as a "partie de plaisir" (*ibid.*: 225) and as a "réunion splendide de toute la cour" (*ibid.*: 226). Joining in, La Mole however fails to master his horse, which crashes into Coconnas (*ibid.*: 232–233) and later, at the verge of the procession, he provokes a fight against his enemy (*ibid.*: 237–242). Their fight proves the superficial and artificial character of the fragile and forced Catholic unity always threatened to break down.³ The narrator despises the cruel "populace" enjoying the "terrible spectacle" (*ibid.*: 235) and La Mole and Coconnas exemplify the people's grudge ("le peuple a de la rancune", *ibid.*: 230). Marguerite wants to oppose their combat, but her friend Henriette de Nevers, as a loyal Catholic, prevents her from doing so, what she later regrets (*ibid.*: 240–245). After the battle, Marguerite has La Mole and Coconnas transferred together into the royal apartments to recover

qui criait, à la déroute d'Ivry : 'Sauvez les François et main basse sur les étrangers.' (Labitte 1841: 293) See Garrisson on Henri IV as the "icône proposée aux Français" (2009: 8) during the Restoration and the July Monarchy.

³ The momentary "fusion" displayed after Marguerite's and Henry's marriage is just as illusionary: "Le lendemain [du mariage] et les jours qui suivirent se passèrent en fêtes, ballets et tournois. La même fusion continuait de s'opérer entre les deux partis. C'étaient des caresses et des attendrissements à faire perdre la tête aux plus enragés huguenots. On avait vu le père Cotton dîner et faire débauche avec le baron de Courtaumer, le duc de Guise remonter la Seine en bateau en symphonie avec le prince de Condé." (RM: 55, emphasis mine)

from their wounds, which lays the foundations for their deep friendship. As the two young men found a homosocial bond (Sluhovsky 2000: 197; Pidduck 2005: 79) around the image of the beautiful Marguerite who is idolised by everyone and later will be La Mole's mistress, the destructive affects of the fanatic multitude are transformed into the emotion of fraternal friendship⁴ and fidelity. In the end, Coconnas and La Mole are both victims of Catherine de Médicis' criminal ploys that tend to prevent Henry's reign. Their lives are sacrificed and when they are brought to the scaffold, the people praises La Mole for not having revealed Henry de Navarre's projected flight from the Louvre where he is persecuted. The novel thus suggests the people's favour for the future king Henry IV and it approaches its end with the description of the pathetic spectacle of the two friends' decapitation in front of which the unified *foule* arises:

Il est sept heures du matin ; la foule attendait bruyante sur les places, dans les rues et sur les quais. [...] C'est qu'en effet il y avait ce jour-là un spectacle déchirant, offert par la reine mère à tout le peuple de Paris. [...] la foule, pour plonger son regard avide jusqu'au fond de la voiture [dans laquelle sont transportés Coconnas et la Mole, L.Z.], se pressait, se levait, se haussait, montant sur les bornes, s'accrochant aux anfractuosités des murailles, et paraissait satisfaite lorsqu'elle était parvenue à ne pas laisser vierge de son regard un seul point des deux corps qui sortaient de la souffrance pour aller à la destruction. (RM: 680)

Quand on vit le beau jeune homme qui ne pouvait plus se soutenir sur ses jambes brisés faire un effort suprême pour aller de lui-même à l'échafaud, une clameur immense s'éleva comme un cri de désolation universelle. Les hommes rugissaient, les femmes poussaient des gémissements plaintifs. (*Ibid.*: 683)

This spectacle provides a counter-image for the horrible spectacles of the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre and of the mutilated body of the admiral, with the effect that the *foule* watches with a single gaze, moving with a single body ("se pressait, se levait, se haussait"), split only along the gender-line. The old, factious order of the Valois dynasty will be replaced by a new, integrative order. The novel represents this foundational replacement as an exclusion or exception of the former from the new affective community and its shared emotion of sorrow:

La nuit venait de descendre sur la ville, frémissante encore du bruit de ce supplice, dont les détails couraient de bouche en bouche assombrir dans chaque maison l'heure joyeuse du souper de famille. Cependant, tout au contraire de la ville, qui était silencieuse et lugubre, le Louvre était bruyant, joyeux et illuminé. C'est qu'il y avait grande fête au palais. Une fête, commandée par Charles IX, une fête qu'il avait indiquée pour le soir, en même temps qu'il indiquait le supplice pour le matin. (*Ibid.*: 686)

⁴ For the humanistic notion of friendship in *La Reine Margot*, which announces revolutionary fraternity, see Adler (1979: 69).

Charles IX tries to convince Marguerite to attend the ball and hide her grief, but before she complies with his solicitation, Henriette and herself rescue their lovers' decapitated heads from the profanation Catherine de Médicis would have wanted to undertake with them. The romantic plot has by now replaced the religious division with a political opposition of rulers and ruled⁵: both the Catholic and the Protestant have become Catherine's victims. In the end, the king's death and Henry's flight then announce the regenerated future of a nation freed from the Valois' malicious machinations and led by the sovereign Henry, as the title of the chapter XV "Le roi est mort : Vive le roi !" (*ibid.*: 712) implicates beyond its announcement of the beginning of Henry III's reign. *La Reine Margot* thus exemplifies what Beasley-Murray describes as the conversion of "affect into emotion, [...] multitude into people" (2010: xx), as well as the foundation of sovereignty: "As affect is transformed into emotion, it founds sovereignty." (*Ibid.*: 128)

According to the historian Éliane Viennot, who has studied the myth of Marguerite de Valois (Viennot 1993), it is via Dumas' novel that "Margot devient propriété de peuple de France tout entier" (Viennot 1994: 6–7). Accordingly, Julianne Pidduck has suggested describing Marguerite de Valois' transformation into *la reine Margot* in terms of Barthes' *mythe* (Pidduck 2005: 21–23). The object of her study, Patrice Chéreau's 1994 cinematic adaptation of Dumas' novel, associates social knowledges, memories and images with the Renaissance queen personified by Isabelle Adjani – first of all the image of Marianne:

I would argue that part of the mythological resonance of Adjani's Margot draws from a reference to 'Marianne' in the film's striking cinematic projection of the figure of a young, white, beautiful woman within a violent tableau of French history. (*Ibid.*: 22)

This view seems justified not only for the visual image in the film, but also for the narrative representation in the novel. Winfried Engler has called 1572 a date that mirrors 1793 ("Reflexionsdatum für 1793", Engler 1998: 138) and Marguerite's association with the Revolution had been prepared by Stendhal's *Le Rouge et le noir* (1830). In this novel, the revolutionary subject Julien Sorel loves a woman, Mathilde de La Mole, that is associated with the historical Marguerite de Valois. Julien himself is, via Mathilde's love for him, associated with the historical La Mole, one

⁵ This opposition of the king and the people will be the general subject in Dumas' Valois- and Musketeer-cycle (see Hohmann 1992: 124–137). For Dumas' historical teleology pointing to the revolution and to the Republic, see Adler (1979: 10–14, 63, 69).

of the members of the conjuration of the *malcontents*. If Stendhal's version hardly makes use of the myth of the Revolution's origins in the Huguenot cause, *La Reine Margot* resonates with this aspect and Dumas, furthermore, elaborates the representation of the female figure allied to and mediator of the conspirators. Joan Landes argues that in revolutionary imagery, a desirable female body was meant to "encourage citizens in their productive political passions" and that the image of the female body "worked to consolidate passionate attachments to home and homeland" (Landes 2001: 2). Just like the nation as object of patriotic love should romantically bind the citizens' affects (*ibid.*: 9), the beautiful image of the desirable Reine Margot seems to be capable "to override differences and unite tempers" (*ibid.*: 39). Dumas' "Margot", thus, recalls aspects of the imagery of the Revolution's female allegory. Allied both to the Catholics and to the Protestants, she may act as a means to consolidate passionate attachments to the nation instead of loyalty to various noble houses. Actually, Marguerite is described as a metonymy for France at the very beginning of the novel, when an ambassador cries out: "Voir la cour sans voir Marguerite de Valois, c'est ne voir ni la France ni la cour." (RM: 32) Whereas Catherine de Médicis is perceived as the foreign queen ("la Florentine", *ibid.*: 526, 699), who is not committed to the common good (cf. Adler 1979: 15, 64), Marguerite de France is the one who acts according to the narrator's vision of the nation's well-being, even if her motivation is personal ambition. Her lover La Mole, soon followed by his friend Coconnas, engages in the "productive political passion" of Henry de Navarre's cause instead of acting in a destructive way and the Catholic Coconnas' implication in their political project (albeit "à contrecœur", RM: 596) suggests that this is not just another factious sedition.

Marguerite is shown to support the weak⁶ (cf. Viennot 1994: 8) and the association with the allegory of liberty is further confirmed by the repeated narrative connection of Marguerite to freedom: "C'est vrai, répondit Marguerite, c'est une si belle et si douce chose que la liberté." (RM: 100) "Marguerite, qui dans tout cela n'avait perdu ni sa liberté de corps, ni sa liberté d'esprit [...]." (*Ibid.*: 608, see also 171, 200, 421)⁷ With the elements of liberty, revolution, beauty, maternity – Marguerite cares for

⁶ When the duc de Guise asks her why she distances herself from him, she replies: "Le roi était le fort et vous étiez les faibles. Henry est le faible et vous êtes les forts. Je joue toujours le même rôle, vous le voyez bien." (RM: 53)

⁷ Henriette de Nevers also celebrates her liberty (see RM: 181).

La Mole as for a child (cf. Adler 1979: 68; Garrisson 2009: 15) – and the fraternity of the two former enemies connected to her character, the novel seems to point to a collective visual memory, which is then projected onto the historical character. This corresponds to Barthes' definition of the myth (1981 [1957]: 199–200): the historical sign – Marguerite de Valois – receives a second, mythical meaning (cf. Pidduck 2005: 21–22) via the visual memory evoked by the narrative attributions. By coupling this connoted image of Marguerite to Henry de Navarre, the currently oppressed future king that will be beloved by the people, the novel serves both royalist *and* revolutionary identifications.

In 1845, this novel can be sold to anyone: it may be read as a propaganda-tale for Louis-Philippe (cf. Garrisson 2009: 8), the bourgeois king who allied himself to popular sovereignty and liberty; it joins contemporary discourses on the origins of modern political ideas in the 16th century and can recall revolutionary pamphlets against the corrupted *Ancien Régime*, led by a weak king and a malicious queen – a royal couple pointing to revolutionary representations of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette. Likewise, the novel may be read as a Bonapartist glorification of the providential man or as an idealisation of the Bourbon dynasty ready for consumption by legitimists. It thus exemplifies Barthes' dictum "Le mythe est une parole dépolitisée" (1981: 229). Critics have blamed Dumas' novel for depoliticising the historical events, for transforming them into a spectacle of passion and for ignoring the political role of the historical Marguerite de Valois in order to support the post-revolutionary gender ratio that excludes women from the political sphere (Viennot 1993, 1994: 8, 11–17; Roberts 1999; Viennot 2005). Indeed, Dumas' Margot mainly seems to serve as emotional glue for Henry's political agenda. Mediating the conversion of affect into emotion, *she* founds *his* sovereignty. The semantic connotations attributed to this figure and its unifying role hence recall female revolutionary allegories, which were devoid of a possible reference to female power and served as a mere metaphor for the political, whereas the band of brothers served as its metonymy.⁸

⁸ For the distinction of metaphor and metonymy in the visual representation of the French Revolution see Landes (1992: 28–31, esp. 29, and 2001: 75). Moshe Sluhovskiy notices that "[i]n some ways, *Margot* is actually a novel about men and their interactions. The dramatic episodes present men dueling [sic], bonding, joking, hunting, fighting, and dying heroically, while the queen's appearances are short and fragmented. Dumas fails to explain why Margot chooses to tie her fate to that of her husband, and why she also chooses La Mole as a lover. [...] Her thoughts (assuming she has any) are never articulated, while her feelings are motivated by undefined desires." (2000: 197) I would

At the same time, this romantic (hi)story contains the potentially problematic aspects of the conflation of some elements of the Margot-myth with the revolutionary imagery: Marguerite's alleged luxury, sensuality and (sexual) uncontrollability, and her desire for power. On one hand, her luxury, her libertinage and her desire for power may exemplify the decadence and vice the revolutionaries attributed to the *Ancien Régime*. But on the other hand, counterrevolutionaries similarly discredited the Republic as a 'whore' and the republican system as a state of disorder. The secondary connotations attributed to the historical Marguerite thus make this character and her "liberté" ambiguous and might trigger affects that escape the calculated effects of the melodramatic representation (on the concept of the 'affective escape' see our Introduction: 6–7). Éliane Viennot, for instance, thinks that "[s]a jeunesse éclatante l'excuse [sc. Margot, L.Z.] pour l'instant de tout, mais il est clair qu'avec le temps elle deviendra comme sa mère – cette intrigante maléfique, calculatrice et à l'ambition effrénée, qui n'est que l'un des monstres femelles qui hantent les œuvres d'Alexandre Dumas." (Viennot 1993: 327)⁹ Such interpretations or speculations attest to the affective 'escape'. The novel, though, seems to suggest that the smart Henry at Marguerite's side absorbs any anxieties possibly triggered by such ambiguous attributions: unlike Charles, who is well under his mother's control, Henry constantly proves his sovereignty. He is, hence, not menaced to be controlled by his wife Marguerite, whose sensual aspects contribute to make her character interesting and charming without being a threat. What had been part of a phobic distancing from the *Ancien Régime* as well as from revolutionary politics can therefore become part of an image capable of evoking a passionate attachment to the collective – or 'collectivised' – past: with Henry as her husband and future monarch, Marguerite as an icon of liberty does not threaten to precipitate the nation into chaos and disorder. In view of the historical context of the novel's production, the couple may even recall the contemporary characterisation of the July Monarchy as "la meilleure des Républiques" (see Nicolet 1994: 9): The best of all Republics is a Republic led by a king.

not agree with the latter: Dumas explains Marguerite's political choices with her realisation that she had served as a lure for the massacre (RM: 161) and with her desire to 'really' be a queen (*ibid.*: 169; 348; 545).

⁹ Sluhovsky compares the image of Marguerite as it was represented by historians and novelists to Laclos' Marquise de Merteuil and to Zola's Nana (2000: 200). According to him, in Patrice Chéreau's version, too, "Margot [...] is likely to become a second Catherine" (*ibid.*: 203).

The narrative and emotional close-up on distant historical events¹⁰ conflates the latter with figures and events from a less distant past or present: Catherine de Médicis seems to mirror Marie-Antoinette (cf. Engler 1998: 144) or the intransigent ideologies of Charles X (cf. *ibid.*: 138) or of the Jacobins, who wanted to erase the adversaries of their vision of the community; Charles IX is shadowed by the image of Louis XVI, Marguerite de France as Margot evokes the *patrie* as a unifying force and finally, Henry de Navarre prefigures the bourgeois king Louis-Philippe. Dumas' novel, published in 1844–45, thus creates a "fiction of an all-inclusive pact" of state hegemony – to borrow from Beasley-Murray's expression (2010: xiv). It confirms a future/past "[c]onstituted power [that] draws its strength from an immanent constituent power that precedes it, and which it claims to represent" (*ibid.*: 227), that is, the fraternal friendship of Coconnas and La Mole, which Henry IV's (future/past) reign is suggested to represent. *La Reine Margot* creates the fiction of a general consent to an idealised, unified national community imagined not least via the shared habit of the reading experience. This habit is to bind the divergent affects of the post-revolutionary multitude split into diverse political factions analogous to the 16th-century religious schism. But, 'something always escapes'. In France, such grandiose and spectacular reconstitutions of history as in *La Reine Margot* or in other historical novels of the romantic period are abandoned in the late 1840s (Viennot 1994: 16). Realist novels pulled back from such representations and instead focused on present society, whereas Dumas himself, while still writing historical novels, turned as well to a different genre: to the *fantastique*.

2 Something Always Escapes: *La Dame pâle*

Four years after his *Reine Margot*,¹¹ in 1849, Dumas publishes a series of fantastic novellas, *Les Mille et Un Fantômes*. In the introductory letter preceding this collection, he writes:

Je vais comme un de ces hommes dont parle Dante, dont les pieds marchent en avant, c'est vrai, mais dont la tête est tournée du côté des talons. Et ce que je cherche surtout, ce que je regrette avant tout, ce que mon regard rétrospectif cherche dans le passé,

¹⁰ For a reflection on closeness and distance of memory see Wodianka: "Myths are characterized by the fact that, on the one hand, their object of memory is located in the temporal or transtemporal remote horizon, but, on the other hand, they are brought into the proximity, the closeness of memory, into the present through repetition and actualization; their meaning is experienced in the present, is being made present [...]" (2005: 61)

¹¹ The theatrical adaptation of the novel in 1847 had been very successful until the revolution of 1848 (Sluhovsky 2000: 196).

c'est la société qui s'en va, qui s'évapore, qui disparaît comme un de ces fantômes dont je vais vous raconter l'histoire. (1001F: 243)

Dumas thus relates his fictional phantoms to his historical novels, and the point of interest for the question pursued here is Dumas' feeling that something 'escapes'. "[T]ous les jours", he writes, "nous faisons un pas vers la liberté, l'égalité, la fraternité, trois grands mots que la Révolution de 1793, vous savez, l'autre, la douairière, a lancés au milieu de la société moderne" (*ibid.*: 242–243). These ideals, however, have lost their sense and even though he writes he walks forward as time goes on, his 'gaze' is turned backward and he asks whether the old society died or whether it has been killed (*ibid.*: 243). In modern times, "tout spectacle disparaît" (*ibid.*: 245) and he tries to resurrect the spectacular society of former times that fades away (*ibid.* and Callet-Bianco 2006: 34). Anne-Marie Callet-Bianco has mentioned the "dimension passéiste du genre fantastique" (*ibid.*) and explains it referring to the novella "Les Tombeaux de Saint-Denis". This story relates how, at the exhumation of the royal necropolis in 1793, the people venerate Henry IV's well-preserved corpse:

malgré les intentions du gouvernement révolutionnaire, l'anéantissement du passé monarchique de la France est impossible. [...] Éliminée physiquement, la monarchie existe encore à l'état de fantôme, et ce fantôme fait le lien entre les morts et les vivants. (*Ibid.*: 35)

Callet-Bianco therefore asks "si, soi-disant républicain, il [sc. Dumas, L.Z.] ne serait pas au fond un nostalgique de la monarchie." (*Ibid.*) Gaétan-Philippe Beau-lière questions this interpretation for going too far (2009: 2, 12) and focuses instead on Dumas' "representation of History [...] tainted by a fear of the power resting in the people's hands [:] it is not the values of liberty, equality, and democracy, but their degradation that it criticizes." (*Ibid.*: 16) The last story of *Les Mille et Un Fantômes* may shed light on the issue of their controversy, precisely because it seems to retreat from the representation of history. I will now turn to this novella, told by the intradiegetic narrator Hedwige, a young Polish woman whom the extradiegetic narrator calls "la dame pâle" (1001F: 384) and focus on the question of affect and on what escapes in representations of its transformation into collectively shared emotion (cf. Beasley-Murray 2010: xxi, 7).

Whereas the Manichaean dualism had not been reflected on the narrative level in *La Reine Margot*, Hedwige presents the dualism that will structure her *histoire* right at the beginning of her story when she characterises her native country, Poland:

Chez le riche comme chez le pauvre, dans le château comme dans la chaumière, on reconnaît le principe ami comme le principe ennemi. Parfois ces deux principes entrent en lutte et combattent. (1001F: 384–385)

When the Poles want to escape the "rugissements" and the "tremblements" (*ibid.*: 385) that bear witness to this battle, she tells her audience, they flee to church, where they encounter but an even stronger presence of two principles: "la tyrannie et la liberté" (*ibid.*). Hedwige's father and brothers have been on the side of liberty: In 1825, they fought against the Russian tsar, but the fight for independence had been suppressed and her two brothers killed. Her father then sends Hedwige to an asylum, a monastery situated in the Carpathian Mountains. Dressed like an Amazon (*ibid.*: 386), she leaves with a dozen of her father's former freedom fighters. On their way through the exotic wilderness, she and her companions are attacked by a horde of barbarous young men:

[U]n cri s'éleva, et nous vîmes se dresser aux flancs de la montagne une trentaine de bandits ; nous étions complètement entourés.

Chacun saisit son arme, et quoique pris à l'improviste, comme ceux qui m'accompagnaient étaient de vieux soldats habitués au feu, ils ne se laissèrent pas intimider et ripostèrent ; moi-même, donnant l'exemple, je saisis un pistolet, et, sentant le désavantage de la position, je criai : "En avant !" et piquai mon cheval, qui s'emporta dans la direction de la plaine. [...]

J'avais vu tomber l'un après l'autre les deux tiers de mes défenseurs. Quatre restaient encore debout, se serrant autour de moi, ne demandant pas une grâce qu'ils étaient certains de ne pas obtenir, et ne songeant qu'à une chose, à vendre leur vie le plus cher possible. (*Ibid.*: 390–391)

This description of the girl in her Amazon dress, who encourages her companions fighting to save her, visibly points to Delacroix' *Liberté guidant le peuple*: Hedwige seizes a pistol and leads her companions like the Liberty on the canvas. Both are surrounded by dead fighters and by determined defenders. Hedwige – the figuration of liberty – is ultimately rescued by a beautiful young man, who providentially appears. Her saviour, Grégoriska, is the half-brother of the attackers' leader, Kostaki. The blond Grégoriska is the son of a former rebel who fought against the tsar; the black-haired Kostaki, his half-brother born from an adulterous affair, is the son of a Russian partisan (*ibid.*: 397–398). The novella then tells a melodramatic love story: the two brothers fall in love with Hedwige; the good brother, Grégoriska, treating her as an equal, his love being cautious and 'civilised', as the text tells us (*ibid.*: 404). Kostaki's love, on the other hand, is characterised as brutish, tyrannical and barbarous: He wants to possess Hedwige. This battle between the *principe ami* and the *principe ennemi* seems to be decided when Grégoriska asks Hedwige to

marry him and to flee with him and then kills his brother Kostaki who foils his plans. But Kostaki comes back as a vampire and takes possession of Hedwige until he is again overpowered by Grégoriska. By comparing this showdown to the Archangel Michael's fight against Satan (*ibid.*: 393, 429), the melodramatic representation and production of affects seem to be quite obviously dichotomous. The story could thus support a foundational identification with the republican history as a struggle against tyranny that has been won in 1848.¹² However, the victory is fragile: in the end, both brothers die in their last battle and Hedwige is left alone. Hedwige, *la dame pâle*, might actually be read as a figuration of the fragile and nearly dead Second Republic that soon after having been established will be subjugated by the revenant of the empire – in French, *empire* and *vampire* sound quite similar. The vampire, as an image for the threatening return of tyranny, may allude to the recent election of Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte, the later Napoleon III. Bonaparte had been elected by the French people six months before the novella was published in *Le Constitutionnel*.¹³ The journal reported in one of the issues that printed the chapters of Hedwige's story: "On connaît toutes les machinations du parti rouge à Paris pour faire croire à un coup d'État, et jeter l'alarme et l'irritation dans les esprits." (*Le Constitutionnel* 1849b: n.p. [3]) The melodramatic narration could thus allude to voices that call for saving the Republic, 'civilisation' and progress by arousing identification with the saviour of liberty, who fights against the "spectre maudit" (1001F: 427) of imperial rule.

But there is something else, something subtler that transcends the Manichaean structure: By creating an atmosphere of suspense and exoticism and via narrative prolepses, the narration also evokes the reader's desire for the vampire. Readers are familiar with the kind of orientalism that opposes civilisation to barbarism and that represents the 'barbarian' other as something desirable – for example in Mérimée's *Carmen* (1847). The affective response – the thrilling desire for the vampire – hence counters the first reading of the melodrama. But the narration itself is more ambivalent: Hedwige certainly loves Grégoriska, her saviour, but as this protector

¹² On modern French melodrama as an aesthetic expression of the search for a stable society in terms of threatened virtue, evil opponents and brave heroes that rescue threatened heroines just like the Republic must be rescued, see Lehning (2007: 126–127; 132).

¹³ Beaulière reflects upon Dumas' doubts and distrust of universal suffrage and the people's capacity to make just decisions – a disenchantment reflected by explicit political considerations in the *Mille et Un Fantômes* and in its introductory letter (Beaulière 2009: 3–4, 11–12).

of liberty loses his innocence and returns stained with blood after having killed his brother (1001F: 412), loving him becomes "presque un crime" (*ibid.*: 421), as Hedwige says. The motif of fratricide may allude to the French *drame historique* of 1848, when the bourgeoisie turned against the worker's revolt. On the other hand, it may also recall the *Terreur*, when the defenders of the Republic killed the partisans of the *Ancien Régime*.¹⁴ What is more is that Hedwige further seems to be experiencing a non-acknowledged desire for Kostaki. This desire cannot be described explicitly. It is a desire of sexual lust represented in the symbolic images of vampirism and revealing itself when she sees the dead Kostaki:

Les yeux du cadavre se rouvrirent et s'attachèrent sur moi plus vivants que je ne les avais jamais vus, et je sentis, comme si ce double rayon eût été palpable, pénétrer un fer brûlant jusqu'à mon cœur.
C'était plus que je n'en pouvais supporter ; je m'évanouis. (*Ibid.*: 416)

[C]et amour d'outre-tombe, qui venait chercher dans la vie, produisait sur moi une impression terrible.

En même temps un étrange sentiment s'emparait de moi, comme si j'eusse été en effet la femme de celui qui était mort, et non la fiancée de celui qui était vivant. Ce cercueil m'attirait à lui, malgré moi, douloureusement, comme on dit que le serpent attire l'oiseau qu'il fascine. [...] Au moment où l'on enleva le corps, je voulus le suivre, mais mes forces s'y refusèrent. (*Ibid.*: 417–418)

Actually, this desire has already been announced after the first battle in the mountains, as Kostaki tries to ride away with Hedwige in his arm:

Ma tête renversée me permettait de voir les beaux yeux de Grégoriska fixés sur les miens. Kostaki s'en aperçut, me releva la tête et je ne vis plus que son regard sombre qui me dévorait. Je bassai mes paupières, mais ce fut inutilement ; à travers leur voile, je continuais à voir ce regard lancinant qui pénétrait jusqu'au fond de ma poitrine et me perçait le cœur. (*Ibid.*: 395)

Instead of closing her eyes in order to avoid Kostaki's gaze, Hedwige seems to be fascinated by it. Keeping her eyes open slightly, she seems to *want* to see him looking at her, just as she does not refuse to don the widow's dress the brothers'

¹⁴ Pointing to the uprising of June 1848, suppressed "au nom de la liberté" (Beaulière 2009: 13), Beaulière argues that Dumas' stories criticize the reiteration of past errors – notably revolutionary violence – in present times (*ibid.*): "Ces récits sont imprégnés d'une méfiance à l'égard de la foule rassemblée autour d'un idéal politique qui la galvanise." (*Ibid.*: 12) Accordingly, *Le Constitutionnel* of June 1st, 1849, that prints a chapter of "La Dame pâle", compares the radical republicans to the Jacobins and to the Paris Commune (*Le Constitutionnel* 1849a: n.p. [1]). One day later, on June 2nd, just above the next chapter of Hedwige's story, the journal writes: "Ce qu'il faut, dit *le Peuple* [sc. Proudhon's journal, L.Z.], ce qu'il faut à la *Révolution démocratique et sociale* [sc. Delescluze's journal, L.Z.], c'est une perpétuelle et fatigante agitation, qui, éclatant tout à coup, se termine par la création d'un comité de salut public, où certains patriotes trouvent une occupation digne de leur génie. Voilà ce qu'entendent ces Messieurs par *tradition* de 93." (*Le Constitutionnel* 1849b: n.p. [1]) In his historical novels, Dumas also deals with the Republic's violent foundation. Hohmann interprets this as Dumas' coming to terms with the Republic's historical guilt consisting in the execution of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette (cf. Hohmann 1992: 136–137, 242).

mother gives her after Kostaki's death (*ibid.*: 417). After the funeral, she saddens at the hour of his death (*ibid.*: 419).

This desire for the vampire nearly kills Hedwige, *la dame pâle*, who, night after night, faints and falls "renversée sur [s]on lit" (*ibid.*: 420). Her loss of control over her body every night before Kostaki enters her room to 'possess' her is an affective experience: According to Brian Massumi,

in the instant of the affective hit, there is no content yet. All there is is the affective quality, coinciding with the feeling of the interruption, with the kind of felt transition I talked about before. That affective quality is all there is to the world in that instant. It takes over life, fills the world, for an immeasurable instant of shock. Microperception is this purely affective rebeginning of the world. Microperception is bodily. There is no flight, or any affect for that matter, without an accompanying movement in or of the body. (Massumi 2009: 5)

Hedwige's experience of affect can only be expressed through the language of the body's departure from consciousness. She is engulfed in a maelstrom of *jouissance*¹⁵. The melodramatic structure of the foundational emotion and identification on one hand and the phobic, distancing emotion on the other is thus thwarted by an affective ambivalence, by an affect that escapes explicit verbal expression and reveals itself through fantastic images. On one hand, there is the evil, the undead, who returns to take possession of Liberty or the Republic, which would finally kill her: "l'amour de Kostaki, Grégoriska me l'avait dit, c'était la mort." (1001F: 409) On the other hand, there seems to be an unacknowledged desire for the submission under a despotic ruler. The blond Grégoriska is certainly the good guy, but his love for Hedwige is chaste, they just kiss once (*ibid.*: 408). The one who fulfils the fantasy of the strong male is Kostaki – he is a threat, but he evokes a strong desire. The novella itself reflects upon the fact that an affect of this kind cannot be directly expressed: the forth character in the story, the mother of the two men, visibly prefers Kostaki, the 'evil' "fils de son amour" (*ibid.*: 400). She wants Hedwige to marry Kostaki and thus verbalises Hedwige's non-acknowledged desire, but she speaks an incomprehensible language: the only words Hedwige understands, and which follow her like a constant interpellation, are "Kostaki aime Hedwige" (*ibid.*: 409). After Kostaki's death, his mother treats Hedwige as his widow and thanks her for having loved him (*ibid.*: 418). The motif of France as the emperor's widow is a well-

¹⁵ See Žižek (1992: esp. 38–41) for the concept of *jouissance*.

known topos (see Musset¹⁶ and Garrigues 2012: 343–351). In this perspective, the two brothers' mother, who had loved the Russian partisan, embodies a preference for imperial rule that Hedwige cannot understand in a rational way.

In 1849, *la dame pâle* tells a story that, although being situated in the Carpathian Mountains, unfolds analogies with the history of the French Republic's foundation as the defence and rescue of liberty and her projected 'marriage' to her defender. At the same time, her story accounts for the affects that have not yet been contained and transformed into the stabilised, constituted emotion that would accompany firm republican habits and identifications. These not yet contained affects may lead to her death. The idealised value or ideologeme of republican liberty is captured in the narrative image that tells the story of the Republic's foundation, but it escapes at the same time through the suspense and the pleasure of reading a vampire story. The eroticised pleasure in subjugation is excessive and, yet, as well foundational in the sense that it already establishes the affective ground for the Second Empire: after the coup d'état in 1851 legitimised by a plebiscite, the French people will confirm Louis-Napoléon as *prince-président* in universal male suffrage and later approve of him taking the title of emperor. Whereas the melodramatic pathos seems to be calculated to constitute a republican community, the potential effects of a thrilling, excessive attraction lay the foundation for the community that emerges in joyful submission under the new emperor – the revenant. The paleness of *la dame pâle* could therefore not only be read as an image for the Second Republic, which is about to die and needs to be rescued, but it could also point to the paleness of the Republic in general, the bourgeois Republic as a pale, unspectacular state that lacks something and that seems to be a living dead.

The spectacle of history as *La Reine Margot* presents it may be a substitute for the spectacles of the former society of representation. But this kind of common or collectivised history does not seem to be possible in the later novella, even though it works with elements similar to those of *La Reine Margot* – melodramatic oppositions and in its centre a woman linked to members of opposing parties. But instead of proposing a commodified representation of history, it tips over to the pole of fantasy. The text situated in geographical more than historical distance does not only account for a haunting memory of the revolutionary crimes and of the *Ancien*

¹⁶ In the famous second chapter of his *Confession d'un enfant du siècle* (1836), Alfred de Musset writes: "ainsi la France, veuve de César, sentit tout à coup sa blessure." (Musset 1960: 67)

Régime or the Empire and for its survival in present times, but also for an 'archaic' attachment to it and to an affective experience associated with it. The novella directly integrates discourses spread by the press: *Le Constitutionnel* – that had promoted Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte – mentioned current criticism of a persistent monarchic sentiment in France ("la persistance en France des mœurs monarchiques", *Le Constitutionnel* 1849b: n.p. [2]) on just the same page that printed Hedwige's reporting of her nocturnal experiences with the vampire. Instead of making history visible, her narration, thus, evokes mental images related to the national history and to contemporary events: memories of events, like those of 1793 or June 1848, or of allegorical images such as Delacroix'.¹⁷ Whereas *La Reine Margot* tends to wipe out contemporary political differences, the society of the Second Republic, and with it narration, seems to be "overwhelmed by the affects it sets out to exclude", to speak again in Beasley-Murray's terms (2010: xv): the multitude has broken apart again and Hedwige, *la dame pâle*, mirrors Margot, the *filles de France* witnessing the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre. Actually, *Le Constitutionnel* of these days uses the term "multitude" to point to a threatening popular violence (1849b: n.p. [3]). It further cites from the journal *La Vraie République* that "*le peuple irait tout simplement en masse décréter sa volonté souveraine sur la place de la Révolution. Il n'est point ici question de la Constitution.*" (1849a: n.p. [1]) This is the idea of the multitude as a barbarous force and the kind of revolutionary violence the *Mille et Un Fantômes* evokes (see footnote 14). In times of political crisis, the commodified image as represented by *La Reine Margot* is broken up by affect. This reveals that the search for unifying images that "appeal for agreement among people with conflicting values" (Landes 2001: 39) has always been a contradictory and impossible project that might even result in the Republic's death.

Pointing to division instead of unification, the last story of *Les Mille et Un Fantômes* does not represent this opposition like the revolutionary caricatures Landes contrasts with the euphoric allegories of the nation (*ibid.*: 38–54). Hedwige, from her point of view as an auto-diegetic narrator, instead tells a story that can be read as an allegory itself, but one that does not stabilise the significations of the images it produces and rather introduces ambivalence. We have two different kinds of

¹⁷ Pidduck relates Chéreau's Margot to Delacroix' canvas (2005: 22–23, 65). *La liberté guidant le peuple* could hence be considered the visual *maillon* that links the story of *la dame pâle* to *La Reine Margot*.

visuality and 'spectacularity' here: a spectacular, dramatic and theatrical representation of history in *La Reine Margot*, presented by a hetero-diegetic and uninvolved – but nonetheless partisan – narrator, and spectres and fantastic images of an undead history in the story of the pale lady. The two stories might thus be considered to exemplify Brian Massumi's distinction between conscious and active memory and their relation to affect:

The present is held aloft by affect. [...] affect is not in time, it makes time, it makes time present, it makes the present moment, it's a creative factor in the emergence of time as we effectively experience it; it's constitutive of lived time.

Conscious memory is quite different from this kind of memory, that of the immediate past that contributes to activating the event of lived experience. Conscious memory is retrospective, going from the present to reactivate the past, whereas active memory moves in the other direction, coming from the past to energize the present. (Massumi 2009: 9)¹⁸

In this perspective, *La Reine Margot* would be an example for conscious memory, whereas *La Dame pâle*, also called *Les Monts Carpathes*, would exemplify active memory: the affective constitution of lived time, energised by the past. *La Reine Margot* presents distant history for present ideologies (cf. Viennot 1994: 12–17) and ends with an emotional containment that works as some kind of suture, whereas the melodramatic dichotomy breaks apart with the close-up on recent history and on ambivalent affects in the later novella. This text testifies to an emphatic experience of the present and to inner conflicts in a wounded state, where hegemony or unity have proven to be an illusion.

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¹⁸ See also Adorf / Christadler (2014: 6) for this view on affect.

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