

Locks of Gold, Locks of Jade: Hair as the Femme Fatale's Weapon of Choice in Paul Féval's *La vampire* and *La ville-vampire*

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Ovid's *Metamorphoses* explains that the Gorgon Medusa changes from a beauty to a monster as a consequence of defiling Athena's (Minerva's) temple, a desecration which comes about from Poseidon's raping of Medusa within the temple walls. Athena's punishment targets the most emblematic trait of Medusa's beauty, her hair:

... Words would fail to tell
The glory of her hair, most wonderful
Of all her charms. . . .
.....
The Sovereign of the Sea attained her love
In chaste Minerva's temple. . . .
.....
... To punish that great crime
Minerva changed the Gorgon's splendid hair
to serpents horrible. (168).

The French novelist, Paul Féval, draws from the Medusa myth in creating new monsters who utilize beauty (specifically hair) as a tool to bait and prey upon others. Féval demonstrates the connection between beauty and death with his female figures in *La vampire* (1865) and *La ville-vampire* (1867), as well as proves how hair serves to convey both saintly and diabolical traits. He constructs a duality of good and evil within two pairs of women—Angèle Lenoir and the vampire Addhéma in *La vampire*, as well as Countess Greete and the Italian tutor la Pallanti in *La ville-vampire*—a dichotomy which is indeed emblematic of many of Féval's works: "Ainsi, le combat manichéen du Bien contre le Mal que conte le roman populaire apparaît chez Paul Féval comme celui de la défense de valeurs anciennes, idéalisées, contre le cynisme, noirci, de l'arrivisme bourgeois" (Galvan 68). Hair, in those two novels, showcases the division of good and evil and is endowed with properties that give and take life for Féval's monstrous creations. The women are simulacrum of mythical femme fatales; Féval draws from the Greek Medusa myth to inform his creation of one vampire, whereas another he creates in the likeness of the biblical Eve. Within both novels, hair is a seductive harbinger of death.

Although the majority of Féval's works do not include the presence of supernatural elements, in recent years, scholarly attention on Féval's works has turned to ones that explicitly treat vampire and vampire-like creatures. *La vampire* is, in essence, a detective novel and historical fiction set in Paris around the assassination plot of 1803 in which Georges Cadoudal plans to kill Napoleon Bonaparte before he can establish himself as emperor. For Gerald Prince, the over-the-top nature of the novel leaves little room for emotional character development: "... le traitement des rapports sentimentaux est indéniablement banal et les extravagances mélodramatiques ne manquent pas ..." (45). However, as a historical novel, the text has offered others great value in its treatment of Napoleon Bonaparte: "... [Féval's] use of the vampire as a theme and as an allegorical motif appears to have been to make more dangerous and pertinent comments about the effects of the Revolution and the Bonapartist dynasty during the reign of Napoleon III" (Gibson 109). Matthew Gibson further explains that due to censorship at the time of *La vampire*, "To attack the regime in print and avoid repression was therefore extremely difficult" (126). For Gibson, the vampire is an allegory, criticizing governmental rule and policy. From another perspective, the text has been presented as a metaphor treating the malicious influence of money and riches: "Pour notre part, nous y voyons aussi la reprise allégorique, mais clairement énoncée, d'un thème cher à l'auteur : la dénonciation du pouvoir maléfique de l'argent qui « vampirise » ses adulateurs" (Galvan 62). That Féval's use of the vampire in *La vampire* is allegorical and critical of the Second French Empire is difficult to dispute. More important, though, is the text's focus on the female nature of the vampire, her role as an aggressor, and the notion that her power to harm comes from the seductive potency of her hair.

Predating Bram Stoker's iconic *Dracula* (1897), *La vampire* does not define *vampire* as a creature who feasts upon the blood of his victims. Instead, Féval's female vampire, Addhéma, removes the scalps of her victims and wears them upon her own head. The transfer of the scalps is, in essence, a transfer of sexuality and beauty, for the new heads of hair restore the vampire's youth, keep her from aging, and result in the deaths of her victims. Second, the vampire is able to don a new identity with the scalping of each victim, which Féval makes apparent by changing her name whenever new hair is placed on her head. A few other names used in the text are Lila, Countess Marcian Gregoryi, and Andréa Ceracchi; however, for simplicity's sake, this paper uses only the name Addhéma. Féval chooses the title *La vampire*, thereby consciously employing the feminine *la* instead of the masculine *le*, to insist upon the fact that the vampire of his text is a woman. Claire Strickett, in writing about Maupassant's *La chevelure* (1884), another fantastic text in which hair possesses supernatural abilities, suggests that "if woman is the Other, occupying the non-default, non-masculine position, then death and the afterlife are the ultimate in alterity, utterly outside the realm of experience of any living subject" (35). That dynamic seems to be the case for Féval's use of the feminine in *La vampire*, which underscores that the vampire is female, drawing attention to her otherness. He mentions through one of his characters that such an appellation is slightly erroneous since the true feminine for a vampire would be "l'oupire ou succube, appelée aussi goule au moyen âge" (130), suggesting to his readers that the text brings to light a new kind of monster. Not only is she the "Other" as a woman, as suggested by Strickett, but she additionally embodies exotic,

foreign, and mysterious otherness as a Bulgarian countess, Marcian Gregoryi, which suggests a fear of the foreign Other also seen in Stoker's *Dracula*.

A woman's head of hair, as illustrated previously, rejuvenates the vampire. Women's hair, in literature beyond Féval's *La vampire*, received considerable treatment throughout the nineteenth century in France. Well-known works, from Balzac's *Honorine* (1843) to Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1857), showcase styles and cuts in order to add depth to the literary figures that they represent. As the popularity of various hair styles develops and evolves, the connotations associated with those cuts may bare different meanings as well: "Loose hair carries the possibility of an erotic charge. Long, abundant hair is traditionally associated with sexuality. Venus is usually represented with a full head of hair lavishly disheveled, especially in mid-nineteenth-century paintings" (Rifelj, "The Language of Hair" 88). Hair, as is the case for Medusa, is often linked to sexual transgression: ". . . Nana, Renée in *La Curée*, Emma Bovary, not to mention Madeleine Féral, all pay the ultimate price for their sexual transgressions. . . . Their undisciplined bodies—in particular, their loosened hair—leads to their downfall" (Rifelj, *Coiffures* 117). In short, hair "incarnates women's sensuality. Long tradition has associated women's hair with lust, sin, and desire" (Rifelj, *Coiffures* 84). The nature of hair as emblematic of "lust, sin, and desire" is at the forefront of Féval's *La vampire*, for Addhéma uses her hair as a means to renew life, preying upon men as well as women, though using male victims for a different kind of rejuvenation.

Addhéma's hair, which continually switches from being as black as pitch or of locks of gold depending upon her previous victim, beautifies her body and serves to entice future male victims. The newly acquired hair, sexually charged and inciting desire in masculine figures, becomes the lure that embellishes the vampire, making her desirable to wealthy male victims. She seduces and quickly marries her young grooms only to kill them shortly thereafter. Though their deaths are never described, enigmatic phrases such as "Le comte Wenzel vient de repartir pour l'Allemagne" (71) are understood to signify their deaths. Thus, through inheritance, the vampire's financial comfort is renewed by the men, whose wealth monetarily restores her life. In fact, the first presentation of the vampire and her hair appears while she is on her way to a secret wedding with a noble groom and soon-to-be victim. The protagonist in *La vampire*, Jean-Pierre Sévérin, sees the young and mysterious woman with her new husband and describes her as a beautiful ghost: "C'était, en tous cas, un fantôme charmant : une femme toute jeune et toute belle, dont les cheveux blonds tombaient en boucles gracieuses autour d'un adorable visage" (21). Another victim, one more intimately involved in the story's plot, is René de Kervoz, the nephew of Georges Cadoudal, the same man who plans to assassinate Napoleon Bonaparte. She seduces René into entering a mysterious house where he is later imprisoned in a windowless room: "Elle s'arrêta et passa les doigts de sa belle main sur son front, où ruisselait le jais de sa chevelure. À mesure qu'elle parlait, sa voix avait pris des sonorités étranges, et l'éclair de ses grands yeux ponctuait si puissamment sa parole que René restait tout interdit" (91). The passage offers a visual path for readers to follow, one which helps to call to mind the Greek Medusa. It begins by describing the dark hair brushed away from the forehead and moves to a flash in her eyes that leaves René motionless (petrified). At another point in the novel, two separate men confirm that "son regard donne le vertige" (30, 31). Addhéma's gaze, which stuns and petrifies, doubtlessly recalls the power that Medusa possesses after

being cursed by Athena. Yet, the iconic snakes that adorn Medusa's head are nearly absent from the text. There are only two explicit examples of Féval's evoking a snake-like image. The first occurs as René approaches the vampire's hideout in the city. He arrives as if enchanted or hypnotized: "Il n'y avait pas en ce moment une idée, une seule, dans le vide de sa cervelle. C'était un malade que ses veines brûlaient, tandis que le frisson *serpentait* sous sa peau" (60; emphasis added). The second instance of a snake-like image is near the conclusion of the novel, when the body of the vampire is delivered to a young doctor, Germain Patou, at his home on "rue de la Serpente" (225). Although the latter example may seem superficial, that Féval chose "rue de la Serpente" in the feminine, as much as he chose to employ the feminine in the title of his text, suggests that such usage is not coincidental.

As Addhéma in *La vampire* inspires fear and preys upon men and women alike, her antithetical counterpart, Angèle Lenoir, inspires pity as she falls victim to the vampire. Much like the vampire, she demonstrates the association of hair and death; unlike Addhéma, she embodies the holy female. Angèle, a name that references angel, is described as pious and saintly throughout the text. Even though she mothers a child out of wedlock, Angèle maintains a religious devotion that surpasses all others in the text: "Notre petite Angèle nous faisait la prière chaque matin et chaque soir..." (136). Angèle is the fiancée of René de Kervoz, the young man held enchanted by the vampire. She is mother of his child and awaits the day of their formal marriage. Sensing that her fiancé has become emotionally distant and suspecting the worst, she follows him to the home of the vampire. When she sees him through the window at night, she compares herself to the other woman—the vampire—and hair becomes her standard for evaluating beauty. She is given only a glimpse of them both but remains able to cry out, "Ses cheveux! . . . ses cheveux blonds! jamais il n'y en a eu de pareils! Je crois distinguer leurs reflets d'or. Elle est trop belle Oh! René [*sic*], mon René [*sic*], ne l'aime pas; on ne peut pas avoir deux amours... si tu ne m'aimais plus je mourrais..." (48). Angèle begins by remarking upon the splendor of the vampire's hair and ends by articulating her thoughts of death. The narrator again turns to her hair as she faints from shock and her body lies on the street: "Du capuchon détaché de sa mante ses cheveux dénoués s'échappèrent et ruisselèrent: des cheveux plus beaux, plus brillants, plus doux que ceux de l'enchanteresse elle-même" (48). Though she does not realize it, the locks of hair that escape from her hood are more resplendent and beautiful than those of the woman who has enchanted her fiancé. As she lies on the ground, the once-complimentary description of her hair becomes critical: "Son pauvre corps inerte s'étendait tout de son long; entre son front et le pavé il n'y avait que ses cheveux épars, ses pauvres cheveux" (48). Though both assessments come from the narrator, there is a remarkable difference between them. The first is largely praiseworthy and complimentary, whereas the second ends with "pauvres cheveux." The latter assessment is best understood as an expression of pity and foreshadows Angèle's grim future.

Angèle's death and the death of the vampire that follows, further reiterate the link between these two figures and help to unify hair, sexuality, and sin together within Féval's novel. Jean-Pierre Sévérin returns home from working at the newly built morgue, only to spend the evening with the body of Angèle: "La hideuse injure qui avait mutilé le front d'Angèle disparaissait sous un bandeau de mousseline blanche. Elle était belle d'une pureté céleste et ressemblait, sous sa candide couronne, à une religieuse de seize ans, endormie

dans la pensée du ciel” (225). When describing the headband that covers Angèle’s wound, Féval notably describes the bandage as a “bandeau de mousseline,” a descriptor which calls to remembrance the hairstyle of *cheveux en bandeau*, in which the hair is pulled back and held by a headband. This is unexpected since readers already know that the *bandeau* she wears is not that of a hairstyle, but rather in the place of one. Looking beyond the hair, Angèle’s corpse lends itself to a comparison with the body of the vampire later in the text. Whereas Angèle’s corpse is surrounded by her mother, child, and brother, who gather as mourners, the vampire has only the medical student, Germain Patou, looking over her, examining her body. Patou, curious from having assisted Sévérin in tracking the vampire and enamored by her beauty, sells all of his medical books to purchase the vampire’s body illegally. As he waits for the body to arrive, the narrator explains that his comments, made under his breath, are akin to the utterances of a young man madly in love, waiting for his lover to arrive: “Ainsi parlent les jeunes fous dans l’attente inquiète d’un rendez-vous d’amour” (225). Her hair, which once belonged to Angèle, begins to enchant the medical student, and after a few minutes, he mindlessly removes straw caught in the vampire’s hair. As he wipes his forehead with the vampire’s own embroidered handkerchief, he falls under her spell:

— Il n’y a pas au monde de femme si belle ! murmura-t-il.
À l’aide du propre mouchoir de la comtesse, une fine batiste dont la broderie sortait à demi de la poche de sa robe, il essuya son front amoureuxment.
Ce premier contact lui procura une sensation si violente, qu’il eut peur de se trouver mal.
Elle était froide, — elle était morte, — et cependant tout le corps du jeune homme vibra sous cet attouchement.
Malgré lui, il porta le mouchoir à ses lèvres.
Un doux parfum s’en exhalait avec une mystérieuse ivresse. (227)

Patou’s removal of the straw and debris from the countess’s hair and his subsequent fixation with her shows that, even after death, her potency to attract male victims is not diminished. Like Medusa, whose gaze is still able to petrify victims even after Perseus cuts her head from her body, Addhéma’s hair remains an enchanting force even after the apparent demise of the vampire herself.

Just as Addhéma finds roots in the mythical Medusa, Eve, the femme fatale of the bible, is the model for the monster of *La ville-vampire*. Her role as a femme fatale “can be traced back to the biblical story of Eve tempting Adam to eat from the Tree of Knowledge” (Simkin 5). Nineteenth-century depictions of women in literature and art who embody Eve-like traits are known as “Les filles d’Ève,” a term popularized by Balzac in his *Comédie humaine*, referring to the two sisters Marie-Angélique and Marie Eugénie (Menon 28). Another example comes from Auguste Clésinger’s mid-century sculpture *Femme piquée par un serpent*, a marble representation of a reclining woman with a bronze serpent that “originally encircled the ankle, no doubt placed there to give the impression that the *Femme* in question was Eve or Cleopatra, both popular allegorical pretexts for nude female sculpture throughout the century” (Joyce 167). Representations of Eve (or “filles-d’Ève”) evolved to not only depict her in the company of snakes but to become half or sometimes entirely a snake herself: “In modern French society, depictions of snakes with contemporary women conjured up the fille d’Ève. Fashionable Parisiennes even came to be

depicted as part snake" (Menon 227). In fact, Elizabeth K. Menon's *Evil by Design* is replete with numerous prints, advertisements, and other productions in which women are shown interacting with snakes, often embodying the role of Eve in dialogue with the devil. That conflation of the woman and the snake—or even the woman as the snake—is also manifest in Féval's *La ville-vampire*, in which he employs the Eve-snake relationship in a process of hair transferal that results in the transferal of life.

The rivalry between Angèle Lenoir and the vampire Addhéma is reflected in *La ville-vampire* through the characters of Countess Greete and Letizia Pallanti. The main intrigue in this novel is a supernatural adventure in which the English novelist, Ann Radcliffe, embarks on a journey to save a dear friend: "Ce récit, publié en 1875, traite lui aussi du vampire, non de manière sérieuse ou parodique, mais sous la forme d'un pastiche" (Compère 65). Féval begins his tale with a brief statement concerning acts of plagiarism by which English writers steal from the French: "Il y a beaucoup d'Anglais et surtout d'Anglaises qui ont pudeur quand on leur raconte les actes d'effrontée piraterie dont les écrivains français sont victimes en Angleterre" (9). The vampires in *La ville-vampire* take many shapes, although perhaps the first vampire, "piraterie," serves as a symbolic target for the rest. Even should this be the case, the criticisms against plagiarism are far less scathing than those in *La vampire* that are critical of Napoleon Bonaparte and, by association, Napoleon III. *La ville-vampire* is more important to this study given its frame narrative in which beauty is transferred from one woman to another via a vampire, for it bears remarkable similarities to Féval's account in *La vampire*, published two years earlier.

In his overtly supernatural tale, Féval compares two women, Countess Greete and Letizia Pallanti, who are both wonderfully gifted: "La comtesse Greete était belle, instruite dans les lettres et dans les sciences, et surtout bonne comme on se représente les saintes du ciel. Mais, malheureusement, son éducation n'avait pas été poussée aussi loin en ce qui regardait la musique, la danse et la langue italienne qui était alors la mode suprême" (61). The countess, though beautiful and well educated, is nevertheless deficient in formal instruction. Her husband, Count Tiberio, understands his wife's shortcomings and hires a young Italian tutor, Letizia Pallanti, to instruct his god-daughter Cornelia. Upon the arrival of the tutor, the narrator informs the reader of her intellectual competence. Where the countess is lacking, Letizia excels:

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

This is but a sampling of Letizia Pallanti's many talents. Though the countess is instructed well in certain subjects, the young tutor's knowledge seems to outshine that of her employer. The comparison of the two women does not seem to have any effect upon the countess, however, who adores the young Italian: "La bonne comtesse Greete l'embrassa plus de cent fois" (62).

The final comparison made between the women concerns their hair—more precisely, Count Tiberio's perception of their hair. Even though Letizia Pallanti is received well by both the countess and her pupil Cornelia, the count alone is not enchanted by her. He finds

that she is “[une dame douée] de trop d'embonpoint . . . , et les prodiges lui faisaient peur” (62). Even more remarkable is the fact that, for the count, she does not have enough hair: “La Letizia était brune. Ses cheveux noirs étaient en effet assez clairsemés, et le comte Tiberio était gâté à cet égard par la splendide chevelure blonde de sa femme qui aurait pu se faire un manteau de ses boucles dénouées” (62). Later, the count confesses to his wife how his perception of the young woman has changed from his first impressions. He admits, “En vérité, comtesse, cette jeune personne serait une merveille, si elle avait seulement vos cheveux” (64). The revelation is made that, between Letizia and Greete, the countess's superiority does not rest upon her position in society or even upon her role as Tiberio's wife but upon her locks of hair. A transformation then begins to take place that underscores the association between the notion of beauty inscribed in the image of the countess's hair and her death, which follows. The author describes the process in which a vampire named M. Goëtzi performs a nightly operation that transfers the countess' hair onto the head of Letizia Pallanti. The vampire's actions are taken with the consent of the tutor, who contracted a deal with him that aims to allow both of them to share the count's riches. Through that collaboration, Letizia embodies modern interpretations of the biblical Eve, who converses and unites with the devil to the point at which she too becomes an embodiment of evil. Representations of that union, in fact, were not uncommon in Féval's time. Writing of the association between serpents and women, Menon suggests, “What had originally been a dialogue between Eve and a snake became a conspiracy between Eve and the devil” (227). As the dialogue changes to conspiracy, so too does Eve's innocence change to malice and thereby suggests the corrupting influence of the snake.

The snake is a figure of death, whether associated with hair through the figure of Medusa or in reference to Eve. In *Les structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire*, Gilbert Durand identifies the snake as a lunar animal, a symbol that indicates, in part, that the constant shedding of skin is a renewal of life. The moon acts symbolically as the renewal of life, for it is the first death as well as the first rebirth: “Mais la lune, non seulement est le premier mort, mais encore le premier mort qui ressuscite” (337). Women, also symbolically associated with the moon via the lunar cycle, are associated with snakes. In *La vampire*, that cycle is seen in the vampire who renews her life by applying new hair to her scalp. That the snake-like renewal of life takes place on the head, also where Medusa's snakes reside, further ties the vampire to the Greek monster. The biblical account of the serpent's interaction with Eve serves to describe the origin of death, as well as the snake's partnership with the woman. Referring to the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, Eve states to the serpent that “God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die” to which the serpent replies, “Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” (*The Holy Bible*, Gen. 3.3-5). Though Eve declared the danger inherent in partaking of the fruit, by trusting the trickster serpent, she and the serpent brought about death.

In *La ville-vampire*, Eve's deal with the devil is manifest in the tutor's acquisition of Greete's enviable hair. This occurs through the vampire's intervention; the countess notices that her hair is beginning to thin and disappear. There is no trace of it in the teeth of her comb, yet it continues to vanish. As that occurs, la Pallanti begins to gain an ample head of hair. Her brown hair grows in at the same rate at which the blond hair of Countess Greete

recedes. The hair of the countess “s’en allaient” and “ceux de la Letizia choisissaient justement ce temps pour repousser. On eût dit que le souhait badin du comte Tiberio avait sa réalisation et que la bonne comtesse partageait avec la signora Pallanti” (65). As the countess’s hair is transplanted from her own head to that of Letizia, it becomes apparent that the count’s affection remains affixed to the hair. His love, or simply his interest, is no longer directed toward his wife, the countess, but the younger woman whose once scarcely covered head is now lusciously crowned with hair. That is evident as the countess, lamenting her loss, moves to the parlor, where the student Cornelia plays the harpsichord: “Derrière elle, Tiberio et Letizia causaient, assis sur le sofa. Les doigts de Tiberio se baignaient dans les masses bouclées qui retombaient maintenant à flots sur les épaules de la Pallanti” (67). As for the countess’s death, Féval mentions it only briefly: “Ce fut pendant la saison des vacances que la comtesse Greete mourut abandonnée dans le château désert” (73). In slowly taking the countess’s beauty, the vampire also deprives her of life. Her fatigue, paleness, and bald head all betray her age, which Féval states as being slightly over twenty years. In both *La vampire* and *La ville-vampire*, life is attributed to hair. As Angèle, Greete, and Medusa lose their hair, they also lose their lives. Angèle’s death is immediate; she is pulled to the River Seine, where the vampire takes her scalp, whereas Greete’s death is more subtle. Conversely, Medusa loses the life that she knew as a beautiful woman and is changed to a monster when Athena takes and replaces her hair.

This study has largely ignored the treatment of hair as it concerns the masculine figures of the two novels by Féval. In both texts, Féval uses hair to add literary description to his masculine characters, offering physical traits and characteristics to associate with those traits. The hair of the feisty Irishman, Merry Bones, matches his temperament, for it is so frizzy that it cannot be contained in a hat: “Ses cheveux crépus lui rendaient impossible l’usage du chapeau ; il les portait câblés, comme le crin brut arrive de Chicago” (*La ville-vampire* 44). On one occasion, Féval simply mentions a secondary character’s white hair, which he suggests is evidence that traumatic experiences are aging him more quickly than expected: “Le docteur Magnus était encore un jeune homme, quoiqu’il eût les cheveux tout blancs” (*La ville-vampire* 126). Ultimately, however, the best example from the two texts that adds the most to an understanding of how Féval uses hair for his female characters, is an introduction he offers in *La vampire* in which he explains his first literary encounter with a vampire. Foreshadowing the vampire Addhéma’s actions, the vampire in Féval’s introductory chapter takes his unconscious new bride to a cemetery where the bodies of his previous victims lie, all dressed in their wedding attire. Féval’s narrator addresses readers directly in order to offer a view of the physical changes that the vampire undergoes in claiming his victim-bride: “Il était hâve ; sans son costume de hussard vous ne l’auriez point reconnu ; les ossements de son crâne n’avaient plus de cheveux, et ses yeux, ses yeux si beaux, manquaient à leurs orbites vides” (12). The masculine vampire described by Féval is characterized by the absence of his hair and eyes, revealing a deathly skull for a head. That masculine figure aligns more closely to the now-traditional understanding of a vampire, which drinks the blood of the victim—and in this case eats the heart as well—and would seem to signify that the supernatural transference of hair is a defining trait for the feminine vampire of the novel.

As noted previously, studies postulating the role of vampires in Féval's works as veiled criticisms of Napoleon III are well established. However, the fundamental struggle between good and evil often finds a strong foothold in popular fiction simply because it resonates with a larger readership. From *La vampire* and *La ville-vampire*, women embody both evil and good. In *La vampire*, Adhéma scalps women and dons the head of hair upon herself as a means of rejuvenation; in *La ville-vampire*, la Pallanti is rendered beautiful through her deal with the devil-vampire. In both examples, a woman is the transgressor and the perpetrator; furthermore, in each example, a woman is the innocent victim. In *La vampire*, Angèle loses her life, whereas her fiancé, René, is left alive. In *La ville-vampire*, the count happily accepts the tutor who replaces his now obsolete wife. Those two novels are not the only works in which hair plays a special role in Féval's tales. In *La fée des grèves* (1850) and *L'homme de fer* (1856), which together comprise his *Merveilles du mont Saint-Michel* (1879) and which draw heavily on his roots in Brittany, women are relegated to being innocent victims or damsels in distress. Additionally, it is the blonde maiden who, like Angèle, is the purest and ultimately the prize that the antagonist seeks. What sets Féval's vampire tales apart is how they associate female beauty with hair more so than with the women to whom the hair belongs. Those deadly women, whose hair baits and petrifies male victims, likewise subject female victims to mortal ends and demonstrate the union between hair and death. As if summoning the classic Medusa and the biblical Eve, women in literature embody sexuality and foreshadow death, through their hair as well as through their association with supernatural creatures or diabolical snakes.

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