

*The Nineteenth-Century Serial as a
Collective Enterprise: Harriet Beecher
Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin and Eugène
Sue's Les Mystères de Paris*

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IN THEIR INTRODUCTION to *Nineteenth-Century Media and the Construction of Identities*, a collection of essays that reflect new work in nineteenth-century media history, Brake, Bell, and Finkelstein note the effect of serialization of fiction in periodicals: "The productive processes that such a work undergoes create a multivalent text, constructed not only by the "author," but by the other contributors and editors, as well as the readers of the publication in which the work appears."¹ This essay will focus on two particularly striking mid-nineteenth-century examples of the complex relationships that unite the writer, readers, and editor of a serial. The first one is a French novel, *Les Mystères de Paris*, by Eugène Sue, which was serialized over a year and a half in 1842–43 in the Paris daily *Le Journal des Débats Politiques et Littéraires*, which translates literally as the Journal of Political and Literary Debates; the second is *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, by Harriet Beecher Stowe, which first appeared in the antislavery weekly, the *National Era*, between 1851 and 1852.

1. Laurel Brake, Bill Bell, David Finkelstein, eds., *Nineteenth-Century Media and the Construction of Identities* (New York: Palgrave, 2000), 5.

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My first point is that in the case of both works, apart from the fact that they aimed at social reform and were tremendously popular and violently criticized, their respective readers played a role in giving final form to each novel, particularly in terms of length. I will then examine the locus of the discussion that is being carried on between the readers and the writer. In Stowe's case, since she was writing far from Washington, where the *National Era* was based, the conversation between the reader and the writer was carried on in the columns of the *Era* itself.² In Sue's case, the correspondence between reader and writer was mostly conducted via private letters, for reasons I will go into later. Sue kept more than three hundred of the letters he received while writing *Les Mystères*; those letters have now been edited and published.³ As can be imagined, they provide a rare and invaluable insight into the interaction between reader and writer during the publication of a serial.⁴ To the writer-audience equation, I would like to add a third and essential protagonist, the editor. I will also examine the context of both works, that is to say the periodicals in which they appeared, in order to emphasize the effects that a favorable or unfavorable environment can produce on the work as well as its reception. Finally, I will examine the interplay of power between writer, audience, newspaper or magazine editor, and book publisher.

2. Stowe left an abundant correspondence, but very few readers' letters can be found in the various institutions that hold the writer's papers. We know, however, that she did keep the letters she received, at least for a time: 'I have received letters about it [*Uncle Tom's Cabin*] from people all over the known world. . . . I regret to say that driven by the everlasting necessity of doing more than I can I have ever deferred collecting and arranging the various memorials of that sudden & wonderful outburst of Anti Slavery zeal. . . .' Stowe to Mr. Hunt, letter dated 'Hartford June 22.' Berg Collection, New York Public Library.

3. Jean-Pierre Galvan, *Les Mystères de Paris: Eugène Sue et ses lecteurs*, 2 vols. (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998). There are 345 readers' letters from the Fonds Eugène Sue held in the Bibliothèque Historique de la Ville de Paris, six letters from other sources, and fifty-one letters written by Sue. Almost two-thirds of Sue's correspondents are men, which does not mean that more men than women read the novel, but it does lead us to question the general belief that most nineteenth-century novel readers were women (the few letters to and from readers in Stowe's papers are addressed to men as well as women).

4. It should be added, however, that either Sue or one of his heirs disposed of the letters that attacked him, as only a couple of those appear in the collection. However, the outrage the serial caused in some circles is well reflected in the contemporary press.

Much work remains to be done on the early history of the serialized novel and on the difference, for example, between serialization in periodicals and part publications.⁵ For the sake of clarity, this essay will equate 'serial' with publication by installments in periodicals. In France, the first installment of a previously unpublished novel—*La Vieille Fille* by Honoré de Balzac—came out in the daily *La Presse* in October 1836, just a few months after the first installment of *The Pickwick Papers* in England.⁶ The dates appear to be quite similar in the United States, with Edgar Allan Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* appearing in the *Southern Literary Messenger* between 1837 and 1838. In both France and the United States, the rise of serialization corresponded with a prodigious growth in the number and circulation of periodicals. In both countries, fiction was rightly considered a way to attract more subscribers.⁷

Two basic differences have to be pointed out, however, between the American and French contexts. The development of serialization in France took place mainly in the daily press. In the case of two dailies launched in Paris in 1836, *La Presse* and *Le Siècle*, their founders had decided to halve the usual yearly subscription

5. See Michael Lund, *America's Continuing Story: An Introduction to Serial Fiction, 1850-1900* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1993), 24-25.

6. The 1836-37 publication of Dickens's *Pickwick Papers* inaugurated the age of the serial in England. The serial predated the Victorian era, but only became pervasive at that time. See Linda K. Hughes and Michael Lund, *The Victorian Serial* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1991), 4 and 280, note 9. For serials in France, see Anne-Marie Thiesse, 'Le roman populaire,' in *Le temps des éditeurs, Histoire de l'édition française*, Roger Chartier and Henri-Jean Martin, eds., 4 vols. (1985; reprint, Paris: Fayard, 1990), 3:509-19. By the time Sue's novel came out in *Le Journal des Débats*, serialization was well accepted even though it could be argued that *Les Mystères* played in France a part that was quite similar to that of *The Pickwick Papers* in England.

7. In 1869 an article in the *Galaxy* put it the following way: 'It [the serial] was born with magazines—grew with their growth, and strengthened with their strength. . . .' According to the same article, '. . . the serial novel has become a prime necessity for the popular magazine.' The article is reprinted in Lund, *America's Continuing Story*, 128-34. In *Le Journal des Débats* for June 14, 1842, the literary critic Cuvillier Fleury explained the craze for the serial by the 'furious passion' of the French readers for novels. For the explosion in periodicals in the United States, see for example John Tebbel and Mary Ellen Zuckerman, *The Magazine in America, 1741-1990* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 8. For the French equivalent, and the link between serials and the increase in readership, see Lise Queffelec, *Le roman-feuilleton français au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1989), 11.

rate for dailies, a daring proposal. It meant that more revenues had to come from advertising, and advertisers were to be lured by the prospect of their ads being seen by a great number of subscribers. The latter objective was to be achieved by playing on the appeal fiction exerted on the readers. The scheme worked out nicely, and serialization therefore played a decisive role in the development of the popular daily press in France.⁸ The case is somewhat different in the United States, where serialization seems to have developed mostly in weeklies and monthlies.⁹

A second key difference lies in the layout of the serialized fiction within the periodical. Unlike the *Era* and most American periodicals that printed serialized fiction in the same space as news and other items, *Le Journal des Débats*, like the other French dailies, had a special section, 'un feuilleton,' which occupied the lower third of pages 1, 2, and 3—out of 4 pages—and was separated from the rest of the paper by a thick, double black line.¹⁰

Without making a systematic and artificial comparison between Sue and Stowe, some common points and differences deserve to be mentioned. An important difference between the two writers is that by 1842, when Sue began publishing *Les Mystères*, he had already had at least half a dozen novels serialized in various Paris-based newspapers, whereas Stowe had not yet produced a novel when she started *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

In respect to their commonalities, both writers exerted a tremendous influence on the society of their time, Stowe by making her readers aware of the horrors of slavery, Sue by acquainting the French middle-classes with the plight of the workers. Nei-

8. Queffélec, *Le roman-feuilleton français*, 11–12. *La Presse* pioneered the idea, and *Le Siècle* followed suit. Also see Lise Dumasy, ed., *La querelle du roman feuilleton: littérature, presse et politique, un débat précurseur, 1836–1848* (Grenoble: ELLUG, 1999), 6.

9. See the list provided in Lund, *America's Continuing Story*, 153–222. French bimonthly literary reviews had been publishing novels in parts since 1829 (Queffélec, *Le roman-feuilleton français*, 11).

10. Originally, the 'feuilleton' consisted of book or theater reviews, accounts of proceedings at the Academy of Science, or descriptions of the latest fashions or inventions. With the growing success of serialized novels, the word 'feuilleton,' which originally referred to a particular section of the paper, came to be equated with the serialized novel.

ther was the first writer to handle the subject, but each was the first to strike a chord in the audience. Both were charged or credited with being at the root of major events in the history of their countries: the Civil War in Stowe's case and the 1848 Revolution in Sue's.¹¹ Moreover, both writers considered that the message of their work was more important than the form in which it was delivered. In the 1850s, Stowe wrote to her brother Charley that she wrote 'for a definite purpose to which the art is accessory.'¹² Within the text of *Les Mystères de Paris*, Sue emphasized the moral aspect of his work, which to him prevailed over its aesthetics.¹³ Finally, both Sue and Stowe were convinced that the root of evil—slavery for Stowe, the poverty and degradation of the working classes for Sue—lay in ignorance. In the final chapter of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Stowe explained that she wrote the novel because she felt that her contemporaries did not realize what slavery was; if they did, they could not have approved of the Fugitive Slave Law. In similar fashion, Sue had one of the characters say in *Les Mystères*: 'If the rich only knew,' thereby implying that knowledge and awareness provided the solution to the problems he raised.¹⁴

Interestingly enough, both writers started their novels with a very modest object in sight, in terms of length. Stowe had been given \$100 by the editor of the *Era*, Gamaliel Bailey, who expected what Stowe described as a 'series of sketches' to occupy

11. The attacks were worded in very similar ways: Stowe's fault was to 'foment heart-burnings and unappeasable hatred between brethren of a common country' (*Southern Literary Messenger Review*, October 1852) and to 'preach up bloodshed and massacre' (*Literary World*, April 24, 1852); as for Sue, according to a priest: 'Il attaque la propriété, il excuse l'infanticide. Il est le Voltaire des nouvelles hordes qui préparent dans l'ombre de nouveaux crimes and de nouveaux carnages.' ('He attacks property, condones infanticide. He is the Voltaire of new hordes that are secretly preparing new crimes and new massacres.') This quotation is from Jean-Louis Bory, *Eugène Sue: dandy mais socialiste* (1962; reprint, Paris: Mémoire du livre, 2000), 362.

12. H. B. Stowe to 'Dear Charley,' undated letter, Collection Acquisitions, Harriet Beecher Stowe Center, Hartford, Connecticut.

13. 'Cet ouvrage, que nous reconnaissons sans difficulté pour un livre mauvais au point de vue de l'art, mais que nous maintenons n'être pas un mauvais livre au point de vue moral . . .', *Les Mystères de Paris* (Paris: Laffont, 1989), 607.

14. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1986), 522; *Les Mystères de Paris*, 430.

no more than a dozen weekly issues.¹⁵ As we know, the serialization extended over forty-four weeks, or forty-one if we exclude the three weeks in which the *Era* appeared without the serial.

As for Sue, the initial situation was somewhat different: the latest contract the writer had signed with Charles Gosselin, a Paris publisher, gave Gosselin the right to sell the writer's novels for pre-publication serialization. The contract also specified that each novel would be written for a two-volume format. Sue insisted that he needed at least four volumes to do justice to the subject and he won his case.¹⁶ However, the serialization extended over sixteen months in *Le Journal des Débats*, some one hundred and fifty installments, and Gosselin was to publish it in ten volumes.

In both cases, the readers of the periodicals were partly responsible for the more extended length of the work. Let us reverse the chronological order and look at *Uncle Tom's Cabin* first because the case is simpler. On November 13, 1851, a reader's letter printed in the *Era* expressed a very clear wish: 'Please signify to Mrs. Stowe that it will quite agreeable to the wishes of very many of the readers of the *Era* for her *not to hurry through* "Uncle Tom." We don't get sleepy reading it.' The editor immediately reassured the reader: 'She [Stowe] will take good care not "to hurry through it," but will *complete* what has been so well begun.' And the readers' desire to see the story continue must have been frequently mentioned in the mail Gamaliel Bailey received, since it was alluded to again just a few weeks later, in another note from the editor: 'Our subscribers are unanimous in praise of this admirable production. They are not anxious to see it closed very soon.'¹⁷

15. On March 9, 1852, Stowe wrote Bailey: 'The thing may extend through three or four numbers' (Stowe to Gamaliel Bailey, copy in the Boston Public Library). When Bailey announced 'A New Story by Mrs. Stowe' in the *Era* dated May 8, 1851, he told his readers to expect a story similar in length to E. D. E. N. Southworth's *Retribution*, which was published in about ten installments.

16. René Guise, 'Les Mystères de Paris. Histoire d'un texte. Légende et vérité,' *Bulletin des Amis du roman populaire* 17 (1992): 9-30.

17. *National Era*, November 7, 1851. There is naturally a possibility that Bailey wrote the readers' letters himself, in order to promote *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and hence the *National Era*. However, the increase in the number of subscribers to the *Era* does indicate an unusual degree of interest in Stowe's serial, which might well have translated into mail addressed to the writer or the editor about it. In Sue's case, the evidence lies in the letters that have been kept.

The readers wished the story to go on because, as they said, it was 'a gripping narrative'¹⁸ that provoked a strong emotional response ('Some of the passages . . . go straight into the depths of the soul, stirring up its purest, best emotions'¹⁹); what is more, it provided a faithful portrait of slavery and, as one reader put it, 'it will do more good to the antislavery cause than a score of ordinary volumes.'²⁰

It seems more than likely, therefore, that the readers' letters and editor's notes in the *Era* encouraged Stowe to continue her story even though she was aware that John P. Jewett, the Boston publisher who was to bring the novel out as a book, wanted a one-volume novel. Stowe acknowledged the role of the readers as well as the link created between writer and audience by adding a few paragraphs after the last installment in the *Era*, starting with the following address: 'The author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" must now take leave of a wide circle of friends whose faces she has never seen, but whose sympathies coming to her from afar have stimulated and cheered her in her work.'²¹

Very few of the numerous letters to Sue were printed in *Le Journal des Débats*. However, the letters that the writer received—and after a while he was so well known that readers could send letters addressed to 'M. Eugène Sue, author of *Les Mystères de Paris*, Paris' and the letters would get to their destination—show that the readers influenced the length of the novel in the same way that Stowe's would do later for *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Sue's readers encouraged him to continue writing for a variety of reasons quite comparable to those provided by the readers of the *Era*. One of the letters is quite evocative of the genuine pain readers felt when the work was ended: 'Ah, Sir, I have just finished reading your book! . . . And I cannot bear to think there will be no fur-

18. In those pre-radio and television days, reading was an essential leisure activity. When Stowe visited Switzerland in 1853, maids at an inn begged her to write another novel, which, like *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, would occupy the long winter evenings. Annie Fields, *Life and Letters of Harriet Beecher Stowe* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co., 1897), 203.

19. *National Era*, August 28, 1851.

20. *National Era*, August 28, 1851.

21. *National Era*, April 1, 1852.

ther installments. . . . You who, to satisfy so many requests, added an epilogue to your immortal work! . . . Now, everything is all over for your readers!’²² Even after the final installment of the epilogue, itself no fewer than eight chapters, some readers still considered the work unfinished and asked Sue to clarify the fate of some of the minor characters he had left hanging, as it were.²³ The readers’ involvement with the characters, what Michael Lund calls their ‘intimacy,’²⁴ is also revealed in the numerous letters from readers who ask the writer to have one particular character reappear in the story or who attempt to influence the fate of the heroes, very much as was the case with some of Dickens’s characters.²⁵

Involvement with the characters was one reason the readers wanted Sue to continue writing; the suspense of the story was another reason, as well as the emotion it caused. Another motive is recurrent in the letters: the moral aspect of the work. Its message was considered sufficiently important for many readers to ask Sue to mention other examples of problems that he should tackle in the serial. The readers often stressed the truth of Sue’s descriptions of the poverty of the working class, of seedy neigh-

22. ‘Ah! Monsieur! Je viens d’achever la lecture de votre livre! . . . Et ne puis me faire à l’idée que ce livre n’a plus de suite. . . . Vous qui pour satisfaire à tant d’exigences avez ajouté un épilogue à votre immortel ouvrage! . . . Tout est *mort* donc, pour vos lecteurs!!! . . .’ Louis Van Houtte, October 18, 1843, in Galvan, *Les Mystères de Paris*, 2:104. Indeed, *Les Mystères* was to have been over with the eighth part, which was announced in the paper as the last one (*Le Journal des Débats*, July 27, 1843). The end of the eighth part was followed in the paper by: ‘The end of *Les Mystères de Paris*,’ to which was added: ‘To be incessantly followed by an epilogue, finishing the 8th and final part’ (September 2, 1843).

23. ‘Murph,’ October 15, 1843, in Galvan, *Les Mystères de Paris*, 2:93.

24. Lund, *America’s Continuing Story*, 87.

25. The mail that Sue received reveals that the line between fact and fiction often tended to get blurred. The most extreme example is a letter from an unemployed worker asking Sue for the address of Rodolphe de Gerolstein, the hero of the novel, who is both an avenger and a savior (E. Bazire, September 4, 1843, in Galvan, *Les Mystères de Paris*, 1:416–17). Sue himself, who was constantly asked for help by poor people, by would-be writers who wanted him to read their works, and by would-be heroes who asked him to write their stories, was often equated with his main character. A number of his correspondents did not doubt that he himself was a ‘Rodolphe.’ This laid the writer under a very heavy responsibility, whether because his readers occasionally threatened suicide if he did not help, or because workers expected him to continue his militant work on their behalf.

borhoods, of prisons and hospitals, and so on. They evoked their own experiences to highlight the realism of *Les Mystères*. This might seem odd when one considers that the story abounds in unlikely events, gothic occurrences, and improbable reunions. However, *Le Journal des Débats*, like the other French dailies, had, in the second decade of the nineteenth century, started devoting an increasing amount of space to sensational news items. These accounts were themselves dramatized, as is the case, for example, of the suicide of a woman after her lover had abandoned her (*Le Journal des Débats*, January 26, 1838), or the strange story of a man who, after a perfectly ordinary meal in a restaurant, used his knife to kill himself (June 19, 1842). The way these news items were selected and reported makes for a certain similarity with the novel and this may partly account for the readers' acceptance of *Les Mystères de Paris* as a story they could both believe in and add to, thanks to their own experience.²⁶

Sue occasionally acted upon the readers' demands by including the testimonies or documents that readers sent him as long footnotes, sometimes even incorporating them in the text itself. One example among many is a long letter sent to the writer on August 27, 1843, by Samuel-Henry Berthoud, who minutely described the last hours of prisoners about to be executed. Sue used that description in the installment that came out on August 31.²⁷ A few days before, the writer had alluded, again in the text of the install-

26. On the parallels between serialized novels and sensational news items or accounts of trials, see Claude Bellanger et al., eds., *Histoire générale de la presse française*, vol. 2, *De 1815 à 1871* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1969), 87; see also Lucette Czyba, 'Du fait divers au roman-feuilleton: *Chaste et flétrie* de Charles Merouvel,' in René Guise et Hans-Jörg Neuschäfer, eds., *Les richesses du roman populaire* (Nancy: Centre de Recherches sur le roman populaire, 1986), 363-73.

27. Galvan, *Les Mystères de Paris*, 1:397-99; 372. Documents sent by the readers were sometimes placed in long footnotes to the serial, as was the case, for example, in *Le Journal des Débats* dated June 24, 1843. Sue did not name his correspondent but generally thanked the readers who sent him information. Occasionally, Sue asked the editor of *Le Journal* to print a reader's letter when it bore upon a particular point he dealt with in the story. (See, for instance, *Le Journal* dated August 1, 1843, containing a letter in which the reader tells Sue about a practical application in Montpellier of a project the writer suggested in *Les Mystères*: a bank that would lend the poor money without interest.)

ment, to information received from the Count d'Orsay. By using these testimonies, Sue literally brought the reader into the text.²⁸

Although, in both cases, the readers played a somewhat comparable role, a key difference between Sue and Stowe deserves to be mentioned. Stowe's readers encouraged her to go on writing, but they do not seem to have influenced the nature of the work: she was out to denounce slavery, and expose it she did. But Sue's readers changed both the man and his work. A French researcher has convincingly demonstrated that Sue had begun *Les Mystères* as a middle-class philanthropist interested in the plight of the working classes, but one who was all too ready to find an easy solution in the guise of private charity. The flood of letters, testimonies, and requests for help led him, however, to begin a systematic analysis of the problems of mid-nineteenth-century France, which led him to offer a number of pragmatic solutions. The novel is, indeed, much more militant in its later parts, for they were composed once he had fallen under the influence of the letters of readers.²⁹

The interaction between the writer of a serial and his or her readers also takes place through the medium of the periodical and its editor. That medium can be favorable but also, obviously more rarely, antagonistic to the serial it publishes. Once again, I will reverse the chronological order, because the case of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is more straightforward.

Uncle Tom's Cabin was published in a very congenial medium: the *National Era* was a moderate antislavery weekly. William

28. This also tends to blur the line between fact and fiction a little more. All through *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Stowe had scattered a number of remarks meant to support the idea that she was describing scenes and characters she had herself observed or that had been brought to her attention by reliable witnesses. However, she tried to maintain a delicate balance between fact and fiction, and was to use testimonies, press cuttings, etc., in another book, *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1853), that she wrote expressly to answer the attacks against *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and to justify both the novel's characters and its events. Sue mixed both fiction and testimony in *Les Mystères*. The reader was constantly reminded in *Le Journal* that Sue was, as he himself put it, 'dramatizing' reality (Eugène Sue to the editor of *Le Journal des Débats*, letter printed in the issue dated August 14, 1843).

29. Anne-Marie Thiesse, 'L'éducation sociale d'un romancier: le cas d'Eugène Sue,' *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 32-33 (1980): 51-63. For a discussion of Sue as a reformist rather than a revolutionary, see Umberto Eco, *De Superman au surhomme* (Paris: Grasset, 1993), 35-71.

Lloyd Garrison, the editor of the *Liberator*, called its policy “milk and water” abolitionism.³⁰ Unlike many abolitionists, Bailey wanted to avoid antagonizing the South. Stowe had the same concern, and her novel fitted the *Era*'s policy perfectly. Susan Belasco Smith has analyzed the way *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was ‘one part of a strong program undertaken by the *National Era* to expose the scandal of slavery in American society in a variety of ways.’³¹

The awareness of a community of interests that brought together readers, editor, and writer around *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is reflected not just in the readers' mail but also in the evolution of the editorial notes in the paper. Stowe missed three episodes over the forty-four weeks of the publication. The first time this happened, Bailey printed a rather dry note, explaining that the manuscript came in too late to be included in that particular issue. The second note, a few months later, was more apologetic: ‘We regret exceedingly that the nineteenth chapter of Mrs. Stowe's story did not reach us until the morning of the day on which the *Era* goes to press. . . .’ The third note was a profuse apology: ‘We regret, as much as any of our readers can regret, that Mrs. Stowe has no chapter in this week's *Era*. It is not our fault. . . .’³² Bailey obviously expected his readers to be angry or at least disappointed by the absence of their favorite serial and seems to have chosen to deflate their reactions by presenting himself as a member of the community of readers who followed the story week after week.

Bailey devoted a number of editorial notes to the success of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and printed four of the ‘thousands of testimonials’ he received.³³ The editor often relayed the readers' questions to the writer. When the *Era*'s subscribers asked him if *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was to be published in book form, Bailey directed the ques-

30. Thomas Gossett, *Uncle Tom's Cabin and American Culture* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1985), 169.

31. Susan Belasco Smith, ‘Serialization and the Nature of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*,’ in Kenneth M. Price and Susan Belasco Smith eds., *Periodical Literature in Nineteenth-Century America* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995), 69–89.

32. *National Era*, August 21, 1851; October 30, 1851; December 18, 1851.

33. *National Era*, April 1, 1852. Of course, Bailey used the popularity of the serial to encourage his readers to renew their subscriptions.

tion to the writer: 'A note from the author touching these points might be of service.'³⁴ The columns of the paper thus became the locus of a conversation that was carried on between the readers, the editor, and the author (the question was answered two weeks later). The editor acted as a middleman between the writer and her audience. The 'two-way communication' that Susan Belasco Smith describes as taking place between Stowe and her readers therefore has to be extended to a third character, Gamaliel Bailey.³⁵

By printing the subscribers' notes of encouragement to the writer and adding his own, Bailey provided in the *National Era* an environment that can be said to have 'nurtured' the story during its publication. Bailey continued to pay attention to the novel after it was published as a book and did his best to promote its sales. For instance, he provided the latest sales figures of that publishing phenomenon, and he even sold it in the offices of the weekly. Moreover, Bailey defended the novel against its detractors, and he followed its reception in England. In other words, the link created while the novel was serialized went on indirectly long after the serial had ended. This is a clear example of a perfect confluence of interests between the three protagonists of the serialization.³⁶

Bailey's interest in Stowe's serialization undoubtedly stemmed from his awareness of the common political agenda shared by author, reader, and newspaper. However, the editor was also quite sensitive to the increase in the number of subscribers that was due to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Several notes in the *Era*, even before the last installment of Stowe's novel, clearly indicate that Bailey felt the need to reassure his readers as to what kind of literary production they could expect the paper to provide in the future. Thus, on March 25, 1852, a week before the final chapters of the novel were printed in the *Era*, Bailey announced that he had 'on file sev-

34. *National Era*, September 4, 1851.

35. Smith, 'Serialization and the Nature of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*,' 72.

36. Claire Parfait, 'Les éditions américaines d'*Uncle Tom's Cabin*, de Harriet Beecher Stowe, de 1852 à 1999' (Ph.D. diss., Université Paris 7, 2000), 79-129.

eral contributions of rare value, which will be published from time to time' after *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had completed its run in the paper. The following week, Bailey continued in the same vein, assuring his readers that a novel translated from the German would soon follow, praising the work as one of 'rich and varied interest, and abounding in the noblest truths' (*National Era*, April 1, 1852). In the same issue of the paper, though, Bailey called on Stowe to keep up the fight against slavery by writing more fiction for the *Era*. The various notes reveal a certain disquiet on the part of the editor. Bailey, who had very early in his editorial career become aware of the powerful attraction exerted by fiction on the audience of periodicals,³⁷ was undoubtedly worried that his new subscribers would feel the vacuum left by the end of Stowe's serial. There is also evidence that he tried to secure Stowe as a permanent contributor. Indeed, just a few days after the completion of her serial, Stowe wrote to Bailey telling him that she was too exhausted to consider writing a new novel in the near future, but that if she did—and the rest of her letter shows that she was already contemplating *Dred*—she would certainly give it to the *Era*. ('If I publish in any paper it shall be in yours.') It is more than likely that she was replying to a request from the editor.³⁸ On May 20, 1852, a note from Bailey in the *National Era* read: 'It is with great pleasure that we announce to our readers that we have succeeded in engaging MRS. HARRIET BEECHER STOWE [and her name was printed in capital letters so that the readers would not miss the note], as a regular contributor to the columns of the *Era*.'

The sales figures explain Bailey's satisfaction and are evocative of the impact of a successful serialization on the circulation of a periodical. According to Stanley Harrold, Bailey's biographer, a 'precipitous rise' in circulation resulted from Stowe's serialized

37. Stanley Harrold, *Gamaliel Bailey and Antislavery Union* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press), xiv.

38. Stowe to Dr. Bailey, Brunswick, April 18; no year is indicated but since the letter deals with the amount of money Stowe had been asked to specify on completion of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, 1852 is the logical date; BMS Am 1569.7 (596), Houghton Library, Harvard University.

novel, the number of subscribers increasing from seventeen thousand in 1851 to nineteen thousand in mid-1852, and briefly peaking at twenty-eight thousand in early 1853. When it became clear, however, that Stowe's contributions would be few and far between, the circulation 'dropped precipitously' in 1854, 'as those who had subscribed for the sake of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* withdrew.'³⁹

The link between *Le Journal des Débats* and *Les Mystères* was much more tenuous than that described above. Sue had earlier published only one serialized novel in that paper, and that was before he started writing his so-called 'social novels.' Sue usually serialized his novels in *La Presse*, a rather progressive newspaper. However, Charles Gosselin, Sue's publisher, who had only lately realized that prepublication serialization could be a good way of promoting a book, had antagonized *La Presse* during the serialization of Sue's *Mathilde*, in 1840-41. The controversy was over a clause in Gosselin's contract with Sue, which stipulated that one-third of the serial could not appear in the papers but would remain the exclusive property of the publisher. As a result, the readers of *Mathilde* in *La Presse* were able to read only the first two parts of the novel, and the paper was forced to summarize the third part. As can be imagined, the readers were outraged.⁴⁰ A year later, *La Presse*, unsurprisingly, declined to serialize *Les Mystères*. Armand Bertin, the editor of *Le Journal des Débats*, accepted Gosselin's offer.⁴¹

Le Journal des Débats was a semiofficial daily, which received government subsidies and was read primarily by middle- and upper-middle-class conservatives. It was an eclectic paper, in which the reader could find accounts of government and court proceedings, as well as a great number of extracts from newspapers in the French provinces and from foreign countries. News of the king and the aristocracy was also prominent, as were accounts of trials.⁴²

39. Harrold, *Gamaliel Bailey*, 143, 139, 185.

40. Galvan, *Les Mystères de Paris*, 1:21.

41. The whole of *Les Mystères* was to appear in the columns of *Le Journal des Débats*.

42. Like *National Era*, *Le Journal des Débats* was made up of four pages of very small print, and the advertising section was located on the last two pages.

The daily systematically derided and attacked the 'Opposition' and ascribed the poverty of the working classes not to any flaw in society itself but to the fact that the land had not yet been made to produce enough. The enemy of the poor was, therefore, not the rich, but what the paper called 'the rebellious earth,' with the solution to poverty being an increase in productivity.⁴³

As *Les Mystères* unfolded in *Le Journal des Débats*, and as the work became more and more militant, the regular readers of the paper were in for a bit of a shock. The readers of the *Era*, after all, subscribed to an antislavery paper. But when subscribers read *Les Mystères* in *Le Journal des Débats*, they received a message that was increasingly at odds with the editorial line of the paper, which raises the question of editorial choices. According to a number of scholars, *Le Journal des Débats* was undergoing financial difficulties, and it was hoped that a popular serial would boost its audience, which is exactly what happened.⁴⁴ It is also quite likely that the editor did not expect the novel to turn into an exposition of the evils of contemporary French society, since the novel took a truly militant tone only in its later parts.

By that time, the novel had already become the rage, not only in Paris, but also in the French provinces and abroad, as letters to Sue and the testimonies of contemporaries show.⁴⁵ *Les Mystères* was already being parodied in November 1842, another sure sign of success.⁴⁶ By then, Bertin could not cease publication, as some French editors had done when a serialized novel was unpopular.⁴⁷ This case, indeed, was different, since putting an end to such a

43. *Le Journal des Débats*, September 1, 1842.

44. Thiesse, *Le roman du quotidien: lecteurs et lectures populaires à la Belle Epoque* (Paris: Le Chemin Vert, 1984), 84.

45. Bory, *Eugène Sue*, 343-46.

46. *Le Journal des Débats*, November 9, 1842.

47. The editor of *La Presse* put an abrupt end to the serialization of Balzac's *La Torpille* because the readers did not like its subject, nor his too 'free' descriptions, and wrote to complain. Thiesse, 'L'éducation sociale d'un romancier,' 53. *La Presse* would also interrupt another serial by Balzac, *Les Paysans*, and replace it with Dumas's *La reine Margot*. The change was made in December 1844, before the renewal of the yearly subscriptions. The link between the success of a serial and the circulation of a paper finds its clearest expression in that example (Queffélec, *Le roman-feuilleton français*, 23). According to René Guise,

successful story as *Les Mystères* might have been nothing short of editorial suicide. Bertin, however, chose to remain at a distance; although he did not show his disapproval, at least he did not support the novel as Bailey would *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

Only once did *Le Journal des Débats* openly support Sue: when he refused to answer an attack from a representative in the National Assembly.⁴⁸ On another occasion, the editor indirectly showed his approval of one of Sue's suggestions. On September 1, 1843, Bertin printed the only letter from a reader that was not preceded by a direct request from the writer for inclusion in the paper, and the editor introduced the letter by writing: 'We receive the following letter . . . and we wholeheartedly agree with the wishes it expresses' (the letter dealt with an association in Toulouse that lent money to the poor without charging them interest).

Like Bailey, Bertin printed notes of apologies, when the interval between the different parts of the novel was longer than what he had announced. The notes were very few—three altogether—when compared to the frequent delays and the numerous readers' letters to Sue on that point. Bertin expressed his regrets once only, and his notes were rather terse, compared to the letter of apology from the writer himself, which was printed in the daily.⁴⁹

the main reason for interrupting a serial was that the readers considered it boring, because of the slow pace and because of too many descriptions at the expense of action. See Guise, 'Recherches en littérature populaire, Tapis-Franc,' *Revue du roman populaire* 6 (1993-94): 23. On the serial in England, Bill Bell notes: 'As an early form of market research, serial sales, too, often allowed the producer to keep his finger on the pulse of audience reaction to the extent that, in some cases, not only the content but also the very length of the narrative became a market-led decision.' Bell, 'Fiction in the Marketplace: Towards a Study of the Victorian Serial,' in Robin Myers and Michael Harris, eds., *Serials and Their Readers, 1620-1914* (New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll Press, 1993): 125-44. For an example of negative reactions from American readers to serials, see Lund, *America's Continuing Story, 72-73*: Harper's editors did not put an end to the two serials by Thackeray that were being attacked by the magazine's readers, but they tried to appease the readers, which clearly tended to meet a similar objective, i.e., to avoid losing readers.

48. Armand Bertin congratulated Sue for his dignified silence and assured him that such attacks should not be taken seriously (*Le Journal des Débats*, June 15, 1843).

49. The editor always ascribed the delay to a bout of sickness on the part of the writer (*Le Journal des Débats*, August 19, 1842; October 20, 1842; and July 6, 1843). On July 19, 1843, Sue himself apologized profusely, explaining that he had been sick, and that he had some research work to carry out for a chapter on lunatic asylums and hospitals; he also justified the delay by his wish to do as thorough a job as possible, and solemnly promised to send the beginning of part eight in time for it to appear on July 27. He was to keep his word.

Over the sixteen months of serialization, Bertin printed ten letters by Sue. Sue's letters in the paper aimed at introducing readers' letters in most cases, and at answering attacks in other papers.⁵⁰ To some extent, then, the paper allowed a conversation between the writer and his audience; the editor, however, was largely absent from this conversation. Bertin did not play the role of a middleman in the same way as Bailey would do in the *National Era*. One reason of course was that Sue did not need the editor to do so since he privately answered most of his readers himself. Another reason why the editor was not directly involved in the ongoing discussion was owing to the discomfort he likely experienced in publishing a novel that contradicted the editorial slant of the paper.

The readers' letters that were printed in *Le Journal des Débats* were documents or testimonies that certainly tended to support Sue's positions—examples of more lenient legislation in other countries, for instance—but in no case did they reflect the enthusiasm expressed in the letters that Sue received. In other words, if we had only *Le Journal des Débats*, we would have no notion of the extent of the readers' emotional involvement in the novel, and this is a significant editorial choice.

We do not know if the subscribers to *Le Journal des Débats* wrote incendiary letters to its editor and blamed him for publishing what was often seen as an immoral and subversive piece of literature.⁵¹ We do have some idea, however, of the reactions of the people who bought *Le Journal des Débats* for the sole purpose of reading Sue's novel. If some congratulated Sue for succeeding in having his message conveyed in what they called 'the paper of privilege,' others complained about having to subscribe to a paper they disagreed with just to read the serial.⁵² One reader underscored the

50. The letters were sometimes printed in the 'feuilleton' section, sometimes in the regular columns on page 2 or 3.

51. According to Marc Angenot, the paper did not lose his usual subscribers, but moved from the parlor to the servants' quarters; see his *Le roman populaire: recherches en paralittérature* (Montreal: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1975), 10. *Les Mystères*, like *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, was read in all classes of society. Sue's correspondents range from the unemployed worker to the aristocrat, from the prostitute to the high-born lady.

52. Galvan, *Les Mystères de Paris*, 1:110, and 2:131, for the first argument; 1:186, 206, 346 for the second.

importance of the medium in which a serial was published when he remarked that the effect of the work was very much undermined by its being published in what he called 'the most retrograde of our papers.'⁵³ Another reader upbraided Sue for the long intervals that separated the publication of each part of the story in a paper whose opinions he did not share and which he subscribed to only for the sake of *Les Mystères*.⁵⁴

To some extent, therefore, the medium in which *Les Mystères* was serialized represented more of an obstacle to the reception of the work than an advantage. Instead of being 'nurtured' by the periodical it appeared in, the novel succeeded in spite of it, at least for those of the readers who resented having to read *Les Mystères* in *Le Journal des Débats*. At the very least, it could be argued that reading the novel in the daily must have proved a somewhat schizophrenic reading experience. On the other hand, the ideological contrast between the serial and the daily, and the attacks by rival papers to which *Le Journal des Débats* was subjected as a result, may have increased the fame of the novel, by keeping up a continuous debate around it.⁵⁵

Needless to say, *Le Journal des Débats*, which had gained a few thousand subscribers thanks to *Les Mystères*, would not promote the book, or defend it against its detractors. The link between paper and serial stopped on the day the serialization ended. The daily would never print another piece by Sue. In fact, the editor would violently attack the writer when the latter ran for the National Assembly in 1850.⁵⁶

Yet, *Le Journal des Débats* did print the serial after all, and, instead of the farewell note to readers that Stowe appended to

53. Louis Chaperon, May 30, 1843: 'Continuez. Je ne vous souhaite qu'un piédestal un peu moins dégoûtant. Il nuit à l'effet naturel de votre première lecture. S'il n'est pas le seul, il est le plus atrocement arriéré de nos journaux.' Galvan, *Les Mystères de Paris*, 1:206-7.

54. Galvan, *Les Mystères de Paris*, 1:186.

55. Galvan, *Les Mystères de Paris*, 1:22. Galvan adds that the very nature of *Le Journal des Débats* caused many readers and commentators then and now to doubt the sincerity of Sue's commitment to the cause of the downtrodden.

56. Bory, *Eugène Sue*, 437.

Uncle Tom's Cabin, the last chapter of *Les Mystères* was followed by a letter to the editor in which Sue expressed his thanks: '... Allow me to thank you publicly for having given this unfortunately imperfect as well as incomplete work the great publicity of *Le Journal des Débats*; I am all the more grateful, sir, as several of the ideas conveyed in that work are fundamentally at odds with those you defend with as much energy as talent. . . . [T]he courageous and loyal objectivity you have shown me is rarely met with.'⁵⁷

It is of course something of an artificial exercise to try to imagine what a book would have become had circumstances been different. By the end of November, when both readers and editor encouraged Stowe to continue with the story, the *Era's* readers knew that little Eva was going to die, but there still remained the question of what was to become of Tom. The fate of George and Eliza was left hanging since they were last heard of in chapter 17 (October 2, 1851) and the thread of their story would not be taken up again before chapter 37, printed in the issue of March 4, 1852. In the interval, the writer was to focus on the story of Tom.

Some contemporary reviewers blamed what they deemed a lack of plot on the fact that the story had been written for serialization. That is the tentative explanation in a review of the novel in *Norton's Literary Gazette*: 'Owing, perhaps, to its having been prepared for publication in weekly parts, there is no great *plot* to the story.'⁵⁸ In *Graham's Magazine*, George Graham, noting that

57. 'Monsieur, *Les Mystères de Paris* sont terminés; permettez-moi de venir publiquement vous remercier d'avoir bien voulu prêter à cette oeuvre, malheureusement aussi imparfaite qu'incomplète, la grande et puissante publicité du *Journal des Débats*; ma reconnaissance est d'autant plus vive, monsieur, que plusieurs des idées émises dans cet ouvrage diffèrent essentiellement de celles que vous soutenez avec autant d'énergie que de talent, et qu'il est rare de rencontrer la courageuse et loyale impartialité dont vous avez fait preuve à mon égard.' (Eugène Sue, Paris, October 15, 1843.) Sue was to write a farewell note to readers for the 1851 revised book version. He thanked them for their interest and announced that a number of the characters of the book would reappear in another work, entitled *Les Mystères du Peuple*. The note is dated January 30, 1851, and reprinted in Eugène Sue, *Les Mystères de Paris*, 1309.

58. *Norton's Literary Gazette* 2 (May 15, 1852): 86. The italics are the reviewer's.

'Mrs. Stowe's style is as careless as her plot,' laid part of the blame on the fact that she was writing for the *Era*, 'perhaps in a hurry.'⁵⁹

In contrast to these critics of the time, Joan Hedrick, Stowe's most recent biographer, sees serialization as exerting a positive influence on Stowe's writing, by allowing her to adapt her unfolding novel to the reactions of her listeners or readers—she read each installment of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* to her family circle before sending it out.⁶⁰ *Dred* and *Oldtown Folks*, Stowe's only two novels that were published in book form without first being serialized, are too long, 'as if Stowe needed the check of an actual audience to shape her story.'⁶¹

According to Stowe's 1878 introduction to *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, John P. Jewett, who, as the *Era*'s readers were informed on September 18, 1851, was to publish the serial in book form, wrote to her 'expressing his fears that she was making the story too long for a one-volume publication.'⁶² The publisher, the writer tells us, worried that a two-volume book on such an unpopular subject as slavery might not sell. Nevertheless, it is doubtful that Jewett's concern focused on the number of volumes as such. Indeed, in mid-nineteenth-century America, what William Charvat calls the 'two-volume strait jacket' was no longer a requirement, and novels as different in length as *The Scarlet Letter* and *Moby Dick* were each published in one volume.⁶³ Jewett himself was later to bring

59. George Graham, 'Black Letters; or Uncle Tom-Foolery in Literature,' *Graham's Magazine* (February 1853), 211. For the meaning and importance of plot in American novels in the mid-nineteenth century, see Nina Baym, *Novels, Readers, and Reviewers: Responses to Fiction in Antebellum America* (1984; reprint, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), chapter 4.

60. Stowe, 'Introduction,' *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Boston: Houghton, Osgood & Co., 1879), lix. Although the title page bears the date of 1879, the edition came out in December 1878; see 'New Books for the Holiday Season,' *Publishers Weekly* (November 30, 1878).

61. Joan Hedrick, *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 332 and 344.

62. H. B. Stowe, 'Introduction,' lx. See J. C. Derby, *Fifty Years Among Authors, Books, and Publishers* (New York: G.W. Carleton & Co., 1884), 457-58. Some scholars claim that Bailey asked his readers whether the story should be brought to a speedy end or continue its course. See John Tebbel, *The Creation of an Industry*, vol. 1 of *A History of Book Publishing in the United States* (New York: R. R. Bowker, 1972), 426; and Frank Luther Mott, *Golden Multitudes* (New York: Macmillan, 1947), 116. I was unable to find a note to that effect in the *Era*.

63. William Charvat, *Literary Publishing in America, 1790-1850* (1959; reprint, Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1993), 83.

out *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in two one-volume editions, an expensive and profusely illustrated one as well as a paper-covered cheap edition. The problem more probably lay in the fact that Jewett had been stereotyping Stowe's story since September 1851, as Bailey's note to the *Era's* readers on September 18 indicates. Stereotyping was costly and therefore generally used only for works that were likely to go through several printings.⁶⁴ According to E. Bruce Kirkham, therein lay the real cause of Jewett's problem with the length of the manuscript: the longer the work, the more expensive the stereotyping, and of course there was no way the publisher could be sure the work would sell.⁶⁵

Stowe was to give various reasons for the final length of the novel, but the encouragement of the *Era's* readers and editor certainly played a part in her continuing to write against the wish of the publisher. The serialization was, however, sufficiently successful for Jewett to change his mind and go to the expense of publishing the work in two editions and several bindings with the addition of illustrations. To a certain extent, the favorable reactions of the audience to the serialization therefore played a significant part both on the final length of the novel and on the material form of the book as it was published, a reminder that serialized publication acted as a testing ground as well as an advertisement for new fiction. Indeed, part of the success of the book is certainly due to the word-of-mouth publicity from the *Era's* readers, and Bailey himself was to remind the author that 'the [*National Era's*] large circulation had served as a tremendous advertisement for the work.'⁶⁶

Once again, Sue's case is more complex because of the particular context in which the serial appeared. René Guise has detailed the story of *Les Mystères de Paris*, and I will briefly summarize his

64. Susan Geary, 'Harriet Beecher Stowe, John P. Jewett, and Author-Publisher Relations in 1853,' in Joel Myerson, ed., *Studies in the American Renaissance, 1977* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1977), 345-67.

65. E. Bruce Kirkham, *The Building of Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1977), 149.

66. 'A Pioneer Editor,' *Atlantic Monthly* (June 1866): 743-51.

conclusions, in order to show the specificity of the case. Gosselin, Sue's publisher, had originally relaxed his two-volume injunction, allowing Sue to write a four-volume novel. The two-volume per novel contract seems to have been the norm in France then.⁶⁷ However, because *Mathilde* had created quite a sensation, Sue had set a precedent and turned it into a six-volume novel. When Gosselin similarly allowed Sue to expand *Les Mystères* from two to four volumes, the writer made a number of changes as a result, not the least of which was the creation of the hero, who did not appear in the original two-volume manuscript. According to Guise, the success of the serial at first led Bertin and Gosselin to agree that Sue could continue beyond the four-volume format. However, both Gosselin, who had little confidence in the prospective sales of a ten-volume book, and Bertin, who was attacked by the press and probably exasperated with the reformist tone of the novel, tried to stop Sue from further writing after the ninth volume, which corresponds to the eighth part published in *Le Journal*. Bertin was careful to announce and insist in *Le Journal des Débats* that the story would end on completion of the eighth part, as if he wished to get the story over with definitively. Sue pleaded and obtained the right to write an epilogue. More than probably, Bertin wielded more power than Gosselin since the chapters of the epilogue made up only half a volume, and Gosselin had to complete the tenth volume by adding, on Sue's suggestion, a very long poem written on *Les Mystères* by Fanny Desnoix, an admirer of Sue, as well as a series of articles on the novel written by Eugène Woestyn, the editor of an Orléans newspaper.⁶⁸

67. Most of the novels advertised in *Le Journal des Débats* were octavo two-volume novels; Gosselin contracted with Victor Hugo for a two-volume novel in 1828, and Balzac's novels were usually published in two volumes. Nicole Felkay, *Balzac et ses éditeurs 1822-1837; essai sur la librairie romantique* (Paris: Promodis, Cercle de la Librairie, 1987). This was due to the influence of the 'cabinets de lectures,' the reading rooms where for a fee readers could rent periodicals and books for a specific amount of time; just as the English circulating libraries imposed the three-volume novel, the French 'cabinets de lecture' influenced the format of the novel. See Robert Bied, 'Le Monde des Auteurs,' in Martin et Chartier, eds., *Histoire de l'édition française*, vol. 2, *Le livre triomphant, 1660-1830* (Paris: Promodis, Cercle de la Librairie, 1984), 589-605.

68. Guise, *Recherches*, 24-27.

Unlike Stowe, therefore, Sue continued to write, encouraged by his readers at a time when both the editor and the publisher wanted him to cease. It is also evident that in Sue's case, the length of the work makes for an unwieldy and sprawling novel. The readers' encouragements to Sue resulted in what Umberto Eco calls 'narrative suicide,' i.e., the revelation in the second part of what was to be an eight-part novel with an epilogue, that Fleur de Marie is the hero's daughter.⁶⁹ This 'narrative suicide' is entirely due to the fact that the novel was originally to be much shorter. As Sue went on writing, he had to handle a huge mass of unwieldy material, with plots and subplots so complex that the writer's only solution was to add lengthy footnotes, when he realized too late that he had failed to reveal a significant event, or else to remind his readers of what had happened before. Alexandre Dumas, Sue's contemporary and a fellow serialist, ascribed a number of the flaws in *Les Mystères* to the protracted length of the novel, which was itself owing to its popularity.⁷⁰ Indeed, Sue was to rewrite the serialized version extensively for an illustrated edition, in order to suppress a number of incoherences due to the inordinate length of the work.⁷¹ Serialization could thus have exerted a positive influence on Stowe's writing, but a negative one in Sue's case.

Although work remains to be done before the link between the writers of serialized literature, their audience, and their editors is fully appreciated, the examples of Sue and Stowe remind us that the nineteenth-century serialized novel was indeed a collaborative undertaking. Stowe was fortunate enough to enjoy the comfort of a homogeneous community that shared the ideals expressed in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. When *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was published as a book, its fame had already been spread somewhat by word of

69. Eco, *De Superman*, 60–61. For a different point of view, claiming that the revelation is part of Sue's overall plan, see Bruno Bellotto, 'Mode d'emploi du texte Romanesque,' in René Guise et Hans-Jörg Neuschäfer, eds, *Les richesses du roman populaire*, 123–24.

70. Alexandre Dumas, 'Eugène Sue,' in Sue, *Les Mystères de Paris*, 1315–50. This is somewhat ironic since Dumas himself was not particularly known for his conciseness and *Le Comte de Monte-Cristo*, serialized in 1844–45 in *Le Journal des Débats*, was also published in ten volumes.

71. *Bulletin des amis du roman populaire*, 21.

mouth from the *Era*'s readers, who were, of course, not only the subscribers, but all those who had access to the periodical's issues once their proper subscribers were finished with them.⁷² This cannot by itself account for the popularity of the work, but there is no doubt that the readers' reactions and Bailey's continued support of the book played a part. The readership of *Les Mystères* in *Le Journal des Débats* was a quite heterogeneous one, however, fractured along political and ideological lines that separated the regular subscribers from those who subscribed only for the sake of the serial. The editor published the serialized novel with as little commentary as possible, merely providing a context, and the paper was by its nature a hostile environment in which to advance the ideas of the novel.

According to Laurel Brake, authors 'write within codes of discourse, of the kind of piece they are writing . . . and of the particular journal they are writing for.'⁷³ Indeed, it seems but logical that writers should adapt at least to some extent to the paper or magazine they are published in. As we have seen, this was the case with Stowe, whose attitude towards slavery and slave owners was very close to the line Bailey had adopted in his paper. To a certain extent, Stowe seems to have fallen in effortlessly with the editorial slant of the *National Era*. Other writers had to make a conscious effort to adapt their work so that it would fit the editorial line and the expectations of the readers of a particular magazine. Thus Sheila Post-Lauria has demonstrated in the case of *Israel Potter*, that Melville, like Hawthorne and Poe before him, 'not only endorsed existing practices but aligned his periodical fiction

72. For the multiple readership of periodicals in the United States, see Lund, *America's Continuing Story*, 51-56. For a similar assessment of the multiple readership of French periodicals, see Yves-Olivier Marin, *Histoire du roman populaire en France de 1840 à 1980* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1980), 45. According to Forrest Wilson, copies of the *National Era* were 'passed from family to family' until they were 'quite worn out'; see Forrest Wilson, *Crusader in Crinoline: The Life of Harriet Beecher Stowe* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1941), 272.

73. Laurel Brake, 'The "Trepidation of the Spheres": The Serial and the Book in the Nineteenth Century,' in Myers and Harris, eds., *Serials and Their Readers*, 83-101.

with specific magazine practices.⁷⁴ In a similar manner, Balzac's correspondence demonstrates his awareness of the context his novels were to be published in: he realized that *Les Paysans* would not suit the political orientations of the daily *Le Siècle* and that the novel could consequently appear only in conservative papers such as *La Gazette de France*.⁷⁵

Sue's case is particularly striking because he chose to disregard these practices, and as it were wrote against the grain of the paper and its regular readers. The note to the editor that he appended to the last installment of the story clearly demonstrates his consciousness of this fact. Furthermore, periodical editors both in France and in the United States exerted a measure of censorship, ranging from the choice of authors and pieces to subtle revisions in order to avoid shocking a public whose tastes and dislikes they were very much aware of.⁷⁶ Again, Balzac's angry letters to or about his editors and what he deemed the 'stupid' complaints of his readers, show that he knew the extent of the pressure that could be exerted by audience and editor.⁷⁷ This makes Sue's resistance to Bertin's wishes all the more singular. Bertin obviously found himself trapped between his own disapproval of the novel, the harsh criticism he received from rival newspapers, and the evident popularity of *Les Mystères*. As a result, the only censorship he seems to have exerted was his insistence that Sue stop after the eighth part. Even so, thanks no doubt to the readers' demands, the editor had to compromise and accept an epilogue. More examples are needed in order to know whether Sue's case was one of a kind or whether audiences enabled other writers to withstand the authority of an editor.

74. Sheila Post-Lauria, 'Magazine Practices and Melville's *Israel Potter*,' in Price and Smith, eds., *Periodical Literature*, 115-32.

75. Honoré de Balzac, *Correspondance*, ed. R. Pierrot (Paris: Garnier, 1964), 3:596.

76. Guise, *Recherches*, 23.

77. Balzac, *Correspondance*, 3:167 and 466-67.

In the end, both novels turned out to be massive bestsellers, Stowe's partly thanks to the sympathetic periodical in which it appeared, Sue's in spite of its unfriendly environment.⁷⁸ Interestingly enough, the popularity of the two writers was later to impair their critical reputations, until the 'rehabilitation' of popular literature brought them back to the fore, but that is another story.

78. Between the first publication and 1845, the seven editions of *Les Mystères* (four in Paris, three in the provinces and abroad) sold between 18,200 and 35,000 copies altogether; for the period between 1846 and 1850, the figures range from 20,000 to 28,000. This puts Sue (his *Le Juif Errant* [1844-45] was to sell even better) among the top sellers of fiction for the decade, along with Dumas. Sue, who received 26,500 francs from *Débats* and around 30,000 francs for the ten volumes published by Gosselin—at a time when the average Parisian worker earned between two and three francs a day—became one of the best-paid writers of the time. Subsequently, he received the unheard-of amount of 100,000 francs for *Le Juif Errant* from *Le Constitutionnel*, which serialized it (Chartier et Martin, *Histoire de l'édition française*, 3:162 and 422-23). Stowe's book, of course, was a publishing phenomenon that sold around 305,000 copies in the United States between March 1852 and March 1853. (Parfait, 'Les éditions américaines d'*Uncle Tom's Cabin*,' 373-76; also see Michael Winship, "The Greatest Book of Its Kind": A Publishing History of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*,' *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 109 [1999]: 318-24.) Bailey gave her \$400 for the serial (Susan Geary, 'Mrs. Stowe's Income from the Serial Version of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*,' *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia* 29 [1976]: 380-82) and she received around \$30,000 from John P. Jewett for the three editions he published; see Parfait, 370-88.

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