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## City as prison: negotiating identity in the urban space in the nineteenth-century novel

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CITY AS PRISON: NEGOTIATING IDENTITY IN THE URBAN SPACE IN THE  
NINETEENTH-CENTURY NOVEL

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
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by  
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Dedicated to my mother, Louise Ann LeCompte Dubroc, who encouraged in me a love of books;  
the many places they could bring me, the experiences they could give me, and the knowledge I  
could take away from them. I am forever grateful.

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## ABSTRACT

The primary goal of this thesis is to examine how the city is read in the works of four nineteenth-century authors: Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* (1860), Honoré de Balzac's *Le Père Goriot* (1834), Fernán Caballero's *La Gaviota* (1849), and Madame de Staël's *Corinne ou l'Italie* (1807). They show the city not just as a setting, but as a character. At times, nineteenth-century urban life becomes so overwhelming to urban newcomers, that the geographical space and its society imprison residents.

The nineteenth-century city was marked by change: industrialization, population shift from rural areas to urban capitals, and changes in political regime. Therefore, a character's journey through the city presents him or her with challenges. The first chapter traces how the author maps out the city for the reader. It examines the forces working against the characters as they undergo their urban journey. The reader discovers the city's geography and society along with the characters. The second chapter examines the criminal nature of the city in *Le Père Goriot* and *Great Expectations*. The third chapter examines women's position in urban society in all four works. As women could not negotiate the geographical space of the city, they must negotiate its interior society, its salons. Marriage is seen as an imprisoning institution for women and even talented independent women face difficulties. Money and love/lust complicate women's negotiation and often lead to social destruction. The fourth chapter examines how characters are able partially to surmount the urban space through successful negotiation, by incorporating themselves in the urban social world or by escaping the city altogether to find a better life abroad.

Negotiating the urban space and its society can prove both destructive and empowering. For some of the characters examined, the city proves to be overwhelming; others have more

relative success in surmounting the difficulties they face. The nineteenth-century city proves to be a mythic place whose truth must be discovered through exploration of its society and spaces.



## INTRODUCTION

The city hides as much as it illuminates in the nineteenth-century novel. Nineteenth-century urban centers were labyrinths of places and people, which could confound newcomers as well as the native citizen. In the novels examined in this thesis, the characters undergo a form of change of identity in order to negotiate a particular urban center. Urban newcomers believed that financial or social success would immediately occur upon arrival in the city; however, this did not always happen. It is in the European metropolis that the characters become caught up in the myth of the city. The city always has an underworld of crime and poverty that changes the characters' view of the urban space. The city is a place to be negotiated: its culture, its society, and its geographical locales all must be understood in order for a character to find any form of success. The city then becomes a place of impossible dreams, and the myth of the city proves to be false. The city becomes a prison, which is perhaps impossible to escape. This thesis will explore how authors use urban space in their work in order to demonstrate its imprisoning effects and the resulting tribulations characters must face in their efforts to negotiate and surmount the challenges presented by the city.

The nineteenth-century served as a point of transition for many European countries, because of political and social revolutions, and this change is most evident in cities. Newcomers to the city, much like the main characters of the novels explored in this thesis, find that the city is not the welcoming place they originally thought it would be. They must negotiate the city's society, elevating their social worth in a place where class divisions are determined by wealth that they have not yet acquired. The characters must also negotiate the city's geography. They enter new neighborhoods as one would enter a foreign country. At times, the characters encounter people who personify the characteristics of these neighborhoods. They must also

negotiate the cities' criminality, as it is easy for them, with their naïve beliefs, to become caught up in the negative side of urban society. The city also serves as a creative place for some characters. It is a place from which they draw inspiration and they themselves come to personify the urban space and its culture.

I have chosen Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*, Honoré de Balzac's *Le Père Goriot*, Fernán Caballero's *La Gaviota*, and Mme de Staël's *Corinne ou l'Italie* because all of these books present the urban space as a place to be negotiated; a place where identity may be found or altered, but also constrained and suppressed. It can be a place of character development, as demonstrated in the *bildungsroman*. The *Bildungsroman* showed readers the possibilities for success in the urban space, but also the trials that young men and women coming to the city from rural areas, in hopes of reaching maturity of the mind and a form of success.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, I argue the city is comparable to the monster, as described in a passage from Honoré de Balzac's *Ferragus* that haunts both the open and intimate spaces of the city. "Pour les autres, Paris est toujours cette monstrueuse merveille, étonnant assemblage de mouvements, de machines, et des pensées, la ville aux cent mille romans, la tête du monde. Mais, pour ceux-là, Paris est triste ou gai, laid ou beau, vivant ou mort; pour eux, Paris est une créature » (*Ferragus* 79).<sup>2</sup> This monster makes the city become more of a place of myth than fact. Patrice Higonnet calls this phenomenon the "myth of the city," a circumstance where citizens and newcomers fail to realize the social and political discord which surrounds them (1-3). In all of the cities examined in this thesis, society is undergoing a change from one political order to another. Characters can use this

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<sup>1</sup> "The subject of these novels is the development of the protagonist's mind and character, in the passage from childhood through various experiences – and often through a spiritual crisis – into maturity, which usually involves recognition of one's identity and role in the world" (Abrams 200-201).

<sup>2</sup> "To others, Paris is always that monstrous marvel, that amazing assemblage of activities, of schemes, of thoughts; the city of a hundred thousand tales, the head of the universe. But to those few, Paris is sad or gay, ugly or beautiful, living or dead; to them Paris is a creature;" (*Ferragus*, Project Gutenberg).

transitory time to their advantage, as they can enter areas of society, both social classes and geographical places, where they would previously have been *persona non grata*. However, this transitory period can also hinder geographical and social movement and imprison characters as well. Readers can see that the geography of the city was forced to change as people from the rural provinces moved into the European metropolis, creating a population boom.<sup>3</sup> The population shift creates new concerns for the urban space.<sup>4</sup> Crime becomes a major problem across nineteenth-century Europe. The threat of crime increases the imprisoning effect on the population. Both Charles Dickens and Honoré de Balzac used this transitory period in European history, as well as the prevalence of crime in many of their novels to express their views about the relationship of the individual to society.

Dickens uses the shift in the English population in *Oliver Twist* and *Great Expectations*, two novels which adhere to the conventions of the *Bildungsroman*, where young, impressionable men come to London with a fixed image of the urban space in their minds. They soon find that their stereotypes are unfounded and they must geographically and socially negotiate the urban space in order to find themselves. In *Great Expectations*, published serially from 1860-1861 in *All the Year Round*, Dickens shows the various London neighborhoods as Pip encounters new friends or enemies in the city. The author also notes London's class divisions, which created suspicions amongst each social class. Each new area explored personifies the people who live there. Dickens also uses a monumental place, Newgate Prison, as a central site. The prison

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<sup>3</sup> David Harvey notes in *Paris, Capital of Modernity* the movement from the French provinces to Paris during the nineteenth century and Balzac's reliance on it to further the plots of his works. "Balzac frequently recounts scenes of ritual incorporation into Parisian life out of provincial origins" (32).

<sup>4</sup> "The avid denial of provincial origins and of provincial powers thereby evolves into one of the founding myths of Parisian life: that Paris is an entity unto itself and that it does not rely in any way upon the provincial world it so despises" (Harvey 32).

haunts the urban landscape, threatening the population with the uncertainty of life which lies inside its walls.

Honoré de Balzac presents Paris as the unreachable dream in his novel *Le Père Goriot*, published in 1834.<sup>5</sup> “For many reasons it was easier much easier in 1830 to write about the fallen monarchy than it had been the case in 1815 for the Napoleonic period. Whereas in 1815 it had been impossible to print anything that could resemble an apology for the fallen tyrant, in 1830 the July Monarchy was committed to full freedom of expression” (G. de Bertier Sauvigny 42). The novel shows Paris during the Bourbon Restoration of Louis XVIII. The aristocracy resumes its position as society’s leaders. Balzac writing in 1834, knew that the Bourbons’ rule over France did not last. It ended with the 1830 Revolution and the beginning of the July Monarchy.<sup>6</sup> Social and political order was, therefore, not truly restored. Balzac takes a retrospective look to the Restoration’s early years in order to show the uncertainty of life in Paris amongst the various social classes.<sup>7</sup> Like *Great Expectations*, the novel comments on class divisions. In *Le Père Goriot*, class divisions are marked in geographical terms as they are in Dickens’ narrative. The Seine is the city’s geographical divider; both the Right and Left Banks have fashionable neighborhoods. The middle and lower classes, such as the boarders of the Maison Vauquer, live in neighborhoods such as the faubourg Saint-Marceau, characterized by its mud, crowded living

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<sup>5</sup> Although the novel is written in 1834, the action takes place during the Restoration period, as Père Goriot enters the Maison Vauquer in 1817 and spends two years in financial descent, ascending the floors of the Maison Vauquer. (see Chapter 2). Balzac openly critiques the aristocracy which had returned to France when Louis XVIII took the throne. With the king returned the aristocracy with its immoral behavior and conspicuous consumption (as shown by Anastasie Restaud and Delphine de Nucingen’s constant need for money and the presence of gambling in the novel) that were prevalent before the Revolution.

<sup>6</sup> Peter Brooks states in his article, “Balzac: Epistemophilia and the Collapse of the Restoration,” Balzac “judged the Restoration had brought the revolution upon itself through its corruption and incapacity[...].he writes about the Restoration from the perspective of the period that followed it, This critical distance in time allows him to see the Restoration as a completed epoch, brought to its end by revolution- and enables him to pass judgment on the Restoration as a whole” (120).

<sup>7</sup> “His principle indictment of the Restoration concerns its egotism, its fixation on class privilege, rather than on national good, and most of all its failure in intelligence” (Brooks 120).

quarters, and suspicious residents. The upper-class characters, such as Madame de Beauséant, and the two Goriot daughters; Anastasie and Delphine, live in neighborhoods such as the faubourg Saint-Germain and the Chaussée d'Antin characterized by their wealth, social activities, such as salons and private balls, as well as the immorality of their residents hidden in their stately homes. The city's societal separations allow the reader to see many views of Paris; as the novel's protagonists, Père Goriot and Eugène de Rastignac must cross geographical and class boundaries, represented by the River Seine and the various Parisian quartiers, in order to interact with characters in the upper classes such as Rastignac's patroness Madame de Beauséant and Père Goriot's daughters. David Harvey notes that "[Balzac's] characters even change their personas as they move from one locale to another" (42). He also mentions that to enter the faubourg Saint-Germain, one must abandon provincial mannerisms, dress, and ways of thinking and take on a cosmopolitan worldview in order to associate with the upper-class (Harvey 42). Patrice Higonnet notes that during the 1830's the myth of Paris was at its height. Parisians wanted to understand their origins, however myths can be deceptive (4, 6-7). Balzac's work uses the myth of the city during the Restoration, a period when the myth of the city fascinated Parisians. Parisians thought of themselves as representatives of the height of culture and refinement.

Fernán Caballero shows the movement of rural folk to the socially-divided urban space in *La Gaviota* published in 1849. The main character, Marisalada moves from the small seaside village of Villamar to the urban cultural center of Seville. This displacement underlines the differences between the two societies. The rural community has a more traditional view of society. The class divisions are less obvious, as the population is nearly all of the same class. In Seville, class differences are more marked, and this leads to Marisalada's quest to become one of

Seville's upper-class women. The novel is less about the geographical negotiation of Seville than it is the social negotiation women must perform in order to integrate themselves into urban society. Marisalada eventually fails to penetrate into Seville's society, showing that her lack of social decorum in the rural space destines her to failure in the urban space.

Urban geography is directly related to female success in Madame de Staël's *Corinne ou l'Italie* published in 1807. Although this is the earliest published work in this thesis, it shows that even in the beginning of the nineteenth-century, authors were considering the importance of the urban setting in their works. Madame de Staël weaves the city into Corinne's plot, for without the urban space, Corinne's artistic work, for which she is renowned in Rome, would be nearly impossible. The author uses the city of Rome as a creative space from which Corinne, the city's arbitrator, draws her inspiration from its history, represented by the various monuments from both Classical and Medieval Christian periods. Corinne is a personification of Rome, and she *is* Italy, as noted in the title. The novel not only shows a geographical negotiation, but also shows cultural differences. Corinne moves between Italy and more conservative Scotland, a space of repressed creativity. Therefore, Rome as an urban space represents liberal society and imaginative space.

In all of these novels, the city serves as a place which must be negotiated in one of two ways, either geographically as one voyages through the author's map of the city's streets drawn out in the text; or within buildings, through its society, as the women who are also part of the four novels must do. Characters such as Pip and Rastignac must transform themselves into men educated by the city. They form their own opinions of the urban space and the society which exists there. The city, for the female characters, proves to be a harder negotiation, because of the social requirements imposed on them. Marisalada was insufficiently trained for the pressures she

would endure in Seville's female-dominated social circles. Corinne's intimate knowledge of Rome's history and geography makes it hard for her to separate herself from the city when she finds love with foreign newcomer, Oswald, Lord Nelvil. Nelvil, a Scotsman, is prejudiced against the liberal Italian way of life and Corinne's interaction with the urban public sphere. In all cases, the city proves to be a monstrous undertaking, as personified in *Ferragus*.

The first chapter of this thesis will lay out the city and its topography for the reader. Knowledge of the intimate spaces of London, Paris, and Rome will better aid an understanding of how the characters in the four novels examined interact with the geographical space and, at times, urban social circles. It will also allow for further character examination, which will permit the reader to see how the urban space can change personality.

The second chapter of this thesis will show the hidden movements of the city's underworld using London and Paris as geographical spaces. The chaotic nature of the city creates a space in which criminals can negotiate. For example, Magwitch, an escaped convict in Dickens' *Great Expectations*, re-enters London and is able to find Pip, the protagonist, without raising suspicion. It is only during his escape that his criminal past comes into play. However, many innocent people, such as Balzac's Père Goriot, are wrongfully suspected of criminal activity due to their mere appearance and suspicious actions.

The third chapter explores women's sometimes limited interactions in the geographical space of the city and their navigations of its upper class society, especially the salons. For women, the rules of social decorum imprison their minds and bodies. Characters such as Père Goriot's daughters, Anastasie de Restaud and Delphine de Nucingen, and Marisalada in *La Gaviota* seek entrance into the wealthy upper class' society despite their humble beginnings in the middle and lower classes. Social negotiation depends on financial success and in attuning

oneself to current standards of femininity. Women were expected to be wives and mothers. Women were to submit to patriarchal rules of social decorum, deferring to their fathers and later to their husbands. Failure to do so, such as in the instances of adultery, producing an illegitimate child, exposed a woman to possible social ostracism. Women occupied the domestic sphere, caring for their husbands and children; they could not explore the city's geography laid out before them. Anastasie and Delphine, the two daughters in *Le Père Goriot*, have the titles and feminine charm necessary to enter into the Parisian salon of Madame de Beauséant, although their financial status is not dependent on their husbands, but on their father, whom they progressively impoverish throughout the course of the novel. Although Marisalada has the patronage of the duke, who assists her in entering the salon of the Countess d'Algar, frequented by Seville's social women, she does not have the same interests as these women, not only because of her rural beginnings in Villamar, but also because does she seek to familiarize herself with the culture and geography of Seville, choosing only to take interest in the bullfights. Corinne takes in both Roman society and its geography in *Corinne ou l'Italie*. She makes Rome her own space, giving it an important place in her creative pursuits. She also integrates herself into its society, establishing her own salon and participating in those of her friends. Roman society is more liberal society than Parisian or Spanish society, so much so that Corinne becomes an arbitrator of the city for her appreciation of Rome and its classical arts. However, she allows a man to interrupt the life she has established in Rome that many women would envy. Lord Nelvil draws her out of Rome and away from the culture she has adopted for the cold British society which Corinne fled as a young woman. In the end, Corinne is imprisoned not only in her relationship with Rome, but also her relationship with Nelvil. In *Great Expectations*, Estella's story is complicated by the pressures placed upon her by Miss Havisham, her adopted mother.



She is later imprisoned in a loveless and abusive marriage with Bentley Drummle. It is only after these two controlling figures die that Estella is allowed to peruse a life of her own making.

Although her geographical and social negotiations are less obvious because the novel concentrates on Pip's interactions in London, her story allows readers to see the social restrictions placed upon women in Victorian England.

The fourth chapter will examine characters who have tried to surmount the city's hurdles and made the urban space their own. Eugène de Rastignac in *Le Père Goriot* and Pip in *Great Expectations* both seek to conquer the urban space through education and social maneuvering. The young men have the aid of benefactors or patrons to help in their urban discovery, although they do not always use these tutors' expertise to benefit their experiences. Therefore, they must, at times, negotiate the urban space on their own. Eventually, Rastignac takes on the city's challenge on his own, integrating himself into the world of the wealthy upper class. Pip finds that the city – its chaotic nature dirty environment, and social divisions, – is too much for him. Although he cannot find success in London, he does become a gentleman, as he realizes the value of human life and his fellow human beings. Both young men mature in different ways in the urban space, but it is through their geographical and social maneuvering that readers see the possibilities and difficulties which the urban space presents to newcomers.

The city proves to be a challenging place for all of the characters examined in this thesis. The city is a mythic place and a place of myths. These characters must surmount their unfounded ideal of the city as well as the confines upon their bodies, as they attempt to negotiate the interior and exterior urban space. The urban space was presented with a new population which created new areas to be dominated by a developing middle class. The city promised success, but it did not always deliver it. Characters' urban negotiations prove that the city and its culture can

imprison a person's body and mind. However, with successful negotiation, they can try to surmount the city's hurdles and dominate the urban space.

## CHAPTER 1: ESTABLISHING THE URBAN SPACE

« Un des spectacles où se rencontre le plus d'épouvantement est certes l'aspect général de population parisienne, peuple horrible à voir, havé, jaune, tanné. Paris n'est pas un vaste champ incessamment remué par une tempête d'intérêts sous laquelle tourbillonne une moisson d'hommes que la mort fauche plus souvent qu'ailleurs et qui renaissent toujours aussi serrés, dont le visage contournés, tordus, rendent par tous les pores l'esprit, les désirs, les poisons dont sont engrossés leurs cerveaux; non pas des visages, mais bien les masques; masques de faiblesse, masque de force, masques de misère, masques de joie, masques d'hypocrisie; tous exténués, tous empreints des signes ineffaçables d'une haletante avidité? » *La Fille Aux Yeux d'Or* (Honoré de Balzac)<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> "One of those sights in which most horror is to be encountered is, surely, the general aspect of the Parisian populace--a people fearful to behold, gaunt, yellow, tawny. Is not Paris a vast field in perpetual turmoil from a storm of interests beneath which are whirled along a crop of human beings, who are, more often than not, reaped by death, only to be born again as pinched as ever, men whose twisted and contorted faces give out at every pore the instinct, the desire, the poisons with which their brains are pregnant; not faces so much as masks; masks of weakness, masks of strength, masks of misery, masks of joy, masks of hypocrisy; all alike worn and stamped with the indelible signs of a panting cupidity?" (*The Girl With the Golden Eyes*).

Gaston Bachelard states in his critical work, *La Poétique de l'Espace*, that a literary work's setting plays as an important a role as the characters and plot.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, space can be read in a literary space just as any other trait, like plot or character can. Bachelard states, « Il y a donc un sens à dire, sur le plan de philosophie de la littérature et de la poésie où nous nous plaçons qu'on 'écrit une chambre', qu'on 'lit une chambre', qu'on 'lit une maison' » (*La Poétique de l'Espace* 32).<sup>10</sup> Can one, therefore, read the urban space through the experiences of various classes of characters? In this thesis I show how authors write about urban life and characters' negotiation of that life through class hierarchy and the city's physical layout; thereby the reader is able to develop a view of the city as a unique character within itself. Raymond Williams states in *The Country and the City*, that "Space is not the 'outside' of narrative, then, but an internal force, that shapes it from within. Or in other words; in the modern European novels, *what* happens depends a lot on *where* it happens" (70). Therefore, as characters negotiate the urban space on a social plane, so too must they also negotiate the personality of the city for personal fulfillment. It is through this navigation of the urban landscape's personality that the characters' views of the city change and this change effects their urban experience.

The nineteenth-century European city presents a space of a contradictory space. Patrice Higonnet notes that "by the late eighteenth century the place of Paris in the world was quite different from what it had been a century before. Economically, culturally, the city's role had broadened, and its ensuing fame was bolstered yet further by a substantial change in the way Europeans perceived the shifting balance between town and country" (27). Peter Ackroyd also

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<sup>9</sup> John K. Stilgoe, in the foreword to the 1994 English translation, points out that Bachelard states that "space can be poetry" (x).

<sup>10</sup> "It therefore makes sense from our standpoint of a philosophy of literature and poetry to say that we 'write a room,' 'read a room,' or 'read a house.'" (*The Poetics of Space* 14).

notes the increasing urban population in London during the nineteenth-century and the eventual overcrowding that resulted: “[...] the population of London had grown from one million at the beginning of the century to approximately 4.5 million by its close. They came in from outlying areas looking for work; they came from Ireland; they came from all the counties of England...” (Ackroyd 17). The author continues stating,

During the first half of the nineteenth century Britain as a whole became an urbanised society; hitherto more than half its population had lived in the countryside. What caused the exodus was hardship and the promise of work (life was especially bad for the rural unemployed), and the certainty of a roof – or at least a bridge – over one’s head. But what particularly enticed people was a sense that something was going on: theatres, music halls, brightly lit streets, huge crowds, hubbub in the streets (103).

Here, one can note the development of the myth of the city. People believed that life in the urban space was better than in rural communities. It presented more economic, educational, and cultural opportunities than living in the countryside. The mass movement of population from rural areas to Europe’s great cultural centers only broadened the gap within society. This displacement of population creates another space for characters to negotiate in their quest for public success and personal achievement.

In this chapter I explain how urban spaces are laid out as a map before the reader, enabling him or her to trace how the fictional characters negotiate events in accordance with the conditions of these spaces. Both politics and historical factors influence these urban spaces. Also, it is important to understand how forces in the periphery, such as climate, and urban dividers, such as rivers, can help or hinder the character’s interactions in the metropolis.

Nearly all of the characters examined in this thesis have an idealized view of the city long before their arrival. Therefore, the city is a space of mythic proportions. Characters must come to

terms with their previous expectations of the city versus what they actually find there. In *Great Expectations*, Pip believes that London will civilize him and turn him into the gentleman Estella desires. Marisalada, in *La Gaviota*, goes to Seville in order to free herself from Fort San Cristobel's stifling small-town social atmosphere. In *Le Père Goriot*, Rastignac arrives in Paris in order to complete his studies; there he discovers the underworld of the capital and what one must do in order to secure social success. In *Corinne ou l'Italie*, Lord Nelvil travels to Rome in order to escape Scotland and the memories of his recently deceased father. He views the city through tours with its arbitrator, Corinne. She has assimilated into Roman society, although she is a native English woman. The Romans have come to love her and her work, accepting them as their own. However, the society Nelvil finds there, in his opinion, lacks the culture and stability of the United Kingdom. The urban space exists as a cultural imaginary for multiple groups of people. Many believed that European capitals, such as London, Paris, and Seville were the height of culture, when actually they hid many of society's wrongs, including the marginalization of many people and criminal activities.

The true experience in the urban space is veiled from citizen and visitor alike; they see what they want to see and ignore the possibility that any malice could occur to them in a place which represents culture. Honoré de Balzac writes in *Ferragus* of Paris :

Il est dans Paris certaines rues déshonorées autant que peut l'être un homme coupable d'infamie; puis il existe des rues nobles, puis des rues simplement honnêtes, puis de jeunes rues sur la moralité desquelles le public ne s'est pas encore formé d'opinion ; puis des rues assassinés, des rues plus vieilles que des vieilles douairières ne sont vieilles, des rues estimables, des rues toujours propres, des rues sales, des rues ouvrières, travailleuses, mercantiles. Enfin, les rues de Paris ont des qualités humaines, et nous impriment par leur physionomie certaines idées contre lesquelles nous sommes sans défense. Il y a des rues de mauvaise compagnie où vous ne

voudriez pas demeurer, et des rues où vous placeriez volontiers  
(*Ferragus* 77).<sup>11</sup>

Here, Balzac is honest with his reader and with the Parisian in that he not only describes the streets which his characters will traverse, but also warns the reader of the city's reality. It is most important to understand that Balzac, like Dickens and Madame de Staël especially, gives a human quality to the city. In *La Poétique de l'Espace*, Bachelard writes of Paris: « On sait bien que la ville est une mer bruyante, on dit bien des fois que Paris fait entendre, au centre de la nuit, le murmure incessant du flot et des marées » (43).<sup>12</sup> Paris is anthropomorphized. It takes on the characteristics of the human activities that take place there, whether those activities are evident or covert.

The myth of the city exists for both the city's citizens and those living in the rural areas who believe that life is somehow perfect in the urban space.<sup>13</sup> As noted previously (*supra* 2), Balzac states later in *Ferragus* that a monster lives within the city. This monster adds to the chaos and the danger that exists there. As Balzac shows the reader, this monster may be difficult to recognize, but it is everywhere, looming above and within the city and searching for its next victim within Paris' darkened streets and corners. The monster, though mythical, exists under the guise of criminals, literal monsters who seek to prey on the innocence of citizens and naiveté of

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<sup>11</sup> "Certain streets in Paris are as degraded as a man covered with infamy; also, there are noble streets, streets simply respectable, young streets on the morality of which the public has not yet formed an opinion; also cut-throat streets, streets older than the age of the oldest dowagers, estimable streets, streets always clean, streets always dirty, working, laboring, and mercantile streets. In short, the streets of Paris have every human quality, and impress us, by what we must call their physiognomy, with certain ideas against which we are defenceless. There are, for instance, streets of a bad neighborhood in which you could not be induced to live, and streets where you would willingly take up your abode" (*Ferragus*, Project Gutenberg).

<sup>12</sup> "We all know that the big city is a clamorous sea, and it has been said countless times that, in the heart of night, in Paris, one hears the ceaseless murmur of flood and tide" (*The Poetics of Space* 28).

<sup>13</sup> David Harvey notes in *Paris, Capital of Modernity* that Balzac's characters' transitions from the provinces to the city. "While the boundary is porous, there is a deep antagonism between provincial ways and those of the metropolis. Paris casts its shadow across the land, but with diminishing intensity the further away one moves" (29).

newcomers. Thus, *others* are created in the urban space. These urban *others* come in many different forms and from different social classes.

The success of the geographical and social negotiation is determined by the character's "mentor," a person more experienced with the city who serves to initiate him or her in its ways. In *Père Goriot*, Madame de Beauséant serves as Rastignac's mentor, aiding him in entering the social elite and providing him familial support in absence of his immediate family. She introduces him to other characters who complicate his social negotiation, such as Père Goriot's daughter, Delphine, who, in her own way, must also negotiate Parisian society in order to maintain her rank and guard her secrets. Pip, in *Great Expectations*, has several agents to aid him. Magwitch, the criminal, acts as his unknown benefactor, who financially supports him in his quest to become a gentleman. The young Englishman also has Mr. Jaggers, a suspicious-looking lawyer who serves as the extension of the benefactor and helps him physically navigate the urban space.

As previously noted, Raymond Williams' *The Country and the City* outlines the population shift between rural and urban areas from the eighteenth-century to the end of the nineteenth, using literature as a basis. "By the middle of the nineteenth century, the urban population of England exceeded the rural populations: the first time in human history that this had ever been so, anywhere" (Williams 217). The same phenomenon was occurring in France, as Paris served as the economic, cultural, and educational center of the state. However, as Honoré de Balzac his novels attest, Paris incurred many social and political changes throughout the nineteenth-century. As Patrice Higonnet notes, "so it was that eighteenth century myths of Paris as capital of the revolutionary spirit and as capital of the Republic of Letters engendered, especially after the Revolution of 1830, conservative fears of another mythical Paris



characterized in negative terms as outmoded, dirty, decrepit, and criminal” (75). The struggle between the upper classes and lower classes causes members of both to be suspicious of one other. It is this suspicion that leads to confusion as to who is responsible for criminal activities. It is during any time of political and social upheaval that crime runs rampant in a society. Balzac includes such a character in the figure of Vautrin, a well-known, yet hidden criminal in *Le Père Goriot*, to contrast with the title character. In truth, it is Vautrin who instigates the suspicion surrounding the innocent older man.

Around 1830, however, a parallel myth of a decaying Paris began to emerge, a myth of Paris, a reverse of modernity, of Paris beset by epidemic disease, inadequate sewers, foul odors, prostitutes and crime. This was the Paris of tainted liquids, of the polluted Seine – an affront to the cosmogonic myth of modernity, a countervailing myth, which was to be counted in turn, in the 1850s and 1880s, when this myth of decadent Paris would generate its own antithesis, the myth of Haussmannized modernity, which would in turn give rise to a new fantasy, that of antiquated, familiar comforting Paris (Higonnet 76).

Rastignac is noted as being afraid to roam the Parisian streets, for fear of being overtaken by a visible criminal. However, criminals did not only exist in public spaces such as in the streets. Vautrin’s criminal activities take place hidden from the police’s view, or he must find inconspicuous persons, such as the naïve Rastignac, to carry out his crimes for him. The discord between social classes and uncertainty of another revolution on the horizon also allows criminals to prosper in the urban space. However, it is this very breakdown in society that allows newcomers such as Rastignac to cross the dividing lines of social classes. The class differences are marked in Parisian geography, forcing Eugène de Rastignac, as well as other characters to traverse Paris in order to create and maintain social interactions. It is with these urban crossings that the city’s monstrosity is perceived. The newcomer Rastignac must discover what is behind the city’s myth

and determine if he will be corrupted by the city, as many in the novel are, or surmount the many hurdles Balzac places before him. Therefore, Rastignac must successfully negotiate Paris' geography in order to attain access to the interior world of the salons and balls where he can insinuate himself into the society of the upper class. Characters also emphasize the possibility of Paris' future, as they come from rural areas and transcend the lines of class division in Parisian society and create their own path in the city.

The possibility of geographical and social movement is also seen in Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*. Pip, like Rastignac, must also negotiate London's society and geography in order to find success. He, like the young Frenchman, must also face instances of criminality and suspicious persons during his journey. Charles Dickens' literary London directly correlates to the London he explored as a young child while his parents were imprisoned in Marshalsea Debtor's Prison. The chaotic urban space provided a perfect hiding place for a young boy. His tours through London allowed him to see the various class levels that existed there. He was greatly impressed by the packed tenements of the impoverished lower classes whose members would serve as the characters of many of his works. These memories would serve him well in his adulthood. Peter Ackroyd, author of *Dickens' London: An Imaginative Vision* states:

London created Dickens, just as Dickens created London. He came to it as a small, nervous child but by the time of his death, in 1870, he had recreated the city for the generations that followed him. He found a city of brick, and left a city of people. London entered his soul; it terrified him and it entranced him. It became the material for his fantasy and the arena for his polemic. And, in the end it was truly Dickens' London (7).

He sought through his literary pursuits to give a voice to those who were not heard in the public realm. His works also show how London influences its citizens. In *Sketches by Boz*, one of his earliest published works, Dickens journalistically describes urban life in two essays entitled "The

Streets –Morning” and “The Streets – Night.” Dickens states in his observation of the urban soundscape: “These and a hundred other sounds form a compound discordant enough to a Londoner’s ears, and remarkably disagreeable to those of country gentleman who are sleeping in the Hummums for the first time” (*Sketches by Boz* 49). His description of London in the light of day is different from that of the murky and misted nighttime.

But the streets of London, to be beheld in the very height of their glory, should be seen on a dark, dull murky winter’s night, when there is just enough damp gently stealing down to make the pavement greasy, without cleansing it of any of its impurities; and when the heavy lazy mist, which hangs over every object, makes the gas-lamps look brighter, and the brilliantly-lighted shops more splendid, from the contrast they present to the darkness around (*Sketches by Boz* 55).

Dickens gives the same mysterious quality to London’s streets as Balzac has in *Ferragus* and *La Fille Aux Yeux d’Or*. In the nineteenth-century, the chaos and change that was part of the urban life seems to create a human figure of the urban space. In this passage, readers will notice the importance of mists and the filth of London’s streets, both of which play an important role in his novels. What is surprising is that Dickens wants readers to see London at a time when it is most dangerous to be on a street in a crowded city, especially with such unfavorable (cold, wet, dirty) walking conditions. These dangerous conditions aid the reformed criminal Magwitch in hiding himself when he arrives in London in order to find Pip. Therefore, it would help any criminal to hide his unsavory activities.

In *Great Expectations*, the urban living situation is shown through the experiences of several characters from different social classes. It is important to understand how a character’s living and occupational situation influences his or her experience within the urban realm and how they would go about negotiating the metropolis. It also shows two different kinds of life for

the characters, as some distance occurs between the occupational space and the domestic sphere. A more in-depth comparison of the characters' homes in *Great Expectations* –Jaggers', an attorney, and that of his office clerk, Wemmick - helps to illustrate how a living space can come to personify a character. For example, Mr. Jagger's occupation as an attorney is displayed in his home as well as in his office. Both places are paralleled to the prison where his clients reside. Mr. Jaggers' office is located in Little Britain, near Smithfield, London's slaughterhouse, which is close to Newgate Prison.

Mr. Jaggers's room was lighted by a skylight only, and was a most dismal place; the skylight, eccentrically patched like a broken head, and the distorted adjoining houses looking as if they had twisted themselves to peep down at me through it. There were not so many papers about, as I should have expected to see; and there were some odd objects about, that I should not have expected to see – such as an old rusty pistol, a sword in a scabbard, several strange-looking boxes and packages, and two dreadful casts on a shelf of faces peculiarly swollen about the nose (*Great Expectations* 164).

It is of particular note that Dickens repeats "expects" twice in Pip's description of the office. Pip's expectations of the lawyer's office are different from what he actually sees. There are multiple references to death in the office as well – a patched window which resembles a broken head, as if to suggest decapitation; a pistol; a sheathed sword; and death masks, possibly of his former clients. Later, Pip gives a similar description of the depressing environment of Jaggers' home: "He conducted us to Gerrard-street, Soho, to a house on the south side of the street. Rather a stately house of its kind, but dolefully in want of painting, and with dirty windows. He took out his key and opened the door, and we all went in to a stone hall, bare, gloomy and little used" (*Great Expectations* 211). The darkened dismal appearance of Jaggers' home can be paralleled to Newgate Prison's appearance, (see Chapter 2). Therefore, for the

lawyer, home and work are not done in separate places, as he deals with the onerous duty of life and death matters; saving people from the scaffold. “There was a bookcase in the room; I saw, from the backs of the books that they were about evidence, criminal law, criminal biography, trials, acts of parliament, and such things.” (*Great Expectations* 211). One can then compare Jaggers’ mixture of the occupational and domestic spaces to Wemmick’s division of the two in his own home. “In a corner, was a little table of papers with a shaded lamp: so that he seemed to bring the office home with him in that respect too, and to wheel it out of an evening and fall to work” (*Great Expectations* 211). Wemmick, the office clerk, personifies the middle class worker who leaves the city at the end of each work day and makes his home in the suburbs. Wemmick’s home is called Walworth, and its title recalls an image of an outer wall protecting the interior of the home. The structure literally protects him, providing a safe and serene space for family and friends. The young man lives on London’s periphery, which is significant in how he views home versus work. Wemmick is an early example of Londoners who would keep a house in the suburbs, yet work in the city. “Keep a distance from London, is Dickens’ reply: work in the city, and in the evening leave for the suburbs” (Moretti 117). Walworth allows Wemmick to separate himself physically from where he works, because he says “(i)t helps brush the Newgate cobwebs away...” (*Great Expectations* 207). He wants to keep the metropolis out of his home. “It appeared to be a collection of back lanes, ditches, and little gardens, and to present the aspect of a rather dull retirement. Wemmick’s house was a little wooden cottage in the midst of plots of garden, and the top of it was cut out and painted like a battery mounted with guns” (*Great Expectations* 206). The house is similar to a castle in its painted outside, although it is not nearly as grand and is reminiscent of the saying “a man’s home is his castle.” Wemmick owns his own home, in comparison to Pip, who must rent, sharing a grimy apartment with fellow student

Herbert. Pip's living situation is teetering on the level of those in tenement housing, with several families packed together. Wemmick has declared himself geographically and financially independent of the city, where Pip is forced to face it daily, in the interior sphere of his apartment and his exterior geographical negotiations. Compare this to Rastignac's housing in the Maison Vauquer, as he must rent as well, while the more prosperous characters, Madame de Beauséant and Anastasie de Restaud and Delphine de Nucingen, Père Goriot's daughters, own their homes. Balzac and Dickens' two protagonists must rely on others for their shelter, where Wemmick has constructed his own home. "I am my own engineer, and my own carpenter, and my own plumber, and my own gardener, and my own Jack of all Trades" (*Great Expectations* 207). The domestic and occupational spaces that Dickens' characters inhabit show how a space can be personified by the person who lives there, and this will become more important when comparing the neighborhoods of *Le Père Goriot*'s characters and understanding Rome as personified in Mme de Staël's *Corinne ou l'Italie*, as her character literally represents Rome's classical heritage. The authors conflate person and place in the urban space. One does not seem to have his or her own identity once he or she has become melded into urban life. This geographical melding is another way in which the urban space can imprison a person's body and mind.

Dickens also presents the potential monstrosity of the urban space. He shows urban chaos in *Great Expectations*, although in *Bleak House*, one can literally see nature's effect on London, which may help readers to understand further the dismal nature of Britain's capital. "As much mud in the streets, as if the waters had but newly retired from the face of the earth, and it would not be wonderful to meet a Megalosaurus, forty feet long or so, waddling like an elephantine lizard up Holborn Hill" (*Bleak House* 5). In *Bleak House*, Dickens establishes a literal fog over

his city, the fog over the River Thames, which will parallel directly the river's role in *Great Expectations*.

Fog everywhere. Fog up the river, where it flows among green straits and meadows; fog down the river, where it rolls undefiled among the tiers of shipping and the waterside pollutions of a great (and dirty) city. Fog on the Essex marshes, fog on the Kentish heights. Fog creeping into the cabooses of collier brigs, fog lying out on the yards, and hovering on the rigging of the great ships; fog drooping on the gunwales of barges and small boats. Fog in the eyes and throats of the Greenwich prisoners, wheezing by the firesides of their wards; fog in the stem and the bowl of the afternoon pip of the wrathful skipper, down in his close cabin; fog cruelly pinching the toes and fingers of this shivering little 'prentice boy on deck (*Bleak House* 5).

In this passage, Dickens' reader can see that the fog is a literal veil over the city and the mythic monster that resides there. It invades not only the physical space of the city, but the personal space, literally the bodies, of its citizens. In *Great Expectations*, Pip describes the Thames' fog as a veil. "As I looked along the clustered roofs, with Church towers and spires shooting into the unusually clear air, the sun rose up, and a veil seemed to be drawn from the river, and millions of sparkles burst out upon its waters. From me too, the veil seemed to be drawn and I felt strong and well" (*Great Expectations* 433).<sup>14</sup> The fog provides a veil which hides conspicuous persons and dangerous activities and conceals them in this supposed civilized capital. As for the mythic part of the city, people believed that cities always existed just as they were, free of forces that effected the rest of the country, but this is not the case for any of the cities that are studied in this thesis. As stated in both the *Bleak House* excerpt and the *Ferragus* excerpt, a monster lies in the

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<sup>14</sup> Pip's description of the clearing of the fog from the Thames happens at a most inopportune time, as it happens just before the chapter involving Magwitch's escape from London. Here, Pip and his friend Herbert attempt to help a reformed man escape the city, is troubled by the fog's clearing. The fog's veil over the men would have prevented them from being discovered. The passage also shows how the fog's invasion upon a person weighs the spirit down, as it could for many citizens. The London fog is comparable to the confusion that the darkness causes on Balzac's streets. Both the fog and darkness surround the character, causing confusion. The fog and darkness also provide a natural cover for criminal activities to take place.

both London and Paris which adds to the cities' mythic appeal, but both these monsters are unseen and possibly harmful to citizens and visitors.

The theory of a river as a socio-economic divider will play an important role in understanding the negotiation of Paris by the characters in *Le Père Goriot*. The River Seine acts as a divider between the characters, such as Père Goriot and Eugène de Rastignac on the Left Bank and characters such as Anastasie and Delphine who live on the Right Bank.<sup>15</sup> The River Thames not only plays an important role in the physical geography of London, but also a social role. Mildred Newcomb states in *The Imaginary World of Charles Dickens*, that the Thames is a polluted river corrupted by an English city. It is a symbol of the defilement of the human society that uses it (10). The Thames divides the civilization of London from the wilderness of the marshes. It is a geophysical divide between the known world and the unknown world. However, one must question how well it separates these two worlds: rivers are fluid geographical entities and are therefore unstable dividers. People can use the fluidity of the river in order to move about, and paired with fog, perhaps without anyone's knowledge. Not everyone in the city can be considered as civilized; as many discriminate against others who participate in criminal activities. "It is a place of everyday business, not frightening in itself but amounting in its combined effect to a 'wide wilderness'" (Williams 160). The "wide wilderness" atmosphere of the city extends to the marshes which lie just on the other side of the River Thames, leaving one to wonder where the wilderness ended and civilization began.

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<sup>15</sup> In *Le Père Goriot*, Père Goriot is seen crossing the Seine only once, although it is important to mention the river as a social divider between him and his daughters. The geographical separation is emblematic of the familial distance between the father and his two daughters, who are charged, by the laws of social decorum as well as by the Napoleonic Code to care for their father in his old age (Code Napoléon, Titre IX: *De la Puissance Paternelle*, Article 371)



The marshes prove to be a mysterious and dangerous place in the minds of the English, providing an ideal space for inconspicuous people and hidden activities to occur. In *Great Expectations*, Pip discovers Magwitch in the Kent marshes. Pip's first description of the marshes shows the space as otherworldly. Dickens introduces the marshes in *Great Expectations* as, "that dark flat wilderness beyond the churchyard, intersected with the dykes and the mounds and the gates, with scattered cattle feeding[...] and that low leaden line beyond, was the river; and that distant savage lair from which the wind was rushing, was the sea"(3). One has the feeling that the marshes mark the end of the civilized world as Pip knows it. "The marshes were just a long black horizontal line then, as I stopped to look after him; and the river was just another horizontal line, not nearly so broad nor yet so black; and the sky was just a row of long angry red lines and the dense black lines intermixed" (*Great Expectations* 7). The marshes come to take on new meaning for the young boy. Rather than just being a geographical marker they are a place that can be inhabited, if only for a short time.<sup>16</sup> Dickens' describes the marshes through Pip's eyes as a dismal place. It is not surprising that an uncivilized criminal would come out of such a place. When the mature Pip returns to Portsmouth as a gentleman, his reflection upon the marshes has changed due to the actions that have taken place there and have so altered his life. "A stranger would have found them insupportable, and even to me, they were so oppressive that I hesitated, half inclined to go back. But, I knew them well, and could have found my way on a far darker night, and had no excuse for returning, being there" (*Great Expectations* 421). He knows that the marshes did once support life, though the memory of the man he found there and

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<sup>16</sup> The colors which Dickens uses are also significant. Black is the traditional color of mourning in the West. It is amongst the black shadows that Pip will come upon Magwitch again and it is also during the black of night, on the Thames, not far from the marshes that Pip will once again help the convict try to achieve freedom. Red is the color of blood and the spilling of blood is associated with death. It is in the marshes that Magwitch risks his life to escape and threatens to cut Pip's throat (*Great Expectations* 4).

thoughts of the future that man would have are now oppressive to him. His words show that his mind has gone back to that moment in his history many times. Therefore, the memory of the marshes imprisons Pip in spite of the fact that this place was meant to be associated with the beginning of freedom for Magwitch. For Pip, the marshes become a momentary character in the novel, as the starting point for the interactions between the young boy and his benefactor.

Honoré de Balzac uses the city of Paris as a character not only in *Le Père Goriot*, but within many of his novels, including the two novellas of interest to us, *Ferragus*, and *La Fille Aux Yeux d'Or*. He often establishes the reader in the city before he begins his characters' navigation in the plot or within the setting. Balzac establishes the personality of the city and its effects on the characters. This analysis of the city and its inhabitants is explicit in his depiction of Parisians in his novel *La Fille aux Yeux d'Or* (*La Fille Aux Yeux d'Or* 209, *supra* 15). The author presents Paris' multiple personalities by the distinct areas of the city with the people who live there. He shows not only how the city has an effect on its citizens, but how the citizens influence the personality of the city and further the myth of Paris. Balzac states :

Quelques observations sur l'âme de Paris peuvent expliquer les causes de sa physionomie cadavéreuse qui n'a que deux âges, ou sa jeunesse ou la caducité : jeunesse blafarde et sans couleur, caducité fardée qui veut paraître jeune. En voyant ce peuple exhumé, les étrangers, qui ne sont pas tenus de réfléchir éprouvent tout d'abord un mouvement de dégoût pour cette capitale, vaste atelier de jouissances, d'où bientôt eux-mêmes ils ne peuvent sortir, et restent à s'y déformer volontiers (*La Fille Aux Yeux d'Or* 209).<sup>17</sup>

This passage illustrates why strangers may want to hesitate before participating in urban life or becoming too settled in the capital. The depiction of city-dwellers is highly negative.

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<sup>17</sup> "For others, Paris is always this marvelous monster, a surprising assembling of movements, of machines, an thoughts, the city of one thousand novels, the head of the world. But for those there, Paris is a sad or happy, ugly or beautiful, alive or dead, for them, Paris is a creature" (*Ferragus*, Flammarion, 79)

In *Le Père Goriot*, the River Seine serves as a geophysical division separating individuals of differing social classes, namely Père Goriot and his daughters. By movement between the two sides of the Seine, characters such as Eugène de Rastignac are able to participate in the lifestyles of more fortunate individuals than those living in the Maison Vauquer. Although the Seine does not play as crucial a role as the Thames does in *Great Expectations*, it does show areas of social differences which are problematic for both Rastignac and Père Goriot.

Neighborhoods are like countries in the novel, all existing on the Parisian continent. When Père Goriot or Rastignac leave the Maison Vauquer, they pass into different societies within the capital. During the dinner table discussions in the boardinghouse, there is much commentary from the other characters as to where they saw each other, and this leads to incorrect presumptions being made about Père Goriot in the text. The faubourg Saint-Marceau is where the majority of the novel's action takes place. Despite the lower- and middle-class atmosphere of this Left Bank neighborhood, it is the site Balzac selects for his most detailed urban observances. The Parisian lower- and middle classes are more geographically mobile in the text; the reader sees more of them on Paris' streets than characters such as Mme de Beauséant, who is always depicted in an interior realm. An upper-class woman would never be seen on the street in an area such as the faubourg Saint-Marceau; she would be perceived as a prostitute.<sup>18</sup> Père Goriot becomes the subject of the boardinghouse's gossip when his daughters, in their finery come to visit him in his apartment, for comparable reasons.

On his first journey out of the Maison Vauquer, Rastignac worries that his relative unfamiliarity with Paris may cause him to encounter danger. The Parisian neighborhoods, as

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<sup>18</sup> Sharon Marcus states in her work, *Apartment Stories: City and Home in Nineteenth Century Paris and London*, that "men freely stroll the boulevards, mingling with the crowd and collecting impressions, but women enter the streets at the risk of being taken for streetwalkers" (1).

further explained in the following chapters personify their inhabitants. For example, the faubourg Saint-Germain, where Madame de Beauséant lives is exclusive to members of the upper class, as is the salon in her home. The faubourg Saint Marceau is a *mélange* of people, as is the Maison Vauquer, which is home to a variety of characters, all from different social backgrounds. The Chaussée d'Antin represents a new sector which attracts the new elite class, by aspiring to be exclusive. Delphine and Anastasie live there, but would have liked to take part in the society of the faubourg Saint-Germain, which their social backgrounds impede them from doing. The parallel between places and characters also occurs in Madame de Staël's *Corinne*, as the young poetess symbolizes Rome, its history and its culture.

Madame de Staël also uses a geographical place to personify characters. Although there are no true neighborhoods depicted in *Corinne ou l'Italie*, the author shows the importance of place and its association to national history in two chapters of the novel. Corinne shows Oswald, Lord Nelvil her extensive knowledge of the history of Rome and the evolution of its architecture from Classical times, when many of the churches were pagan temples. The tour reveals Corinne's immersion into Roman culture. She has studied the city in-depth

Corinne uses historical monuments to show Lord Nelvil the city's character as well as why she draws the inspiration for her poetry from it. Corinne gives the tour with intensity and enthusiasm for her adopted home. The reader will find that the poetess can only achieve her creativity in the Roman metropolis. Although Rome's society is a place of freedom for the young woman, the city and its past imprison her. Mme de Staël does something unique in her novel; the chapter titles act as road signs to the city, unlike Dickens and Balzac, whose novels are permeated with references to London and Paris. The author uses specific moments in the

narrative to map out the city for her reader as Corinne maps out the city's monuments and their history while introducing Nevil to Rome.

Corinne and Nelvil go first to the Pantheon, which was transformed in nineteenth-century Rome from a pagan structure to a religious one. The Catholics had made it their own : « (L)e catholicisme a hérité du paganisme; mais le Panthéon est le seule temple antique à Rome qui soit conservé tout entier, le seul où l'on puisse remarquer dans son ensemble la beauté de l'architecture des anciens, et le caractère particulier de leur culte » (*Corinne ou l'Italie* 678).<sup>19</sup> Corinne comments here on the statues of Augustus and Agrippa.<sup>20</sup> For the first time, Nelvil expresses his prejudice against Italy. Corinne hopes to remedy this through teaching him about the culture. The two explorers then go to St. Peter's Square where Corinne analyzes the structure based on its architecture. She notes the space's link to spirituality, even from the outside. « Un obélisque de quatre-vingts pieds de haut, qui paraît à peine élevé en présence de la coupole de Saint-Pierre, est au milieu de la place. La forme des obélisques elle seule a quelque chose qui plaît à l'imagination; leur sommet se perd dans les airs, et semble porter jusqu'au ciel une grande pensée de l'homme » (*Corinne ou l'Italie* 681).<sup>21</sup> When the two enter the church, Corinne states that in Italy geographical places inspire imagination: « Le nôtre parle de l'imagination par les objets extérieurs » (*Corinne ou l'Italie* 682).<sup>22</sup> This is an important statement for Corinne. The two then set out for the Capitol, where Corinne was crowned as a recognized as a patroness of the arts. From this building, one can see the Seven Hills of Rome. Corinne points out some of the

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<sup>19</sup> “Catholicism has inherited from paganism everywhere in Italy, but the Pantheon is the only ancient temple in Rome which has been preserved intact, the only one in which can be seen in its entirety the beauty of classical architecture and the particular nature of ancient worship” (*Corinne or Italy* 53).

<sup>20</sup> The Oxford World Classic's English edition states in its Explanatory Notes “*Agrippa*: 63-12 BC. distinguished general and right-hand man of the Emperor Augustus” (*Corinne or Italy* 411).

<sup>21</sup> “In the middle of the square is an obelisk, eighty feet high, which barely seems tall beside the dome of Saint Peter's. In the very shape of obelisks there is something pleasing to the imagination. Their summits disappear into the skies and seem to carry a great human idea up to heaven” (*Corinne or Italy* 57).

<sup>22</sup> “Ours appeals to the imagination through external objects” (*Corinne or Italy* 59).

remnants of Rome's most famous buildings – the Forum, temples, and arches constructed in dedication for a war well-won. They proceed to the Colosseum, where the two have differing opinions of the place's importance. Oswald believes that the place is deplorable because of the death that occurred there, « il ne voyait dans ces lieux que le luxe du maître et le sang des esclaves » (*Corinne ou l'Italie* 686).<sup>23</sup> Corinne tells him that he must consider the space without regard to justice or morality, which are Christian ideals that rule their world, not the ancient world. « Ne portez point, dit elle à lord Nelvil, la rigueur de vos principes de morale et de justice dans la contemplation des monuments d'Italie; ils rappellent, pour la plupart, je vous l'ai dit, plutôt la splendeur, l'élégance et le goût des formes antiques, que l'époque glorieuse de la vertu romaine » (*Corinne ou l'Italie* 686).<sup>24</sup> Corinne and Nelvil spend two days amongst the Seven Hills of Rome, contemplating the ancient ruins there. “Les Romains d'autrefois faisaient une fête en l'honneur des sept collines : c'est une des beautés originales de Rome : que ces monts enfermés dans son enceinte; et l'on conçoit sans peine comment l'amour de la patrie se plaisait à célébrer cette singularité » (*Corinne ou l'Italie* 687).<sup>25</sup> Corinne wants to show Nelvil that even one of the most ancient areas of Rome is still a celebrated monument in Roman culture.

In the chapter that follows, Chapitre Premier of Livre V entitled “Les Tombeaux, Les Églises et les Palais,”<sup>26</sup> readers see a more solemn side of Rome, the tombs, churches and palaces. Mme de Staël opposes this chapter with the previous' more lively urban setting. She does this to show that Corinne exists in two Roman worlds, present and past, both of which

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<sup>23</sup> “He could see only the master's luxury and the slaves' blood” (*Corinne or Italy* 67)

<sup>24</sup> “Do not take the severity of your principles of justice and morality into the contemplation of Italy's monuments,” she said to Lord Nelvil. As I have told you, they mostly recall the splendour, the elegance and the tastes of classical forms, rather than the glorious era of Roman virtue” (*Corinne or Italy* 67).

<sup>25</sup> “These hills, enclosed within the precincts of Rome, are one of its original beauties and it is not difficult to understand how, in their love for their native land, Romans delighted in celebrating this unusual feature” (*Corinne or Italy* 68).

<sup>26</sup> *Corinne, ou l'Italie* 691; Book V, Chapter 1, entitled “Tombs, Churches, and Palaces” (*Corinne or Italy* 76)

influence her art. « ‘Vous savez, milord, loin que chez les anciens l’aspect des tombeaux décourageât les vivants, on croyait inspirer une émulation nouvelle en plaçant ces tombeaux sur les routes publiques, afin que, retraçant aux jeunes gens le souvenir des hommes illustres, ils invitassent silencieusement à les imiter’ » (*Corinne ou l’Italie* 691).<sup>27</sup> Corinne’s words prove to be a moment of foreshadowing. She has spent her time in Rome paying homage to Ancient Rome’s great dead poets. Dressed as a Sybil she embodies the continuation of Roman traditions. The Tiber River also plays an important role as a reminder of Rome’s ancient history.

« Jadis il était couvert de vaisseaux et bordé de palais; jadis ses inondations mêmes étaient regardées comme des présages : c’était le fleuve prophète, la divinité tutélaire de Rome. Maintenant on dirait qu’il coule parmi les ombres, tant la couleur de ses eaux paraît livide! Les plus beaux monuments des arts, les plus admirables statues ont été jetée dans le Tibre, et sont cachées sous ses flots » (*Corinne ou l’Italie* 694).<sup>28</sup>

The Tiber is more significant as a monument to Rome’s past, than as a geographical barrier in modern Rome.<sup>29</sup> The river is not used as a social divider. Through Corinne’s tour, Nelvil is able to realize the importance that the river once held for the city and the beauty that exists beneath its waves. Through this tour, Corinne teaches Nelvil not only about Rome, but also reveals that the past existing simultaneously with the present, inspires this educated woman.

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<sup>27</sup> “‘You know, my Lord, that the sight of the tombs, far from discouraging the living, was thought by the Romans to inspire new emulation, and so these tombs were sited on public roads; young people were thus reminded of famous men and silently invited to imitate them’” (*Corinne or Italy* 77).

<sup>28</sup> “In the past it was covered with ships and there were palaces along its banks; in the past even its floods were looked on as omens. It was the prophetic river, Rome’s guardian divinity. Not it is so isolated, its water seem so pale, that it is as if it were flowing amongst the shades of the dead. The most beautiful artistic monuments, the most wonderful statues, have been thrown into the Tiber and are hidden beneath its water” (*Corinne or Italy* 81-82).

<sup>29</sup> Here the Tiber almost seems like a mythological river which has seen Rome’s past, but has no important part to play in the city’s present or future, save to be a geographical marker. The Tiber would have played an important role in religious ceremonies and for trade in the ancient Roman metropolis, but with the prevalence of Catholicism, which marks the Roman landscape with its churches and monuments, as noted in Corinne’s tour, the Tiber has lost its mystical air over the city and Roman culture.

Each character in the nineteenth-century city is faced with his or her own beliefs about how the city functions after arrival. They soon discover that these beliefs are mythical. Life in the city is a fearful undertaking for some of the characters examined. Both Pip and Rastignac become too caught up in the social expectations placed upon young men. In their hope for social advancement, both men consider committing criminal acts. Geographical negotiation entails an apprehensive attempt to control an unknown place. These adventures expose the young men to a myriad of people and experiences. The women of the novels have their own difficulties with urban negotiation. Characters such as Anastasie de Restaud and Delphine de Nucingen along with Marisalada attempt to break into their respective societies' upper class through the medium of the *salon*; however, their ambition to succeed prevents their social success. Estella's social difficulties in *Great Expectations* show the pressures placed upon women in Victorian England. It is only through the death her adoptive mother and husband that she is able to seek her own life. Unlike Estella, Corinne is unable to free herself from Rome's influence and from Lord Nelvil's pressures to transform her into the woman he wants her to be. In all of the novels, the city presents some way in which it can imprison the characters.



## CHAPTER 2: THE CITY CRIMINALIZED

In *Le Père Goriot* and *Great Expectations*, criminality permeates the texts. Due to the political and societal changes that occurred in England and France throughout the nineteenth-century, tensions arose between the social classes.<sup>30</sup> Criminals fed on this element of social distrust. The urban space's mere geography and chaos allowed criminality to occur in the domestic as well as in the public sphere. Criminals inhabited the same space as innocent law-abiding citizens. The city dissimulates, hiding its least desirable aspects from the unsuspecting urban citizen or visitor and shielding criminals' actions from punishment.

In this chapter I will compare the urban experiences of Magwitch, the criminal who aids in driving the plot of *Great Expectations*, as well as the criminalized, yet innocent figure of Père Goriot in *Père Goriot*. Compared to the true villainous characters, Vautrin in *Le Père Goriot* and Compeyson in *Great Expectations*, these two men are morally innocent, and victims of instigation and suspicion.<sup>31</sup> The image of the prison as central to urban existence in *Great Expectations* will also aid in understanding criminality in the urban space, as will the relationship between poverty and criminality.

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<sup>30</sup> Arlene Young states in *Culture, Class, and Gender in the Victorian Novel*, "The unease that plagued the consciousness of the bourgeoisie while fostered by fears of political unrest, was also inspired, I argue, by the sheer size and diversity of the 'masses' that comprised the lower classes" (51).

<sup>31</sup> I do not intend to say that these two men are completely innocent of wrongdoing in their narratives, but to contrast them against criminal characters who cause more social concern. For example, Père Goriot is suspected of being a criminal, although he has not committed a criminal act, yet the residents of the Maison Vauquer boardinghouse speak of him and treat him like a criminal. However, it is Vautrin, the true criminal who instigates the gossip against the older man. In this thesis, Vautrin is presented as the instigator for the criminal suspicions surrounding Père Goriot. In *Great Expectations*, when the reader is first introduced to Magwitch, he or she does not know what his crime is, although he seems murderous. When he discovers Pip in London, the reader finds that the charge against him was forgery. He is sent to the Australian penal colony because of the overpopulated prisons in London, namely London's Newgate Prison, where he dies. Magwitch states that he has done his time for the crimes he has committed, " 'And what I done is worked out and paid for!'" (*Great Expectations* 330).

Paris in *Le Père Goriot* is a city based on social divisions. Honoré de Balzac calls into question the injustice of social divisions based on class. The narrative demonstrates how the destabilization of society after the Restoration of 1815 influences Parisian geography and how that geography is negotiated.<sup>32</sup> Although many characters in the novel are able to take advantage of the social mobility and ascendancy that the Restoration of 1815 affords its populace, Père Goriot remains stationary, unable to enjoy his wealth or the advantageous marriages of his daughters. He becomes a prisoner of La Maison Vauquer.

Balzac infuses the text with a sense of class consciousness and class division. The Maison Vauquer is a reflection of the city's society. The boardinghouse residents are placed on various floors according to their social rank. At first, Père Goriot resides on the first floor, along with the members of the upper middle class, including Mme Vauquer, Mme Couture and young Victorine. As his finances decline, he moves to the second floor and then to the attic, where he leads a life of relative solitude.<sup>33</sup> One can see his descent into an impoverished existence as he ascends the boardinghouse's floors. Upstairs, he is farthest away from the social action occurring on the floors below. Class consciousness is always visible to outsiders as well as to the inhabitants. The boardinghouse's class divisions are even replicated at the dinner table. Thus, the Maison Vauquer is a miniature version of Paris itself.

Père Goriot's suffers in his solitude, because he has little interaction with Paris, his neighbors, and his daughters. Rastignac is the only visitor who comes to see him without ulterior motives. If Père Goriot is discovered to be his daughters' father, he could cause problems for them. Their status would be diminished in spite of their titles. Therefore, traversing the city

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<sup>32</sup> Balzac writes the novel after the 1830 Revolution. He is criticizing the period of 1817-1819 from the retrospective viewpoint of the political and social changes which would take place fifteen years later.

<sup>33</sup> The reason for his move in the boardinghouse is because he is pawning his family riches in order to fund his daughters' extravagant lifestyles. This will be discussed later in Chapters 3 and 4.

openly becomes nearly impossible for him. When Père Goriot crosses the Seine, he enters into another world, governed by a different set of social rules.<sup>34</sup> When he visits his daughter, he is not allowed to announce himself as Anastasie de Restaud's father. It would damage her social reputation to be associated with a father who lives in the faubourg Saint Marceau.

Père Goriot's reduced lifestyle is reflected in Balzac's description of his financial descent. It so changes the man that his former wealth is unapparent. During the winter of his second year, after he moves from the boardinghouse's first floor to the second, he ceases to have a fire in his room.<sup>35</sup> He is reduced further, and increasingly becomes the target of dinner table gossip for the boardinghouse's residents.

Vers la fin de la troisième année, le père Goriot réduisit encore ses dépenses, en montant au troisième étage et en se mettant à quarante-cinq francs de pensions par mois. Il se passa de son tabac, congédia son perruquier et ne mit plus de poudre. Quand le père Goriot parut pour la premier fois sans être poudré; son hôtesse laissa échapper une exclamation de surprise en apercevant la couleur de ses cheveux, ils étaient d'un gris sale et verdâtre. Sa physionomie, que des chagrins secrets avaient insensiblement rendue plus triste de jour en jour, semblait la plus désolée de toutes celles qui garnissaient la table (*Le Père Goriot* 53).<sup>36</sup>

It is evident that he has ceased social interactions with the outside world when his outward appearance changes. He forsakes the accoutrements of a middle class lifestyle. Therefore, he stops taking pleasure in everyday life. Poverty, which defines his new way of life, imprisons him in the Maison Vauquer

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<sup>34</sup> Père Goriot is only seen in a location across the Seine once, when he visits Anastasie de Restaud's home. However, he is treated there in a disrespectful manner as if he were a servant. The scene shows the distance in their father-daughter relationship.

<sup>35</sup> « Il eut besoin d'une si stricte économie qu'il ne fit plus de feu chez lui pendant l'hiver » (*Le Père Goriot* 49)

<sup>36</sup> "Toward the end of the third year, Monsieur Goriot cut his expenses still further, moving up to the third floor, where he paid only forty-five francs a month. He stopped using tobacco, gave up his barber, and no longer powdered his hair. When he showed himself, for the first time, totally without powder, the landlady gasped in surprise, noting the true color of his hair, which was a greenish-gray. His face, which had grown sadder day by day, etched by his hidden sorrows, had become the most ravaged of all those that decorated her table" (*Père Goriot* 24).

Père Goriot's new position in the Maison Vauquer separates him from other residents and leads to an unfair presumption of criminal activities. He is accused of partaking in prostitution, of thievery, and drug use, all of which are untrue.<sup>37</sup> « Mais serait-ce donc un voleur ou un receleur qui, pour se livrer plus sûrement à son commerce, affecterait la bêtise, l'impuissance, et vivrait en mendiant? » (*Le Père Goriot* 62).<sup>38</sup> His quick descent into an impoverished lifestyle, cause the residents of the Maison Vauquer to think the worst of him.

Vautrin is the novel's true criminal, although the boardinghouse's residents do not suspect him of wrongdoing. Detective Gondureau explains to Mme. Vauquer how Vautrin, whose real name is Jacques Collin, comes to be known as *Trompe-la-Mort* (*Le Père Goriot* 222)<sup>39</sup> : « Son Excellence a maintenant la certitude la plus complète que le prétendu Vautrin, logé dans la Maison-Vauquer, est un forçat évadé du bagne de Toulon, où il est connu sous le nom de Trompe-la-Mort » (*Le Père Goriot* 222).<sup>40</sup> The detective then tells of his criminal activities, primarily financial fraud.

Jacques Collin, surnommé Trompe-la-Mort, a toute la confiance des trois bagnes, qui l'ont choisi pour être leur agent et leur banquier. Il gagne beaucoup à occuper de ce genre d'affaires, qui nécessairement veut un homme marqué...Le faux Vautrin, dit l'agent, en continuant, reçoit les capitaux de messieurs les forçats, les place, les leur conserve, et les tient à la disposition de ceux qui s'évadent, ou de leurs familles, quand ils en disposent par testament, ou de leurs maîtresses, quand ils tirent lui pour elles (*Le Père Goriot* 223).<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> « Il n'y eut alors plus aucun doute. Le père Goriot était un vieux libertin dont les yeux n'avaient été préservés de la maligne influence des remèdes nécessités par ses maladies que par l'habileté d'un médecin » (*Le Père Goriot* 53).

<sup>38</sup> “‘Could it be that Goriot was a thief, or a fence, trying to be a helpless old clod and living like a beggar, the better to practice his trade?’” (*Père Goriot* 30).

<sup>39</sup> “‘Death-Dodger’” (*Père Goriot* 128)

<sup>40</sup> “‘His Excellency is now quite sure that this so-called Vautrin, who lodges at the Maison Vauquer, is in fact an escaped convict from Toulon Penitentiary, where he's known as ‘Death-Dodger’” (*Père Goriot* 128).

<sup>41</sup> “‘Jacques Collin, also known as Death-Dodger, has the absolute trust of every convict in three different penitentiaries, they've all picked him to be their agent and their banker. He earns a good deal from this sort of business, which plainly requires a man of marked talent’...’This so-called Vautrin,’ the detective went on, ‘handles all the convicts’ money, and invests it, and takes care of it, using it also for anyone who manages to escape, or their

However, this explanation does not describe the full extent of his criminal activities. He has earned his name as Trompe-la-Mort through his activities with the Société des Dix-Milles, a group of elite criminals who masterfully evade the police and the court system through their cunning knowledge of the law. Vautrin acts as their agent as well.<sup>42</sup>

Vautrin eludes the police because his fellow criminals who will come to his aid. They protect their leader in such a way that they form a police force in and of themselves. Therefore, one can theorize that criminals have more control over the city than does the police or judicial system. Young Eugène de Rastignac is easily seduced by Vautrin's access to large sums of money. The young man does not realize that Vautrin's position as a high-ranking thief may cause problems for him later (see *infra* Chapter 4).

Vautrin bears the brand which physically marks him for his criminal wrongdoing.<sup>43</sup> The thief is the instigator of the gossip surrounding Père Goriot, as he uses the older man to hide his own actions. He is the first to report Goriot's trip to the pawn broker, Gosbeck, as well as to bring attention to the female visitors who enter and exit his room. Vautrin presents himself as an

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families (when that is they have so instructed him to dispose of it, at need), or their mistresses, for those whose benefit also they sometimes draw on him, as on a bank” (*Père Goriot* 129)

<sup>42</sup> « [L]a Société des Dix-Milles est une association des hauts voleurs, de gens qui travaillent en grand, et ne se mêlent pas d’une affaire où il y a pas dix milles francs à gagner. Cette société se compose de tout ce qu’il y a de plus distingué parmi ceux de nos hommes qui vont droit en cour d’assises. Ils connaissent la Code, et ne risquent jamais de se faire appliquer la peine de mort quand ils sont pincés. Collin est leur homme de confiance, leur conseil. A l’aide de ses immenses ressources, cet homme a su se créer une police à lui, des relations forts étendues qu’il enveloppe d’un mystère impénétrable » (*Le Père Goriot* 225). [“[T]he League of Ten Thousand is an association of thieves on a truly large scale, men who are involved only when truly significant sums are at stake; they won’t bother with anything worth less than ten thousand francs. They are the most distinguished people who come before the criminal courts. They know the law, so when they’re caught it’s never a question of the death penalty,. And this Collin fellow is their confidant, their adviser. With the help of his immense resources, this man is known to have established a kind of private police force, a whole series of connections and interconnections wrapped around him like an impenetrable mystery” (*Père Goriot* 130)].

<sup>43</sup> The reader discovers Vautrin's brand in a conversation between Mme Vauquer and M. Poiret, the Chief Minister of the Police, in which Poiret states, « Ah! ah! comprenez-vous le calembour, mademoiselle? dit Poiret. Monsieur l’appelle un homme de *marque*, parce qu’il a été marqué » (*Le Père Goriot* 223)[““Oh ho!” exclaimed Poiret. “Do you get the joke, Mademoiselle? He’s calling Vautrin a marked man, because he’s certainly been marked, hasn’t he?” (*Père Goriot* 129)]

honest man upon his escape, as Detective Gondureau explains to a shocked Madame Vauquer, who, like the other boardinghouse residents, was seduced by his charm.<sup>44</sup> Here, one finds that Vautrin's actions resemble Magwitch's. He takes his financial resources and becomes a respectable citizen. However, he is different from Magwitch in that the honesty is a guise under which he continues his criminal works. His interactions with Eugène de Rastignac prove him to be an unreformed criminal because he seeks to seduce the young man into his web of criminality. In the novel, Père Goriot stands as the antithesis of Vautrin. The older man is presumed to be a criminal because he leads a relatively solitary life, clothed in mystery.

Père Goriot's voluntary solitary confinement contrasts to the relative freedom that Rastignac and the criminal Vautrin have to roam the city. Père Goriot's dismal appearance as well as reduced wealth marks him as a suspicious character. Paris is inaccessible to him, despite his former wealth and influential connections. As will be seen in Chapter 3, had the daughters taken responsibility for their father, they could have bettered their future. Rastignac, the newcomer, discovers Paris for Père Goriot and is the link between the older man and his daughters. Vautrin is able to circulate amongst Paris' various social classes in the Maison Vauquer, hiding his criminal status. Thus, Paris hides criminals in its streets and creates criminals out of innocent men.

Honoré de Balzac presents solitude and distance as forms of imprisonment. Charles Dickens shows literal imprisonment along with solitude and distance, through the image of Australia and Newgate Prison in *Great Expectations*. In Dickens' novel, unlike *Le Père Goriot*,

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<sup>44</sup> "Trompe-la-Mort, en venant ici, a chaussé la peau d'une honnête homme, il s'est fait bon bourgeois de Paris, il s'est logé dans une pension sans apparence; il est fin, allez! On ne le prendra jamais sans vert » (*Le Père Goriot* 226). ["When he came to Paris, this Death-Dodger took on the role of an honest man – he made himself into a good respectable citizen, he took lodgings in a quiet boardinghouse, because, oh, he's a sly one! you'll never catch him napping." (*Père Goriot* 130)].

there are notable criminal characters. Magwitch and Compeyson have both committed crimes, although Magwitch's crime is less severe and he also reforms himself, unlike the vengeful attempted murderer Compeyson.

Representations of imprisonment permeate *Great Expectations*. In the first chapter, the reader sees Magwitch<sup>45</sup> as the escaped prisoner, an image which haunts Pip when he encounters the escaped convict in London years later.

“A fearful man, all in coarse grey, with a great iron on his leg. A man with no hat, and with broken shoes, and with an old rag tied round his head. A man who had been soaked in water, and smothered in mud, and lamed by stones, and cut by flints, and stung by nettles, and torn by briars, who limped, and shivered, and glared and growled; and whose teeth chattered in his head as he seized me by the chin” (*Great Expectations* 4).

Magwitch is associated with the marshes. He appears to the young boy like a swamp monster. Magwitch is a dismal figure, who comes out of a dreary place. He is presented in the same way in which a criminal would surprise an innocent passer-by on the streets of one of Europe's great cities. He looks the part of a monster, too. Young Pip notes that he does not have a hat, proper shoes, and the clothes he wears are grey. All these details denote his impoverished state and to Pip he seems uncivilized. Guilt surrounds him.<sup>46</sup> In *Charles Dickens' and the Image of Women*, David Holbrook mentions that “guilt is an obsession with Dickens” (6). Neither the reader nor Pip knows who Magwitch actually is and what he has done. However, Pip does not, at the time, know the man is a prisoner, as the cannons have not sounded and a search party has not yet formed to look for the man. The Magwitch the reader does see is a coarse and unreformed man,

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<sup>45</sup> Magwitch's full name is Abel Magwitch, but he takes on the name Provis (*Great Expectations* 444).

<sup>46</sup> Magwitch's appearance is much like that of Père Goriot's when the Frenchman must let go of the fashionable accoutrements (his jewelry and his powdered wigs) which are visible markers of his wealth. The suspicions that surround Père Goriot also surround Magwitch, as Rastignac and Pip do not know of the crime of which each man is accused. The only fault that both men share is that they appear to be dangerous criminals.

as shown by his mistreatment of the young boy. “You fail, or you go from any words in any partlicker, no matter how small it is, and your heart and your liver shall be tore out, roasted and ate” (*Great Expecations* 6). This threat and the last image that Pip has of Magwitch stay with the young man for years after Magwitch has escaped.

Pip and Herbert attempt to help Magwitch escape from London via a steamboat travelling abroad, and eventually find one travelling to Hamburg.<sup>47</sup> The two young men plan to disguise him and then take him on the marsh side of the River Thames, which is not as heavily trafficked or inhabited as the London side. There, he will board the steamer and leave England. During the preparations, Pip feels guilty that he cannot better disguise the criminal, as he did for his previous successful escape. “He will have much difficulty in reconciling this image of Magwitch with the image of his [benefactor]” (Newcomb 39). How could a man who is so unlike himself, or his impression of what a benefactor should look like, rich, debonair, and well-dressed, be the person responsible for his future success?

“The more I dressed him and the better I dressed him, the more he looked like the slouching fugitive on the marshes. This effect on my anxious fancy was partly referable, no doubt, to his old face and manner growing more familiar to me; but I believe too that he dragged one of his legs as if there were still a weight of iron on it, and that head to foot there was Convict in the very grain of the man” (*Great Expectations* 337).

This is the image that many Londoners would have of an escaped convict. This passage is surprising, as Pip seeks to help the man whose image has haunted him to that day. In the midst of the chaotic city, one sees an instance of kindness that surpasses class lines. Pip an up-and-coming gentleman lowers himself to help a man he barely knows. The young man proves that being a gentleman occurs in more ways than accumulating wealth and titles. “His concern is

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<sup>47</sup> *Great Expectations* 417-418



always to keep human recognition and human kindness alive, through these unprecedented changes and within this unrecognizably altered landscape” (Williams 163). Pip sees Magwitch not as the man he was in the swamps, but as a human being who is attempting to find a new life in the country which rejected him, considering him no more than a worthless criminal since his youth.

Magwitch’s re-capture shows how the British treated reformed criminals. Although he has reformed himself, even contributing a considerable amount of capital to Britain as a nation-state and empire through his proxy via Pip, he will never be able to discard his status as convict.<sup>48</sup> Suspicion will always surround him. There is no hope for a reformed criminal to re-enter normal society. David Meredith notes in his article, “Full Circle? Contemporary Views on Transportation,” that to citizens of the British Isles, “what mattered was whether transportation produced moral reformation – a ‘change of heart’, and not just better behavior” (22).

Criminal exportation allows England to extend colonialism. It is a form of national guilt, because the criminal and his humanity are no longer visible and no longer in need of care. The first instance of Magwitch’s criminality and a hint as to criminal transportation is mentioned when Pip sees the prison ships at sea. “The boat had returned, and his guard were ready, so we followed him to the landing-place made of rough stakes and stones, and saw him being put on the boat, which was rowed by a crew of convicts like himself” (*Great Expectations* 40). These

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<sup>48</sup> Edward Said states in *Culture and Imperialism* that, “In Dickens’s *Great Expectations*. Abel Magwitch is the convict transported to Australia whose wealth – conveniently removed from Pip’s triumphs as a provincial lad flourishing in London in the guise of a gentleman – ironically makes possible the great expectations Pip entertains” (62-63)

boats would then make the voyage to the Australian colony, in Magwitch's case, to Botany Bay in New South Wales.<sup>49</sup>

For Britain, the economic benefits of transportation lay in disposing convicts more cheaply than maintaining them in prison at home, and in the fact that they did not return to Britain upon the expiration of their sentence. The British government attempted to keep the expense of transportation to a minimum. There were numerous complaints about the conditions of convicts during the voyage and a reluctance to make significant improvements, on the grounds of economy (Meredith 16).

The British government and the colonists as well mistreat the convicts. Magwitch states that he is taken for “an ignorant common fellow” (*Great Expectations* 321). Owing to the distance from England, the criminal no longer “counts” for the nation-state. In actuality, at the time that Australia was colonized in 1834, the *South Australia Act* of 1834 states that no criminals are to be transported there. “And be it further enacted That no Person or Persons convicted in any Court of Justice in *Great Britain* or *Ireland*, or elsewhere, shall at any Time or under any Circumstances be transported as a Convict to any place within the Limits herein before described” (*South Australia Act* 453). Edward Said states in *Culture and Imperialism* that, Australia “was established as a penal colony in the late eighteen hundreds mainly so that England could transport an irredeemable, unwanted excess population of felons to a place, originally chartered by Captain Cook, that would also function as a colony replacing those lost in America” (xv). Dickens shows that his convict has not only reformed his actions, but his morals, as he considers his ‘gentleman’s’ well-being to be more important than his own life. Only Pip and Herbert see his humanity. “For now, my repugnance to him had all melted away, and in the hunted wounded shackled creature who held my hand in his, I only saw a man who had meant to

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<sup>49</sup> “‘And Magwitch – in New South Wales – having disclosed himself,’ said Mr. Jaggers” (*Great Expectations* 336). See also *Great Expectations* 333.

be my benefactor, and who felt affectionately, gratefully, and generously towards me with great constancy through a series of years” (*Great Expectations* 446). Pip’s statement shows that his view of Magwitch has changed with the reformed convict’s admission to being the driving force behind the young man’s aspirations. He no longer sees the sea-roughened criminal from the churchyard, but a human being in his place.

In terms of the urban space, Magwitch is an unsuccessful negotiator. His convict status marks him, much like the brand marks Vautrin. As noted in the passage, Magwitch’s suspicious mannerisms serve as a visible marker, where Pip’s memory serves as a mental marker. “It occurred to me as inconsistent, that for any mastering idea, he should have endangered his freedom and even his life. But I reflected that perhaps freedom without danger was too much apart from all the habit of his existence to be to him what it would be to another man” (*Great Expectations* 437). Magwitch shows his humanity by risking everything to see his dream for Pip realized. “‘Dear boy,’ he answered, ‘I’m quite content to take my chance. I’ve seen my boy, and he can be a gentleman without me’” (*Great Expectations* 447). It is through his latter experience with Magwitch that Pip truly takes on the title of gentleman, as he has learned through the convict’s transformation from a threatening bestial creature to a gentleman himself.

The further lack of negotiation occurs in Magwitch’s attempted escape on the Thames. The Thames serves as a threshold between the civilized metropolis and the marsh wilderness. Dickens mentions that along parts of the river, there is little chance that their scheme would be discovered. The deserted nature of the riverbank allows Pip and Herbert to use the river as a possible means of escape for Magwitch. “We should then be well in those long reaches below Gravesend, between Kent and Essex, where the river is broad and solitary, where the water-side inhabitants are very few, and where lone public-houses are scattered here and there, of which we

could choose one for a resting-place” (*Great Expectations* 434). Dickens gives a slight air of hope when he describes deserted landscape and how it would increase the possibilities for Magwitch’s successful escape. “The crisp air, the sunlight, the movement on the river, and the moving of the river itself – the road that ran with us, seeming to sympathize with us, animate us, and encourage us on--freshened me with new hope” (*Great Expectations* 435). It is on the river that Compeyson reappears for the final time, and succeeds in harming Magwitch, leading to his recapture.<sup>50</sup> Magwitch’s unsuccessful escape attempt shows that the Thames, like the city, retains its grasp on all who try to leave it.

In *Great Expectations*, Newgate Prison towers over the urban landscape. Newgate Prison’s origins were unknown. The prison was not always associated with the image that Dickens portrays in his novels. In documents dating from King John’s reign, it is referred to as “the King’s Prison.” According to Edward Valentine Mitchell, author of *The Newgate Calendar*, the population was made up of political dissenters and the lowest criminal class. (Mitchell 1) It is noted that the criminals’ actions were uncontrolled, and therefore vice (such as gambling and drinking) was allowed. By 1629, it is noted as being “in a state of utter ruin,” (Mitchell 3). It is believed to have been rebuilt within the ten years following. By the end of the eighteenth-century, it was known as a place of squalor and sin. Its population “ranged from six hundred to double that number towards the end of the eighteenth century, and no less than one hundred and sixty offences were then punishable by death. The conditions were still squalid and revolting in the extreme” (Mitchell 4). One can see the link between the prison and London’s unsanitary

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<sup>50</sup> Still in the same moment, I saw the prisoner [Compeyson] start up, lean across his captor, and pull the cloak from the shrinking sitter in the galley. Still in the same moment, I saw the face disclosed, was the face of the other convict from long ago. Still in the same moment, I saw the face tilt backward with a white terror on it that I shall never forget, and heard a great cry on board the steamer and a loud splash in the water, and felt the boat sink from under me” (*Great Expectations* 444).

street conditions. “Sanitary arrangements were practically nil and the stench abominable” (Mitchell 5). By 1850, it is noted as being one of England’s worst prisons. It is unsurprising, given the prison’s history, that Magwitch would have died of sickness rather than by his death sentence. Living in the prison was nearly a death sentence into itself. “[In 1850], the principal turnkey at Newgate affirmed to a Parliamentary Committee that the chances of leaving the prison better than he was on entering it were ‘very small indeed’” (Collins 32). Magwitch’s is treated as an animal by the Australian colonists and later within the walls of Newgate Prison.

Dickens’ focus on Newgate Prison is not the first mention of the prison in popular literature. Newgate novels, also known as Old Bailey novels, were popular reading material. These works were inspired by the *Newgate Calendar*, which contained brief accounts of a criminal’s life, trial, and execution (Novak 33). By 1830-1847, such novels had reached their height in popularity. Dickens’ own *Oliver Twist*, first published serially in 1837 is an example of his foray into the Newgate novel. “To read the Newgate Calendar was to experience vivid evidence of the breakdown of the humane relationships in contemporary society” (Novak 45). These literary works did bring attention to prisons and to reform. Dickens’ obsession with criminality and the prison’s image in his novels is due to painful personal memories. His own father spent time in Marshalsea Prison as a debtor.

Pip notes Smithfield, the city’s slaughterhouse, was the cattle market in London. “So I came into Smithfield; and the shameful place, being all asmeared with filth and fat and blood and foam, seemed to stick to me” (*Great Expectations* 165). The scene is significant, as it contrasts with the prisoner’s experiences in Newgate Prison, which will be discussed later. Smithfield is comparable to Newgate in that both served as London’s slaughterhouses. Smithfield is another example of Dickens’ pervading representations of death. Inmates were crowded like cattle in the

prison and treated as if they were animals.<sup>51</sup> Both locations are places of shame and guilt, forshadow Pip's experiences, discussed in Chapter 4.

Newgate Prison serves as a constant threatening reminder of freedom's fragility. "The fascination with the gallows, murder, prisons, and instruments of torture might well have been seen as part of the novelist's preoccupation with human reality in all its ranges" (Holbrook 165). The reader does not know the extent of Magwitch's crimes, although Pip theorizes that it was one of the most severe, perhaps murder, since he is sent abroad. Pip mentions that, "I would sit and look at him, wondering what he had done, and loading him up with all the crimes in the Calendar" (*Great Expectations* 338). He unfairly judges Magwitch, as the man has only committed minor crimes, compared to the murderous entries in the Newgate Calendar. Magwitch represents the morally reformed criminal. Yet, despite being a reformed criminal, he ends up again imprisoned in Newgate Prison.

In "A Visit to Newgate Prison," first published in *Sketches by Boz*, Dickens uses his journalistic style to report on the London prisons' conditions and their unfortunate inhabitants, especially young criminals, women, families and the condemned. "He expresses compassion for some of the prisoners, and horror at the depravity patent in others" (Collins 33). He notes that London's many citizens do not realize their proximity to the imprisoned criminal population, which is just a wall's width away from the street.

If Bedlam could be suddenly removed like another Aladdin's palace, and set down on the space now occupied by Newgate, scarcely one man out of a hundred, whose road to business every morning lies through Newgate Street, or the Old Bailey, would pass the building without bestowing a hasty glance on its small grated windows, and a transient thought upon the condition of its unhappy beings immured in its dismal cells; and yet these same

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<sup>51</sup> Also of note is a comparison that the sense of death in both locations stick to characters. Herbert states that Newgate's cobweb's stick to him, just as Pip notes that animal remnants stick to him.

men, day by day, and hour by hour, pass and repass this gloomy depository of the guilt and misery of London, in one perpetual stream of life and bustle utterly unmindful of the throng of wretched creatures pent up within it – nay, not even knowing, or if they do, not heeding the fact, that as they pass one particular angle of the massive wall with a light laugh or a merry whistle, they stand within one yard of a fellow-creature, bound and helpless, whose hours are numbered, from one the last feeble ray of hope has fled for ever, and whose miserable career will shortly terminate in a violent and shameful death (*Sketches by Boz* 201).

Dickens rightly calls the prison the ‘guilt and misery of London,’ because the city has failed its impoverished population, causing many to resort to lives of crime. “He conveys, of course, a sense of stark hopelessness of the prison atmosphere” (Collins 36). It is unfortunate that, for many of the previously homeless criminals who live within its walls, Newgate is their first experience of having a home. The author not only humanizes the prison, but also humanizes the criminals who live there, some of whom are awaiting their deaths by hanging. Although the hanging man is a repetitive image in *Great Expectations*, it serves as foreshadowing to Magwitch’s eventual end. “The image of the phantom man echoes throughout the novel as foreshadowing of Magwitch’s death, but not by hanging” (Holbrook 127). When Magwitch is recaptured, the charge laid against him is for being in a place from which he was exiled.<sup>52</sup> Magwitch’s sentence of hard labor abroad is important as a part of coming to terms with the British colonial system. As mentioned above, Magwitch is sent to the quarries of New South Wales.

The aim of Australian convictism was to reform prisoners through hard labor. Foucault’s comments in *Discipline and Punish* on forced labor are pertinent: « Le travail pénal doit être conçu comme étant par lui-même une machinerie qui transforme le détenu violent, agité,

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<sup>52</sup> *Great Expectations* 447

irréfléchi et une pièce qui joue son rôle avec une parfaite régularité » (*Surveiller et Punir* 245).<sup>53</sup>

The convicts worked for Britain, even though they did not experience any of the material benefits their work brought to the nation-state, save moral reform. « Le salaire du travail pénal ne rétribue pas une production; il fonctionne comme moteur et repère des transformations individuelles: une fiction juridique puisqu'il ne représente pas la « libre » cession d'une force de travail, mais un artifice qu'on suppose efficace dans les techniques de correction » (*Surveiller et Punir* 246).<sup>54</sup> Re-assimilation into the empire's urban center would have been difficult for the reformed prisoner. Said states that "Magwitch is in fact unacceptable, being from Australia, a penal colony designed for rehabilitation but not the repatriation of transported English criminals" (*Culture and Imperialism* xv). The transported individual would still be labeled as a member of the dangerous class, literally a threat to society's wellbeing. "The prohibition placed on Magwitch's return is not only penal but imperial: Subjects can be taken to places such as Australia, but they cannot be allowed to 'return' to the metropolitan space, which, as all Dickens's fiction testifies, is meticulously charted, spoken for, inhabited by a hierarchy of metropolitan personages" (*Culture and Imperialism* xvi).<sup>55</sup> However, the Australian penal colony contrasts the colonial mission. "L'utilité du travail pénal? Non pas un profit; ni même la formation d'une habileté utile; mais la constitution d'un rapport de pouvoir, d'une forme économique vide, d'un schéma de la soumission individuelle et de son ajustement à un appareil

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<sup>53</sup> "Penal labour must be seen as the very machinery that transforms the violent, agitated, unreflective convict into a part that plays its role with perfect regularity" (*Discipline and Punish* 242)

<sup>54</sup> "The wages of penal labour do not reward production; they function as a motive and a measure of individual transformation: it is a legal fiction, since it does not represent the 'free' granting of labour power, but an article that is presumed to be effective in the techniques of correction" (*Discipline and Punish* 243)

<sup>55</sup> When Magwitch is recaptured, he is identified as a "returned Transport" (*Great Expectations* 444).



de production” (*Surveiller et Punir* 246-247).<sup>56</sup> There, British citizens were transformed into slaves and leveled to the social rank of the natives seen from a condescending colonial perspective. This transformation makes them *persona non grata* in nation-state. It is an empty criminal reform. The convict is unable to re-assimilate into the nation state, and has not learned any sort of occupation that would better his social status. Magwitch is never able to regain his status as a British citizen because of his criminal past, as well as his physical distance from England itself.

Magwitch dies in the prison due to sickness. Nevertheless, the image of the condemned man walking towards his death remains. “And then he showed me the Debtors’ Door, out of which culprits came to be hanged: heightening the interest if that dreadful portal by giving me to understand that ‘four of ‘em’ would come out that door the day after to-morrow at eight in the morning to be killed in a row. This was horrible and gave me a sickening idea of London” (*Great Expectations* 166). This event marks the beginning of Pip’s dissatisfaction with London.

It is through Magwitch’s labors in the Australian colony that Pip is allowed to pursue great expectations. “Le travail par lequel le condamné subvient à ses propres besoins requalifie le voleur en ouvrier docile” (*Surveiller et Punir* 246).<sup>57</sup> When Pip first encounters Magwitch in his London apartment, Dickens hints that the Australian convicts are reformed through labor. When Pip remarks, “if you have shown your gratitude by mending your way of life” (*Great Expectations* 316), he expresses what many Britons would have been feeling, that prisoners

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<sup>56</sup> “What, then is the use of penal labour? Not profit; nor even the formation of a useful skill; but the constitution of a power relation, an empty economic form, a schema of individual submission and of adjustment to a production apparatus” (*Discipline and Punish* 243).

<sup>57</sup> “The labour by which the convict contributes to his own needs turns the thief into a docile worker. This is the utility of the remuneration for penal labour; it imposes on the convict the ‘moral’ form of wages as the condition of his existence” (*Discipline and Punish* 243).

could be re-assimilated into society if they could prove they had reformed themselves, assuring that they would not be reconvicted upon reentry into the nation-state. Dickens, an advocate of criminal reform rather than punishment in prison, represents through Magwitch the possibility of prisoner reformation.

In the novels *Le Père Goriot* and *Great Expectations*, the authors show how the urban space can unfairly imprison innocent men. The urban space hides them from the general population, but there are instigators, in the persons of Vautrin and Compeyson, who seek to implicate the men. However, many citizens, as shown in *Great Expectations* and *Le Père Goriot*, are oblivious of the prisoner or social outcast in their daily lives. Pip considers Magwitch's humanity after he has discovered that the reformed convict is his benefactor. Magwitch demonstrates that he has changed from the uncivilized figure Pip encountered in the swamps of Kent years before. Rastignac, too, uncovers the truth about Père Goriot's descent into poverty and his literal and figurative distance from his wealthy daughters. The two characters show the failure of society to include marginalized persons due to unfounded fear. In *Great Expectations*, Magwitch proves he is reformed by using his financial wealth to fund Pip's venture to become a gentleman. Père Goriot also uses his wealth to serve as his daughters' benefactor until his death, although he is not publicly acknowledged as being helpful to them. Both men become imprisoned by the social divisions that the nineteenth-century city creates. The social divisions also permit true criminals to circulate the city unsuspected, by allowing innocent men to assume the guilt for the crimes of others. Vautrin serves as the instigator of the suspicions surrounding Père Goriot. This suspicion of an innocent man shields the criminal's acts.<sup>58</sup> In *Great*

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<sup>58</sup> A further discussion of Vautrin will follow in Chapter 4, as the criminal hopes to involve Rastignac in his scheming. Vautrin attempts to draw the young man into the criminal underworld of Paris, which will affect Père Goriot's relationship with the newcomer.

*Expectations*, Compeyson is responsible for Magwitch's recapture and subsequent death. His criminality worsens as he nearly drowns Magwitch during his recapture on the Thames. In *Le Père Goriot* and *Great Expectations*, the urban functions as a prison for innocent men.

### CHAPTER 3: URBAN SPACE: A WOMEN'S PRISON

The nineteenth-century woman is an image of the *other* due to her subjugated role in society. In spite of their marginalization, many upper-class women were given extensive educational advantages in comparison to their middle- and lower-class peers; their education, however, does not prepare them to negotiate the demands of marriage and imbues them with practical social skills. Subjugated as daughters, and as wives, they are defined as second-class citizens. The urban space was dominated by the male figure. In this chapter, we explore the subjugation of women and question women's relationship to spatial confinement. How does society exclude women physically, mentally, and legally from full social participation?

Women in the nineteenth-century were given very few freedoms in society as well as in their own homes. Much of their lives were determined by men. David Holbrook states in *Charles Dickens and the Image of Women*:

When they married, women passed from dependence on their parents into submission to the husband (on Pauline principles). The concept of marriage as partnership was unknown, while husbands simply did not confide in or consult their wives, on any matters. This kind of unequal relationship was embodied in the law, under which a woman became legally an infant on marriage and had no right even to her own clothes. Her property became her husband's and she became virtually her husband's chattel (64).

If Holbrook's description of marriage is true, it is plausible to understand why a character like Estella would have resisted marriage. She proves herself throughout the novel to be physically and emotionally independent of men, as her adopted mother has well taught her. Marriage would have been a shock for her, having been brought up solely by women. Being under the control of a man, especially an abusive one like Bentley Drummle, would have been unbearable for her.

It is imperative to note is how nineteenth-century European authors present their female characters. Dickens presents Miss Havisham as a prisoner of her own making in Satis House. It seems that everyone in Portsmouth knows that the mansion is a prison: “I had heard of Miss Havisham up town – everybody for miles round had heard of Miss Havisham up town – an immensely rich and grim lady who lived in a large and dismal house barricaded against robbers, and who led a life of seclusion” (*Great Expectations* 51). Pip’s observations upon arrival at Satis House confirm the rumor. “Within a quarter of an hour we came to Miss Havisham’s house, which was of old brick, and dismal, and had a great many iron bars to it. Some of the windows had been walled up; of those that remained, all the lower were rustily barred. There was a courtyard in front, and that was barred; so, we had to wait, after ringing the bell, until some one should come to open it” (*Great Expectations* 55). Dickens imagery recalls images of a prison with the mention of iron bars and walled-up windows.

Miss Havisham’s very appearance recalls the image of someone who has never left this house. ““You are not afraid of a woman who has never seen the sun since you were born?”” (*Great Expectations* 58). Miss Havisham has created her own prison to which she is also the prison guard not only for herself, but for her adopted daughter Estella, whose mind and heart she also imprisons. She forces herself to live with constant reminders of her would-be wedding. The wedding feast still sits, rotting as a constant reminder of the day when her fiancé left her at the altar.

Miss Havisham has failed to live up to the standards Victorian society instilled in upper-class women. She is neither able to love successfully as a wife, nor as a mother. Women were meant to be married and failure to marry and carry on one’s duty to the British Empire was a failure to be a good citizen by not creating future citizens in the marriage bed. Due to this failure,

she is figuratively “imprisoned” in Satis House, and cut off from proper society, even that of the small Kentish village where she resides. However, one cannot place the blame solely on Miss Havisham, for it is partly her fiancé’s fault for not holding up his part of the engagement.<sup>59</sup> It is due to his abandonment of the young Miss Havisham that the woman begins her distrust of and disdain for the male sex. The future citizen who she does create, through adoption, Estella, learns from her to scorn men.<sup>60</sup> Holbrook suggests that she taunts Pip sexually and socially, as Pip cannot have a sexual relationship with her, through marriage or otherwise. Pip can never aspire to be Estella’s husband, because he is not a gentleman. Should Pip attain the social rank of a gentleman, his money will not be “old money” and it will have been achieved from a criminal’s labors abroad (Holbrook 19). Dickens uses Pip’s transition from a provincial boy into an urban gentleman to critique the social class system established in urban centers.

Dickens presents women as the driving force behind the narrative, although it is not for their feminine qualities. Miss Havisham is falsely believed to be Pip’s benefactor.<sup>61</sup> Estella’s mistreatment of Pip drives the young man to go to London to become a gentleman, to increase his social worth to conform to her demanding standards. His success in London would hopefully lead to a marriage between the two. It is because of Estella that Pip is willing to endure his urban tribulations. Estella has been extensively trained by Miss Havisham to view men as threatening to her heart and to her freedom. For example, on one of his first visits to Satis House, Pip finds young Estella pretty; although her personality does not inspire any initial affection ““I think she

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<sup>59</sup> ““Compeyson is the man who professed to be Miss Havisham’s lover”” (*Great Expectations* 352)

<sup>60</sup> Pip and Estella are both adopted. Estella is adopted by Miss Havisham. Her mother, Molly, Mr. Jagger’s maid, is a murderess (*Great Expectations* 214, 391) Her father, as the reader will discover, is Magwitch (*Great Expectations* 413-414). Pip’s parents are both dead, as seen in the novel’s first scene, where he visit’s his parents’ graves (*Great Expectations* 3). His sister, Mrs. Joe Gargery and her husband, Joe, adopt and raise him (*Great Expectations* 7). One can consider Magwitch’s investment as his benefactor to be a form of adoption as well.

<sup>61</sup> “Yet he said it with so much meaning, too, that I felt he as perfectly understood Miss Havisham to be my benefactress, as I understood the fact myself” (*Great Expectations* 183).

is very insulting.’” (She looked at me then, with a look of supreme aversion)” (*Great Expectations* 82). Pip has the discernment to understand that Estella’s personality and beauty are not similar. Estella does not represent the type of woman to whom a man should be attracted, even though she is beautiful. Her personality should have turned Pip away from desiring her as a wife. Estella then realizes Pip’s affections for her and crushes his emotions by toying with them. She presents herself as a desirable yet unattainable woman. It is because of Miss Havisham that Estella subjugates Pip. Miss Havisham seeks to imprison both Estella’s and Pip’s hearts and minds through her past experiences with men.

“‘It seems,’ said Estella, very calmly, ‘that there are fancies – I don’t know what to call them- which I am not able to comprehend. When you say you love me, I know what you mean, as a form of words; but nothing more. You address nothing in my breast, you touch nothing there. I don’t care for what you say at all. I have tried to warn you of this; now, haven’t I?’”( *Great Expectations* 362).

Here, the reader sees that Estella has become as cold-hearted towards men as Miss Havisham has for years. Estella’s one hope for reform occurs when she goes abroad to be educated and later marries Bentley Drummle. She is an example of how female education does not ultimately help a woman in asserting herself in society. Her education will be wasted in her marriage. Estella’s experiences outside of Satis House, which are unseen in the novel, may cause her to reevaluate her relationship with Miss Havisham. Perhaps this comes with her marriage too. She frees herself from Satis House’s prison. “It happened on the occasion of this visit that some sharp words arose between Estella and Miss Havisham. It was the first time I had ever seen them opposed” (*Great Expectations* 303). Thus, the young woman detaches herself from her elderly mentor: “...Estella gradually began to detach herself. She had shown a proud impatience more than once before, and

had rather endured that fierce affection than accepted or returned it” (*Great Expectations* 303). This scene shows that Estella is evolving into a person who needs and wants to be loved, and who wants to be involved in a society other than Miss Havisham’s.

During her adult years, this liberation plays out in her divorcing her abusive husband, Bentley Drummle. “I had heard of her living a most unhappy life, and as being separated from her husband, who had used her with great cruelty, and who had become quire renowned as a compound of pride, avarice, brutality, and meanness. And I had heard of the death of her husband... This release had befallen her some two years before; for anything I knew, she was married again” (*Great Expectations* 482). Drummle’s death releases her from an abusive marriage, and frees her from the possibility of a divorce.

Divorce was a severe legal matter in the Victorian period, especially for women, as it often left them with little resources or social protection. Despite the fact that the divorce was based on spousal abuse, the woman still bore the brunt of a social stigmatism that she had failed in her womanly duties to her family and to society. “Divorce was expensive, almost impossible, and in any case meant social ostracism” (Holbrook 64).<sup>62</sup> Estella is changed by her husband’s death and this is evident in her actions, as she returns to the Kent countryside, to the Satis House of her childhood and reconciles with an older, more mature Pip. “I am greatly changed. I wonder you know me.” (*Great Expectations* 482). The greatest surprise is that she admits she has a heart.

In *Le Père Goriot*, women are portrayed in loveless relationships. Although Anastasie de Restaud and Delphine de Nucingen do not seem to be primary characters in Honoré de Balzac’s plot, they are vital to the story. Their experiences as women living in the urban space and

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<sup>62</sup> *An Act to amend the Law relating to Divorce and Matrimonial Causes in England* written in 1858, around the time that Dickens was writing *Great Expectations*, which was published serially in 1860-1861, gave women increased rights in divorce, where previously her husband would have had the majority of rights against her (c. 108, 453-458)



attempting to negotiate urban society are crucial to understanding the restrictions that French law placed on women. Their father's extensive financial support greatly aids them in this negotiation, rather than their husband's titled names. The two women do have a visible father who loves them, yet they distance themselves from his affections, preferring instead loveless marriages. This contrasts the two women with Estella, whose parentage is unknown, causing her to depend on Miss Havisham. Anastasie and Delphine's sub-plots show that French women did not fare much better in society, as they held the same social status as English women. As Elinor Accampo states in her article "Integrating Women and Gender into the Teaching of French History: 1789 to the Present," "that women are dependent on men financially and must manipulate them with their sexuality to assure they maintain their social positions" (277). The underlying driving force for the plot is financial control over the marriage. In one way, Anastasie and Delphine have succeeded in that they have married wealthy men and have entered a society which others, Rastignac, for example, must negotiate in order to enter. The two women have made their own father an outsider to their world and wealth. Although it is customarily the children's duty to aid the parents in their old age, one does not find this in Père Goriot's relationship with his daughters. They have disowned him, despite the fact that it is his wealth that funded their dowries.

The women's stories are an example of female education gone wrong. Balzac tells his readers the extensive history of the women's education at their father's expense, yet they seem to have learned nothing more than to control men in order to achieve their own means of success.

L'éducation de ses deux filles fut naturellement déraisonnable.  
Riche de plus de soixante mille livres de rente, et ne dépensant pas  
douze francs pour lui, le bonheur de Goriot était de satisfaire les  
fantaisies de ses filles : les plus excellents maîtres furent chargés  
de les douer des talents qui signalent une bonne éducation : elles

eurent une demoiselle de compagnie : heureusement pour elles, ce fut une femme d'esprit et de goût : elles allaient à cheval, elles avaient voiture, elles vivaient comme auraient vécu les maîtresses d'un vieux seigneur riche : il leur suffisait d'exprimer les plus coûteux désirs pour voir leur père s'empresst de les combler : il ne demandait une caresse en retour de ses offrandes. Goriot mettait ses filles au rang des anges, et nécessairement au-dessus de lui, le pauvre homme! (*Le Père Goriot* 128-129).<sup>63</sup>

He has tried to produce the best for them, only to be cast off himself. In reality, their actions could have been prosecuted under the Napoleonic Code of 1803. As I have previously emphasized under Titre IX: *De la Puissance Paternelle*, article 371 (*supra* 24), « L'enfant, à tout âge, doit honneur et respect à ses parents. » (*Code Civil des Français*).<sup>64</sup> Balzac shows that it is good for a father to invest in his daughters' educations, but the burden is on the women to insure that they use that up-bringing for what it is meant. However, the baron de Nucingen and Count de Restaud do not seem to care about their educations, only the finances they provide to further the men's schemes. Delphine complains of her husband's stinginess to Rastignac. « Eh bien! sachez que monsieur de Nucingen ne me laisse un sou: il paye toute la maison, mes voitures, mes loges; il m'alloue pour ma toilette une somme insuffisante, il me réduit à une misère secrète par calcul. Je suis trop fière pour l'implorer » (*Le Père Goriot* 197).<sup>65</sup> Therefore, the Baron de Nucingen financially subjugates his wife, although she dissimulates, not allowing him to think so. In actuality, she does beg; she convinces her father that she, along with her sister, needs the

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<sup>63</sup> “His daughter's education, inevitably, was a preposterous affair. Having more than sixty thousand francs a year, and spending no more than twelve hundred on himself. Goriot's happiness consisted in satisfying his girls' every fantasy. He hired the very best teachers, charging them to endow the young ladies with all those abilities that indicate a good education; they had a live-in companion – luckily for them, a young woman of taste and spirit; they went riding; they drove about in a carriage; they lived as if they'd been the mistresses of some rich old lord; all they had to do was express a desire for something, no matter how costly, and their father would hurry to get it for them, never asking so much as a caress in return for his offerings. To Goriot his daughters were absolute angels, and inevitably far superior to their father, poor man!” (*Père Goriot* 70).

<sup>64</sup> “A child, of any age, owes honor and respect to his father and mother” (Richards 103).

<sup>65</sup> “Let me tell you, Monsieur de Nucingen never lets me have a cent. He provides the house, my carriages, my theater boxes; he gives me a tiny allowance for my clothes, he's deliberately making me a secret beggar. But I'm too proud to beg” (*Père Goriot* 112-113).

money in order to fund their lives. Therefore, they subjugate Père Goriot, in spite of the fact that he is no longer legally responsible for their care as he was when they were young girls, because they are married to titled aristocrats.

Père Goriot's daughters only acknowledge him when they need financial help. The quartiers where they live become markers of financial gain or loss. These geographical areas have rules which must be negotiated, obeyed or defied. Anastasie and Delphine play into each of these actions. They obey the social rules established by upper class society by marrying well and producing children. However, they negotiate and defy social rules by their deceptive acts of adultery. Delphine's negotiation fails, as her husband discovers her affairs and threatens their marital stability as well as her reputation. Without Père Goriot's aid, his daughters' reputations and their lives would be ruined and they would have to return to a decidedly lower standard of living. Despite the governments' attempts to preserve cultural stability through marriage, Balzac shows through Anastasie and Delphine's deteriorating marriages that the institution of family was unstable, much like French culture and the French state. Even those who were most trusted with continuing French society, the upper class because of its wealth, were untrustworthy. Elinor Accampo notes that "Articles [in the Napoleonic Code] stipulating women had to obey their husbands, the far stiffer penalties for single and married women if they committed adultery, and the legal protection that men, married or single, enjoyed if they fathered a child out of wedlock, all reflected the fear that female sexuality could destabilize the family and thus society" (275). Therefore, one can apply the term *classe dangereuse*, usually reserved for the lower classes, to the upper-class, because they should be viewed with the same suspicion in their daily lives as the lower classes that live in unfashionable neighborhoods. When it comes to marriages in the French upper-class, nothing is guaranteed. Anastasie and Delphine have had to marry for wealth

and the security it brings rather than for love or attraction, which they find in their extramarital affairs.

In *Père Goriot*, Anastasie and Delphine, have become prisoners to their lavish lifestyles. They are able to marry upper-class men because of the social upheaval in France during the first-half of the nineteenth-century, although they and their husbands find themselves indebted to the exorbitant costs, both financial and moral, their lifestyles require.<sup>66</sup> They do not enjoy the same social position as Madame de Beauséant, who is one of the arbiters of Parisian society. « Il venait de connaître en madame la vicomtesse de Beauséant l'une des reines de la mode à Paris, et dont la maison passait pour être la plus agréable du faubourg Saint-Germain. Elle était d'ailleurs, et par son nom et par sa fortune, l'une sommité du monde aristocratique » (*Le Père Goriot* 59).<sup>67</sup> Delphine tries desperately to enter Madame de Beauséant's salon. Patrice Higonnet states that in the nineteenth-century, the salon had less to do with encountering *philosophes* and appreciating the arts, such as readers will see in Corinne's salon, and more to do with exclusivity. "By contrast, the *salonnières* of the [nineteenth] century would pride themselves on their exclusivity, as was the case with the very 'select' salon of Madame de Beauséant, in Balzac's *Père Goriot*, to which the ambitious baronne de Nucingen, wife of an oafish banker, dreamed of being invited" (34). Delphine's admission to the salon would have changed her social status from *nouveau riche* to a woman who could fully circulate with the Parisian "old money" whose titles and wealth dated from long before the 1789 Revolution. Anastasie's admission to this exclusive society would surely have followed. Both daughters push their paternal relationship to the edge when

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<sup>66</sup> "This fictive world carries over into personal behaviors; to adopt all the trappings of wealth, particularly to assume the clothing of its outward signs (dress, carriage, servants, well-furnished apartments), and to go into debt to do it, is a necessary" (Harvey 34-35)

<sup>67</sup> "He had realized that Madame la Vicomtesse de Beauséant was one of the queens of Paris fashion, as her house was one of the most charming in the whole Saint-Germain district" (*Père Goriot* 28).

they require their father to ensure that their lavish lifestyles continue, despite their reckless behaviors. Their advantageous marriages do not help Père Goriot, but harm him, by forcing him to contribute monetarily to their husbands' demands. The Goriot daughters will only receive possible social repercussions after their father's death. Neither of them is present when the old man dies.

Fernán Caballero is not as forgiving as Balzac was to his female adulterers. Caballero also presents an adulterous woman in her novel, *La Gaviota*. Marisalada is a complex character in comparison to the female characters in the previous novels discussed. Marisalada is completely devoid of feminine traits and character, which leads her to face many hurdles. She is vocally talented, but her lack of social graces, cause her uncomely appearance to reveal itself. The townspeople of Villamar, her seaside village, are correct to call her *la gaviota*, the seagull, because her voice resembles the cacophony of a seagull's cry.

Marisalada's story has less to do with a geographical navigation of the urban space, but more with navigating urban society. Her story serves as a warning to Caballero's readers of what can happen when a woman ignores the rules of social decorum in order to aspire to elevate herself above her social rank. Marisalada is the daughter of a fisherman, who is beloved by the townspeople. The young woman is heavily abused by her father's friends who believe she should make more of an effort to attract a husband and secure a safe old age for her father. Therefore, the rural society ostracizes her, believing her to be ugly, which is why she is called "the seagull," as well as unfeminine. Her reaction, then, is to ostracize herself. When Stein, also known as Don Frederico, enters the narrative as Villamar's new foreign-born doctor, he presents a new future for the young woman.

Hija mía – dijo la anciana cuando estuvieron solas -, ¿qué no sería que se casase contigo don Federico y que fueses tú así la *seña* medica, la más feliz de las mujeres, con ese hombre que es un San Luis Gonzaga, que sabe tanto, que toca tan bien la flauta y gana tan buenos cuartos? Estarías vestida como un palmito comida y bebida como una mayorazga; y sobre todo, hija mía, podrías mantener al pobrecito de tu padre, que se va haciendo viejo y es un dolor verle echarse a la mar, que llueva o ventee, para que a ti no te falte nada. Así don Federico se quedaría entre nosotros, consolando y aliviando males, como un ángel que es (*La Gaviota* 74).<sup>68</sup>

Her marriage would have very little to do with her emotions for Stein. It is obvious that she does neither want to marry him nor loves him. It could be believed that townspeople (namely, María) want her to marry Stein not for her happiness, but because they want him to stay. His status as an educated doctor increases her social worth amongst the townspeople, even though she does nothing to ascend to her new-found social status. Her marriage to Stein ensures her family, her father, security, as well as ensuring the welfare of her community. Marisalada's marriage to Stein aids her in finding an escape from the townspeople's constant observations.

The entrance of another man, the duke, who will secure her future more so than her husband, allows her to flee the repressive Villamar. The duke's ability to convince Marisalada to move to Seville shows how unstable Stein's and Marisalada's marriage is. The duke can be considered a benefactor to both Marisalada and Stein, ensuring that the couple's transition from rural to urban life is smooth. He is certain that they will be a success. It is an outsider, who is unfamiliar with Villamar's dependence on the young doctor, who draws their most loved and most hated citizens away all at once. "Entre los dos poseéis cuanto es necesario para hacerse

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<sup>68</sup> "“You will be with this man, who is a St. Louis de Gonzague, who knows every thing, who is a good musician and who gains plenty of money; you will be the doctor's wife, the happiest of women. You will be dressed as a dove, nurtured like a duchess; and you could then, above all, help your poor father, who is growing old; and it pains our heart that he is obliged to be on the sea despite rain and wind, so that his child may want for nothing. Thus would Don Frederico remain among us, like an angel of the good God, consoling us and taking care of all who suffer”” (*La Gaviota – The Seagull; or The Lost Beauty* 106-107).

camino en el mundo. ¿Y querías permanecer entrados en la oscuridad y el olvido? No puede ser; el no hacer participar a la sociedad de vuestras ventajas, repito que no puede ser ni será” (*La Gaviota* 94).<sup>69</sup> Marisalada becomes a prisoner of her talent, which forces her and Stein to move to Seville, although it allows her to see things that she would not have seen in rural Villamar. Her unrealized talent, taken for granted in Villamar, is what will make her a social success in the city. In her transference from the rural to urban space, Marisalada shirks her responsibilities not only as a daughter, for she is entrusted with her elderly father’s care, but also as a wife. The duke intrigues her with the fame and fortune that will come to both of them with Marisalada’s fame. “El duque entró en seguida en una larga explicación de todas las ventajas a que podría conducir aquella admirable habilidad, que le labraría un trono y un caudal” (*La Gaviota* 95).<sup>70</sup> She will have advantages in the city that were never realized in the sea-side village.

Caballero’s readers see that Seville’s society is no better than Villamar’s. The Sevillians care little for her personally, but rather for her talent. There is little possibility that without her talent, Marisalada would even be allowed entrance into the city’s elite society, especially given her low-born past. Gossip and good family names are what are truly important in Seville’s society. No one will care for her if and when she fails. However, it is in Seville that she is able to transform and cast off her rural past. “María participaba con el *gran cantante* de la desafortada ovación que le ofrecía un público, que de rodillas los veneraba humildemente” (*La Gaviota* 162).<sup>71</sup> She becomes well-known for her vocal talent, and readers see a transformation from a screeching seagull to a singing bird. However, this transformation is merely vanity-driven, as

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<sup>69</sup> “‘You two’, continued the duke, ‘have all that you could require to make your way in the world; and you would remain hidden in obscurity, and forgotten! This must not be. Will you not let society share in your brilliant qualities? I repeat, this cannot be, this must not be’” (*La Gaviota, - The Seagull; or the Lost Beauty* 138).

<sup>70</sup> “The duke then entered into a long explanation of all the advantages which might arise for her distinction and a fortune” (*La Gaviota – The Seagull; or The Lost Beauty* 139).

<sup>71</sup> “Marisalada shared with the grand singer the unbridled ovation of a discerning public, who fell on their knees in all humility” (*La Gaviota – The Seagull* 233).

there is no change in her heart or spirit. Her fidelity to her marriage experiences no change, either. “*Marisalada* pasaba su vida consagrada a perfeccionarse en el art, que la prometía un porvenir brillante, un carrera de gloria y una situación que lisonjeara su vanidad y satisficiera su afición al lujo. Stein no se cansaba de admirar su constancia en el estudio y sus admirables progresos” (*La Gaviota* 124).<sup>72</sup> She transforms into Tenorini, who is famous for her voice and whose talent allows her to travel throughout Europe’s great cities. The exposure to the luxuries that wealth brings, especially in comparison to her impoverished past life, allows Marisalada to transform herself into one of Seville’s leading ladies on the social scene.

She is then transformed into a woman who shows herself only for appearances.

Caballero’s description of the Countess d’Algar, one of Seville’s *grande dames*, demonstrates admiration for a woman who has social graces:

Querida en extrema por su madre, adorada por su marido, que, no gustando de la sociedad, de daba, sin embargo, una libertad sin límites, porque ella era virtuosa y él confiado, la condesa en realidad una niña mimada. Pero, gracias a su carácter, no abusaba de los privilegios de tal. Sin grandes facultades intelectuales, tenía el talento del corazón; sentía bien y con delicadeza. Toda su ambición se reducía a divertirse y agradar sin exceso, como el ave que vuela sin saberlo y canta sin esfuerzo (*La Gaviota* 101).<sup>73</sup>

It is in this description of the countess that Caballero gives her reader a representation of what a idealized conventional woman should be. Her inner grace causes all around her to adore her. The countess is dutiful to her husband and her duties as a proper woman of her rank. She does have

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<sup>72</sup>“Marisalada devoted all her time to perfecting herself in the art which promised her a brilliant future, a career of celebrity, and a position which, in flattering her vanity, would satisfy her love for luxury. Stein ceased not to admire the constancy for her studies, and was enthusiastic in his astonishment at her progress” (*The Seagull* 178).

<sup>73</sup> “Passionately cherished by her mother, idolized by her husband, who, without loving the world, left his wife unlimited liberty, because he knew her to be virtuous, and had full confidence in her, the countess was truly an accomplished woman, abusing none of her privileges, such was the nobleness of her character. It is true she possessed in no degree grand intellectual faculties, but she had the talent of *heart*; her sentiments were just and delicate. All her ambition was reduced to the desire to amuse and please, without effort, like the bird which flies without knowing it, and sings because she sings” (*La Gaviota, - the Seagull; or The Lost Beauty* 150)



liberties given to her by her husband, who has confidence in her virtue, and she does not abuse them. The young woman is also a singer, although her ambition is different from Marisalada's; she seeks to please and entertain those around her. The countess' talent comes from inside. She has something that Marisalada, despite her talent and fame does not; she has heart. This image of the countess contrasts to Marisalada who was brought to Seville by the duke to show off her singing talent, and her journey has little to do with increasing her intellectual pursuits. Stein had attempted tutoring her prior to their marriage. The possibility of Marisalada's entering the countess' social circle is further impeded by her inability to assimilate properly into the noble woman's salon.

María, dirigida en su tocador por los consejos de su patrona, se presento malísimamente pergeñada. Un vestido de foulard demasiado corto y matizado de los más extravagantes colores; un peinado sin gracia, adornado con cintas encarnadas muy tiesas; una mantilla de tul blanco y azulado guarnecida de encaje catalán, que la hacía parecer más morena; tal era el adorno de su persona, que necesariamente debía causar, y causó, mal efecto (*La Gaviota* 145).<sup>74</sup>

Although Marisalada has talent that will allow her to cross social boundaries, she is ill-prepared to do so because of her coarse demeanor. She will not be able to physically transform into a proper urban woman unless she first changes her personality and view of the city. “‘-¿ Os gusta mucho Sevilla?’ – le preguntó la condesa. – ‘Bastante, - respondió María’. – ‘¿Y qué os parece la catedral?’ – ‘Demasiado grande.’ – ‘¿Y nuestros hermosos paseos?’ – ‘Demasiado chicos.’ –

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<sup>74</sup> “Marisalada, instructed in her toilet by her hostess, presented herself accoutered in a manner most ridiculous. She wore a dress of silk, handkerchief pattern, too short, and blending colors the most extravagant; her coiffure was most ungracefully intermingled with red ribbons of unheard-of stiffness; a mantle of tulle, white and blue, garnished with Catalan lace, exceeded in the black of her tint. The *ensemble* of her *parure* could but necessarily produce, and did produce, the most pitiable effect” (*La Gaviota – The Sea-gull; or The Lost Beauty* 205).

‘Entonces, ¿qué es lo que más os ha gustado?’ –‘Los toros.’” (*La Gaviota* 144-145).<sup>75</sup> She does not attempt to assimilate into urban life by discovering the city on her own or coming to appreciate the many unique spaces it offers its newcomers. Therefore, Marisalada is different from Pip, Rastignac, and, Corinne, all of whom attempt to integrate themselves into urban life by discovering the city’s architecture and landscape. The sole space that Marisalada does take interest in is Seville’s bull-fighting ring.

Marisalada actually does visit the bull-fighting ring which was popular amongst Seville’s upper class, as well as the rest of the populace. The space is one of the few that is specifically described in detail.

Aquella reunión inmensa, a la que acude toda la población de la ciudad y la de sus cercanías; aquella agitación, semejante a la de la sangre cuando se agolpa al corazón en los parosismos de una pasión violenta; aquella atmósfera ardiente, embriagadora, como la que circunda a una bacante; aquella reunión de innumerables simpatías en una sola; aquella expectación calenturienta; aquella exaltación frenética, reprimida, sin embargo, en los límites de orden; aquellas vociferaciones estrepitosas, pero sin grosería; aquella impaciencia, a que sirve de tónico la inquietud; aquella ansiedad, que comunica estremecimientos al placer, forman una especie de galvanismo moral, al cual es preciso de ceder o huir (*La Gaviota* 114).<sup>76</sup>

The bull-fighting ring represents the town of Seville coming together as a culture. At the bull-ring, the classes are intermixed, although Caballero notes that the rich are still segregated from the other classes. “La plaza estaba llena; doce mil personas formaban vastos círculos

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<sup>75</sup> ““Does Seville please you much?” asked the countess. ‘Sufficiently,’ replied Maria. ‘And what do you think of our cathedral?’ ‘It is too large.’ ‘And our beautiful walks?’ ‘Too small.’ ‘And what then interests you the most?’ ‘The bulls’” (*La Gaviota – The Sea-gull; or The Lost Beauty* 206).

<sup>76</sup> “This immense rendezvous, where were gathered together all the population of the city and its environs; this agitation, like that of the blood which in the paroxysms of a violent passion rushes to the heart; this feverish expectation, this frantic excitement, kept, however, within the limits of order; these exclamations, petulant without insolence; this deep anxiety which gives a quivering to pleasure; all this together formed a species of moral magnetism; one must succumb to its for, or hasten to fly from it” (*La Gaviota – The Sea-gull; or The Lost Beauty* 169).

concéntricos en su circuito. La gente rica estaba a la sombra; el pueblo lucía a los rayos del sol el variado colorido del traje andaluz” (*La Gaviota* 114).<sup>77</sup> Despite the class divisions, the town still comes together in a unified front to cheer on their favorite bullfighter. Marisalada’s husband refuses to attend with her, as he finds the sport too gruesome, and this sets him apart from the Spanish men, underlining that he is of German origin. Caballero shows that Stein, a doctor, is more civilized and compassionate for living beings, than other men, particularly Pepé Verde, the man with whom Marisalada has an affair. “En España, la compasión en favor de los animales es, particularmente en los hombres, por punto general, un sentimiento más bien teórico que práctico. En las clases ínfimas no existe” (*La Gaviota* 115).<sup>78</sup> The bull-fighting ring, and the persons who frequent it, are representations of urban society’s baseness. The duke notes at the bull-fight that Marisalada is most animated. It is the first time that he, as well as the reader, has seen her become emotional throughout the novel.

Desde su llegada a la capital de Andalucía, ahora fue la primera vez que notó alguna emotición en aquella fisonomía y desdeñosa. Hasta aquel momento nunca la había visto animada. La organización áspera de María, demasiado vulgar para admitir el exquisito sentimiento de la admiración y demasiado indiferente y esquiva para entregarse al de la sorpresa, no se había dignado admirar ni interesarse en nada. Para imprimir algo, para sacar algún partido de aquel duro metal, era preciso hacer uso del fuego y del martillo (*La Gaviota* 116-117).<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> “Twelve thousand persons were assembled in this place; the rich were thrown in the shade, and the varied colors of the costumes of the Andalusian people were reflected in the rays of the sun” (*La Gaviota – The Seagull; or The Lost Beauty* 169).

<sup>78</sup> “Besides, it must be avowed, and we avow it with grief, that compassion for animals is, in Spain, particularly among the men, a sentiment more theoretical than practical. Among the lower classes it does not exist at all” (*La Gaviota – The Seagull; or The Lost Beauty* 170).

<sup>79</sup> “Since the arrival of this young woman at the capital of Andalusia, it was the first time that he had remarked any emotion on this cold disdainful countenance. Until now he had never seen her animated. The rude organization of Marisalada was too vulgar to receive the exquisite sentiment of admiration. There was in her character too much indifference and pride to permit her to be taken by surprise. She was astonished at nothing, interested in nothing. To excite her, be it ever so little, to soften some part of this hard metal, it was necessary to employ fire, and to use the hammer” (*The Seagull; or The Lost Beauty* 173).

She finds the experience exciting due to the violence of the action and the noise of the crowd. She finds a comparable exhilarating atmosphere as a stage performer. However, her reaction surprises her patron, the duke. Most likely, he believed that her social graces and as well as her vocal talent would improve upon her arrival in Seville. Eventually, Marisalada's lack of male escort leaves her vulnerable to the charms of Pepé Verde, one of the city's well-known bullfighters. He effects the way she views her art, making her hungry for applause rather than for the artistic development, which Stein encouraged. Pepé Verde is Marisalada's undoing, causing her to detach herself from her husband, her talent, and her ambitions.

All the men upon whom she was dependent or who were dependent on her are dead by the story's end. It can be theorized that death and alienation are ways in which the author punishes her main character (not heroine) for her adulterous acts. Marisalada becomes a prisoner to Caballero's effort to moralize in her text.

Maria's refusal to subordinate herself to the males to whom she is socially bound brings them, symbolically, death in place of nurturance: her father, her husband, and her lover all die as more or less direct consequence of her behavior (Kirkpatrick 266).

In Marisalada's story, the character fails to realize her wrongdoings until it is too late for any reform to take place, even when she returns to Villamar and is forced to remarry in a loveless marriage and bear children for whom she has no maternal instinct. For Pip and Rastignac, the city is a place to realize aspects of their personality, of humanity, and of social interactions. In comparison to Corinne, Marisalada does not attempt to interact with the physical aspects of the city in itself, but solely its society. There is no attempt on her part to discover the city as a unique place.

Fernán Caballero uses Marisalada's story as a commentary on a woman's role in society. "The novel's plot line, then makes Maria's story above all a didactic fable about women's proper place" (Kirkpatrick 265). It is only when Marisalada becomes a public woman, one who performs in front of audiences, that she begins to face difficulties. Caballero's conservative values play out in Marisalada's public fall from society's graces. If she had any social graces to begin with, she may have been accepted: "From the onset the narrative presents her character defective of femininity" (Kirkpatrick 265). Corinne is similar to Marisalada in that the young poetess is a public performer, but her character is noted for her womanly charms and her elegant tastes, while also showing that she is an educated and liberated woman, qualities which the Spanish woman lacks. Louise-Germaine de Staël presents creativity from a positive point of view, even though her novel *Corinne ou l'Italie* is loaded with male criticisms of female performance. "As an acclaimed and charismatic opera star, Maria is an antipathetic version of Mme de Staël's archetype of the female genius...Corinne can only achieve her triumph in Italy, the idealized utopia of artistic value" (Kirkpatrick 269). Mme de Staël questions female performance, female social roles, transnationality, and issues of the past and present metropolis in *Corinne ou l'Italie*.<sup>80</sup> Mme de Staël's liberal view of female social roles allows Corinne, poetess, dancer, public speaker, to be feminine and to be a performer at the same time.

Corinne, who is the most liberated of female characters compared in this thesis, must also negotiate a relationship and the potential confines it presents to her literary creativity. Although de Staël presents Corinne as a liberated woman living in Rome's relatively liberal society the

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<sup>80</sup> Madame de Staël uses Corinne to show that creative women deserve to have a space to perform. Corinne actively questions women's social roles, especially as leaders of creative circles, such as a salon. Lord Nelvil represents the British patriarchal society which seeks to subjugate creative women solely to private spaces. The use of Rome and Italy as a liberal space for female performance contrasts with the impossibility of female liberation in the British realm.

poetess becomes trapped by her creativity, her past, and her lover. As already shown in Chapter 1, urban negotiation in the novel is shown through her role as tour guide in the city introducing new-comer Oswald, Lord Nelvil to Rome. The young man falls in love with her because she is different from any English women he has known. He idealizes, romanticizes, and exoticizes her, because she is someone to whom he is unaccustomed, a liberated woman. Their whirlwind romance causes problems that will ultimately undermine Corinne's talent and understanding of herself as a public performer and her attitude towards the place where she lives.

When Nelvil first encounters Corinne at the Capitol, she resembles the 1617 painting entitled *Sybil* by Italian Baroque painter Domenico Zampieri.<sup>81</sup> « Elle était vêtue comme la sibylle du Dominiquin, un châle des Indes tourné de sa tête et ses cheveux... » (*Corinne ou l'Italie* 662-663).<sup>82</sup> Her appearance as Sybil creates an image in Oswald's head of her as a foreign being. She is different from British women in her dress and public demeanor. The Roman people, both women and men, adore her for her talent, and adopt her as their own. Nelvil has unfounded notions of who she is and what she can become for him, with little regard for what she actually wants in their relationship and her life.

*Corinne* uses geography as social commentary. Rome represents creativity, life, happiness, and freedom. The British Isles represents patriarchy, repression of women's creativity, and depression.<sup>83</sup> Both oppose each other culturally. Corinne is a public artist; she feeds off the public's response to her poetry, her dancing, and her performances. She would not be able to recreate this atmosphere in Britain, where women are relegated to the domestic sphere.

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<sup>81</sup> <http://library.artstor.org.libezp.lib.lsu.edu/library/iv2.html?parent=true>

<sup>82</sup>“ She was dressed like Domenichino's Sibyl. An Indian turban was wound round her head and intertwined with her black hair” (*Corinne ou l'Italie* 23).

<sup>83</sup> « Après avoir quitté la maison de Lady Edgermond, Oswald se rendit en Écosse » (*Corinne ou l'Italie* 817) [“After leaving Lady Edgermond's house, Oswald went to Scotland” (*Corinne, or Italy* 315)]

« Il aurait jugé très-sévèrement une telle femme en Angleterre, mais il n'appliquait à l'Italie aucune des convenances sociales » (*Corinne ou l'Italie* 662).<sup>84</sup> His distance from the United Kingdom causes him to abandon social prejudices. This is unlike the values to which he is accustomed; men being lauded for their achievements in the public sphere. « [I]l avait vu souvent dans son pays des hommes d'État portés en triomphe par le peuple, mais c'était pour la première fois qu'il était témoin des honneurs rendus à une femme, à une femme illustrée seulement par les dons du génie » (*Corinne ou l'Italie* 662).<sup>85</sup> Corinne senses that Lord Nelvil will never be able to accept her public role. She wonders, « étonnée du calme extérieur d'Oswald, ne sachant s'il l'approuvait ou s'il la blâmait secrètement, et si ses idées anglaises lui permettaient d'applaudir à tels succès d'une femme » (*Corinne ou l'Italie* 672).<sup>86</sup> Corinne actively questions whether the Scottish man's prejudices towards public women will allow their relationship to continue. His thoughts show the different expectations placed upon English and Italian women.

« Il n'y avait certainement rien de plus contraire aux habitudes et aux opinions d'un Anglais que cette grande publicité donnée à la destinée d'une femme; mais l'enthousiasme qu'inspirent aux Italiens tous les talents qu'imagination, gagne, au moins maintenant, les étrangers, et l'on oublie les préjugés mêmes de son pays, au milieu d'une nation si vive l'expression des sentiments qu'elle éprouve. Les gens du peuple à Rome connaissent les arts, raisonnent avec goût sur les statues; les tableaux, les monuments, les antiquités, et le mérite littéraire porté à un certain degré, sont pour eux un intérêt national » (*Corinne ou l'Italie* 662).<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> "In England, he would have judged such a woman very severely, but he did not apply any kind of social conventions to Italy" (*Corinne or Italy* 22).

<sup>85</sup> "In his own country he had often seen statesmen borne in triumph by the people, but it was the first time head witness honour done to a woman, to a woman renowned only for her gifts of genius" (*Corinne or Italy* 23).

<sup>86</sup> "But sometimes she paused at the most brilliant moments of her conversation, surprised at Oswald's outward calm, not knowing whether he approved of her secretly or blamed her, or whether his English ideas would allow him to applaud this kind of success in a woman" (*Corinne or Italy* 40).

<sup>87</sup> "There was certainly nothing more contrary to the customs and opinions of the English than this publicity given to the fortunes of a woman, but the enthusiasm which all imaginative talent arouses in the Italians infects foreign visitors, at least momentarily. They even forget their native prejudices when they are among people who express their feelings so vividly. The common people of Rome are familiar with the arts, and discuss sculpture with good

Marisalada and Corinne are talented women, even though their authors have different objectives in the way they present the characters. Caballero, a conservative, attaches social ruin to Marisalada, as she believes that women should not publicly perform.<sup>88</sup> Louise-Germaine de Staël uses the love story of Oswald and Corinne, and their opposing beliefs on women's social position to show that a talented woman should not have to choose between creativity and love, but should be able to experience both, for love can inspire even more creativity.

The depth of Mme de Staël's text invites analysis. Issues of transnationality, public versus private sphere, love, and women's social roles are all explored in the novel. For example, Corinne may be considered a transnational character because she casts off notions of the requirement of nationality, or of requiring a person to be Italian, English or French. She inhabits all three of these cultures, as seen by what Lord Nelvil notices in her home. "En l'attendant, il se promenait avec anxiété dans son appartement; il y remarquait, à chaque détail, un mélange de tout ce qu'il y a de plus agréable dans les trois nations, française, anglaise, et italienne : le goût de la société, l'amour des lettres, et le sentiment des beaux-arts » (*Corinne ou l'Italie* 670).<sup>89</sup> Corinne is also unique because she is a successful public woman. As mentioned above, the Romans love her ability to bring ancient forms of poetry and recitation back to modern Rome. Oswald, Lord Nelvil rejects her need to perform. His notions of womanhood are unfairly imposed upon her. Although the two love each other, nationality, or rather their different national

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tastes. Pictures, monuments, antiques, and a certain level of literary merit, are for them a national interest" (*Corinne, or Italy* 21).

<sup>88</sup> "Thus, the same concerns that compelled Cecilia Boehl to use a male pseudonym are expressed a disapproval for the unwomanly ambition and egoism that lead Maria Santaló [Marisalada] to pursue her musical career" (Kirkpatrick 265).

<sup>89</sup> "As he waited for her, he walked up and down in her rooms, and in every detail he noticed an agreeable mixture of everything that is most pleasing in the three nations, French, English, and Italian, the taste for social life, the love of literature, and the appreciation of the arts" (*Corinne or Italy* 37).



cultures represented in the characters make a relationship between the two impossible. Oswald cannot allow himself to think of Corinne as a public woman and also as his wife.

He seeks to subjugate her with his notions of women's behavior. Nelvil is in love with her creativity, although he cannot realize that it is directly related to Rome's geographical space.

If Oswald had deemed Corinne Woman enough to love as a wife, she would have lost her identity as public figure, poet, and artist. Oswald's masculine gaze destroys Corinne regardless of whether he rejects her or tries to incorporate her into his world. Since Oswald is only able to love Corinne when idealizing her in his mind as the proper natural Woman, his qualified love usurps her talent and obliterates her identity (Marso 120).

He applies his notions of how women ought to be to Corinne, believing that she will still possess her creative spark, despite leaving the inspirational space and giving into his oppressive notions of love: "Despite his best efforts to love Corinne, Oswald does not know how to love in a way that would allow Corinne to grow personally and publically, or artistically, in their love" (Marso 121). Mme de Staël is stating something very specific in the character of Corinne. She is stating that women ought to be able to be public figures and have a marital relationship as well.<sup>90</sup>

Madame de Staël's *Corinne ou l'Italie* demonstrates a relationship between person and place, past and present. As we have stated, although the novel is set in nineteenth-century Rome, the author connects the modern city to its classical past through the character of Corinne, its patron poetess. Corinne draws notably upon the city's classical monuments for inspiration: "The heroine's lost voice is inscribed in her stone double: a fossil voice ready to live. The Corinne-

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<sup>90</sup> "Staël's critique of the revolutionary fashioning of gender boundaries confirms that when man/citizen and woman/wife are constructed as opposing, mirror image categories, both men and women lose. In portraying a woman as an esteemed artist in her novel and framing Corinne's dilemma as a split consciousness about her identity, Staël is eager to point out the travesty in denying women the ability to be women when (and *if*) they are able to become public figures. In Staël's novel, Corinne is only able to retain her public identity if she is able to deny her feelings and desires as a woman. She cannot be both woman and citizen simultaneously" (Marso 121).

monument substitution, moreover, is poetically implicit from the moment of Corinne's first appearance at the Capitol" (Vallois 133). Although Corinne exists in nineteenth-century Rome, her voice and body is connected to the Antiquity through the specific type of classical recitation and dances that she performs. She becomes a Roman monument in living form. Therefore, she can also be re-appropriated, which Nelvil attempts to do in taking her away from Rome.

On ne peut pas faire un pas dans Rome sans rapprocher le présent du passé, et les différents passés entre eux. Mais on apprend à se calmer sur les événements de son temps, en voyant l'éternelle mobilité de l'histoire des hommes; et l'on a comme une sorte de honte de s'agiter, en présence de tant de siècles, qui tous ont renversé l'ouvrage de leurs prédécesseurs (*Corinne ou l'Italie* 689).<sup>91</sup>

Corinne does two things in these tours: "she *shows* Italy to Oswald...and she *represents* Italy to Oswald" (Le Coat 142). This is why Oswald cannot come to terms with Corinne's public identity; he cannot take a wife who would publicly have to represent an entity to an entire people, namely the Roman people.

Bachelard writes, « l'espace appelle l'action, et avant l'action l'imagination travaille » (*La Poétique de l'Espace* 28).<sup>92</sup> The critic shows the important link between space and imagination and this is what the Mme de Staël's readers see in the Corinne's character. She has an intimate relationship with the Roman space. « C'est la région d'intimité se désignent par une attraction » (*La Poétique de l'Espace* 30).<sup>93</sup> Under Lord Nelvil's influence, Rome loses its grasp on her creativity. She loses her attraction to the creative space, therefore losing her well-being, creatively and her physical health. The new-comer's criticisms of Rome, its people, culture, and

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<sup>91</sup> "You cannot take a step in Rome without bringing together the present and the past and the different pasts between them. But you learn to take the events of your own day calmly when you see the ever-changing vestitudes of human history. You are almost ashamed to be worried in the presence of so many centuries which have all overturned the work of their predecessors" (*Corinne or Italy* 72).

<sup>92</sup> "space calls for action, and before action, the imagination is at work" (*The Poetics of Space* 12)

<sup>93</sup> "All spaces of intimacy are designated by attraction. Their being is well-being" (*The Poetics of Space* 12)

past negates the city's power over Corinne. This nullification of the urban space causes Corinne to reconsider Rome's influence on her art and leads her to leave the inspirational space.

« Corinne surtout avait peu de prévoyance, la crainte ni l'espérance n'étaient pas faites pour elle; sa foi dans l'avenir était confuse et son imagination lui faisait en ce genre peu de bien et peu de mal » (*Corinne ou l'Italie* 749).<sup>94</sup> Even at the moment of her departure from Rome, Corinne loses confidence in her ability to call upon her inspiration. Her uniqueness fades as she comes under Oswald's control, becoming imprisoned by what she believes is love.

The negotiation of both present and past makes Corinne a unique figure in de Staël's novel. It is only upon her departure from Rome, drawn by Nelvil's love, that she discovers she cannot draw upon just her mind and spirit for inspiration.

Corinne éprouvait un sentiment de mélancolie en rompant ainsi toutes ses habitudes; elle était fait depuis quelques années dans Rome une manière d'être qui lui plaisait; elle était le centre de tout ce qu'il y avait d'artistes célèbres d'hommes éclairés; une indépendance parfaite d'idées et d'habitudes donnait beaucoup de charmes à son existence; qu'allait-elle maintenant devenir? (*Corinne ou l'Italie* 749).<sup>95</sup>

She is willing to change her life in order to prove her love for Oswald, although she knows that she must separate herself from the life she has known and the place which has come to inspire all that she is, both in art and person. In Rome, she was liberated from social expectations placed upon women, which is most likely the reason why she was so admired and successful as an artist. Rome imprisons her due to the fact that it is the only place she can exist liberated to create. She

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<sup>94</sup> "Corinne, above all, was without foresight; neither fear nor hope was made for her. Her faith in the future was blurred, and in this respect her imagination served her neither well nor ill" (*Corinne or Italy* 186).

<sup>95</sup> "For some years she had adopted a style of life in Rome that she liked. She was the centre of all the famous artists and enlightened men, a complete independence of ideas and habits that made her life very attractive; what was going to become of her now?" (*Corinne or Italy* 185).

is chained to the geographical space in order to fulfill her destiny as an artist. In order to live, she must write and recite; it is a way in which she shares her love with other people.

Upon her return to Rome, Corinne finds that she cannot replicate what she once had in the city. The lack of ability to rejoin the culture which she left puts her mind and body in peril. She becomes ill over the fact that she cannot live up to her past. Rome still loves her, but she cannot re-assimilate into the culture. Her relationship with Nelvil has caused her to have a different perspective on Rome, as it was the place of many of their adventures together. She has allowed him not only to have a negative influence on her, but also on Rome. He replaces Rome in her mind.

Women in the novels discussed, face the problem of their male counterparts' romantic idealization of them. Pip idealizes Estella because of their obvious class distinctions. This social discrepancy prevents any type of romantic relationship, let alone an arranged marriage. He knows Miss Havisham's power over her and her future, and yet he pursues her. Also, he idealizes Miss Havisham as a sort of "fairy godmother" of his future. Pip has a moment of realization not of Estella's motivations, but of Miss Havisham's when he discovers that the elderly woman is not his benefactor. Père Goriot idealizes his two daughters because they have married well. In his eyes, they can do no wrong. Rastignac idealizes several women including Madame de Beauséant, his benefactor, Victorine, and both Anais and Delphine. He is willing to accept to a duel and kill a man for Victorine's affections, putting him under the power of the criminal Vautrin. Stein idealizes Marisalada, as he believes that he can civilize her, making her into a better person. A mission to civilize her on his part is not necessarily taken to make her the ideal domestic, but to make her an educated person, someone who would be respected by Villamar's villagers. Lord Nelvil commits the worse type of idealization in *Corinne*. He loves

her for her talent and her way of life, but it is these very things which he will suppress by making her into the ideal wife. It can be suggested that Corinne's foreignness is the basis of Nelvil's attraction; he is seduced by the Roman space. He views her, as Mme de Staël writes, as a conquest. She cannot express herself freely in Scotland or adapt to the United Kingdom's repressive society. Oswald seeks to subjugate her in a way that the previous protagonists have not: he seeks to control her mind and body through marriage. At one point in each of these novels, the male characters have a moment of realization that they cannot accept these women as they are.

The women portrayed in the four novels are not all viewed in the public sphere. The women's negotiation is done primarily within the private sphere; they must negotiate within their domestic confines. In some circumstances they are successful in surmounting society's rules. Madame de Beauséant along with Père Goriot's daughters, are nearly always seen circulating in the inner society of Paris, within peoples' homes. The few times that the reader views Anastasie and Delphine outside of the domestic sphere, it is a signal from Balzac of some wrongdoing at play on the part of the two women. For example, Vautrin spies Anastasie going into the goldsmith's shop to receive the money from the sale of her father's silver bowl to pay off her husband's blackmail. By the novel's end, the two Goriot daughters find themselves in social ruin upon their father's death. They are unable to use him for their financial needs and are now subject to their husbands' demands and financial restrictions.

Dickens also relegates Miss Havisham and Estella to the private sphere. The reader only sees Miss Havisham within the confines of Satis House, where she must daily face the wedding which she never had. Estella is able to free herself from Miss Havisham's prison only to enter

into a confining and abusive marriage with Bentley Drummle. She eventually is able to free herself of both and, by novel's end, becomes the owner of Satis House.

Madame de Staël has her character circulate in the private society of Rome, within her home, in private performances, but also in the public sphere, as is evident by Lord Nelvil's first encounter with her at the Capitol. She has roamed around the city and learned the history of its monuments. She has assimilated herself into Roman society.

Caballero's Marisalada cannot assimilate herself into Seville's inner society, even though she is seen enjoying its public celebrations. Marisalada performs in Seville's and Madrid's theatres and also is seen as a spectator in the bull-fighting ring, but her main goal is to become one of the women who circulate in Seville's upper-class salons where women such as the Countess d'Algar have their place. She is ill-prepared to take on a social role in this new society, as she has not been trained in the proper social decorum. The education which Stein gave her in Villamar is merely practical knowledge, and also from a male point of view. Due to her poor social preparation and lack of female interests and companions which could occupy her time, she is left vulnerable to people, like Pepé Verde, who seek to harm her reputation.

The women characters examined in this chapter all must negotiate the social landscape of a geographical space, making their own way in an exclusive society. Successful negotiation equates to exerting oneself contrary to social expectations. Marisalada, Delphine and Anastasie, and Corinne are all women who question conventional social expectations placed upon women. Marisalada's story shows her author's prejudice against women performing publicly. Delphine and Anastasie show that the permeable nature of Restoration France would allow women to enter into higher social ranks for a financial and moral price. The women abuse their relationships in order to attempt social success in the salons. Corinne is also the victim of a relationship, as she

loses her creativity in the pursuit of love. Estella's narrative shows a woman surmounting her role in society. The young woman is at first imprisoned by her adopted mother, then is able to negotiate out of Satis House by going abroad. It is only after subsequently escaping a loveless marriage that she gains insight into herself. In these novels, the women negotiate society. For the men depicted in the following chapter, negotiating the urban space underscores how the characters' identity is shaped with rapport to the city and its imprisoning forces.

## CHAPTER 4: THE CITY SURMOUNTED?

Pip and Eugène de Rastignac are two characters who seem to successfully negotiate the city in order to secure future and fortune. The young men are representatives of the nineteenth-century *bildungsroman*. Franco Moretti states in *Atlas of the European Novel: 1800-1900*, that it is in the public sphere that the *bildungsroman*'s hero must prove himself (65).

In the great city, though, the heroes of the *Bildungsroman* change overnight from 'sons' into 'young men'; their affective ties are no longer vertical ones (between successive generations), but horizontal, within the same generation. They are drawn towards those unknown yet congenial faces seen in the gardens, or at the theater; future friends, or rivals, or both... (65)

Both young men enter the urban space as naïve and inexperienced outsiders. They will develop into their roles as gentlemen. In the beginning, the two have an idealized view of urban life, and are naïve as to what they are about to experience. Their backgrounds are similar, as both come from rural origins and are hoping to find education and success in the city. However, one finds that it is the city - London or Paris - its society and culture which educate the young men more so than book knowledge.

In this chapter I address the male urban experience. The young men, through their adventures in their respective capitals attain social mobility, literally. Their new-comer status allows them further to discover the urban space, but it also allows them to experience human interaction on a socio-economic level. They are able to see the city as it truly is, the truth behind the illusion and the monsters that it hides. Their time in the city determines their future. Their urban negotiation will cause them to make choices, leading to the city's influences on them. The most important question is whether they will find success. "There is also a choice: a choice of the human shape of the new social and physical environment. Or there can be choice – we *can* be in



a position to choose – if we see, physically and morally, what is happening to people in this time of unprecedented change” (Williams 161). The nineteenth-century city allowed for some social mobility. “It is also the altered, the critically altered relationship between men and things, of which the city was the most social and visual embodiment” (Williams 163). Eugène de Rastignac has arrived in Paris at the perfect time, as his status as a new-comer increases his chances at entering the world of the wealthy elite.

Eugène de Rastignac has come to the city explicitly to be educated. However, there is more at stake for him, as his family is dependent on his successful future. « Son père, sa mère, ses deux frères, ses deux sœurs, et une tante dont la fortune consistait en pensions, vivaient sur la petite terre de Rastignac. Ce domaine d’un revenu d’environ trois mille francs était soumis à l’incertitude qui régit le produit tout industriel de la vigne, et néanmoins il fallait en extraire chaque année douze cent francs pour lui » (*Le Père Goriot* 57).<sup>96</sup> With his family constantly in the background, readers can see how Balzac is making a comparison of the simple country life of Southern France with the city life that will quickly corrupt young Rastignac. He financially burdens both his mother as well as his sisters. In spite of his guilt at imposing this burden upon them, he enjoys the pleasures of the city, as many young men in his position would.

Pendant sa première année de séjour à Paris, le peu de travail que veulent les premiers grades à prendre dans la Faculté l’avait laissé libre de goûter les délices visibles de Paris matériel. Un étudiant n’a pas trop de temps s’il veut connaître le répertoire de chaque théâtre, étudier les issues de labyrinthe parisien, savoir les usages, apprendre la langue et s’habituer aux plaisirs particuliers de la capitale: fouiller les bons et les mauvais endroits suivre les cours qui amusent, inventorier les richesses des musées. Un étudiant se

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<sup>96</sup> “The tiny Rastignac estate was inhabited by his father, his mother, his two brothers, his two sisters, and an aunt whose only fortune was a lifetime annuity. The property was perhaps three thousand francs a year, not allowing for the instabilities inherent in the wine trade, but somehow they managed to squeeze out twelve hundred francs a year for him” (*Père Goriot* 26).

passionne alors pour des niaiseries qui lui paraissent grandioses  
(*Le Père Goriot* 56).<sup>97</sup>

He has already begun learning to negotiate the Parisian labyrinth, but Balzac notes that any young man must investigate both the good and bad parts of the city.

Rastignac's Parisian benefactor is Madame de Beauséant, his aunt's friend, who had been presented at court. His familial connections could greatly help him in achieving social and financial success by using her name as a key in which to open doors which would be closed to many others, such as the Goriot daughters. Eugène knows that succeeding socially is as important as succeeding at law school. « Tout à coup le jeune ambitieux reconnu, dans les souvenirs dont sa tante l'avait si souvent bercé, les éléments de plusieurs conquêtes sociales, au moins aussi importantes que celles qu'il entreprenait à l'École de Droit » (*Le Père Goriot* 58).<sup>98</sup> "In *Old Goriot*, Rastignac mentions the name of Madame de Beauséant (which means: Faubourg Saint-Germain), and the doors of Paris' great world fly open before him; then he mentions Goriot (which means: 'the grimmest of the quarter of Paris'), and these doors are barred" (Moretti 106). Thus, he goes to Madame de Beauséant's ball and meets Anastasie de Restaud. It is interesting how much women aid in his discovery of the city. Without Madame de Beauséant's help, he would never have been able to cross the Seine and experience the world of the wealthy in the homes of Anastasie and Delphine. Even she herself admits to this truth. « Voyez-vous, vous ne

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<sup>97</sup> "The workload at the Law School, during his first year in Paris, was a light one, and he had been free to taste the obvious delights of the great city. Indeed, a student can't have too much time on his hands, if he wants to understand every theatre's individual repertoire, study the Parisian labyrinth's intricate convolutions, learn how things are done, master the capital's peculiar language, and grow accustomed to its special pleasures; he needs to explore both good and wicked neighborhoods, take all the interesting courses at the university, catalogue the treasures in all the museums. And a student needs to throw himself into endless idiocies, which seem to him immense and noble" (*Père Goriot* 26).

<sup>98</sup> "...and the young man suddenly perceived, in the ancient memories of his aunt had so dreamily recounted, the fundamentals of social triumphs at least as important as those he had tackled in law school" (*Père Goriot* 27).

serez rien ici si vous n'avez pas une femme qui s'intéresse à vous » (*Le Père Goriot* 115).<sup>99</sup>

Therefore, he is more determined than Pip, as Pip has been given a chance to succeed by an outsider, and Rastignac wants to achieve it for himself. « Comme il arrive aux âmes grandes, il ne voulut ne rien devoir qu'à son mérite » (*Le Père Goriot* 57).<sup>100</sup> His family is dependent on his success, and their hardworking natures remind him constantly of why he must improve himself, despite his many worries (*Le Père Goriot* 57-58).<sup>101</sup>

Rastignac shares his fair share of secrets in the urban space just as Pip will in London. He is the first to discover what Père Goriot is really doing in his attic apartment. « Mais serait-ce donc un voleur ou un receleur qui, pour se livrer plus sûrement à son commerce, affecterait la bêtise, l'impuissance, et vivrait en mendiant? » (*Le Père Goriot* 62).<sup>102</sup> He soon realizes the man's secret and the two share a special bond as they travel into a realm governed by different social rules. He is the first to comprehend the mysterious relationship between Père Goriot and Anastasie de Restaud, for whom Eugène lusts, as well as her sister, Delphine de Nucingen. Madame de Beauséant reveals their familial tie and details about Goriot's past. « Mais, enfant que vous êtes, s'écria la vicomtesse, Madame de Restaud est une demoiselle Goriot » (*Le Père Goriot* 110).<sup>103</sup> Because of her position and her wealth, Madame de Beauséant intercepts a lot of information, and is therefore able to help Rastignac untangle the web of Parisian society. She serves as an informant for the young man. In spite of his knowledge of the Goriot daughters' pasts and their mistreatment of their father, he still wants Anastasie. Therefore, he, like Pip, will need more funds in order to achieve his goal, and reaches out to his sisters « Il écrivit à chacun de ses

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<sup>99</sup> "Understand you'll never be anything, here in Paris, without a woman's backing" (*Père Goriot* 62).

<sup>100</sup> "Like all men of great spirit, he wanted to owe his success to nothing but his own abilities" (*Père Goriot* 27).

<sup>101</sup> *Père Goriot* 27

<sup>102</sup> Could it be that Goriot was a thief, or a fence, trying to be a helpless old clod and living like a beggar, the better to practice his trade?" (*Père Goriot* 30).

<sup>103</sup> "Oh, silly enfant that you are!" cried the vicomtesse. "Madame de Restaud's maiden name is Goriot" (*Père Goriot* 59).

sœurs en leur demandent leurs économies » (*Le Père Goriot* 122).<sup>104</sup> He does so knowing that it will further impoverish his already poor family.

Rastignac succumbs to corruption as he develops into an urban man. « Si l'on vient à songer aux milles formes que prend à Paris la corruption, parlante ou muette, un homme de bon sens se demande par quelle aberration l'État y met des écoles, y assemble des jeunes gens » (*Le Père Goriot* 168).<sup>105</sup> Rastignac subsists in the city, taking in its pleasures using borrowed money. The young man shirks his law studies in order to appear to possess the wealth and women that the city promises young men like him. He is influenced by Vautrin, the criminal instead of by Mme de Beauséant's strength and kindness. He experiences Parisian life to its fullest, showing his fickleness, as he transfers his affections from Anastasie to Delphine. He also discovers that the most important members of Parisian society are women, especially those in the upper class, as Mme de Beauséant pointed out to him earlier. He also realizes what it is to be poor, as his gambling debts have accumulated and he must now find a way to pay for his new lifestyle. « Vers cette époque, Rastignac avait perdu son argent, et s'était endetté. L'étudiant commençait à comprendre qu'il lui serait impossible de continuer cette existence sans avoir des ressources fixes » (*Le Père Goriot* 209).<sup>106</sup> This realization will occur for Pip in *Great Expectations* as well. Balzac and Dickens use their characters' impoverished states to show the resourcefulness (or lack thereof) of their young heroes. The ability to pick oneself up from the depths of debt to become a success shows true negotiation skills.

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<sup>104</sup> "he wrote to each of his sisters, asking for their savings" (*Père Goriot* 66).

<sup>105</sup> "And if you stop to think of the thousand forms which corruption takes, in Paris, whether opened or unobserved, a sensible man might well wonder by what aberration the State decided to set its schools in that city and bring together so many young men" (*Père Goriot* 95).

<sup>106</sup> "And then Rastignac lost all his money and fell into debt. He began to understand that, without fixed and reliable resources, he could never continue his new existence" (*Père Goriot* 119-120).

When Père Goriot dies, Eugène famously challenges Paris « À nous deux maintenant » (*Le Père Goriot* 367).<sup>107</sup> Perhaps, then, he will trump the many forces, including sly criminals who prey on the innocent. The result of Rastignac's narrative is one of social maneuvering in order to get what he wants out of the city's exclusive society. The character is less concerned with developing into a good person through his urban experiences and/or becoming a working professional than he is about being accepted into the salons of wealthy influential women. As readers of Dickens will see in *Great Expectations*, there is something to learn about oneself in the urban space.

Even before arriving in London, Pip wonders how the city will have an effect on him personally and professionally. "What would I become with these surroundings? How could my character fail to be influenced by them?" (*Great Expectations* 96). Dickens foreshadows Pip's coming transformation when he states that Pip will be influenced by London's surroundings. He will become something and someone, perhaps not the gentleman that his benefactor had wished, but the city will change him.

Pip's first impression of London is Dickens' honest assessment of what a newcomer would think of the metropolis. "Of course I had no experience of a London summer day, and my spirits may have been oppressed by the hot exhausted air, and by the dust and grit that lay thick on everything" (*Great Expectations* 165). It is not what he expected of the great wondrous city that is supposed to be the foundation of English life and responsible for making him a gentleman. He is not the only English person who had this stereotype of London or of all of England. "We Britons had at that time particularly settled that it was reasonable to doubt our having and being the best of everything; otherwise, while I was scared by the immensity of London, I think I might

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<sup>107</sup> "'Now it's just the two of us! – I'm ready!'" (*Père Goriot* 217).

have had some faint doubts whether it was not ugly, crooked, narrow, and dirty” (*Great Expectations* 163). Pip had great expectations of the city, and the city did not live up to them. Here, the character shows his immediate distrust of the urban space. He admits that “London was decidedly overrated” (*Great Expectations* 174). Dickens shows through Pip’s first vision of London that the city is not all he expected the urban center to be. He wonders how his great expectations are to pass in such a chaotic place.

I consumed the whole time in thinking how strange it was that I should be encompassed by all this taint of prison and crime; that, in my childhood out on our lonely marshes on a winter evening I should have first encountered it; that, it should have reappeared on two occasions, starting out like a stain that was faded but not gone; that, it should in this new way pervade my fortune and advancement (*Great Expectations* 164).

Although Newgate Prison has a pervasive importance in Dickens’ novel, Pip shows that the prison which surrounds him is the city itself. He idealistically believed that he would have only experienced criminal behavior once in his life, in the marshes with the prisoner Magwitch. However, this is not the case, it reappears in his life in London, where crime is omnipresent and anyone is a possible criminal. He is right to fear that crime should threaten his ‘fortune and advancement.’

In his quest to become a gentleman, Pip has begun a cultural performance, attempting to make himself acceptable in London society through purchasing jewelry and participating in the city’s entertainment. He finds himself in debt, despite all the financial resources poured into him and all the education he has received.

My worldly affairs began to wear a gloomy appearance, and I was pressed for money by more than one creditor. Even myself began to know the want of money (I mean of ready money in my own

pocket), and to relieve it by converting some easily spared articles of jewellery into cash. But I had quite determined that it would be a heartless fraud to take more money from my patron in the existing state of my uncertain thoughts and plans (*Great Expectations* 381).<sup>108</sup>

There is a parallel between Dickens' his own family's past financial troubles and the dilemma Pip confronts. Paradoxically, Pip's circumstances begin to mimic his benefactor's, Magwitch's, own criminal status. Both new-comers and citizens of long date become indebted to the urban space. In this way, the city shows its fickleness towards its citizens by promising them the world and then forcing them to face many hurdles in order to achieve the ideal urban life.

Pip makes his transformation into a gentleman not by money or personal success, but by the entrance of Magwitch, his inmate benefactor. It is in his unsuccessful attempt at freeing his reformed new friend that Pip learns what being a gentleman is truly about – being gentle to all men, and women, too. Even in the civilized capital, the convict is treated just as he was in the Botany Bay colony, as convict, an “ignorant common fellow.” Pip does seek to better himself after acknowledging the financial effort and support that Magwitch has given to him. However, he finds he must go abroad in order to realize his quest to become a gentleman “A new Pip appears, less laden than the old Pip with the chains of the past – he is glimpsed in the form of a child, also called Pip; and the old Pip takes on a new career with his boyhood friend Herbert Pocket, this time not as an idle gentleman but as a hardworking trader in the East, where Britain's other colonies offer a sort of normality that Australia never could” (*Culture and Imperialism* xvi). Pip will have an easier time becoming financially successful in the Indian colony than in London, where one must have both education and social connections. In India

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<sup>108</sup> Note that this is the same action that Père Goriot's daughters perform when they fall into debt.

men make their own success, as the subcontinent is separated from London's exclusive society.<sup>109</sup>

As Dickens' and Balzac's novels demonstrate, there are two possible alternatives: fleeing the city or coming up against it in spite of its flaws. Characters who flee the city do so because of its transformation and the chaos that results. Pip leaves London because he has seen what it can do to many of the people about whom he cares. His action is unsurprising because Dickens notes his dissatisfaction with the urban capital from the hero's initial arrival. By having Pip go abroad to India in order to realize his dreams of financially and socially elevating himself, he becomes a gentleman of independent means. Success does not necessarily have to occur in Europe's urban centers, but in its periphery as well. Pip finds financial success outside of England's national boundaries.

Imperialism and colonialism play an important part in the overall scheme of *Great Expectations*. Without Britain's colonial project of expanding its empire on a global scheme, neither Magwitch nor Pip would have been able to become financially secure. The colonial enterprise allows these marginalized characters to achieve financial success. Pip goes further than his benefactor, he attains social success as well, and by the novel's end is able to return to England as a gentleman.

It is through the money and Magwitch's toil in the penal colony of Australia that Pip is allowed to peruse the life of ease that his benefactor wanted for him. "I've been a sheep-farmer, stock-breeder, and other trades besides, away in the new world,' said he, 'many a thousand mile of stormy water from this'" (*Great Expectations* 317). Magwitch's forced migration to Australia

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<sup>109</sup> The Indian colony is just creating its own society with its own social rules and classes. This flexibility allows newcomers seeking to make their fortune to become a different sort of gentleman. This gentleman would be a man of his own making, without family titles and money to help him along.



has some benefit for someone living in England. When Pip and Herbert decide to seek their fortunes and great expectations in India, they are further benefitting from England's imperialist agenda. Pip and Herbert's migration to India is by choice, in contrast to Magwitch's forced exile and labors in the penal colony. They are also participating in a form of nationalism in that they are giving their homeland a more prominent place on the world stage. The quest for imperialism and the act of colonization frames the novel.

Pip's venture into the East India Company with Herbert can be interpreted as a new form of class conflict and idealization of the colonial space by those inhabiting the national center, where the colonial mission began in Parliament's halls

But, there was recompense in the joy with which Herbert would come home at night and tell me of these changes, little imaginings that he told me no news, and would sketch pictures of himself conducting Clara Barley to the land of Arabian Nights, and of me going out to join them (with a caravan of camels, I believe), and of our all going up the Nile and seeing wonders (*Great Expectations* 416).

It is with the East India Company that Pip is able to put his gentlemen's education to good use, by making his own way in life, and making his own means without depending on a patron to finance him, not even Joe who had paid his debt and freed him from the lime kilns. The East India Company allowed middle class men to ascend to wealth without the title that living in England would have required. Philip Lawson notes in *The East India Company: A History*, that the company was taking a downfall by 1857, around the time that Dickens was writing *Great Expectations*. In 1858, the company ceased to hold claim to the colony and its government was transferred to the British crown, per the *Act for the better Government of India*. This act stated "The Government of the Territories now in the possession of the *East India Company* and all

Powers in relation to Government vested in or exercised by the said Company in trust for Her Majesty, shall cease to be vested in or exercised by said Company” (c.106, 424). Therefore, Pip becomes an agent of the English nation-state and his citizenship is more evident in the colonial space than Magwitch’s was in the penal colony. Magwitch’s criminal status that relegated him to servitude alters his position as citizen. Pip’s position is opposite. He is an agent of the nation-state and exercises power over the indigenous Indian people. Therefore, Magwitch’s capital gains in one colony, Australia, have aided Pip in his position in a newer colonial space, British India.

The voyage to British India is not without its stereotypes, which may cause potential pitfalls for the young men. Herbert has an idealized view of the Middle East and Southeast Asia, much like Pip had when he first arrived in London as a young boy. He, once an *other* himself, projects *other*-ness on the Indian natives. Edward Said states in *Orientalism*, that it is the cultural imaginary which surrounds the Orient,

...the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality experience. Yet none of this Orient is merely imaginative. The Orient is an integral part of European *material* civilization and culture. Orientalism expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles (1-2).

What is most interesting is that Pip continues the colonial cycle, despite viewing the degradation of impoverished persons’ first-hand in London. Pip’s success came at the cost of the colonial *other*. At the novel’s end, Pip continues the British mission of subjugating people through colonialism, as he will subjugate the Indian people assuming the role of the colonist, comparable to those who mistreated Magwitch.

In earnest, the Britain's success is at the expense of the *other*, whether he or she exists within the center or on the periphery, in Britain, or in the colonies. Once again, an examination of how the British are viewing themselves in regard to an external other is needed. Culture and society in the colonies replicates that which is seen in the center, the city of London.

It is through Pip and Rastignac's adventures and social entanglements in London and Paris that readers can see how one can attempt to overcome the city. Dickens and Balzac present their protagonists' stories with an honest look at the city, its dirtiness, its difficult upper class, and social problems. These characters eventually make the city their own, by seeing the difficult experiences of others, namely, Magwitch and Père Goriot, both of whom have suffered mistreatment. The future may be promising for the two heroes. Rastignac and Pip come into their own understanding of the city by maturing during their negotiations of the urban space. Each man's identity is changed by the urban space, despite the many pitfalls they encountered. Whether or not they truly surmount the city cannot be definitely determined.

## CONCLUSION

The city is viewed in a slightly different way in each of the national traditions examined in this thesis. All of the novels have one common trait: the city is held up as a cultural center. It is place where success can be achieved by inhabitants of long date as well as by newcomers. The characters do not realize, however, that an identity change as well as social and geographical negotiation are necessary to conquer its challenges.

In *Great Expecations*, London is represented as the financial and cultural center of Great Britain. When Pip arrives in the capital, his childish views begin to change when he sees the criminality of the space. Newgate Prison looms over the landscape and threatens the population with the possibility of confinement and death. When Pip walks through the city, he sees a divided society. Mr. Jagger's home shows him the fruits of success, but with this, he also sees a life consumed by work. Wemmick's home Walworth shows a separation of work and home. Wemmick is a self-made man who has built his own home. Its self-containment keeps the possibility of the invasion from the criminality away from the comforts of home and family. The British colonial project has an underlying important role in the text. The capital is moreover conceived as the civilized center of the empire. Without the benefit of Magwitch's earnings from his forced labor in the Australian quarries, Pip would not have had the resources to fund his experiences in London. Pip could not have discovered the truth about London and would not have changed his opinion of it. Without Australia, Pip would have never had success in India. There, Pip is able to become a successful gentleman through his ventures in the East India Company. In *Great Expectations*, the colonies provide the space for success more than the urban space.

In *Le Père Goriot*, one can still see the criminality of the city, as the criminal Vautrin and his band permeate Eugène de Rastignac's urban experiences. For Rastignac, Paris means success not only for himself, but for his impoverished family. Rastignac's experiences in Paris show a society that has transformed after periods of revolution. Père Goriot is paradoxically a victim of this social change. His wealth was derived from it. His daughters benefit from it. Yet, Anastasie and Delphine impoverish their father in order to fulfill their desire to keep up appearances in the aristocracy to which their impoverished but titled husbands belong. In Paris, money and corruption pervade the urban experience. Without these two things, one cannot succeed. Père Goriot dies because of his daughters' lust for money and for the life it affords them. Rastignac attempts to rise above the material world of Paris and challenges the city at its own game. If he is to succeed in the city, it will have to be on his own terms.

Marisalada's story in *La Gaviota* is also a story of urban corruption. As in *Great Expectations* and *Le Père Goriot*, the city is held as a cultural center. In Seville, Marisalada can achieve her dreams of becoming a famous singer. The city and its society can provide her a space and an audience where she can mold her craft as well as her social graces. However, she fails at her attempt to enter into the salon of the Countess d'Algar, who could have greatly helped her in her quest to become a full member of Seville's society. Instead, Marisalada prefers the gruesome but colorful bullfighting ring. In this confined space, one can see the entirety of society, but at its worst. All are cheering for a murderous goal, the death of an animal. During this scene, the reader sees Marisalada at her most animated, but it also shows the way in which the city has effected her. The bullfight inspires her to reveal the baseness of her character. She has failed to notice the beautiful aspects of Seville – the walkways and the cathedrals – in favor of one of its most gruesome spaces.

In *Corinne ou l'Italie*, Rome not only functions as a cultural center, but provides a projection of the title character's spirit. The novel is the only one amongst the four examined in this thesis where a person is intertwined with a city's culture. In the novel, Corinne has the advantage of knowing the city and being able to navigate the urban space physically and socially. Without Rome, Corinne cannot perform her art. She bases her life around the city and she demonstrates her extensive knowledge of the city, its famous people and places through the tours she gives to newcomer Lord Nelvil. Art becomes a part of her life. Without her art, she cannot live. Lord Nelvil, who judges the city according to his own presuppositions and experience, cannot understand what the ancient churches and monuments mean to Corinne. These churches and monuments compensate for Corinne's lack of family in Rome. Lord Nelvil causes a division between Corinne and Rome upon his declaration of love for her. He cannot appreciate the liberal way of life which occurs in the city in contrast to the harsh and strict life of his homeland. He takes the place of Rome in Corinne's mind and this alters her view of the city. She cannot have the same life in Scotland as she would in Italy. She no longer takes comfort in the places that previously inspired her. The break between person and place not only costs Corinne her creativity, but also her life.

In all of the novels examined, the city takes on a life of its own. One can read the city and its personality through the characters throughout the narratives. In each narrative one can see how the city can imprison those who live in it and become caught up in the criminal acts that take place there. Pip and Rastignac show the readers the difficulties of both urban geographical negotiation and social negotiation. Both young men are able to free themselves from the criminality in their respective cities. Pip finds success outside of the city. Rastignac, because of his advantageous connections, is able to elevate his social position and gain entry to the Parisian

upper class. The men in these novels have an easier time successfully negotiating because they do not have the social rules inhibiting their actions. Expectations are placed on urban women requiring social perfection. Marisalada and Corinne fall victim to the city's influence over their lives. Both women are dependent on their performance skills to make successes. The women examined in this thesis must succeed in social negotiation to survive in the urban space. In all of these novels the city represents something new and different: a home, an inspiration, a stage, or a prison. For all of the characters examined who inhabit and confront these European urban centers, the city represents both a hopeful and sometimes fear-inspiring change.

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