THE EVOLUTION OF THE THEME OF CRIMINALITY
FROM BALZAC, TO HUGO, TO ZOLA

by

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ABSTRACT

In the work of Balzac, Hugo and Zola can be found a diversified literary concentration on the theme of criminality which mirrors the evolution of parallel social movements in France during the Nineteenth Century when significant economic and political changes were taking place as a result of demographic shifts and altered social patterns. This brief survey attempts to demonstrate how these three prominent, yet disparate novelists have dealt with the theme of criminality from conflicting viewpoints during a period which saw the rise of a new capitalist bourgeoisie and the establishment of large urban industrial centres.

This thesis explores the individual approaches of these three novelists and compares their criminal profiles through the study of at least three novels for each author. It will be seen that Balzac tended to adhere to the Eighteenth Century classical view of the criminal, while also leaning towards the newly introduced positivist thinking. Hugo's romantic vision of society is explored through his depiction of the criminal as victim; and Zola is examined in light of his experimental approach to the criminal phenomenon, which reflects the philosophical and scientific ideas of the late Nineteenth Century.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Social History

Nineteenth Century France witnessed the emergence of a literature which more than ever before reflected the social realities of the period. This was a time of hitherto unprecedented political and social unrest which has usually been attributed to the aftermath of the Revolution, the ensuing disruptive Napoleonic era and, of course, the far reaching effects of the Industrial Revolution. The first part of the Nineteenth Century saw the rise of a new capitalist bourgeoisie that was responsible for the development of urban industrial centres, Paris being by far the most formidable. The unemployed poor converged upon Paris from other parts of the country and were soon to become identified as a separate class known as the 'dangerous people'.

The 'dangerous classes' were thought to be easily identifiable, as their physical appearance was said to reflect their so-called moral degeneracy. It was believed that vice was the common denominator of the 'dangerous classes' and the root cause of their dangerousness. This contemporary attitude is amply expressed by Balzac in the opening paragraph of La Fille aux yeux d'or, where he describes the general population of Paris as "un peuple horrible à voir, hâve, jaune, tanné", and
then proceeds to pass judgment upon them by stating that their faces are mere masks "masques de faiblesse, masques de force, masques de misère.... masques d'hypocrisie" which avidly seek your gold and their pleasure.¹

The danger that the wretched living conditions of the urban poor might turn them towards crime was evident to the newly established 'middle class' who depended upon their labour for economic growth. Significant changes were made to the criminal justice system of the Ancien Régime, which implied reform, but which in fact facilitated greater social control. According to the Twentieth Century philosopher, Michel Foucault, the penitentiary system was introduced at the end of the Eighteenth Century by the bourgeoisie as a means of taming and controlling the undeserving poor for obvious economic and utilitarian reasons:

Les institutions disciplinaires ont secrété une machinerie de contrôle qui a fonctionné comme un microscope de la conduite.²

Not all historians entirely agree with Foucault's somewhat Marxist interpretation of the punitive system, but it would be difficult to overlook the fact that the authorities definitely felt threatened by the urban poor at a time when their misery had become increasingly apparent. In reality, the most frequent victims of crime were usually the 'labouring poor' who were less able to protect themselves against the dangerous elements of
their own social class. The authorities were quick to turn this situation to their advantage by emphasizing the gulf between "les classes laborieuses et les classes dangereuses".\(^3\)

The dangerous classes were accused of seeking material gratification without submitting to 'honest toil'. The 'honest folk' had a clear idea of who composed the 'dangerous classes' and were encouraged to fear them. The actual term 'dangerous classes' was coined in a book published in 1840 by H-A. Frégier\(^4\) and the concept it expressed remained reasonably constant throughout the early part of the Nineteenth Century. However, as the century progressed, the terms 'dangerous' and 'labouring' started to become almost synonymous, and the labouring class as a whole was once again associated with the threat of insurrection which had previously emerged during the Revolution.

It was felt that the lower classes in general should be repressed and reformed for the benefit of the common good, and to this end their vices were greatly emphasized and even enlarged upon. The evils of drinking among men and sexual depravity among women became the focus of politicians and social reformers to the extent that the notion of moral depravity among the lower orders became the generally accepted view of Nineteenth Century society. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that the literature of this period reflects the social preoccupations of the time and provides excellent historical documentation of the evolution which took place within the social attitudes towards those sections of society considered
most susceptible to criminal behaviour in France during the last century.

Philosophical & Scientific Influences

As with most issues which concerned social change, interest in criminal justice reform was originally introduced by the Enlightenment movement with the publication in 1764 of Beccaria’s essay Dei delitti e delle pene (On Crime and Punishment). In this work, Beccaria advocated for utilitarian and humanitarian reasons that the punishment should fit the crime and be no more excessive than necessary. These ideas were enthusiastically adopted by the prominent thinkers of the time, most notably Helvétius and Voltaire, and came to be known as the classical school of criminology to which Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) also belonged.

Bentham was inspired by Beccaria to campaign for a rational, humane and codified system of law. It was he who was responsible for the design of the ‘Panopticon’ which was an experimental type of prison where deviants could be segregated and observed for their punishment and society’s protection. Bentham’s innovative plans for the Panopticon were well received in 1794, but were not acted upon. However, his lasting influence lay more in the growing acceptance of the prison as a means of punishment at a period in history when such measures of social control were most economically expedient. Therefore, in spite of reasonably humanitarian intentions, the ultimate result
of classical criminology was not to make punishment less but to make it better and more efficient.

The next theoretical movement in criminology was that of "positivism" which refers to a method of analysis based on the collection of observable scientific facts. Positivist criminology tended to scientifically analyze the criminal rather than the crime, and possibly emerged due to the failure of the new system of prisons to regulate the conduct of the dangerous classes. Among those most prominent in this movement were the Italian physician, Cesare Lombroso (1835-1909), who developed the theory of the 'born criminal', and the Belgian statistician, Adolphe Quetelet (1796-1874), whose criminology reflected the new statistical movement and its concern with empirical social research. Early traces of this school of thought can be found in the work of Balzac who was forever quoting government statistics and whose descriptions of criminals in Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes tended to reflect the views voiced later by Lombroso:

Ces misérables, qui, pour la plupart, appartiennent aux plus basses classes, sont mal vêtus; leurs physionomies sont ignobles ou horribles car un criminel venu des sphères sociales supérieures est une exception heureusement assez rare.\(^5\)

By making this statement, which may not be unfounded, Balzac does nevertheless somewhat contradict his own opinions which more often condemned the crimes of the rich.
Later in the century, a more social and psychological approach to crime was introduced by such thinkers as Gabriel Tarde (1843-1904) and Emile Durkheim (1858-1917). Tarde believed that criminal behaviour was prompted by imitation and that society created its own criminals. A similar view seems to have been held by Victor Hugo who was obliquely criticized by Balzac in his 1845 preface to Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes when he stated:

Quelques plumes animées d'une fausse philanthropie font, depuis une dizaine d'années, du forçat, un être intéressant, excusable, une victime de la société; mais selon nous, ces peintures sont dangereuses et anti-politiques.6

One can only presume that Balzac was referring to Le dernier jour d'un condamné and possibly its preface. It would have been interesting to note his reaction to Les Misérables had he lived long enough to witness its publication!

This section would not be complete without a brief mention of the Darwinian theory adopted by Benedictin Augustin Morel (1809-1873) who developed the concept of psychological degeneracy. Morel, who practised at an asylum in Rouen during the mid-Nineteenth Century, published a Traité des dégénérescences physiques, intellectuelles et morales de l’espèce humaine et des causes qui produisent ces variétés (1857) which, along with the publications of Prosper Lucas and Claude Bernard, greatly influenced the work of Emile Zola.
Morel believed that degeneration literally meant a degenerating lesion in the brain which could be passed on from one generation to another. Furthermore, he maintained that:

The existence of dangerous and unsafe occupations, life in overly populated and diseased cities, submit the organism to new causes of decline and degeneration.  

It is easy to see how this concept of environmental and hereditary taint is amply reflected in Zola’s Rougon-Macquart family saga.

**Popular and Literary Influences**

France under the Restoration and July Monarchy (1814-1848) was riddled with alarm and concern about urban poverty and crime at a time when the level of literacy of the population had risen. During the Revolution, pamphleteers sometimes called "les Rousseaux des ruisseaux" (grub street) had published polemic articles which were intended to reach the masses by means of libellous sensationalism. Such publications as Hébert’s Le Père Duchesne and Marat’s L’Ami du peuple encouraged the people to ‘widen their horizons’ for so-called political purposes, but in reality they instilled in their new found readers a taste for literary intrigue and smut.

For those who could not read, the introduction of the ‘mélodrame’ around 1800 provided an excellent vehicle for the promulgation of popular theses, which very often included
poverty, criminality, illegitimacy and class exploitation. One of the masters of this literary genre was Joseph Bouchardy who often oriented the drama of his complex plots towards social problems. The melodrama was so popular that it was soon adopted by 'more respectable' writers, such as Victor Hugo and Alexandre Dumas (père et fils) who produced an 'ennobled' version called 'le drame romantique' of which the play Hernani (1830) is an example.

Melodrama was also fed into popular novels, and the most widely read popular novel of the Nineteenth Century was Les Mystères de Paris by Eugène Sue, which first appeared serially in Le Journal des débats between 1842 and 1843. This work, which revealed the secret life of misery of the population of Paris through a sequence of dramatic installments, was originally the money-making project of the snobbish Eugène Sue, who has been described by some as a socialist dandy. According to the social historian, Louis Chevalier, the labouring classes identified so much with the characters of this 'roman feuilleton' that their reaction eventually influenced the author to become a social crusader. This fact is actually evidence by his subsequent publication of Les Mystères du peuple in 1849 which has definite revolutionary undertones.

Apart from works of fiction, numerous other publications appeared during this period which attested to the general public's interest in urban crime. Many of these were produced by social reformers, such as Louis Blanc, Moreau-Christophe and
Proudhon, whose intentions were mainly to investigate the social problem and come up with some form of solution. In 1840, the Académie des sciences morales et politiques set up a contest whereby 2,500 francs (originally 5,000 francs) were to be awarded to the most valuable study that could identify those elements of the urban population which most constituted a danger to society. The winning entry was an essay by an unknown journalist named Eugène Buret, and the importance of this essay entitled *La Misère des classes laborieuses en France et en Angleterre* (1840) lies in the fact that Buret identified misery more as a state of mind brought about by urban dehumanization as opposed to simple poverty which did not necessarily induce a state of abject misery. It would seem that this analysis did not go unnoticed by Victor Hugo who started his epic tale of *Les Misérables* only five years later.

Another possible source of the lively French interest in crime and punishment may well have been the intellectual climate of the age. This was the era of romanticism, with its stress on sensibility, the colourful and the bizarre. This period saw a revival of the gothic novel, the development of 'les contes fantastiques', often imitations of the tales of E.T.A. Hoffmann, and many utopian-type literary contributions, as can be found in the works of Pierre Leroux, Saint-Simon and even George Sand. There was also, of course, a strain of sheer morbid curiosity in this literary interest in criminals and prisons which was demonstrated by the inordinate attention given by Parisian
society and some romantic writers to specific criminals, such as the murderer poet, Lacenaire. According to the historian, Gordon Wright, a prominent member of society "went so far as to obtain the embalmed hand of the guillotined Lacenaire and to display it on a cushion in his drawing room."13

The purpose of this brief study will not be to concentrate on the morbidity of crime in the context of literature, but to trace the evolution of the theme of criminality in the work of Balzac, Hugo and Zola. It would seem that these three novelists in some way mirror the social realities and intellectual attitudes which underwent a parallel evolution as the Nineteenth Century progressed. Although this subject offers material of an immense scope, research will be restricted to three or four novels for each author, even though additional reference might be made to their other works when appropriate. In the case of Balzac, the three novels chosen are Le Père Goriot, Illusions perdues, and Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes, as it is within these works that the theme of criminality is most directly addressed. For Victor Hugo, the focus will be placed upon Le dernier jour d'un condamné, Claude Gueux and, of course, Les Misérables. The choice of novels for Emile Zola may at present appear less apparent, but it seems that Thérèse Raquin, L'Assommoir, Germinal and La Bête humaine provide interesting examples of the gradual shift in the concept of criminality into that of degeneracy and social insurrection.
In addition, a brief character study will be provided of the notorious and somewhat infamous Eugène François Vidocq, who represented a definite type of the Nineteenth Century Paris criminal underworld, and who has often been identified as the model for Balzac’s Vautrin and Hugo’s Valjean, as well as numerous other less prominent characters in these novels. For chronological reasons, this short chapter concerning Vidocq will precede the main body of the thesis as it might assist in laying certain foundations for at least some of the material that is to follow. However, it should be stated that no in-depth study of Vidocq’s dubious literary efforts has been undertaken, as they were of questionable merit, although rich in pertinent information.
CHAPTER II

EUGÈNE-FRANÇOIS VIDOCQ

General Information

No literary study of the theme of criminality in Nineteenth Century France should ignore the existence and undeniable contribution of Eugène-François Vidocq. Although Vidocq did in fact publish several books and autobiographies relating to his considerable criminal connections, it is certainly not for his literary prowess that he has been remembered. He does, however, represent an important link between the criminal and judicial worlds of his time which he brought to the attention of his contemporaries through his publications and his highly controversial public image.

This man of humble origins was born in Northern France in 1775; after a tumultuous youth, he was condemned to prison and then the galleys from where he escaped several times before becoming a police spy, and eventually founding in 1820 what is still known today as La Sûreté. In 1827, he resigned from the Sûreté, and in 1828 he published his memoirs which were largely ghost-written and elaborated upon by two "réviseurs", Morice and L'Héritier, at the instigation of Vidocq's editor, Tenon, who wanted to capitalize on the public's newly found interest in criminal literature.
Vidocq should not, however, be exonerated from a strong personal desire to "cash-in" on his experiences and to paint a somewhat glowing picture of his exploits. According to his biographers, he was genuinely well thought of by many reputable people who came into contact with him, but it is obvious from his writings that he needed very little persuasion to sing his own praise. In his biography of Vidocq, Philip John Stead refers to an episode when the advocate Charles Ledru took Vidocq to a famous phrenologist, Dr. Fossati, who felt his skull and stated:

In the unknown person you have brought to me, there are three very distinct persons: a lion, a diplomat and a sister of mercy.

Upon later hearing this pronouncement quoted by Ledru, the inspector of prisons, Moreau-Christophe, who knew Vidocq well, felt that the phrenologist should also have included three other characters: "a fox, an ape and an old braggart."

It is perhaps due to Vidocq's strong tendency to brag that he became so notorious and is acknowledged to have served as the model for Balzac's Vautrin: the character who has been described as "one of the more complex, more dynamic and varied" of La Comédie humaine, as well as its "towering villain". However, it is not only as the model for Vautrin that Vidocq was able to serve Balzac; he also provided in his numerous publications useful information about the Paris criminal underworld which is amply reflected in the three Balzac novels being considered in
This study, most notably *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes*. It should also be mentioned that Balzac was not the only writer of the time to be influenced by Vidocq. After the publication of his memoirs, Vidocq was made the hero of several dramatic works both in England and France, and he also featured indirectly in the novels of such writers as Alexandre Dumas, Eugène Sue and Victor Hugo, to name but a few. It is often overlooked that Vidocq’s memoirs and subsequent activities furnished Victor Hugo with the material for a great deal of the events concerning the life of Jean Valjean in *Les Misérables*.

The Connection with Balzac

Jean Savant opens his introduction to *Les Vrais mémoires de Vidocq* by stating:

Evidemment, avoir servi de modèle à Balzac, voilà qui suffit à demeurer immortel. N’est pas Vautrin qui veut.... Et avoir inspiré plusieurs chapitres du massif chef-d’oeuvre qui s’intitule *La Comédie humaine*, c’est déjà un titre de gloire. Such a strong statement from the man who is acknowledged to have done the pioneer work on Vidocq’s biography seems to justify at least a modicum of exploration into the Vidocq/Balzac connection.

It is an historical fact that Balzac was personally acquainted with Vidocq and that they dined together several times. On one particular occasion, they were both guests of the
philanthropist courtier, Benjamin Appert, who had invited the famous public executioner, Sanson, to join the party. It appears that the conversation between the dour Sanson and the slightly disrespectful Vidocq provided Balzac with much useful material for his work. Apart from their occasional meetings and Vidocq’s publications, with which Balzac was undoubtedly familiar, it appears that they also shared a mutual acquaintance in the person of a retired judge, Gabriel de Berny, who also happened to be the aged husband of Balzac’s first mistress.

The influence of Vidocq can be felt in many of Balzac’s works, including the play entitled *Vautrin*, which was banned by Louis-Philippe because the actor playing the title role, Frédéric Lemaître, combed his hair "à la Vidocq", which apparently resembled the coiffure of the king, who resented being likened to "un ancien bagnard". Apart from these anecdotal facts, it appears that this play possessed very few redeeming features, but the same cannot be said of Balzac’s novels in which the shadow of Vidocq can most definitely be felt. Jacques Collin, alias Vautrin (and several others), even bears Vidocq’s physical characteristics, including his immense strength which Balzac meticulously describes as follows in *Le Père Goriot*:

Il avait les épaules larges, le buste bien développé, les muscles apparents, des mains épaisses, carrées et fortement marquées aux phalanges par des bouquets de poils touffus et d’un roux ardent.
Anyone who has seen a portrait of Vidocq would not fail to recognize the resemblance (see Appendix A). Many other characters in Balzac's novels, such as the police spy, Corentin in Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes, and Bibi-Lupin, the "chef de la Sûreté" in both these novels, are either based upon Vidocq himself or individuals described by Vidocq, such as the ex-convict and police agent, Coco-Lacour, who was his real-life rival, traitor and successor.

In addition to the balzacien characters for whom Vidocq actually provided the model or the description, many facts associated with the criminal justice system and the criminal underworld, "les bas fonds de la haute pègre", were also obtained directly or indirectly from Vidocq. Striking examples of this can be found in "La dernière incarnation de Vautrin" which comprises the last part of Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes. For instance, in a conversation between two convicts concerning the different gastronomic conditions in the three respective French "bagnes", Balzac has borrowed Vidocq’s words almost verbatim. Balzac writes:

Mon fiston, reprit Fil-de-Soie, à Brest on est sûr de trouver des gourganes à la troisième cuillerée, en puisant au baquet; à Toulon vous n’en avez qu’à la cinquième; et à Rochefort, on n’en attrape jamais, à moins d’être un ancien."
Vidocq's original version in his memoirs, which also happens to be part of a conversation between an uninitiated first offender and an experienced "cheval de retour" reads as follows:

D'abord vous serez nourri, et bien nourri. Car au bagne de Brest, il ne faut que deux heures pour trouver une gourgane dans la soupe, tandis qu'il faut huit jours à Toulon.\textsuperscript{12}

Balzac's in-depth knowledge of criminal justice terminology was no doubt acquired through his earlier experience as a legal clerk, but it is also quite likely that Vidocq offered his own contributions. Vidocq undoubtedly provided assistance with the "argot" spoken by the criminals in this last section of Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes where Balzac seems to take great delight in giving the reader a blow-by-blow translation of numerous colourful terms.\textsuperscript{13} It also seems likely that Balzac adopted some of Vidocq's opinions about the criminal personality, as his personal experience would not normally qualify him to make such sweeping statements as:

Il est nécessaire de faire observer ici que les assassins, les voleurs, que tous ceux qui peuplent les bagne ne sont pas aussi redoutables qu'on le croit.\textsuperscript{14}

Balzac was in no position to be such an authority on the subject, but Vidocq was certainly never reticent about asserting his "superior" knowledge which he no doubt shared with the novelist.
The Connection with Victor Hugo

Unlike Balzac, Victor Hugo never acknowledged Vidocq's influence in his work, nor did he advertise the part played by Vidocq in discreetly concealing certain embarrassing situations which had resulted from Hugo's sometimes less than exemplary personal life. In La Vie aventureuse de Vidocq: le vrai Vidocq, Jean Savant brings to light two circumstances which brought Victor Hugo into professional contact with Vidocq in 1833 and again in 1845 when Vidocq was acting in his capacity as private detective. Savant implies that the first "rapprochement" between the two men had some bearing upon the writing of Claude Gueux, but this seems to be pure conjecture, and Vidocq's other biographer, Philip John Stead, makes absolutely no mention of such a connection, nor for that matter has any other literary reference been found to confirm Savant's suppositions.

It is interesting to note that in actual fact Stead never once mentions Victor Hugo's name in his biography of Vidocq. However, it cannot be denied that the circumstances surrounding Jean Valjean's activities reflect and sometimes mirror certain facts associated with Vidocq. These include the method of Valjean's escapes, some of the people with whom he was in contact, such as Soeur Simplice, as well as some of the problems facing a released convict who was always obliged to carry an identifying yellow passport. It is quite likely that Vidocq also provided the physical model for Valjean. According to Jean Savant, the "sauvetage" of Fauchelevent by M. Madeleine
(Valjean), who was then Mayor of Montreuil-sur-Mer, is directly based upon a similar situation in Vidocq’s life when he too pulled one of his ex-convict employees from under a heavy cart, and had him transported to a hospital where the man was treated at Vidocq’s expense. It is certainly true that Vidocq’s business enterprise in Saint-Mandé, where he operated a paper manufacturing plant staffed by otherwise unemployable ex-convicts, bears a marked similarity to the activities of the philanthropist, père Madeleine.

On the other hand, Jean Savant vehemently denies any connection between Vidocq and the less than loveable Javert. Victor Hugo, however, actually makes mention of Vidocq when describing Javert, and refers to him as "un mouchard marmoreen, Brutus dans Vidocq". Javert, the son of criminal parents, born in a prison, shares with Vidocq unwelcome previous connections with the criminal world which both are anxious to repudiate by unswerving, albeit fanatical, adherence to law and order. It is difficult to believe that Hugo did not have Vidocq in mind when he wrote of Javert:

Il partageait pleinement l’opinion de ces esprits extrêmes qui attribuent à la loi humaine je ne sais quel pouvoir de faire, ou si l’on veut, de constater des démons, et qui mettent un Styx au bas de la société.

Evidence of Vidocq’s rigidity with regard to his new-found and blind respect for the law can be felt throughout his memoirs and
is amply exemplified by such frequent statements as: "Je me résolus à purger la société d’un tel monstre"¹⁹, and when referring to "criminal dens of iniquity", he states with complete complaisancy:

Je n’y regardais pas de si près. Quelque répugnance que j’eusse pour ces lieux, je n’hésitais pas à m’y rendre, à me familiariser avec les misérables qui les fréquentaient, et dont ma mission m’obligéait d’en purger la société.²⁰ (my emphasis)

Later in his epic novel, Victor Hugo gives a somewhat farcical description of four specific criminals in the section of Les misérables entitled "Patron-Minette". This is perhaps one of the weaker sides of the novel which will be referred to later in this study. Suffice it to say that this section was undoubtedly based upon information found in Vidocq’s memoirs, and once again Victor Hugo actually names Vidocq and Coco-Lacour in connection with these particularly unsavory and caricatured individuals:

À eux, quatre, ces bandits formaient une sorte de Protée, serpentant à travers la police et s’efforçant d’échapper aux regards indiscrets de Vidocq….. parfois se simplifiant au point de ne plus être qu’un, parfois se multipliant au point que Coco-Lacour lui-même les prenait pour une foule.²¹
Apart from Vidocq's indirect contribution to the theme of criminality in the literature of his century, he maintained a colourful, high profile for the remainder of his career. After resigning from the Sûreté, he became involved in a variety of activities associated with the underworld which included running a controversial private detective agency, lending money to high risk debtors and, of course, publishing exciting if perhaps highly exaggerated accounts of the criminal world. At the age of seventy in 1845, he decided to capitalize on his notoriety across the channel by staging an exhibition in London in which he featured himself as the principal exhibit. His plans to open a detective agency in London did not, however, come to fruition, and in 1846 he returned to Paris where he lived in somewhat reduced but comfortable circumstances until his death in 1857.

As Vidocq's literary works are not specifically being examined in this study, it would be inappropriate to elaborate upon him further at this point. However, additional reference may be made to other aspects of his influence in the two following chapters concerning the evolution of the theme of criminality from Balzac to Victor Hugo. It will be of interest to note that these two authors actually manipulated the facts concerning Vidocq to reflect their respective ideologies which coincided with the evolution of social attitudes towards crime between approximately 1830 and 1862.
CHAPTER III

HONORÉ de BALZAC

Félicien Marceau states in his introduction to a 1971 edition of Le Père Goriot:

Pour quelqu'un qui n'a jamais lu une ligne de Balzac, il n'y a pas à hésiter: il faut commencer par Le Père Goriot et enchaîner sur Illusions perdues et Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes.¹

He then goes on to describe Le Père Goriot as "un roman-carrefour" which is at the heart of the balzacien universe. There is no doubt that this novel provides an excellent starting point for the uninitiated reader to become acquainted with the complex network of characters which comprises La Comédie humaine. It is also true that the two subsequent novels recommended by Marceau guide the reader through a smooth path from which he can comfortably branch out.

For the purposes of this study, these three novels also happen to illustrate most obviously Balzac's approach to the theme of criminality which reflects both the attitudes of his time as well as his own personal opinions.

Like many early Nineteenth Century writers, such as Eugène Sue, Balzac started his career by producing pulp novels under assumed names which pandered to the public's thirst for
titillating yet reassuring tales about extraordinary criminals who had nothing in common with the every-day man and who never escaped justice in the end. These works of questionable literary merit were socially expedient as they contributed to the maintenance of social order while providing superficial entertainment. These novels contrasted sharply with the adventurous tales of the Eighteenth Century which tended to depict outlaws as more fun-loving, generous characters who often captured the hearts of the reader.

In most cases, the newly established bourgeoisie of the post-revolutionary period considered the previous attitude of indulgence and even sympathy towards literary criminal heroes to be socially dangerous, and it cannot be denied that Balzac shared their views. He was himself a bourgeois with upwardly mobile aspirations, and seemed to consider it his duty to uphold the social values of a class which was increasingly threatened by the potential revolutionary power of the masses.

Although greed and ambition comprise an integral part of *La Comédie humaine*, Balzac devotes very little attention to the criminal activities of the lower classes, and concentrates almost exclusively on the corruption of the establishment, where 'legal' crimes are committed daily in the never ending quest for success. In most cases, the populace is mentioned only when it cannot be avoided, and Balzac's coverage of the areas inhabited by this section of society is aptly described by the social historian, Louis Chevalier, when he writes:
Si les rues et les quartiers ouvriers sont mentionnés en ces récits, c’est que, dans cette vieille ville, ils se situent sur le ‘parcours obligé des commerçants pressés’. Pas plus que ses personnages, Balzac ne s’y attarde.³

Balzac’s concentration on the extraordinary criminal which marked the earlier novels of his youth, such as Annette et le Criminel and Le Vicaire des Ardennes, is still to be found in La Comédie humaine where the theme of criminality reappears and is specifically identified in the three novels mentioned by Félicien Marceau which are presently under consideration in this study. It might also be worth noting that these three works span a period of thirteen years from the publication of Le Père Goriot in 1834 to that of "La dernière incarnation de Vautrin" (Part IV of Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes) in 1847. They are also classified by Balzac into three separate sections of La Comédie humaine: Le Père Goriot belonging to "scènes de la vie privée", Illusions perdues falling under "scènes de la vie de province, and the four parts of Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes comprising part of "scènes de la vie parisienne". All things considered, this classification appears to be most appropriate as will be seen when these three novels are studied in more detail. More attention will be paid to Le Père Goriot and Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes as the topic of criminality is only vaguely suggested in Illusions perdues which
nevertheless provides the required transition between the other two novels.

**Ambivalence and Ambiguity**

Balzac’s basically reactionary attitude towards the criminal behaviour of the labouring classes was not without its contradictions. On the one hand he adhered strongly to the classical tradition founded entirely upon the notion of free will, but he was also influenced by the neo-classical movement which advocated some consideration of extenuating circumstances. This latter school of thought, more in keeping with the views of the Romantic period rather than those of the Enlightenment, placed some emphasis upon the circumstances surrounding the actual criminal rather than concentrating exclusively upon the crime. The neo-classical movement was responsible for introducing a system of criminal records which were to assist the judge in determining the moral character of the accused before passing sentence. Balzac was well aware of this new system and admired its efficiency:

> Ce calpin universel, bilan des consciences, est aussi bien tenu que l’est celui de la Banque de France.

It is amusing to note that he cannot resist making a comparison with the efficiency of a financial institution!

This ambivalence between two schools of thought is particularly noticeable in Balzac’s development of the two main characters in *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes*, where the
reader is confronted with the self-willed Vautrin and the weak but originally well-intentioned Lucien de Rubempré, who is led into criminality through vanity and lack of moral fibre. In Le Père Goriot, the ambivalence is less obvious, but it is not entirely absent. Eugène de Rastignac cannot in any way be considered legally responsible for the death of Victorine Taillefer’s brother, but neither could he be completely exonerated from all guilt, as he was aware of Vautrin’s plans of staging a duel and was not sufficiently motivated to stop it in time. It could be said that ‘extenuating circumstances’, i.e. the sedative that Vautrin slipped into his wine, made it impossible for him to act. However, even prior to being drugged, he preferred to send old Goriot to warn Taillefer in order not to miss his appointment with Delphine. Vautrin, on the other hand, never fails in this novel to represent the prototype of the clear-cut criminal who fits tidily into the classical concept, and who states quite categorically that Rastignac must choose between the mediocrity of the honest road and the ‘honour’ acquired through crime, deviance and corruption. According to him:

Il n’y a pas de principes, il n’y a que des circonstances: l’homme supérieur épouse les événements et les circonstances pour les conduire.  

In other words, he is fully responsible for his actions and proud of his free-will.
It has already been mentioned that Balzac was also influenced by the positivist concept of criminality which subscribed to the theory of the 'born criminal' who could easily be identified by certain physical features which reflected a degree of bestiality. It would seem that Balzac tended to apply this theory almost exclusively to the lower class criminal, as is evidenced by his description of the prisoners in "La dernière incarnation de Vautrin". Furthermore, he does not fail to mention in *Le Père Goriot* that Vautrin was a hairy, robust man who, when arrested, reacted like a wild cat:

Le sang lui monta au visage, et ses yeux brillèrent comme ceux d'un chat sauvage. Il bondit sur lui-même par un mouvement empreint d'une si féroce énergie, il rugit si bien qu'il arracha des cris de terreur à tous les pensionnaires. À ce geste de lion, et s'appuyant de la clameur générale, les agents tirèrent leurs pistolets.7

The animal-like features are not be found in Balzac's descriptions of his 'victims of circumstance' who fall into crime almost without being aware of it, such as Lucien and Esther. Women, however, are not exempt from a tinge of bestiality if they happen to belong to "les bas fonds" as can be seen in Balzac's description of Europe and particularly Asie who is ferocious, dark and ugly.

Perhaps one of the most interesting contradictions in Balzac's attitude towards crime is the ambiguity he ascribes to
the role of the criminal justice system. On the one had he admires the machiavellian investigation methods of the police who make use of questionable characters such as Peyrade, Contenson and Corentin and who eventually employ Vautrin, but he also criticizes the impotence of the courts about which he states:

Les parquets, les tribuneaux ne peuvent rien en fait de crimes, ils sont inventés pour les accepter tout fait... Le forçat devait toujours penser à sa victime, et se venger alors que la justice ne songeait plus ni à l'un ni à l'autre.8

In this particular instance, Balzac is actually referring to the fact that the criminal justice system may have the power to punish, but not the power to protect. He provides an excellent example of this weakness in the system which accounts for Europe’s symbiotic association with Paccard and Vautrin who are more capable of protecting her from the vengeance of a convict indicted on her testimony. By the same token, he condemns a legal system which can allow an honest man like David Séchard to be treated like a criminal when those who exploited him are free to prosper. At the end of Illusions perdues, Jacques Collin (alias Carlos Herrera) takes full advantage of this injustice when he points out to Lucien:

Il y a des gens sans instruction qui, pressés par le besoin, prennent une somme quelconque par violence, à autrui; on les nomme criminels et ils sont forçés de
compter avec justice. Un pauvre homme de génie trouve un secret dont l'exploitation équivaut à un trésor, vous lui prêtez trois mille francs......, vous le tourmentez de manière à vous faire céder tout ou partie du secret, vous ne comptez qu'avec votre conscience, et votre conscience ne vous mène pas en cour d'assises.  

Balzac does, however, allow himself the pleasure of at least suggesting the possibility of a divine justice which can on occasion intercede and punish those who have escaped judgment. The fate of Taillefer fils in Le Père Goriot could perhaps be interpreted as retribution for the murder his father committed and for which his friend was executed in one of Balzac's earlier novels entitled L'Auberge rouge.  It should nevertheless be emphasized that no actual reference is ever made to the 'cosmic puppeteer', and it is assumed that none is really intended.

La haute pègre

In spite of the contradictions identified in Balzac's conception of criminality, it cannot be denied that he leans towards the depiction of a criminal world which exists outside of society and which is governed by its own code of laws. There is almost a type of elitism associated with certain criminal groups such as "La Société des Dix-Mille" of which Vautrin claims to be a senior member and perhaps even their undisputed leader. However, according to Vidocq, this mysterious
association, which only accepted thieves who stole over ten thousand francs, was not based upon reality and existed only as a figment of the novelist's rich imagination. It would seem that Balzac's acquaintance with the criminal underworld was still quite limited when he wrote *Le Père Goriot* where his character study of Vautrin is a great deal more psychological than sociological and, therefore, belongs appropriately in "les scènes de la vie privée".

Although Balzac's knowledge of the criminal world at the time of *Le Père Goriot* (1834) appears to be restricted to a few words of slang such as "Sorbonne" and "tronche" for which he proudly provides a colourful definition, he becomes considerably more familiar with the mechanisms of the judicial system and the workings of the so-called 'criminal mind' by 1847 when "La dernière incarnation de Vautrin" is finally published in *La Presse*. As a matter of interest, this last part was not included as the conclusion of *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes* until several years after Balzac's death, when the definitive edition of *La Comédie humaine* was compiled.

It is probable that many factors prompted Balzac to turn his attention to the criminal world during this interim period which saw the publication of Eugène Sue's *Les Mystères de Paris* around 1840, as well as an increasing public obsession with crime, criminals and criminal conspiracies. This was a time of rampant paranoia experienced by Parisians of all classes, when criminals were seen or imagined to be lurking behind every
corner. They were often fictionalized as semi-theatrical characters who could assume "a multitude of Protean guises in pursuit of that eminently Protean entity, money." The myth of the Protean criminal who observed while remaining unobserved was "commonly amplified to produce the myth of the criminal conspiracy against society". This is definitely evident in Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes in which Balzac creates a network of criminals working together to prey upon society, and who closely resemble the network of police spies who conspire against them on behalf of society. Balzac suggests this quite strongly when he implies that individuals such as Esther, Lucien and even Nucingen are mercilessly manipulated by both of these two groups after they have had the misfortune of being caught in the middle:

Ainsi, tout en s’ignorant les uns les autres, Jacques Collin, Peyrade et Corentin se rapprochaient sans le savoir; et la pauvre Esther, Nucingen, Lucien allaient nécessairement être enveloppés dans la lutte déjà commencée, et que l’amour-propre particulier aux gens de police devait rendre terrible.

The model provided by Vidocq in his life and his Mémoires probably contributed significantly to Balzac’s promulgation of a conspiracy of "la haute pègre". The success of Les Mystères de Paris also played its part, in so far as Balzac could not resist emulating and surpassing the work of a less talented
rival, and he even admits in a letter to Madame Hanska that in writing the last part of Splendeurs et misères: "je fais de l'Eugène Sue tout pur". However, in spite of these obvious influences, Balzac was never the man to concentrate intentionally on what he considered to be mediocrity, and it can therefore be assumed with a reasonable degree of safety that Balzac intended to paint a picture of exciting criminal conspiracy which to him was far more interesting than the boring reality of the common criminal.

Criminal Profiles

Although Victor Hugo easily rivals Balzac with his succinct definitions of criminal slang, his criminal profiles pale in comparison with those provided by the author of La Comédie humaine. In Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes, Balzac manages to bring to life a multitude of colourful characters who are fascinatingly evil and yet remain sufficiently associated with the human race to maintain their credibility. It has been noted above that these criminal-type personalities are equally represented on both sides of the law, and the complexity of their nature is well worth a brief examination before proceeding to a more in-depth study of Balzac’s 'pièce de résistance' who is, of course, Vautrin.

Apart from Vautrin, the only other character directly associated with the criminal justice system in Le Père Goriot is the police inspector Gondureau. It has been said that he, more
than Vautrin, is based upon the legendary Vidocq, and Pierre-Georges Castex even points out in his introduction to the novel that in the original manuscript Mlle. Michonneau "alla trouver Vidocq, le fameux chef de la police de sûreté". It has already been stated in the previous chapter that Balzac borrowed from Vidocq to create many of his criminal characters, but it will later be seen that Vautrin also differed a great deal from his acknowledged model, in as much as he represented revolt whereas Vidocq easily complied with social authority.

Although the other characters in Le Père Goriot cannot be described as overtly criminal, many can be classified as the 'legal criminals' so often found in Balzac's novels, and some, such as Nucingen, actually show marked criminal tendencies. Mlle Michonneau also provides an excellent example of a person who could easily be persuaded to deviate from 'the path of righteousness' given sufficient financial encouragement:

Puis le sobriquet de Vénus du Père-La-Chaise décida mademoiselle Michonneau à livrer le forçat au moment où, confiante en la générosité de Collin, elle calculait s'il ne valait pas mieux le prévenir et le faire évader pendant la nuit.

Illusions perdues offers numerous examples of similarly questionable characters, such as the corrupt lawyer Petit-Claud, the money lender Métrivier, the treacherous Cérizet and, of course, the infamous Cointet brothers who 'legally' swindle the naive David Séchard out of his secret. However, we have to wait
for *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes* to encounter Balzac’s more poignant criminal profiles. It is only in this novel that the ambitious second-rate poet, Lucien Chardon, blossoms into Vautrin’s parvenu accomplice now known as Lucien de Rubempré. This does not mean to say that he becomes any more interesting; in fact Lucien never really stands out as one of Balzac’s great creations. He shares with Esther a certain lack of depth which deprives them both of any real credibility. This is particularly true of Esther, who was originally scheduled to be *La Torpille* and whose identity seems to fluctuate rather too dramatically from virtue to vice without sufficient justification.

It would seem that, in the case of *Splendeurs et misères*, Balzac concentrated his artistic energies on creating excellent secondary characters such as Asie, Europe, Paccard and, of course, the three police spies Corentin, Peyrade and Contenson. Of these three, perhaps Peyrade stands out as the most human due to his fondness for his daughter, however, Contenson’s propensity for dissipation also serves to lend credibility to the fact that such a man is unlikely to aspire to a position more elevated than police spy. It is interesting to note that the only one who remains alive to eventually defy Vautrin is the least vulnerable Corentin whom Nucingen saw more as "un directeur d’espionnage qu’un espion".20

Among the real criminals, Asie, aka Jacqueline Collin, actually rivals Vautrin for strength and ingenuity, but this is
perhaps not surprising as she turns out to be his aunt. Balzac's description of "la marchande à la toilette" is both vivid and convincing.\textsuperscript{21} Asie possesses many of the same skills as Vautrin in the field of disguise and subterfuge and is by far one of the most interesting characters in this novel. She does, however, belong entirely with her nephew in the classical free-will classification of criminal profiles, which is not entirely the case for her cohorts Europe and Paccard who tend to cleave together for protection.

These two characters fit more tidily into the neo-classical model which allows for some degree of consideration for extenuating circumstances. Paccard is described by Corentin as "un grand drôle de Piémontais qui aime le vermouth",\textsuperscript{22} and his "friend", Europe, is presented with at least a modicum of indulgence for her criminal behaviour. Europe, whose real name is Prudence Servien, is definitely depicted as one of society's victims who never stood a chance in the new ruthless industrial era:

Née à Valenciennes et fille de tisserands très pauvres, Europe fut envoyée à sept ans dans une filature où l'industrie moderne avait abusé de ses forces physiques, de même que le Vice l'avait dépravée avant le temps. Corrompue à douze ans, mère à treize ans, elle se vit attachée à des êtres profondément dégradés.\textsuperscript{23}
It is worthy of note that Europe is in some ways an exceptional character, because she is one of the few of her class to whom Balzac devotes a certain amount of attention and even extends some degree of pity. Although she is far less prominent than Esther, she is more credible, as she is not inflicted with Esther’s unrealistic fluctuations in attitude and behaviour.

The remaining more secondary criminal characters tend to fall reasonably squarely into the Lombrosian category of born criminals who can usually be easily identified by their lack of intelligence and their bestial physical appearance. Among this group are most of the convicts in La Conciergerie, such as La Pouraille, Fil-de-Soie and Le Biffon who are all too easily manipulated by Vautrin’s overwhelmingly superior intellect. Only Vautrin’s "ancien camarade de chaine", Theodore Calvi, is permitted to rise a little above the others in order to justify the favour and protection afforded him by the man who is undeniably one of Balzac’s greatest creations.

Vautrin

This complex and controversial character has been the subject of innumerable studies, and yet Balzac’s real position vis-à-vis Vautrin does not appear to have ever been satisfactorily established. It would seem that there is a definite evolution within the personality of Vautrin from his initial entrance on the scene in la pension Vauquer to his last ‘incarnation’ in l’hôtel Serizy. He is originally described in
Le Père Goriot as a rather vulgar court jester with tainted paternal tendencies which in some ways rival Goriot's twisted and almost perverted paternal feelings. It has been argued that Balzac's moral ambivalence, which can be found throughout La Comédie humaine, is personified in the character of Vautrin who epitomizes evil while often speaking the truth. Balzac's introduction of Vautrin is in itself paradoxical; on the one hand he is "un fameux gaillard" whose deep jovial voice was in harmony with his pleasing gaiety, yet in the same descriptive paragraph he also makes the menacing statement:

Sa figure, rayée par des rides prématurées, offrait des signes de dureté que démentaient ses manières souples et liantes.

In case this is not enough to put the reader on guard, Balzac continues his warning by unequivocably adding:

Il avait prêté plusieurs fois de l'argent à Madame Vauquer et à quelques pensionnaires; mais ses obligés seraient morts plutôt que de ne pas le lui rendre, tant, malgré son air bonhomme, il imprimait de crainte par un certain regard profond et plein de résolution.

As the novel progresses, however, Vautrin also reveals a side of his nature which has been developed as a result of his revolt against a corrupt society, and this becomes particularly apparent during his tête-à-tête with Rastigac, when he definitely voices the author's personal disillusionment.
It is through Vautrin that the views of the implicit narrator are transmitted, and for this reason he is endowed with overwhelming personal magnitude with which he is able to reduce those around him to mere puppets. Rastignac’s attitude toward Vautrin confirms Balzac’s ambivalence when he reflects after their long conversation, or more precisely after Vautrin’s long monologue:

En deux mots, ce brigand m’a dit plus de choses sur la vertu que ne m’en ont dit les hommes et les livres.  

As will be later seen in Splendeurs et misères, Vautrin is to have a lasting impact upon Rastignac who still fears his power when again confronted by Jacques Collin at the masked ball:

Rastignac eut le vertige comme un homme endormi dans une forêt, et qui se réveille à côté d’une lionne affamée. Il eut peur, mais sans témoins: les hommes les plus courageux s’abandonnent alors à la peur.  

This malignant power, coupled with superior intelligence, is never more evident than during Vautrin’s arrest, when Balzac endows him with unassailable dignity, and allows this branded outcast to challenge the corrupt society of his time in terms which defy any possible misinterpretation:

Nous avons moins d’infamie sur l’épaule que vous n’en avez dans le coeur, membres flasques d’une société gangrenée: le meilleur d’entre vous ne me résistait pas.
Those present during the arrest remain under Vautrin's spell after he is taken away and, like a Greek chorus, they collectively cast out Mlle. Michonneau who was responsible for denouncing him.

Although Carlos Herrera still possesses strong predatory tendencies when Vautrin reappears at the end of *Illusions perdues*, he never quite recaptures the dynamism he so obviously exudes in *Le Père Goriot*. Herrera is able to seduce Lucien de Rubempré with very little difficulty:

> La corruption tentée par ce diplomate sur Lucien entrait profondément dans cette âme disposée à la recevoir. 31

Unfortunately, it soon becomes evident that this hitherto unshakeable force is in fact equally seduced by Lucien whose irresistible is not always apparent!

The Jacques Collin of *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes* is a more overtly vicious character than the Vautrin of *Le Père Goriot*, in as much as he is actually seen to kill, swindle and procure quite deliberately and without any sign of mercy or remorse, whereas his crimes are not specified in the earlier novel. This viciousness is in some ways emphasized by the emotional vulnerability inspired by Lucien, i.e. he is willing to sacrifice everyone at the altar of the man who has become his reason for living, in fact his other self.

It has been argued that Vautrin undergoes a metamorphosis from an essentially masculine to a feminine personality. This
argument has been succinctly presented in an article by Marther Niess Moss who states that Balzac has motivated the actions of his characters by deliberately polarizing masculine and feminine psychological traits. According to her:

Masculinity is characterised repeatedly in terms of intelligence, cunning, strength, will and energy, while femininity is defined in terms of sensibility, sensitivity, weakness, frailty and passivity.\(^3\)

If one is to accept this interpretation, then it would seem that Vautrin's personality does in fact evolve from essential masculinity to feminine sensibility and weakness. With the exception of perhaps one early moment of wishful thinking in which Vautrin looks at the sleeping Rastignac and says: "Si j'étais femme, je voudrais mourir (non, pas si bête) vivre pour lui",\(^3\) it is difficult to recognize the towering colossus of Le Père Goriot in the broken, bereaved man who cannot bring himself to part with Lucien's dead body in Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes. However, life is suddenly rekindled in this extraordinary criminal who miraculously overcomes excruciating grief to once again throw the gauntlet in the face of society by offering to play by its own rules. He does in fact undergo a reincarnation which is a little difficult to accept as the Procureur Général, M. de Grandville, grants him his every wish, including the commuted sentence of Theodore Calvi, his previous chain companion and lover.
Like Vidocq, Vautrin succumbs to the power of authority and becomes a part of it, but Balzac does not permit him to become part of mundane humanity. He is quickly and unrealistically extricated from his brief moment of weakness to emerge ever fascinating and triumphant when he finally reflects to himself:

Ils me croient, ils obéissent à mes révélations, et ils me laisseront à ma place. Je régnerai toujours sur ce monde, qui, depuis vingt-cinq ans, m’obéit....

In spite of Balzac’s adherence to realism, he seems to have allowed Vautrin to carry him squarely into the realm of romanticism for which he severely criticized others. The real romantic approach to criminality within society will, however, he explored in greater detail in the next chapter devoted to Victor Hugo. Balzac’s ambivalence regarding Vautrin only serves to emphasize the ambiguity of his social position which prompted him to uphold society’s values while secretly resenting and even condemning them.
CHAPTER IV

VICTOR HUGO

While Balzac essentially viewed criminality as a unidimensional phenomenon whereby only the illegal activities of an individual are judged criminal, Hugo sought to enlarge the concept of criminality to encompass not only the individual lawbreaker, but also society as a whole which collectively perpetrates crimes against individuals. Having made this statement, it might be appropriate to emphasize that Hugo placed significantly more criminal responsibility upon the state and went so far as to proclaim himself "l'avocat des misérables" and "l'accusateur public du crime universel".¹

Born into an ultra-royalist family, Hugo initially upheld the values of his mother who strongly supported the return of the Bourbons in 1815. However, he was soon to develop a social conscience after witnessing the branding of a young woman in 1818 and the execution of Jean Martin in 1825.² Although Hugo wrote Le dernier jour d'un condamné in 1829, it is still speculated as to whether or not he originally intended this work to be purely an artistic project, as it has been argued that:

L’angoisse prolongée du Condamné révèle plus du souci d’obtenir des effets littéraires et artistiques que de traduire les réelles préoccupations pénales de l’auteur.³
Be this as it may, Hugo himself makes his intentions quite clear three weeks after the original publication by adding a short preface in the form of a one act play, Une Comédie à propos d’une tragédie, in which he venomously pokes fun at the ruling class who do not wish to be reminded of the unpleasant realities for which he holds them responsible:

Affreux - On était tranquille, on ne pensait à rien. Il se coupait bien de temps en temps en France une tête par-ci par-là, deux tout au plus par semaine. Tout cela sans bruit, sans scandale. Ils ne disaient rien. Personne n’y songeait. Pas du tout, voilà un livre... - un livre qui vous donne un mal de tête horrible!

The poetic style identified in Le dernier jour d’un condamné could easily be attributed to Hugo’s natural literary aptitude and his strong leaning towards romantic sensibility. Anyone familiar with the preface Hugo added three years later in 1832 would be hard pressed not to recognize an undisguised and somewhat clumsy plea for the abolition of the death penalty. It is quite obvious that Hugo was making no pretence of realism when he described a man with his head half cut off standing up and pleading for mercy!

Le supplicié, se voyant seul sur l’échafaud, s’était redressé sur la planche, et là, debout, effroyable, ruisselant de sang, soutenant sa tête à demi coupée
qui pendait sur son épaule, il demandait avec de faibles cris qu'on vînt le détacher.  

This heart-rending account could only have been intended to appeal to the reader's sentiment, and Hugo actually states within the preface: "Nous préférons souvent les raisons du sentiment aux raisons de la raison."  

This preface was written after the July 1830 three-day rebellion which toppled the Bourbon régime and placed the well-intentioned Orléanist, Louis-Philippe, upon the throne. This king was soon to prove a disappointment to the liberal intelligentsia to which Hugo belonged. However, the July Revolution was nevertheless crucial to a major reorientation of Romantic sensibility during the first half of the 1830's, when the most influential French Romantics began to consider social action no less important than individual expression. It is around this period that Hugo's political ideology started to become more in line with his literary ideas which already reflected romantic revolutionary tendencies.

Conflicting Ideologies

After 1830, Hugo starts to move increasingly towards socialist ideals, but he does not fully embrace revolution until Louis-Napoléon's coup d'Etat in 1851, when Hugo is forced into exile for a period of nineteen years. It is largely while in exile that Hugo wrote Les Misérables, but it is during the interim period between 1830 and 1851 that much of the
preparation for this mammoth work took place. The problems of society and its organisation were critical to him in the early 1830’s, and he was greatly influenced by social thinkers such as Pierre Leroux, a follower of Claude-Henri de Saint-Simon (1760-1825), and Charles Fourier (1772-1837) whose plans for a better world "demonstrate the interaction between individual feeling and collective responsibility typical of French Romanticism in the 1830’s".  

This particular interaction can easily be identified in *Claude Gueux* (1834) where the poet tries somewhat unsuccessfully to reconcile justice and class. In this short story, loosely based upon fact, Hugo places his belief in the sanctity of human life in direct conflict with human justice. He allows Claude Gueux to hack a man to death with his blessing after receiving the consent of his fellow prisoners. It would seem that in this instance, Hugo squarely sacrifices one of his most deeply felt ideals for the sake of another, and one is tempted to conclude that this is the direct result of the poet’s newly found political and social orientation.

Although such a flagrant conflict is not to be repeated in Hugo’s works, other less glaring contrasts in the poet’s ideologies can often be identified. When he is obliged to choose between his philosophical doctrines and his political passions, his passions usually prove to be the stronger. He has great difficulty reconciling his pacifism with his patriotism, as is evidenced by his reticence to condemn the revolutionary
violence of 1793 or the wars of the glorious Napoleonic era. He raises the insurgents of the 1832 revolt to the level of demi-gods, and yet he refuses to allow Jean Valjean to take Javert’s life at a time when it could almost have been considered an appropriate action. Jean Valjean’s clemency on this occasion can be seen to be in marked contrast with the violence of Claude Gueux, when one considers that both men had been equally provoked.

Hugo also demonstrates certain contradictions in his political beliefs regarding property. Although he openly condemns the bourgeoisie for their tyrannical selfishness and challenges society to improve the appalling living conditions which lead the working class into a life of crime, he never advocates communism. His ideal seems to be a benevolent capitalism which is exemplified by the general prosperity of Montreuil-sur-Mer under the altruistic guidance of Monsieur Madeleine. Hugo appears to be in favour of a greater sharing of property, but offers no solution to social inequality which would remain in an attenuated form. In his book Le Crime et la peine dans l’oeuvre de Victor Hugo, Paul Savey-Casard states appropriately:

La pensée du poète est moins nette en matière d’organisation du travail qu’en matière d’assistance.11

When it comes to assistance, the poet strongly advocated state intervention, but in the case of punishment he quickly changed his mind. For instance, Hugo firmly believed that, for the most
part, magistrates allowed themselves to be governed by the letter of the law and did not pay sufficient attention to extenuating circumstances when passing judgment. This opinion is amply expressed by the five year sentence inflicted upon Jean Valjean for the theft of a loaf of bread.

Although it could not really be argued that Victor Hugo ever seriously questioned the power of divine right, he sometimes wavered in his optimism regarding the people’s natural right to govern themselves. He shared with his enlightened contemporaries the theoretical belief that universal suffrage was the instrument of political progress, but he was not always confident that all levels of society possessed the required moral fibre to make what he considered to be the correct political decisions. He was bitterly disappointed in the people’s choice to abdicate their own power in 1851, and felt compelled to advocate certain limitations to their political freedom. He believed that social reform could only be achieved through moral reform, but in spite of his faith in the intrinsic goodness of man, he could not deny that certain individuals appear at least to be beyond redemption. He actually devotes a whole book in Les Misérables to "Le mauvais pauvre" who is, of course, epitomized by Thénardier and described in the following terms:

Lavater, s’il eût considéré ce visage, y eût trouvé le vautour mêlé au procureur; l’oiseau de proie et l’homme de chicane s’enlaidissant et se complétant
l’un par l’autre, l’homme de chicane faisant l’oiseau
de proie ignoble, l’oiseau de proie faisant l’oiseau
de chicane horrible.\textsuperscript{13}

\textit{Les bas-fonds}

Whereas Balzac sought to observe as well as aspire to
upward social mobility in spite of all its ignominy, Hugo who
belonged to the establishment, plunged into the depths and
brought to life hell on earth in the form of misery and social
injustice. It has been established that the poet was greatly
influenced by Dante’s \textit{Divine Comedy}, and in writing about \textit{Les Misérables} to a friend from his exile in Brussels in 1861, he
actually states: "Dante a fait un Enfer avec de la poésie, moi
j’ai essayé d’en faire un avec la réalité."\textsuperscript{14} In the famous
chapter entitled "La Cadène", Hugo describes seven carts
transporting the prisoners to Toulon, and it has been argued
that he erroneously meant to evoke the seven circles of hell in
Dante’s poem when in actual fact there were nine.\textsuperscript{15} The chapter
entitled "Le bas-fond" provides a vivid picture of living hell
and opens with a direct reference to one of Dante’s characters:

\begin{quote}
Là le désintéressement s’évanouit. Le démon s’ébauche
vaguement; chacun pour soi, Le moi sans yeux hurle,
cherche, tâtonne et ronge. L’Ugolin social est dans
ce gouffre.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

The "entities" which appear in this chapter cannot be considered
human, and have been debased beyond recognition to lend more
weight to Hugo's condemnation of poverty and ignorance imposed upon the victims of society. These human larvae are depicted with such horror that the reader cannot fail to feel revulsion, and at least some degree of fear for the consequences of social apathy.

Unfortunately, this powerful effect is somewhat diffused by the following chapter which introduces the four leading members of the criminal gang "Patron-Minette" in such a way as to reduce them to ridiculous caricatures. Although Hugo violently opposed determinist theories introduced by such thinkers as Hippolyte Taine (1828-1893), he shows some signs of adhering to the concept of the 'born criminal' put forward by the Lombrosian school when he attributes a number of brutish physical characteristics to the thug, Gueulemer:

Front bas, tempes larges, moins de quarante ans et la patte d'oie, le poil rude et court, la joue en brosse, une barbe sanglière; on voit d'ici l'homme. Ses muscles sollicitaient le travail, sa stupidité n'en voulait pas. C'était une grosse force paresseuse.

The theme of inherent laziness will be explored more deeply with Zola, but Hugo addressed the subject in the encounter between Jean Valjean and the younger member of Patron-Minette, Montparnasse. After Montparnasse has unsuccessfully attempted to rob Valjean, he is treated to a lecture on the consequences of laziness which will lead him to perpetual suffering at the
hands of the criminal justice system. Some of this anticipated misery is described in the following terms:

Et alors tu passeras des années dans une basse-fosse, scellé à une muraille, tâtonnant pour boire à ta cruche, mordant dans un affreux pain de ténèbres dont les chiens ne voudraient pas, mangeant des fèves que les vers auront mangées avant toi.\(^{19}\)

Such cruel and undue punishment might perhaps be deserved in this particular case, but in many instances human suffering and degradation are portrayed in such a way as to inspire pity and indignation in the most hardened reader. The departure of "la chaîne" from Bicêtre in *Le dernier jour d’un condamné*\(^{20}\) and the conditions of the galley slaves kept for months in the Châtelet prison under the Seine during the Seventeenth Century\(^{21}\) are two examples of Hugo’s deliberate delving into the mire to capture the emotions of the public.

The poet constantly makes effective use of the contrast between light and dark to symbolize the freedom of the sky and the oppression of the earth. A progression from sunlight to darkness can be detected in *Le dernier jour d’un condamné* as the condemned man gradually moves away from any glimmer of hope towards the perpetual darkness of death.\(^{22}\) However, the contrast is far more prevalent in *Les Misérables*, where the concept of darkness and light symbolizing depth and height are even conveyed in the titles of the chapters such as "Pleine lumière"
and "Choses de la nuit"; both chapters contained in Part IV, Book VIII entitled "Les enchantements et les désolations".

It is not by chance that Jean Valjean drags Marius through the subterranean tunnels of the Paris sewers only to eventually emerge into the light. This symbolic journey is contained in Part V, Book III entitled "La boue, mais l'âme", and the Book describing Jean Valjean's final hours is called "Suprême ombre, supême aurore" which in some way summarises his life. It could be argued that these constant juxtapositions between high and low, and light and dark, although well intentioned and characteristic of the romantic mind, have in fact resulted in an over simplification of the social evils which Hugo wished to expose and remedy. In an article published in 1985, Auguste Dezalay draws some 'enlightening' comparisons between Hugo's figurative treatment of extremes and Zola's more concrete interpretation of subterranean life in Germinal. He does, however, convincingly argue that Hugo's overpowering manichaeism did in fact have some influence upon the socialist views so vehemently expressed in Germinal which will be further explored in the next chapter.23

Criminal Profiles

In the novels of his youth, Victor Hugo created his share of extraordinary criminals, such as the bestial monster Han d'Islande, and in Notre Dame de Paris the sometimes demonic Claude Frollo who is somewhat reminiscent of Matthew Lewis' The
Monk. However, as Hugo became increasingly involved in social reform, his criminals can more easily be identified with the rest of humanity, even if they in fact often differ from reality. Generally, he tended to lean towards describing occasional delinquents who were driven to crime through hunger and despair. Claude Gueux, le Friauche in *Le dernier jour d'un condamné*, and Jean Valjean belong to this category, and all three were unduly victimised by the harshness of the criminal justice system.

It has already been seen that Hugo did not realistically bring to life any really hardened criminals, with the notable exception of Thénardier to whom he gave no quarter. This consummate evildoer possesses no redeeming qualities and can be seen to epitomize the squallor of the criminal world which has nothing exciting to offer. It is nevertheless interesting to note that he and his equally ugly wife defy all the theories of hereditary degeneracy so dear to Zola by producing basically untainted children of a completely different stamp. Gavroche is one of them and so is Eponine. So are those two little innocent boys left adrift in Paris and momentarily taken in by Gavroche who gallantly offers them the hospitality of his elephant on the site of the old Bastille.

Gavroche, whose name has become synonymous with street urchin, is a delightful character, but apart from breaking a few street lamps, he bears very little resemblance to what is generally known about the criminal behaviour of abandoned
vagrants. Charles Dickens' Artful Dodger, though still romanticised, is closer to reality in as much as he is actually a pick-pocket who actively recruits prospective young thieves for Fagan. Eponine, on the other hand, possesses a certain basic humanity which is far more convincing and endearing than Hugo's portrayal of the 'virtuous Fantine'. This idealized and angelic young woman described as "un de ces êtres qui sont tout ensemble faibles et horribles et qui font frémir ceux qu'ils ne font pas pleurer"\textsuperscript{25} is still endowed with a certain amount of childish vanity which prompts her to brag about her ability to read in an attempt to impress Marius.

Neither Fantine nor Cosette warrant any particular attention, but both women offer typical examples of the socially desirable Nineteenth Century female while serving mainly as catalysts for the development of the plot. Cosette as a child is a mere Cinderella figure, and as an adult she does very little to further our modern day expectations of feminine fulfillment. Fantine, although cast in the role of a female criminal, i.e., prostitute, never remotely resembles the reality of her station and merely represents the Victorian idealized image of the 'fallen woman' who remains intrinsically pure. The fact is that very few truly criminal types emerge from any of the three works under consideration. The condemned man in Le dernier jour d'un condamné does not even make any pretence of belonging to a criminal world, as the exact nature of his crime is never divulged. Claude Gueux is introduced as "un pauvre
ouvrier" with "une belle tête" who is befriended by an almost altruistic fellow prisoner, Albin, who offers to alleviate Claude's hunger by sharing his food. Although such cases of unselfish bonding may occasionally exist within the prison community, they would certainly not constitute the rule and would never be considered representative of prison interaction.

By contrast, Hugo paints a far more convincing picture of the effects of prison life in *Les Misérables*, when he poetically describes Jean Valjean's descent into a state of instinctual behaviour where only the occasional glimmer of humanity still remained:

Jean Valjean était dans les ténèbres... Il vivait habituellement dans cette ombre, tâtonnant comme un aveugle... Seulement, par intervalles, il lui venait tout à coup, de lui-même et du dehors, une secousse de colère, un surcroît de souffrance, un pâle et rapide éclair qui illuminait toute son âme, et faisait brusquement apparaître partout autour de lui... les hideux précipices et les sombres perspectives de sa destinée. 

In spite of the fact that Hugo gradually raises Jean Valjean to nothing less than saintliness by making him successfully endure innumerable trials and tribulations sent to test his moral integrity, he is nevertheless depicted as a potentially dangerous character when first released from his nineteen years of confinement. This is not to say that Valjean was originally
dangerous when he was sentenced to five years in the galleys for stealing a loaf of bread to feed his sister's starving children. The only time Valjean was ever a real threat to society was after society had made him so, and he would definitely have remained a significant threat if he had not encountered Bishop Myriel who quite literally redeemed his soul with two silver candlesticks, but not before Valjean had relieved him of his silverware. With the exception of the Petit Gervais episode, necessary for the development of the plot by making Valjean a recidivist and therefore eligible for recapture, Valjean undergoes an idealistic faith conversion and soon becomes the unrealistic epitome of goodness and self-sacrifice.

This romanticized image of the criminal as saint, though far removed from human reality, does nevertheless convey the social reality that "no Christian world forgives anyone, not even this man for whom there is nothing to forgive". In an essay concerning the "essential innocence" of the so-called "criminal" Jean Valjean, a sociologist, Edward Sagarin, accurately points out that the case of Jean Valjean emphasizes still today the unfortunate truth that in this world "there are only 'les condamnés'; there are none who can be called 'les anciens condamnés', although they might be called 'les anciens prisonniers'."

A character who has yet to be mentioned and who would definitely agree with this last statement is Valjean's nemesis, the immovable Inspector Javert. This much maligned police
officer has been the subject of considerable debate. It has been previously mentioned that Jean Savant vehemently denied any resemblance to Vidocq, and it has also been argued that some resemblance was in fact intended (see page 19). Although Javert could never be considered a likeable character, it could be argued that he too is a victim of society's intransigence. Throughout the interminable manhunt, Javert remains locked within his own self-loathing for the degrading circumstances in which providence saw fit to have him born. Born in a prison of a prostitute mother and galley slave father, Javert, like Valjean, is equally branded with the stamp of outcast which he never ceases to repudiate. He refuses to contemplate any deviation from the rules laid down by the authorities to which he is subservient, and he does not dare ever question the righteousness of the path he has chosen as his own means of redemption. When Valjean eventually proves to him that another way exists, he actually does go off the rails, as the title of the chapter describing his suicide implies "Javert déraillé".

Hugo's description of Javert's last hour brutally conveys the internal conflict which has suddenly been allowed to re-emerge within him and, inspite of his odiousness, or perhaps because of it, Javert is no longer altogether hateful and becomes rather frighteningly real, as he too joins the rest of humanity:
L'idéal pour Javert, ce n'était pas d'être humain, d'être grand, d'être sublime; c'était d'être irréprochable. Or il venait de faillir. He could not face the fact that he owed his life to the man he despised most and he could face even less the fact that he had failed in his duty, yet he could feel himself slipping towards what he feared most:

L'irrégulier, l'inattendu, l'ouverture désordonnée du chaos, le glissement possible dans un précipice, c'était là le fait des régions inférieures, des rebelles, des mauvais, des misérables.

Les Misérables

This immense novel was more than twenty long years in the making: parts were written before the revolution of 1848, and much was added between 1860 and 1862, when the book was finally published. During this period, the actual concept behind the word 'misérable' underwent an evolution which coincided with the social and political changes taking place at the time. In other words, the 'signifier' no longer exactly represented the same 'signified'. In 1847, when Balzac published La dernière incarnation de Vautrin, he described the prisoners in the "préau" as "ces misérables, qui, pour la plupart, appartiennent aux plus basses classes", and the reader is at no pains to understand that the term 'misérable' meant wrongdoer usually found in the lower echelons of society.
When Hugo first embarked upon his novel, he did not wish to emphasize the criminality of the wrongdoer, but the misery which led him to a life of crime and which kept him there. For this reason, the manuscript was originally entitled Les Misères when the writing first started in 1845, but his work was interrupted by the events of 1848 and again by the coup d'État of 1851 which turned the poet's attention to other matters. He did not resume composition of the manuscript until 1861, when the title suddenly changes to Les Misérables. There seems to be no recorded explanation for this sudden change in title, and it has been argued by many historians, social scientists and literary scholars that the new title unconsciously reflected a social evolution which was taking place in the Nineteenth Century as a result of political and economic change. Louis Chevalier explains this subtle evolution of the concept of crime and misery which eventually meld into one in the following terms:

Il ne désignera plus deux conditions différentes, mais le passage de l'une à l'autre, cette détérioration sociale que nous décrivons: une situation intermédiaire et mouvante, et non pas un état. Evolution interne d'un mot qui, sous une forme inchangée, traduit une évolution des faits et de l'opinion concernant les faits, aussi nettement qu'une ample description du phénomène.
There are several rather glaring contradictions within *Les Misérables*. We are told that "Les galères font le galérien" and yet we are faced with the saintly Jean Valjean who is redeemed through the kindness of one man. We also read that "Tous les crimes de l'homme commencent au vagabondage de l'enfant" and yet we are presented with the altruistic bravery of Gavroche. It is true that we are also offered Thénardier, Montparnasse, and the other less than attractive members of the criminal gang "Patron-Minette", but it has already been mentioned that for the most part these characters do not compare well with the villains in *La Comédie humaine*. The criminality which really lives in this novel is the borderline crime perpetrated out of need, ignorance and desperation.

It might be said that Victor Hugo did in fact achieve what would seem to have been his goal: he was successful in awakening the public's awareness to the plight of the wretched. The crimes most prevalent in this work are those endured by the populace, and not those perpetrated against the propertied classes. Within the innumerable pages of *Les Misérables*, we encounter child abuse, exploitation of women, false arrest, persecution of ex-convicts, abandonment of the elderly, and the list continues. These victims are the true 'misérables', they may or may not be truly criminal, but in society's eyes they are guilty of the crime of poverty and will nearly automatically be condemned for their trespasses, as in the case of Champmathieu:
Cet homme avait volé des pommes, mais cela ne paraissait pas bien prouvé; ce qui était prouvé c'est qu'il avait été déjà aux galères à Toulon.37

After the publication of Les Misérables, new criminological theories started to be introduced, not necessarily as a result of the book, but as a result of the social changes which are reflected in the book. Social thinkers such as Gabriel Tarde (1843-1904) and Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) advanced theories of moral responsibility and anomie (dérèglement) which implied that criminal behaviour was largely a result of social circumstances.38 They often found themselves in direct conflict with the adherents of the positivist school of criminology led by Cesare Lombroso (1835-1909) who advocated a more biological explanation for deviant behaviour. In his book La Philosophie pénale (1890), Gabriel Tarde wrote:

The majority of murderers and notorious thieves began as children who have been abandoned, and the true seminary of crime must be sought for upon each public square or each crossroad of our towns, whether they be small or large, in those flocks of pillaging street urchins, who, like bands of sparrows, associate together, at first for marauding, and then for theft, because of a lack of education and food in their homes.38
One might be forgiven for jumping to the conclusion that Tarde had read *Les Misérables*, as his metaphor concerning sparrows is suspiciously reminiscent of Hugo’s opening paragraph to the book entitled "Paris étudié dans son atome" which specifically addresses the problem of abandoned and vagrant children:

Paris a un enfant et la forêt a un oiseau; l’oiseau s’appelle le moineau; l’enfant s’appelle le gamin.³⁹

Inspite of Hugo’s unrealistic idealism, it should be acknowledged that he made a very significant contribution to the social thinking of his time, and helped to pave the way of progress by bringing the plight of the masses to the forefront of literature. It is true that he painted an idealized picture which easily lends itself to criticism, and it is equally true that he carefully avoided the realistic portrayal of ugliness which was all too often to be found among the urban, industrialized poor. This task was to fall to Emile Zola who was somewhat chided by Victor Hugo and many others for his frank and unflattering picture of the working poor in *L’Assommoir* in 1877.
CHAPTER V

ÉMILE ZOLA

Few authors have assembled in their works a more varied collection of criminals than did Emile Zola. The four novels chosen for this study provide examples of four different types of criminality: a crime of sexual passion in Thérèse Raquin; a homicidal maniac among other murderers in La Bête humaine; crimes committed as a result of alcoholic intoxication in L’Assommoir; and the insurrectional criminality of the crowd in Germinal. The approach of Emile Zola is however profoundly different from that of Victor Hugo, as it avoids any incursion into the realm of the metaphysical and ignores the concept of good and evil. In many respects Zola’s work is much closer to that of Balzac, as it is steeped in an atmosphere of materialism and determinism, but Zola has taken realism one step further than his predecessor by giving it a scientific foundation.

Zola, like Balzac, was ambitious. He was born in 1840 into a family unjustly impoverished by the premature death of his Italian father who was denied credit for the development of a canal system in Aix-en-Provence.1 He suffered considerable financial hardship during his early years in Paris which provided him with first-hand experience of the dreadful living conditions imposed upon the underprivileged. He shared with the Paris poor a sense of relative deprivation when being forced to
witness the Second Empire’s display of ferocious opulence which contrasted sharply with the general population’s struggle to earn enough to eat.

After several less than lucrative menial jobs, Zola set himself up as a journalist and found employment with a cheap daily paper called *L’Événement* where he was paid reasonably generously as an art critic. This happy state of affairs was to last only until the publication of seven controversial articles which earned him his dismissal in late 1866. Word got around that the highly opinionated writer attracted more trouble than he was worth, and during 1867, he was forced to accept literary hackwork for whatever payment he could squeeze from unenthusiastic publishers. It is during this time that he was commissioned to sensationalize legal documents from the files of the Aix and Marseilles law courts. He developed a series of stories under the title of *Les Mystères de Marseilles* which began to be published in serial form in March 1867.²

This series, which ran for nine months, was later that year published as a novel of which Zola had no reason to be particularly proud, as it appears that it was a "rather dreary catalogue of man’s follies"³ with very little literary merit. It did, however, serve to provide the novelist with time to complete *Thérèse Raquin*, which also happened to be based upon a previously published court case where a woman and her lover kill her unwanted husband and are subsequently brought to trial. Zola speculated that it would be interesting to create a
situation where the lovers' crime went undetected and in which the protagonists became rivetted together through fear and remorse.

The publication of Thérèse Raquin in December 1867 provoked a violent reaction from the critics who accused the young novelist of producing "une littérature putride" which was tantamount to pornography. Zola answered the critics in a rather pompous preface to the second edition of the novel by summarizing his so-called 'scientific' method in a way which laid the foundation of what came to be known as 'naturalism'. He states that: "Thérèse et Laurent sont des brutes humaines" and that "J'ai simplement fait sur deux corps vivant le travail analytique que les chirurgiens font sur des cadavres". Zola concludes his preface by giving his scientific approach the label of 'naturalism', and he implies that he belongs to a new literary group of naturalist authors which some ignorant and naive journalists have blindly called "putrid".

**Literary and Scientific Influences**

It has been speculated that the authors which Zola placed under the banner of 'naturalism' included Hippolite Taine, the Goncourt brothers and perhaps Hector Malot and Alexandre Dumas, fils. It is certain that he greatly admired Edmond and Jules de Goncourt whose book *Germinie Lacerteux* he enthusiastically reviewed in February 1865. It is to these "frères frileux d'Auteuil" that in 1868 Zola confides his plans to write the
social and natural history of a family under the Second Empire. In many ways, he wished to rival Balzac, whom he critically admired, by producing a series of interwoven novels along similar lines to *La Comédie humaine*. This idea was first instilled in him by Hippolite Taine who, when asked to review *Thérèse Raquin* and *Madeleine Férat*, wrote to Zola two long letters suggesting that he discard the intensely dramatised miniatures of domestic life and apply himself instead to the larger canvas and wider horizons of contemporary life and social movements. When defending his position to the somewhat sceptical and haughty Goncourt brothers, Zola is said to have blurted out:

> Les caractères de nos personnages sont déterminés par les organes génitaux. C'est de Darwin! La littérature, c'est ça!"\(^\textsuperscript{10}\)

Zola's reference to Darwin is hardly surprising given the times, but Armand Lanoux convincingly argues in his preface to the *Rougon-Macquart* chronicle that the remark concerning genital organs was entirely original and could definitely be said to form the basis of the driving social force behind much of Zola’s future work. This is already evident in *Thérèse Raquin* and is certainly to become a central component of *La Bête humaine*, where at least three of the murders are committed for a variety of sexually based reasons.

Since adolescence, Zola had been fascinated by physiology and he devoured Clémence Royer's 1864 translation of Darwin's *On
the Origin of Species by means of Natural Selection (1859). Prior to this, he had read Prosper Lucas' *Traité philosophique et physiologique de l'Hérédité naturelle* which had first appeared in 1850. At the time, ideas on heredity were so speculative that it suited Zola to use the information provided in this work to establish his Rougon-Macquart family tree. Zola had a tendency to adopt scientific theories and add his own imaginative extensions with rather more enthusiasm than discernment, and it is no doubt for this reason that he happily annexed the theory of experimentation put forward by Claude Bernard in his 1865 book entitled *Introduction à la médecine expérimentale*.

Zola's attempt to impose medical experimental methodology on what he called 'le roman naturaliste', which he was to rename 'le roman expérimental', was severely criticized by his contemporaries. Today, Zola's experimental theories are considered even more 'fragile', and the concept of literary naturalism is attributed almost exclusively to the work of Emile Zola. Although the biological methodology of Claude Bernard is still today considered sound, and the ideas of Prosper Lucas on heredity are beginning to re-emerge, many of the wilder scientific theories introduced in the Nineteenth Century and eagerly adopted by Zola have long since been refuted, but they nevertheless contributed to the expansion of the rational scientific method of research originally introduced during the Enlightenment.
In the realm of criminology, the Classical School of the Enlightenment, which stressed free will and placed its emphasis upon the crime rather than the criminal, was being attacked by the Lombrosian positivists who were shifting the focus of investigation from the crime back to the criminal. As previously mentioned, Cesare Lombroso developed the concept of the 'born criminal' whom he believed to be a victim of atavism. According to Lombroso, atavistic tendencies implied a 'throwback' to an earlier stage of evolution which was characterized by inferior morphological features and primitive behaviour in direct conflict with the rules of 'civilized society'. Zola's literary contribution to this theory can be found in the character of Jacques Lantier whose compulsive desire to kill a woman is described as "une rancune amassée de mâle en mâle, depuis la première tromperie au fond des cavernes".

Zola's Rougon-Macquart chronicle also follows lines laid out by Bénédictin Augustin Morel in his Traité des Dégénérescences (1857) in which he developed the theory that degeneration could be traced to "an essential lesion in the central nervous system". This lesion could be formed by environmental factors, such as poor diet, alcoholism and unsanitary living conditions, and could cause organic deficiencies which could be passed on from one generation to another. Morel's degeneration myth of hereditary taint has now been completely discredited, but at the time Zola was laying the
foundations for Les Rougon-Macquart, the theory was being given a great deal of attention. These ideas did in fact form the basis of the neurotic disequilibrium and the propensity for alcoholic abuse passed on by the union of Adelaide Fouques (Tante Dide) and her lover Macquart. It is even interesting to note that out of the twenty novels in the Rougon-Macquart series only five are dedicated to the more stable Rougon side of the family and, perhaps with the exception of Le Docteur Pascal, they make for far less exciting reading.

Apart from Thérèse Raquin which is not part of the Rougon-Macquart chronicle, the novels under consideration in this study belong to the Macquart branch of the family, and together with Nana and possibly L'Oeuvre which are not included here, they are generally considered to represent Zola's finest work. It would seem that Gervaise and her tainted progeny provided the best examples of Zola's literary creation. The degenerative legacy of Macquart is clearly evident in L'Assommoir which slowly and painfully depicts Gervaise's gradual and predetermined descent into ignominious death:

Elle devenait idiote, elle ne songeait seulement pas à se jeter du sixième sur le pavé de la cour, pour en finir. La mort devait la prendre petit à petit, morceau par morceau, en la traînant ainsi jusqu'au bout dans la sacrée existence qu'elle s'était faite.¹⁸
Violence, Sex and Death

No social history of the late Nineteenth Century would be complete without reference to the work of Emile Zola, and Henri Mitterand points out that Louis Chevalier "ne craint pas d’utiliser l’oeuvre de Zola pour écrire l’histoire de la société parisienne du XIXe siècle". It is, however, also true that Zola’s literary achievements have often been regarded with suspicion and in some cases outright disapproval. It has already been mentioned that many of Zola’s contemporaries, among them Victor Hugo, were shocked by what they considered to be his tasteless emphasis of hitherto unmentionable subjects and, because his novels were bestsellers, the author was often accused of riding on the tide of sensationalism.

It cannot be denied that Zola’s approach to realism demanded that all aspects of life be examined in detail, and he definitely believed in the overriding importance of sexual urges in determining behaviour. In some respects, he was ahead of his time by foreshadowing the psychoanalytical theories later put forward by Freud, Jung and Adler. In Germinal, the aggression of the crowd is often directly associated with sexuality, as in the case of the women’s posthumous castration of Maigrat. Sex and violence go hand in hand in Thérèse Raquin, and this same theme is later elaborated upon in La Bête humaine to which is added Lombroso’s theory of atavism. In L’Assommoir, violence, although not specifically associated with sex, is directly attributed to alcoholism and few novels offer a more appalling
picture of physical child abuse than Zola in the following
description of Lalie’s pathetic demise at the hands of her
brutal, alcoholic father who had previously beaten her mother to
death:

Après avoir tué la maman d’un coup de pied, est-ce qu’il ne venait pas de massacrer la fille! Les deux bons anges seraient dans la fosse, et lui n’aurait plus qu’à crever comme un chien au coin d’une borne.\textsuperscript{21}

The language in this quotation also offers an example of Zola’s ‘naturalist’ indirect free style which was meant to portray more vividly the actual speech of those belonging to the lower level of society under scrutiny in \textit{L’Assommoir}. This use of popular expressions such as the verb ‘crever’ definitely contributed to the unsavory flavour of the subject matter, but was widely criticized at the time as the author was accused of pandering to the semi-literate taste of a newly identified reading public.

Within each of the four novels in this study can be found the recurring theme of downward mobility, which in most cases culminates in death. This theme is often symbolized by a fall in either a figurative or realistic sense. When Laurent first touches Thérèse Raquin, she slips to the ground while accepting his embrace: "elle s’abandonna, glissant par terre, sur le carreau", and, of course, "l’acte fut silencieux et brutal".\textsuperscript{22} Later Camille dies by falling into the water, and from that point on the two murderers quite literally start to fall apart,
until they eventually fall together in death on the same floor where they had first fallen:

Ils tombèrent l’un sur l’autre, foudroyé, trouvant enfin une consolation dans la mort... Les cadavres restèrent toute la nuit sur le carreau de la salle à manger.23

In L’Assommoir, we encounter Coupeau’s fall from the roof which marks the beginning of his downward journey into alcoholic oblivion. The downward mobility in Germinal is to some extent symbolized by the crumbling of the mine brought about by Souvarine’s wilful destruction. La Bête humaine offers two symbolically significant falls: Grandmorin’s fall from the train which starts the destruction of the marriage between Roubaud and Séverine, and Jacques’ final fall with Pecqueux which puts an end to his uncontrollable madness and activates the uncontrollable wheels of progress symbolized by the runaway train.

However, La Bête humaine is to be the last of Zola’s sombre novels. It has been argued that the novel was written as a response to Dostoyevsky’s Crime and Punishment. According to Armand Lanoux, Zola wished to create a physiological criminal who would stand in direct contrast with Dostoyevsky’s metaphysical Raskolnikov. The latter representing a cerebral agent possessed of free will, and the former, Jacques Lantier, being the unwilling victim of a hereditary will to kill.24
Although the publication of *La Bête humaine* (1890) occurred soon after Zola’s meeting with Jeanne Rozerot with whom he was soon to father two children, the preparation for the novel had taken place previously, and it is said that his obsession with sex and violence was significantly diminished after he became more actively involved in the former. It is true that Zola had formerly described himself as "un chaste" and it is likely that Freud could have provided an interesting explanation for Zola’s earlier fixation on sex, violence and death as the primary driving force behind most human behaviour.

**Criminal Profiles**

Much has been written about Zola’s crowds, Zola’s Paris, Zola’s myths and even Zola’s violence, but very little attention has been accorded to Zola’s criminals. In spite of their numbers, none of Zola’s prominent criminals have really stood the test of time, and this could perhaps be attributed to the fact that they were too much the product of a positivist vision to maintain their credibility. Although Thérèse and Laurent often arouse feelings of horror and disgust, they are so devoid of humanity that they fail to ring true. Zola states in his preface: "J’ai voulu étudier des tempéraments, et non des caractères", and this is precisely what he has done. These two ‘non-characters’ can more easily be compared to laboratory rats than to human beings, but one cannot say that Zola has failed to
bring them to life as it would seem that he had no intention of doing so.

The same cannot quite be said of Jacques Lantier, who is the product of a more mature Zola. It is fortunate that the author sufficiently moderated his adherence to positivism by only subtly borrowing some of Lombroso’s theories when describing Lantier’s physical characteristics:

Il venait d’avoir vingt-six ans, également de grande taille, très brun, beau garçon au visage rond et régulier, mais que gâtaient des mâchoires trop fortes.\(^{27}\) (my emphasis)

Jacques Lantier does not arouse the same horror as Laurent because he is endowed with a conscience which makes it impossible for him to kill except when overcome by his hereditary, instinctual urge. However, it might be argued that this character would have been more credible had Zola not attributed his uncontrollable and unwanted thirst for blood to any primordial origin. It is known that such killers exist, but no satisfactory explanation has yet been given for their behaviour, although many theories such as those of Lombroso have been adopted and later discarded.

Those criminals who warrant more attention are the less central characters, and those who are usually considered socially marginal. Three of the four novels in this study can provide several examples of criminal behaviour which is more the result of socialization than hereditary taint. One such
character is the Maheu’s crippled son, Jeanlin, in *Germinal*; he becomes detached from the group due to his accident and develops pathological tendencies which lead him to victimize other children, steal from his starving family and eventually kill an innocent, unsuspecting young soldier for the sheer pleasure of it. When asked by Etienne why he committed such a crime, all Jeanlin could say was: "Je ne sais pas, j’en avais envie." Etienne is later to understand Jeanlin’s uncontrolled act of animal agression as he experiences a similar satisfaction after killing Chaval. Zola, however, provides no specific explanation for Jeanlin’s moral deterioration, but he does imply through Etienne’s indirect discours that such abominable regressions are the inevitable consequence of social injustice:

> Quelle abominable chose, de se tuer entre pauvres diables, pour les riches.²⁹

Similar reasoning is to be found in *L’Assommoir*, where Nana’s insubordination and rapid slide into promiscuity can be directly attributed to her unsavory home environment and her lack of respect for parental authority. Both she and Jeanlin conform with modern-day conceptions of juvenile delinquency which is believed to often originate from the hardships encountered by socially disadvantaged families. Colette Becker convincingly points out in her article "La condition ouvrière dans *L’Assommoir*: un inéluctible enlisement" that Zola is condemning a society which reduces its underprivileged members
to a level where normal standards of morality and self-respect are impossible to uphold due to the dehumanizing nature of their work and living conditions. She states that Gervaise's decline was beyond her control just as much for environmental reasons as because of any hereditary predisposition to alcoholism.  

La Bête humaine, which Marc Bernard describes as nothing more than "une suite de meurtres", also offers its fair share of socially determined criminality. One might suggest that the central character, Jacques Lantier, whom Zola casts as the token criminal of the Rougon-Macquart progeny, is far less interesting than some of the peripheral characters who either commit murder or are falsely accused of having done so. Among these is Misard who slowly poisons his wife, Phasie, for reasons of greed and who is never even detected because of the social insignificance of his victim. This crime is placed in sharp contrast with the murder of Président Grandmorin, a man of dubious moral character but powerful political connections. Roubaud, who killed Grandmorin out of jealousy, is never prosecuted for this murder as it is feared that such measures could reveal the victim's previous sexual indiscretions. Roubaud, however, like Laurent, quickly goes to seed after committing his crime and is eventually wrongfully convicted of killing his wife, Séverine, when he was originally scheduled to be her victim.

In spite of these numerous victims of murder, the greatest victim of injustice is Cabuche, a man who was once responsible for an accidental death, and who consequently becomes the
scape-goat. This simple-minded quarryman is automatically and conveniently suspected of Grandmorin's murder and later convicted of knifing Séverine when in fact he is entirely innocent. This character is definitely constructed along hugolien lines, as he once served five years in prison for killing a man in a brawl and is never to be forgiven for his crime. Cabuche is made to fit the mould of what was commonly expected of a criminal-type both physically and socially, as is evident by Zola's description of the impression he makes in court:

Quant à Cabuche, il était bien tel qu'on se l'imaginait, vêtu d'une longue blouse bleue, le type même de l'assassin, des poings énormes, des mâchoires de carnassier, enfin un de ces gaillards qu'il ne fait pas bon rencontrer au coin d'un bois. (my emphasis)

However, in actual fact, contrary to all appearances, Cabuche was morally superior to all the other characters in the novel. By raising Cabuche to the level of a martyr, Zola contradicts his own positivist beliefs, as he openly accuses the ruling class of injustice by expediently exploiting pseudo-scientific social darwinism to protect its political power.

The Criminal Machine

Although the machine has featured prominently in Twentieth Century literature, Zola was one of the first to bestow upon machines a social role which was usually far from salutary.
'La machine' could actually be considered a key word in Zola’s work. His novels often portray the machine as an extension and even a personification of bourgeois industrial power which indifferently exploits, corrupts and kills those who have the misfortune to be subjected to its needs or sacrificed to its uncontrollable side effects. In two cases the actual titles of the novels suggest the criminal aspects of machines, namely *L’Assommoir* and *La Bête humaine*.

The word 'assommoir' was a popular term used to describe a drinking establishment, and obviously the noun is derived from the verb 'assommer' which means to overwhelm, to knock senseless and to kill. The machine which was actually responsible for performing such a crime was the still 'alambic' which looms over Gervaise and her entourage. This machine is quite literally possessed of animated powers which first frighten, then threaten and eventually overcome Gervaise. The intrusive malevolence of this distilling machine can be felt throughout the novel, and can easily be identified as the symbol of growing industrialisation which slowly swallows its victims indiscriminately:

L'alambic, sourdement, sans une flamme, sans une gaieté dans les reflets éteints de ses cuivres, continuait, laissait couler sa sueur d'alcool, pareil une source lente et entêtée, qui à la longue devait envahir la salle, se répandre sur les boulevards extérieurs, inonder le trou immense de Paris.
Another machine within this same novel which also symbolically diminishes the autonomy and self-respect of the working man is the rivetting machine which can perform the same work as the blacksmith Goujet whose superior skills and exemplary lifestyle are only to be repaid with the indignity of obsolescence. This point is well illustrated by Sandy Petry who states in an article concerning the theme of work in L’Assommoir:

Le texte pousse à l’extrême le parallélisme entre la tâche effectuée par la machine et celle que vient de faire Goujet. Tous deux créent le même objet... Mais cette identité ne sert qu’à souligner une opposition capitale, l’absence de participation humaine au travail qui termine la séquence à la forge.\(^{35}\)

This absence of human participation in work led to a state of deregulation which Emile Durkheim labelled ‘anomie’. This is also to be found in Germinal where the miners are completely overshadowed by the ominous presence of the pit which Zola called ‘le Voreux’; a name which invites an immediate association with the idea of voraciousness (voracité). This rapacious hole houses numerous machines such as pumps, lifts and various other steam engines which serve to crush and ingest human fodder for the sole purpose of extracting coal. Like the still in L’Assommoir, le Voreux permeates everything around it
and is often compared to a flesh-eating, fire-breathing monster which Souvarine attempts to kill as he would a human enemy:

Il y mettait une férocity comme s’il eût joué du couteau dans la peau d’un être vivant qu’il exécrerait. Il la tuerait à la fin, cette bête mauvaise, à la gueule toujours ouverte, qui avait englouti tant de chair humaine!  

Of course, the image of the beast embodied in a machine is exemplified in La Bête humaine, where la Lison personifies both the aggressor and the victim. It could be said that la Lison rivals Jacques Lantier for first place as criminal protagonist in the novel. She, like her human male counterpart, embodies an irresistible urge to destroy, while at the same time offering Lantier her submissive and obedient loyalty which is itself first impaired by her breakdown in the snow and eventually destroyed by her rival, Flore. The locomotive, be it la Lison or her successor, is frequently responsible for ‘cutting’ people to death, as in the case of Flore who throws herself in front of a train in retribution for her crime, and more notably Jacques and Pecqueux who are quite literally cut into small pieces:

Les deux hommes, tombés ensemble, entraînés sous les roues par la réaction de la vitesse, furent coupés, hachés, dans leur étreinte, dans cette effroyable embrassade, eux qui avaient si longtemps vécu en frères. On les retrouva sans tête, sans pieds, deux
troncs sanglants qui se serreraient encore, comme pour s’étouffer.38

The criminal nature of the train can also be extended to the role of accessory by its projection of a red light which is reflected into the room where Jacques is alone with Séverine. This red reflection, suggestive of blood, significantly contributes to Jacques’ desire to kill, and it is a recurring theme in the Rougon-Macquart series. It is also to be found in Thérèse Raquin where the fire reflects threateningly in Laurent’s face:

Elle se tourna vers Laurent sur le visage duquel le foyer envoyait en ce moment un large reflet rougeâtre, elle regarda ce visage sanglant, et frissonna.39

Apart from machines, buildings and locations are also used as symbols of engulfing malevolence. These include the oppressive ‘passage du Pont-Neuf’ in Thérèse Raquin, ‘la grande maison’ in L’Assommoir, and ‘le coron’ in Germinal. By evoking the active participation of machines and places, Zola has managed to create the impression that the human beings in his novels are being driven and destroyed by forces entirely beyond their control. Even the crowd in Germinal, and to some extent the train passengers in La Bête humaine assume the role of an indifferent, unstoppable mechanical force which is transported towards a destiny it played no part in choosing.
This unidentified driving force can be attributed both to physiological as well as mechanical functions which are both the result of evolutionary advancement. Like Hugo, Zola viewed criminality as a two-dimensional phenomenon, which on the one hand involved the individual activities of a so-called criminal type, and on the other the collective crimes committed by bourgeois society against the proletariat for the purposes of economic profit. His approach, however, is significantly different to that of Hugo, as he places stark realism in direct contrast with the poet’s romantic depiction of ‘les misérables’. To Zola ‘les misérables’ are truly miserable, and no human criminal is granted the privilege of rivalling Vautrin’s satanic villainy or Valjean’s nauseating sanctity. However, criminals nevertheless appear in great quantities in Zola’s work, they often go nearly unnoticed, and are seldom allowed to stand out from the crowd. It could be said that Zola adopted a levelling approach to individual human deviance by setting it against the devastating backdrop of collective indifference and tyrannical machines.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The Nineteenth Century saw a veritable scientific and philosophical explosion which completely changed the social patterns of the western world. The literature of the Nineteenth Century did not invent the criminal, but it did bring the theme of criminality to the fore at a time when scientific and sociological explanations were first being offered for the criminal behaviour of a newly formed industrial working class. The many facetted utilitarian approaches to the ever increasing urban social problems might have remained outside the realm of literature had the romantic movement of the 1830’s not directed its attentions to the social role of the writer and the artist.¹

It is during this time that many authors started to exploit the subject of deviance and delinquency from a multitude of different angles, depending upon their individual temperaments, talents and political affiliations. This brief survey has attempted to demonstrate how three prominent, yet disparate, novelists have dealt with the theme of criminality from conflicting viewpoints, while at the same time reflecting the fluctuating world view of a century undergoing hitherto unprecedented social changes.

It has been seen that Balzac essentially sought to maintain the aristocratic image of the urban brigand often to be found in
popular literature. Although he wished to draw a social picture of his time by developing *La Comédie humaine*, he did not intend to bore his readers with the unnecessarily sordid details of reality. Instead he preferred to titillate the tastes of the newly enriched bourgeoisie by creating extraordinary and often exceedingly malevolent criminals along the lines of those described by Vidocq.

Balzac also came close to providing the type of entertaining mystery which was later developed and refined into a new literary genre now widely known as the detective novel. In an article entitled "Préhistoire du roman policier", Jean-Claude Vareille demonstrates how, in "La dernière incarnation de Vautrin" (1847), Balzac creates a situation with the mysterious death of 'la riche veuve Pigeau' which suspiciously resembles the circumstances surrounding Edgar Allen Poe's *Murders in the rue Morgue* (1841). His 'dénoûlement', however, is somewhat different, as the explanation for the mystery is quickly provided through the confession of a criminal rather than the perspicacity of a sleuth. Vareille compares Balzac's style of mystery to "un roman policier avorté" and goes on to explain the basic difference between the serial novel and the detective novel in the following terms:

L'énigme et sa solution juxtaposées, c'est le feuilleton: la lente transformation de l'énigme en sa solution et donc sa dissolution progressive, c'est du roman policier.
Although Victor Hugo provides what might be considered an exciting manhunt in *Les Misérables*, it would be untrue to say that his primary goal was to entertain or mystify. Like his Russian literary contemporaries, Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy, he used his art to promulgate his own vision of morality and faith in order to further the cause of human progress. He sought to expose the crimes committed in the name of civilization upon those whom he depicted as innocent victims of society (Thénardier being the notable exception). He was often excessively romantic and unrealistic in his approach, but he did succeed in awakening the conscience of those who wished to use their power and influence to alleviate the plight of the potentially dangerous poor.

Victor Hugo offered individual examples of social injustice which he believed could be remedied through education, generosity and kindness. It is possible therefore that he painted his characters in such glowing terms in the hope that they would endear themselves to the ruling class, who would in turn be prompted to effect social improvements on their behalf. He did not envisage the unity of the proletariat in terms of a political body, and this opinion is articulately expressed by Auguste Dezalay when he writes of Victor Hugo:

*Le peuple existe, par lui, par Jean Valjean, par Champmathieu ou Fauchelevent, mais il n’a pas, comme*
The work of Emile Zola does in fact tie together the contributions of both Balzac and Hugo. Like Balzac, Zola planned and created a social study of his time, but unlike his illustrious predecessor, he placed his emphasis upon the lives of the lower echelons of society which he depicted in painfully realistic terms. Gone is Hugo’s religious, respectful and unwilling prostitute Fantine, as well as his goodhearted, valiant vagabonds Gavroche and Eponine; instead we find an oversexed monster like Laurent, drunken waistrels like Coupeau and Bijard, and an ugly, crippled sociopath like Jeanlin. Zola reduces individual criminality by depriving it of balzacien glamour and hugolien virtue. It stands naked and dwarfed by the power of the crowd and the indifference of the machine. However, if one criminal profile can be said to stand out as a connecting link between these three authors it is surely that of Thénardier, who embodies balzacien villainy and zolien ugliness while remaining the creation of Hugo.

In the work of Balzac, Hugo and Zola can be found a diversified literary concentration on the theme of criminality which mirrors the evolution of parallel social movements in the Nineteenth Century. It should nevertheless not be overlooked when concluding this study that other literary genres also explored the darker sides of human existence during this period.
and later. Two examples which come to mind are the 'conte fantastique' which enjoyed great popularity throughout the Nineteenth Century but generally not beyond, and, of course, the 'roman policier' which sees its formative period of development during the latter part of the last century, and which is still thriving today. The narrative structure of the detective novel has been the subject of several literary analyses, and could offer a rich tapestry of ideas for studying the further literary evolution of the theme of criminality.
CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION


CHAPTER II - EUGÈNE-FRANÇOIS VIDOCQ


16. Ibid.: 203.


18. Ibid.: 199.


**CHAPTER III - HONORÉ DE BALZAC**


8. Honoré de Balzac, Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes, op.cit.: 587.


13. Antoine Adam, op.cit.: ix.


15. Ibid.: 53.


17. Antoine Adam, op.cit.: xiv.


23. Ibid.: 586.


27. Ibid.: 21.
28. Ibid.: 137.
29. Honoré de Balzac, Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes, op. cit.: 434.
31. Honoré de Balzac, Illusions perdues, op.cit.: 699.
33. Honoré de Balzac, Le Père Goriot, op.cit.: 220.
34. Honoré de Balzac, Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes, op. cit.: 934.

CHAPTER IV - VICTOR HUGO


3. Ibid.: 60.


11. P. Savey-Casard, op.cit.: 91.

12. Ibid.: 94.


15. Ibid.: 234.


22. Paul Comeau, op.cit.: 64-66.


29. Ibid.: 70.


33. Elliott M. Grant, op.cit.: 249.


CHAPTER V - ÉMILE ZOLA


2. Ibid.: 33.

3. Ibid.: 33.

5. Emile Zola, Préface, Thérèse Raquin, (Paris: François Bernard, ?): VIII.

6. Ibid.: IX.


10. Graham King, op.cit.: 41.

11. Armand Lanoux, op.cit.: XI.

12. Ibid.: XVIII.


22. Emile Zola, Thérèse Raquin, op.cit.: 34.


24. Armand Lanoux, op.cit.: L.


26. Emile Zola, Préface, Thérèse Raquin, op.cit.: VIII.


29. Ibid.: 405.


31. Marc Bernard, op.cit.: 120.


38. See André Possot, "Thèmes et fantasmes de la machine dans *La Bête humaine*, *Cahiers naturalistes*, 57, 1983: 111.


CHAPTER VI - CONCLUSION


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APPENDIX A

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