

The Jewish Capital of Europe: Literary Representation from Balzac to Proust of the Societal Place and Architectural Space of Jews in Paris from the July Monarchy to the Belle Époque

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Abstract

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Nineteenth-century France experienced a literary phenomenon of Jewish characters. Represented in greater proportion than their actual population, they were situated within the modernizing city, sometimes as agents of modernity. Creating a palimpsest of literature, history, society, and architecture, this dissertation analyzes the changing representation of Jewish characters within the transforming urban context. The Jewish figures portrayed by Honoré de Balzac, Charles Baudelaire, Jules and Edmond de Goncourt, Emile Zola, Guy de Maupassant, and Marcel Proust evolve between 1830 and 1914, from the stereotypical Shylock type to highly modern, elite aesthetes. Becoming ever more modern, the Jewish characters are presented as participating in the modernization of the urban space, of industry and banking, of arts and society. While the city metamorphosed into a capital of modernity, the discourse concerning Jews became increasingly negative, developing from an ancient cultural aversion to the Jewish religion to the modern expression of racial antipathy, i.e. anti-Semitism. The places in Paris in which these characters are found correspond to the rapid assimilation of the Jewish population in the city and reveal an adverse reaction of non-Jewish Parisians to the transformation of the capital and to the presence of a select but powerful Jewish elite. In this dissertation, I pursue an interdisciplinary layering of texts on literary, social, and architectural history. In the literary scholarship, I look at Jewish characters in French fiction. In the historical and sociological studies of

the Parisian Jewish population I focus on the representation, expression, and existence of Jews in Paris. I use texts on the architectural history of the city to follow the urban transformation across the nineteenth century. How Balzac, Baudelaire, the Goncourts, Zola, Maupassant, and Proust portray Jewish characters functions to varying degrees of success as an indicator of urban transformation. While urban and architectural texts give no indication of the Jewish involvement in the factual metamorphosis of the city, nineteenth-century French fiction reveals the presence and participation of Jews in Paris in the massive remaking of the city to becoming a pole of attraction for European Jewry.

*The Jewish Capital of Europe: Literary Representation from Balzac to Proust of the Societal Place and Architectural Space of Jews in Paris from the July Monarchy to the Belle Époque*¹

I. Dissertation Introduction:

Over approximately the last decade, the field of Jewish studies has evolved to include new and innovative explorations of the place and the role of Jews in the development of modern society. Paul Lerner, a cultural historian of German Jews, reveals this new trend in Jewish studies, “in recent years the taboos have fallen away, and scholars have been vigorously exploring the role of economic activities in a range of areas, including Jewish emancipation, Jewish-gentile relations, and Jewish cultural expressions... Parallel to the reemergence of Jewish economic history, a new subfield of Jewish cultural history has recently arisen, consisting of works that assay the meaning and operation of “Jewishness” in particular cultural contexts” (Lerner 16). In Europe in particular, scholarship of the social and cultural history of developing metropolitan settings has shed light on the Jewish presence and participation in the movement towards social, economic, industrial and architectural modernity. Although Lerner focuses on German Jewry, his comments on Jewishness and modernity are also pertinent to French Jewry, “Werner Sombart, one of the period’s most prominent economic thinkers, argued that Jews demonstrated a unique, historically and racially determined aptitude for commercial capitalism and were thus the bearers of economic modernity” (Lerner 5). In this dissertation, I argue that the evolution in the representation of Jewish identity in nineteenth-century French literature, written in and about Paris, from the beginning of the July Monarchy to the end of the Belle Époque reveals the participation of Jewish figures in the modernization of the

¹ Paris has never been called “The Jewish Capital of Europe” by any scholar; however, in this dissertation, I am proposing this idea as a new way of envisioning nineteenth-century Paris as the city in which the Jews of Europe enjoyed the most phenomenal rate of financial, social, and political success. The 1790 and 1791 decisions to grant citizenship and full and equal rights to the Jews of France allowed French Jews to become an integral part of French society. This aspect of France attracted Jewish families and individuals from across Europe all seeking the greater freedom and improved lifestyle that emancipation afforded French Jews. The nature of this historical situation has led me to the conclusion that Paris, pre-Dreyfus Affair, was the ideal location for a thriving and diverse Jewish population.

French capital. This dissertation fits into the growing field of interdisciplinary Jewish Studies by uniting literature, literary scholarship, social and historical studies, and architectural and urban texts to analyze the involvement of the Jewish population in Paris in the rapidly changing political, social, industrial, and architectural environment.

The use of Jewish characters was not a new occurrence in nineteenth-century French fiction. The way in which authors came to employ Jewish characters was, however, entirely novel. Jewish characters had previously been restricted to two clichés, the avaricious and hideous Jewish moneylender of an advanced and uncertain age and his beautiful Jewish daughter, finding their most finalized realization in Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*, published in 1820. Motivated by the surrounding culture of change, nineteenth-century French authors did not allow themselves to be pigeonholed by age-old stereotypes. The new Jewish characters of nineteenth-century French fiction no longer corresponded to the two limited typecasts. Instead, they were greatly inspired by the increasingly visible Jewish population following the 1791 revolutionary decision to emancipate the Jews of France by granting them French citizenship and allowing them to benefit from all the same rights as their French neighbors of Catholic or Protestant religious identity.

Jewish characters had thus evolved into a reflection of real changes occurring in France, with Paris as the epicenter. Taking into consideration questions concerning the actual urban presence of the Parisian Jewish community—where they lived, how they lived, how their Jewish identity was expressed, how this identity evolved with the changing urban and social context, where they moved within the city, in what type of housing they lived, which styles of architecture did they prefer—this dissertation seeks to reveal how the underlying cultural discontent and social unrest experienced by Parisians in the midst of the rapidly changing political, social, economic, cultural, and architectural context that defined Paris over the long nineteenth century came to be expressed in the representation of Jewish characters in novels and poetry. Both the accuracy and inaccuracy of literary representations of Jewish characters uncovers shifts in appreciation of the French public for the Jewish population, itself increasing and transforming with the evolution of the city

and society. The literary representation of the place and space of Jews in the city became a favored but increasingly fraught subject in French literature from the 1830s to the 1890s. The more rapidly and intensely Paris changed on an architectural, industrial, societal, and political level, the more negative the representations of Jewish characters became.

The involvement of Jewish individuals and institutions in the modernization and urban metamorphosis of Paris, beginning with the first railway in 1837 and continuing with the architectural renovation and expansion of the city during the Second Empire, gave Jews in Paris a vital and very visible role in the transformation of the French capital. The role of Jewish individuals in the transformation of Paris greatly influenced how society considered the presence and participation in everyday Parisian life, culture, and traditions of the Jewish population. By the Third Republic, anti-Semitism had flourished and popular dissatisfaction over the excessive expenditures of the Second Empire, encouraged by rampant financial speculation, rapid industrial advances, and rising architectural extravagance, led the Parisian population to become suspicious of the ambitions of their Jewish neighbors. As the Jewish figure came to be seen as an agent of modernity, the non-Jewish French population began to suspect their Jewish neighbors of plotting to take over the French nation. In the novels and poetry of Honoré de Balzac, Charles Baudelaire, Jules and Edmond de Goncourt, Emile Zola, Guy de Maupassant, and Marcel Proust the transformation of the city is paralleled by an evolution in the treatment of Jewish characters. I have chosen these five particular authors for the reason that they wrote about Paris contemporary to their time periods, with one or two exceptions—Zola and Proust, for example wrote about Paris of the time period slightly previous to their own. They also set many novels, stories, or poems in the transforming urban context of nineteenth-century Paris and, most importantly, they placed Jewish characters in this modern urban environment. Many other nineteenth-century French authors were inspired by Jewish themes. Chateaubriand, Lamartine, Vigny, Hugo, Sue, Sand, and Flaubert all wrote about Jews or Judaism, but they were interested in the Jews of Judea, the ‘Oriental’ Jews of the Bible, the history of the Jewish religion, the mysticism of the Kabbalah, or

the mythological Wandering Jew. The Jews of these authors no longer existed and had no place in French society. Balzac, Baudelaire, the Goncourts, Zola, Maupassant, and Proust, however, dealt with modern Jews in contemporary Paris in the midst of massive societal, political, architectural, and industrial metamorphosis.

The naissance and development of anti-Semitic sentiment and discourse was an essential part of the discussion that involved including modern Jewish characters in a contemporary setting. The transition from ancestral anti-Judaic Catholic beliefs to an intense anti-Semitic political and social movement is traced in the treatment of Jewish characters within the novels of these five authors. Balzac, for example, engaged with Jewish characters from a vantage of curiosity and mystery mixed with jealousy and Zola's novels show unfiltered hatred towards the Jewish people. The farther away from the French Revolution and the Jewish Emancipation of the end of the eighteenth century, the more intense the apprehension that the non-Jewish French population felt towards the Jewish population became. The intensification of anti-Semitism is also felt within the novels. Maupassant's *Bel-Ami*, published in 1885, offers a highly negative portrait of an exceedingly successful Jewish social climber and publishing tycoon for whom the French-Catholic protagonist, of impoverished origins, having spent much time in North Africa in the military, feels intense and insatiable jealousy. In Zola's work, *L'Argent*, published in 1891, the equally French-Catholic protagonist, of rural origins, proffers unfiltered anti-Semitic slurs against the Jewish banker that he is trying in vain to vanquish. This evolution came to a violent culmination in 1894 when a Jewish officer of the French army, Alfred Dreyfus, was falsely accused of treason. The trial unleashed a wave of anti-Semitic sentiment across France with repercussions reaching all the way to colonial North Africa where deadly riots broke out in major cities of French Algeria. From Balzac to Proust, the growing anti-Semitic discourse was documented in fiction as it occurred in reality and the more successful the Jews of Paris became, the more evident the anti-Semitic discourse became in the novels across the nineteenth century.

In the period following emancipation and preceding the Dreyfus Affaire, seizing the opportunity offered to them by the Assemblée Nationale, the Jews of France became involved and excelled in diverse domains.

Of all the professions that the Jews of France chose to exercise, it was the successful bankers, businessmen, lawyers, and politicians who were the most visible to the French public. A small but obvious group of individuals and families came to form a Jewish elite that was seen as disproportionately rich and suspiciously powerful, usurping the place of the traditional French aristocracy and ruling class through a new form of financial feudalism. The importance of the Jewish elite was such that French authors were inspired to include Jewish characters in their literary works modeled after actual Jewish figures in French society. Gleaning aspects of personalities, appearances, histories, places in society, and involvement in various events from the lives of Jews such as James de Rothschild, Berr Léon Fould, Emile and Isaac Pereire, Charles Ephrussi, or Charles Haas, nineteenth-century authors created Jewish characters that walked across the pages of novels as they strolled through the streets of Paris. Jews and their place in Paris, Parisian society and culture, and their role in the past, present, and future of the city thus became a common, even privileged, literary subject that various authors exploited in diverse ways.

A similar phenomenon had occurred during the eighteenth century when French philosophical authors, known as *les philosophes*, used the “Jewish question” to discuss human perfectibility. According to Claude Lévi-Strauss, quoted by Ronald Schechter, “the Jews were good to think” for *les philosophes*. As an ancient and cohesive group, tied to traditions, they were the perfect subjects of study for experimentation in the amelioration of human beings. Montesquieu, the Marquis d’Argens, Voltaire, and Rousseau discussed the “Jewish question” at length, arguing over the ancient resistance of Jews to change and adapt to their surroundings. As direct beneficiaries of the 1789 Revolution, being granted equal rights by the Assemblée Nationale and becoming French citizens in 1790 and 1791, the Jews of France again became a literary focal point in the nineteenth century. In the nineteenth-century Jewish literary trend, it was not their resistance to change that was the topic of discussion, but their ability to evolve and to encourage evolution that was considered. With the French Revolution existing as a catalyst to France’s emergence as a modern nation and with the Jews of France being seen as having greatly benefited from the Revolution, the association of

modernity with the Revolution and the Jewish population occurred naturally in the French collective comprehension. Following the Jewish emancipation in France during the revolution, the great changes of the century that followed became inextricably linked to a particularly French expression of Jewish identity. As both actors and symbols of nineteenth-century modernity, the Jews of France became a target for those who opposed transformation. All that the opposition conceived of as a negative aspect of change was seen as originating in the 1789 Revolution and as both benefitting and catalyzed by the Jews: “Le seul auquel la Révolution ait profité est le Juif. Tout vient du Juif. Tout revient au Juif” (Drumont VI).

By the time Marcel Proust wrote his great novel of Parisian high society in the first quarter of the twentieth century, more than a century of evolution and transformation of the urban fabric of the city and the Parisian population and assimilation of Jews to French culture had informed the place of Jewish characters in French literature. Of the many authors that contributed to the spectrum of Jewish characters, the work of Balzac, Baudelaire, the Goncourts, Zola, Maupassant, and Proust in particular led to the creation of a literary record attesting to the changes in the Jewish identity that were coincidental to the changes in the urban expression of Paris, architecturally, socially, politically, and economically. In this dissertation, I seek to elucidate the *raison d'être* of Jewish characters in nineteenth-century French literature as a manifestation of the reaction of the Parisian population to the great and multifaceted changes involved in the violent metamorphosis of Paris into an economic, industrial, and cultural capital of Europe. The role that literature plays in this project is that of a cultural archive. While historical and sociological texts tell the facts of the Jewish history and demography in France and the architectural, social, political, and economic history of the city, the novels, short stories, and poems of French authors provide unique perspectives of the opinions of those living in the various periods across the nineteenth century. Taking inspiration from Louis Chevalier, for whom “sources romanesques” were “seules à même de faire comprendre les drames et les passions de la ville-époque”, and putting to test Maurice Samuels’ claim that French authors employed Jewish characters to grapple with the disquieting birth of a modern industrial and capitalist nation, this

dissertation brings in the architectural and urban element expressed in French literature of the long nineteenth century to argue that Jewish characters not only served as a creative outlet for the discussion of modernity for French authors, but that they also came to represent vectors of change, reflecting their role in the transformation of Paris (Lassave 116).

In chapter one, *The Jewish Monarchy: Mapping the Appearance of Jewish Characters in Balzac's Comédie humaine*, I offer a close reading of the Jewish characters of Balzac's *Comédie humaine*. Looking at the specific neighborhoods, streets, homes and interiors that are associated with Balzac's Jewish characters, the Jewish community in Paris under the July Monarchy takes form from the perspective of a Parisian, Catholic and nostalgic for the elegance and social hierarchy of the Ancien Régime. In this first chapter, we see how Balzac sets a high standard for representation of Jewish characters for the authors to follow. Furthermore, the diverse Jewish characters of the *Comédie humaine* are spread out across the city. From the Quartier Latin, the Quartier Saint-Georges, Ville-l'Évêque beyond the Madeleine, to Chaillot in the Quartier des Champs-Élysées, the breadth of the Jewish presence in Paris as represented by Balzac foreshadows the omnipresence of certain Jewish figures involved in the transformation of the city during the Second Empire.

In chapter two, *The Jewish Empire: Metamorphosis of the Belle Juive to the Affreuse Juive*, I discuss the relative fading of Jewish characters during the Second Empire, the exception being Charles Baudelaire's Jewish prostitute the Goncourts' Jewish artist's model. In the lack of diversity of Jewish characters and the complete disappearance of male Jewish characters in this period, a transition is revealed in the perception of the Jewish population in Paris. The Parisian population in general was suspicious of the political, economic, social, and architectural transformation of the French capital taking place. The evolution of the Jewish population in Paris, rapidly assimilating to post-Revolutionary Parisian culture coinciding with the transformation of the city, the Jews of Paris become entangled in the negative reception of the changes at hand. However, blaming the Jewish population for the nineteenth-century metamorphosis of France, catalyzed by the 1789 Revolution, had not yet been fully realized. The Jews were suspected as agents of

modernity, but the nature of the Empire prevented outright blaming. The lack of male Jewish characters reflected the role and importance of several Jewish figures in Napoléon III's government and their influence in the censorship of the artistic expression of negative Jewish stereotypes. The Jewish female, not protected by government censors, underwent a transformation from iconic *Belle Juive* to vile *Affreuse Juive*. This shift in negative figuration exposes the blossoming anti-Semitic sentiment hidden just barely below the surface of the increasingly discontent Parisian population, opposed to the modernization of the city and the capitalist society that had taken root.

In chapter three, *The Anti-Jewish Republic—Social Ascent and Literary Descent of Jewish Figures in Paris*: I consider the reappearance during the Third Republic of male Jewish characters. Those of Emile Zola and Guy de Maupassant represent a distillation of the modern Jewish literary stereotype. Either the ultimate, yet forever rejected, social climber, buying his place in society, or the cold and calculating Jewish banker, at the head of the world's most powerful bank and living and breathing the intricacies of stock market manipulation and speculation, the male Jewish characters are hyperbolic representations of all that French society had come to negatively associate with Jewish figures a few generations after Emancipation. The focus on male Jewish characters directly associated with the economic and presented in unflattering terms exposes the crystallization of a previously vague anti-Judaic tendency, dominated by curiosity for the mysterious and dangerous Jewish difference, into a definite anti-Semitic discourse, accusing the Jews of unfair financial prowess and misrepresenting the entire Jewish population as all resembling a highly visible, exceptionally wealthy, and elite minority. The Jewish characters of Zola and Maupassant are seen as promoting and facilitating luxurious expansion of the city to the west. They are accused of participating in corrupt behavior and breaking social mores. They are denounced as having financially derailed the French colonial mission. They are blamed for the collapse of the unique Catholic bank and the ruin of scores of innocent French-Catholic investors. They are called traitors of the nation, helping Germany triumph over France, a frightening preview of the looming Dreyfus Affair.

In chapter four, *The Belle Époque of Proust—The Jews of Paris Become the Princes of Israel*, I analyze the Jewish characters of Marcel Proust's archetypal novel of the Belle Époque bring to a close the long and transformational nineteenth century. Through the representation of Proust's two essential Jewish characters, Charles Swann and Albert Bloch, a cycle of Jewish assimilation comes to a culmination. No longer concerned with all that is financial, the Jewish characters of *La Recherche* are aesthetes for whom high society frequentations reveal their arrival among the aristocracy. These characters are, or strive to be, original, eclectic, and aloof. Their interest in art and seeming disinterest in anything else makes them attractive and sought after. Their social successes are however superficial and easily shaken especially when the Dreyfus Affair drives a rift in French society and brings anti-Semitism to a boiling point. The masks that these characters adopt, consciously or not, in order to penetrate the high society are thinly veiled for Proust, Jewish by his mother and therefore in a unique position to observe and commentate the feats and defeats of Jewish assimilation over a century after Emancipation. Proust's Jewish characters no longer represent the transformations of the long nineteenth century; they are the end product of a long assimilation in which Jewish traits were disguised behind a modern, Parisian appearance. Living in the new and glamorous neighborhoods of the western quarter of the city, the Jewish figures of Proust's Belle Époque have little to do with their literary predecessors.

Taking into consideration the history of the Jewish presence in Paris and the transformation of the French capital into an architecturally, socially, politically, and economically modern city, the methodological approach of this dissertation brings together historical, social, and literary texts to analyze the evolution of Paris over the long nineteenth century. The primary texts employed in this project are works of fiction, particularly novels of the nineteenth-century realism and naturalism movements with stories set in Paris and some poetry inspired by the great changes occurring in the city. These texts are analyzed within the context of the tumultuous nineteenth-century society, following the French Revolution of 1789 and the formative years of the First Empire, continuously replacing and renewing governments, instating new rulers and new

laws at intervals of ten to twenty years. Looking at where Jewish communities, families, and individuals were actually situated in the city and comparing their presence and location to that which is represented in works of fiction, this dissertation aims to interpret the social and historical implications of such literary representations and the similarities and differences therein. By mapping both the placement and movement of Jewish characters throughout Paris in nineteenth-century fiction while studying the evolution of the city during this period in texts of architectural and social history, this dissertation contributes a novel, interdisciplinary approach to the study of literature and society in Paris.

There are several works of literary analysis concerning Jewish characters of French fiction of which the majority concern Balzac's *Comédie humaine*. In 1930, Pierre Abraham published *Créatures chez Balzac*, in which many curious characters are discussed, including several of Jewish origins. Marthe Spitzer's 1939 work, *Les Juifs de Balzac*, is however uniquely dedicated to Jewish characters and, although quite dated, it still serves as an important source of analysis of the role of Jewish characters in Balzac's fiction. Ketty Kupfer's extensive analysis of the Balzac's Jewish characters, also entitled *Les Juifs de Balzac*, published in 2001, expands on Spitzer's work, meticulously examining all the details unique to each Jewish figure appearing in the *Comédie humaine*. In *Les Juifs des romantiques*, appearing in 2010, Nicole Savy goes beyond a survey, including but far from limited to Balzac, of the Jewish characters imagined by French authors belonging or tangential to the romantic movement. While, much of the work concerning Jewish characters in French fiction is understandably done in France, Maurice Samuels is one particular figure that stands out in the cross over of French literature and Jewish studies in the United States.

In 2006, Samuels published an article, "Metaphors of Modernity", analyzing the roles played by the Jewish banker, the baron de Nucingen, and the Jewish prostitute, Esther Van Gobseck. In this article, Samuels makes the claim that Balzac employed the figures of the Jewish banker and the Jewish prostitute to discuss the societal and financial changes occurring in France. For Balzac, Samuels argues, the Jewish character provides the author with ideas, theories, and concepts with which he can cogitate on, cope with,

and even combat, although futilely, the encroaching modernization of French culture, turning Paris into the European capital of modernity. In 2010, Samuels published *Inventing the Israelite* and turns the tables around, looking at Jewish authors of nineteenth-century French fiction, and continues to argue that the literary theme of Jews in modern French culture is in fact a primary place for the reflection on the great transformations occurring in France. With the publication of, “Zola’s Philosemitism: From *L’Argent* to *Vérité*”, an article in which the evolving opinion of Emile Zola concerning Jewish characters and Jews in France is analyzed, Samuels brings to light a little known aspect of Zola’s questionable appreciation of the Jewish population in Paris.

All of these works have greatly informed this dissertation, however, what is lacking as a linear study, tracking representation of Jewish characters in each period of the nineteenth century history of Paris, beginning with Balzac and ending with Proust, that takes into consideration the role of actual Jewish in the transformation of the city and how this is reflected in or has an influence on the literature produced during the period. None of these authors follows the increasingly anti-Semitic discourse in the French fiction set in Paris from 1830 to 1920, nor has this phenomenon been linked to the architectural, industrial, social, political, and economic metamorphosis of the French capital. This dissertation fills that void and brings together Jewish studies in French literature with the changing urban culture and environment.

The research conducted for this dissertation has led to the discovery of interesting and pertinent trends. The increasingly anti-Semitic discourse, evolving from subtle and nearly nonexistent in Balzac’s fiction to blatant and omnipresent in Zola’s last novel published previous to the Dreyfus Affair, is the clearest trend for which literary evidence is abundant. However, coinciding with the increasingly anti-Semitic discourse is the success, presence, and visibility of certain Jewish families and figures forming an elite society in Paris, involved in banking, speculation, and politics. The more wealthy and powerful this small group grew, the more negative and violent the literary representation of Jewish characters became. Furthermore, the more the Jews of France adopted French culture, traditions, manners, and modes of living, the more assimilated

they became, the more suspicious the French population, especially in Paris, became. While the objective of the 1791 emancipation was to disband with differences and encourage the Jews of France to become individual and contributing members of French society, the French population had a much more difficulty than anticipated, or even considered at all, in accepting their Jewish neighbors as French. Once able to differentiate between a Jewish person and a French person based on dress, place, community, manners, and speech, the French population became increasingly distrustful of French Jews disguised, in the French opinion, as regular Frenchmen. With assimilation, there was also a prominent trend amongst the Jewish population in which each successive generation moved away from traditional commercial and financial professions and adopted aristocratic positions as artists, art collectors, musicians, and patrons of the arts. This trend further encouraged the negative perspective of Jews in France as usurping the place of high society haut bourgeois and aristocrats. While opposition to the transformation of the city focused on Napoléon III and the baron Haussmann, the Jewish population was seen as having financially participated and was thus targeted as agents of unsolicited change. From the ultimately obstinate population in the eighteenth century, the Jews of France became the symbol of a violent and dangerous modernity in the nineteenth.

Jewish characters have been appearing in literature for hundreds of years. It is only natural that the members of the first monotheist religion from which sprang Christianity, and therefore France's Catholicism, should incite curiosity, mystery, and intrigue amongst populations aware of but unfamiliar with the intricacies of this ancient religion and its deeply connected but globally widespread members. However, the reputation of Jews as rootless and nomadic, ruthless usurers, predatory, elitist, and exclusive among other negative qualifications have made the Jewish figure into the perfect literary villain. The two most iconic Jewish characters that solidified the tradition of Jewish literary representation are Christopher Marlowe's Barabas in *The Jew of Malta*, written from 1589 to 1590, and William Shakespeare's Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*, written between 1596 and 1599. Of the two, Shakespeare's Shylock has become an

enduring literary typecast with his hideous and exacting personality unjustly transferred to the entire Jewish population. Originally established by two non-Jewish writers, this literary tradition of Jewish characters was then carried through the nineteenth century. While France saw the first Jewish authors writing in French about Jewish topics beginning in the 1830s, non-Jewish French authors continued the literary tradition of including Jewish characters in their literary texts. Honoré de Balzac in particular imagined a variety of Jewish characters for the *Comédie humaine*, appearing between 1830 and 1848. Despite literary precedent, Balzac's Jewish characters were not all presented as terrible as Shylock, some of them were uncannily liberal, modern, generous, and full of good intentions. Balzac's Jewish characters approached accuracy in their representation of the actual Jewish population in Paris, something that no earlier author had yet to accomplish. This unique quality of Balzac's Jewish characters has earned him praise for having been the first author to represent actual and modern Jews in a realistic presentation of Parisian society under the July Monarchy. While Balzac had altered the tradition of Jewish characters figuring as Shylock doubles, the ensuing Jewish characters imagined by authors in the generations after Balzac did not entirely follow suit. Charles Baudelaire, Jules and Edmond de Goncourt, Emile Zola and Guy de Maupassant are just a small sampling of the French authors that succeeded Balzac and continued the tradition of including Jewish characters in the literary work of forms including poems, journals, and novels. With each subsequent generation of writers the portrayal of Jewish characters shifted from Balzac's approach of curiosity and mystery, although mixed with some suspicion, to a definitive expression of a growing anti-Semitic attitude. This shift in appreciation of the Jewish population in Paris coincided with extensive changes in the domains of society, economy, politics, and urbanism. Dissatisfaction with these changes amongst the French non-Jewish population of Paris encouraged the designation of their Jewish neighbors as both the source and the sole beneficiaries. This dissertation thus aspires to further prove and develop this link between the increasingly anti-Semitic discourse of French authors, the Parisian population's reaction to the growing

Jewish population, to the rapidly transforming urban space, and to the evolving social, economic and political identity of the French capital.

Nineteenth century France was a tumultuous place in Europe and Paris was in fact the epicenter of all the quakes resonating across the country and the continent. The 1789 Revolution was the catalyst of the continuous metamorphosis that France, especially Paris, experienced throughout the century that followed. From the Directoire, to the First Empire, the Restoration, the July Monarchy, the Second Republic, the Second Empire, and finally the Third Republic, the nineteenth century was punctuated by violent renewal. The Jewish emancipation of 1790 and 1791 was directly associated with the first great French Revolution, this association has endured in the French cultural memory in the century that followed. Anti-Semitic writers such as Alphonse Toussenel and Edouard Drumont capitalized on this association to accuse the Jewish population of France of instigating and profiting from the first and successive revolutions perturbing the French nation. The discourse began with Toussenel in 1846, “Ces prétendues conquêtes révolutionnaires avec lesquelles on a monté la tête au peuple ne sont que d’impudents mensonges. L’argent a confisqué à son profit exclusif tous les principes, toutes les institutions, toutes les réformes de la révolution de 89, et l’émancipation du travailleur est une chose à refaire, complètement à refaire”, and was further developed by Drumont (Toussenel 281). Forty years after the publication of *Les Juifs rois de l’époque*, Drumont published *La France juive*. This wildly popular anti-Semitic work that took Toussenel’s accusation of Jews as being the facilitators and then the fortunate heirs of the French Revolution to a higher level of intensity and certitude, “La seule ressource du Jacobin, en dehors de ce qu’il nous extorque par le budget, est de se mettre en condition chez Israël, d’entrer comme administrateur dans quelque compagnie juive où on lui fera sa part... Le seul auquel la Révolution ait profité est le Juif. Tout vient du Juif ; tout revient au Juif. Il y a là une véritable conquête, une mise à la glèbe de toute une nation par une minorité infime mais cohésive... On retrouve ce qui caractérise la conquête : tout un peuple travaillant pour un autre qui s’approprie, par un vaste système d’exploitation financière, le bénéfice du travail d’autrui. Les immenses

fortunes juives, les châteaux, les hôtels juifs ne sont le fruit d'aucun labeur effectif, d'aucune production, ils sont la proélibation d'une race dominante sur une race asservie... Il est certain, par exemple, que la famille de Rothschild, qui possède ostensiblement trois milliards rien que pour la branche française, ne les avait pas quand elle est arrivée en France ; elle n'a fait aucune invention, elle n'a découvert aucune mine, elle n'a défriché aucune terre ; elle a donc prélevé ces trois milliards sur les Français sans leur rien donner en échange... Cette fortune énorme s'accroît par une progression en quelque sorte fatale... Le Dr Ratzinger l'a dit très justement : 'L'expropriation de la société par la capital mobile s'effectue avec autant de régularité que si c'était là une loi de la nature. Si on ne fait rien pour l'arrêter, dans l'espace de 50 ans, ou, tout au plus, d'un siècle, toute la société européenne sera livrée, pieds et poings liés, à quelques centaines de banquiers juifs' ” (Drumont VI-VII). With the popularity that the theories of Toussenel and Drumont received, it became accepted as fact that each new governmental body taking power after each uprising proceeding the 1789 Revolution was in reality directed from behind the scenes by the elite Jewish bankers of France and greater Europe. Although entirely unfounded, these theories put in great peril the Jewish emancipation of 1790 and 1791 and jeopardized the great leaps achieved in the assimilation and integration of the French Jewish population into the French nation.

Many historians and sociologists have criticized the uniquely French tradition that encourages, even requires, those of origins other than French Catholic to adopt French culture and history as their own, leaving behind their own culture and history, in order to become fully French. Although this tradition has always stopped short of forced conversion, the impetus has nevertheless lurked behind the curtain of the French cultural agenda. During the debates of the Assemblée Nationale leading up to the Jewish emancipation, the Abbé Grégoire fought continuously for Jewish rights, desiring ardently that the Jewish population of France be given the opportunity to integrate the greater French population, with the ulterior motive that they would eventually convert to Catholicism. Conversion did eventually occur in some cases during the subsequent century, although those who converted were in minority and often caused scandal

and despair. Other figures more imbued with a fervent democratic ideology believed that religion was purely a personal affair that had nothing to do with belonging to a greater nation. A famous speech by the politician Stanislas de Clermont-Tonnerre reveals the concept of individuality involved in both the French Revolution and the imparting of French citizenship to the Jews of France, “Il faut tout refuser aux Juifs comme nation et accorder tout aux Juifs comme individus; il faut qu’ils ne fassent dans l’État ni un corps politique ni un ordre ; il faut qu’ils soient individuellement citoyens. Mais, me dira-t-on, ils ne veulent pas l’être. Eh bien ! S’ils veulent ne l’être pas, qu’ils le disent, et alors, qu’on les bannisse. Il répugne qu’il y ait dans l’État une société de non-citoyens et une nation dans la nation” (*Archives* 756). When the decision was made, this speech by Clermont-Tonnerre appeared to have had an important impact. The Jews of France were granted citizenship as individual members of the French nation. This method of integrating the Jewish population into the surrounding French nation has, at times, been considered by Jewish historians and intellectuals as having the ambition of erasing Jewish identity, eradicating Jewish community, and replacing these two integral aspects of Jewish life with a French individualistic identity. However, under Napoléon I, the creation of the Jewish consistories in France led to the establishment of an entirely new Jewish identity unique to French Jews. The organization of the Jewish religion into a religious, political, and social body did not encourage conversion or a replacement of Jewish identity with French identity, it created a new, open-minded, democratic, often secular, and, most importantly, post-revolutionary liberal identity that the Jews of France could share with their non-Jewish French neighbors. Despite detractors, the Jewish emancipation in France fostered the creation of an innovative and proactive Jewish community particularly eager and willing to participate in the creation of a modern, prosperous, and architecturally beautiful French capital. If Toussenet and Drumont believed that the Jews of France were the sole beneficiaries of the French Revolution, it was in fact quite the opposite; the Jews of France helped to make France, especially the French capital, and the French citizens all beneficiaries.

Jewish Paris Before Emancipation:

When the Assemblée Nationale respectively granted full and equal rights to the Sephardi and Papal State Jews of Bordeaux, Bayonne, Avignon, Carpentras, Cavaillon, Ile-sur-la-Sorgue and the Ashkenazi Jews of the Alsace and Lorraine regions in 1790 and in 1791, the restrictions that had long prevented Jews from living in French cities were lifted. For Paris and Strasbourg in particular, the Jews of France were allowed almost overnight to enter, purchase homes and businesses, and become involved in all the aspects of life in the largest urban settings in France. Education, distance from tight-knit religious communities, and the anonymity of city life fostered an evolution in Jewish identity towards a culture of modernity, intellectualism, and creativity that in turn influenced the transformation of the French nation. Following emancipation, the Jewish population in Paris grew exponentially, bringing into the city new Jewish individuals and families throughout the nineteenth century. This increase in the Jewish population would have been astonishing for a city in which Jews had long been forbidden to live, let alone enter, unless granted rare and exceptional permission by the French king. This interdiction had however not been made historically permanent until the fourteenth century when Charles VI signed an official document ordering the removal of the Jewish community from Paris and all of the French kingdom, “L’expulsion de 1394 mit fin à dix siècles d’histoire juive à Paris” (Berg 65-68). In fact, previous to this legally definitive end of the Jewish presence in the French kingdom, the Jewish community of Paris had been active and involved in various sectors of city life. According to some the Jewish presence in France is even older than the French presence, “Vous étiez ici avant nous !” Cette phrase, prononcée à Metz en 1935 par l’académicien Louis Bertrand, peut s’appliquer aux Juifs de Paris, mais aucun document ne vient étayer cette affirmation” (Berg 21). Various Jewish objects have been discovered since Bertrand’s somewhat implausible exclamation proving that the presence of Jews in France does in fact date back to the first century, “Après la révolte de Bar Kochba (135 de notre ère), la Gaule fut habitée par des Juifs chassés de Palestine. Bernard Blumenkranz fit en 1969 une communication à l’Académie des inscriptions consacrée aux premières implantations des Juifs en France du I^{er} siècle au début du V^e siècle... grâce au recours à l’archéologie. Il invoqua le témoignage de six objets, tous décorés d’un

ménora” (Berg 21-22). The archeological objects attesting to Jewish presence in France as early as the first century were however found throughout southern France, not indicating their presence in Paris.

Nevertheless, it is believed that Jews benefiting from the protection of the Roman Legion followed the movements of this group of soldiers, possibly finding their way to Paris, “On sait également que les Juifs avaient au début de notre ère suivi les légions romaines et s’étaient installés en Gaule, dans un certain nombre de villes, dont Lutèce, y précédant les Francs. On peut penser avec Robert Anchel que les Juifs s’installèrent en Gaule comme le firent les marchands syriens” (Berg 21-22). The Ile de la Cité appears to be the location of the earliest Jewish community in Paris, “La voie centrale de l’île de la Cité, entre le Petit-Pont et le pont Notre-Dame, sur l’emplacement de la grande route gallo-romaine des Pyrénées en Germanie, porta pendant tout l’ancien régime le nom de rue de la Juiverie... Elle prolongeait au nord la rue du Marché-Palu... Dans cette rue se trouvait l’église de la Madeleine, citée en 1190 : *Ecclesia B. Mariae Magdalena, ubi fuit Synagoga Judaeorum*” (Roblin 12). Members of the Jewish community were believed to have inhabited two other streets on the Ile de la Cité. Knowledge of the Jewish inhabitants of these streets has been gleaned from registers indicating that their homes had been confiscated by the king, “La rue de la Vieille-Draperie portait au XVIII^e siècle le nom de *Judearia Pannificorum*, car les drapiers y furent installés après l’expulsion de 1183 par le roi qui leur céda 24 maisons juives moyennant 100 livres de rente” and “La rue de la Pelleterie a la même origine: en 1183 Philippe-Auguste y céda aux pelletiers 18 maisons juives, moyennant 73 livres de rente. Au XIII^e siècle elle porte le nom de *rua Mazacra Mediana*, ‘boucherie moyenne’ ; on y mentionne une *domus quae fuit stupe judeorum* (une maison qui avait été prise des juifs)” (Roblin 12-13). As the community grew, or had its homes seized by the royal authority, it both spread and migrated off the Ile de la Cité to either side of the Seine.

On the Left bank, south of the Petit Pont, one particular area of preference was the rue de la Harpe. This street harbored a substantial Jewish community in the twelfth century, “La Juiverie de la Harpe... Comme la Juiverie de la Cité elle est sans doute antérieure à 1183. On y trouvait un cimetière entre la rue de

la Harpe (bd Saint-Michel), la rue Pierre-Sarrasin et la rue Percée (bd Saint-Germain). Les épitaphes furent étudiées par Baluze au XVII^e siècle, puis au XIX^e lors de la construction de la librairie Hachette. Les plus récentes sont de la fin du XIII^e siècle, les plus anciennes sont difficilement datables. Il y avait encore au XV^e siècle celle d'un médecin avignonnais, mandé à Paris par Louis VI en 1122. Il est certain que ce fut le cimetière des XII^e et XIII^e siècles, avant l'expulsion de Philippe le Bel qui marque la fin réelle du judaïsme parisien. Il y avait, à côté du cimetière, une juiverie importante au XIII^e siècle et peut-être déjà au XII^e. La rue de la Harpe dans sa partie inférieure est dénommé « Juiverie » dans plusieurs documents : 1247, *Vicus cithare in Judearia* ; 1257. *Vicus Judeorum* ; 1262. *Vicus Judeorum et Cithare, vicus qui dicitur Vetus Judearia*. Ce dernier texte nous signale qu'en 1262 déjà il n'y avait sans doute plus de Juifs dans la Juiverie de la Harpe, ce n'était qu'une vieille Juiverie désertée au profit d'autres quartiers pour des raisons qui nous échappent. Il y avait également des synagogues dans ce quartier, mais pas cette même rue, plus près de la Seine, rue Regnault-Le-Harpeur, en 1272, commune sans doute à tous les Juifs de l'Université" (Roblin 16). The discovery of tombstones with Hebrew characters on the rue Galande and near the Pantheon have lead archeologists and historians to believe that a Jewish community also existed in this area, between the rue Galande and the Pantheon, "En 1258 les Juifs versent des droits au chapitre de Notre-Dame pour un cimetière situé rue Galande. On a découvert aussi une pierre tombale hébraïque du XIII^e siècle, au coin de la rue d'Ulm et de la place du Panthéon" (Roblin 17). The expansion of this community on the Left Bank contributed to the creation of more bridges crossing the Seine, "Sous le règne de Louis VI, la population juive augmenta sensiblement... Les rues où les Juifs habitaient sur la rive gauche étaient situées vers le bas de la rue de la Harpe et à l'ouest de celle-ci. La Juiverie de la rue de la Harpe aurait pour origine les Juifs voisins du Petit-Pont sur la rive gauche. Elle aurait augmenté à la suite de la création du pont Saint-Michel et du Pont-au-Change. Les Juifs purent être assez nombreux dans ce quartier à partir du règne de Louis VI. La position des deux cimetières que nous connaissons laisse penser que les Juifs étaient relégués dans une zone périphérique de la ville" (Berg 31). The Jewish community of the Left Bank was however not as substantial

as the one on the Right: “Les quartiers juifs de la rive droite eurent plus d’importance que la Juiverie de la rue de la Harpe” (Berg 32). Two Jewish communities existed in the areas of les Champeaux and Saint-Bont. Les Champeaux was first inhabited by a Jewish community under Robert le Pieux around 1010 before becoming an open-air market, “À Paris, les Juifs habitaient les Champeaux, un pauvre quartier aux ruelles sombres, fermé le soir par des grilles qui correspondent approximativement à l’emplacement des anciennes Halles. Louis VI y installa un marché en 1137” (Berg 30). The other Jewish community of the Right Bank inhabited several streets in the Marais, “Une bulle de Calixte II en 1119 et deux autres d’Innocent II en 1135 et 1143 citent une rue des Juifs située sans doute sur la rive droite de la Seine. Cette juiverie occupa la rue Saint-Bon et la rue de la Tacherie... Sauval ajoute que les ‘artisans’ juifs logeaient vers les Halles dans la rue de la Friperie, de la Chaussetterie, de la Toilerie ou de la Fromagerie et Jean-de-Beauce. Le nom de la ‘Toilerie’ aurait remplacé la dénomination de ‘Juiverie’. Ces rues étaient fermées aux deux bouts par de grandes portes appelées portes de la juiverie” (Berg 32). While this early presence of a Jews in Paris is believed, by Robert Anchel to have contributed to the economic growth and importance of the city, the Jewish population served above all as a ready source of income for the royal authorities.

A method of extracting revenue from the Jewish community was adopted late in the twelfth century. Known as the “politique de l’éponge”, it was accomplished by allowing the Jewish community to become wealthy, then squeezing the money out like water from a sponge to be recuperated by the king, “On pressurait les Juifs comme on pressait une éponge, puis on les laissait ‘se regonfler,’ et quand on en avait besoin, on les rappelait, avant de les pressurer à nouveau” (Berg 34). However, once the Jewish community had been squeezed of all its resources, they were no longer useful and were forced out of the city. The cycle recommenced when they were later granted entry again to allow them to redevelop their wealth so that the king could squeeze them once more. This technique was first used by Philippe August, “En 1181, pressé par de grands besoins d’argent, Philippe Auguste se saisit de leurs biens... Comme la première opération était insuffisante pour les finances royales, le roi supprima toutes les créances des Juifs sur des Chrétiens à

condition que ceux-ci en réservent le cinquième au Trésor royal. Privés de leurs biens et de leurs créances, les Juifs devenaient inutiles. Ils furent expulsés en 1182... une nouvelle communauté naquit en 1198, après le rappel des Juifs dans le domaine royal. Ils ne retrouvèrent pas leurs synagogues transformées en églises, ni les quarante-deux maisons dont ils étaient propriétaires et que le roi avait vendues aux pelletiers en 1183. La plupart habitaient désormais hors de la Cité. Les artisans logèrent vers les Halles, dans des rues déjà citées, rues de la Poterie, de la Friperie, de la Chaussetterie, etc. Ces rues s'appelaient alors la juiverie. Les plus riches d'entre eux habitèrent la Cité... Ils étaient quarante. On peut citer Moyse de Sens, Joce Doain, Fautinus de Pontoise, Léo de Pierrefonds, Peret d'Orléans, Jacob de Falaise, Léo Crosse de Melun" (Berg 34-37). Following expulsion, they were always welcomed back into the city and allowed to conduct business again until the king felt the need to relieve the community of their financial holdings.

Since all the resources of the Jewish community were confiscated each time the king decided to squeeze the Jewish sponge, including homes, businesses, and places of worship, they had new Christian neighbors if they returned to the same neighborhood, or they settled in different streets than their original homes, "En 1253, dans la juiverie de la rue de la Harpe, les maisons des Chrétiens jouxtaient celles des Juifs. Sous le règne de Philippe III, il y avait toujours une juiverie rue de la Harpe et rue Saint-Bon. Sauval écrit que d'autres Juifs s'étaient établis rue des Lombards, rue Quincampoix et rue des Jardins. Ils avaient deux synagogues, situées rue de la Tacherie et rue du Cloître-Saint-Jean-en-Grève... En 1261, il existait un cimetière juif rue Juiverie Saint-Bon, appelée plus tard rue de la Vieille-Juiverie. En 1273, Philippe le Hardi interdit aux Juifs de Paris de posséder plus d'une synagogue et d'un cimetière. Celui de la rue Guerlande fut rendu aux chanoines de Notre-Dame, propriétaires du terrain. On utilisa l'autre cimetière, qui occupait l'emplacement de la rue Pierre-Sarrazin et des boulevards Saint-Germain et Saint-Michel. L'entrée était située rue de la Harpe... après l'expulsion de 1306 décrétée par Philippe le Bel, ce terrain ne fut pas bâti. Il ne l'était pas au XVI^e siècle, ce qui expliquerait que de nombreuses pierres tombales demeurèrent... Le livre de la taille de 1292 contient à la fin le rôle de l'imposition des Juifs de Paris, rue par rue et maison par

maison... Le recensement permet de définir les limites du quartier juif de la rive droite. Il comprend la rue du Franc-Mourir, l'actuelle rue de Moussy, la rue Neuve, la rue Court-Robert-de-Paris, aujourd'hui partie de la rue du Renard, Saint-Merri, la rue de l'Attacherie, le Petit-Pont" (Berg, 47-50). What is now considered the emblematic Jewish neighborhood in Paris, the Marais with the rue des Rosiers at the center and surrounded from east to west by the rue de Turenne, the rue Vieille-du-Temple, and the rue des archives, was thus slightly to the east of the initial Medieval Jewish communities of the Right Bank. That there was the earliest and a fairly important Jewish community on the Left Bank, on and around the rue de la Harpe, is always surprising to those who envision the commercial Right Bank as the exclusive home of Parisian Jews.

The Jewish community of the Left Bank, the third of Paris that Philippe August designated as the University, appropriately became known for a Parisian Talmudic school. "Benjamin de Tudèle appelle Paris 'Paris sur la Bièvre' car c'est dans ce qui deviendra le Quartier latin, où coule la Bièvre, que se trouve la célèbre École talmudique de Paris... Dès la fin du XII^e siècle, Judah bn Isaac—appelé sire Léon de Paris—était à la tête de l'École talmudique de Paris. Il y demeura jusqu'à sa mort en 1224. Il occupa une place importante dans la Synagogue. Yehiel ben Joseph, nommé sire Vives de Meaux... fut un élève de Judah sire Léon à qui il succéda comme directeur de la Yeshiva de Paris" (Berg 41). Following these two figures, others participated in the renown of the Parisian Talmudic school, including famous Jewish Rabbis and scholars from across Europe: "L'École rabbinique parisienne était devenue un foyer attractif pour les étudiants de la province française et des grandes communautés étrangères, tant d'Allemagne que d'Espagne. Elle joua le rôle qui avait été celui de l'école juive de Champagne aux XI^e et XII^e siècles sous l'impulsion de Rashi" (Berg 42). Unfortunately, the Jewish intellectual community of the Left Bank was persecuted beginning in the thirteenth century, culminating in a mass burning of the Talmud in 1244 and a general exodus during uprisings in the 1280s. By the time the entire Jewish community was disbanded from the capital in 1306, the famous Talmud Torah of Paris had practically ceased to exist.

The Jewish experience in Paris leading up the fourteenth century was thus remarkably defined by looting, committed by the highest authority, the king, and expulsion. From 1306 until 1394 alone, the Jews of Paris were ordered to leave the city and then were welcomed back on at least four separate occasions. Nearly a quarter of a century before the final expulsion of 1394, the Jewish community of Paris had become small and somewhat elitist, with only the wealthiest, intrepid enough to brave the risk of confiscation of wealth and eventual expulsion, allowed exceptionally to inhabit the city, “Lors des émeutes de 1380, la communauté juive de Paris n’existait que depuis vingt ans. Cette communauté semblait peu nombreuse et assez riche. À la mort de Manessier de Vesoul, en 1375, la direction de la communauté passa à Lionnet de Seneu, Isaac Cristofle, Benion de Salins et Vivant de Montréal” (Berg 65). This small and affluent group of Jews in Paris were finally living in the area of Paris now known as the Jewish neighborhood, “Les Juifs parisiens habitaient près de l’hôtel Saint-Paul, résidence royale, dans la rue des Rosiers et la rue des Juifs (l’actuelle Ferdinand-Duval)” (Berg 65). Their presence around the rue des Rosiers was transitory and the final expulsion of 1394 assured that no Jews would inhabit the Marais and until the eighteenth century.

In the years before the 1789 Revolution, Jews were trickling back into the city. The community was loosely divided into the categories of “les Juifs de Metz”, “les Juifs de rite allemand”, “les Juifs espagnols et portugais”, and “les Juifs avignonnais” (Berg 85-100). The Jews of Metz were the first to have requested special permission from the king to enter the city for the purposes of business and banking, “Dès le commencement du XVIII^e siècle, les Juifs de Metz étaient en relation avec des banquiers parisiens. Ils les sollicitaient pour négocier des lettres de change, ou pour le règlement d’opérations financières” (Berg 88). Their presence was tenuous, barely tolerated. However, as the supplier of horses and grain to the French army, they were allowed “permissions de voyage” (Berg 88). From 1755 to 1759 a variety of Jews of Ashkenazi origin, from Alsace, Lorraine, or Germany, along with those from Metz, were found in the capital. This newest cohort of Jews from the east was particularly characterized by their quality of merchants, in the fields of “manufacture de Calamande”, “quincaillerie”, “bijouterie”, “gravure”, “cliquaillerie”, “banquiers”,

and “manufacture de tabac”. This diverse group was set up primarily on the Right Bank, “Ils habitaient le quartier Saint-Martin et le quartier Saint-Denis, se regroupaient dans les rues Geoffroy-l’Angevin et Beaubour, et dans les rues adjacentes: rue Maubué, du Poirier, des Ménétriers, Simon-le-France, Saint-Julien-des-Ménétriers et de Montmorency” (Berg 89). Since this group of Jews all followed Ashkenazi traditions of Judaism, they formed an ethnically and religiously cohesive body, grouped together on the Right Bank with one exception, “Un seul Juif s’était séparé de ses ‘frères’: Cosman Leman Moyse Lévy de Dresde vint proposer l’établissement d’une manufacture de Calamande, façon Angleterre imitant les toiles peintes, et s’installa rue Mazarine”, on the Left Bank (Berg 89). The Sephardi Jews, originally of Spain before expulsions in 1492 and Portugal before forced conversions and public burnings of the eighteenth century, were naturally of diverse origins, coming not only from Bordeaux and Bayonne in France, but also from Italy, Egypt, and the Netherlands. Their professions also varied and included Jewelry, chocolate, miniature paintings, medicine, architecture, and maritime trading. With some exceptions, this group of Sephardi Jews inhabited the opposite side of the Seine than the Ashkenazi Jews, “Généralement, ces Juifs portugais établirent le centre de leurs foyers et de leurs affaires sur la rive gauche, dans les quartiers Saint-André et Saint-Germain, rue Hautefeuille, rue Saint-Séverin et vécurent de préférence à l’hôtel” (Berg 89). The Jews of Avignon, sharing similarities with the Jews of Bordeaux and Bayonne, lived in the same areas: “quai des Augustins, rue Saint-André-des-Arts, rue Hautefeuille” (Berg 99). The Jews of Avignon were silk manufacturers, businessmen, or interpreters. Of the three groups, the Jews of Avignon were considered the most French, “Ils adoptèrent vite les manières et les défauts de la société française” (Berg 99). Despite the expulsion of 1394, believed to have been definitive, the Jewish community in Paris had become substantial by the end of the eighteenth century. They participated in the debates of the Assemblée Nationale, arguing for equal rights, “L’émancipation des Juifs fut, en grande partie, l’œuvre des Parisiens” (Berg 105). The relative modernity, assimilation, and similarity in their manner of living with the surrounding Parisian community made the Jews of Paris an exemplary model for those arguing that the Jews of France could in

fact integrate French society and participate as active individuals. However, within this preciously assimilated community, there was a definite division between the Left Bank and the Right, between the Sephardi and Ashkenazi Jews.

Although separated by the Seine into two fairly distinct groups, the German Jews of the Right Bank and the Spanish and Portuguese Jews of the Left, they were all concentrated in what is considered the old center of the city, close to the same areas that had once been occupied by Medieval Jewish communities of the tenth, eleventh, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries. Following emancipation, the majority of the Jewish immigrants arrived from the east, from the Alsace and Lorraine regions and farther east in Germany. This influx of Ashkenazi Jews made the part of the Right Bank that is immediately opposite the Ile-de-la-Cité and the Ile Saint-Louis the unofficial headquarters of the Parisian Jewish community. However, with the movement of wealth from the center to the west throughout the nineteenth century, those who had successfully grown their fortune left the Marais for more western neighborhoods that were considered of higher standing. The Jewish families leaving the Marais were also considered highly assimilated, often showing little to no signs of their ancestral religion, thus leaving the Marais with the double ambition of becoming more French and increasing their position in Parisian society by living in a more respectable and less Jewish associated neighborhood. The success of a small but decidedly visible group of Jewish bankers and traders made the Jewish community of Paris famous, even infamous, throughout France and Europe. The Rothschild family in particular came to represent a new form of Jewish identity. Immensely wealthy, highly educated, cultivated in French manners, admitted to the highest society, allowed intimate meetings with the various rulers of France, the Rothschild family was emblematic of the astonishing success some Jews had achieved after emancipation. From the hideous, greedy, penny-pinching Shylock figure, the Jews of France attained the wealth and status equal to barons, princes, and kings, as Alexandre Dumas remarked: “Le Juif chez nous n’existe plus comme type, il s’est fondu dans la société; il n’a rien qui le distingue des

autres hommes, ni dans son langage, ni dans sa tournure, ni dans son costume; il est officier de la Légion d'honneur, il est académicien, il est baron, il est prince, il est roi” (Dumas 48).

In this dissertation, I trace the movement of the Jewish population from the center to the west through the Jewish characters of Honoré de Balzac, Charles Baudelaire, Edmond and Jules de Goncourt, Emile Zola, Guy de Maupassant, and Marcel Proust who all include Jewish figures in their works of fiction inspired by the reality of the nineteenth-century Parisian society. Following the movement of the Jewish characters will uncover the reaction of Parisian society not only to the rapid assimilation and exponentially increasing wealth of an elite cohort of Jewish individuals and families throughout the nineteenth century, but also to the transformation occurring within the entire Parisian society and, most importantly, to the urban structure of the city. Nineteenth-century Paris was a place of precipitous metamorphosis in several aspects: the ruling body changed every twenty years or so, the city expanded from the center to engulf surrounding suburban communities, industry developed ten-fold with the implantation of factories in the capital, the population grew with the influx of peasants seeking better-paid positions, the Jewish community increased significantly and became involved in the highest levels of society, the layout of the city evolved dramatically and the architecture became highly neo-classical and luxurious as the city spread to the west. All of these aspects influenced the greater Parisian population and this influence is seen in the treatment given to Jewish characters in the works of these five authors of the nineteenth century.

Divided into four chapters, this dissertation looks at three or four time periods spanning from 1830 to approximately 1914. The novels of Honoré de Balzac address the expression of Jewish identity from a Parisian perspective under the July Monarchy. A few poems of Charles Baudelaire and one novel of the Goncourt brothers looks at the Jewish community, represented by two female characters, during the Second Empire. Although written during the Third Republic, the work of Emile Zola retells the role of male Jewish figures during the Second Empire, especially those involved in banking, trade, and speculation. Guy de Maupassant presents one particularly informative Jewish character involved in the Parisian press in the

1880s of the Third Republic. Marcel Proust's novel explores the life of two Jewish characters in the turn of the century period, just before the Great War of 1914. Although taking place during the Third Republic, this period is considered the Belle Époque, a time following the architectural upheaval of the Second Empire and as period of calm between the Franco-Prussian and Second World Wars. The goal of this dissertation is to observe how the discourse concerning the Jews of Paris changes with time and with the diverse and multiple transformations rocking the foundations of the French capital and the Parisian society.

II. Chapter One: *The Jewish Monarchy: Mapping Jewish Characters in Balzac's Comédie humaine.*

Introduction:

In the nineteenth century, one small but increasingly visible sign of developing and evolving Parisian diversity was the burgeoning Jewish community, which was recently allowed to participate in Parisian society in many more ways than previous to the revolutionary emancipation of 1791. Historical data tells the facts of this growing Jewish population, multiplying from 500 in 1789 to 40,000 by 1880. Nevertheless these numbers cannot reveal the French perspective on the appearance of Jewish figures populating the French capital emerging most notably in the upper levels of Parisian society. However, the literature of the period, striving to reproduce or creatively represent Parisian society in minute realistic and naturalistic detail, offers a unique lens through which one can begin to perceive and explore the effects of the growing Jewish presence and grasp magnitude of the Jewish influence on and within a city in great transformation. In this chapter, an exploration of Balzac's diverse and curious characters of Jewish origin with which he populated the streets of Paris in his novels of the *Comédie humaine*, will show how fictional Jewish figures were in fact representative of the changes taking place in Parisian society.

Nineteenth-century Paris was a place of tremendous transformation, from a social, architectural and urban landscape perspective. The Jewish characters of the *Comédie humaine* are evidence of such change simply by their unprecedented quantity and variety and more importantly by the role they play as agents. From the eighteenth to the nineteenth century, the nature of Jewish representation underwent a complete metamorphosis. Believed by Enlightenment philosophers to be incapable of adapting to the societies in the midst of which they lived, the Jews of nineteenth-century Paris became the most convinced and enthusiastic promoters of change in the heart of the Parisian community that they had adopted as their own. An influential professor once said that societal changes appear in literature after the change has already occurred. The emergence of Jewish characters in Balzac's *Comédie humaine* in disproportion to the Jewish population in Paris at the time indicates that the place and role of Jews in French society had already undergone a transformation. The Jewish characters of Balzac in the first half of the nineteenth century were thus test subjects, just as they were for the Enlightenment philosophers questioning human perfectibility. The experiment that Balzac was conducting with his Jewish characters was however not based on human perfectibility, but on the Parisian population's ability to adapt to the changes that Jewish figures both enacted and represented. In the *Comédie humaine*, Balzac opposes the French-Catholic traditions of the Ancien Régime, based on social hierarchy determined by birth, with that of the post-Revolutionary modernity in which financial, political, social, and technical genius take the place of birth in determining who dominates the top of the mountain that is Parisian high society. One way in which Balzac demonstrates the Jewish representation of change, also revealing how the city was evolving and how the Parisians were reacting, was through the style of the homes and the particular neighborhoods in which the Jewish characters of the *Comédie humaine* lived, worked, and frequented.

Scholarly work on the *Comédie humaine* is historically prolific and the presence of Jewish characters has intrigued many scholars of literature, history and society. The two major works dedicated solely to Balzac's Jewish characters are Marthe Spitzer's and Ketty Kupfer's *Les Juifs de Balzac*, sharing the same title but

published over sixty years apart, the first in 1939 and serving as a truly unique work by the very nature of its existence previous to the Second World War and the catastrophic fate of the European Jewish population, the second in 2001. According to Spitzer, a scholar from Budapest who appears to have only published this one, albeit important, work, the significance of Jewish characters in the *Comédie humaine* is determined by two factors that decide in fact any character's importance in Balzac's novels, "la fréquence de son apparition et... l'intensité de la passion qui l'obsède" (Spitzer 77). The Baron de Nucingen, Jean-Esther Van Gobseck, Éliás Magus, and Raoul Nathan fit these criteria. They are recurring Jewish characters, notorious for their financial and creative superiority, that play central roles, are mentioned throughout the *Comédie humaine*, and are often characterized by an intense obsession, "Gobseck est obsédé par une curiosité psychologique extraordinaire... Pénétrer les secrets les plus intimes du coeur humain est [son] seul intérêt," and Magus, who "ne s'intéresse qu'aux objets d'art... surtout les tableaux", "est donc le passionné de beautés artistiques... capable de commettre un crime pour avoir l'objet convoité" (Spitzer 78-79). However, it is not just the male Jewish characters who are heroes in the *Comédie humaine*, Jewish women such as Esther Van Gobseck and Josépha Mirah, high class courtesans with notable artistic talent and unparalleled beauty, labeled at the time as either Oriental or Biblical despite their decidedly Ashkenazi and European origins, are as important as their male coreligionists, although appearing less frequently.

However, it is not simply their reappearance in various novels of the *Comédie humaine* or the diverse forms with which they are painted that render these Jewish characters as representatives of modernity and transformation. It is where they live, how they live, and the places they frequent that reveal the transition to modernity in Paris. The dwellings of Jewish characters are evoked in both Spitzer's and Kupfer's studies, but a discussion of where they lived in Paris and how this is representative of the evolution of the city, what role that Jews had in this evolution, or how they came to represent it is missing. Spitzer argues that Balzac's description of a Jewish character's home serves two means, "la description de leur demeure... éclaire le caractère individuel de même que le caractère national" (Spitzer 34). Kupfer, turning her dissertation at the

Sorbonne into a comprehensive overview of Balzac's Jewish characters, maintains the same argument as Spitzer, only elaborating on why Balzac had such a personal interest in the detailed descriptions of the homes of his characters, "le lieu d'habitation revêt chez Balzac une importance primordiale. Il a lui-même souvent déménagé, a pris plaisir à dépenser des fortunes pour l'ameublement de chacune de ses maisons. La demeure est, pour lui, le reflet du caractère et des préoccupations des personnages qui l'habitent" (Kupfer, 232). The Jewish characters' homes are thus symbolic of their place in society. In this chapter we will see how the spaces that Balzac's Jewish characters occupy in the city come to reflect in time their role in the transformation of the urban environment via the architectural forms and the neighborhoods of the city.

In his groundbreaking work, *Inventing the Israëlite*, published in 2010, Maurice Samuels, professor of French literature, points to the association that came to be made between Jews and modernity in Paris throughout the nineteenth century, "Parisian Jews, in other words, were canaries in the coal mine of modernity" (Samuels, 20). Nevertheless, in this study of Jewish writers in nineteenth-century France, Samuels never mentions how their place in Paris, the areas and homes in which Jewish characters live, supports this claim. Furthermore, Jeannine Guichardet, literary scholar specialist of Balzac and the nineteenth century, tells of the importance of architecture in Balzac's writing and what he believed it revealed about those who inhabited the architectural forms of nineteenth-century Paris in her work, *Balzac "archéologue" de Paris*, published in 1987. Quoting Balzac in *La Recherche de l'absolu*, Guichardet underscores the centrality of architecture in the study of society in the *Comédie humaine*, "Les événements de la vie humaine, soit publique, soit privée sont si intimement liés à l'architecture, que la plupart des observateurs peuvent reconstruire les nations ou les individus dans toute la vérité de leurs habitudes, d'après les restes de leurs monuments publics ou par leurs reliques domestiques... De là vient sans doute le prodigieux intérêt qu'inspire une description architecturale" (Guichardet, 14). Invited to the homes of key Jewish figures in nineteenth-century Paris, Balzac was aware of where and how they lived in Paris. In her investigation of Jewish characters in nineteenth-century French romantic literature, *Les Juifs des romantiques*, published in

2010, Nicole Savy, another nineteenth-century specialist, only focusing on Romantic literature, explains how Balzac knew intimately the most Jewish area of the city, “Grand marcheur dans Paris, Balzac connaît fort bien le Marais et son quartier juif” (Savy 139). However, in asserting that Balzac’s treatment of Jewish characters is equal to occurrences in Parisian society, “il les assimile: il montre ce qui est en train de se passer dans la société réelle”, and in maintaining that Jews lived side by side with Christians, “Juifs et chrétiens vivent ensemble, dans les mêmes lieux... ils font partie intégrante de la société commune et de ses différentes classes”, Savy states neither how these assimilated Jews represented what was happening in society nor where they lived in Paris alongside their Christian neighbors.

In the spirit of Louis Chevalier, a social and cultural historian and demographer, and his controversial but pertinent method of studying social change through nineteenth-century realist and naturalist fiction and with an eye to the work of Spitzer, Kupfer, Samuels, Guichardet and Savy, this chapter will explore where Balzac’s Jewish characters lived in Paris and what implications this entails within the evolving Parisian society and urban environment. The physical and social geography of the city that is brought to life in the pages of the *Comédie humaine* thus reveals the cultural importance of Jewish characters and physical and social place they occupied in Paris to an author haunted by nostalgia for the Ancien Régime and motivated by the modern organization of society to carve out a place for himself through literary sensation and economic success, the latter of which he failed fairly miserably. The nineteenth century is marked by a new awareness of space, especially the establishment of hierarchy of space in the city. Despite the Revolution’s attempt to abolish social difference, Paris became increasingly divided along the lines of social differentiation throughout the nineteenth century. Furthermore, the ability to financially elevate oneself in society increased the geographical divisions in Paris, relegating the poor and working classes to the eastern half of the city and reserving the western half for an elite group of affluent aristocrats and bourgeois. Awareness of these trends increased with Jacques Séraphin Lanquetin’s work, *Ville de Paris: Question du déplacement de la population*, published in 1842, studying the geographical and demographical divisions underway in Paris. While

Chevalier's *Classes laborieuses et classes dangereuses* employs the fiction of Balzac and other nineteenth-century French authors writing in and about Paris to trace the urban and social evolution of the city based on crime and poverty within the working class, this dissertation looks at Balzac's Jewish characters to further follow the division of the city and prove the role of Jewish figures as both representations of agents of urban geographical and social transformation.

An Evolving Jewish City:

The context in which Balzac situated his stories and characters was in fact unique and unprecedented for the Parisian Jewish community. Before delving into the meat of Jewish representation in the *Comédie humaine*, it will be helpful to set the stage. Writing during the July Monarchy, and also portraying this period in his novels, Balzac incorporates Jewish characters simply because they are part of his vision and comprehension of the city. That Balzac noticed the new Jewish presence is not entirely surprising; that he wrote Jewish characters into his opus however very telling of the social and historical context. The city had begun to change when Balzac began writing and the Jewish presence in Paris and in his novels is proof of the evolving context. The Jewish place in this period was still forming and there are certain aspects of Balzac's description of Jewish characters that confirm and support this situation. In this first section, the context of Jews in Paris and Jewish characters in the *Comédie humaine* will set the framework for an exploration of their physical place in the city in the next.

Throughout the *Comédie humaine*, the reader is led through the streets of Paris following the movements of characters from one street to another, one neighborhood to the next, crossing the bridges over the Seine via the Ile de la Cité or the Ile Saint-Louis, moving from the Right Bank to the Left, or vice versa. Just as Balzac himself wandered the city, his narration navigates readers through the streets of Paris, encountering new and interesting characters. In his frequent wanderings Balzac himself was always attracted to the antique shops of the Marais. With the Marais existing as a starting point for many Jewish individuals having arrived in the city from other regions in France or from elsewhere in Europe, Balzac must have chanced

upon some intriguing figures. The variety of national origins of Balzac's Jewish characters—Dutch, Polish, German, Alsatian or Bordelaise amongst others—is evidence of the actual diversity of the growing urban Jewish population. Following emancipation, despite encouragement to enter into professions other than those in the financial field, the Jews of France slipped easily, almost seamlessly, into the urban environment, finding employment as bankers, businessmen, traders, or shop owners. Previously banned from inhabiting major cities, the Jews of France quickly found their place in this nineteenth-century European capital. Furthermore, in the rapidly transforming social and architectural setting of nineteenth-century Paris, the Jewish population became so closely linked to urban space, city professions, and a modern, cosmopolitan lifestyle that Balzac was compelled to include Jewish characters in his fictional reconstruction of Paris. Balzac's choice to include Jewish characters is in fact what sets him apart from other authors of the same period. Eugène Sue and Victor Hugo, for example, also set stories in a Parisian environment under transformation, but neither of these contemporaries of Balzac included Jewish characters as an integral part of the urban setting, involved in and indicative of change, on a demographic and geographic level.

The association of the Jewish individual and the nineteenth-century Parisian urban landscape was contradictory to the traditional stereotype of the wandering Jew disseminated in France and Europe (*qui*). This mythical figure had benefitted from a rich biblical and literary tradition as the Jewish shoemaker who witnessed the crucifixion of the Christian Messiah and is thus condemned to wander the Earth until his return. Having taken root in Medieval European literature, French writers of the nineteenth century brought this character back into the literary scene with several novels including Edgar Quinet's *Abasvérus*, appearing in 1833-1834, Eugène Sue's *Le Juif errant*, published in 1844, and Alexandre Dumas' long and unfinished novel, *Isaac Laquedem*, printed as a *feuilleton* from 1852 to 1853. A nomad in permanent exile with no fixed home or solid roots in any land, this stereotype willfully ignored the traditional urban ghetto in which Jews were forcibly rooted beginning in the Middle Ages. While Joachim Schlör claims that "Jews have always been an extraordinarily urban people", evoking a long historical relationship between the urban setting and

Jewish identity, Jews in France had been refused residence in many cities, especially Paris, and repeatedly since the eleventh century (Schlör 224).

When Charles VI wrote and enforced the edict of 1394, the Jews of Paris were expelled from the city more permanently than any other official expulsion. After 1394, the Parisian Jewish population literally disappeared from inside the walls until the late eighteenth century. Throughout Europe Jews were prohibited from owning land, homes, and commercial or production spaces. Following the 1789 Revolution, the Jews of Paris were therefore an extraordinarily new urban people and Schlör's claim only becomes correct following the emancipation that opened cities and allowed this population to rapidly urbanize. France's decision to emancipate the Jews in 1791 changed the Jewish relationship with the city, allowing them to become home, land, and business owners, setting roots and growing into a permanent element of the Parisian cityscape. Balzac's choice to cast Jewish characters as urban figures flew in the face of the literary tradition of the wandering Jew, proving the modernity of Balzac's Jewish characters as remarkably new to the urban scene and thus symbolic of change.

Paris is a privileged setting for many stories in the *Comédie humaine* and the new Jewish presence in the French capital served Balzac as an original source of literary creativity. Having moved several times throughout the city, Balzac was more than familiar with the Parisian urban landscape and the various neighborhoods inhabited by different Jewish individuals, families, and communities. An astute observer, Balzac was aware of all the various qualities of the streets in Paris and communicated to the reader all the oddities, intricacies, and novelties of the urban setting. The growing Jewish population contributed to new personalities appearing in the Parisian cityscape. Inspired by the new manifestation of Jewish identity in the urban space, Balzac's Jewish characters are consequently contrary to age-old stereotypes. Historically in French literature, the token Jewish character is relegated to a version of the *Merchant of Venice's* Shylock or *Ivanhoe's* Isaac of York, "ils sont calqués sur ceux de Shakespeare et de Walter Scott... Ils se vêtiront du masque, emprunté à la littérature médiéval, de l'usurier riche et avare, lâche et entêté et toujours inquiétant"

(Kupfer 45). Before the myth of the rich and cosmopolitan Jew just becoming popular during Balzac's career, fueled by the Rothschild's famous wealth, the traditional stereotypical Jewish character was an itinerant usurer, peddling second-hand wares and engaging in devious financial deals with unsuspecting French Catholics, either destitute peasants or naïve, impressionable, and easily corrupted sons of the aristocracy (Sepinwall 30-31). This is not to say that Balzac did not include Jewish usurers in the *Comédie humaine*—Gobseck, one of Balzac's most famous Jewish characters, is a moneylender—but it shows that none of Balzac's Jewish characters fits the mold of the age-old wandering Jew stereotype.

Going beyond traditional negative figurations, Balzac's portrayal of a variety of Jewish characters was unique. Representing the newly assimilated Jew, Balzac is "le premier à donner le portrait du Juif Moderne" (Spitzer 21). Balzac's Jewish characters were an integral part of the evolution occurring in Paris: "Il a eu l'originalité de peindre les Juifs dans la société de son temps, une société qu'il ne craignait pas de voir en pleine mutation" (Kupfer 54). Furthermore, Balzac's Jewish characters are both complex and highly developed. They are found exercising multiple professions: "il leur a donné des rôles différents et variés... ils ne sont pas seulement usuriers, banquiers ou brocanteurs mais, médecins, journalistes, dandies, prostituées, voire aristocrates par assimilation" (Kupfer 54, Savy 141). One of the first nineteenth-century authors to use the new Jewish presence as original literary material, Balzac imagined Jewish characters throughout his fictional Parisian society, recounting the itinerary of Jewish characters moving throughout the city. Inspired by the social realities of the July Monarchy, Balzac was a true archeologist of the "mobilier social" furnishing the figurative urban house, seeking to unveil the meaning behind the "immense assemblage de figures, de passions, et d'événements" of Parisian society in its nineteenth-century urban home (Guichardet 16). Fundamental to the *Comédie humaine*, Jewish characters are part of the Guichardet's proverbial "social furniture" decorating the city, furnishing the urban landscape, and reflecting the new realities of the post-revolutionary and rapidly modernizing nineteenth-century Parisian setting.

Unlike the eternally wandering Jew, never setting roots, Balzac's Jewish characters are anchored in Paris simply by the nature of having a Parisian address. Allowed for the first time in hundreds of years to live and to possess homes in the city after emancipation, the Jews of France bought homes and land, settling as they had never before had the opportunity. No longer prohibited from becoming property owners by the various ruling parties and no longer fearful of expulsion accompanied by confiscation of all material possessions, the Jews of France had the legal reassurance to become rooted members of society. In giving his Jewish characters actual addresses in Paris, Balzac provides evidence of these new and favorable circumstances. The Antiquaire in *La Peau de chagrin* has a permanent shop on the quai Voltaire. Gobseck, after extensive world travels, has come to settle permanently in a convent-like apartment on the rue des Grès. Nucingen's home on the rue Saint-Lazare doubly ties him to Paris, serving as home and bank headquarters. Élie Magus is the owner of an aristocratic home on the rue de la Chaussée des Minimes near the Place des Vosges. Moïse Halpersohn, although traveling across Europe for his medical profession, has both a home and a health clinic in the Chaillot neighborhood, rue Marbeuf and rue Basse-Saint-Pierre. Other Jewish characters, such as Esther Van Gobseck, Raoul Nathan, Fritz Brunner, and Josépha Mirah, are less rooted than the later, but they still have actual, sometimes multiple, Parisian addresses. Esther, Raoul, Fritz, and Josépha's mobility can easily be attributed to their young age and, for those that live a long life, they later find a more permanent place in the city. Furthermore, three of these younger Jewish characters are artists. Esther and Josépha are actresses. Raoul is a playwright. Their creative characteristics lend easily to an artistic indecision. Balzac himself moved all over the city and his literary production is proof that mobility and creativity go hand in hand. Although they might not all have immediate permanent addresses, these Jewish characters all share Paris as a common denominator and their movement is circumscribed by the walls of the city.

Following the trajectories of Balzac's Jewish characters, the reader can envision and conjure up an interactive, literary, even Jewish map of the city. The urban landscape of Paris is therefore brought to life at a very particular time contemporary to Balzac—the first half of the nineteenth century, from the end of the

Restoration Monarchy to the end of the July Monarchy. Paris of this time, according to Balzac, is at the same time a historical and modern urban setting, a composition of new and old, “à partir des quelques vestiges d’un Paris morcelé, mutilé, lui fait retrouver, ‘reconstruire par analogie’ le vieux Paris... En fait, bien peu de romans se déroulent dans un autrefois parisien” (Guichardet 15). The importance of Balzac’s novels thus originates in the historical and social perspective precisely because they were inspired by the realities of the city in which he lived, observed with his own eyes, and recorded with his pen. Known to have a penchant for furniture and decorations of a previous era, one can imagine Balzac writing the scene that takes place in the antique shop on the quai Voltaire in *La Peau de Chagrin* after visiting a similar setting with a Parisian Jewish Antique dealer.

Although the period depicted by Balzac prefaced the rapid metamorphosis of the Second Empire, preparing the landscape for architectural and urban changes and growth to the surrounding suburbs, it was still a period of change, “After about 1830, the Paris economy began to grow more rapidly and the building of apartment houses accelerated... When the 1840s saw faster growth in France, thanks partly to the modernising policies of the government, building revived in Paris and the early railways strengthened interest in industrial construction methods... The Rue Rambuteau, a new street driven by the prefectural authorities from the Halles to the Marais in the 1840s, was lined by apartment houses... Population growth accelerated in the 1840s when most of the new railways built terminals in Paris” (Sutcliffe 77-78). Balzac’s work is thus additionally important from an architectural and urban perspective, memorializing the city prior to the great urban works of the Second Empire and during the slow but steady changes of the 1830s and 40s. By the middle of Balzac’s writing career, the race to modernity in Paris had already begun.

The July Monarchy was coincidentally a period of profound transformation for the Jews of Paris, “l’essentiel de son œuvre est écrit sous le règne de Louis-Philippe, au cœur même des années d’assimilation, de reconstruction identitaire et d’ascension sociale” (Savy 137). By the 1840s, some of the Jews in Paris had reached a point at which their success had become decidedly noticeable, “Déjà sous la Restauration,

quelques juifs de la capitale s'étaient fait remarquer par leur réussite et leur influence; cette tendance ne fera qu'augmenter sous le règne de Louis-Philippe" (Roos 74). Parisian Jews strove to assume a bourgeois lifestyle and cleanse themselves of their previously distinctive differences, "Throughout the century... increasing numbers of Jews... began to adopt bourgeois occupations and comportments... As the Jews joined the bourgeoisie, they shed many of the trappings of traditional Jewish life, such as the use of Yiddish, and often ceased to attend synagogue" (Samuels 11). The transformation was so successful that the Jewish bourgeoisie came to rival the traditional French bourgeoisie in Paris, "sur le plan socio-professionnel... c'est vers 1840 que le pourcentage de bourgeois juifs rejoint à peu près celui des bourgeois dans la société parisienne en général" (Piette 19). Furthermore, the desire to be bourgeois and to advance themselves in society led the Jews of Paris to greatly diversify their professions, "de même, la représentation juive dans l'ensemble des professions et métiers est un fait accompli dès le milieu de la monarchie de Juillet" (Piette 19). Faithful to the great social changes of Parisian society, Balzac portrays Jewish characters in the full process of assimilation, as they appeared in the 1830s and 40s, still awkward in their modern French trappings, often over eager to impress and to gain entry to society through ostentatious display.

Following emancipation and the rights granted to the Jewish population, France in general, and Paris in particular, was a desired destination for the European Jewish community, "Tous, étaient attirés à Paris, nouveau pôle d'attraction" (Kupfer 24). Prominent banking families saw great potential for business in the French capital, "C'est entre 1810 et 1830 que certaines familles juives célèbres s'installèrent à Paris" (Kupfer 25). But it was not just the business prospects that drew Jews from the East; it was also the intellectual possibilities of advancement that were denied them in Germany and Austria. The orientalist Albert Cohn and Salomon Munk left Vienna and Berlin respectively for Paris due to the impossibility of obtaining real professorships; "[Cohn] comprend qu'il ne trouvera aucun poste... après avoir obtenu son doctorat, il prend la décision de partir pour un pays plus hospitalier, la France... C'est pour la même raison que Munk a dû se résoudre à quitter Berlin... Bien que qualifié pour devenir *Privat Dozent* (professeur suppléant), aucune

carrière publique ne s'offrait à lui puisque l'édit de 1812 interdisait toujours aux Juifs l'accès à l'administration, à la justice et à l'armée" (Seni 37). Cohn and Munk are just two examples of many Jewish intellectuals from countries to the east of France that found refuge and the potential for more prestigious academic positions in nineteenth-century Paris.

The majority of the Jews arriving in Paris in the century following emancipation were of eastern origin, either from France, Germany, or beyond. With the largest Jewish population in France speaking German or a combination of German and Hebrew, known as Yiddish, and inhabiting the Alsace-Lorraine region, the German and Yiddish speaking Jews to the east of France prompted the German-Jewish population in eastern France to swell, "L'immigration juive est surtout ashkénaze. Les juifs allemands s'installent en France soit à Paris, soit en Alsace ou en Lorraine germanophone..." (Roos 94). While Jews beyond the eastern French border moved into Alsace-Lorraine, the German and Yiddish speaking population already inhabiting Alsace-Lorraine moved west towards the capital, "À Paris, après 1830, ils y représenteraient près de 20% de la population juive que les parisiens distinguent difficilement de leurs coreligionnaires français, leurs habitudes, leur rite, leur accent teuton étant semblables" (Roos 94). The Ashkenazi majority in Paris is noticeable throughout the *Comédie humaine*, as nearly all the characters are of Ashkenazi origin with one exception. By creating characters with shifting ethnicities, Balzac reveals the confusion that Parisians felt in regards to the origins of Eastern Jews. Nucingen, for example, is alternately said to come from Eastern France, Germany, and Poland (Kupfer 103). Elias Magus, however, is the only character of potentially Sephardic origin, having come to Paris via Bordeaux. He is nevertheless described with equally confusing nationalities, "une espèce de Hollando-Belge-Flamand", that would in fact confirm his Sephardic origins when considering that Bordeaux and cities in Belgium and Holland served as landing ports for Jews fleeing the Iberian Peninsula from 1492 to the eighteenth century.

Furthermore, this period saw a major shift in how Jews were seen within Parisian society, "by the 1840s the Jews had become synonymous with change in all its forms. In fact, certain highly visible Jews pioneered

many of the changes associated with the transition to modernity in France... Jews took a leading role not just in modernizing the French economy and infrastructure but in modernizing French culture as well” (Samuels 19). The July Monarchy, under the leadership of Louis-Philippe, was revealed to be the most tolerant and liberal period to date in regards to the Parisian Jewish community. While Jews across Europe were excelling in the nineteenth century, it was in France that they found the most success, “Individual French Jews achieved unparalleled success” and “As in other countries, Jews particularly excelled in business and the arts. Only in France, however, did unconverted Jews reach the highest levels of government, beginning in the 1830s” (Samuels 10). The July Monarchy embraced the age-old idea that a wealthy and successful Jewish community was financially beneficial to the rest of the population. No longer fearing expulsion and confiscation of their wealth that had been the leading trend in relations between French kings and the tolerated Jewish communities, the Jews in Paris took advantage of such an advantageous situation.

From Gobseck to Halpersohn:

The first Jewish character in the *Comédie humaine* appears in a short story for which the title bears his name. Jean-Esther Van Gobseck, the main character of *Gobseck*, published in 1830, is originally of the “faubourgs d’Anvers” (*Gobseck* 79). Derville, an attorney who began as his neighbor, only to become his friend and business partner, tells Gobseck’s story. While Derville is narrating in the aristocratic faubourg Saint-Germain in the salon of the vicomtesse de Grandlieu, Gobseck’s story begins in the Latin Quarter on the rue des Grès, now rue Cujas. After painting a meticulous portrait of his late friend, Derville mentions Gobseck’s curious living situation. Specific details indicate that the building in which both Derville and Gobseck rented rooms had previously belonged to a convent: “Cette maison, qui n’a pas de cour, est humide et sombre. Les appartements n’y tirent leur jour que de la rue. La distribution claustrale qui divise le bâtiment en chambres d’égale grandeur, en ne leur laissant d’autre issu qu’un long corridor éclairé par des jours de souffrance, annonce que la maison a jadis fait partie d’un couvent” (*Gobseck* 78). Particularly intriguing is Gobseck’s status as one of the few Jewish characters in the *Comédie humaine* living on the Left

Bank and the only Jew of Balzac's literary Parisian society living within the center of Paris's original university neighborhood, an area of the city with particularly religious roots, the university initially existing as a school of Catholic theology and philosophy. The religiosity of this neighborhood was however not limited to Catholicism; there had also once been the famous Yeshiva de Paris centered in this part of the city, "l'école rabbinique parisienne était devenue un foyer attractif pour les étudiants de la province française et des grandes communautés étrangères, tant d'Allemagne que d'Espagne", fitting in quite well with the general theme of religious scholarship (Berg 41-42).

Furthermore, the building in which Gobseck resides was, as Balzac claims, truly an old convent. The property along the city walls of the Left Bank had been given to the Jacobins in the thirteenth century, "en 1218, Jean Barastre, doyen de Saint-Quentin, leur donna une propriété située près des murs de la ville, ainsi qu'une petite chapelle dédiée à Saint-Jacques" (Lazare 269). The building Balzac describes as cloistering, lacking a central courtyard, and receiving light only from the street, could easily have been the monastic dormitory built by the French king, Saint Louis, sometime after 1220, "Saint-Louis les combla de bienfaits, fit terminer leur église et construire un dortoir et des écoles... aussi plusieurs terrains pour agrandir l'établissement" (Lazare 269). Before this street became rue des Grès, it was called "le passage des Jacobins", serving only as an entrance to the convent from the rue Saint-Jacques. When the religious property was seized during the 1789 Revolution, the passage was turned into a street that Haussmann would later replace in part with the boulevard Saint-Michel, "Un procès-verbal dressé par le conseil des bâtiments civils, dans sa séance du 24 thermidor an VII, porte ce qui suit, 'Les domaines nationaux qui bordent le passage des Jacobins, ayant été vendus à la charge de fournir le terrain nécessaire pour la formation d'une rue à ouvrir ce passage'" (Lazare 269). In Balzac's period, the rue des Grès connected the rue Saint-Jacques with the rue de la Harpe, a historically Jewish street dating to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Balzac therefore placed his earliest Jewish character directly in proximity to two of the oldest Jewish communities in Paris that existed in between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries. Michel Roblin, a French historian who specialized

in Paris, named the two Jewish communities after the streets on which they were found, “la Juiverie de la Harpe” and “la Juiverie de Galande” (Roblin 16-17). The more recent Catholic identity of Gobseck’s street had in fact obscured the history of the original Jewish communities once inhabiting the rue de la Harpe and the rue Galande prior to the 1180s and sometime between 1250 and the 1390s respectively. Either by coincidence or deliberately, Balzac had in fact reclaimed for his Jewish character this area of Paris from the Catholic and French powers, successfully reinstating a Jewish presence.

The early Jewish communities of the Left Bank were primarily attracted by the business potential, “On peut supposer que les Juifs habitant sur la rive gauche de la Seine... ont subi cette attraction” (Anchel 61). The attraction being the rue Saint-Jacques, a Gallo-Roman route with a great commercial importance, cutting a straight line through the city, crossing the Seine at the center of the Ile de la Cité, and forming on this island the commercial street originally named “la rue de la Juiverie” (Anchel 61). In Medieval times Jews and Syrians were the only ones to take advantage of the “importance de cette voie commerciale”, setting up shops to sell rare spices imported from around the Mediterranean and beyond. The early Jewish presence on the Left Bank contributed to the commercial growth of Paris, “L’existence des Juifs en cet endroit précis apparaît donc comme très étroitement liée, et depuis un âge très reculé, au développement de Paris” (Anchel 62). These early Jewish communities did not originally specialize in usury; they primarily worked with cloth, fur, and jewelry, working as tailors, fur traders, and goldsmiths. With the growth of Catholic businesses and the endorsement of Catholic leaders, the once diverse Jewish professions were reduced to “le commerce de l’argent”. Even usury was unprofitable due to the difficult competition of the “banquiers Lombards” who had monopolized control of the city’s financial market (Roblin 21). In situating Gobseck on a street with such a layered and multifaceted religious history, Balzac also touches on an idea that had just barely begun to take root in French society. Rumor had it that the state was selling the land once belonging to the aristocracy, of which convents and monasteries were in large portion, to the highest bidder and that the rich

Jews of France were buying. Either by coincidence or deliberately, Balzac has Gobseck reclaiming this neighborhood from the Catholic and French powers, reinstating a Jewish presence.

After a lifetime wandering the globe in search of gold, Gobseck leads a quiet existence, balanced, calm, and in retreat from the chaotic world. He is destined to finish his days in the peaceful and silent manner of a monk, “Aussi sa vie s’écoulait-elle sans faire plus de bruit que le sable d’une horloge antique” (*Gobseck* 77). This curious character shares an equally curious characteristic with a greatly similar character, the Antique dealer of Balzac’s first novel, *La peau de chagrin*, published in 1831, just one year after *Gobseck*. This peculiarity is an equally ageless and ancient appearance, “Son âge était un problème: on ne pouvait pas savoir s’il était vieux avant le temps, ou s’il avait ménagé sa jeunesse afin qu’elle lui servît toujours” (*Gobseck* 77). Magically capable of living longer than the average person, he preserves his life force, “Ses actions, depuis l’heure de son lever jusqu’à ses accès de toux le soir, étaient soumises à la régularité d’une pendule. C’était en quelque sorte un *homme-modèle* que le sommeil remontait. Si vous touchez un cloporte cheminant sur un papier, il s’arrête et fait la mort; de même, cet homme s’interrompait au milieu de son discours et se taisait au passage d’une voiture, afin de ne pas forcer sa voix. À l’imitation de Fontenelle, il économisait le mouvement vital, et concentrait tous les sentiments humains dans le moi” (*Gobseck* 77). Both the neighborhood and the building in which Gobseck lives in Paris are appropriate to the unique personality of this strange Jewish character. His lifestyle resembles that of a Christian monk in a monastery. He practices usury, but the Catholic Church strictly prohibits this profession. Although Balzac never once wavers from the Jewishness with which he has labeled this character, he is described as more indifferent than incredulous to any faith.

This lack of religious identity combined with a highly sober and regulated lifestyle leaves his young friend Derville pondering whether Gobseck’s only connection to Judaism is the usury he practices. Falling victim to ancient anti-Jewish stereotypes, Derville posits that Gobseck remained faithful to his mother’s Jewishness by considering Christians as fair victims. This hypothesis is confounded later in the story when Gobseck protects the inheritance that an aristocrat will leave his children from his non-aristocratic wife’s

habit of paying her gambling lover's debts with the dwindling aristocratic family's fortune. Gobseck's only religion is that of preservation and the work to which he has dedicated the last of his life force is preventing fortunes from being wasted. Balzac has transposed the eighteenth-century belief in eternally enduring Jewish traditions onto the new, financially driven ideals of the nineteenth century. No longer representative of the tenacity ascribed to ancient Jewish practices that successfully kept the Jewish population separate from their Catholic and Protestant neighbors, this Jewish character comes to symbolize the transformation happening within the Parisian Jewish community. Gobseck's quest for preservation, either of his own life or the fortune of others, ties him at once to the Shylock stereotype and to the evolving Jewish identity within the modernizing French capital. This original Jewish character serves as bridge from the past to the future of representation of Jews in French literature.

While the religious origins of the building and neighborhood are congruous with the monkish nature of this character, Balzac employs Gobseck's passion for gold to emphasize his Jewish heritage. Serving as Derville's worldly teacher, Gobseck explains the essential nature of gold, "Si vous aviez vécu autant que moi, vous sauriez qu'il n'est qu'une seule chose matérielle dont la valeur soit assez certaine pour qu'un homme s'en occupe. Cette chose... c'est L'OR. L'or représente toutes les forces humaines... Nos fantaisies veulent du temps, des moyens physiques ou des soins. Eh bien, l'or contient tout en germe, et donne tout en réalité" (*Gobseck* 81-82). Although this character's Jewish origins are tenuous and loosely based on traditional stereotypes of the gold-obsessed Jewish moneylender, Gobseck appears as a last and haunting vestige of the ancient Jewish community of the Left Bank. Practicing the very last profession to which his long gone predecessors were limited, Gobseck succeeds magnificently, hiding his slyly won fortune from the inopportune curiosity of the rest of Paris, "Était-il riche ou pauvre? Personne n'aurait pu répondre à ces questions. Je ne voyais jamais d'argent chez lui. Sa fortune se trouvait sans doute dans les caves de la banque" (*Gobseck* 78). In perfect disguise in the middle of one of the oldest Jewish areas of the city, Gobseck even pretends that a gold coin he dropped is not his, "Un jour, par hasard, il portait de l'or; un double

napoléon se fit jour, on ne sait comment, à travers son gousset; un locataire qui le suivait dans l'escalier ramassa la pièce et la lui présenta. — Cela ne m'appartient pas, répondit-il avec une geste de surprise. À moi de l'or! Vivrais-je comme je vis si j'étais riche?" (*Gobseck* 78). Similar to the Jews forced to hide their Jewishness in Spain and Portugal after forced conversions and violent expulsions, Gobseck hides his fortune amassed in usury, an aspect innate to this character that Balzac presents as an authentically Jewish trait.

Gobseck's insistence on concealing his fortune combined with his Belgian, Dutch, and Flemish origins and his arrival in Paris via Bordeaux all come together to reveal this Jewish character's Sephardic inspired identity. That Gobseck traveled the world by boat with connections in Belgium, Holland, and Bordeaux is consistent with the migrations of Sephardic Jews. Following expulsions and periods of intense violence between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries, the Jews of the Iberian Peninsula fled by boat. Many left via the Mediterranean, but those who left via the Atlantic landed in various places, such as Bordeaux and Bayonne in France, Bruges and Anvers in Belgium, and The Hague, Rotterdam, and Amsterdam in the Netherlands. Sephardic Jews were particularly known for their command of maritime commerce and many had the opportunity to travel the world on business. When Paris again became hospitable for Jews—not officially allowed to inhabit the city, but risking little chance of expulsion—in the eighteenth century, Sephardic Jews in particular chose to live on the Left Bank, "La protection de l'abbaye de Saint-Germain, sur le territoire de laquelle se trouvait une foire importante, les conduisit à se grouper dans le voisinage; ils habitent presque tous rue Saint-André-des-Arts, rue Saint-Séverin, rue Mazarine, quai des Grands-Augustins, rue de l'Hirondelle, rue Gît-le-Cœur, dans les deux quartiers actuels de l'Odéon (6^e arr.) et de la Sorbonne (5^e arr.). Malgré la proximité de la rue de la Harpe, où était, au XIII^e siècle, une juiverie importante, il n'y a aucun rapport entre les établissements du moyen âge et ceux du XVIII^e siècle. Ils ont à leur tête un syndic, lequel fut longtemps Jacob Rodrigues-Pereire, instituteur des sourds-muets" (Roblin 43-44). Gobseck, like his Sephardic predecessors, found protection in a religious building. He is however very isolated, a vestige of the past. By the time Derville encounters his curious, ancient, Jewish friend, all the

other Sephardic Jews had moved to the Right Bank, “Entre temps, les Séfaradis avaient abandonné leur vieille ‘escole’ du quartier Saint-André-des-Arts, et, habitant désormais en majorité sur la rive droite, dans les nouveaux quartiers du faubourg Montmartre” (Roblin 57). Gobseck thus serves as a historical marker with which Balzac unearths both the clichéd usurer figure and the presence of Sephardic Jews on the Left Bank.

The next Jewish character in the *Comédie humaine* is also found on the Left Bank and appears as Gobseck’s near twin. An unusual occurrence for an author for whom character development was critical, this character does not actually have a name and is referred to as the Antique dealer. The missing name comes from the fact that Balzac had formed Gobseck and the Antique dealer from the same mold: “dans la première édition, Balzac avait fait de l’antiquaire un juif, comme Gobseck” (End note, *Peau de 90-91*). Although he is not explicitly labeled as Jewish in the final edition, there are some essential details describing this character that recall both Gobseck and the traditional Shylock stereotype. The Antique dealer first emerges in an unsettling encounter with Raphaël de Valentin in the novel *La peau de chagrin*, published in 1831. It is not entirely clear which one inspired the other, Gobseck inspiring the Antique dealer or the Antique dealer inspiring Gobseck, but both characters embody for Balzac the wily and sinister Jewish figure, enveloped in mystery. Like Gobseck, the Antique dealer is ageless, both ancient and youthful, “ce personnage qui semblait être sorti d’un sarcophage” with “la singulière jeunesse qui animait les yeux” (*Peau de 89*). Also having traveled extensively, this character had soaked up the wisdom of his worldly experiences, “une science profonde des choses dans la vie... les mœurs de toutes les nations du globe et leurs sagesses se résumaient sur sa face froide” (*Peau de 90*). While the Antique dealer does not speak of an obsession with gold as Gobseck does to his young lawyer friend, Balzac compares him to a figure called “Le peseur d’or” in a painting by Gérard Dow (*Peau de 90*). It becomes clear that the Antique dealer is also infatuated with the precious metal when he indicates how he embellished a Raphaël masterpiece of Jesus-Christ: “J’ai couvert cette toile de pièces d’or”, a strange revision of Christ on the cross (*Peau de 92*). While the unadorned painting would have inspired religious notions, “Enfin la religion catholique se lisait tout entier... Cette

peinture inspirait une prière, recommandait le pardon, étouffait l'égoïsme, réveillait toutes les vertus endormies”, the Antique dealer has twisted it into a veneration of gold (*Peau de 92*). Balzac implies that society's new religion is in fact gold with the Antique dealer's gold-coined portrait of Jesus. Later in the *Comédie humaine* Balzac spells out this what he had earlier insinuated when the non-Jewish character, Célestin Crevel, says in *La Cousine Bette*, “Enfin, l'éternelle allégorie du veau d'or! Du temps de Moïse, on agiotait dans le désert! Nous sommes revenus au temps bibliques” (*Bette* 353-354).

Despite the obvious similarities, there are some important differences between Gobseck and the Antique dealer. While Gobseck blends in with his surroundings, the Antique dealer is not dressed to fit seamlessly in with French society of the 1830s. His attire evokes the stereotype of an occult Kabbalistic figure who escaped to France from the far corners of Eastern Europe, an orthodox Jew of the sort Balzac describes in his 1847 *Lettre sur Kiev*, dressed in “costumes pontificaux” (*Kiev* 40). However, *La Peau de chagrin* was published before Balzac had traveled to Poland, Ukraine, and Russia where he first encountered truly Orthodox Jewish communities. He thus curiously and instinctually dressed his Antique dealer in the garb of a rabbi of Eastern European Jewish tradition, “un petit vieillard sec et maigre, vêtu d'une robe en velours noir, serrée autour de ses reins par un gros cordon de soie. Sur sa tête, une calotte en velours également noir laissait passer, de chaque côté de la figure, les longues mèches de ses cheveux blancs... Une barbe grise et taillée en pointe” (*Peau de 89-90*). While Balzac's intuition concerning the dress of an orthodox Jew is uncanny, he must have found inspiration in the Marais where many figures of this somewhat impoverished Jewish community were artists' models. His Antique dealer recalls not only biblical paintings, but also the models with characteristically Jewish features that posed as biblical figures, “l'apparence de ces têtes judaïques qui servent de types aux artistes quand ils veulent représenter Moïse” (*Peau de 90*). Balzac's Antique dealer is not located in the Marais, but on the quai Voltaire of the Left Bank, making his Jewish identity all the more ancient and mysterious.

While the details of the Antique dealer's history and potential Jewish affiliations are uncertain, Balzac leads the reader on a treasure hunt through Paris to find him. Although not the principal protagonist, the Antique dealer plays a crucial role in *La Peau de chagrin*. When the main character, Raphaël de Valentin, encounters the Antique dealer, his life is unexpectedly and irreversibly changed. The path that Raphaël follows to this encounter emphasizes the desolation of a destitute aristocrat struggling to survive in post-Revolutionary Paris where the sons of the Ancien Régime aristocracy no longer had the rights to the privilege, comfort, or respect from which their ancestors benefited. When he meets the Antique dealer, the circumstances of Raphaël's life recall the religious accusations of Jewish moneylenders corrupting young and naïve aristocrats by loaning them money for gambling and prostitutes. Beginning at a casino on the Right Bank and finishing in the Jewish Antique dealer's shop on the Left, Balzac narrates the path of perdition that the French-Catholic society so feared for the dying aristocracy.

Leaving the casino somewhere beyond the Palais Royal, most likely within the neighborhood surrounding the Bourse, an area generally associated with speculation and quickly-made and easily-dissipated fortunes, Raphaël de Valentin meanders to the Seine: "Il se trouvât bientôt sous les galeries du Palais-Royal, alla jusqu'à la rue Saint-Honoré, prit le chemin des Tuileries et traversa le jardin d'un pas indécis... Il s'achemina vers le pont Royal... Arrivé au point culminant de la voûte, il regarda l'eau d'un air sinistre..." (*Peau de 70-75*). Crossing to the Left Bank and strolling along the riverside, contemplating his unfortunate situation, he eventually finds himself in the Antique dealer's shop: "Il continua donc son chemin et dirigea vers le quai Voltaire... se dirigea vers un magasin d'antiquités dans l'intention de donner une pâture à ses sens, ou d'y attendre la nuit en marchandant des objets d'art... Il entra chez le marchand de curiosité d'un air dégagé" (*Peau de 70-75*). Upon entering the Antique dealer's shop, Raphaël continues wandering inside, lost in the seemingly endless floors and rooms filled with worldly treasures, "Au premier coup d'œil, les magasins lui offrirent un tableau confus, dans lequel toutes les œuvres humaines et divines se heurtaient... Tous les pays de la terre semblaient avoir apporté là quelque débris de leurs sciences, un échantillon de leurs

arts... Cet océan de meubles, d'inventions, de modes, d'œuvres, de ruines lui composait un poème sans fin... En montant l'escalier intérieur qui conduisait aux salles situées au premier étage... il marchait dans les enchantements d'un songe... Quand il entra dans les nouveaux magasins... suivit son conducteur et parvint à une quatrième galerie" (*Peau de 76-83*). The Antique dealer finally appears in this fourth gallery.

The Antique dealer emerges before the young and disparaged aristocrat as if by magic, "Tout à coup il crut avoir été appelé par une voix terrible... il ferma les yeux, les rayons d'une vive lumière éblouissaient; il voyait briller au sein des ténèbres une sphère rougeâtre dont le centre était occupé par un petit vieillard qui se tenait debout et dirigeait sur lui la clarté d'une lampe. Il ne l'avait entendu ni venir, ni parler, ni se mouvoir. Cette apparition eut quelque chose de magique" (*Peau de 89*). The mystical apparition of the Antique dealer contributes to the popular belief that Jews lured in aristocrats, enchanting them with the promise of riches, turning them into easy victims. Furthermore, this otherworldly encounter encouraged superstitious stereotypes surrounding Orthodox Judaism. Whether it was Balzac's intention or not, he successfully created an ambiance of unsettling mystery around the Antique dealer that has made literary scholars question the realism of this particular novel. For Raphaël de Valentin the strange things that happen in this Antique shop are more along the lines of fantasy than reality. Nevertheless the location of this fantastical antique shop is firmly rooted in Paris on the quai Voltaire.

As Balzac explains, Raphaël encounters the Antique dealer around 1829, on the Left Bank: "Cette vision avait lieu dans Paris, sur le quai Voltaire, au dix-neuvième siècle" (*Peau de 91*). Balzac emphasizes the date of this encounter to heighten the surprise of seeing the oddly old and young Antique dealer. Furthermore, it is not arbitrary that Balzac placed the Antique dealer's shop on the quai Voltaire. It is the same riverside street where Voltaire, one of the most negative critics of Jews of the eighteenth century, lived his last days: "Voisin de la maison où le dieu de l'incrédulité française avait expiré" (*Peau de 91*). As a prolongation of another quay, "Ce quai a été détaché, en 1791, du quai Malaquais pour recevoir le nom de Voltaire", this street became quite aristocratic when the earliest home built in 1622 was inherited by the "marquise de Saint-

Aulaire” and later rented it “à vie, de 1695 à 1710” to a former royal concubine, “Louis-Renée de Penacoët de Kéroualle, ex-maîtresse du roi Charles II... duchesse de Portsmouth” (Hillairet 659). Nearly all the homes built in the seventeenth century on the quai Voltaire were eventually inhabited, bought or inherited, by Ancien Régime aristocracy. Voltaire appeared twice at 27 quai Voltaire, first renting a room in a “Maison construite en 1661” from “la marquise de Bernières” in 1723, then in 1778 from Charles de Villette, whose mother, a friend of Voltaire, had inherited it in 1766 from “la veuve du marquis de Gramont” (Hillairet 661). Balzac echoes accusations of Jewish moneylenders corrupting the Catholic population in situating the Antique dealer on the previously aristocratic quai Voltaire in association with the philosophical writer who attacked Jews for their unwillingness to integrate society in clinging to archaic traditions. Emphasizing the mysterious and occult aspects of the Antique dealer along with his magically vast and treasure-filled shop, Balzac portrays a diabolical Jewish figure seeking to further spoil the ruined aristocracy. His prey, Raphaël de Valentin, born after the Revolution and experiencing great financial and social disadvantages, represents the old nobility, victim of the Revolution, and succumbing to the corruption of times.

Gobseck, on the rue des Grès, and the Antique dealer, on the quai Voltaire, are the only two Jewish characters of the *Comédie humaine* residing on the Left Bank. They have many commonalities: their physical appearance of a “petit vieillard” inspired by the paintings of Rembrandt, Metzger, and Gérard Dow; a contradicting young and ancient or ageless quality; a worldly-wise disposition acquired in traveling the globe; and a seemingly magical capacity to preserve their life-force, Gobseck “À l’imitation de Fontenelle... économisait le mouvement vital”, and the Antique dealer in learning to “laisser notre faible organisation dans un perpétuel état de calme... une formule dont s’emparent les sages” (*Gobseck* 77, *Peau de* 99). The idea that Balzac’s Jewish characters represent modernity is weakened when considering that these two characters embody a traditional representation of Jews in literature—the older, stereotypical anti-Jewish version of the wandering Jew, perceived as doomed to itinerancy, imbued with the ancient, occult, and mysterious Jewish traditions, and impossible to integrate into society—that Balzac adopted from historical popular belief and

literary trends, i.e. Shakespeare's Shylock and Walter Scott's Isaac of York (Rouart). They exercise two of the most clichéd professions ascribed to Jews, usury and antique dealing, are relics of historical prejudices and an enduring literary tradition, but they are both found living in Paris in the nineteenth century, in fixed locations, and interacting on a social and financial level with non-Jewish members of Parisian society.

In choosing to place these two Jewish characters on the Left Bank, Balzac links Gobseck and the Antique dealer to the unchanging urban landscape of this half of the city, forgotten amidst the rapid growth concentrated on the Right Bank. Jacques Séraphin Lanquetin, representing the Conseil Municipal of the July Monarchy, observed in the 1830s and 40s that the Left Bank remained in an undeveloped Medieval state, "La rive gauche de la Seine ne cesse de perdre sur la rive droite, à cause de son manque d'activité économique" (Lavedan 20). In living on the bank that represents stagnation and reverse growth, Gobseck and the Antique dealer are caught in the trap of negative figuration that restricted Jewish characters to the antiquated roles of usurers and peddlers of second hand wares, unable to evolve beyond the role in which they had been pigeonholed by society. These characters reflect the historical French perception—solidified by the philosophical writers during the eighteenth century of which Voltaire was a major contributor—of the Jewish people as obstinate and refusing to assimilate to the cultures of the cities, regions, or countries in which they lived when, in reality, they were unable to integrate into a the societies that denied them the rights and opportunities necessary to become active members (Schechter).

Nevertheless, these two Jewish characters of Balzac are living in nineteenth-century Paris, post 1789 Revolution and 1791 emancipation. In Paris in the time period depicted by Balzac, Gobseck and the Antique dealer are French citizens with equal rights and are thus at the heart of societal transformation as the most recent members of society forcing their fellow Parisians to question popular beliefs. With these two works of fiction, *Gobseck* and *La peau de Chagrin*, both published in 1830, Balzac appears to be exorcizing the Jewish ghosts of French history and European literary tradition in order to forge ahead with novel and intriguing Jewish characters in new and improving parts of the city. With Gobseck and the Antique dealer

appearing early on in the *Comédie humaine*, before Balzac had imagined other possibilities for Jewish characters, these two almost identical characters are both anchored to the literary tradition of the ancient and avaricious wandering Jew and serve as a point of departure from which Balzac was able to branch out and find inspiration for more modern Jewish characters.

The next Jewish character appearing chronologically after Gobseck and the Antique dealer represents an evolution beyond the clichés of usury and peddling and the economic, industrial and architectural inertia of the Left Bank. The Baron Frédéric de Nucingen is a more modern Jewish representation, characteristic of prominent Jewish figures in the Parisian society of Balzac's time. The modernity of this character is not only in his association with modern industry, like the Rothschild or the Pereire brothers and their realization of the first railway in France beginning in 1837, but also in his lack of any Jewish identity in a religious sense. Parisian Jews of the July Monarchy rapidly assimilated to French culture and quickly dispensed with Jewish traditions and practices to adopt a modern Parisian lifestyle. Henri Heine and Alexandre Dumas recounted this phenomenon respectively in 1840 and 1845: "Les juifs en France... se sont presque ou entièrement perdus ou, pour mieux dire, absorbés dans la nationalité française. Ces juifs sont des français tout comme les autres" and "Le juif chez nous n'existe plus comme type" (Heine 65, Dumas 48). Like the real Jewish figures of Paris described by Heine and Dumas, Nucingen has no specifically Jewish traits that would distinguish him from a similar banker of Catholic or Protestant origins of the same period. Furthermore, Nucingen is one of the most recurring characters in the *Comédie humaine*, appearing in about thirty different novels and short stories and mentioned in even more (Kupfer 79, 351-352). A clever banker and businessman of Alsatian, German, or Polish origin, depending on Balzac's inspiration, Nucingen made an immense fortune in all sorts of industries and trades, "Chez lui, la banque est un très-petit département: il y a les fournitures du gouvernement, les vins, les laines, les indigos, enfin tout ce qui donne matière à un gain quelconque. Son génie embrasse tout. Cet éléphant de la Finance vendrait des Députés au Ministère, et les Grecs aux Turcs. Pour lui le commerce est, dirait Cousin, la totalité des variétés, l'unité des spécialités. La Banque envisagée

ainsi devient toute une politique” (*Nucingen* 140-141). Nucingen’s success can be attributed to his understanding of how nineteenth-century Parisian society has come to revolve around money, an aspect of modern society that Balzac laments, “L’argent autrefois n’était pas tout, on admettait des supériorités qui le primaient. Il y avait de la noblesse, le talent, les services rendus à l’État; mais aujourd’hui la loi fait de l’argent un étalon général, elle l’a pris pour base de la capacité politique” (*Bette* 480-481).

Nucingen’s financial genius is not restricted to his knack for dealing in a variety of trades; it is also in his skill in manipulating the market in his favor. Like Balzac’s complicated appreciation of the Rothschilds and the *haute banque juive*, of which this family had become a cultural symbol, Nucingen’s financial prowess inspires more jealousy and disdain than awe and respect. The ease and facility with which Nucingen makes a fortune of the financial ruin of others, “Le banquier est un conquérant qui sacrifie des masses pour arriver à des résultats cachés, ses soldats sont les intérêts des particuliers” makes him both esteemed and scorned by competition and victims, with the rest of Parisian society to witness (*Meininger, Nucingen* 141). His modernity is further defined by his keen knowledge of the intricate workings of the financial market, “Nucingen avait compris ce que nous ne comprenons qu’aujourd’hui: que l’argent n’est une puissance que quand il est en quantités disproportionnées” and his ability to anticipate the market and stay several steps ahead of the rest of the financial community, “ce puff financier... était préparé depuis onze mois”, makes him a dangerous and unpredictable adversary (*Nucingen* 180, 205). Inspired by the myth surrounding the Rothschild family of a deceitfully obtained and infinitely vast fortune, Nucingen multiplies his funds as if by magic, “avec dix millions, il savait en pouvoir gagner trente” (*Nucingen* 180). His methods are at best crafty, and at worst fraudulent and corrupt, “Ce grand homme songeait alors à payer ses créanciers avec des valeurs fictives, en gardant leur argent... Une pareille liquidation consiste à donner un petit pâté pour un louis d’or à de grands enfants qui, comme les petits enfants d’autrefois, préfèrent le pâté à la pièce, sans savoir qu’avec la pièce ils peuvent avoir deux cents pâtés” (*Nucingen* 180). Like the Rothschilds, he always comes out of any

business deal or financial affair richer and more powerful, “Il faut toujours que ces Juifs gagnent à tout ce qu’ils font et même à ce qu’ils ne font pas” (*Lettres à l’étrangère*, qtd in Kupfer 37).

Another factor determining Nucingen’s modernity is his resemblance to actual Jewish figures of Parisian society. A formidable financial force in the Parisian society of the *Comédie humaine*, Nucingen is modeled after two actual Jewish bankers in Paris of Balzac’s time, James de Rothschild and Berr Léon Fould. Balzac’s idea of transposing James de Rothschild, Berr Léon Fould, and a mixture of traits from other Jewish personalities of nineteenth-century Paris onto the pages of the *Comédie humaine* was an innovation that would become tradition with French novelists. Of the two potential models, James de Rothschild and Berr Léon Fould, Anne-Marie Meininger believes that the later, a Jewish banker originally of Boulay in Lorraine, to Paris via Strasbourg, is the most accurate prototype for Nucingen. Similar in stature, Nucingen is “Carré de base comme de hauteur,” while Fould is “bel et bien carré de base comme de hauteur, un cube” (Meininger 32). There are however some cultural resemblances between Nucingen and Rothschild. Just like James de Rothschild, “le baron Frédéric de Nucingen... est israélite, originaire de la vallée du Rhin, et parle un épouvantable français—celui de James était cléèbre” (Bouvier 49-50). On the contrary, Nucingen’s banking style resembles more accurately that of Fould, “Les Fould prirent la curieuse habitude de liquider à chaque crise grave pour réapparaître le danger écarté... ils sont, plus que les Rothschild, le prototype de la maison Nucingen” (Gille 30-31). Not only has Balzac based Nucingen on actual bankers, gleaning aspects of their banking practices and their physical appearance, he has also abandoned the appearance of the wandering Jew type of Gobseck and the Antique dealer. In portraying Nucingen as round and well-fed like the portly German-Jewish banking figures that James de Rothschild and Berr Léon Fould cut in nineteenth-century Parisian high society, Balzac set a new precedent for Jewish stereotypes, beginning a new literary tradition.

As scholars of Balzac debate the rivalry for the title of the Jewish banker who inspired Nucingen, Rothschild and Fould were in reality great rivals in the Parisian world of banking (Bouvier, Meininger). In his letters, Henri Heine designates James de Rothschild as “le grand rabbin de la rive droite” and Berr Léon

Fould as “le grand rabbin de la rive gauche” (Heine 65). In this curious comparison the association of the Left Bank with Berr Léon Fould is somewhat inaccurate since both Rothschild and Fould resided on the Right Bank. Nevertheless, Heine was not literally placing Rothschild on the Right and Fould on the Left banks, he was referring to their involvement in the creation of competing Paris-Versailles railways: “ces noms, comme on sait, désignent les deux chemins de fer qui, l’un en longeant la rive droite de la Seine et l’autre la gauche, conduisent à Versailles, et qui sont dirigés par deux grands rabbins de la haute banque, rabbins rivaux qui se jalouent avec autant d’animosité que jadis les célèbres talmudistes Samaï et Hillel dans l’ancienne Babylone” (Heine 66). Heine also evokes these financially competing Jews of Paris in the context of the Damascus Affair of 1840. When the Jewish community of Damascus was wrongly accused of ritually murdering a Catholic priest, many Jews were tortured and killed in interrogation. The Rothschild family sent representatives to Egypt to calm tensions and to obtain the release of Jewish prisoners (Seni). When Heine commends Rothschild’s dedication to the international Jewish cause, he also makes a point of Fould’s complete disinterest, “Nous devons rendre au grand rabbin de la rive droite cette justice qu’il a montré pour la maison d’Israël une sympathie plus empressée que son docte antagoniste, le rabbin de la rive gauche, qui, avec l’inébranlable tranquillité d’âme d’un Hillel, tandis qu’on torturait et égorgeait ses coreligionnaires en Syrie sur l’instigation d’un consul de France, tint au Palais-Bourbon, dans la chambre des députés, plusieurs beaux et remarquables discours sur la conversion des rentes et l’escompte de la Banque” (Heine 66). While James de Rothschild advocated for the national and international Jewish community, Berr Léon Fould clearly showed no interest in his coreligionists of the diaspora. Similarly, in over thirty appearances in the *Comédie humaine*, Nucingen never reveals any affinity for his fellow Jews either in Paris or abroad.

When comparing the various possibilities, there are several points with which scholars have attempted to discredit Rothschild as Nucingen’s model. While Nucingen’s Jewishness is somewhat dubious, “fils de quelque juif converti par ambition”, Rothschild’s was definite. Seen as never having being fully assimilated to French culture like other Jews of analogous financial and political status, Rothschild never took French

citizenship. He also remained devout, insisting on observance of religious practices in his home for his immediate and extended family, ensuring that his children, grandchildren, and relatives upheld Jewish traditions for generations to follow. Fould, however, was more interested in growing his fortune and participating in industrial modernization than he was concerned about perpetuating Jewish traditions, proving Heine's accuracy in his observations concerning this Jewish banker's religious beliefs: "l'or est le dieu du jour... l'industrie est la religion dominante" (Heine 65-66). For Fould and his fictional double, Nucingen, the motivation to succeed financially and the advanced capacity to realize financial exploits contributed to what French culture had come to see as typical Jewish traits in nineteenth-century Paris. Real and fictional Jews were considered Jewish due to stereotypical attributes that French popular belief labeled as Jewish. Balzac's interpretation of Nucingen's German-sounding accent, his financial prowess, and his modern banking methods are proof of Nucingen's Jewishness. When Balzac pushes these stereotypes to an extreme his own deficiencies in terms of understanding the religious aspects of Jewish identity are revealed, as Balzac endowed Nucingen with neither religious affinities nor knowledge of Jewish practices.

For Balzac and his nineteenth-century readers, the non-practicing Jews of nineteenth-century Paris were considered to be Jewish due to the cultural stereotypes assigned to them in literature, theater, painting, and other forms of artistic expression. These cultural stereotypes were particular to the nineteenth century, had little to do with the actual religion, and marked a crucial point in the evolution from a traditional anti-Judaic to a modern anti-Semitic sentiment, the former based on the idea that Judaism was the enemy of Catholicism, the later founded in the newly emerging ideas of race and genetic inheritance. In Balzac's case, his Jewish characters were informed by the fantastic rather than the realistic, "la judéité des personnages de Balzac n'est pas religieuse mais une nationalité qui a pour toile de fond tout un héritage biblique, obscure, mystérieux, attirant et inquiétant à la fois" (Kupfer 108). The evolution from an anti-Judaic to an anti-Semitic position, vis-à-vis the Jewish population in France, was at an early stage when Balzac began writing. The Shylock type characters that Gobseck and the Antique dealer represent are evidence of a lingering anti-

Judaic Catholic influence. Although modern anti-Semitism as it came to be defined in racial terms did not materialize in France until late in the nineteenth century, an early form did emerge in French literature later in Balzac's career, particularly in the 1840s with Alphonse Toussenel's work, *Les Juifs, rois de l'époque*, first appearing between 1844 and 1845. While other writers appeared to fall under the influence of the sentiments of the times, "the 1840s was the decade during which anti-Semitism was contagious throughout France", Balzac continued to move away from the traditional wandering Jew cliché. Others, however, adapted this ancient stereotype to their contemporary setting, "Moi, je vois dans le Juif errant la personnification du peuple juif, toujours riche et banni au moyen âge, avec ses immortels cinq sous qui ne s'épuisent jamais, son activité, sa dureté de cœur pour quiconque n'est pas de sa race, et en train de devenir le roi du monde et de retuer JC, c'est-à-dire l'idéal. Il en sera ainsi par le droit de savoir-faire, et dans 50 ans la France sera juive. Certains israélites le prêchent déjà" (Sand, qtd in *Le Siècle de George Sand* 349). Breaking away from the fantastical representation of Jewish characters, ancient and ageless, with occult and mystical powers, Nucingen signals a turning point, inaugurating a change in Balzac's use of Jewish characters. He began situating them more firmly in the reality of nineteenth-century Paris where Jewish individuals were becoming ever more prominent and visible. Nucingen thus signified a new articulation of Jewish identity tied to the growing importance of Jewish bankers in Parisian high society.

Although Balzac makes the association between Nucingen and the bank, "son Altesse divine madame la Banque, l'illustre Nucingen", just as the Rothschild name was a synonym of the *haute banque*, that Rothschild was the principle model for Nucingen has been frequently and convincingly doubted (Meininger, *Nucingen*). The characteristics connecting Rothschild and Nucingen are tenuous, "On avait longtemps pensé que Nucingen était Rothschild, mais J.H. Donnard a démontré que les seuls points communs, c'était l'origine juive, le sens des affaires et l'accent tudesque" (Ménard, *Dictionnaire* 74). In fact, Balzac gleaned aspects from all the members of the Parisian banking milieu to create a composite character, "*La Maison Nucingen* dévoile les machinations de la haute banque, et Nucingen, loin d'incarner Rothschild, emprunte des traits à Ouvrard,

à Laffitte et à Girardin” (Raimond). Evidence of Balzac’s multifaceted inspiration for Nucingen accumulates: “si l’on devait trouver à Nucingen des modèles, il faudrait chercher du côté de Girardin, d’Ouvrard, de Laffitte et d’Humann. De tous, un peu” (Ménard, *Dictionnaire* 74). Despite all the possibilities for the Jewish individual who inspired Nucingen, Fould’s importance is established irrefutably, “Berr Lion Fould est en effet le prototype du financier Nucingen, dont la carrière, décrite par Balzac, renvoie de manière troublante au cursus présenté par Cerfberr de Medelsheim: ajoutons que, comme l’a montré Mme Meininger, Balzac était d’autant mieux renseigné sur ces épisodes que son grand-père, Sallambier, s’est trouvé en rapports étroits sous la Révolution avec Lippmann, l’un des fils de Cerf Berr” (Barbier 20). A Jewish banker and military supplier of Alsace, Medelsheim was Fould’s benefactor, forming him in banking and funding the launch of his protégé’s career in Paris, a trajectory that Balzac elaborates with Nucingen and the Baron d’Aldrigger.

Comparing Fould and Nucingen, their professional trajectory in particular reveals great similarities. Both began in poverty, at the bottom of the financial food chain. With the guidance and economic aid of Cerfberr de Medelsheim for Fould and the Baron d’Aldrigger for Nucingen, both strategically caused the liquidation of their banks three times in order to advance their interests. Fould used the profits of these false bankruptcies to purchase properties *intra* and *extra muros* in reality, and Nucingen follows suit in fiction: “Il se hisse du néant à la fortune en trois liquidations: la première le fait connaître, la deuxième lui permet l’achat d’un somptueux hôtel particulier dans le quartier Poissonnière, la troisième... le fait membre de la Haute Banque et propriétaire d’un domaine princier près de Paris” (Meininger 31). With these similarities, there is some suspicion as to which story is factual and which is fictional: “Certes, ce n’est pas pure coïncidence... Mais on peut préférer la démarche inverse: retrouver dans le monde réel la réplique de ceux que *La Comédie humaine* nous a si bien fait connaître...” (Ménard, *Dictionnaire* 74). For Nucingen and his various models one begins to question whether myth modified reality or reality informed myth?

Purchasing one or more properties was an important milestone for Jewish bankers in nineteenth-century Paris. It was a symbolic act that rendered the financial success of their banking houses visible to the Parisian population, announcing their arrival at the highest point of social ascension, “les éléments non-mobiliers... leur consistance, leur nature (répartition entre biens urbains et extra-urbains) acquièrent un caractère spectaculaire qui consacre une prééminence sociale et une ‘visibilité’ aussi agréable au banquier que profitable à ses affaires” (Bergeron 97). Following the example of the real-life, spectacularly wealthy Jewish bankers in nineteenth-century Paris, Balzac has Nucingen first purchasing his *hôtel particulier* on the rue Saint-Lazare, and then a property outside of Paris, “il acheta pour deux millions un magnifique domaine aux portes de Paris” (*Nucingen* 204). Of the many indications of economic accomplishment, owning primary and secondary residences, inside and outside of Paris, was a tangible display of success in fiction as in reality, “Désormais, on le voit, l’un des piliers du patrimoine... consiste dans la possession de façades prestigieuses dans le Paris de la rive droite... Le second pilier du prestige, c’est la possession d’un château avec son parc, dans un rayon d’une trentaine de kilomètres autour de la capitale” (Bergeron 102-103). Before Balzac narrated Nucingen’s path to financial triumph, Fould’s remarkable success story was punctuated by the acquisition of an impressive Parisian address, “Le témoignage le plus éclatant de cette fortune rapide réside dans l’achat qu’il fait d’un important immeuble situé rue Bergère, derrière le boulevard Poissonnière, et où les Fould demeureront pratiquement tout au long du XIX^e siècle. Le numéro 104 de la rue Bergère avait déjà été acheté par un banquier, Jean-Louis Bourcard, pour la somme de 150 000 francs, le 8 ventôse an X. Le quatrième jour complémentaire de la même année, Bourcard revend à Berr Léon Fould, jusque là domicilié 3, rue Saint-Georges. Il s’agit d’un ensemble très important, l’ancien hôtel de Nicolas Dupré de Saint-Maur: ‘une grande maison [...] ayant son entrée par une porte cochère, consistante en deux petits corps de bâtiments sur la rue, in principal corps de logis entre cour et jardin, deux autres corps de logis en aile, grand jardin et bâtiment au bout dudit jardin’ ” (Barbier 55). With a significant advance on other Jewish bankers, Fould possessed an elegant aristocratic home before Rothschild had even set foot in France.

Not only did Fould reside in an aristocratic mansion in the soon to be neighborhood of la Bourse before Rothschild was old enough to be dispatched to the French financial field, he also bested Napoléon's initiatives to enforce assimilation. Fould had firmly asserted his commitment to integrating Parisian culture with this exceptional Parisian residence even before Napoléon could unite the Sanhedrin that would lead to the foundation of a state-organized religious institution in 1806. In acquiring such an aristocratic home, Fould made it clear to anyone questioning either his commitment to France or the Jewish financial community's position and importance in Paris that he and the emerging group of Jewish bankers had magnificently risen to the challenge. His aristocratic home served as testament to his successful assimilation to French culture to the extent that old noble families were displaced. His financial triumph afforded him these changes, "l'importance... du nouveau statut social acquis par Fould... la richesse financière autorise ici l'adoption progressive d'un nouveau 'style de vie' " (Barbier 55-56). After an imposing Parisian façade, the next step was a second address in the countryside, "nous voyons, notamment le banquier, suivant le modèle des nouveaux notables de l'Empire, s'installer plus volontiers à la 'campagne' dans les environs de Paris" (Barbier 55-56). More interested in adopting the French customs of the moment, Fould had essentially shed all previous Jewish trappings, slipping easily into his new noble surroundings and felling comfortably into the furnishings of the most fortunate under the First Empire.

Purchased in 1802, Fould's home in Paris contributed to raising the stakes for the level of wealth and standing that Jewish individuals could attain in nineteenth-century Paris. The presence of this Jewish banker in this particular neighborhood in Paris, rue Bergère, established his permanence at the financial center of the city, "Il est, de plus, très bien situé au cœur du quartier parisien des affaires, tout proche, tout comme la Bourse, qui se transporte de l'ancien Palais-Mazarin, rue Vivienne, à l'Église des Petits-Pères... Toute la 'Haute banque', la Banque de France et la Bourse sont dans un rayon inférieur à 1 kilomètre" (Barbier 56). The neighborhood of the Bourse, initially occupied by religious institutions including the Couvent des Filles Saint-Thomas and the Église des Petits-Pères (now the Basilica Notre-Dame-des-Victoires) and the original

Bibliothèque nationale, Richelieu/Louvois, did not officially become the financial neighborhood of Paris until Napoléon I laid the first stone of the Palais Brongniart in 1808. This particular location, along the rue Vivienne, was chosen for the notorious counter-revolutionary ambiance around the Couvent des Filles Saint-Thomas and for the proximity of two of the most profitable places that the Bourse had occupied during the eighteenth century, the Hôtel Nevers and the Galerie Vivienne. Fould's decision to purchase a highly aristocratic home in this neighborhood of Paris foreshadowed the more permanent inauguration of this particular area as the financial nucleus of the city. When Balzac situated Nucingen in Paris, it is important to note that the neighborhood surrounding the Bourse had already been thoroughly populated. By the time James de Rothschild purchased his first important Parisian address on rue d'Artois, now Laffitte, to the west of Fould on rue Bergère, the western migration of the city was well established, forcing Balzac to imagine a residence even farther to the west. His choice to house Nucingen on the rue Saint-Lazare was in accordance with the development of the city, as the neighborhood surrounding the Bourse and the Chaussée-d'Antin were already developed, thriving, and saturated with wealthy bankers, socially ascending bourgeois, and some fortunate aristocrats. However, by placing Nucingen to the west of the Bourse Balzac discredits this Jewish Baron's legitimacy. The area around what is now the Saint-Lazare train station lacked the prestige of the neighborhoods directly around the Bourse and the Chaussée-d'Antin. This attempt to mock and mare Nucingen's social and financial success reflects the nineteenth-century Parisian opinion that an aristocratic Jewish banker was an impossible conception. Just as the Baron James de Rothschild's aristocratic title was not always taken seriously or accepted as legitimate, Balzac sought to diminish Nucingen's nobility. Aristocratic or not, the location of Nucingen's home ties him to industrial innovations such as the first railway, conceived of and constructed by the Pereire brothers in the late 1830s, with its Parisian terminus, the Gare Saint-Lazare, not far from the fictional character's home on the rue Saint Lazare.

Although most of the attention given to Jewish bankers is and has been focused on the Rothschilds, it was the Foulds who were the first influential Jewish family in France. When Alphonse Toussenel accused the Jews of France of buying all the land once belonging to noble families, he might as well have named Fould explicitly. Fould had in fact begun purchasing land as early as 1795 and was particularly interested in land seized during the Revolution: “Berr Lion va donc s’employer, comme bien d’autres, à transformer certains de ses titres en biens fonciers—en l’occurrence, en domaines nationaux... Le 6 brumaire an IV (29 octobre 1795), le voici qui achète à Pierre Benoît Hanoteau une ferme sis sur la commune du Sacq, près de Conches (Eure)... Le lendemain, 7 brumaire, notre jeune financier, désormais associé pour moitié avec Claude-Antoine Thierry, rachète encore à Robert Langlume et Louis Paradis trois domaines ruraux, dont deux étaient d’anciennes possessions de l’abbaye Saint-Loup d’Orléans, confisquées en 1791. La surface cumulée de ces biens est très importante, puisqu’elle atteint quelque 230 hectares, sur lesquels on pratique principalement l’élevage” (Barbier 43). Although Fould appears as a pioneer for the trends that the Jewish banking would follow later in the nineteenth century, Fould was only following the fads of the wealthiest tier of Parisian society when he purchased his country castle, “le caractère pittoresque—les méandres de la Seine et les coteaux, les forêts de Meudon, Saint-Cloud, Saint-Germain, Marly, les villes comme Versailles, Saint-Germain-en-Laye, le château de Malmaison, les villages comme Croissy, Chatou, etc. —commence à attirer les Parisiens plus fortunés” (Barbier 86). In copying the Parisian financial elite, Fould set the course for his fortunate coreligionists to follow.

If financial success, or the demonstration of having achieved a financially important status, was marked by the acquisition of intra and extra Parisian façades, it is noteworthy that Fould did not actually acquire a country home until the 1830s, several years after acquiring his aristocratic home in Paris: “il achète à Mme Eugène Bonafous, en 1831, le château de Rocquencourt, entre Versailles et Saint-Germain-en-Laye... Le domaine, autour de ce château ‘à l’italienne’, est très important” (Barbier 85). With *La Maison de Nucingen* first appearing seven years after Fould’s acquisition of the Château de Rocquencourt, Balzac’s novel takes

on the appearance of a historical document chronicling the social and economic developments of Fould's life and banking career in Paris up to his most important purchase, an aristocratic castle with an extensive domain, placing him at the highest level of financial and societal achievement. After Fould, other successful, Jewish bankers of Paris chose to purchase, rather than have built, homes within and without the walls of the city. James de Rothschild in particular, imitated Fould in purchasing a *hôtel particulier* in the affluent, booming, and modern Chaussée-d'Antin neighborhood, "Il passe d'abord de la rue Le Peletier à la rue de Provence, aux confins de la Chaussée-d'Antin, fief des financiers les plus en vue, puis achète, le 10 décembre 1818, un hôtel, rue d'Artois, l'actuelle rue Laffitte... [qui] avait été successivement occupée par la reine Hortense et par Fouché. Celui-ci l'avait vendue à un banquier viennois, Fries, et à un grand commerçant de Prague, Lamel, qui la cédèrent à James. Etablissement définitif puisque les Rothschild n'auront jamais d'autre adresse... Le voilà donc installé dans le quartier le plus riche, le plus animé, le plus moderne de la capitale. C'est le Paris des boulevards, de la vie, de la jeunesse, qui s'oppose au faubourg Saint-Germain de l'aristocratie aux salons revêches" (Muhlstein 67-68). The trend of acquiring existing noble homes continued until Rothschild had the Château de Ferrières built from 1855 to 1859, demolishing the palace built for Fouché, Napoléon I's head of police. Similar to Fould, Rothschild had begun to purchase all the land surrounding Fouché's palace, including vast fields and forests, to create the domaine de Ferrières beginning in 1828. While the château de Ferrière's inaugurated "le goût Rothschild", a manner of speaking that designated anything excessive, overly ornate, bejeweled, or golden as Jewish, James de Rothschild was not entirely setting a trend, he was in fact only following Fould's example.

Just as Fould appeared as a founding figure in the creation of the financial neighborhood of the Right Bank in the neighborhood of the confiscated monastery, the Couvent des Filles Saint-Thomas, Balzac's Jewish banking character, Nucingen, surfaces in nearly all the financial dealings of the *Comédie humaine* and is therefore synonymous with this same Parisian financial neighborhood around the Bourse on the Right Bank. In *La Maison Nucingen*, published in 1838, Nucingen's itinerary is charted in detail, first appearing in

Paris during the First Empire with an unusual but successful financial ruse that makes his name known, “En 1804, Nucingen était peu connu, les banquiers d’alors auraient tremblé de savoir sur la place cent mille écus de ses acceptations. Ce grand financier sent alors son infériorité. Comment se faire connaître? Il suspend ses paiements. Bon! Son nom, restreint à Strasbourg et au quartier Poissonnière, retentit sur toutes les places !” (*Nucingen* 138-139). The second time Nucingen successfully maneuvers a suspension of payment and enacts another false liquidation is when he purchases his *hôtel particulier* rue Saint-Lazare. Originally known as the “rue des Porcherons” or the “rue d’Argenteuil,” the future rue Saint-Lazare did not receive its current name until 1770, leading to the “maison Saint-Lazare” for which “On ignore l’origine... le plus ancien titre qui mentionne cet établissement est de l’année 1110. C’était un hôpital de pauvres lépreux, sous l’invocation de Saint-Ladre ou Saint-Lazare” (*Lazare* 24). Remaining fairly undeveloped in the eighteenth century and continuously widened beginning in the 1830s, this street was a particularly nineteenth-century invention, “En 1734, cette voie publique n’était encore bordée que de rares constructions” (*Lazare* 370-371). The recent rural quality of the rue Saint-Lazare, to the west of Fould’s home on the rue Bergère, corresponds to accounts of the development of the city, “De fait, l’Ouest de Paris est, dans la première moitié du XIX^e siècle, une région encore pratiquement restée rurale” (*Barbier* 86). The difference between the period during which Fould made his fortune in Paris—first purchasing his highly aristocratic home near la Bourse, then his castle and estate of Rocquencourt, just North of Versailles—and the period during which Balzac drew inspiration from Fould’s trajectory to narrate Nucingen’s rise to power narrates the evolution of the city *intra* and *extra muros*.

For Nucingen the acquisition of a second, more aristocratic residence in the countryside exhibited his wealth and solidified his social status in the Parisian high society. Nevertheless, Balzac presents Nucingen’s estate just outside of Paris not as aristocratic, but as a palace conceived to abate boredom: “Nucingen, las de son hôtel de la rue Saint-Lazare, construit un palais” (*Une fille d’Ève* 48). Having two addresses, with at least one in Paris and one in the country, was an indicator of an elevated financial and social status. However, in

the case of Nucingen, Balzac exaggerates this status indicator when translating from reality to fiction, rendering Nucingen's acquisition of a country estate socially unacceptable to the point of ridicule. Balzac derides the disproportionate display of wealth that French culture had come to believe as stereotypically Jewish. Nucingen falls perfectly into the trap of the "goût Rothschild" that the collective French opinion believed immoderate, "Il y a... une différence d'attitude frappante entre la prodigalité de James de Rothschild et la mesure de ses confrères bourgeois pour qui le luxe effréné évoque les fastes de l'aristocratie décadente et qui, par une prudence innée, se refusent à l'étalage de leur opulence" (Muhlstein 90). Nucingen, like Rothschild in reality, appears to not have grasped the cultural lesson of discretion innate for the non-Jewish French bankers of the same period: "ces riches bourgeois du XIX^e siècle, les Delessert, les Périer, les Davillier, les Mallet ou les Hottinger, ont progressé dans une société qui ne les a jamais exclus. Ils sont chez eux. Ils n'ont jamais connu l'ostracisme assorti de violences, l'hostilité constante qui poursuivaient les Juifs, où qu'ils aillent, avant la Révolution. Ces grands bourgeois ont donc un sens de la réalité sociale et une perspective plus juste" (Muhlstein 90).

Furthermore, Nucingen's Parisian address, the façade seemingly expensive only to the un-cultured observer, has no aristocratic history, appearing tastelessly modern. The *hôtel Nucingen* falls short of its intended purpose. Instead of existing as tangible evidence of Nucingen's financial and social success, it reveals the newness of his fortune. In reality, Fould's address rue Bergère was highly aristocratic, once belonging to an important noble family of the Ancien Régime, and, while he did not inherit this aristocratic mansion from aristocratic ancestors, per tradition, he did have the discernment to chose a truly Ancien Régime dwelling. Quite the opposite, Nucingen's home is described as noticeably more bourgeois than the purely aristocratic homes of the neighborhoods in which, as Balzac says, "on respire l'air du faubourg Saint-Germain" (*Duchesse de Langeais*). Of recent construction, "du style Restauration", and Nucingen's home is missing the noble aesthetics of the homes conceived and constructed for aristocrats of the Ancien Régime: "Dans cette maison de financier, le bon goût ne vient pas atténuer les méfaits combinés de la mode et de

l'argent" (Guichardet 202). In *Le père Goriot*, Nucingen's home is seen from the perspective of Eugène de Rastignac, like Raphaël de Valentin of *La Peau de chagrin*, a young aristocrat of an ill-fated old noble family from the countryside sent to study law in Paris: "Rastignac arriva rue Saint-Lazare, dans une de ces maisons légères, à colonnes minces, à portiques mesquins, qui constituent le 'joli' à Paris, une véritable maison de banquier, pleine de recherches coûteuses, de stucs, des paliers d'escaliers en mosaïque de marbre... un petit salon à peintures italiennes, dont le décor ressemblait à celui des cafés" (*Goriot* 203). Despite Rastignac's station in society as a fallen aristocrat, Balzac affords him the capacity to observe Nucingen's home and discern the less than noble veneer.

The aristocratic elite of nineteenth-century Paris did not appreciate this particular style that Balzac associated with the Restoration. It was seen as a poor substitute for the noble dwellings of the faubourg Saint-Germain, the faubourg Saint-Honoré, and some select neighborhoods with a historical aristocratic presence, including the Place des Vosges and the Chaussée-d'Antin. Balzac lessens Nucingen's financial and social feats by both housing him in a Restoration-built *hôtel particulier* in a very recently developed area. When Balzac lists all the less than noble architectural forms of Nucingen's home that Rastignac observes, the newness of this Jewish banker's recently won fortune is revealed in the details: "Des contours incertains, beaucoup de flou, mais quelques signes fâcheux qui suffisent à classer l'édifice: 'colonnes minces' et portique, mosaïques polychromes, et surtout présence de stucs. Les stucs sont toujours de mauvais augure, et comme un symbole de faux-luxe, de vanité bourgeoise" (*Bette* 212, qtd in Guichardet 203). While Balzac casts doubt on the aristocratic nature of this Jewish character by refusing him a truly aristocratic mansion in a noble area of Paris, the *hôtel Nucingen* is in fact an early prototype of what will become the typical nineteenth-century style, falling into "la norme des hôtels parisiens", as indicated in an "allusion introduite postérieurement... [permettant] de situer la maison 'entre cour et jardin' " (Guichardet 202). Homes of a similar design began to sprout up in reality all across the western corner of the city in the 1840s. That Balzac placed Nucingen in this home and in this part of the city reaffirms this Jewish character's modernity, as

opposed to his aristocracy, and confirms the western development of the city that eventually attracted those wealthy enough to purchase homes away from the noisy and crowded center.

Nucingen's home is nevertheless more than meets the eye. The *hôtel Nucingen* on rue Saint-Lazare doubles as a bank, "On apprend avec une certaine surprise... que les grâces fragiles de l'hôtel de Nucingen dissimulent la fameuse maison de banque" (Guichardet 203). The offices and vault are found on the bottom floor, "Suivant les us et coutumes du commerce, la caisse était située dans la partie la plus sombre de l'entresol étroit et bas d'étage. Pour y arriver, il fallait traverser un couloir éclairé par des jours de souffrance, et qui longeait les bureaux dont les portes étiquetées ressemblaient à celles d'un établissement de bains" (*Melmoth* 70). If modernity and innovation are contradictory to aristocratic, Nucingen's home, both contemporary and functional, in an area of Paris that was just beginning to be developed, is the very opposite of aristocratic and therefore unforgivingly bourgeois, or worse, Jewish. This tradition of combining home and bank was common amongst leading banking families in Paris throughout the nineteenth century. When Berr Léon Fould established his family home on rue Bergère in 1802, he also installed his banking headquarters in this aristocratic *hôtel particulier* once known as the hôtel Saint-Maur. "...Nous aurons l'occasion de pénétrer plus avant dans la 'maison Fould' au milieu du XIX^e siècle... l'installation du jeune banquier juif et des siens dans l'hôtel d'une des plus brillantes familles de l'Ancien Régime traduit la hiérarchie nouvelle des fortunes et des personnes qui est celle du début du XIX^e siècle... Rue Bergère, il a des locaux suffisamment vastes pour installer sa famille et ses bureaux, loger aussi certains des employés de la banque, les domestiques de la maison et, éventuellement, des parents ou des amis en visite" (Barbier 55-56). Following the model set by Fould over a decade prior, James de Rothschild established the Rothschild banking house in Paris on rue d'Artois, now Laffitte, in the hôtel d'Otrante, "Comme ses confrères, James habite le principal corps de logis, entre cour et jardin et loge ses bureaux dans les ailes encadrant la cour d'honneur" (Muhlstein 68). When James married Betty de Rothschild in 1824 this mansion functioned as both home to the couple and their many children and as the Parisian headquarters for the family bank. The

expansive rooms of this vast residence were divided between the sizeable family and the offices for the imposing bank, “Résidence principale de James et de Betty, l’hôtel particulier du 19 rue Lafitte à Paris dans le IX^e arrondissement de Paris, ancienne propriété de Fouché, accueille les bureaux de la banque et les appartements privés” (Collard 9). This duo of home and bank began a literary tradition in which the homes of wealthy Jewish bankers and entrepreneurs were depicted and that Émile Zola later exploited in his 1891 novel *L’Argent*.

Placing Nucingen on the Right Bank in a purely nineteenth-century neighborhood with homes appearing as modern and ostentatious imitations of the truly noble, centuries-old homes of aristocrats, marks this character as a tasteless arriviste, “Pour cette noblesse de titre, Nucingen, même baron, restera un parvenu”. (Kupfer 120) This portrayal of Jews in Paris as social climbers with keen financial acumen and in-existent social and aesthetic discernment that Balzac puts forth in the first half of the nineteenth century set the tone for a new literary trend. Authors following Balzac continued this particular representation of an elite Jewish banker, vulgar, indelicate, and continuously offending the good taste of proper high society. Like Nucingen these characters are found in the modern quarter of the city, often times around the Bourse, the Chaussée-d’Antin, and other Right Bank neighborhoods farther to the west in the rapidly developing portion of Paris. These Jewish characters, as representations of only a tiny sliver of the Jewish population of Paris, are all marvelously rich, the proud owners of lavish Parisian façades and countryside estates, but often lack the good taste, appropriate reserve, and cultural moderation of their non-Jewish counterparts in reality—although non-Jewish banking characters often have a similar penchant for opulence in fiction.

Living in this new nineteenth-century neighborhood also links Nucingen to the growing association in French society of Judaism and modernity. The *hôtel Nucingen* on rue Saint-Lazare predated, and therefore predicted, the creation of the first Paris rail station, the gare Saint-Lazare in 1837, by Isaac and Emile Pereire of Bordeaux. The price of expropriation and reconstruction of the already developed place de la Madeleine, the initial preferred location, led the Pereires to instead chose the same neighborhood inhabited by Balzac’s

fictional Nucingen, “Ils poursuivent néanmoins démarches et expropriations jusqu’au début de 1839, où devant tant d’oppositions et des coûts en si forte expansion, ils renoncent à cette implantation centrale pour se replier sur le terrain borné par la rue Saint-Lazare et la rue d’Amsterdam” (Autin 66-67). With the Baron Nucingen, inhabiting the rue Saint-Lazare in a characteristically modern area of the nineteenth-century Paris, Balzac underscored the associated between the most infamous Jewish banker of the *Comédie humaine* and Parisian modernity. He delineated where Jewish figures would institute modernity in the age of industrial capitalism, in cities in general and in the northwestern corner of Paris in particular. This part of Paris, beyond the Bourse and the Chaussée-d’Antin, was just beginning to emerge as the financial and industrial center of the city with Jewish bankers and entrepreneurs literally paving the way. By the beginning of the Second Empire when the Pereire brothers purchased “tout ce qui était à vendre dans le quartier”, the fate of this section of Paris was sealed (Assouline 21). Not only are Nucingen’s appearances in the *Comédie humaine* indicative of the growing Jewish population in Paris, but his particular appearance on the rue Saint-Lazare marks also the western development of the city and attests to the Jewish role in this urban transformation.

Mentioning the Baron de Nucingen is nearly inconceivable without evoking the exquisitely beautiful Esther Van Gobseck, a high-class Jewish prostitute and “arrière petite-nièce de l’usurier” Gobseck. Not only generally in the *Comédie humaine*, but also particularly in Nucingen’s trajectory, Esther plays an essential role. Maurice Samuels compares Esther to Nucingen as his female economic counter balance, “A sexual capitalist, the prostitute exploits her beauty for all it is worth... [Esther] thus functions in a manner that is akin to her target, the banker Nucingen, who likewise earns a fortune without what the economic discourse of the time defined as “productive labor”... both extract value from what should supposedly not serve as a commodity (love and money)” (Samuels 173). As the most beautiful female character Balzac imagined, Esther is the epitome of “la belle juive” in the greater French tradition, possessing what Balzac deems as all the elements of *Oriental* beauty, “En France, il est extrêmement rare, pour ne pas dire impossible, de rencontrer les trente fameuses perfections décrites en vers persans sculptés, dit-on, dans le sérail, et qui sont

nécessaires à une femme pour être entièrement belle” (*Splendeurs* 85). For Balzac, as for many literary and visual artists of nineteenth-century France, fascination with the imagined image of an *Oriental* female began with Napoléon’s exploits in Egypt, becoming more and more prominent with the oriental-inspired work of painters and writers traveling throughout the Mediterranean basin. It is important to note that the French collective imagination thought of anywhere from Greece to Morocco, passing through Turkey, Palestine, Egypt, Algeria, and Tunisia, as an *Oriental* region when parts of North Africa were farther to the west than the most western part of France. The beautiful Jewess, seen as having roots in Palestine, otherwise known as Asia Minor, was therefore seen as possessing “Oriental” traits.

With the French conquest of Algiers in 1830, the continued Algerian military campaign, and diplomatic interests in Morocco and Tunisia, artists and writers such as Eugène Delacroix and Alexandre Dumas had the opportunity to travel to North Africa. Back in France, they shared numerous painted and written depictions of Jewish women perceived as *Oriental* beauties, dressed in traditional North-African attire, found in exotic settings often depicted as heavily draped and shadowy interiors (*Arama*). These harem-like interiors fueled the collective French imagination, spellbinding the Parisian public into believing that Jewish women were “Oriental beauties”. Esther’s appearance recalls for Balzac “les chefs-d’œuvre artistiques des plus grands peintres” inspired by the mystical and fantastic nature of the Orient (Kupfer 145-149). Both writer and male characters are spellbound by “la fascination qu’exerce la femme orientale... une obsédante attirance physique... cette femme juive qui puise à travers de lointaines contrées aux noms évocateurs toutes les magies du vaste Orient” (Kupfer 145-149). Descriptions of Esther evoke images of an ancient Jewish beauty born of desert sands, “L’origine d’Esther se trahissait dans cette coupe orientale de ses yeux à paupières turques, et dont la couleur était un gris d’ardoise qui contractait, aux lumières, la teinte bleue des ailes noir du corbeau... Il n’y a que les races venues des déserts qui possèdent dans l’œil le pouvoir de la fascination sur tour... La nature dans sa prévoyance, a-t-elle donc armé leurs rétines de quelque tapis réflecteur, pour leur permettre de soutenir le mirage des sables, les torrents du soleil et l’ardent cobalt de

l'éther"? (87-88) This association with the Orient and the realm of the harem determines Esther's place in Paris. She is frequently sequestered by male figures, guarded incessantly, hidden from the general public, and isolated in hermetic interiors, either lavish or squalid, in convents or private apartments.

Contrary to what was labeled as her distinctive *Oriental* appearance, Esther does not hail from any exotic, eastern region. In describing her as *Oriental* Balzac participated in a common European misinterpretation of Jewish origins, "L'un des mythes répandus au XIX^e siècle est justement que les Juifs sont des Orientaux, voire des Asiatiques, même s'ils vivent depuis des siècles en Alsace, en Allemagne ou en Espagne" (Savy 92). Along with her great uncle, Jean-Esther Van Gobseck, and mother, Sarah Van Gobseck "la belle Hollandaise," Esther's origins are most recently in Holland. Like her uncle, Gobseck, Esther is most likely of Sephardic origins, potentially accounting for her dark hair (and olive-toned) skin. Esther's appearance is nonetheless read as *Oriental*, falling into traditional literary and artistic clichés of Jews for a public for whom the Orient appears as a vast and confusing region: "l'Orient et l'Asie se confondent et n'ont pas de contours géographiques bien définis" (Kupfer 148). For Balzac in particular, "L'Orient s'étend, d'après Pierre Citron, 'sur le monde arabe et l'islam, englobe non seulement Israël (et tous les Juifs) et l'Égypte mais aussi l'Afrique du Nord et l'Espagne... une sorte d'amalgame...' cet univers exotique" (Kupfer 149). Painters, poets, playwrights, composers, and novelists alike refer to female Jewish characters in similar language with *Oriental* serving as a key term.

For Esther, it is a certain "beauté hébraïque" that determines her influence in the masculine financial world of the *Comédie humaine*. With her biblical beauty Esther is the only being capable of seducing such a gold obsessed Jewish character as the Baron de Nucingen, "il n'y a que les yeux d'Esther qui puissent remuer un homme aussi pourri que Nucingen" (*Splendeurs* 493). However, the currency of beauty for the Jewish female does not afford liberty, "ainsi Esther doit-elle cacher sa beauté sous un masque... et vivre... en vase close" (Kupfer 147). Although Esther is found in several locations across Paris, she is restricted in her movement by dominant male characters, embodying an oriental courtesan confined to the harem. In

Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes, the novel in which Esther crosses paths with Nucingen and subsequently alters the typical comportment of this Jewish banker, her initial surroundings are far from the exotic harems and the luxurious interiors of an orientalist Delacroix painting. The reader finds Esther in a poorly furnished, tiny apartment on the morally suspect rue de Langlade, a neighborhood infamous for its unsavory reputation of prostitution, “La destination de ce quartier s’explique par l’existence d’une assez grande quantité de maisons semblables à celle-ci, dont ne veut pas le Commerce, et qui ne peuvent être exploitées que par des industries désavouées, précaires ou sans dignité” (*Splendeurs* 65). Esther’s dismal apartment is in a precarious building of the sort deplored by those who desired to cleanse the city, “une maison d’ignoble apparence... cette construction, mal-plâtrée, sans profondeur et d’une hauteur prodigieuse... ressemble assez à un bâton de perroquet” (*Splendeurs* 63). The area surrounding the rue de Langlade, despite being in a previously prestigious neighborhood, is where “la prostitution a depuis longtemps établi là son quartier général” and, having accumulated over time the dirtiness of the old city, it is not easily cleansed, “[elle] conservera longtemps la souillure qu’y ont laissée les monticules produits par les immondices du vieux Paris”. (*Splendeurs* 63) Situated west of the Palais-Royal, “ces rues étroites, sombres et boueuses, où s’exercent des industries peu soigneuses de leurs dehors”, this particular Parisian street was raised and replaced during the Second Empire along with several surrounding streets, alleys and passages by the boulevard de l’Opéra (*Splendeurs* 63). After renouncing the luxurious life of a high-society prostitute for her true love, Lucien de Rubempré, Esther has been living dejectedly amidst ruins of a once lavish past, “un ensemble de choses lugubres et joyeuses, misérables et riches, qui frappait le regard... vestiges du luxe dans ces tessons, ce ménage si bien approprié à la vie bohémienne de cette fille abattue dans ses linges défaits” (*Splendeurs* 67-68)

Esther’s apartment on the rue de Langlade is nevertheless a transitional space for this *belle Juive* character. When Jacques Collin, one of the *Comédie humaine*’s most famous criminals, disguised as the abbot Carlos Herrera, a Spanish priest, finds her near death in her tiny apartment on the disreputable rue de Langlade,

Esther begins a journey crisscrossing Paris. Moving from the Right Bank to the Left and back to the Right, evolving from Jewish courtesan to religious novice and back to Jewish courtesan, Esther's movement and evolution are an opportunity to explore various Parisian neighborhoods of diverse qualities: old, new, corrupt, and pure. From the rue de Langlade, Herrera transports Esther to a convent on the Left Bank in the faubourg Saint-Germain, "célèbre par l'éducation aristocratique et religieuse... une maison religieuse où les jeunes filles des meilleures familles reçoivent leur éducation" (*Splendeurs* 82-85) Esther is promised a transformation from prostitute to aristocrat and an escape from her previously precarious situation, all of which are to occur through conversion: "vous y deviendrez catholique, vous y serez instruite dans la pratique des exercices chrétiens, vous y apprendrez la religion; vous pourrez en sortir une jeune fille accomplie, chaste, pure, bien élevée" (*Splendeurs* 82-85). By placing Esther in a prestigious aristocratic convent in the middle of the *noble faubourg*, Balzac exaggerates Herrera's role as a zealous Spanish priest: "la naïve Esther... allait procurer à l'archevêque la gloire de la conversion d'une juive au catholicisme" (*Splendeurs* 89). For Esther, going from the rue de Langlade to the aristocratic convent of the Left Bank, the change of scenery is complete. No longer confined to her dingy rooms in the precarious building in the Right Bank's prostitution headquarters, Esther runs through the gardens, "poussée à courir dans les magnifiques jardins du couvent, elle allait affairée d'arbre en arbre" (*Splendeurs* 93) Part of "les jardins seigneuriaux qui subsistent dans le Paris du XIX^e siècle... grands jardins en harmonie avec la magnificence de ses fortunes territoriales", Balzac extols the pastoral qualities of this ancient aristocratic corner of Paris (Guichardet 42). The setting, "sans doute le pensionnat des Oiseaux... au coin du boulevard des Invalides et de la rue de Sèvres", is peculiar for this beautiful Jewish prostitute (Guichardet 42). The contrast is drastic between the aristocratic convent with park, trees, and garden on the Left Bank and the Right Bank's bourgeois, commercial, and industrial ambiance with cafés, restaurants, and theaters to entertain the morally suspect *nouveaux riches*. Balzac chose an appropriate location for Esther's religious and moral regeneration, far from the debauched atmosphere of the rue de Langlade and memories of Esther's previous life.

Although Herrera is dressed as a priest, his objective is much more devious than desiring to purify Esther of her past life of debauchery and Jewish irreligion. Esther's former immoral profession and ambiguous or absent religious affiliations give legitimacy to his actions, benevolent only in appearance, "Mon enfant, reprit le prêtre après une pause, votre mère était juive, et vous n'avez pas été baptisée, mais vous n'avez pas non plus été menée à la synagogue: vous êtes dans les limbes religieuses" (*Splendeurs* 81). Having never been exposed to any religious tradition by her Jewish and equally courtesan mother, Sarah Van Gobseck, Esther is a perfect test subject for religious renaissance as imagined by famous French Catholic figures like the abbé Grégoire fighting for Jewish emancipation, but hoping that it would lead to conversion. The true intentions for the religiously purified Esther are to secure Lucien de Rubempré's financial future, Herrera's aristocratic protégé. Esther's religious rebirth is part of a greater scheme to seduce Nucingen, the Jewish Baron, and his fortune. The criminal Herrera, a notorious prison escapee, the infamous Vautrin, ironically justifies his stratagems to steal the Jewish banker's fortune by calling Nucingen a thief, "cet homme est un voleur de grande Bourse, il a été sans pitié pour bien du monde, il s'est engraisé des fortunes de la veuve et de l'orphelin, vous [Esther] serez leur Vengeance !" (*Splendeurs* 227). Esther's stay at the *couvent des Oiseaux* is just long enough for a rudimentary religious and aristocratic education. Whisked away by the charlatan priest, Esther is found again on the Right Bank, in a setting more harmonious with her theatrical and biblical beauty, in a "belle maison neuve" on rue Taitbout of the stylish Chaussée d'Antin neighborhood.

The rue Taitbout first appeared in Paris in 1775 after Jacques de Vézelay purchased much of the surrounding land. Vézelay proceeded to develop the area at his own expense, "Il sera ouvert aux frais du sieur Bouret de Vézelay, une rue de 30 pieds de largeur, dans le terrain par lui acquis... au quartier du Faubourg-Montmartre, laquelle aboutira d'un bout sur le rempart de la ville en face de la rue Grammont, à travers un terrain dont le dit sieur Bouret de Vézelay est propriétaire, et par l'autre bout dans la rue de Provence" (Lazare 626). In fiction, the rue Taitbout is twice featured in the *Comédie humaine*. More precisely,

it is the “belle maison neuve” in which Esther is found following her stay at the convent on the Left Bank. Appearing earlier in the *Comédie humaine*, it was the house in which the count Roger de Granville hid his mistress, Caroline Crochard, “la grosse Caroline Bellefeuille,” in *Une double famille* (*Splendeurs* 108). Both the home and the apartment become a recurrent destination for mistresses that male characters wish to keep secret. Like Caroline, Esther is hidden there from the prying eyes of the nosy and gossiping Parisian public. She is kept there like a courtesan in a harem, closely guarded by an accomplice of Herrera, and only has permission to go out at night and accompanied by a guard, “Cet appartement sera votre prison... Si vous voulez sortir... vous vous promènerez pendant la nuit, aux heures où vous ne pourrez point être vue; car votre beauté, votre jeunesse et la distinction que vous avez acquise au couvent seraient trop promptement remarquées dans Paris” (*Splendeurs* 110). Although it is a “belle maison neuve” in a fast-paced neighborhood in Paris, Esther’s *Oriental* beauty had inspired Balzac to recreate the interior setting of an Orientalist painting with Esther as the central figure captive in a closed interior.

The rue Taibout distinctly diverges from the rue de Langlade. Modern and luxurious, both the neighborhood and the apartment constitute a major change in status for a once destitute Jewish prostitute, “au milieu du Paris moderne où il existe, dans les maisons nouvellement bâties, de ces appartements qui semblent faits exprès pour que de nouveaux mariés y passent leur lune de miel”. (*Une double famille* 942) The buildings exterior is described as being of noble appearance and the interior is depicted as being lavishly furnished and decorated. Based on the description of the space occupied by Caroline, it is clear that it was intended for a cherished and protected mistress, “Au milieu de la rue Taitbout, dans une maison dont la pierre de taille était encore blanche, dont les colonnes du vestibule et de la porte n’avaient encore aucune souillure... se trouvait, au second étage, un petit appartement arrangé par l’architecte comme s’il en eût deviné la destination” (*Une double famille* 943). The view from the balcony of the apartment offers a rare glimpse of the neighborhood: “de l’élégant balcon qui décorait la façade”, one can see “le boulevard au bout de la rue Taitbout” (*Une double famille* 944). It is “une échappée de vue” from which “une multitude de

voitures élégantes et une foule de monde emportées avec la rapidité des ombres chinoises” are distinguished along with “les piétons et les tilburys, voitures légères” (*Une double famille* 944). For Esther, as for Caroline, the apartment on the rue Taitbout is both palace and prison. As they stand perched atop an ornate modern balcony, it is also a stage without an audience as the two isolated mistresses look through “un trou pratiqué pour les acteurs dans un rideau de théâtre” observing the bustle of the boulevards (*Une double famille* 944). That Balzac confines Esther to this closed interior reveals the persistence of the “belle juive” stereotype that will be explored in the next chapter. It is important to note that Esther, as an *Oriental* beauty locked away in a guarded harem, serves as a starting point from which Balzac will later diverge for a different female Jewish character. Furthermore, in recreating a setting fit for an Orientalist painting, Balzac points to the trend that will later fascinate Parisian society, that of the collection of and decoration with Asian art.

Esther spends four years living in romantic seclusion with Lucien de Rubempré on the rue Taitbout before being rediscovered. As her conditions of her confinement state, Esther ventures out only at night and with a guard, but she is never seen in public with Lucien for whom being seen with a Jewish ex-prostitute would ruin his chances of a noble marriage. Unfortunately for Esther, it is Nucingen who discovers her late one night in the Bois de Boulogne. Esther’s beauty mesmerizes Nucingen: “[il] fut surpris par une vision céleste qui le trouva sans son arme habituelle, le calcul... Par le silence des bois, et, à cette lueur pure, le baron vit une femme seule... À la vue de cet ange, le baron de Nucingen fut comme illuminé par une lumière intérieur” (*Splendeurs* 125-126). When Esther appears as a magical midnight apparition in the forest, a series of events is set in motion that lead to yet another change of address. When Herrera, the faux scheming Spanish priest, hears of Nucingen’s encounter with Esther and the usually unmoved banker’s love-struck reaction, he puts into action a plot to make Lucien, his protégé, rich. Herrera plans to exploit Esther to squeeze Nucingen for cash since her beauty, as Balzac sees it, has become profitable: “sa beauté passe à l’état de capital” (*Splendeurs* 226).

According to Balzac, Esther's Jewish beauty makes her the perfect lure for the Jewish banker's fortune. Herrera's plan begins by returning her to a situation meant to incite an outpouring of financial generosity from the otherwise penny-pinching Jewish banker. As planned by Herrera, Nucingen finds Esther in the Marais, rue Barbette, in a building with furnished rooms of the sort typically inhabited by Jewish tailors and upholstery workers, "une maison garnie tenue par un tapissier du quartier... au quatrième étage... dans une chambre mesquinement meublée," "mise en ouvrière et travaillant à un ouvrage de broderie". (235) The ploy is successful and Esther is credible in her role as a poor Jewish seamstress. Moved by the sight of the "angel" that had appeared magically to him in the forest only in a destitute situation, Nucingen opens his wallet and hands over a small fortune, "Nucingen tira de la poche de son habit un portefeuille et compta les cent mille francs" (*Splendeurs* 236). The forty days following Esther's initiation as Nucingen's "maîtresse en titre" are dedicated to the renovation of what Nucingen calls "*eine bedid balai*" on the rue Saint-Georges. Nucingen has purchased this small palace with everything included—"Argenterie, mobilier, vins, voitures, chevaux"—from one of his previous stockbrokers who had lost all in financial ruin (*Splendeurs* 259). Representing both modernity and a modern version of a Jewish stereotype, Nucingen offers Esther nothing less than the most up-to-date, "Toutes les inventions trouvées par le luxe avant la révolution de 1830 faisaient de cette maison le type du bon goût. Grindot l'architecte y avait vu le chef-d'œuvre de son talent de décorateur. L'escalier refait en marbre, les stucs, les étoffes, les dorures sobrement appliquées, les moindres détails comme les grands effets surpassaient tout ce que le siècle de Louis XV a laissé dans ce genre à Paris" (*Splendeurs* 268). Nucingen spares no expense, "En deux mois Nucingen venait d'arroser le commerce de plus de deux cent mille francs" (*Splendeurs* 290).

While Nucingen's personal residence on rue Saint-Lazare is described by another character as being tacky and modern, the home that Nucingen creates for Esther is noticeably more aristocratic. Of a noble nature, the decorations are more impressive, in Balzac's words, than the most ornate period of French history, the eighteenth-century with the sumptuous style of the king, Louis XV, heavily influenced by royal

mistresses and wives (Auslander 66-67). Nucingen's aristocratic choices for ornamentation and furnishing along with the person for whom he chooses to spend a fortune are both indicative of new and old trends. Revisiting the eighteenth century in architecture and design would become highly popular, almost essential for acceptance in Parisian society, later in the nineteenth century. In claiming that the furniture and décor of the home Nucingen prepares for Esther as being of a more luxurious style than the style of Louis XV indicates the accessibility of furniture, furnishings, and decoration of a highly aristocratic fashion to such figures, not belonging legitimately to the aristocracy, as a Jewish banker. Furthermore, in evoking the style of Louis XV, Balzac predicted the future of interior design. Furniture and furnishings from the eighteenth century would become highly fashionable later in the nineteenth with some highly wealthy heirs of Jewish banking fortunes participating avidly in the recreation of the eighteenth-century art-de-vivre in a modernizing nineteenth-century Paris. That Nucingen only chooses to spend his money on ornate decorations for a biblically beautiful Jewish female also ties this story to literary precedents such as the greedy and ugly Jewish moneylender who only permits himself to splurge on his exquisite Jewish daughter. Although Nucingen desires more than a father-daughter relationship with Esther, who could easily be his daughter, the situation in which these two Jewish characters are found recalls the strange interactions between Shylock and his daughter Jessica and Isaac of York and his daughter Rebecca. Hoping to avoid any undesired and illicit interactions with Nucingen, Esther even proposes, to little avail, that they maintain the same father-daughter relationship that Balzac would have seen in the *Merchant of Venice* and read in *Ivanhoe*.

Moving to rue Saint-Georges marks an important and dangerous transition for Esther. From a reformed prostitute living in seclusion, intimate only with her true love, Esther is forced to return to the debauched world that she had previously fled. However, there are some major benefits to becoming the mistress of a wealthy Jewish banker. Esther is not only free to go out into the world, she also becomes the owner of the opulent home that Nucingen has provided for her, "Le matin, il doit m'offrir le contrat de la maison de la rue Saint-Georges" and celebrates with a housewarming party, "Dans huit jours, nous pendons la

crémaillère” (*Splendeurs* 303). Esther’s new home quickly becomes a destination for the more decadent company of the *Comédie humaine*: “la fleur des gens d’esprit” including “lorettes... Tullia, Florentine, Fanny-Beaupré, Florine, deux actrices et deux danseuse, et puis Madame du Val-Noble” and “Lousteau, Rstignac, du Tillet, Bixiou, Nathan, le comte de Brambourg... rois du bon mot” (*Splendeurs* 446, 454, 325). Her new home on rue Saint-Georges thus takes on the appearance of “une maison de courtisane” and Esther plays perfectly the role of “la femme la plus spirituelle, la plus amusante, la plus belle et la plus élégante des Parias femelles qui composent la classe des femmes entretenues” (*Splendeurs* 325). Despite being housed in such a luxurious setting, Esther is again a high-class prostitute, forced by the fake priest, Herrera, to return to her debauched ways prior to her stay at the convent.

Balzac’s choice of location in Paris for Esther’s reappearance as a courtesan is appropriate, “La rue Saint-Georges est aussi la rue des lorettes, demi-mondaines ou femmes entretenues, des courtisanes” (Grieu 88). Furthermore, the rue Saint-Georges and the rue Saint Lazare intersect just three streets north of Esther’s new home, making it easily accessible for Nucingen, “Le splendide hôtel d’Esther... se situait dans le bas de la rue, non loin de la rue de Provence” (Grieu 88). The reputation of the neighborhood is reaffirmed when Nucingen invites another courtesan to visit and give her approval, “le baron pria du Tillet d’y amener Florine afin de voir si tout était en harmonie avec la fortune de Nucingen” (*Splendeurs* 268). Many of the wealthy Jewish figures of the July Monarchy also had their luxurious homes in this neighborhood, although it did not yet have the theatrical and licentious repute when they purchased residences as early as the first Empire. James de Rothschild’s home was not far on the rue d’Artois and the bankers Hottinguer and Fould lived to the east on the rue Bergère (Bergeron 52). Balzac even placed the same fictional actress and courtesan that Nucingen invites to inspect and approve Esther’s new home, Florine, on the same street as the actual Jewish banker, Worms de Romilly, to the east on the rue de Bondy (Bergeron 103). Distinctive of the neighborhood developing to the north and west of the Bourse and the Chaussée d’Antin, the modern *boulevards*, had become a pole of attraction, in fiction as in reality, for exotic courtesans, actresses, singers,

and dancers, like Esther, and for Jewish banking magnates, forming a curious mixture of what most conservatives would have seen at the time as a hotbed of corruption. The rue Saint-Georges fell squarely in the middle of these intersecting milieus.

Unfortunately for Esther, her appearance in *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes* marks the close of her role in the *Comédie humaine*. In Herrera's plot to squeeze Nucingen of his fortune by means of the beautiful Jewish courtesan, Esther has been too altered by her stay at the aristocratic convent to agree to return to her previous lifestyle. Instead, she prefers to die heroically for her one true love, Lucien de Rubempré. Esther's disappearance does not however conclude the appearance of famous Jewish courtesans. Josépha Mirah, who débuts later in the *Comédie humaine* in *La Cousine Bette*, frequents the same wealthy, artistic, debauched, and somewhat aristocratic society as her predecessor. While Josépha does not enjoy the same fame and presence in the *Comédie humaine* as Esther, her Jewish heritage is noteworthy, "Josépha, madame, est juive, elle se nomme Mirah (c'est l'anagramme de Hiram), un chiffre israélite pour pouvoir la reconnaître, car c'est une enfant abandonnée en Allemagne (les recherches que j'ai faites prouvent qu'elle est la fille naturelle d'un riche banquier juif)" (*Cousine Bette* 36). She is also the only Jewish character that Balzac presents as personally confirming her own Jewishness. Promising the wife of the Baron Hulot, for whom she was once the mistress, to help find her husband, she says: "Attendez quelques jours, dit-elle, madame, et vous le verrez, ou je renierai le dieu de mes pères; et pour une juive, voyez-vous, c'est promettre la réussite" (*Cousine Bette* 36). It was the Baron Hulot who launched Josépha's theatrical career, "vous l'avez vue assurément aux Italiens où il l'a fait entrer par son crédit" (*Cousine Bette* 430). Unlike Esther, for whom the attentions of anyone other than Lucien de Rubempré are unbearable, Josepha is a well-trained expert in the art of being a courtesan and her Jewish heritage makes her even more efficient in extracting funds from her many admirers, "Le théâtre, et surtout les instructions que Jenny Cadine, madame Schontz, Malaga, Carabine ont données sur la manière de traiter les vieillards, à cette petite que je tenais dans une voie honnête et peu coûteuse ont développé chez elle l'instinct des premiers Hébreux pour l'or et les bijoux, pour le Veau d'or !

La cantatrice célèbre, devenue âpre à la curée, veut être riche, très-riche. Aussi ne dissipe-t-elle rien de ce qu'on dissipe pour elle. Elle s'est essayée sur le sieur Hulot, qu'elle a plumé net, oh ! plumé, ce qui s'appelle *rasé* ! Ce malheureux, après avoir luté contre un des Keller et le marquis d'Esgrignon, fous tous deux de Josépha, sans compter les idolâtres inconnus, va se la voir enlever par ce duc si puissamment riche qui protège les arts" (*Cousine Bette* 36-37). This lifestyle brings out certain undesirable traits that Balzac qualifies as coming from her Jewish origins. Josépha is nevertheless a ruthless businesswoman who runs through clients, developing an imposing reputation, and bankrupting all of her love-struck victims.

Despite Josépha's ferocious ambition for wealth and fame, she settles on the rich art enthusiast, the duc d'Hérouville: "Ce grand seigneur a la prétention d'avoir à lui seul Josépha, tout le monde courtisanesque en parle" (*Cousine Bette* 37). Josépha exchanges an apartment paid for by the Baron Hulot on the rue Chauchat, "comme tous les artistes attachés à l'Opéra", for a modern mansion on the rue de la Ville-l'Évêque, "Monsieur, dit-elle, j'ai cédé les guenilles de la rue Chauchat à la petite Héloïse Brisetout de Bixiou" (*Cousine Bette* 107, 103). The rue Chauchat, "Cette rue, percée en 1779, entre les rues Chantereine (de la Victoire) et de Provence, a été prolongée jusqu'à la rue Rossini en 1821 et jusqu'au boulevard des Italiens en 1875", situated in the middle of the Grands Boulevards neighborhood, described as the district in which all the *lorettes*—kept women, actresses, singers, and courtesans—lived, is no longer appropriate for Josépha's determination to climb to the top of the social mountain (Hillairet 334). The street for which she gives up what Josépha calls her "rags" of the rue Chauchat has a loftier reputation. La rue de la Ville-l'Évêque was named for the area originally just outside of Paris called la Ville-l'Évêque that had developed on the lands belonging to the bishop of Paris: "Depuis le VI^e siècle, l'évêque de Paris avait possédé dans cette région un fief très important qui s'étendait, au XIII^e siècle, de la place du Palais-Royal jusqu'au Roule" (Hillairet 645). It was a place with a privileged history, "Il comprenait une maison de plaisance, des terres, des granges, des fermes, un port et un abreuvoir. C'était la *Culture-l'Évêque*. Les privilèges dont jouissaient les habitants y attirèrent des paysans, des artisans, des ouvriers" (Hillairet 645). This section of Paris was not incorporated

into the city until just before the revolution of 1789, “Ce bourg, érigé en faubourg de Paris en 1722, fut, en 1787, englobé dans la capitale lors de la construction du mur des Fermiers-Généraux” (Hillairet 645). Located just west of the Eglise de la Madeleine, this neighborhood was just becoming fashionable in the 1830s and 40s, following the western movement of the city in which the areas around the Bourse and the Chaussée-d’Antin were the first to be saturated. Furthermore, Josépha’s home is in the world of *La Comédie humaine* one of the most elegant homes in Paris ever offered to a courtesan, “une de ces jolies maisons modernes à doubles portes, où, dès la lanterne de gaz, le luxe se manifeste... un salon d’attente, plein de fleurs rares, dont l’ameublement devait coûter quatre mille écus de cent sous... ce salon dont les trois fenêtres donnaient sur un jardin féerique, un de ces jardins fabriqués en un mois avec des terrains rapportés, avec des fleurs transplantées, et dont les gazons semblent obtenus par des procédés chimiques” (*Bette* 105). Not only is Josépha Mirah’s new home modern, it is in a modern neighborhood and it has an exotic and unusual garden of the kind that would become fashionable for the most extraordinarily rich from mid-century on, appearing again in the novels of the Second Empire and Third Republic, most notably with Zola’s *La Curée* and Maupassant’s *Bel-Ami*.

The interior is just as fantastical as the exterior and Balzac emphasizes the exquisite taste that would never be found in the home of such a character as Nucingen, who was surely lacking the proper discernment common to the old nobility. When the Baron Hulot rediscovers his former mistress, he is stunned by the unreserved luxury in her new home: “Il admira non seulement les recherches, les dorures, les sculptures les plus coûteuses du style dit Pompadour, des étoffes merveilleuses que le premier épiciier venu aurait pu commander et obtenir à flots d’or; mais encore ce que des princes seuls ont la faculté de choisir, de trouver, de payer et d’offrir: deux tableaux de Greuze et deux de Watteau, deux têtes de Van-Dyck, deux paysages de Ruysdaël, deux de Guaspre, un Rembrandt et un Holbein, un Murillo et un Titien, deux Teniers et deux Metzù, un Van-Huysum et un Abraham Mignon, enfin deux cent mille francs de tableaux admirablement encadrés. Les bordures valaient presque les toiles” (*Bette* 105) Although the decoration of Josépha’s new

home was financed by a Duke, it was the modern financial dealings of an astute banker that made such lavishness feasible, “Le duc a mis là tous les bénéfices d’une affaire en commandite dont les actions ont été vendues en hausse” (*Bette* 106). Balzac has thus combined two ideals in his creation of the Duke d’Hérouville: modern financial intelligence with aristocratic and an impeccable Ancien Régime style. Josépha, however, believes that it is not the modern bankers who are capable of such feats, but the wise old nobility, “Il n’y a que les grands seigneurs d’autrefois pour savoir changer du charbon en terre en or” (*Bette* 106). Her somewhat naïve statement reveals Balzac’s hope that old nobility will eventually triumph over new money, imparting Josépha with some curious convictions and in a strangely noble light when considering her religious origins and career choice.

Just like Esther and the home that Nucingen offers her on the rue Saint-Georges, the Duke d’Hérouville offers Josépha the modern mansion on the rue Ville-l’Éveque: “Le notaire, avant le dîner, m’a apporté le contrat d’acquisition à signer, et qui contient quittance du prix...” (*Bette* 107). Furthermore, a community forms around Josépha that is almost analogous to the society that Esther frequented after becoming Nucingen’s official mistress. The guest list for Josépha’s house-warming party is however slightly more sophisticated than the regulars appearing at Esther’s home. Josépha’s status as a phenomenal artist most likely made her more appealing the higher-society guests than Esther, who was simply an exquisite courtesan. The company that Josépha attracts includes aristocrats and bankers that are mixed with the typical high-society kept women: “ils sont là tous grands seigneurs: d’Esgrignon, Rastignac, Maxime, Lenoncourt, Verneuil, Laginski, Rochefide, la Palférine, et en fait de banquiers, Nucingen, du Tillet, avec Antonia, Malaga, Carabine et la Schontz” (*Bette* 107). Like Esther, the presence of courtesans most certainly confers the ambiance of a brothel, albeit elegant and aristocratic, on the home, the inhabitants, and the many guests. There is however something much more serious about Josépha that counteracts the tendency towards a brothel like environment in her home. Unlike Esther, Josépha commands her situation in life and

is powerful enough to never fall victim to true love or scheming fake priests. Josépha is in fact entirely in control of her own destiny and her place in high society is due more to her talent than to her beauty.

Her appearance in the two novel series called *Les Parents pauvres*, including *La Cousine Bette* and *Le Cousin Pons*, is unusual simply because she appears nowhere else in Balzac's writing. The most beautiful Jewish female character, Esther, having died in *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes*, was no longer available for the role of the most irresistible Jewish courtesan when Balzac was writing *Les Parents pauvres* much later in his career. Esther's death then presented Balzac with the opportunity to create a new and improved *belle juive*. Although both characters are Jewish, beautiful, and courtesans, there is one essential difference that differentiates Esther and Josépha. Unlike Esther, Josépha has never known, nor does she express a desire to know, true love. She firmly declares her ignorance: "On te parle du véritable amour... de cet amour qui fait qu'on s'enfonce! qu'on enfonce père et mère, qu'on vend femmes et enfants... Connais pas! *Connais pas*". She even admits to, her benefactor, the Duke d'Hérouville, her lack of love for him, "Vous pouvez m'aimer véritablement... mais moi je ne vous aime pas de l'amour dont on parle, de cet amour qui fait que cet univers est tout noir sans l'homme aimé. Vous m'êtes agréable, utile, mais vous ne m'êtes pas indispensable; et, si demain vous m'abandonniez, j'aurais trois ducs pour un" (*Bette* 457-458). One would think that this confession would be perilous for Josépha and her relationship with the Duke that supports her financially, but she is completely in control of her own situation to the point that she believes that nothing is able to endanger her newly acquired position in the Parisian high society. In not feeling any love for her current or previous benefactors, Josépha has no reason to purify herself as Esther wished to do for Lucien de Rubempré. Nor does she need any religious education or conversion since she affirms her Jewish identity and is respected as a talented artist. The absence of true love also allows Josépha to be independent and free to make her own decisions. She assures herself that financial support can be easily and quickly procured from any other wealthy aristocrat in Paris due to her talent and beauty. The home financed and lavishly furnished for her on the rue de la Ville-l'Évêque is, as Josépha sees it, expendable and replaceable.

As a Jewish female who stands by her Jewishness, defends her immoral profession, and succeeds in the arts, Josépha appears to be a revolutionary form of the *belle juive* character. While Esther was defenseless against the criminal manipulations of Jacques Collins', disguised as the abbot Herrera, Josépha is entirely in command of her present and future and thus appears to take revenge for Esther, the character from whom she was invented. Esther's only talent was her beauty and it was eventually what led to her demise. Falling victim to the stereotypically *belle juive* plot, Esther died due to her impossible love for a Christian. Josépha, however, is beautiful, highly talented in the arts, and feels no love or attachment to anything or anyone and is therefore an emancipated *belle juive*. Furthermore, when Esther was not able to truly benefit from such luxurious surroundings in the home on the rue Saint-Georges offered by Nucingen due to her true love for Lucien, Josépha is fully capable of reveling in the luxury of the home on the rue de la Ville-l'Évêque offered by the Duke d'Hérouville. These differences in attitude and outcome for Esther and Josépha are explained by Balzac's insistence on repeating the trajectory of the traditional *belle juive* character and scenario, as seen in *The Merchant of Venice* or read in *Ivanhoe*, for Esther and the inspiration he gleaned from famous Jewish courtesans in the 1840s. Thérèse Lachman and Judith-Julie Bernard, in particular were the most notorious *demi-mondaines*, only Jewish, beginning in the mid- 1840s. Presenting an entirely new version of the *belle juive*, these two Jewish women must have easily inspired Balzac to rewrite Esther's story when he created Josépha, the most talented Jewish *cantatrice-courtesane* of the *Comédie humaine*.

Thérèse Lachman, also known as *La Païva*, was born in the Moscow ghetto in 1819 and turned up in Paris in the 1840s, having left her husband and her baby behind in Russia. She is first found in the poor Jewish neighborhood of the Marais, "elle vint échouer à Paris, où elle logea dans le quartier juif qui se trouve non loin de l'église Saint-Paul" (Boulenger 18). She subsisted as a low-class prostitute until encountering a wealthy Jewish musician from Frankfurt, Henri Herz. Unaware of her previous marriage, Herz married Thérèse in Paris and gave her a salon that was frequented by the Parisian world of artists under the July Monarchy, "le bon et charmant Henri Herz offrit à 'madame Herz' la savoureuse fierté d'avoir un salon, d'y

recevoir régulièrement des artistes, des gens de lettres. On y vit, on y applaudit Richard Wagner, centre autres musiciens. Théophile Gautier, Émile de Girardin devinrent les habitués et les intimes amis de Thérèse” (Boulenger 28). When Herz lost his money and discovered that his wife was already married, the Herz family cut Thérèse out of the last of the family fortune. She continued to live a precarious and somewhat dissolute, but certainly lavish, life until her legal husband died in 1849. By this time, “Thérèse habitait place Saint-Georges, dans le bel appartement qui convenait à une créature de luxe, une illustre princesse de scandale comme elle était alors” (Boulenger 35). With a home in the same area of Paris as Esther when Nucingen offers her the luxurious home on the rue Saint-Georges it is not just a coincidence. Balzac carefully chose this neighborhood for its particular reputation: “le quartier de Notre-Dame-de-Lorette, alors réservé au commerce galant” (Picon 12).

La Païva was not unique in her genre, Judith-Julie Bernard was also found in Paris in the 1840s. After giving birth to the famous Sarah Bernhardt in 1844, she began her career as courtesan, “Dans les années 1850, Julie Bernard est clairement identifiée comme courtisane par de nombreux témoignages littéraires” (Picon 11). Also known as Youle, she exploited her Jewishness by exaggerating a mysterious foreign allure, taking advantage of the more liberal and less moral times “Sa judaïté lui tient lieu d’exotisme dans la vie galante de la capitale sous la monarchie de Juillet gouvernée par son appétit de plaisirs” (Pincon 11-12). As a Jewish courtesan and a Parisian *demi-mondaine*, Julie Bernard also maintained a salon in Paris where she had a reputation for telling salacious stories with an air of innocence, “elle ne répugne pas à raconter avec une feinte pudeur des histoires osées qui font l’attraction de son salon fréquenté par de nombreuses personnalités de l’époque, comme le peintre Fleury, le docteur Monod, Alexandre Dumas père, Rosini, le banquier Lavolie, Camille Doucet, alors directeur des Beaux-Arts, le duc de Morny, amant attiré de sa sœur, ou encore le baron Hippolyte Larrey, chirurgien de Napoléon III” (Pincon 12). Julie Bernard, as other theatrical women of the period, lived on the rue de la Michodière in the center of the most theatrical neighborhood and just a few streets away from the Opéra Comique de Paris on the place Boieldieu.

Although it had just recently been rebuilt in 1840s, the Palais Garnier later replaced the Opéra Comique during the Second Empire and the Third Republic. Both La Païva and Youle, as Jewish women involved in the arts and entertainment of the upper class and predominantly male Parisian world, encouraged the stereotype of the exotic and biblical Jewish female. They took advantage of an otherwise disadvantageous situation and not only survived, but also lived in surroundings filled with beautiful furnishings and sophisticated company. The portrait of these two women, their place in Parisian society, and their ties to the theatrical world recall closely Balzac's portrait of Josépha Mirah, their literary double.

With *La Cousine Bette* being published in 1846, it is conceivable that Thérèse Lachman or Julie Bernard were most certainly possible inspirations for Josépha. Balzac was aware of these Jewish women in Parisian society, "We know, for example, that there were Jews among the upper crust of the capital's courtesans, who may have provided models for Balzac's Esther or Josépha: the Russian-born Thérèse Lachman... as well as the Dutch-born mother of the legendary actress Sarah Bernhardt, achieved fame as professional *demi-mondaines* in Paris during the July Monarchy" (Samuels 170). When considering that La Païva and Youle were not known in Paris until the 1840s, Josépha Mirah appears to be a perfect fictional representation of these two beautiful and seductive Jewish women of nineteenth-century Paris. This interpretation then explains Esther's failure and Josépha's success. While Esther exists in the *Comédie humaine* as a literary reincarnation of the weak and victimized *belle juive*, Josépha embodies the future possibilities of a strong, determined, and talented Jewish woman in a society become more interested in wealth and entertainment, "les jeunes gens des années 1840 s'occupent de faire fortune et de se divertir... C'est le début de l'âge d'or des demi-mondaines, des cocottes, des lorettes qui fréquentent des hommes du beau monde" (Picon 11). Nevertheless, if *La Païva* and *Youle* became known in the society in which Balzac circulated after the invention of Esther and just around the time that Josépha makes her début in the fictional society of the *Comédie humaine*, it is more likely that Balzac predicted these beautiful Jewish courtesans' rise to fame in nineteenth-century Paris rather than taking inspiration from them for his ultimate *belle juive* character.

However, as it has been suggested for the fictional character that is Nucingen and the Jewish figures that he resembled in reality, one can ponder the same question, which came first the fiction or the reality, for the character that is Josépha and Jewish women that she takes after in reality.

The next character, Raoul Nathan, is of the same Parisian *beau monde* as the artists frequenting the salons of the *demi-mondaines* like Esther and Josépha. He is also second in the number of appearances in the *Comédie humaine* to Nucingen, the most conspicuous and recurrent Jewish character: “Point de mire littéraire et mondain de Paris, Nathan apparaît dans dix-neuf romans” (Kupfer 79). When Nathan appears in the novel *Une fille d’Ève*, he is considered as being a part of “la fleur des gens d’esprit” and is found in the middle of the modernity of the Right Bank in the neighborhood frequented by a curious combination of *lorettes*, Jewish bankers, and the newly wealthy. Contributing to the diverse portrait Balzac paints of Jews in Paris, Nathan is neither usurer or antique dealer, nor banker. Instead, this youthful character represents the modern journalist, “homme de lettres talentueux... le type même de l’écrivain-journaliste” who “fréquente les théâtres” and “devient critique” (Kupfer 79). In his profession as a theater critic, playwright, and journalist, Natha, becomes popular in the salons of the aristocracy, “le personnage aux origines juives qu’il est de bon d’inviter et d’exhiber dans une soirée” (Kupfer 121). He is however caught between two worlds and vacillates from one writing career to the next, from one Parisian society to another. While the alluring actress, Sophie Grignoult, “qui s’était surnommée Florine par un baptême assez commun au théâtre”, anchors him in the of the Right Bank’s wealthy, theatrical, and immoral society, the angelic and aristocratic Marie-Angélique de Vandenesse pulls him into the Left Bank’s noble milieu of the Faubourg Saint-Germain (*Ève* 89). With the plot of *Une fille d’Ève* set in Paris during the culmination of the Restoration Monarchy, just as the revolution of 1830 is being prepared and then enacted, and the inauguration of the July Monarchy, this Jewish writer, either theatrical or political, must take care not fall in with the wrong side, the rising bourgeoisie of the Right Bank or the old nobility of the Left.

Presenting this Jewish character as being “à l’image de la jeunesse littéraire d’aujourd’hui”, Balzac casts Nathan in stark opposition to the well-dressed literary dandies popular within the elite social and intellectual circles of nineteenth-century Paris (*Ève* 74). In the beginning of the story Nathan appears not only artistically ruffled, but also purposefully unkempt, “Sa chevelure longue et toujours en désordre... Ce Byron mal peigné... Ses vêtements semblent toujours avoir été tordus, fripés, recroquevillés exprès pour s’harmoniser à sa physionomie... Sa démarche froisse toute idée d’ordre” (*Ève* 66-67). It is nonetheless Nathan’s artistic genius that makes him so fashionable, “invité dans les cercles aristocratiques en raison de son excentricité, de ses talents artistiques et de la curiosité qu’il provoque” (Kupfer 121). While moving throughout the city and within various levels of society, surfacing like other Jewish characters in diverse homes, streets, and neighborhoods of Paris, Nathan’s movements are “saccadés comme s’ils étaient produits par une mécanique imparfaite... des zigzags enthousiastes... des suspensions inattendues qui lui font heurter les bourgeois pacifiques en promenade sur les boulevards de Paris” (*Ève* 67-68). This writer with the potential for virtuosity works and lives as he moves, running from one place to another, constantly moving and never staying still long, “Nathan courait de son bureau de rédaction au Théâtre, du Théâtre à la Chambre, de la Chambre chez quelques créanciers” (*Ève* 123). His intense piercing blue eyes define this turbulent character: “des yeux napoléoniens, des yeux bleus qui traverse l’âme” (Abraham 145). In Balzac’s world, blue eyes imply: “des hommes d’action, disons même d’aventuriers” (Abraham 145). Nathan brings everywhere an unsettling and awkward ambiance, “Il apporte dans le monde une gaucherie hardie, un dédain des conversations, un air de critique pour tout ce qu’on y respecte qui le met mal avec les petits esprits comme avec ceux qui s’efforcent de conserver les doctrines de l’ancienne politesse” (*Ève* 68). Nathan is thus a perpetual foil to the smooth workings of the polite Parisian society.

While the amalgam of characteristics that Balzac combines to describe Nathan seems more fit for a monster, it is this monster-like appearance and ungainliness that make him a purely Parisian character, “Sa figure ravagée, détruite, lui donne l’air de s’être battu avec les anges ou les démons... les rides creuses de ses

joues, les redans de son crâne tortueux et sillonné, les salières qui marquent ses yeux et ses tempes... Ses membranes dures, ses os apparents... sa peau, tannée par des excès... maigre et grand... des jambes de héron, des genoux engorgés, une cambrure exagérée, des mains cordées de muscles, fermes comme des pattes d'un crabe, à doigts maigres et nerveux... un nez tourmenté... une charmante bouche... les convulsions de ses mouvements de tête, qu'il a remarquablement brusques et vifs... Sa barbe longue et pointue n'est ni peignée, ni parfumée, ni brossée, ni lissée... Ses cheveux mêlés... luxuriants... graissent les places qu'ils caressent. Ses mains sèches et filandreuses ignorent les soins de la brosse à ongles et le luxe du citron... Enfin le terrible Raoul est grotesque" (*Ève* 66-67). The monstrous presentation of the modern nineteenth-century writer is oddly similar to Balzac's description in the novel *Ferragus* of the diverse streets of Paris brought together to form an unwieldy monster, "Monstre complet d'ailleurs... Paris est toujours cette monstrueuse merveille, étonnant assemblage de mouvements, de machines, de pensées... Paris est une créature" (*Ferragus* 78-79). Like the streets of Paris, the distinct parts, hideous in their own right, of the Jewish character miraculously form a monstrous but attractive and poetic elegance. In emphasizing the monstrosity of the city and the writer that it had created, Balzac foreshadowed the emergence of poets like Baudelaire for whom Paris was an essential source of inspiration but morally and financially costly, "Voyager dans Paris est, pour ces poètes, un luxe coûteux" (*Ferragus* 79).

At first glance Nathan lives as frugally as the character, Gobseck, in accordance with the idea that "les Juifs de Balzac préfèrent vivre chichement", and as miserably as Esther on the rue de Langlade (Kupfer 234). His home is in "le passage Sandrié" and his apartment is "au troisième étage d'une maison mince et lourde" with a Spartan interior: "un petit appartement désert, nu, froid, où il demeurerait pour le public des indifférents, pour les néophytes littéraires, pour ses créanciers, pour les opportuns et les divers ennuyeux qui doivent rester sur le seuil de la vie intime" (*Ève* 86). With the passage Sandrié located "Entre la rue Basse-du-Rempart et la rue Neuve-des-Mathurins", just south of the rapidly developing *grands boulevards* and the *Chaussée-d'Antin*, and just north of the future Palais Garnier, Nathan's home is in a neighborhood on the

Right Bank that is on the brink of full transformation (*Ève* 86). Both his apartment and the building in which it is located reveal the surprisingly modest origins of a section of Paris that, in the 1830s and 40s, has yet to become the alluring neighborhood that the Pereire brothers conceived of and funded in the 1860s. The relative anonymity of the street where Nathan has his apartment is due to an original existence as the *impasse Sandrié*. In 1775, Monsieur Sandrié had an entrance to his home constructed off of the existing passage, but the impasse become passage Sandrié was not recognized as a public street (Lazare 607). Although Nathan passes the majority of his existence outside of this bare and meager apartment, his presence in this neighborhood marks it with theatrical genius and predetermines the success of certain Parisian actresses, like Florine, in Balzac's imagined theatrical society of the *Comédie humaine*. Furthermore, in housing a playwright in this neighborhood, Balzac is foreshadowing the future of the Opéra Garnier.

While his small and poorly furnished apartment in the drab building of the passage Sandrié is telling of the insecurity of an artist's existence, it is not where Nathan truly lives, "Son domicile réel, sa grande existence, sa représentation étaient chez mademoiselle Florine" (*Ève* 86). Florine is his theatrical muse and mistress: "Depuis dix ans, Raoul s'était si bien attaché à cette femme qu'il passait la moitié de sa vie chez elle" (*Ève* 87). Florine's abode, "enrichie de tributs galants... pleine d'offrandes les plus distinguées", is a whirlwind of luxurious disorder, a "pêle-mêle de luxe royal et dédaigneux", bursting with sculpted wood trimmings lined with gold, numerous pieces of art ranging from sculptures to paintings, and jewels that span across the several rooms composing the apartments of this adored actress. So lavishly adorned are Florine's apartments that they rival the sumptuousness of the Rothschild home, "Pour trouver des comparaisons de toutes ces belles choses, il aurait fallu aller à deux pas de là, chez Rothschild" (*Ève* 89). The playwright and his actress flourish in this creativity-inspiring environment, thriving in the imaginative disorder representing the originality and theatricality of the artist in both Nathan and Florine, "Tout cela placé sans aucune symétrie, mais avec un art inaperçu. Il y avait de la coquetterie et du laisser-aller, deux qualités qui ne se trouvent réunies que chez les artistes" (*Ève* 88). Nathan's second home is in a section of Paris, the *grands*

boulevards, that is often associated with the spectacular world of theaters. In Balzac's imagined world of the *Comédie humaine*, it is teeming with burlesque individuals including actresses, dancers, and artists that often than double as high-class prostitutes. Originally the rue Basse-Saint-Martin, now rue René Boulanger, this street was named rue de Bondy from 1771 to 1944. Florine's apartments on the rue de Bondy were offered to her early in her career by a more mature but naïve admirer named Matifat. This "riche droguiste de la rue des Lombards" has imagined Florine as an inexpensive gift to himself: "il avait pensé qu'une petite actrice des boulevards serait peu dispendieuse" (*Illusions* 230). While Florine's apartments were originally furnished at the expense of Matifat, he is quickly replaced by Étienne Lousteau, who is then supplanted by Nathan.

While Nathan's plays are considered to be masterpieces by veritable "hommes du goût", Florine's career takes off when she appears in them, "comédienne de second ordre, mais qui depuis dix ans les amis de Nathan, des journaux, quelques auteurs intronisaient parmi les illustres actrices" (*Ève* 69). Florine's beauty and Nathan's literary prowess make this couple quite compelling. Nathan writes captivating critiques and roles for his enchanting actress in collaboration and on his own at the Théâtre-Français. Nathan and Florine together complete the secret formula needed to create a sensational writer and an acclaimed star of the stage, "L'association des deux destinées, assez commune dans le monde dramatique et littéraire, ne faisait aucun tort à Raoul... Pour Florine, la puissance de Raoul était comme un spectre protecteur... Raoul pouvait tout pour sa vanité d'artiste, pour la tranquillité de son amour-propre, pour son avenir au théâtre. Sans l'intervention d'un grand auteur, pas de grande actrice" (*Ève* 89-97). Nathan's ambitions are however greater than the theater. He aspires to be a journalist and to direct a political newspaper.

To repay Nathan for launching her very successful acting career, Florine sacrifices her beautiful apartment, lavish art, and furniture to help finance his new newspaper, "La belle actrice fit venir... quatre riches marchands de meubles, de curiosités, de tableaux et de bijoux. Ces hommes entrèrent dans ce sanctuaire et y inventorièrent tout... pour quatre-vingt mille francs... Le marché fut conclu... Le journal fut baptisé chez elle... de grand matin, les emballeurs, commissionnaires et porteurs vinrent enlever tout le luxe

de la célèbre actrice” (*Ève* 74). The newspaper is first located in Florine’s emptied home: “Le journaliste devait camper dans [l’ancienne maison de Florine] où les bureaux du journal furent établis” (*Ève* 77). In transitioning from a playwright to a political journalist, Nathan also attempts to replace Florine with Marie-Angélique de Vandenesse, trading an actress for an aristocrat. Just as Nathan deems that being linked to an actress is not conducive to creating a career in the political world, so is the rue de Bondy’s theatrical reputation not suitable for the fledgling political paper. From the rue de Bondy and Florine’s previous apartments, the offices of the new political newspaper appear on the rue Feydeau. In the neighborhood of the Bourse, the rue Feydeau cuts diagonally from the rue Montmartre to the rue de Richelieu and intersects the rue Vivienne at the place de la Bourse. This new address sets the tone for Nathan’s ambition to distance himself from the theatrical world, placing him squarely within the financial and political one. The rue Feydeau, changing names from rue Neuve-des-fossés-Montmartre around 1675, was named after “une célèbre famille dont plusieurs membres ont occupé les premières charges de la magistrature” (Lazare 218). As if announcing Nathan’s determination to succeed in the political world after having done so in the theatrical one, the street that Balzac has chosen for Nathan’s paper carries a heavy historically political connotation, both next to the Bourse and associated with the Feydeau family of magistrates.

While the career of a political journalist reveals itself to be more than highly demanding, requiring great versatility, “le journalisme touche à tout durant cette époque, à l’industrie, aux intérêts publics et privés, aux entreprises nouvelles, à tous les amours-propres de la littérature et ses produits”, the weight of such an important role in the political domain of Parisian society proves to be too great a challenge for Nathan. His particularly artistic disorganization and the financial demands of establishing a modern enterprise don’t lead to expected success. When the money so generously supplied by Florine disappears, Nathan must borrow from a banker: “dévoreré par le Fisc, par les frais de premier établissement qui furent énorme” (*Ève*). Feeling guilty for having employed all of Florine’s fortune in establishing the newspaper, Nathan forces her to recreate her previously glorious salon so that the elite of the intellectual, artistic, bourgeois, and aristocratic

society of nineteenth-century Paris can come together once again for lavish festivities. Florine takes on substantial debt in setting up a new home as lavish as before, “une délicieuse maison tout entière à elle rue Pigalle, où revint son ancienne société” (*Ève* 135). Contrary to Nathan’s idea that theater and actresses are not appropriate for successfully writing captivating political journalism, Florine’s success as an actress and *demi-mondaine* turns out to be essential to the survival of a political newspaper. The salon in which all kinds of artistic, social, economic, industrial and political intrigue is discussed is indispensable to writing well-informed articles: “La maison d’une fille posée comme Florine était un terrain neutre, très favorable aux ambitieux politiques”. (*Ève* 135) Nathan’s attempt to replace Florine has unforeseen consequences and he eventually leaves Marie-Angélique de Vandeness out of necessity and returns to the more stable relationship with his creative muse: “Quitte-t-on un bonheur certain pour les coquetteries du faubourg Saint-Germain” (*Ève* 135).

Nathan’s literary genius and ambitious designs for a political newspaper curiously recall important elements in Balzac’s early career. One of Balzac’s first ventures was a publishing house in which he desired not only to print his own writing but also the various forms of popular literature of the times. Like Nathan in his short-lived stint as a political journalist, the printing dreams of Balzac failed in an impressive financial disaster. What is more, Nathan’s frantic movements about the city evoke Balzac’s own fleeting but intense and prolific literary career in which he traversed Paris daily going from salons to theaters to restaurants to parks or forests and any other literature-inspiring location only to return home late, write until the early hours of the morning, then sleep an hour or two, and begin all over again. Based on the details of Nathan’s harried daily schedule, one can imagine Balzac recounting his own frenzied life, “Il lui fallait se trouver presque chaque jour à cheval au Bois de Boulogne, entre deux et trois heures... Il ne quittait les salons que vers minuit... Il devait obéir aux volontés capricieuses... suivre les débats parlementaires, le torrent de la politique, veiller à la direction du journal, et mettre en scène deux pièces dont les recettes étaient indispensables... En quittant le monde entre une heure et deux heures du matin, il revenait travailler jusqu’à

huit ou neuf heures, il dormait à peine, se réveillait pour concerter les opinions du journal avec les gens influents desquels il dépendait, pour débattre les mille et une affaires intérieures” (*Ève* 123)

As Balzac would experience personally towards the end of his life, this chaotic and feverish pace takes a toll on Nathan’s physical and mental health. Faced with the perilous financial side of the literary profession, Nathan is desperate enough to attempt to take his own life, locked in his office on the rue Feydeau: “À cette heure, les vastes appartements occupés par le journal dans un vieil hôtel de la rue Feydeau étaient déserts”, and in “une petite pièce sombre donnant sur une arrière-cour, et qui jadis était un cabinet de toilette attenant à une grande chambre à coucher dont l’alcôve n’avait pas été détruite... Nathan râlait assis sur son fauteuil de rédacteur en chef... Il venait d’achever une lettre à Blondet pour le prier de mettre son suicide sur le compte d’une apoplexie foudroyante”. (150) Discovered before succeeding in asphyxiating himself, Nathan is brought to a nearby hotel to recover discreetly, “Personne ne savait ce malheureux au lit, rue du Mail, dans un hôtel garni”. (152) Nearly succumbing to the pressure of the political environment and literary demands, Nathan recovers in the hotel on the rue du Mail, but his literary genius in theater falls short in politics and his story ends in relative obscurity: “Aujourd’hui, cet ambitieux si riche en encre et si pauvre en vouloir, a fini par capituler et par se caser dans une sinécure, comme un homme médiocre”. (189)

Although the rue de Mail is not a street known for any reputable establishments in the hotel industry of early nineteenth-century Paris, it is mentioned more than once for a hotel in which two Jewish characters spend a night or more. Located in the second arrondissement and dating to the seventeenth century, “Cette rue a été ouverte, de 1633 à 1635, sur l’emplacement d’un jeu de mail établi en bordure de l’ancienne enceinte de Charles V, entre les portes Montmartre et Saint-Honoré”, a hotel on the rue du Mail appears again after Raoul Nathan’s convalescence as a starting point in Paris for Fritz Brunner (Hillairet 87). In *Le cousin Pons*, Balzac traces the itinerary of Brunner and his friend, Wilhem, from Frankfurt to Paris: “arrivés à leur dernier billet de mille francs, les deux amis prirent une place aux messageries dites royales, qui les conduisirent à Paris, où ils se logèrent dans les combles de l’hôtel du Rhin, rue du Mail, chez Graff, un

ancien premier garçon chez Gédéon Brunner [père]. Fritz entre commis à six cents francs chez les frères Keller, banquiers, où Graff le recommanda. Graff, maître de l'hôtel du Rhin, est le frère du fameux tailleur Graff. Le tailleur prit Wilhem en qualité de teneur de livres” (*Pons* 87). Brunner is thus a pivot point between several major and minor Jewish characters. While arriving in the hotel on the rue de Mail where Nathan previously recovered appears purely coincidental, Brunner’s trajectory does cross paths with a different Jewish character. His trajectory intersects with the one that Elie Magus is following in “le musée Pons”.

Sylvain Pons is one of the most fervent collectors of Ancien Régime masterpieces of the *Comédie humaine*: “Envoyé par l’État à Rome... [il] en avait rapporté le goût des antiquités et des belles choses d’art... [et] revint donc à Paris, vers 1810, collectionneur féroce, chargé de tableaux, de statuettes, de cadres, de sculptures en ivoire, en bois, d’émaux, porcelaines, etc... Pons cachait à tous les regards une collection de chefs-d’œuvre en tout genres” (*Pons* 58-59). Invited by Pons to his home on the rue de Normandie in the Marais, the German-Jewish Brunner is immediately grasps the value of the collection: “Brunner, à l’aspect des magnifiques œuvres collectionnées pendant quarante ans de patience, s’enthousiasma, les estima, pour la première fois, à leur valeur... enfin une collection unique des plus beaux modèles... [on] fut étonné de l’admiration... pour les brimborions de... Pons” (*Pons* 108-109). In entering the *musée Pons* and seeing the magnificent art, Brunner was unexpectedly offered what Magus ardently desires, “Jamais il n’espérait pouvoir entrer dans un sérail si bien gardé. Le musée Pons était le seul à Paris qui pût rivaliser avec le musée Magus. Le juif avait eu, vingt ans plus tard que Pons, la même idée; mais, en sa qualité de marchand amateur, le musée Pons lui resta fermé... Pouvoir examiner la magnifique collection du pauvre musicien, c’était, pour Élie Magus, le même bonheur que celui d’un amateur de femmes parvenant à se glisser dans le boudoir d’une belle maîtresse que lui cache un ami” (*Pons* 164).

Making his début in 1839 in the short story, *Pierre Grassou*, Magus is first described as “un marchand de tableaux, l’usurier des toiles... vieux bois d’Allemagne” and he appears as a fixture of the more modern neighborhood of the *grands boulevards*, “Elias Magus, espèce de Hollando-Belge-Flammand... Venu de

Bordeaux, il débutait alors à Paris, brocantait des tableaux et demeurait sur le boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle” (*Grassou* 17-18, 22). Magus amassed a fortune exploiting a naïve and mediocre painter, Pierre Grassou de Fougères. Guileless and in need of money, Fougères is easily duped by this devious Jewish *brocanteur*, “Un autre, un de ces artistes défiants et farouches, aurait remarqué l’air diabolique d’Elias Magus, il eût observé le frétillement des poils de sa barbe, l’ironie de sa moustache, le mouvement de ses épaules qui annonçait le contentement du Juif de Walter Scott fourbant un chrétien” (*Grassou* 23). Magus secretly commissions copies of the work of masters such as Metzsu, Rembrandt and Gerard Dow from Grassou, “À trente-sept ans, Fougères avait fabriqué pour Elias Magus deux cents tableaux complètement inconnus” (*Grassou* 27). Magus gives the paintings an antiqued finish and sells them as the work of master painters at an inflated price, “Ses toiles si peignées, si nettes, qui avaient la dureté de la tôle et le luisant des peintures sur porcelaine, étaient comme couvertes d’un brouillard, elles ressemblaient à de vieux tableaux” (*Grassou* 24). Showing some appreciation for the painter who had made his fortune, Magus introduces Grassou to the equally simple Monsieur Vervelle and his marriageable daughter, Virginie. Magus indicates to the painter that he would be comfortable for life if he married Vervelle’s daughter: “à l’abri du besoin pour le reste de tes jours” with “Cent mille francs de dot... Trois cent mille francs d’espérances, maison rue Boucherat, et maison de campagne à Ville-d’Avray” (*Grassou* 30). Invited to the country house, Fougères discovers what has become of his paintings when Vervelle shows him his prized gallery: “Le marchand de bouteilles semblait avoir voulu lutter avec le roi Louis-Philippe et les galeries de Versailles. Les tableaux magnifiquement encadrés avaient des étiquettes où se lisaient en lettres noires sur fond d’or: Rubens, *Danse de faunes et de nymphes*; Rembrandt, *Intérieur d’une salle de dissection. Le docteur Tromp faisant sa leçon à ses élèves*. Il y avait cent cinquante tableaux tous vernis, époussetés, quelques-uns étaient couverts de rideaux verts qui ne se tiraient qu’en présence des jeunes personnes. L’artiste resta les bras casés, la bouche béante, sans parole sur les lèvres, en reconnaissant la moitié de ses tableaux dans cette galerie: il était Rubens, Paul Potter, Mieris, Metzsu, Gérard Dow! Il était à lui seul vingt grands maîtres” (*Grassou* 37-38). Realizing the artful

deception of the sly art dealer, the artist proclaims, “Et Magus est un fameux marchand de tableaux! dit le peintre qui s’expliqua l’air vieux de ses tableaux et l’utilité des sujets que lui demandait le brocanteur” (*Grassou* 46-48).

By the time Magus appears in *Le Cousin Pons*, he is described as “un juif qui ne fait plus d’affaires que pour son plaisir... le plus riche des anciens marchands de la curiosité, le plus grand connaisseur qu’il y ait à Paris” (*Pons* 157). He is living in semi-retirement in the very same neighborhood as Sylvain Pons: “La Chaussée des Minimes étant à deux pas de la rue de Normandie” (*Pons* 163). The neighborhood is suitable for both Pons and Magus as the Parisian center for antique dealers, particularly Jewish antique dealers. In close vicinity to the Place des Vosges, the setting of the Marais lends well to the collection of Ancien Régime works of art when considering that this square was one of the first noble neighborhoods created early in the seventeenth century by Henri IV with the intention of housing noble families of the royal court. Between *Pierre Grassou* and *Le Cousin Pons*, Magus therefore moves contrary to the western trend in Paris, from the boulevard de Bonne-Nouvelle to the Chaussée des Minimes. Unlike other wealthy Jews of Paris who left the Marais for the *grands boulevards* or farther west, Magus leaves the *grands boulevards* and heads east to the Marais. On the Chaussée des Minimes, now the rue de Béarn, “petite et vaste rue qui mène à la Place Royale où il possédait un vieil hôtel acheté, pour un morceau de pain, comme on dit, en 1831”, Magus has carefully selected the setting for his collection, “Cette magnifique construction contenait un des plus fastueux appartements décorés du temps de Louis XV, car c’était l’ancien hôtel de Maulaincourt. Bâti par ce célèbre président de la Cour des Aides” (*Pons* 157). This Jewish character’s curious tendency of going against the grain of society, choosing to move east rather than west, deciding to move back to a Jewish neighborhood with his wealth conversely to those leaving, is explained by an acute obsession for collecting works of art, “Le vieillard finissait, comme nous finissons tous, par une manie poussée jusqu’à la folie... il se laissa prendre par l’admiration des chefs-d’œuvre qu’il brocantait; mais son goût, de plus en plus épuré, difficile, était devenu l’une de ces passions qui ne sont permises qu’aux Rois, quand ils sont riches et qu’ils

aiment les arts... le brocanteur retiré ne se passionnait que pour des toiles irréprochables, restées telles que le maître les avait peintes, et du premier ordre dans l'œuvre. Aussi Élie Magus ne manquait-il pas une seule des grandes ventes, visitait-il tous les marchés et voyageait-il par toute l'Europe. Cette âme vouée au lucre, froide comme un glaçon, s'échauffait à la vue d'un chef-d'œuvre, absolument comme un libertin, lassé des femmes, s'émeut devant une fille parfaite, et s'adonne à la recherche des beautés sans défauts. Ce Don Juan des toiles, cet adorateur de l'idéal, trouvait dans cette admiration des jouissances supérieures à celles que donne à l'avare la contemplation de l'or. Il vivait dans un sérail de beaux tableaux !” (*Pons* 157-158). The imposingly aristocratic home that Magus has purchased and renovated on the Chaussée des Minimes is the ideal habitat in which to house his collection. As the collection His collection being highly aristocratic, this Jewish character desires nothing less than a noble *hôtel particulier* of the *ancien régime* in which to display the masterpieces in his possession. His choice of Chaussée des Minimes is validated by the noble history of this street, “La partie de cette voie publique comprise entre la Place Royale et la rue des Minimes, a été ouverte en 1607, sur des terrains appartenant aux seigneurs de Vitry” and by its proximity to Henri IV’s *Place Royale*, now the Place des Vosges (*Lazare* 451).

After purchasing this *hôtel particulier* of old nobility in the Marais, Magus proceeds to turn it into a lavish sanctuary for his masterpieces, “Ces chefs-d'œuvre, logés comme doivent l'être les enfants des princes, occupaient tout le premier étage de l'hôtel qu'Élie Magus avait fait restaurer, et avec quelle splendeur! Aux fenêtres, pendaient en rideaux les plus beaux brocarts d'or de Venise. Sur les parapets, s'étendaient les plus magnifiques tapis de la Savonnerie” (*Pons* 158). The home and the decorations are luxurious, but the frames in which the paintings are housed are truly extravagant, “Les tableaux, au nombre de cent environ, étaient encadrés dans les cadres les plus splendides, redorés tous avec esprit par le seul doreur de Paris qu'Élie trouvât consciencieux, par Servais, à qui le Juif apprit à dorer avec l'or anglais, or infiniment supérieur à celui des batteurs d'or français” (*Pons* 158). A traditional three-floor *hôtel particulier* of the seventeenth century, this noble building had weathered the unrest and violence of the French Revolution, during which many

aristocratic homes were targeted for destruction and despoiling “cet hôtel à cause de sa situation, n’avait pas été dévasté durant la révolution” (*Pons* 157). Each floor has a specific purpose. The ground floor is reserved for the restoration and sale of paintings, “Le rez-de-chaussée, tout entier pris par les tableaux que le Juif brocantait toujours, par les caisses venues de l’étranger, contenait un immense atelier où travaillait presque uniquement pour lui Moret, le plus habile de nos restaurateurs de tableaux, un de ceux que le Musée devrait employer” (*Pons* 158-159). The first floor is the gallery, decorated in the style of Louis XV, where Magus displays his most prized masterpieces. Magus has eked out a small space for his daughter on the ground floor, “Là se trouvait aussi l’appartement de sa fille, le fruit de sa vieillesse, une Juive belle comme sont toutes les Juives quand le type asiatique reparait pur et noble en elles. Noémi, gardée par deux servantes fanatiques et juives, avait pour avant-garde un Juif polonais nommé Abramko” (*Pons* 159). Despite his great wealth and the luxury surrounding his collection of paintings, Magus lives in poor conditions on the second floor, “Élie Magus habitait deux chambres en mansardes au deuxième étage, meublées pauvrement, garnies de ses haillons, et sentant la juiverie”, confirming, at least in the case of Magus, Kupfer’s observation that “Les Juifs de Balzac préfèrent vivre chichement et continuent de mener leur vie de ghetto” (Kupfer 234).

The curious circumstance of Élie Magus returning to the Marais and recreating eighteenth-century princely surroundings in a historically appropriate *hôtel particulier* for his collection is revealing. The general trend in the wealthier spheres of Parisian society beginning in the first half of the nineteenth century was movement towards the northeastern sections of the city, to newer neighborhoods with modern, luxurious, and newly constructed dwellings. The drive towards modernity was counterbalanced by nostalgia and longing for the aristocratic ambiance of the eighteenth century. “La collection Double,” for example, amassed by the Baron Léopold Double and sold in 1881, began in the 1830s, “Il y a trente ans, un jeune officier d’artillerie s’amusait déjà à réunir une collection de meubles et d’objets d’art historiques, c’est-à-dire ayant appartenu à des personnages célèbres des dix-septième et dix-huitième siècles” (Lacroix 6). For Magus, it is the old that wins over the new and the Marais is, in his opinion, more fitting for a home representative

of the eighteenth century. Between *Pierre Grassou* and *Le Cousin Pons*, Magus becomes more obsessed with collecting *ancien régime* masterpieces. His obsession with collection is symptomatic of this nostalgia and longing for the eighteenth century, although it appears all the more curious for a Jewish character for whom the eighteenth century would have recalled Jewish hardship rather than the *art de vivre* of the French aristocracy. Magus' home and collection function as a preview for what will become more prevalent amongst Jewish figures in French society. In the last third of the nineteenth century, the art of collecting and recreating the eighteenth-century aristocratic *bôtel particulier*, the perfect scenery for the pieces of a collection, became an important pastime for wealthy, high-society Parisian Jews. However, in placing Magus in a home of noble appearance, in the most historically Jewish neighborhood of Paris, Balzac emphasizes the stereotypical traits of this Jewish character even when found in surroundings princely enough for Louis XV. Magus, his home, and his collection, “une des collections qui accusent le caprice d'un maniaque ou la prodigalité d'un fou”, are forever associated with his Jewishness despite the pure genius of his collection (Lacroix 5). That Magus is unforgivably Jewish, however, assures the success of the *musée Magus* over the *musée Pons*, as Magus defeats Pons and makes away with some of his rival's most prized pieces.

Élie Magus is however not the last Jewish character to appear in the pages of the *Comédie humaine*. *L'Envers de l'histoire contemporaine*, published in 1848, the last during Balzac's lifetime, presents a final but equally curious and innovative Jewish character, molded after the crooked and avaricious Shylock character. Moïse Halpersohn is described in terms familiar to Gobseck, the Antique dealer, and Élie Magus, “un vieillard en robe de chambre, qui fumait une longue pipe. La robe de chambre, en alépine noire, devenue luisante, portait la date de l'émigration polonaise” (*L'Envers* 342). A curious combination of Polish and Oriental traits, he appears as physically unusual and unattractive, “Halpersohn était... un homme de cinquante-six ans, à petites jambes turques... Il y avait en cet homme quelque chose d'oriental, car sa figure avait dû, dans la jeunesse être fort belle ; il en restait un nez hébraïque, long et recourbé comme un sabre de Damas” (*L'Envers* 342). Just as the Antique dealer resembles paintings of Moses, Halpersohn recalls

paintings of Joseph: “Le front, vraiment polonais, large et noble, mais ridé comme un papier froissé, rappelait celui de saint Joseph des vieux maîtres italiens. Les yeux, vert de mer et enchâssés, comme ceux des perroquets, par des membranes grisâtres et froncées, exprimaient la ruse et l’avarice à un degré supérieur. Enfin, la bouche, fendue comme une blessure, ajoutait à cette physionomie sinistre tout le mordant de la défiance” (*L’Envers* 343). As a well-traveled and wise doctor, Halpersohn is different from all the other Jewish characters of the *Comédie humaine*. This Jewish doctor is unique in his kind, “Halpersohn, qui passa, pendant cinq ou six ans, pour un médocastre, à cause de ses poudres, de ses médecines, possédait la science innée des grands médecins. Non seulement il était savant et avait beaucoup observé, mais encore il avait parcouru l’Allemagne, la Russie, la Perse, la Turquie, où il avait recueilli bien des traditions; et comme il connaissait la chimie, il devint la bibliothèque vivante de ces secrets épars chez les bonnes femmes, comme on dit en France, de tous les pays où il avait porté ses pas” (*L’Envers* 345). In describing the wanderings and Halpersohn’s unusual, almost magical, medical practices, Balzac draws on ancient stereotypes of Jews as rootless drifters, as international and nationless, as witches and sorcerers. Halpersohn is nevertheless a modern doctor who heals rich Parisians. Furthermore, he makes his national alliances very clear, “En Pologne, je suis polonais; à Paris, je suis parisien” (*L’Envers* 349).

In the *Comédie humaine*, Halpersohn has gained a reputation in Paris as both the doctor of the rich and the only doctor capable of curing strange psychological afflictions, neuroses that appear to have no source: “un médecin juif qui passe pour un empirique; mais il m’a fait observer que c’était un étranger, un polonais réfugié, que les médecins sont très jaloux de quelques cures extraordinaires dont on parle beaucoup, et que certaines personnes le croient très savant, très habile” (*L’Envers* 271) In *L’Envers de l’histoire*, Halpersohn treats a patient whose doctor has deemed incurable without the Jewish doctor’s intervention: “Il y a cinq jours, monsieur, le médecin du quartier qui soigne ma fille, ou si vous voulez, qui l’observe, m’a dit qu’il était hors d’état de guérir une maladie dont les formes variaient tous les quinze jours. Selon lui, les névroses sont le désespoir de la médecine, car les causes s’en trouvent dans un système inexplorable” (*L’Envers* 270-271).

The patient in question is the daughter of a previous prosecutor, in hiding after the Revolution, who had married the daughter of a Polish aristocrat general living as a political refugee in Paris. Since the father is criminal wanted for unjust sentencing during the revolution, the family has been reduced to an impoverished living situation as they have no means of income while in hiding from the state and those seeking revenge for the desolation he caused in condemning aristocrats to death. The daughter, Vanda, closely resembling her Polish mother, is suffering from a strange, national sickness, “la plique polonaise”. Halpersohn himself claims to be the only doctor with the knowledge to cure this mysterious malady, “Or, moi seul aujourd’hui sais comment faire sortir la plique de manière à pouvoir la guérir” (*L’Envers* 375).

Halpersohn is meticulous in his manners of healing. He chooses his patients carefully, compels them to follow his medical program to the letter, and obliges a large remuneration, “il est exigeant, défiant, il choisit ses malades, il ne perd pas son temps... Moïse Halpersohn devait d’ailleurs être payé largement, car il guérissait, et guérissait précisément les maladies désespérées auxquelles la médecine renonçait” (*L’Envers* 271, 344). The amount he charges attracts criticism and he is even accused of favoring rich Jews, “ — Si le baron de Nucingen vous faisait dire qu’il souffre et veut vous visiter, répondriez-vous: Qu’il vienne! — J’irais, répliqua froidement le juif... — Vous iriez... parce que le baron de Nucingen a deux millions de rente” (*L’Envers* 348-349). When faced with the case of Vanda, Halpersohn refuses at first, but once he promised sufficient remuneration, he agrees to visit the poor, fallen aristocratic family. He is nevertheless still very demanding and, in order to cure Vanda of her mysterious illness, Halpersohn requires her to stay in isolation at his health clinic, “Quand vous viendrez, vous me l’amènerez, rue Basse-Saint-Pierre, à Chaillot, maison de santé du docteur Halpersohn” (*L’Envers* 372-372).

Halpersohn has set up his *maison de santé* on la rue Basse-Saint-Pierre in the Chaillot neighborhood of the Right Bank, just the south of the Champs-Élysées. Beginning at the quai de Billy, now avenue de New York, and finishing at the rue de Chaillot, rue Basse-Saint-Pierre was originally two different streets, la rue des Égouts or Basse-de-Chaillot and la rue Saint-Pierre, “Depuis 1806, ces deux parties ont été réunies sous la

seule et même dénomination de rue Basse-Saint-Pierre” (Lazare 540-541). This street, however, ceased to exist when it was consumed by the rue du Manutention and by the sites of well known museums along the Seine, “Cette rue a été ouverte, en 1866, comme rue de pourtour de la *Manutention militaire* dont l’emplacement est actuellement occupé par les musées d’Art moderne. Cette ouverture absorba la rue Basse-Saint-Pierre qui, partant du quai, se dirigeait obliquement vers le nord-est puis, après avoir coupé les emplacements actuels des musées d’Art moderne et du musée Galliera, aboutissait rue de Chaillot, vers notre place Rochambeau”. (Hillairet, 95) Balzac seems to have curiously predicted, and correctly, the nature of one of the homes in this neighborhood considering that an actual maison de santé appears on this very street nine years after the publication of this novel with the imagined location of Halpersohn’s clinic, “À l’ex-n° 28 était une propriété que le ménage Tallien aurait habitée et qui avait appartenu, en 1823, à la belle-mère du maréchal Dode de La Brunerie ; elle devint, vers 1857, une maison de santé” (Hillairet 96).

Although there is little description of Halpersohn’s fictional health clinic in Balzac’s novel, one actual anonymous Anglophone strolling the streets of Paris during the Second Empire took notice and shared his observations in writing, “I had often, whilst walking through the smaller streets of Paris, and more especially those nearest the barriers or circuit walls of the city, had my attention arrested by a class of houses as yet nondescript, and of an altogether peculiar appearance... One of these, larger than most others of the sort, had for that reason, perhaps, more thoroughly attracted my notice” (“Maisons de Santé” 1). From the description of the building we can deduce the appearance of Halpersohn’s clinic, “The house to which I have alluded... was large, strongly built, and of four stories high. Painted from roof to floor in glaring white, its aspect was clean... the forty and odd windows that looked from it to the street were all hermetically closed with wooden shutters, protected in some cases by thick, perpendicular bars of iron... It had two doors: the one, small, was apparently a private entrance; the other, large, and surmounted by a formidable row of iron spikes, seemed destined to admit carriages” (“Maisons de Santé” 1).

The purpose of such health clinics varied greatly from a home for the mentally infirm to a place to house wealthy prisoners unfit to stay in prison. The common theme is that one must be of an affluent or noble family important enough for the sick member to gain access or have permission granted from prison, “maisons de santé are rather agreeable places, and, indeed, some of them are; for although there are certainly a good many which are no better than private mad-houses, yet there are others—and to these it is that resort the genteel defaulters, duelists, and others I have named—which are, in point of fact, neither more nor less than boarding-houses, and very sumptuous ones too. The apartments in them are handsome, the gardens extensive and well kept, the living excellent, and the charges necessarily high” (“Maisons de Santé” 1). The price that Halpersohn demands for healing Vanda is a thousand gold crowns for the home consultation and fifteen francs a day with three months paid in advance for her stay at the health clinic. Halpersohn justifies the inflated price by equating his healing practice to a business in which the intention is not only healing people, but also earning a large amount, “Je vends la santé: les riches peuvent la payer, je la leur fais acheter” (*L’Envers* 350). Although this character is the first Jewish doctor to appear in the *Comédie humaine*, Balzac has endowed him with the usual, clichéd desire for the accumulation of wealth. Halpersohn, however, swears that the money accrued in healing for a high price has a holy but secret purpose, “l’avidité qu’on me prête a sa raison. Le trésor que j’amasse a sa destination; elle est sainte” (*L’Envers* 350).

Despite the lack of description of Halpersohn’s clinic, Balzac does provide a detailed account of the famous Jewish doctor’s home, with his *cabinet médical* included, in the same neighborhood as his clinic. Halpersohn shares his home with another Polish expatriate, “Ce médecin polonais, devenu depuis si célèbre, demeurait alors à Chaillot, rue Marbœuf, dans une petite maison isolée, où il occupait le premier étage. Le général Roman Tarnowicki logeait au rez-de-chaussée, et les domestiques de ces deux réfugiés habitaient les combles de ce petit hôtel, qui n’avait qu’un étage” (*L’Envers* 276). La rue Marbeuf was a fairly new street in Paris at the time, founded in 1798 in a former agricultural area with its previous name, *la rue des Gourdes*, for the various squash cultivated in the surrounding fields and gardens, revealing this agricultural history. The

current name, rue Marbeuf, came from both the *Jardins Marbeuf* and the *Folie-Marbeuf*, gardens with sculptures, that belonged to the marquise de Marbeuf in the 1780s. After the marquise was executed during the Revolution, the gardens and pavilion became a place for summer parties. With gardens and fields, this area of Paris was fresh, bucolic, and suitable for the purposes of a doctor healing Parisians of illnesses linked to the unhealthy atmosphere of the inner city. Just like Magus carefully chooses the home and the surroundings in which to house his precious collection, so too has Halpersohn selects the western, more rural section of Paris for the cleaner air, greenery, and open space to better serve the needs of his patients.

Halpersohn's home is of modest appearance and the room in which he receives patients even more so, "Le cabinet, tendu d'un papier qui simulait du velours vert, était mesquinement meublé d'un divan vert. Le tapis vert mélangé montrait la corde. Un grand fauteuil en cuir noir, pour les consultants, se trouvait devant la fenêtre, drapée de rideaux verts. Un fauteuil de bureau, de forme romaine en acajou, et couvert d'un maroquin vert, était le siège du docteur... Entre la cheminée et la table longue sur laquelle il écrivait, une caisse commune en fer, placée en face de la cheminée, au milieu de la paroi opposée, supportait une pendule en granit de Vienne sur laquelle s'élevait un groupe en bronze, représentant l'Amour jouant avec la Mort, le présent d'un grand sculpteur allemand qu'Halpersohn avait sans doute guéri. Le chambranle de la cheminée avait une coupe entre deux flambeaux pour tout ornement. De chaque côté du divan, deux encoignures en ébène servaient à mettre des plateaux... des cuvettes d'argent, des carafes et des serviettes" (*L'Envers* 346-347). Balzac compares Halpersohn and the setting in which he is first presented to a painting, "Le cadre était d'ailleurs en harmonie avec ce portrait échappé d'une toile de Rembrandt" (*L'Envers* 346). Despite the unexceptional nature of Halpersohn's home, the amount of money heaped around the room in which he receives patients, most likely their payments, does astonish visitors: "Les consultants avaient déposé sur la cheminée et sur le bord de la table d'assez grosses offrandes... des piles de pièces de vingt francs, de quarante francs et deux billets de mille francs" (*L'Envers* 344). The imagery of piles of money placed randomly around Halpersohn's medical cabinet ties this Jewish character to the traditional stereotype of the

Jewish usurer preying on impoverished French Catholics. Balzac has returned at the end of the *Comédie humaine* to the Jewish usurer character, only adapting Halpersohn to the modern setting with a contemporary clientele. Despite his extraordinary medical talents, Halpersohn's penchant for accumulation of wealth makes him a controversial character and villain for Balzac's nineteenth-century readership.

The two Jewish characters with which Balzac closes the *Comédie humaine*, Élie Magus and Moïse Halpersohn, are found at opposite poles of the city, Magus at the eastern edge of the Marais and Halpersohn at the western edge of the developed city. Both characters are vastly different, with some essential stereotypical similarities, such as their greed and facility in accumulating wealth. Nevertheless, Magus and Halpersohn are still representative of Balzac's ability to realistically represent Jewish figures in nineteenth-century French society. They are distinct and developed characters, they live in greatly different areas of the city, and they exercise dissimilar professions as an art dealer and collector and a doctor, one profession appearing less altruistic than the other. Of all the similar and dissimilar traits of these two Jewish characters, their location in Paris is significant to the evolution of the city and the changing place of Jews in Parisian society. Both Magus and Halpersohn represent the old and the new. As an art collector, creating an ideal eighteenth-century setting for his collection of masterpieces of art, Magus is representative of new trends in the upper rungs of society, the taste for the Ancien Régime and the aristocratic glory of the eighteenth century. Magus is nevertheless unforgivably Jewish, living in the Marais and reminiscent of traditional Jewish *brocanteurs*. Halpersohn, a sought after doctor living in a new neighborhood just off the Champs-Élysées in the modern western reaches of the city, is above all cast as a Jewish enchanter with dubious magical practices that heal seemingly unhealable ailments. Just like Magus, Halpersohn represents a new trend, although it is not in style, taste, or art, but in professions. With the Jewish Emancipation nearing its fiftieth anniversary, the Jewish population in Paris had greatly diversified the professions that were practiced. Living in one of the most modern neighborhoods in Paris, Halpersohn is representative not only of the development of the city, expanding to the west, but he also stands for the evolution of the Jewish

population for which the only trade of moneylending had become a thing of the past. Nevertheless, Balzac's descriptions of Magus and Halpersohn inspire mystery and awe. Like Gobseck and the Antique dealer, Halpersohn and Magus are cut from the same mold, they are all Jewish sorcerers of sorts, *les rois mages*, like the name that Balzac has given to Magus, they are Jewish magicians.

Conclusion:

Balzac opened the *Comédie humaine* with Gobseck and the Antique dealer, two Jewish characters cut from the Shylock mold, he diversified the traits, ages, and professions of his Jewish characters like Nucingen, Esther, Josépha, Nathan, and Brunner through the middle of his opus, then he returned to a medieval Jewish prototype towards the end of his writing career with two more Shylock-type Jewish characters, Élie Magus and Moïse Halpersohn. Throughout the *Comédie humaine*, the diversity of his Jewish characters grew when he imagined them not just as usurers and peddlers, but as modern bankers, playwrights, journalists, doctors, actresses, singers and famous courtesans, “Dans la capitale, les Juifs de la *Comédie humaine* évoluent dans toutes les sphères de la vie sociale et économique conformément d’ailleurs à la réalité historique” (Kupfer 117). This facet of Balzac's portrayal of Jewish characters has earned him the praise of modern scholars as the first nineteenth-century French writer to represent actual Jews in Parisian society. For what reason then did Balzac return to the most classically negative figuration of Jews after dedicating ink and pages to developing Jewish characters beyond Shakespeare's medieval moneylender? And furthermore, what motivated Balzac's decision to transfer Magus from the modernity of the *grands boulevards* to the Jewish antiquity of the Marais, the neighborhood that would become an elected Jewish ghetto for immigrants arriving from the east in the second half of the nineteenth century? With Magus predicting the trend of collecting eighteenth-century masterpieces, he would have been better placed in the western portion of the city where the most avid Jewish collectors would later house their collection. It is also curious that Balzac instead imagined a Jewish doctor in the Chaillot neighborhood, just off the developing hub of bourgeois-chic and high society strolling that would become the Champs-Élysées at the turn of the century?

Is the modernity associated with Balzac's Jewish characters, the Baron de Nucingen, Raoul Nathan and Josépha Mirah, diminished by the return of Shylock typecasts, the malevolent and menacing Magus or the magically overpriced doctor Halpersohn? Balzac seems to find in each of his own Jewish characters some wonderfully good aspects and some terribly evil attributes. Balzac vacillates between the Shylock stereotype and the modern Jewish figure, contributing member of society. It is important to note that Balzac chose to begin and to end his great study of society with Jewish characters that are confusingly good and evil. While an array of diverse Jewish figures separates them, Gobseck, the Antique dealer, Magus, and Halpersohn are still cut from the Jewish *usurier-brocanteur* mold. For Balzac, Jewish genetic memory trounces evolution and integration, "le juif ne peut rompre totalement avec ce qui a contribué à créer des stéréotypes autour de sa personne; même son élévation dans l'échelle sociale ou sa réussite financière n'ont pas annihilé la singularité du décor dans lequel il évolue" (Kupfer 234).

Balzac's travels to Eastern Europe in the 1840s explain the resurfacing of such stereotypical Jewish figures as Magus and Halpersohn in the wake of such modern Jewish characters as Nucingen, Nathan, and Brunner. In the city of Brody in particular Balzac was exposed to a form of Jewish identity that he had most likely never come across in Paris. In *Lettre sur Kiev*, Balzac describes the difference between assimilated Jews in Paris and orthodox communities in the east, "Les juifs, en Allemagne, en France, sont des gens comme vous et moi; leur religion, leurs mœurs sont tellement fondues dans le mouvement social auquel ils s'agrègent que tout ce qui fait le juif a disparu, sauf son habilité commerciale, son avidité; mais son avidité met des gants jaunes, son habilité se francise: il est poète comme Heine, musicien comme Meyer-Beer et Halévy, collectionneur comme les Fould, généreux comme les Rothschild; tandis que dès Cracovie, les vrais talmudistes se manifestent" (*Kiev* 39-40). Balzac is surprised by the size of the Jewish communities in urban centers of Eastern Europe and their control of city life, "Les juifs célébraient une de leurs plus grands fêtes et, quand les juifs font leur cérémonies religieuses, la vie commerciale s'arrête. Tout, à compter Brody, est

entre les mains des juifs. Je n'ai lu dans aucun ouvrage de renseignements exacts sur cette conquête de la Pologne par les Hébreux. Le juif règne et ne gouverne pas! voilà ce qui est certain" (*Kiev* 39).

Not only were the Jews of Eastern European cities more numerous, they were also more obvious because they either were forced to remain separate or they refused to adopt the lifestyle of the majority population, adamantly maintaining traditions that assure separation from non-Jewish societies, "Les juifs n'ont rien abandonné de leurs usages, ils n'ont fait aucune concession aux mœurs du pays où leur race allait s'étendre. Il leur est défendu de posséder des terres, et, en Russie, de les affermer: ils ne peuvent que commercer et usurer... Je les ai vus dans les petites villes fourmillant comme des mouches, allant à leurs synagogues en costumes pontificaux dont la bizarrerie me faisait sourire, comme on sourit d'une mascarade, mais qui n'étonnait personne" (*Kiev* 40). Based on Balzac's observations, it is clear that he picked up on the vast difference between the Jewish experience in Eastern Europe and in France. For the Jews of Eastern Europe, there were severe restrictions on every aspect of life including where they could live, what professions they could exercise, when and how many could marry, where children could go to school, and more. In France, Jews were citizens with equal rights, they could own land, work in a variety of fields, marry whenever and whomever they liked, and often sent their children to publically or privately funded schools. The place of Jews in Eastern European society and French society was starkly contrasted.

Balzac began to understand the workings of the Jewish place in Eastern European society when he explains the behavior of Polish Jews based on their historically negative interactions with proximate populations, "Le juif polonais craint toujours les extorsions que subissaient ses ancêtres au Moyen-âge, et c'est chez lui devenu comme un indélébile instinct de race que l'habitude de mettre sa fortune sous un petit volume portative. Ainsi, à l'exception de deux ou trois colossales maisons juives... tous les juifs condensent leurs profits de la manière suivante. Leurs femmes portent un bonnet caractéristique, composé de deux énormes cœurs de choux en bijouterie qui sont placés au-dessus de chaque lobe frontal, et qui ressortent sur un fond de perles. Là est la fortune de chaque ménage juif. Le juif ne pense qu'à changer ses petites perles

contre des grosses, ses grosses contre de plus grosses; puis des perles d'un orient inférieur contre des perles d'un éclat pur, puis contre des perles d'un orient irréprochable. Ainsi des diamants" (*Kiev* 40-41). Balzac's observations of the Jews of Eastern Europe reveal some of the strange characteristics that Magus in particular, demonstrates, adapted nonetheless to a Parisian setting and the cultural values of the times. It is for this reason that of Magus and Halpersohn, the two last Jewish characters of the *Comédie humaine*, it is Magus, much more so than Halpersohn, that is representative of certain evolutions in Parisian society and the changing perspective Parisians held on their Jewish neighbors.

Élie Magus, either by intelligence or purely good taste, has not concentrated his wealth in pearls or diamonds as Balzac explains for the Jews of Eastern Europe. Instead, he has invested his resources in artistic masterpieces, paintings of great value created by renowned masters. Less portable than pearls and diamonds, the *chef-d'œuvres* that Magus possesses are however worth an immense fortune. In amassing his collection, Magus shows the same capacity of discernment in art as the Jews of Eastern Europe in pearls and diamonds, "Leur connaissance des diamants et des perles est comme on voit une science innée chez tous les juifs, ils vont à l'école au sein de leurs mères, et, dès l'âge le plus tendre, leurs yeux sont habitués à considérer les pierres précieuses, les perles, et à les évaluer" (*Kiev* 42-43). While Magus is a reincarnation of the Shylock stereotype and a regression in Balzac's representation of the modernity in Jewish identity, he is also an illustration of the evolution occurring in the taste and interest in Parisian society for all things eighteenth-century and Ancien Régime. Magus' obsession with the work of old masters is in fact trendy.

The final residence of Élie Magus on the rue de la Chaussée des Minimes in the Marais exposes Balzac's changing impression of Jews and trends in general perception of Jewish figures in Parisian society. Balzac's treatment of Magus uncovers a mixture of appreciation, envy, aversion, and suspicion of talents associated with Jewish identity in French culture when considering that "stereotypes tend to tell us much more about the person who has stereotypes or feels or uses them than about the stereotypically described object" (Schlör 230). While Magus has successfully recreated an authentic setting in an old, aristocratic mansion with

interior decorations identical to the most elegant and decadent eras of French history, the eighteenth century, this Jewish character remains fully Jewish and therefore unattractive and distasteful to Balzac and his Parisian readership that had become weary of impostors adopting and playing the role of elegant eighteenth-century aristocrats following the 1789 revolution and the less legitimate royal rulers that followed. However, in order for Balzac to arrive at a character such as Magus, he needed to pass through a variety of Jewish characters, creating a diversity of Jewish representation previously unknown in French fiction.

The diversity of Jewish identity in Paris under the July Monarchy was not just a figment of Balzac's literary imagination. He observed and recreated the Parisian society in which the Jews of a few generations following emancipation had become tremendously successful. The most prolific period in Balzac's literary career corresponds with the emergence of the first truly French and particularly Parisian Jewish community. The influential Jews of Paris took both on a permanent and a prominent nature that had an important impact on the economic and industrial transformation of the city. Just as Balzac's infamous banking character, Nucingen, is found living on the rue Saint-Lazare, the actual banking and entrepreneurial Pereire brothers turned the area of Saint-Lazare into the most modern hub of the city with the first major train station, inaugurating a push towards a different and more modern than ever urban landscape. Furthermore, for Jewish figures of the nineteenth century, Paris was an essential place to be, "Quiconque voulait mettre un pied dans le cercle privilégié des banquiers privés, de la haute banque qui régnait sur l'époque, devait oser s'installer à Paris" (Graetz 65-66). Paris played a central role in the creation of this illustrious *haute banque juive*. The most successful Jewish figures were however limited to a fortunate handful, "Dans chacune des étapes de son développement, elle ne sera constituée que d'une petite poignée, véritable élite économique", but their presence and influence were felt throughout the Parisian population (Graetz 66). Changes in the structure of the Jewish community, the creation and organization of *les Consistoires*, with the *Consistoire central* based in Paris, giving a real French-feel to the hierarchy and workings of the Jewish religious community,

along with the vast opportunities offered to Jews as French citizens, led to diversification of professions and success in several domains, “Dans la capitale, la mobilité du juif membre d’une profession libérale peut se donner libre cours. Le centralisme parisien s’y prête. Et c’est vrai aussi pour la société juive elle-même. Le caractère centralisé et hiérarchisé de l’édifice consistoriale permet de traduire le prestige acquis par le médecin, l’avocat, l’universitaire au sein de la société française en termes de pouvoir” (Graetz 75).

For elite Jewish figures, coming to Paris and becoming involved in the economic and social development of the city also meant, participating in the transformation of the urban landscape, movement towards the commercial and financial neighborhoods, and the accumulation of wealth in the western portion of the city. During the first half of the nineteenth century, at the same time that Balzac was imagining and composing the *Comédie humaine*, “Highly visible Jews pioneered many of the changes associated with the transition to modernity in France. The Rothschild banking house as well as the Pereire brothers’ Crédit Mobilier revolutionized France’s banking system... these two rival families also competed to put in place France’s first railway lines” (Samuels 19). Other “Jews took a leading role in... modernizing French culture... Jacques Offenbach and his new light operettas provided a sound track to the bustling life of the boulevards, just as publishers like Arthur Meyer helped create the first mass-circulation newspapers” (Samuels 19). The Jewish figure in Paris was therefore a nineteenth-century beacon of modernity and “fiction writers of the period, such as Balzac, used Jewish characters to frame their vision of modernity”, often appearing as “objects of scorn or envy or lust” (Samuels 21). Since the urban transformation of Paris into a modern financial, industrial, and cultural capital of Europe was therefore linked in the French imagination to the presence of important Jewish figures, it is possible to observe the place of Jewish characters in great nineteenth-century literary works, like the *Comédie humaine*, in order understand the nature of their involvement in the metamorphosis of the urban landscape.

As the cultural historian, Joachim Schlör, indicates, “the overall and general developments of modernization and urbanization between, say, 1830 and 1900, affected the Jewish minorities in some

European countries more quickly and intensively than it did the other populations as a whole”, modernity came to be seen as Jewish in Paris (Schlör 230). The Jewish presence in Paris, associated with modernity and therefore transformation, translated in French fiction, especially for Balzac, into a means of understanding the changes at hand, “it is true that non-Jewish fiction writers of the period, such as Balzac, used Jewish characters to frame their vision of modernity” (Samuels 21). While there are many different ways of considering the Jewish characters of Balzac’s *Comédie humaine*, the particular perspective of the streets and the addresses at which Jewish characters are found brings together the study of Jewish presence in Paris and the evolution of the urban landscape. As “the importance of roadways in urban representation only intensified over the course of time”, in conjunction with “the attention accorded to problems of movement and circulation,” the city and the streets of Paris were a central setting for numerous stories of nineteenth-century French fiction, the *Comédie humaine* in particular. (Pinon 8)

Alongside the changes in the Jewish community there were some developments in the urban sector of small but particular importance. Development in Paris occurring in the first half of the nineteenth century was encouraged by a significant movement to the west of the capital beginning with new commercial architectural forms for the wealthier society that had also begun to populate the north-western corner of the city, “The most important novelty of the period was the covered commercial arcade, a cluster of them being built within some of the large sites in the busy north-west sector of the central area, on either side of the *grands boulevards*” (Sutcliffe 74). The western development of the city was further encouraged by the creation of “a variety of small mansions and apartment houses, some of the later being the fashionable Madeleine area and in the Faubourg Poissonnière”, also producing “a suburban alternative to the crowded central areas” with “peripheral land development schemes” appearing to the northwest of central Paris (Sutcliffe 76-77). This western movement of the city center towards *les grands boulevards*, *la Bourse*, and the still somewhat pastoral land beyond was confirmed in the successive reports of Jacques Séraphin Lanquetin from 1839 to 1842, “Lanquetin avait été frappé par certains déplacements... de la population parisienne...

l'abandon de ce qui avait été jadis la croisée et le cœur de Paris pour les grands boulevards, de la Bourse à la Chaussée d'Antin" (Lavedan 18). This shift from the center of the city and the previously noble neighborhoods around the Louvre and the Place des Vosges on the Right Bank and the Faubourg Saint-Germain on the Left is felt in the novels of Balzac with the more modern financial and commercial figures, like the Baron de Nucingen, inhabiting the newer financial neighborhood.

For Balzac, this newer and more spectacular neighborhood in Paris is "le quartier des commerces, des spectacles, des jeux, des lorettes, et donc le quartier balzacien par excellence" (Grieu 87). Many of the important figures of the first half of the nineteenth century, either of Jewish origin or other, were involved in French society through commerce or banking and were drawn to the north-western corner of Paris as it had become the economic center of the city, "l'accumulation depuis un demi-siècle de nouveaux centres d'activité économique sur la rive droite, le dernier étant la Bourse... la population riche fuit les quartiers bruyants du centre pour s'en aller à l'extrémité ouest de la ville et même hors de Paris. Le haut commerce tend vers les grands boulevards et au-delà de la rue Bleue, comme le prouve le changement d'adresse de trente-huit maisons de soieries en gros" (Lavedan 21). Balzac's novels bear witness to this shift in preference that Parisians demonstrated for where they desired to live in the city, "le goût des parisiens qui, entre les années 1820 et 1840, s'est porté de l'est de la place de la République (qui n'existait pas encore) aux quartiers de l'Opéra et de la Madeleine" (Grieu 87). Balzac's descriptions of the streets of Paris before the great metamorphosis of the second half of the nineteenth century thus serve as evidence of a city in evolution, evolving particularly to the west. Evidence of the western movement of the city's population, following the commercial, economic, industrial, and even social development of the neighborhoods around *les grands boulevards*, *la Bourse*, *la Chaussée d'Antin*, and *les Champs-Élysées* is present in Balzac's Parisian novels. With nearly all of Balzac's characters appearing in Paris within the changing urban landscape, the Jewish characters in particular point to this western shift, as they would do so in reality during the Second Empire.

Between Élie Magus in the Marais and Moïse Halpersohn near the Champs-Élysées, there are numerous Jewish characters at various addresses and diverse neighborhoods throughout the city. Through his Jewish characters Balzac emphasizes the expansiveness of his literary topographical map of Paris. According to Benjamin, it is this topography that is the key to the Balzacian universe, “Balzac est parvenu à donner un caractère mythique à son univers grâce à certains contours topographiques. Paris est l’assise de sa mythologie—Paris avec ses deux ou trois grands banquiers (Nucingen, du Tillet), Paris avec son grand médecin Horace Bianchon, avec son entrepreneur César Birotteau, avec ses quatre ou cinq grandes cocottes, avec son usurier Goseck, ses quelques avocats et militaires. Mais ce sont surtout les mêmes rues et les mêmes recoins, les mêmes lieux et les mêmes angles qui forment l’arrière-fond devant lequel les figures de cet univers apparaissent. Qu’est-ce à dire, sinon que la topographie donne le plan de cet espace mythique de la tradition, comme des autres, qu’elle peut même en devenir la clé ?” (Benjamin 108). David Harvey says of Balzac and the Paris he depicts in the *Comédie humaine* that, “By demystifying the city and the myths of modernity with which it was suffused, he opened up new perspectives, not only on what the city was, but also on what it could become” (Harvey 25). Not only did Balzac unveil the myths of modernity, he also foreshadowed the tumultuous renovations of the Second Empire. He prepared the unassuming Parisian population for the revolutionary remaking of the city at the hands of Napoléon III and his prefect Haussmann by helping to “create a climate of public opinion that could better understand (and even accept, though unwittingly or regretfully so) the political economy that underlays modern urban life, thus shaping the imaginative preconditions for the systematic transformations of Paris that occurred during the Second Empire” (Harvey 25). While Balzac’s Jewish characters are found throughout the city, their connection to modernity, western movement, the economic workings of society, and cultural trends all prime the urban landscape for the novels to come in the second half of the nineteenth century in which reinvented Jewish characters will once again tell the story of the evolutions of Paris and the Parisian population.

III. Chapter Two: *The Jewish Empire: Metamorphosis from Belle Juive to Affreuse Juive, from Realism to Naturalism.*

Introduction:

In Paris, from the July Monarchy to the Second Empire, literature in particular shifted from the detailed and expansive descriptions of a city and a society in slow but steady transformation in the *Comédie humaine* to the grotesque, beautiful, acerbic but poignant images of a destructive modernization in *Les Fleurs du mal*. Importantly, the literature of the Second Empire possessed no equivalent to the *Comédie humaine* in terms of diversity in representation of Jewish characters. Following Balzac's death in 1851, only a few authors attempted to recreate a literary representation of French or Parisian society in which Jewish characters play a central role. Following such memorable characters as Gobseck, Esther, Nucingen, Magus, and others, there was a void that was not immediately filled. New Jewish characters did eventually appear in the Third Republic, but even then, no opus of any single French author resembled the *Comédie humaine's* literary

presentation of the diversity and complexity characterizing the Jewish presence in Paris. Of greater significance, the less moralizing and more curiosity driven approach to representation of Jewish figures of the *Comédie humaine* disappeared with the arrival of the Second Empire. This void in the literary representation of Jews in Paris is significant for nineteenth-century French literature because it reveals a negative shift in the French perspective on the Jewish population in France and the involvement of an elite group in the modernization of Paris and the Parisian society.

After the publication of Balzac's last novel, *L'Envers de l'histoire contemporaine*, in 1848, it was not until 1866-1867 that a notable Jewish figure in fiction with a prominent role manifested again. It is at this point that Edmond and Jules de Goncourt collaborative work of fiction, *Manette Salomon*, featured a Jewish artist's model as a key protagonist. The representation of the Jewish population within the greater Parisian society in this novel is however extremely muted, a blurry and uncertain backdrop with only Manette and her Jewish female relatives appearing in focus in the foreground. After Balzac, the Jewish character went into a dormant state. The publication of the female dominated *Manette Salomon*, far from reviving the Jewish diversity of the *Comédie humaine*, reduces the Jewish community of Paris to a few women, one of great beauty, all of a certain sinister and menacing nature. In this chapter, an exploration of the limited but important role of the Jewish female and her transformation from *belle Juive* to *affreuse Juive* in the literature of the Second Empire will demonstrate some essential changes occurring in French, and more importantly Parisian society, and how the Jewish character, more than ever before had come to represent the negative aspects of the changes that were transforming French society.

In *Paris, Capital of Modernity*, David Harvey points to 1848 as a year in which a radical break in Parisian history occurred, "Something dramatic happened in Europe in general, and in Paris in particular, in 1848. The argument for some radical break in Parisian political economy, life, and culture around this date is, on the surface at least, entirely plausible" (Harvey 3). Representation of Jewish characters in Parisian literature therefore concurrently experienced a "radical break" in 1848. Before the break, Balzac populated the *Comédie*

humaine and Paris with a variety of Jewish characters; after the break, the once diverse array Jewish characters disappeared from fiction until late in the second half of the nineteenth century. This lacuna in the tradition of Jewish characters in nineteenth-century French fiction, inaugurated by the translation of Walter Scott's *Ivanhoé* and augmented by Balzac's use of various Jewish types throughout the *Comédie humaine*, has gone unstudied, hardly remarked by scholars interested in the phenomenon of Jewish representation in nineteenth-century French novels. According to Harvey, the work of Balzac in the first half of the nineteenth century is telling of the changes to come in the second, "The whole of Balzac's oeuvre, 'anticipated' in uncanny ways social relations that were identifiable only 'in embryo' in the 1830s and 1840s... If revolutionary movements draw upon latent tensions within the existing order, then Balzac's writings on Paris in the 1830s and 1840s stand to reveal the nature of such. And out of these possibilities, the transformations of the Second Empire were fashioned" (Harvey 17). However, if writers such as Flaubert and Baudelaire were "greatly influenced by Balzac" and whose prose and poetry were, as Harvey describes, "taut, sparse, and fine-honed", remarkably opposite to the intricately detailed volumes produced by Balzac, how is that the writers within the first twenty years after Balzac's departure showed no similar interest in the Jewish figures of Parisian society?

In *La "belle Juive"*, Eric Fournier claims that at mid-century the Jewish representation in nineteenth-century French literature continued to be plagued by negative caricatures that the Jewish newspaper, *les Archives israélites*, deplored: "L'année même où trois Juifs—Crémieux, Cerfberr et Fould—sont élus à la chambre, l'organe de presse des Juifs libéraux fustige la persistance de stéréotypes dévalorisants ne rendant pas compte de l'intégration en cours" (Fournier 32). While Fournier does not account for the gap in Jewish characters in novels depicting French society after Balzac, he does point to the shift in appreciation of the French for their Jewish neighbors. The resurgence of negative stereotypes signaled a certain feeling of contempt and distrust that had begun to grow with the success of some highly visible Jews during the July Monarchy and the Second Empire. While the gross stereotypes that French authors of all genres of literature

employed in describing Jewish characters misrepresented the actual changes in the Jewish population in France, particularly in Paris, there was also an imbalance in the gender of the Jewish representations: “Si les écrivains peinent globalement à représenter les évolutions de la judaïcité française... L’originalité créatrice de la période se concentre sur la femme et sa beauté. Cette production culturelle semble ainsi reproduire en filigrane, dans le registre de l’imagination créatrice, un des plus anciens thèmes de l’antijudaïsme. L’homme, obstiné dans sa foi sacrilège, est considéré comme incapable d’évoluer et ne mérite qu’avec parcimonie un regard neuf. La femme, au contraire, reste une figure plus mobile, plus ouverte à la conversion, et stimule la créativité des écrivains” (Fournier 33). The Jewish characters playing minor or major roles in the literature produced during the Second Empire are therefore entirely female and the Goncourt brothers’ novel, *Manette Salomon*, is a perfect example.

The predominance of the female Jewish character is nevertheless appropriate in a literary continuity of Balzac’s use of Jewish characters. During the July Monarchy Balzac took the lead in developing and expanding *la belle Juive* characterization in nineteenth-century French literature (Fournier 33-34). Balzac’s Jewish actresses and courtesans became something of an accepted truth for his Parisian readers, “Le lectorat de Balzac se persuade que la “belle Juive” est une réalité contemporaine, une figure révélée par le génie de l’auteur et non un fantasme imaginaire” (Fournier 34). The belief in the *la belle Juive* phenomenon led to the success of Jewish women in Parisian society, “Sous la monarchie de Juillet et le second Empire, des courtisanes juives apparaissent et brillent... Certaines d’entre elles se hissent au sommet de la galanterie... Au théâtre, où la frontière avec la galanterie est parfois mince, une génération d’artistes [juives] suscite l’intérêt” (Fournier 33-34). One of the most important appearances of the Jewish female figure is in the artistic production of the period, of which Eugène Delacroix’s paintings are proof. In need of models for their works of art featuring an “Oriental” ideal of beauty, many artists traveled to North Africa and others simply sought inspiration within Paris itself, “les peintres parisiens... ont une prédilection pour les jeunes

juives du Marais” (Fournier 34). Through literary and artistic production, the “Oriental” beauty of the Jewish female became a cultural emblem in France of the 1830s, 1840s, and the beginning of the 1850s.

Literature following suit, the Goncourts’ Jewish female character, Manette Salomon, hails from a family of peddlers, models, and antique dealers, typical trades for the poor Jewish families of nineteenth-century Paris, often gathered poorest neighborhood of the city. Historically, the Jewish Marais was the headquarters of Jewish peddlers and this was also the neighborhood in which artists sought their Jewish models. However, Manette is not from the Marais. Instead, her family is situated on the Left Bank, “au bout de cette vilaine rue du Vieux-Colombier... dans un sale magasin où il y a en montre des lorgnettes en ivoire et du plaqué... Un magasin vieux neuf... la brocante” (*Manette* 253-254). The vicinity of the neighborhood in which artist studios were located legitimates the Goncourts’ choice of setting for the antique shop where Manette lives with her mother who runs the store and her siblings who peddle or pose. The Goncourts’ main character, Naz de Coriolis, the artist who falls madly and mistakenly in love with his model, Manette, lives on the Left Bank just like Balzac’s Antique dealer in *La Peau de chagrin*. Literary precedent and reality encouraged the Goncourts to choose the rue Vieux-Colombier over the rue Vieille-du-Temple.

The beautiful Jewish female took on such literary and artistic importance in French cultural and artistic representation that the Jewish male was practically forgotten until the 1870s and 1880s. The Goncourts’ novel is evidence of this unexpected suppression of male Jewish characters. The Parisian society surrounding their Jewish heroine is remarkably lacking in Jewish figures of the opposite gender. When Manette makes her appearance in this work of fiction, she is so omnipresent that all male characters of are dominated. The Goncourts’ imagined painter, Naz de Coriolis, a French-Catholic aristocrat turned bohemian artist, is no match for the Jewish female’s charms and persuasion. The in-existent Jewish male in the Goncourts’ fictional Parisian society intimates the changing perception that Parisians had of the Jewish population living and thriving within the city. This concentration on Jewish female characters, as opposed to a combining male and female Jewish characters to form a realistic representation of the Parisian Jewish

community, is characterized in *Manette Salomon* by a surprising transition from *belle juive* to *affreuse juive* (Lathers). Whereas the period in which Balzac explored various representations of Jewish figures can be described as “le temps des interrogations, marqué par une volonté de comprendre”, the ensuing period in which the Jewish female takes center stage is however denoted as “le temps... de la suspicion et de la condamnation” (Fournier 36). The Jewish female was therefore seen as a dangerous figure of which to be weary. The Goncourt brothers’ novel featuring a Parisian Jewish female, a beautiful artist’s model, thus presents an important break with the tradition of idealizing the Jewish female as an “Oriental” beauty of biblical purity, “Ce livre opiniâtement antisémite constitue une rupture. Il clôt le moment romantique et inaugure la période fin de siècle, celle où la Juive, dont la beauté cesse d’être idéale, devient une femme fatale” (Fournier 36). However, if *Manette Salomon* constituted an important rupture in 1867, how is it that the *affreuse Juive* had already made an appearance a decade earlier in Charles Baudelaire’s *Les Fleurs du mal*?

In this chapter it is precisely this shuffling around of the *belle juive* and the *affreuse juive* representations of Jewish women in nineteenth-century Paris that will be elaborated. The transition from *belle juive* to *affreuse juive* is evidence of the changing appreciation of the Jewish population in France, particularly in Paris. The idealized *belle juive* became an image of the early period in which Jews were still working to adopt a more French identity and the *affreuse juive* inaugurated the later period in which Parisians were finding it very difficult to accept the remarkable assimilation of some highly visible and powerful elite Jews. The appearance of the seemingly dangerous Jewish prostitute and artist’s model in French literature occurred in coincidence with the end of the July Monarchy and the beginning of the Second Empire and the rise to political power of a few Jewish figures in Paris. The timing of this evolution in the representation of Jewish characters was therefore linked to changes taking place in French society, concentrated in Paris and occurring concurrently with the great urban renovations beginning as early as the 1840s and accelerating significantly during the Second Empire. These shifts in the organization of French society, in the architectural arrangement of the city, and in the conception of urban space influenced the French

perspective of the Jewish population, especially living in Paris, at the heart of the transformations. The vast metamorphosis of the urban landscape of Paris—initiated by Napoléon III and Haussmann and continuing after their fall from power—influenced the representation of Jewish characters in the literature of the Second Empire. The Jews of France were perceived as participating in the transformation of the city and it was this connection to transformation and modernity that persuaded authors of the mid-nineteenth century, writing in and about Paris, to eliminate the diversity of Jewish representation that had become so central in Balzac's *Comédie humaine*. The Goncourts chose to focus solely on the Jewish female figure because she had always symbolized biblical purity and could thus be corrupted, unlike the male Jewish figure that had historically been represented as a mysterious and sinister figure, willing and capable of preying on innocent French Catholics.

In *Œuvres complètes* and *Les fleurs du mal*, the second published first in 1857, Baudelaire evokes a specific Jewish prostitute called Sarah “La Louchette” with whom he had intimate relations when he was a student. Baudelaire was also familiar with a famous Jewish artist's model, known as Marix, within a community of bohemian artists to which he belonged in the 1840s and 50s. In looking at Baudelaire's poetry and observing manner in which the Jewish female is represented, the changing perspective of the Jewish population in Paris becomes clearer. Jules and Edmond de Goncourt's novel, *Manette Soloman*, of the 1860s, further demonstrates the negative transformation of French perception of Jews in France in recounting the damage that a Jewish artist's model inflicts on the productivity and creative genius of a French artist. While the figuration of the Jewish female in the poems of Baudelaire and in the novel of the Goncourt brothers reveals the precarious situation and reputation of the fellow Jewish citizens of France, Marie Lathers, professor of French and Humanities, ascertains another function. This other function is uniquely involved in the greater evolution of literary trends and, consequently, societal trends. Lathers describes the role of the Jewish prostitute and artist's model in French literature unambiguously as a middle point in the transition from Balzac's realism to Zola's naturalism, “Edmond and Jules de Goncourt's literary project, which will

serve us as a bridge linking the realism of Balzac and the naturalism of Zola, makes use of the model's body to expose its inner workings" (Lathers 142). The shift from realism to naturalism is further defined by the transition from Balzac's *belle juive* to Baudelaire's *affreuse juive*. Lathers claims that this shift is narrated in the Goncourts' *Manette Salomon*, "The shift from the archetype of the *belle Juive* to the denigrated *affreuse Juive* became visible in the 1850s and 1860s... *Manette Salomon* narrates this shift" (Lathers 143).

This shift from the *belle juive* to the *affreuse juive* also reveals an underlying, insidious feeling of unrest caused by the metamorphosis of the city into a modern, industrial, capitalist, and often rich and luxurious capital. The disappearance of diverse Jewish characters paralleled the great architectural, economic, governmental, industrial, and urban transformations concentrated in Paris. While Jewish characters of varied professions and different personalities vanished from fiction for nearly two decades, actual Jewish individuals were participating in the great urban renewal in the same period. Looking at Baudelaire and the Goncourts' Jewish women, prostitutes and artists' models, this chapter will address several questions: where they are found in Paris, what areas of the city they frequent, what their appearance speaks to in terms of the general impression of anxiety, how their social status is represented, and most importantly what role their Jewish identity plays in their relations with their non-Jewish clients or patrons. In answering these questions, my hypothesis is that the eclipse of diversity in representation of Jewish characters from about 1848 to 1866 and the transition from the beautiful to the atrocious Jewess is that the French perspective of Jews in Paris underwent an important and unfavorable evolution from curiosity and interest in the Jewish people with a still lasting but under the surface ancient Catholic distrust and disdain of the Jewish faith to a full fledged racial hatred with a heightened sentiment of jealousy due to some few but unimaginably rich, successful and seemingly all-powerful Jewish families. Authors chose to represent this change in appreciation of the Jewish population in the form of the Jewish female, prostitute and artist's model because the Jewish female had come to represent a less obvious danger to French society. While the Jewish men seen as corrupting French society were highly visible and no longer cloaked in mystery, the women remained enigmatic "Oriental"

beauties that represented an invisible danger. The Jewish female characters of Baudelaire and the Goncourts thus exemplify what Parisians had come to imagine as the threat posed by the Parisian Jewish community. Parisians feared that the Jewish community had become so powerful that they were taking over the city and transforming it into a Jewish capital of modernity in which the new financial aristocracy took precedence over the ancient nobility.

The Great Works of Haussmann and the Pereire Brothers:

Beginning long before the French Revolution, the French capital had been continuously undergoing transformation, yet the renovations at the hands of Napoléon III and Haussmann during the Second Empire are almost unanimously considered the greatest single metamorphosis that Paris experienced in modern history. Modernity, however, made its great debut following the French Revolution, a point at which the Jews of France also underwent a major status change from a separate nation to individual citizens of France, “Ce type d’entrée de certains Juifs dans la modernité correspond aussi au moment où la France connaît elle-même un lent et continu processus de modernisation dont les historiens ont souvent sous-estimé la continuité” (Birnbaum 166). Throughout this chapter, we will see that the Jewish emancipation following the French Revolution led to Jews being involved in the transformation of Paris into a modern industrial, capitalist city, a cultural center not only for France but also for Europe and beyond. However, before delving into the Jewish participation in the modernization of Paris, the process of transformation leading up to the Second Empire should be briefly explored.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, Paris continued to experience urban improvements, small and slow but significant in their conception of future renovations and development of the city. During the First Empire, Napoléon began key projects that would be continued, aggrandized, and completed throughout the nineteenth century. While the idea of creating a royal east west axis through the city, from the Château de Vincennes, passing the Palais du Louvre, the Jardins des Tuileries and beyond was first conceived by Louis XIV, Napoléon was the one to set into action the realization of this project with the rue de Rivoli. When

completed, the rue de Rivoli did much more than accomplish the beginning of an east west royal axis: “together with two new streets running north from the Tuileries gardens towards the rue Saint-Honoré, the rue de Castiglione and the rue des Pyramides... produced a dense street network in an area of great potential for prestige building” and “the application of classical design principles along what was potentially a very long street and its tributaries... provided a formula for street architecture which, while based on *ancien régime* precedents, would shape nineteenth-century Paris” (Sutcliffe 70-71). Napoléon also participated in the location of the Paris stock market and the growth of the Parisian financial neighborhood: “Sur la rive droite, le XVIII^e siècle a vu le développement, au sud des boulevards ou à proximité de la place Vendôme, du centre des activités économiques caractéristiques du Paris moderne, et le premier Empire a parfaitement reconnu ce puissant phénomène dans le choix qu’il a fait de localiser la Bourse là où elle s’est pérennisée” (Bergeron 175). Establishing the Bourse in this area just west of the middle of the Right Bank further encouraged western movement of the city and served as a pole of attraction for the wealthy portion of the Parisian population with bankers, speculators, and individuals of all sorts of financially oriented professions moving to this area to be closer to their place of work and to the financial dealings of the capital.

During the Restoration Monarchy, under the supervision of the prefect of the Seine, Chabrol de Volvic, sixty-five new streets were opened and three important canals were completed: the Canal Saint-Denis, or the Canal de l’Ourcq, and the Canal Saint-Martin. Furthermore, Chabrol facilitated the creation of new neighborhoods with the help of financial investment from Parisian bankers and businessmen, “Il est à l’origine de plusieurs lotissements: Batignolles (1821), quartier Saint-Georges et François I^{er} (1823), Beaugrenelle (1824), le quartier de l’Europe (1826)... Plusieurs sociétés privées sont parties prenantes dans l’aménagement de ces nouveaux quartiers. L’entreprise du financier Dosne investit le quartier Notre-Dame-de-Lorette ; la société Hagermann, le quartier de l’Europe. Les banquiers André, Cottier et surtout Jacques Lafitte... spéculent sur les opérations immobilières dans le quartier Poissonnière (ancien enclos Saint-Lazare). Le lotissement d’une partie du quartier François I^{er} est dû à l’initiative du colonel de Brack”

(Combeau 62). This method of encouraging urban growth by inciting the financial participation of private investors was not unique to Chabrol, and it was certainly not the first time it was used to enable renovation and construction in Paris.

Popular writer Joan DeJean reveals the impetus behind the development of the Ile-Saint-Louis in which private investors, incredibly wealthy financiers, purchased and developed nearly all the plots of land (DeJean 63-69). Just like the neighborhoods appearing in Paris during the nineteenth century, the development of the Ile-Saint-Louis in the sixteenth century allowed for the experimentation of new concepts, “By building on virgin territory, they were able to showcase residential architecture on a scale not possible in an area with preexisting construction such as the Marais... thus provided a rare occasion to try out innovative ideas in urban planning and residential architecture” (DeJean 62). The island became a prized destination for the rich with the help of one investor in particular, “the client of their dreams... member of a modest provincial family... quickly become a pillar of Paris’ financial community, known as the Sieur de Bretonvilliers” who “used his vast wealth... to give the island its original architectural monument” (DeJean 68-69). The construction of the massive *Hôtel Bretonvilliers*, “inaugurated a brief period in the course of which the Ile Saint-Louis... assumed its modern identity as a fabled spot, home to many of the most legendary private residences in Paris” (DeJean 69). This model of private investment encouraged by the state to motivate further development foreshadows and informs the neighborhoods created during the Restoration Monarchy and, most importantly, during the Second Empire. By involving private investors in the urban renovation of the city, the Parisian government, either under Louis Philippe or Napoléon III, allowed for new neighborhoods to be built with luxurious buildings that would first attract the wealthiest of Parisian high society and eventually the nobility. This model repeats exactly the creation of the Ile-Saint-Louis: private investors built magnificent homes that only the most wealthy could afford with architectural and design elegance that eventually appealed to nobility who often came to take the place of the wealthy.

Urban renovation and growth continued during the July Monarchy and, while the responsible party might not have become as iconic as Haussmann, he did manage to leave his mark, “Le comte Barthélemy de Rambuteau... occupe la fonction de préfet de la Seine de 1833 à 1848. Son œuvre est considérable et ne peut être résumée comme une simple préfiguration des projets haussmanniens. En quinze années, le tableau parisien change” (Combeau 63). Under Rambuteau, Paris saw more new streets were built, most notably the rue de Rambuteau, “La nécessaire aération de la ville... entraîne l’ouverture de 110 voies... La rue Rambuteau (1845), large de 13 m, vaste chantier imposant expropriations et démolitions” (Combeau 63). Named after the prefect of the Seine, this street was the widest yet in Paris and the first to cut across a tangled and insalubrious medieval portion of the city, allowing for greater flow of air and creating easier access to *Les Halles*. The importance of this specific street is however much less in its width than in the creation of the tradition of *expropriation* and *percement* that it inaugurated. This process entailed taking possession of the buildings in an area to be reconstructed, relocating or compensating displaced inhabitants, piercing through the center and demolishing the majority of the existing structures, and finally rebuilding with modern, classically inspired apartment buildings. This process would come to define the methods of Haussmann and the Second Empire and it is clearly explained in the official language the government employed in authorizing such methods of urban redevelopment, “Une ordonnance royale du 5 mars 1838 porte ce qui suit... Le préfet du département de la Seine, agissant au nom de la ville de Paris, est autorisé à acquérir, soit de gré à gré, soit par voie d’expropriation... les immeubles ou portions d’immeubles dont l’occupation serait nécessaire pour effectuer le percement de la nouvelle rue... On a commencé immédiatement l’ouverture de cette rue, qui sera prochainement terminée au moyen de l’expropriation des immeubles situés dans la rue de la Tonnellerie, depuis le n° 105 jusqu’à la place de la Pointe-Saint-Eustache” (Lazare 582-583). These urban ameliorations of the first half of the nineteenth century were nevertheless small in scale and very localized, concentrated in limited areas without thought of expansion or connection to the surrounding city.

In Paris the transition from the first to the second half of the nineteenth century, particularly from the July Monarchy to the Second Republic and then to the Second Empire, was notably marked by a significant increase in tangible urban growth and redevelopment. While plans to transform the French capital's urban landscape had for the most part remained in the theoretical stage under the First Empire and the Restoration and July Monarchies, "There had been considerable discussion about, as well as practical efforts... the modernization of Paris under the July Monarchy. During the 1840s innumerable plans and proposals were discussed", Napoléon III acted on his plans during the Second Empire, "The Emperor, after being elected President in 1848, had already been party to urban renewal initiatives, and Berger, Haussmann's predecessor, had begun the task in earnest. The rue de Rivoli was already being extended, as was the rue Saint Martin; and there are LeSecq's and Marville's photos and Daumier's trenchant commentaries on the effects of the demolitions from 1851-1852, a year before Haussmann took office, to prove it" (Harvey 8). Following 1848, the change was consequently not in the motivation to renovate the city, but in the means, method, and measure with which the renovation would be enacted, "Haussmann and his colleagues were willing to engage in creative destruction on a scale hitherto unseen. The formation of Empire out of the ruins of republican democracy enabled them to do this" (Harvey 11-12). The Emperor and Haussmann approached the transformation of Paris from an all-encompassing perspective that had previously not characterized urban renewal, "Avec Napoléon III et Haussmann, il faut désormais parler politique urbaine. La ville est considérée, contrairement aux projets antérieurs, dans sa globalité. Il ne s'agit pas uniquement de réaliser quelques percées nouvelles, mais de réaménager les quartiers centraux, de faciliter la circulation des hommes et de l'air avec des voies élargies, d'établir des liens entre la périphérie et le cœur, de relier les gares et les pôles internes de la ville, de multiplier les équipements collectifs..." (Combeau 65).

This shift in the conception of urban planning and renovation was made possible through a new approach to money. Referring to François Loyer, Harvey points to the role of capitalism in this change of ideas in terms of how to go about bringing the city into modern times, "The architectural historian Loyer, in

his detailed reconstruction of architectural and building practices in nineteenth-century Paris enunciates the principle at work exactly: ‘One of capitalism’s most important effects on construction’, he writes, ‘was to transform the scale of projects’. While Haussmann’s myth of a total break deserves to be questioned, we must also recognize the radical shift in scale that he helped to engineer, inspired by new technologies and facilitated by new organizational forms. This shift enabled him to think of the city (and even its suburbs) as a totality rather than as a chaos of particular projects” (Harvey 13). While often accused of grandeur, Haussmann was in reality merely continuing the work of various predecessors while thinking on a much greater scale and willing to take the major financial risks, that his predecessors were never willing to do or maybe even capable of conceiving, to transform the city as a whole.

The pace of restoration and expansion of the city under the Second Empire accelerated exponentially. According to “*La Revue de l’architecture et des travaux publics de 1867*” from 1852 to 1866 the creation of new buildings and homes climbed steeply, “le chiffre total des constructions et rénovations avait dépassé 80 000 maisons. La capitale se transformait” (Berg 175-177). In order for such a drastic change in the trend of growth, construction, and remodeling of the city, there was one essential modification that had to be made. This change was financial and accomplished by two important parties: Haussmann and the Jewish banking brothers of Bordeaux, Emile and Isaac Pereire. When Haussmann was chosen by Napoléon III to replace Jean-Jacques Berger as the Prefect of the Seine, he reversed the appearance of the city’s budget, “The 1853 budget underestimated the expected receipts for the year and over-estimated expenses. Berger had consistently manipulated his budgets in this way to convince the Corps Législatif that Paris was poor and needed subsidies if it were to undertake public works. The new prefect, anxious to attract private capital to his enterprises, would later do the contrary, making Paris appear a sound investment” (Jordan 228). Haussmann firmly believed that the city had no other option than to incur debt in order for progress to be made. This new approach allowed for “Debt-financed expenditure” and “required no additional taxation and added no burden to the treasury provided the expenditures were productive and promoted growth and

economic activity” (Jordan 228). Haussmann stood by the promise of the Second Empire not to raise taxes in order to fund public works, “Avec une grande prudence politique, le préfet voulait financer ses travaux par l’emprunt et en reporter le coût sur les générations futures. Il refusait d’augmenter les taxes et le taux de l’octroi, comptant seulement sur le développement des affaires provoqué par ses constructions pour accroître les revenus afin de payer les intérêts et d’amortir peu à peu les emprunts” (Marchand 5). If taxation was no longer a possible source of financing, the money would have to come from banks that were willing to take the same great risks as Haussmann. All that Haussmann needed then was the bank daring enough to loan massive quantities of money to fuel the future transformation of Paris.

The Prefect of the Seine turned to the Pereire brothers after more conventional banks had refused such an apparently dangerous and fantastical engagement with the city, “Haussmann s’est heurté aux financiers traditionnels qui redoutaient cette fuite en avant, en particulier à la haute banque orléaniste menée par Rothschild” (Marchand 5). Having already pioneered the introduction of the first railway in France in 1837, Emile and Isaac Pereire were the banking daredevils that Haussmann required to finance his grandiose plans for the city. As “brilliant but overly adventurous financial buccaneers”, Emile and Isaac Pereire were the perfect match for the Second Empire’s equally audacious financial attitude of debt-financed expenditure, “The Pereires... tried to change the meaning of that symbol [of credit]. They had long seen the credit system as the nerve center of economic development and social change... they sought to democratize savings by mobilizing them into an elaborate hierarchy of credit institutions capable of undertaking projects of long duration” (Harvey 117). The first of these institutions was established just in time to take part in the transformation of the city, “En 1852, ils fondèrent le Crédit mobilier qui venait au second rang des banques de France... À peine le Crédit mobilier avait-il été créé que l’empereur décida de bouleverser Paris. La participation des frères Pereire était indispensable” (Berg 174-175). Furthermore, the democratic spirit of the Saint-Simonian movement made the collaboration between Napoléon III, Haussmann, and the Pereire brothers ideologically feasible: while “Haussmann, tout comme Napoléon III, était un Saint-Simonien

convaincu”, “[Les frères Pereire] étaient pénétrés d’un esprit démocratique et, on le sait, idéologues du saint-simonisme” (Berg 173). The alliance of Napoléon III, Haussmann, and the Pereire brothers was formed, “Émile et Isaac Pereire participèrent à la transformation de Paris, souhaitée par Napoléon III”, and the modernization of Paris became both financially possible and ideologically imperative (Berg 173).

The doctrine of the religiously inspired socialist movement known as Saint-Simonism advanced the industrial and architectural expansion of the city with a central tenant proclaiming that, “la société ne devait avoir qu’un seul but: produire... afin ‘d’accroître le plus rapidement possible le bonheur social du plus pauvre’ ” (Autin 28). This movement fostered interesting mixtures of people, classes, and ideas, creating a climate of innovation and new possibilities, “Les savants mêlés aux banquiers, les nobles confrontés avec les manufacturiers... toute la France active, avide des lendemains brillants, qui s’associe avec passion au renouveau industriel, c’est-à-dire une fois encore au développement de la production sous toutes ses formes” (Autin 28-29). The association of Napoléon III, Haussmann, and the Pereire brothers seemed destined and perfectly arranged as the Saint-Simonian conception of productivity for the greater good of humanity imparted, for a time, legitimacy on the Second Empire’s plans for the city. Nevertheless, Haussmann’s increasingly extravagant debt-financed renovations would never truly appear motivated by a social desire to improve the lives of the poor. Nor would the participation of Emile and Isaac Pereire be perceived as philanthropically driven. Both Haussman and the Pereire brothers, whether intended or not, always catered to the wealthy populations of Paris, “The new financial institutions [Haussmann] created favored the haute bourgeoisie, who made Paris in their image, which was also his” (Jordan 232). Over the course of the Second Empire and the transformation of the city, the Saint-Simonian social ideologies would be entirely superseded by a desire to make Paris over as a city of luxury, conceiving and building lavish hotels and homes, dedicating whole streets and entire neighborhoods to affluent constructions and architectural design as luxurious as Versailles. All of the expensive new buildings and streets were concentrated in the western portion of the city, and revealed a severe neglect of the eastern half of the city.

The great works of Napoléon III and Haussmann ultimately turned into a massive project of gentrification and the poor working class areas of the city benefited little from the Saint-Simonian ideals of productivity.

By the end of his time as Prefect of the Seine Haussmann would be greatly criticized for both the enormous expense of the renovation, construction, and development projects and the particular attention he gave to the northwestern corner of the city. Between the place de l'Opéra to the parc Monceau, Haussmann had facilitated and encouraged the creation of an elitist neighborhood for the extremely rich. It was this aspect of Haussmann's contribution to the transformation of the city that was the least appreciated, "His strong partiality for expensive housing for the rich had economic as well as aesthetic and social dimensions. The disproportionate building of expensive apartments, at exactly the time when the influx into Paris was dominated by those who could afford only modest quarters, drove the *octroi*, which in turn drove future deficit financing and encouraged the gentrification of Paris" (Jordan 232). Haussmann favored the interests of the wealthy, which in turn brought more money to the state, "The lower middle class and the petite bourgeoisie, who would have built more simply and cheaply, and put less money in the city coffers, were steadily and gradually pushed out by a haute bourgeoisie of landlords and commercial interests who could afford to look upon the buying and selling of property as a speculative activity" (Jordan 232). However, these practices had not created, but exacerbated the trend of western migration of wealth in the city that had begun long before Haussmann became Prefect of the Seine. Jacques Lanquetin was the most important opponent of the flow of wealth and the migration of the haute bourgeoisie to the western portion of the city and called for a rebalancing of development during the July Monarchy (Lavedan). However, the admonitions that Lanquetin proffered were dismissed as unfounded by the Prefect Rambuteau only to be realized by Haussmann a few decades later, "The old center of Paris and the newer neighborhoods to the west were filled with bourgeois housing" creating a "horizontal segregation" which "sharply divided east and west Paris along economic lines" (Jordan 232).

Both the movement of wealth to the west and the renovation and construction of affluent homes and neighborhoods had reached such a fast pace that once opposition was established, the process could not be stayed, “By the time Haussmann was dismissed, the process of urban transformation he had set in motion had assumed such momentum that they were almost impossible to stop. Haussmannization—as represented, for example, by the completion of the avenue de l’Opéra—continued for many years after his dismissal. The continuity in part depended upon the strong and loyal team of talented administrators and technocrats he assembled around him—Alphand to do the parks, Belgrand to engineer the water and sewers, Baltard to redo Les Halles, architects like Hittorff to build monumental works, Davioud to create fountains... The worth of these works had been so well proven, the reputations of the architects and administrators so well established, the logic of the unfolding of the urban plan so well entrenched, and the overall conception so well accepted that Paris developed largely along the lines Haussmann defined for the next thirty years or more” (Harvey 100). However, in the list of Haussmann’s the strong and loyal team, Emile and Isaac Pereire are strangely omitted. These Jewish bankers were nevertheless a key part of the original impetus to remake the city. Their financial participation was essential to even getting the projects imagined by Napoléon III and executed by Haussmann off the ground. Furthermore, the role the Emile and Isaac Pereire played was not simply financial, it was also architectural. The elitist neighborhoods that Haussmann facilitated and encouraged between the place de l’Opéra to the parc Monceau were designed and realized by the Pereires along with many other projects throughout the western corner of the city.

Without the help of the banking capacities of the Pereire brothers, the momentum of Haussmann’s projects might even have come to a complete halt. In the second decade of the Second Empire, for example, construction paused for a moment when the builders suddenly claimed the reimbursement that they were promised: “Construction costs were normally paid by the builders, who would then be reimbursed by the city... only after the project was complete... In 1863 several of the builders ran into financial difficulties and demanded immediate repayment from the city of sums they had already advanced, although

the projects were only partially complete. The city, unable to come up with the money and save the builders from financial ruin, turned to the Pereires' *Crédit foncier*, which advanced the money—at the emperor's urging" (Jordan 234). The implication of Emile and Isaac Pereire and their various banking institutions was a fundamental part of maintaining the steady and continuous pace of Paris' urban transformation. Yet, their role in the remaking of the city has gone widely unrecognized, the French public preferring to believe that Haussmann and the emperor were the sole source driving the reconstruction.

Since they were not acknowledged for their participation, the Pereire brothers escaped, in a way, the blame placed on Haussmann. The prefect was blamed for much towards the end of his career and his role in the gentrification of the northwestern corner of the city was undeniable, yet he was not the lone actor in the transformation of the city. Emile and Isaac Pereire were decisive and, although they were bankers and financial entrepreneurs, their role was far from limited to the financial aspect of Haussmann's great works of the Second Empire. Haussmann and the Pereire duo worked together seamlessly to finance and build the same lavish neighborhoods of disproportionately expensive housing of which Haussmann was accused of overproducing. With the new laws of expropriation, Haussmann procured the land that the Pereires then purchased, "Les Pereire achetaient des terrains à bas prix, bien qu'ils fussent dans le centre de Paris, grâce aux expropriations, les équipaient et les revendaient avantageusement" (Marchand 5). With the purchased land, Emile and Isaac Pereire built not only great hotels and mansions, but they also formed neighborhoods with a luxurious but harmonious style that came to define western Paris and the Second Empire.

The first of the Pereires' projects during the Second Empire is now an iconic place in Paris, the arcaded galleries lined with shops of the rue de Rivoli, "L'Empereur et son préfet souhaitaient en effet réaliser dans l'environnement du nouveau Louvre une architecture d'accompagnement abritant un hôtel et un centre commercial... le projet ne provoque pas d'enthousiasme des hommes d'affaires ou des spéculateurs... Les Pereire sont approchés. Leur vigueur, leur acharnement sont maintenant célèbres. Leur jeune *Crédit mobilier* peut être in salutaire adjuvant... L'hésitation des Pereire, si elle existe, est brève. La fièvre des

chemins de fer n'est-elle pas tombée ? L'aventure immobilière peut la relayer ou la compléter. En quelques semaines ils créent la Société anonyme de l'hôtel et des immeubles de la rue de Rivoli" (Autin 180). The Pereires were more than just financially involved in the rue de Rivoli project, "La société se voit confier quatre types d'activités: des acquisitions de terrains rue de Rivoli, entre le passage Delorme et la rue des Poulies (devenu rue du Louvre); les constructions sur ces terrains; l'exploitation des hôtels garnis—c'est l'expression utilisée à l'époque—élevés sur ces terrains; la location, l'échange ou la revente desdits terrains" (Autin 180-181). Much more than just bankers, the Pereires were involved in every aspect of the creation of the rue de Rivoli from start to finish.

For both the Pereires and Paris, the project of the rue de Rivoli was just the beginning. When the *Société anonyme de l'hôtel et des immeubles de la rue de Rivoli* became the *Compagnie immobilière* Emile and Isaac ambioned taking on the whole city, "La nouvelle entreprise peut acheter des terrains, construire, échanger ou revendre sur tout le territoire de la ville" (Autin 181). Upon completing their first project, the Pereire brothers didn't waste any time and segued directly into many others, "Immédiatement, la nouvelle société, qui achève l'hôtel et le future magasin du Louvre ainsi que beaucoup d'immeubles de la rue de Rivoli, participe à la rénovation du futur quartier de l'Opéra, prend position du côté des Champs-Élysées et se préoccupe de réalisations immobilières le long des voies nouvellement ouvertes, ou à ouvrir" (Autin 181). Extremely savvy business men, Emile and Isaac instinctively knew where and when to place themselves to best benefit from the opening of new streets and the creation of new neighborhoods, "Très tôt en effet, la Compagnie achète l'hôtel d'Osmond, qui forme aujourd'hui l'angle du boulevard des Italiens et de la rue Halévy et s'étend jusqu'à la rue Meyerbeer, acquiert les terrains dits du Jardin d'Hiver, régnaient ainsi sur presque tout le quadrilatère bordé par les Champs-Élysées, la rue Marbeuf, la rue François-I^{er} et l'avenue Montaigne, et s'implante entre le boulevard de Sébastopol et la rue Saint-Denis le long de la rue du Caire... les deux promoteurs savent se poster dans les positions clés que deviendront bientôt la place de l'Opéra, le rond-point des Champs-Élysées et le carrefour Réaumur-Sébastopol... Leurs terrains sont divisés en lots, et

lorsque le remembrement ou le percement des voies interviendra, ils seront prêts à céder, à acheter, à échanger, voire simplement bénéficier des opérations de voirie. La suppression prévue, de la rue Basse-du-Rempart, vestige de l'ancienne enceinte, élargira, après nivellement, les boulevards des Italiens et des Capucines, dont ils deviendront riverains, et la future rue de Marignan traversera de part en part leur domaine élyséen" (Autin 181-182). Although the presence of the Pereire brothers in nearly all the areas of development in the western portion of the city must have felt pervasive to Parisians as their name was everywhere that new and particularly fancy construction was taking place, Haussmann has always taken the majority of the credit for the urban renewal of the Second Empire, giving Paris its modern expression that it still retains today.

While the Jewish characters of the *Comédie humaine* are found in various parts of Paris, are indicative of modernity and transformation, and recall different Jewish individuals actually living in Paris during Balzac's time, there were no Jewish characters imagined during the Second Empire that meet the same criteria. It is quite strange that at even at the height of Emile and Isaac Pereire's participation in the urban renewal of Paris, no single author of the time thought to reimagine them as characters in a novel about the tumultuous period of destruction and construction. It was not until the end of the Second Empire that Zola would begin to write extensively about the Parisian metamorphosis in his Rougon-Macquart series beginning with *La Curée* in 1872. . It is therefore curious that when Jewish characters do appear in Second Empire fiction, they are exclusively female and have no innovative attributes that could link them to the modernization of Paris. These Jewish women of fiction, or reality in the case of Baudelaire, thus served a very different function than the association of Jewish presence with transformation and modernity. Their purpose was to give voice to the apprehensions, dissatisfaction, and resentment of the Parisian population faced with imminent and inescapable change that was not viewed as benefitting the average Parisian, but as advancing the objectives of an all-powerful Jewish elite, often epitomized by the Rothschild family.

Baudelaire's Affreuse Juive:

In the void of Jewish characters formed between Balzac's Moïse Halpersohn of 1848 and Jules and Edmond de Goncourt's Manette Salomon of 1866-1867, Charles Baudelaire's Sarah "La Louchette" bridges the gap. In his poetry of the end of the July Monarchy and the beginning of the Second Empire, Baudelaire introduced a new and highly unflattering version of the biblically beautiful Jewish Muse. His reinterpretation of the *belle Juive* of the first half of the nineteenth century is less inspired by the various Jewish female literary precedents than the hard reality of an emerging artist's bohemian lifestyle in a city in the throes of destruction and reconstruction in a violent transition to modernity. Baudelaire's poems are symptomatic of a literary shift away from a nostalgic and romantic vision of Paris as an Ancien Régime city offered in the first half of the nineteenth century towards more grotesque and fantastic portraits of the urban space and its growing and predominantly impoverished population. Furthermore, Baudelaire's Jewish Muse, or anti-Muse, delineates a clear break from the previous stereotypically beautiful Jewish heroine whose biblical beauty served as a reprieve for her Jewishness and consequential association with the corruption of an avaricious Jewish male, typically portrayed as her father, "De 1855 à 1870, le motif marque une pause. Les créations romanesques, dramatiques ou picturales sont en net reflux. La figure de la "belle Juive", considérablement explorée, suscite moins d'intérêt. Est-elle devenue un cliché usé jusqu'au ressassement?" (Fournier 35). Fournier proposes a reading of Baudelaire's Jewish anti-heroine not as a rejection of the once universally accepted *belle Juive*, but as a questioning of her authenticity, "Peut-être faut-il comprendre ainsi l'énigmatique 'affreuse Juive' de Baudelaire, comme une provocation, une façon de marquer son dédain face à un thème omniprésent. La figure baudelairienne symbolise bien cette période marquée par le temps des interrogations, voire du doute, mais en aucun cas de la négation" (Fournier 35). Notorious for his paradoxical imagery and provocations, Baudelaire turned the nearly sacred beautiful Jewess archetype into a object of repulsion in portraying her as atrocious.

The poet's appreciation of the Jewish female, either *belle* or *affreuse*, was conflicted, inspired by the Orientalist movement of artistic representation but corrupting her beauty through monstrous adjectives.

Baudelaire's Jewish female thus represented a mounting French malaise concerning modernity and the increasingly visible Jewish population in Paris. Belonging to a community of artists, Baudelaire was exposed to the mid-century artistic trend favoring subjects evoking beauty perceived as "Oriental": "Cette période est effectivement celle où croissent les peintures consacrés à cette beauté, essentiellement à travers des sujets orientalistes ou bibliques, à la suite de deux tableaux précurseurs: les *Femmes d'Alger* de Delacroix (1833) et la *Judith* de Vernet (1827). Vernet persévère dans la veine biblique avec *Juda et Thamar*, suivi en cela par Chassériau dans *Suzanne au bain* et surtout *Esther se parant pour être présentée au roi Assuérus*. Il s'essaye également au registre orientaliste avec ses *Juives de Constantine*. Delacroix continue de mettre en images ses impressions de voyage dans sa *Noce juive au Maroc* tout en étant inspiré par la Bible avec sa *Madeleine dans le désert* ou le registre historique avec *l'Enlèvement de Rébecca*, inspiré d'*Ivanhoé*. Telles sont les œuvres les plus notables de cette production picturale. Elle contribue à maintenir l'intérêt pour les figures bibliques qui présentent l'intérêt d'être à la croisée du féminin, de l'orientalisme et du tableau d'histoire. Pour quelques peintres, c'est également l'occasion de souligner l'érotisme de la 'belle Juive', telle *Thamar* de Vernet, orientale voilant son visage tout en dévoilant un sein" (Fourier 35). The artistic influence of the Orientalist movement had great momentum in French culture but Baudelaire clashed with these invented beliefs of beauty, "Le cliché de la beauté juive est à ce point ancré dans la littérature du dix-neuvième qu'il faut être rebelle comme Baudelaire pour s'en écarter" (Klein 12). According to Luce A. Klein, the literary Jewish heroine is a manifestation of ambivalence, "ces grandes figures sont ambivalentes par nature... Contre les valeurs traditionnelles, qui séparaient nettement les absolus du Mal et du Bien, l'homme revendique la liberté de son essentielle ambivalence. En même temps, souvent il craint cette liberté et cette ambivalence, et ne peut les supporter" (Klein 58-59). Baudelaire's poetry demonstrates this ambivalence by showing in equal parts attraction to *la belle Juive* and repulsion for *l'affreuse Juive*. For Baudelaire, however, the *belle juive* and the *affreuse juive* are ultimately one and the same with this duality reinforcing ambivalence.

Breaking away from Balzac's idealized realism in which the myth of *la belle Juive* is taken for reality, Baudelaire's beautiful but abrasive poetic representation of life in Paris announces the shift towards the hyperbolic, tending toward the scientific literary style that Zola will come to embody under the Third Republic. The style of expression intrinsic to the sometimes morbid and sinister poems of Baudelaire prepared the terrain for the transition from literary realism to naturalism. In this transition the Jewish female transforms from a statue-like figure, almost magical in her beauty, nearly flawless, to a human figure to be studied, questioned, and blamed for the misfortunes of a struggling artists and the afflictions of modern society. After Baudelaire's conflicted relationship with the literary canon that is the *belle Juive*, it is his radically opposite *affreuse Juive* that later becomes a point of observation and fantastic pseudo-scientific study of naturalism, "Nineteenth-century naturalism—realism taken to its (purported scientific) extreme—often depicts the female body as a site of hereditary failure; in naturalist novels, woman becomes a contaminated and contaminating vessel whose corpus reflects the corruption of the Second Empire" (Lathers 17). While the female in general had been transformed into a source of corruption, the Jewish female was yet more complex. For Baudelaire, his Jewish Muse possessed both the sublime and idealized beauty of Balzac's Jewish heroines and the repulsive, diabolical, and corrupting nature of the Jewish prostitute.

The conflation of *belle Juive* and *affreuse Juive* in Baudelaire's revisiting of the literary figure of the idealized beautiful "Oriental" Jewish female uncovers a deeper and more conflicted relationship with the Jewish population in France. Although Baudelaire's actual Jewish Muse was not an artist's model, but a prostitute, it is his transformation of the *belle juive* to the *affreuse juive* that later became a vehicle for the representation of all that artists and writers found dangerous in the metamorphosis of Paris: "The Jewish female model is read as a literary character who was made to assume stereotypes created by the conjunction in the mid to late nineteenth century of anti-Semitism, colonialism, and scientific and literary naturalism" (Lathers 17). Baudelaire was nevertheless not initially inspired by the Jewish artist's model, somehow accepted for her role

in the art that she inspired, but the even less morally excusable Jewish prostitute who, despite her debased profession and position in society, served the poet as an important source of artistic inspiration.

While it was with an actual Jewish prostitute that Baudelaire found inspiration, the literary and artistic precedent of the *belle juive* certainly encouraged the poet to seek out in reality the biblically beautiful Jewess of fiction. This literary and artistic precedent of the beautiful Jewess, often exercising the profession of prostitution in the *Comédie humaine*, ran alongside another literary trend, that of the depiction of the artist's professional and personal life. Balzac's *Chef-d'œuvre inconnu* is the perfect example in which the life of the artist was intended to be the main attraction, "the novel of the artist's life became a popular subgenre of French literature, one that included important texts by Honoré de Balzac, the Goncourt brothers, and Emile Zola" (Lathers 4). However, "As models made their way into public studios", it was the artists' models, frequently Jewish females, that garnered more attention than the artists themselves. Balzac's Jewish female characters were nevertheless not professional models, despite appearing in salons frequented by artists of diverse expressions. His three most famous, Coralie, Esther, and Josépha, were high-class prostitutes of exceptional beauty, but they never posed for an artist. While Jewish artists' models posed for a living and were often respected for their abilities, Jewish prostitutes, fictional or actual, had only their beauty and ability to seduce wealthy men to rely on for their survival. The Jewish female prostitute's social condition contributed to the dangerous stereotype of the parasitic Jew. Jewish artists' models, however, were appreciated, although not unanimously, for their talent in posing for artists who went on to produce cultural masterpieces. For Baudelaire, it is possible that the Jewish artist's model influenced his poetic representation of the female figure in general, but it is certain that his intimate relations with a real Jewish prostitute led to poetic production. Balzac's idealized and beautiful Jewish prostitutes of the *Comédie humaine* were in fact for Baudelaire less real than visionary, subliminally motivating the poet to engage in interactions with a real Jewish prostitute and leading ultimately deconstruction of the *belle Juive* and the reconstruction of her evil opposite, the *affreuse Juive*.

If a link is to be drawn between Balzac's fictional Jewish prostitutes and Baudelaire's actual Jewish Muse, the characters of Esther and Lucien de Rubempré in *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes*, are instrumental. It is curious, however, that Balzac did not develop Esther's character more in the direction of an artist's model since she certainly fit the criteria for beauty and, with *Splendeurs et misères* first appearing in 1837, the timing was appropriate: "During the end of the Restoration and the July Monarchy (about 1825-48), the mythical *grisette* and then the Jewish poser dominated the female modeling scenes of Parisian bohemia. Jules Clarétie notes that there were two distinct periods of female models prior to the Italian: the Parisian "grisette du faubourg" of the pre-1830 era and the "Juive d'Afrique" of the post-1830 era (*La vie à Paris*, 191). The second period relates to Napoleon III's Second Empire (1852-70), during which Italian immigrants who came to the urban centers of France as a result of the Industrial Revolution began to dominate the modeling trade. During this time female models were identified either as *Juives* or *Italiennes*" (Lathers 24). A literary prediction of what Baudelaire would become, Lucien de Rubempré is presented as a tortured artist and genius poet for whom Esther might have been a source of poetic inspiration. More concerned by his social advancement through a well-placed marriage in the intolerant and venal aristocratic society of Paris in the 1830s, Lucien failed to see the creative potential in his would be Jewish Muse. Unlike Balzac's tortured Lucien de Rubempré, Baudelaire scorned the idea of venality and quickly found inspiration in his relations with Sarah, "dite La Louchette". For Balzac, Esther was not an artist's model and never became Lucien's Muse, her double impurity as Jewish and prostitute was apparently too great an obstacle for such a situation to be imagined in the first decade of the July Monarchy. Revealing the relationship between Esther and Lucien as socially impossible, Balzac foretold the real societal reaction to an artist's association with a Jewish prostitute. As we will see with Baudelaire and his relations with his Jewish prostitute and Muse, Lucien could not be seen with, or known to frequent, a Jewish prostitute, no matter how heavenly or celestial her appearance. Baudelaire would experience first hand this tension between attraction and aversion for the

Jewish prostitute. Just as it was impossible for Esther to be Lucien's Muse in the fictional society of the *Comédie humaine*, Baudelaire's Jewish prostitute could be nothing other than an ephemeral Muse in reality.

Always counter to convention, Baudelaire thus found inspiration from the socially unacceptable Jewish prostitute, and not from the culturally accepted Jewish artist's model. The poems concerning Baudelaire's intimate encounters with one particular Jewish prostitute serving as poetic Muse foreshadow future literature in which Jewish women, prostitutes or artist's models, play important roles, "the artist's purported problems with his models allowed writers to grapple with issues of sexuality and representation" (Lathers 4). In contrast to Balzac's biblically pure and angelic Jewish beauties, the Jewish Muses of the second half of the nineteenth century are cast in a sinister light. Although it is not explicitly stated, Balzac initiated this shift from the Jewish female as helpless victim to advocate in control of her own destiny with his last Jewish female character, Josépha. Unlike Esther, Josépha possesses all the cunning and craft of a Jewish male character but these traits are disguised behind an external façade of biblical beauty, "Josépha Mirah, la plus juive des courtisanes balzaciennes, est aussi la seule qui ne connaisse pas la chute... son existence montre la voie de la survie pour la courtisane juive. Sa mobilité est strictement ascendante. Elle épuise comme une 'sangsue' des protecteurs de plus en plus riches... Sa force est d'avoir une conscience aigüe de sa propre condition. Elle ne cherche ni l'amour ni la purification et est la seule à assumer pleinement sa judéité... Elle se définit elle-même comme Juive et impure" (Fournier 82). Balzac's portrayal of Jewish females had therefore reached a critical dénouement by the end of his literary career. Writers, poets, novelist, essayists, or social journalists in Balzac's wake would continue to consider the Jewish female, for the most part, as a biblical beauty, she would soon be perceived as only pure in exterior appearance, hiding an avaricious Jewish identity below the surface.

Baudelaire, and writers to follow, revealed this surface beauty as a screen for a much more conflicted creature, exposing a transformation in the appreciation of the Jewish presence in France and a complex state of mind in which traditional Catholic beliefs clashed with modernity. Baudelaire's adolescent attraction to a

Jewish prostitute, followed by an adult repulsion for this same Jewish female, is indicative of the greater rejection in French society of the emancipated Jews, “Baudelaire’s case illustrates the historical transition between traditional and modern anti-Semitism... these two varieties coexisted in the poet’s thought during the late 1850s and early 1860s, the modern form becoming progressively stronger as his financial misery, persecution complex, and cultivation of self-martyrdom grew” (Bowles 206). The shift occurring in Baudelaire’s perception of the Jewish female, mirrors a societal trend in which modern anti-Semitism was born. In at least three poems of the collection, *Les fleurs du mal*, first published in 1857, and in one poem in Baudelaire’s *Œuvres complètes*, under *Poésies de jeunesse*, the poet references a particular Jewish prostitute that he frequented from the 1830s to the 1840s. Referred to as Sarah La Louchette, their encounters occurred in the poet’s early years in Paris as an unsuccessful student and a burgeoning *artiste maudit*.

A complex combination of desire, curiosity, and disgust for this Jewish female is uncovered in these poems that were written later as recollections of his relations with Sarah. Baudelaire’s poems therefore illustrate the changing Parisian perspective of the emancipated Jewish population. While Coralie, Esther, and Josépha were much more than just prostitutes in Balzac’s fictional Parisian world, all three holding a privileged position in society, prized for their aesthetic qualities, their Jewishness pardoned by their exquisite beauty, Sarah La Louchette does not receive the same generous treatment from Baudelaire. While it is their Jewish and “Oriental” origins that impart biblical beauty to Coralie, Esther, and Josépha, making them all the more magical, the Jewishness of Baudelaire’s Muse appears directly related to the poet’s negative emotions. Most notably in the poem, “Une nuit que j’étais près d’une affreuse juive”, nouns and adjectives such as “cadavre étendu”, “corps vendu”, “majesté native”, “cheveux qui lui font un casque parfumé”, “noires tresses”, “reine des cruelles”, and “froides prunelles” expose intensely conflicting sentiments and indicate a shift away from the biblically divine Jewish Muse that previously inspired artist and writers alike (Baudelaire 45). Baudelaire’s Jewish female represents an incarnation of evil, a biblical Eve, perpetually recalling the original sin. Sarah’s Jewishness is seen as malicious and feeding into the temptations felt by

Baudelaire, confusing even further attraction and aversion, desire and guilt. The poet's depiction of the beautiful but debased Jewish female thus "serves as a means of both reading the model... and situating the model's body in... Paris—as alternately prostitute and Muse—at a time when the incarnations of woman as real and ideal were embodied by the Jewish model" (Lathers 109). Through his anti-heroic atrocious Jewess, Baudelaire exposes "The passage in the nineteenth century from *belle Juive* to *affreuse Juive*—beautiful Jewess to abominable Jewess, beautiful poser to infectious prostitute" (Lathers 109).

Far from Balzac's sublime heroines, Esther and Josépha, their Jewishness and impure profession pardoned by their biblical beauty and artistic talents, Sarah La Louchette does not appear particularly attractive and Baudelaire pities her for her unfortunate situation as a prostitute, "Pour avoir des souliers elle a vendu son âme... La pauvre créature... A de rauques hoquets la poitrine gonflée, Et je devine au bruit de son souffle brutal, Qu'elle a souvent mordu le pain de l'hôpital... Si vous la rencontrez, bizarrement parée, Se faulant, au coin d'une rue égarée, Et la tête et l'œil bas comme un pigeon blessé, Traînant dans les ruisseaux un talon déchaussé, Messieurs, ne crachez pas de jurons ni d'ordure, Au visage fardé de cette pauvre impure, Que déesse Famine a par un soir d'hiver, Contrainte à relever ses jupons en plein air" (Baudelaire 204). The poet's pity is entwined with tenderness, as if he truly felt compassion and affection for this doubly corrupt female, both Jewish and prostitute, "Elle louche, et l'effet de ce regard étrange, Qu'ombragent des cils noirs plus longs que ceux d'un ange, Et tel que tous les yeux pour qui l'on s'est damné, Ne valent pas pour moi son œil juif cerné... Cette bohème-là, c'est mon tout, ma richesse, Ma perle, mon bijou, ma rein, ma duchesse, Celle qui m'a bercé sur son giron vainqueur, Et qui dans ses deux mains a réchauffé mon cœur" (Baudelaire 204). Despite her grotesque appearance, her base profession, and her Jewishness, Baudelaire appears to have truly loved Sarah La Louchette and his memories of her were predominantly tender.

Having met her in his early days in Paris, a period during which Baudelaire's rebellion against society's established ideas was just taking root, recently expelled from the prestigious Lycée Louis-le-Grand and

choosing to pursue his artistic vocation as a poet, Sarah La Louchette is also associated with the Quartier Latin, “Sarah La Louchette was “a ‘little prostitute from the Latin Quarter’ according to Pichois” (qtd in Lathers 131). The dark, confining atmosphere of this ancient Left Bank neighborhood, hardly touched by renovations since the establishment of the University, appears at first as an appropriate setting in which one would find a Jewish prostitute to whom Baudelaire had given bewitching qualities. Sarah is however only evoked in conjunction with the Quartier Latin because that is where Baudelaire was living when he met her. It is more likely that she was “a ‘little prostitute from the Saint-Antoine area’ according to François Porché” (Lathers 131). How then did Baudelaire meet this Jewish prostitute when he was living on the other side of the Seine? One possible idea is that Baudelaire met her at a dance hall in the Marais, “a young girl from the Rue du Temple area whom Baudelaire would have met at a public dance, according to F. W. J. Hemmings” (Lathers 131). The idea that Sarah was from the Marais and that Baudelaire might have encountered her at a dance hall led to the theory that Sarah was also an artist’s model: “The attractive although admittedly farfetched possibility that Sarah was a model as well as a prostitute is suggested by Rozier’s account of the model clientele of *L’Astic*, which was Sarah’s neighborhood” (Lathers 131). The popularity of this particular dance hall was such that it was known under three different names, “C’était, il y a une vingtaine d’années, un bal fort en vogue dans le quartier Saint-Antoine, dont il faisait le plus bel ornement. On l’appelait *L’Astic*, je ne sais pas pourquoi, mais je le devine ; on l’appelait aussi le *Bal des Acacias*, je ne sais pas non plus,—sans le deviner ; on l’appelait enfin la *Reine Blanche*, en souvenir de quelque reine des blanchisseuses dont le couronnement avait eu lieu là,—à moins que ce ne fût en souvenir de la mère de saint Louis, qui possédait quelque hôtel dans les environs, il y a bien longtemps” (Delvau 24). As a young and rebellious artist, Baudelaire must have attended dances at this establishment of an equally refractory reputation.

That Baudelaire first encountered Sarah La Louchette at this dance hall is possibly less “farfetched” than Lathers believes. The female, and particularly Jewish, clientele of this nineteenth-century nightclub makes this hypothesis more than plausible, “*Astic*, *Acacias* ou *Reine Blanche*, c’était un bal couru. Il était situé à

l'entrée de la rue Saint-Antoine, à droite, à peu près à la hauteur de l'endroit où la rue de Rivoli vient aboutir aujourd'hui. Son public, tout à fait spécial, se recrutait, pour les hommes, parmi les artistes, et, pour les femmes, parmi les modèles,—la plupart juives, et toutes belles filles. Il y avait là des Esther, des Judith, des Rébecca, des Lia à n'en plus finir—de grands yeux de velours noirs qui ont mis le feu à bien des jeunes cervelles !” (Delvau 24-25). Frequented primarily by artists and female Jewish models, Victor Rozier recalls the atmosphere and the attendees of this particular dance hall during the period in which Baudelaire would have met Sarah, “La Reine Blanche de la rue Saint-Antoine... était presque exclusivement composé d'artistes et de jeune israélites qui habitaient le quartier Saint-Antoine. Celles-ci n'avaient guère d'autre pratique de leur religion que de se recréer le jour du sabbat en se livrant au plaisir de la danse. Elles étaient couturières ou blanchisseuses, passementières ou brunisseuses ; mais bientôt elles quittaient le giron paternel et professaient un métier que leur type et leurs perfections physiques leur permettaient d'exercer... Elles étaient modèles... La plupart des filles qui servent de modèles aux peintres son juives. Avant 1848 elles auraient cru manquer à un devoir en n'allant pas à *l'Aspic* ... C'était là qu'on pouvait voir la juive qui servit de modèle à Paul Delaroche pour la Renommée qui distribue les couronnes dans la belle fresque de l'hémicycle des Beaux-Arts ; c'était là qu'on pouvait distinguer les originaux de tant d'autres peintures de nos maîtres modernes, justement admirées... Les anciens modèles et les nouveaux n'ont plus de bal spécial. Elles vont dans tous les bals selon leur toilette. On les rencontre à la Salle Barthélemy, au Wauxhall, au Château-d'Eau, au Bal Mabille ; on en voit aux cafés du boulevard du Temple, on les retrouve partout, tandis qu'à l'époque dont nous parlons, le samedi était un jour exclusivement réservé par elles à la Reine Blanche” (Rozier 56-57). It thus appears entirely conceivable that Sarah came from the lower-income working-class neighborhood of Saint-Antoine, the eastern extremity of the Marais, and that she frequented the dance hall famous for its Jewish clientele of female artists' models. Whether or not Baudelaire met Sarah at this dance hall is entirely hypothetical, but not impossible to imagine.

The possibility that Baudelaire's interest in Sarah began upon seeing her at the dance hall frequented by artists and female Jewish artists' models in the Marais is indicative of the nature of the Jewish presence in this neighborhood. She was of course not a glamorous Jewish prostitute of the sort that Balzac imagined for Esther and Josépha, she was an impoverished young woman with no choice but to sell her body to survive. As one of the oldest neighborhoods in Paris, also largely untouched by any renovation like the Quartier Latin, with exception to the rue de Rambuteau, the Marais was in Baudelaire's period a poor and working-class neighborhood where Jewish immigrants of little means could find inexpensive housing in poorly maintained apartment houses. Based on the recollections of one of Baudelaire's friends from his post-lycée years, we know that Sarah's housing situation was congruent with her status as a poor Jewish female in the Marais, " 'Avant l'Inde il y avait la Juive. Je ne sais plus son nom (Sara je crois). Baudelaire l'appelait Louchette. Elle demeurait rue Saint-Antoine. Un jour, Baudelaire m'avait emmené vers l'église Saint-Louis, sous prétexte de revoir une Piéta de Delacroix. En chemin, nous demandâmes Mlle Sara (?) à une concierge dont la loge s'ouvrait sur une allée peu large. Elle était absente' " (Pichois, Ziegler 124). If this memory is correct, Sarah lived on one of the oldest thoroughfares in Paris, 'La rue Saint-Antoine repose sur la chaussée de l'ancienne voie romaine, solide, dallée, surélevée au-dessus des marécages environnants, qui reliait Paris à Melun. Elle résulte de la fusion, au XV^e siècle, des deux rues suivantes : La première commençait à la *porte Baudoyer* (rue des Barres) et finissait à la porte *Saint-Antoine* de l'enceinte de Philippe Auguste. C'était la rue de la *Porte-Baudoyer* et, aussi, la rue de *l'Aigle*, du nom d'une auberge située à l'angle de la rue de Jouy. La seconde se trouvait comprise, après la construction, en 1356, de l'enceinte Charles V, entre l'ancienne et la nouvelle porte *Saint-Antoine*. C'était la rue du *Pont-Perrin*, nom dû au pont franchissant un égout situé près de la rue du Petit-Musc" (Hillairet 376). Once part of a medieval Jewish community expelled by the end of the fourteenth century, the rue Saint-Antoine was in fact more of a royal and aristocratic destination in the fifteenth, "Sa partie anormalement large, située entre les deux anciennes portes, porta aussi le nom de *cours Saint-Antoine*, terrain de lices et lieu de promenades, qui bénéficia longtemps du voisinage des séjours royaux,

l'hôtel Saint-Pol d'abord, la *maison royale des Tournelles* ensuite, puis, plus tard, celui de la place *Royale* (des Vosges)” (Hillairet 376). Movement out of this part of the city had begun by the middle of the eighteenth century, leaving the area open for a Jewish community to be reestablished. The neighborhood had however lost much of its once royal and aristocratic charm after the wealthy had fled to the less crowded western corner of Paris and the Jewish community that took root again was one of the poorest of the city.

In the translation recounting this foray into the Marais to visit Sarah, the “allée” off of the rue Saint-Antoine is called a “passageway”, potentially referring to the *passage Saint-Pierre*. In fact, two passages once existed, *Saint-Pierre* and *Saint-Paul*, that were supposed to be replaced by two new streets that never saw the light of day, “Son emplacement formait, avant 1790, deux passages distincts. Le premier, celui qui prend naissance à la rue Saint-Antoine, conduisait au cimetière de la paroisse Saint-Paul, et se nommait *passage Saint-Pierre*; le second, qui longeait au nord de l'église Saint-Paul, aboutissait également au cimetière et s'appelait *passage Saint-Paul*... Les actes de vente... prescrivent aux acquéreurs soit l'obligation de fournir sans indemnité le terrain nécessaire au percement de deux rues projetées, soit de ne recevoir en dédommagement que le prix de la partie du terrain qui devait servir aux nouvelles voies publiques... —Les rues Mansart et Rabelais n'ont point été formées; les deux passages qui se réunissent sous une voûte ne sont plus connus aujourd'hui sous la dénomination de *Saint-Pierre*” (Lazare 540). To this day the passage Saint-Paul still exists, while the passage Saint-Pierre disappeared sometime after the beginning of the First World War, based on a photo in Jacques Hillairet's *Dictionnaire historique des rues de Paris*, described as “Débouché du pass. Saint-Pierre dans la rue Saint-Antoine en 1913” (Hillairet 379). Baudelaire's first Jewish Muse was therefore anchored in a very real architectural and urban reality, linked to the passage Saint-Pierre and to the location of *L'Astic*, the *Bal des Acacias* or *La Reine Blanche*. As a Jewish female who truly existed in this area of Paris in the middle of the nineteenth century, Sarah La Louchette will later influence further literary narratives including Proust's token Jewish prostitute, “Rachel quand du seigneur” for example.

Despite Baudelaire's original attraction, Sarah La Louchette, as described by Baudelaire's pen, was no biblical beauty, "Vice beaucoup plus grave, elle porte une perruque. Tous ses beaux cheveux noirs ont fui sa blanche nuque ; Ce qui n'empêche pas les baisers amoureux, De pleuvoir sur son front plus pelé qu'un lépreux... Elle n'a que vingt ans ; sa gorge—déjà basse, Pend de chaque côté comme une calebasse, Et pourtant me traînant chaque nuit sur son corps, Ainsi qu'un nouveau-né, je la tête et la mords" (Baudelaire 204). The images that this Jewish prostitute evoked for the poet are significant in their revelation of how the old medieval neighborhoods were envisioned by the Parisian imagination. Like the old and abused image that Baudelaire attributes to Sarah, these two ancient parts of the city, the Quartier Latin and the Marais, that have been linked to the poet and his Jewish prostitute appear dark and neglected, places in the city in which one would have found fallen women of Sarah's likeness, "Se faufile, au coin d'une rue égarée... Traînant dans les ruisseaux un talon déchaussé" (Baudelaire, 204). Language referring to the streets of Paris mark the association Baudelaire made with this Jewish prostitute and the crassness of city streets: "rue", "ruelle", "au coin d'une rue égarée", and "ruisseau" as in the stream of water running down the middle of the narrow medieval streets of the Quartier Latin and the Marais. Sarah is linked to the dirtiness of the streets of the oldest neighborhoods in Paris, the perfect reversal of the *belle Juive* of the 1830s and 1840s.

Based on the castigation that Baudelaire received from his friends for his relations with Sarah and their attempts to dissuade him from seeing her, Baudelaire's attachment to Sarah must have been fairly intense. His friends expressed their concern in writing, publishing a collective work in which certain poems refer to Baudelaire's relationship with Sarah: "*Vers* marks the autumn of 1842 as the period when Baudelaire's poet friends were preoccupied with his debasement with Sarah" (Lathers 131). This collective work brought together the poems of three different writers and was originally meant to include Baudelaire's work, "In 1843 three poets of the so-called école normande... Gustave Levavasseur, Ernest Prarond, and A. Argonne (pseudonym for Auguste Dozon)—published a collection of poems called *Vers*" (Lathers 129). While Baudelaire's poems are absent from this collection, the poet is present, "Two of the poems published in

Vers, one by Dozon and one by Prarond, contain direct references to Baudelaire's bohemian days... Both poems warn of Baudelaire's association with the woman who supposedly threatened his ability to practice his art" (Lathers 129). Baudelaire's Jewish friend is alluded to without artifice in both poems: "Vous l'aviez l'esprit tendre et le cœur vertueux, Tous les biens convoités d'une amitié naïve, Lorsqu'une belle femme, et de naissance juive, Vous conduisit au fond d'un couloir tortueux"; "Hélas! je ne pus me défendre, De ses deux regards assassins, De ses yeux qui faisaient les saints, Et qui louchaient d'un air si tendre. Comme Hélène elle sût fait descendre, Au bruit de lugubres tocsins, Et cavaliers, et fantassins, De la Grèce aux bords du Scamandre, Un Sioux, en voyant ses cheveux, Eût ri de son rire nerveux, Dans l'espoir de scalper sa nuque" (qtd in Lathers 130). It is clear in these lines that "une belle femme, et de naissance juive" whose eyes "louchaient" is Baudelaire's mistress, Sarah La Louchette. Both excerpts reveal the danger in maintaining a relationship with this prostitute, not only was she pulling Baudelaire down a torturous hallway with eyes like assassins, she is also described as capable of defeating armies. The menacing aspect of Sarah La Louchette is not found in her profession as a prostitute, but in her Jewishness, emphasized through her hair that a Native American of the Sioux tribe might even have desired. Baudelaire's feelings for Sarah withstood the admonishment of his poet friends since there is "evidence to suggest that Baudelaire may have even borrowed money for Sarah in an attempt to help her escape a life of prostitution" (Bowles 197).

Although Baudelaire was not mutually exclusive, seeing many other women besides Sarah, this Jewish prostitute has nevertheless been "identified as the most likely source of Baudelaire's venereal infection", serving to enforce and legitimize the poet's friends' warnings of the dangers of frequenting this particular female. Although Sarah's Jewishness had nothing to do with a common disease in prostitution, it seems to be what made her appear more dangerous, capable of corrupting the artist in his artistic abilities and in his physical health not because she was a prostitute, but because she was Jewish (Lathers 132). Baudelaire did finally heed the warnings and even came to believe that Sarah was a dangerous vector in his own life, "as an incarnation of the female contaminator of the artist: a prostitute and Jewish, she represented contamination

through her ethnic origins”, his vitriolic verses in poems of *Les fleurs du mal* attesting to his change of perspective concerning his relations with Sarah (Lathers 132). After sickness and much persuasion from friends and family, Baudelaire stopped seeing Sarah. It was then that the pity and tenderness he exhibited in his early *Poésie de jeunesse*, turned to revulsion, “Baudelaire himself gave a strong impetus to the movement that would thrust the *belle Juive* once and for all into the arena of the *postulation vers Satan* with his description of the *affreuse Juive*” (Lathers 129). The poet’s relations with Sarah were definitively ended when his mother sent him on “a voyage to the Orient in 1841-42 to separate him from bad influences and to encourage him to give up the idea of becoming a poet” (Lathers 129). The Orient was a curious choice of destination for the poet who had been under the influence of a woman who would have been considered as an “Oriental” Jewish prostitute. Nevertheless, a voyage to the Orient did not change Baudelaire’s mind about his Jewish mistress since he had already encountered the *affreuse juive* and was thus unaffected by the potential *belle juive* that inspired so many of his artistic contemporaries upon their “Oriental” travels. Traveling, however, did not agree with Baudelaire and he quickly returned to Paris to begin again his life of as a poet in the company of other creatively inspirational women since Sarah’s influence had been broken. While Baudelaire turned the prostitute for whom he once had tender words into the terrible *affreuse Juive*, it is in the Goucourt brothers’ *Manette Salomon* that “the narration” of this transformation is articulated.

Manette and her Models:

Upon returning to Paris, Baudelaire took up residence on the Ile-Saint-Louis, at 22 quai de Béthune, staying there only briefly from 1842 to 1843. He again appeared on the Ile Saint-Louis in 1845, this time at 17 quai d’Anjou at the home of Fernand Boissard, known either as the hôtel Pimodan or the hôtel de Lauzun. The poet’s presence at the address is noted in the preface that Théophile Gautier wrote for the 1868 edition of *Les fleurs du mal*. In this preface, Gautier sets the scene in Fernand de Boissard’s salon, although he is believed to be mistaken about the date, “La première fois que nous rencontrâmes Baudelaire, ce fut vers le milieu de 1849, à l’hôtel Pimodan, où nous occupions, près de Fernand Boissard, un

appartement fantastique qui communiquait avec le sien par un escalier dérobé caché dans l'épaisseur du mur" (Gautier 1). This phase in Baudelaire's literary career was marked by an encounter with yet another Jewish female and, in the company of Baudelaire, Gautier, and Boissard, and another artist were two women, one of which is of particular importance, "Il y avait là cette superbe Marix qui, toute jeune, a posé pour la *Mignon* de Scheffer, et, plus tard, pour la Gloire distribuant des couronnes, de Paul Delaroche" (Gautier 1). Unlike Sarah La Louchette, Baudelaire never had intimate relations with Joséphine Bloch, otherwise known as Marix, and it is questionable that this other Jewish female had any role in inspiring poetic production for Baudelaire. There is, however, an important connection between Marix, the place where it is theorized that Baudelaire met Sarah La Louchette, and the novel that the Goncourt brothers later wrote. Marix was also known to frequent the dance hall in which Baudelaire encountered Sarah La Louchette, later inspiring the Goncourts to imagine their fictional artist encountering a Jewish model in their novel, *Manette Salomon*.

In the preface of *Les Fleurs du mal*, Gautier also describes Marix in the salon of Fernand Boissard, "Sur le canapé, à demi étendue et le coude appuyé à un cousin, avec une immobilité dont elle avait pris l'habitude dans la pratique de la pose, Maryx, vêtue d'une robe blanche, bizarrement constellée de pois rouges semblable à des gouttelettes de sang, écoutait vaguement les paradoxes de Baudelaire, sans laisser paraître la moindre surprise sur son masque de plus pur type oriental, et faisait passer les bagues de sa main gauche aux doigts de sa main droite, des mains aussi parfaites que son corps, dont le moulage a conservé la beauté". (Gautier, 8) While Marix disappears from Gautier's preface to Baudelaire's *Fleurs du mal* after this brief sighting, she does not vanish from the French cultural memory, immortalized, along with many of her Jewish friends in posing, in paintings and sculptures: "Si vous voulez avoir leurs portraits, vous n'avez qu'à interroger les marbres et les toiles des artistes contemporains, les statues de Pradier et les tableaux de Schopin, les œuvres médiocres et les presque chefs-d'œuvre: elles sont dedans" (Delvau 25). Those writing on Parisian dance halls also assured that the presence of this particular Jewish artist's model in Paris has

remained memorable along with the many other Jewish models of the period from the 1830s to the 1860s, “C’était à l’*Astic* que venait cette belle juive qui avait servi à Paul Delaroche pour sa *Renommée* distribuant des couronnes, dans la fresque de l’hémicycle des Beaux-Arts. C’est drôle, n’est-ce pas ? de voir une *Renommée* danser le cancan... C’était le reine des modèles, celle-là, comme Cadamour en était le roi ; mais si Cadamour s’habillait de ficelles, la belle juive s’habillait autrement, et un peu plus coûteusement. Un beau corps doit porter de beaux vêtements—puisque les règlements de police lui défendent de s’habiller de sa seule beauté, qu’ils considèrent comme une feuille de vigne insuffisante” (Delvau 25). Although the omnipresence of Marix did not inspire Baudelaire, she was, however, most likely an important source of inspiration, a model so to speak, for the Goncourts’ character, Manette Salomon, also a Jewish artist’s model.

Marix was only her *nom de plume*, taken from her father, Marix Bloch. Her real name was Joséphine Bloch, but “Marix” was so widely known that few were familiar with her given name. Joséphine was a sought after model, posing “for works by Ary Scheffer, Charles Steuben and Fernand Boissard de Boisdenier, in addition to Delaroche; the sculptor Adolphe-Victor Geoffroy-Dechaume was said to have made a cast of her in 1843” (Waller 87). Her sisters, Séraphine and Jeannette, were also famous for their beauty and the three together had come to form the exclusive category of artists’ models known as “les Marix”, of which there were naturally only three. Recalling their beauty, Alexandre Privat d’Anglement describes the younger two as the most pure Jewish type ever imagined, “Puisqu’il me faut garder tout ce qu’il y a de plus joli pour la fin, et faire, sans calembour, comme font les enfants, une bouchée de roi, je vais vous décrire Séraphine et sa petite sœur Jeannette. Ce sont des Marix, c’est-à-dire les plus beaux modèles des ateliers de Paris. Peintres et sculpteurs, vous avez trouvé votre rêve dans les formes exquises de ces deux admirables jeunes filles, et votre écueil dans la transparence des tons de leur peau. Figurez-vous, lecteurs, le plus beau type juif qui se puisse voir, des yeux pleins d’ardeur et de rêves impossibles, des cheveux à faire blanchir le fameux noir aile de corbeau, le nez pur, des lèvres, des bras, des pieds, des mains d’une finesse biblique à désespérer tous les poètes objectifs et tous les peintres coloristes. En un mot, si vous voulez voir

le beau, mais le vrai beau, le type oriental dans sa pureté, prenez les Marix, et les plus délicieuses créations des peintres de la Judée s’animeront devant vos yeux” (Anglemont 307). Inspiring artists of all sorts, *les trois Marix* could also have even been a source of inspiration for Balzac, as he was also known to frequent the salon of Fernand Boissard, “By 1845, Marix was living with Boissard at the hôtel Pimodan, 17, quai d’Anjou. Gautier, Baudelaire, Meissonier, Balzac, Delacroix, Ernesta Grisi, Alice Ozy and others visited to enjoy their hospitality, which included music and hashish” (Waller 87).

If the Goncourts did not frequent the Hôtel Pimodan in reality, their artist character, Naz de Coriolis, certainly did in fiction. When asked “— Qu’est-ce qu’on fait à l’hôtel Pimodan ?”, Coriolis paints the picture of this innovative, bohemian, and artistic salon for his artist friends, “— Mais c’est très amusant, dit Coriolis. D’abord, Boissard est très bon garçon... Beaucoup de gens connus et très amusants... Théophile Gautier... la bande de Meissonier... On fait de la musique dans un salon... dans l’autre, on cause peinture, littérature... de tout... Et une antichambre avec des statues... grand genre et pas cher... Un dîner tous les mois... nous avons déboursé chacun six francs pour un couvert en Ruolz... Ça se termine généralement par un punch... Nous avons Monnier qui est superbe ! Il a eu la dernière fois une charge belge, les *prenkirs*... étourdissante !... Et puis Feuchères, qui fait des imitations de soldat, des histoires de Bridet à se tordre... Un monde bon enfant et pas trop canaille... On bavarde, on rit, on se monte... Tout le monde dit des mots drôles... L’autre jour, en sortant, je reconduisais Magimel le lithographe... Il me dit : ‘Ah ! comme j’ai vieilli !... Autrefois, les rues étaient trop étroites... je battais les deux murs. Maintenant c’est à peine que j’accroche un volet !...’” (*Manette* I 15-16). Not of the same aristocratic social standing as Coriolis, himself of a highly original identity—bohemian, Creole, French-Catholic—his friends uncomfortably tease him about his place in the world, “— Quel homme du monde ça fait, ce Coriolis ! Il va chez Boissard, excusez !... Mais tu t’est trompé d’atelier mon vieux... tu aurais dû entrer chez Ingres...” (*Manette* I 16). Nevertheless, Coriolis neither meets Marix at the Hôtel Pimodan nor the Jewish model that will later become his Muse.

While Joséphine Bloch most likely served as inspiration for the Goncourts' Jewish model, she also appears in the Goncourts novel. Mixing fiction and reality, the Marix sisters are found in the imagined studio of an invented master painter, "The Goncourts mention Marix in *Manette Salomon* as one of three models of the same name (the reference is to her sisters, Jeanne and Séraphine) who pose at the fictional atelier of Langibout in the early 1840s" (Lathers 121). The Goncourts created a literary *mise en abîme* by presenting the real-life Jewish models modeling in the fictitious studio where their male protagonist, Coriolis, is studying a few years previous to meeting his Jewish Muse, Manette Salomon, who is herself modeled after the Bloch sisters, "—les corps des trois Marix, le trio de Juives dont l'une a sa superbe nudité peinte dans la Renommée de l'Hémicycle de Delaroche" (*Manette* I 45). More evidence of this inspiration is found the Goncourts' *Journal*, where they mention her relationship with the artist, Boissard, " 'Boissard had for mistress the Jewish Maryx, whom he taught to read and write' (entry for 7 Sept. 1853)" (Lathers 123). In a curious twist of fiction and reality, the Goncourts' fictional painter, Coriolis, frequents the actual salon of Fernand Boissard, whose real-life mistress, Marix, became the inspiration for the fictional mistress of the Goncourt's invented painter, Coriolis. Just before embarking on a long trip to explore the Orient, Coriolis laments the end of a life of parties, often taking place at Boissard's hôtel Pimodan, "Plus de dîners de Boissard, plus de supers, de nuits au champagne..." (*Manette* I 51).

In several accounts Joséphine Bloch is described as divinely beautiful, recalling Balzac's biblical beauties, Esther and Josépha. However, when the Goncourts model their Jewish female after this actual artist's model, they alter her exquisite appearance of with something sinister. The Goncourts' character, Manette, is not only a source of artistic inspiration for Coriolis, she is also a source of failure and despair for the artist. Lathers ponders how Manette's responsibility in ruining Coriolis' artistic career reflects on the Goncourts' impressions of how Marix negatively influenced Fernand Boissard's artistic career in reality since Boissard was nothing more than an amateur dabbling in painting and other forms of art according to the Goncourts: "if Manette was based at least in part on Marix (the initial "M" is also indicative of the allusion), one cannot

help to wonder at the Goucourts' opinion of Boissard's mistress, for Manette is stingy, vicious, and ultimately responsible for the downfall of the artist Coriolis" (Lathers 123). The exquisiteness of the Goncourts' fictional Jewish female is therefore cast in an ominous light with the artist's future defeat hidden behind the deceptive beauty of his Muse. The Goncourts' conception of the model/artist relationship can then be seen as a representation of the Jewish/French relationship as it had come to be considered as parasitic by the middle of the Second Empire. While the *affreuse juive* appears directly in the work of Baudelaire, the Goncourts' novel narrates the transition from *belle juive* to *affreuse juive*, with the later developing throughout the narrative, marking the decidedly negative shift in the French appreciation of the Jewish population particularly within Parisian society, "With *Manette Salomon*... the *belle Juive* was rewritten as *affreuse juive*. After midcentury, the female Jewish model began to be invested with an anti-Semitism seemingly reserved in former times for the male" (Lathers 31). The *belles juives* characters of the first half of the nineteenth-century, their Jewishness pardoned by their biblical beauty, had evolved into the beautiful but dangerous *affreuse juive* that Manette Salomon embodies, a literary representation of the current state of French/Jewish affairs by the middle of the Second Empire.

Born to Marix and Gertrude Bloch, Joséphine, along with her sisters, Séraphine, and Jeannette, were the three children of a Jewish family of which very little is known. All three sisters went on to become artists' models of respected reputation, famous for their beauty and talent. Although there is no evidence of their mother modeling, the fact that all three sisters went into the modeling industry supports the idea that modeling was a family affair for the less wealthy Jewish families in mid-nineteenth-century Paris. The Jewish family with three daughters who posed for numerous artists and various works of art in the middle of the nineteenth century corroborates this theory. Once the oldest of the Bloch sisters began modeling, the path was smoothly paved for the two younger ones. The Goncourts give affirmation to this tradition in Manette's story. Her mother and all of her siblings were, or had been, models: "Mais il y avait une vieille femme, il me semble, je me souviens, dans le temps, qui nous apportait de la parfumerie... — Ça c'est la mère... qui a fait

des enfants, des bottes... tous qui posent... la mère au magasin, à la brocante... Elle, c'est la fille, c'est sa dernière... une dix-huitaine d'années..." (*Manette* I 253). Coriolis recalls having encountered the mother and daughter several years prior to rediscovering Manette as a fully-grown model. No longer able to model herself, Manette's mother had proposed her youngest daughter as a model for a baby Jesus to Coriolis just as he was preparing to leave for a long voyage to the orient, "— Personne de ces messieurs n'aurait besoin d'un petit Jésus ? — demanda la femme avec un sourire humble, et, dégageant la tête de l'enfant, elle montra une petite fille aux yeux bleus" (*Manette* I 54, 53). Coriolis was charmed by Manette as a child of maybe one or two years, foretelling his future fascination with the young woman, "— Oh ! charmante... — dit Coriolis ; et faisant signe à l'enfant : — Viens un peu, petite... Un peu poussée par sa mère, un peu attirée par le monsieur, et marchant vers son regard, moitié peureuse et moitié confiante, elle arriva à lui. Coriolis, la mettant sur ses genoux, lui fit prendre des gâteaux dans des assiettes, sur la table. Puis lui passant la main dans ses petits cheveux, des cheveux d'enfant blonde qui sera brune, et s'amusant les doigts de ce chatouillement de soie, il resta un instant à regarder ce grand et profond bonheur d'enfant que la petite avait dans les yeux" (*Manette* I 52-53).

Far from sinister or unfortunate, the story of Joséphine Bloch's ascension from artist's model, to the mistress of an amateur painter, and then becoming the wife of a foreign aristocrat recalls something of Manette's narrative. Of the fictional Salomon family, Manette is the most successful in the world of Parisian modeling. Of the three sisters, Joséphine also accomplished the most not only in the modeling milieu but also in her life after posing. From model, muse, and mistress, Marix catapulted herself to the status of wife of an aristocrat, "Early in 1847, however, Marix and Boissard separated, and by spring of 1848, she was the mistress of the Baron Herman d'Ahlefeld, an attaché to the Danish ambassador... in 1849 she and Ahlefeld had a daughter and they married two years later. The family moved to Denmark, where they had four more children" (Waller 87). While the details of the relationship between Marix and the baron d'Ahlefeld, are unknown, they did have several children together and, despite the baron's early death, Marix's devotion to

them indicates that she was most likely quite attached to her foreign noble husband. Like Marix, Manette's status changes from model, to mistress, to mother of his child, and finally to wife of the aristocratic, bohemian artist, Naz de Coriolis. It is nevertheless clearly stated that Manette feels no love for Coriolis, neither as an artist, nor as a husband, and even less as the father of her child, "Elle avait accepté Coriolis pour amant sans l'aimer. Elle l'avait rencontré dans un moment où elle n'avait personne. Abandonnée par Buchelet, elle l'avait pris comme une femme qui a l'habitude de l'homme prend celui que l'occasion lui offre et que son goût ne repousse pas. Coriolis ne lui avait ni plu ne déplu : elle n'avait vu en lui qu'une chose, c'est qu'il était artiste, c'est-à-dire un homme de son monde, et qu'il était naturel de connaître" (*Manette* I 309). Unlike Marix, Manette only has one child with Coriolis and, quite different from the baron d'Ahlefeld, her artist remains alive, although his painting career more or less perishes, permanently damaged by what the Goncourts present as his injurious relationship with Manette, a vicious, Jewish opportunist. Marix, however, was not the only possible model for the Goncourts' character; Manette could have been modeled after many more Jewish artists' models of the times.

The Goncourts had no lack of literary resources for the construction of Manette, her story, and her relationship with Coriolis, their imagined artist. There is in fact literary tradition of artists' models appearing in nineteenth-century literature, considered by Walter Benjamin as "panoramic" in which all the various personalities in Paris were described in exaggerated language, forming gross stereotypes. Benjamin posited that the impetus to produce unflattering and derided descriptions and drawings of the diversifying Parisian population was the influx of immigrants from throughout France and Europe, giving the well-established Parisian society a feeling of invasion, "The panorama literature was a project in stereotyping whose extraordinary popularity has been attributed to Parisians' anxieties about the changes in the urban populace... Benjamin suggested that by reducing the alien faces that thronged the streets to innocuous and harmless types, the panorama literature tamed and controlled the menacing aspects of the crowd. The unknown and the unclassifiable was made familiar, legible and intelligible" (Waller 19). The best known of

this form of literary expression popular beginning in the 1840s is the collaborative work, *Les Français peints par eux-mêmes*. It is thus not surprising that the artist's model, especially the Jewish artist's model, having already been portrayed as dangerous and menacing to the artist's career and even to the reputation of the École des Beaux-Arts, makes an appearance in the panorama literature. Émile de La Bédollière's contribution entitled "Le modèle" features a description of both male and female Jewish models and warns of their menacing monopoly over the industry, "Les Juifs pullulent depuis quelques années dans les ateliers. Ils ne voulaient jadis que poser pour la tête, mais cette pruderie n'a pas tardé à s'appriivoiser. Le peuple, qui possède, non moins que les Gascons, la faculté de pousser partout, menace de monopoliser un métier qu'il avait dédaigné longtemps. Tant pis pour les Beaux-Arts" (La Bédollière 368-371).

Léon de Laborde, in his work proposing various critiques and possible ameliorations to the Parisian art world, accuses Jewish models of introducing monotony to the works of art produced and of corrupting the lifestyle of the artists, "Les hommes sont hideux et les femmes abjectes: ceux-là quittent des loges de portier et des ateliers des cordonniers pour poser en Achilles: celles-ci ne laissent que trop percer le métier qu'elles font dans les attitudes qu'elles fournissent aux artistes dans les inspirations comme dans les distractions qu'elles leur donnent. Aux uns et aux autres manquent la distinction native, l'aisance naturelle; ils les remplacent par l'élégance du bal Mabille et la hardiesse de poses affectées... Si la race israélite apporte aux ateliers des formes moins dégradées et un type plus caractérisé, ces formes sont grêles, ce type est juif, et ces modèles jettent sur toute l'école un ton monotone auquel il faut la soustraire... tous ces modèles de métier, ne faisant la pose qu'un accessoire de leur vie vulgaire ou désordonnée, apportent à l'atelier de l'artiste le laisser-aller et l'indifférence; il y a absence complète de communauté entre eux et l'œuvre à laquelle ils prennent part" (Laborde 9-10). For the Goncourts, Manette is the exact incarnation of the danger described by Laborde. Her presence in the studio of Coriolis and her long-term relationship with the artist, as model, mistress, mother of his child, and wife, corrupt the artist and his art. Coriolis becomes contaminated by

Manette's intrinsically noxious nature as a model and as a Jewish female and he stops producing meaningful work. Manette's story is that "of a Jewish model blamed for the failures of her artist-lover" (Lathers 17).

Having established the French, and particularly Parisian, perception of Jewish models as threatening to the arts and the artists, how then did modeling come to be perceived as a Jewish profession? For Jews in nineteenth-century Paris, modeling became an extension of the typically Jewish art of peddling, "According to a census taken by the Consistory in 1809, most Parisian Jews were poor and many continued in occupations similar to those they had pursued in rural areas... The largest number—336—were 'junk dealers, peddlers and shopkeepers'. The list included a single *modèle de l'académie* or artist's model, but since posing was closely associated with peddling... it seems likely that more than one member of the Jewish community practiced both *métiers*" (Waller 82). The Goncourts first present Manette's mother as an itinerant perfume seller, "Mais il y avait une vieille femme, il me semble, je me souviens, dans le temps, qui nous apportait de la parfumerie" (*Manette* I 253). She most likely came to modeling by chance, selling perfume by knocking on the doors of artists who needed models and not perfume. This method of seeking clients or employment continues once Manette's mother can no longer pose. Instead of selling perfume or her services as a model, she knocks on doors to propose Manette as a model for baby Jesus. In the panorama literature, this proximity of peddling and posing is seen as originating in the Jewish nature, labeled as "naturellement mercantile", predisposed in other words to sales. In posing models were selling their image and likeness to artists. Once a Jewish model was no longer employable as a model, the next logical step was either to return to peddling or to open a shop. Manette's mother eventually opens an antique shop, "une brocante", after retiring from the modeling profession.

Another example of panorama literature is Louis Leroy's, *Physionomies parisiennes, Artistes et rapins*, an entire book dedicated to caricatures of the art world, featuring the various individuals orbiting around the central figure of the artist. Although appearing after the publication of *Manette Salomon*, the entry pertaining to 'Le modèle' is revealing in the similarity between peddling and modeling, both of which require making

rounds and knocking on doors. In this imagined scene, a young Jewish female calls on an artist in his studio, and instead of proposing items to sell she proposes her services as a model, “On a frappé à la porte de l’atelier. Une jeune fille, mise décemment, se présente. — Qu’y a-t-il pour votre service, mademoiselle ? — Monsieur, je viens vous demander si vous avez besoin d’un modèle. — Ah ! très bien. Entrez donc. La politesse de l’artiste est tombée immédiatement au-dessous de zéro. — Vous ne posez que la tête. — Je pose tout, monsieur. — Voyons ! Et la jeune fille, décemment mise, ôte ses gants, son chapeau... et le reste. Elle monte sur la table du modèle, donne tous les mouvements demandés par le peintre. — Hanchez un peu... Levez les bras... Arrondissez-les... Bien... Vous ne développez pas assez le torse... Vous vous appelez ? — Rachel. — Êtes-vous exacte ? — Oh ! oui, monsieur. — Voyons le dos... Il laisse un peu à désirer... il a des maigreurs. — Dame ! je n’ai que dix-sept ans, et à la maison on mange si mal. — Êtes-vous seule chez vous ? — Non, monsieur ; j’ai trois sœurs. — Posent-elles ? Elles ont commencé par poser ; aujourd’hui... — Aujourd’hui ? — Elles ne posent plus. — Montrez les mains... Superbes ! Vous me convenez ; mais si je commence une étude d’après vous, vous ne me lâcherez pas ? — Oh ! monsieur, pour qui me prenez-vous ? — C’est que je tiens beaucoup à ne pas rester en plan. — Monsieur, ma sœur Judith n’a consenti à se laisser enlever par un comte allemand qu’après avoir fini de poser pour L. Gérôme. — Voilà qui me décide. Rhabillez-vous. Vous viendrez demain à dix heures...” (Leroy 107-112). The questions that the artist asks the Jewish model reveal the cynicism of the artist in terms of the reliability of the Jewish model. Jewish models had gained the negative reputation of being opportunistic, leaving an artist for a more profitable situation, a more promising artist or an advantageous marriage. While Manette’s mother most likely began modeling in the same manner, by knocking on an artist’s door, it is more likely that her original intention was to sell perfume and that modeling became a new opportunity to earn a better living.

Female models of Jewish origin were therefore prevalent enough in the middle of the nineteenth century for the Goncourts’ to find ample subjects of study for their own Jewish model. Despite the continued impression that Jewish models were taking over the modeling scene and influencing the art and the artists, it

was in fact just an impression. Models of diverse origins, including Italian and Parisian models, began to replace Jewish models during the Second Empire and Third Republic, especially as Jews began to leave the poorer castes of society for the middle and even upper classes, "...while Jews continued to pose into the 1860s, they were not as large a proportion of the population of models as was suggested by Laborde and others... The number of Jewish models no doubt also decreased as Jews acculturated to French society. By the 1840s, many Jews had adopted the French language and the prevailing dress and social mores. They were no longer clustered in the lower trades, but were moving into the middle classes. In 1851, only 20 percent of Parisian Jews were considered indigent, and according to one nineteenth-century scholar of the Jewish community, by 1853 only 7 percent of the population remained peddlers. By the Second Empire, Jews were prominent in business, the press, theater and government" (Waller 83). The memory of the Jewish model remained present in the French perception of the modeling industry, resilience linked to the growing political and societal anti-Semitism. This memory of the Jewish model was not fond and rather tinted by the idea that the Jewish model was a dangerous source of corruption, for the artist and his art.

One nineteenth-century artist, Alexandre Schanne, recounts his experience with a Jewish model with inspirational beauty and an uninspiring attitude. Of these three Jewish female artists' models, fictional and real, Manette, Marix, and Schanne's Caroline are nevertheless of an altogether different appearance. Marix represented the classical Jewish Oriental type, "The *belle juive* model was characterized by very dark hair and eyes, an oval face with either an ivory or olive tint, arched eyebrows, full lips, graceful hands—and these were the features of Joséphine Marix" (Lathers 352). Manette does not have dark brown hair or eyes. As a child she was blond, " — J'étais toute petite... Maman me menait dans les ateliers pour poser les Enfants Jésus... J'étais blonde, à ce qu'il paraît, dans ce temps-là", but a sort of blond that would become brown latter in life, "des cheveux d'enfant blonde qui sera brune" (*Manette* 310, 54). Having become a brunette as an adolescent, Manette nevertheless retains traits of her previous blondness, "l'artiste étudiait ces bras ronds, aux coudes rougissants, qui, levés, blanchissaient sur ces cheveux bruns, ces bras au bas desquels la lumière,

entrant dans l'ombre de l'aisselle, montrait des fils d'or frisant dans du jour" (*Manette* 264). With golden hairs on her arms, Manette most likely falls into the category of what the Goncourts' fictional artist classifies as "des blondes d'Alsace, à la blondeur dorée du blé mûr" (*Manette* 256). While Marix appeared pale, with an ivory tint, Manette is golden in skin tone, a characteristic that emphasizes her Oriental difference, a proximity to the sun and warm, dry landscapes, "cette chair, une chair de brune, mate et absorbant la clarté, blanche de cette chaude blancheur du Midi qui efface les blancheurs nacrées de l'Occident, une de ces chairs de soleil, dont la lumière meurt dans des demi-teintes de rose thé et des ombres d'ambre" (*Manette* 263-264). Manette, however, has blue eyes, "des yeux bleus bizarres". Manette is different from the traditional Jewish model, her peculiar blue eyes with her warm, golden skin making her somewhat of an anomaly. But, it was not unheard of for Jewish models to have blue eyes. Théodore Chassériau's biblical painting, *Esther se parant pour être présentée au roi Assuérus*, or *La Toilette d'Esther*, demonstrates the possible variations in the physical appearance of Jewish models with "yet another variant of the Jewess... with golden hair and blue eyes" (Waller 86). Alexandre Schanne's Jewish artist's model also had blue eyes, only with dark hair and pale skin.

Although there is no real physical resemblance besides blue eyes, Schanne's Jewish Caroline is however another element proving the diversity of Jewish artist's models after which the Goncourts might have modeled Manette. As one of six children of a toy maker and merchant in the Marais, Schanne's father set him on a path of drawing and painting, first taking classes at Les Arts et Métiers and eventually being admitted to the studio of Léon Cogniet to become a painter. It was during the period at the studio Cogniet that he encountered Caroline. Due to the unexpected absence of the model scheduled to pose, Schanne was sent out to find another, "Je vous disais donc qu'un jour, le modèle de femme fit défaut à l'atelier Cogniet. Mes camarades me donnèrent la mission délicate d'en aller quérir un par la ville... Le hasard d'une rencontre avec un ami à qui je confiai mon embarras, me fit réussir on ne peut mieux. D'après son indication, je me rendis rue du Figuier-Saint-Paul, la rue même où je demeurais depuis peu... Le renseignement était bon... Je tombais dans une famille juive. La jeune fille qui vint m'ouvrir était aussi belle que les plus belles de sa

race. Elle avait les cheveux noirs naturellement ondulés; un front peu élevé mais large; des yeux bleus abrités sous de longs cils; une bouche dont le dessin correct et la belle couleur sans maquillage aurait fait mourir de dépit les courtisanes de Venise. Et puis des dents, oh ! des dents qu'il y avait plaisir à se faire montrer en excitant le rire de la joyeuse enfant par quelque gai propos. Inutile de vous parler du corps qui était un chef-d'œuvre sculptural; non que le sujet manque d'intérêt, mais il en a peut-être trop" (Schanne 84). Lucky enough to find a model on the suggestion of a friend, and coincidentally on the very same street as the room he was renting in the medieval hôtel de Sens, it is however not surprising that Schanne found a Jewish model in the Marais. Most of these Jewish female artists' models were poor and lived in the Marais. Caroline was an experienced model and agreed to come to the atelier Cogniet in the afternoons since she also worked nearby with the sculptor, James Pradier, in the mornings, becoming an important model in the studio where Schanne was learning, "Caroline M*** devint un des modèles favoris de l'atelier Cogniet" (Schanne 85).

Caroline, like the actual Marix and the fictional Manette, was illiterate, a common trait of the Jewish models of mid-nineteenth-century Paris. Taken by her beauty, Schanne seized the opportunity when he learned of her illiteracy, proposing to come to her home for lessons. He describes the small and rudimentary home where she lived with her parents and two brothers on the rue du Figuier-Saint-Paul on his first visit, "l'unique chandelle éclairant ce taudis. La lumière étant devenue plus vive, j'inventoriai du regard un mobilier qui n'était pas celui dans lequel se prélassent les plus riches fils d'Israël. Il y avait là, un lit avec cinq ou six matelas posés en pile, et visiblement destinés à être mis par terre, au moment du coucher; c'étaient aussi quelques chaises bancales et des ustensiles de cuisine traînant partout. On voyait encore accrochées à la muraille de petites boîtes à courroies servant à vendre des bibelots dans la rue, car j'étais chez des camelots" (Schanne 86). As a biographical account, the cohabitation of an artist's model with a family of peddlers proves the link between peddling and modeling. Although he does not seem surprised by the obvious poverty displayed throughout the tiny one-room home, he does make a comparison with the stereotypical wealthy Jewish banking family thought to live in lavish *hôtels particuliers* with luxurious furniture, art, and

decoration typically represented by the Rothschild residences in and outside of Paris. If Schanne had ever believed this stereotype to be true for the whole Jewish community, the contradiction presented by Caroline's home in the poor Jewish neighborhood of the Marais would have proven otherwise.

Schanne, however, could not judge the neighborhood in which Caroline and her family live, especially not the street, since he himself grew up in the Marais and was living on the rue du Figuier-Saint-Paul when he met Caroline. Referred to as the rue du Figuier, the Saint-Paul was an addition designating the historical association of this street with the royal residence of Charles V, of which the hôtel de Sens was an important part, "Cette maison, dans la suite, fut cédée à Charles V et servit, ainsi que plusieurs autres habitations, à former son hôtel royal de Saint-Paul" (Lazare 220). This neighborhood and this street, with the hôtel de Sens as the main attraction, served for many years as a residence for governmental and royal figures, "Il servit dans la suite d'habitation à plusieurs prélats illustres, tels que l'archevêque Duprat, chancelier et premier ministre; Louis de Bourbon, prince de la famille royale; Louis de Guise, cardinal de Lorraine; Jean Bertrandi, garde-des-sceaux, etc. Marguerite de Valois, première femme de Henri IV, y résida plusieurs années" (Lazare 220). Following the Revolution, the hôtel de Sens became national property and was sold. The once royal residence was in a sorry state and apparently open to less than wealthy renters, "En 1842, on construit une maison sur les dépendances de cet hôtel. La façade, curieux débris de l'architecture du XVI^e siècle, vient d'être dégradée par la brosse du badigeonneur, et sur la porte d'entrée de l'antique manoir des archevêques de Sens, on lit ces deux mots : *Roulage générale*" (Lazare 219-220). The condition of the hôtel de Sens indicates the relative poverty and degradation of the neighborhood, filled with relics of a royal past, abandoned sometime before the Revolution and left to be occupied by the poor and transient, of which the Jewish population in Paris had quite a large amount, despite popular belief in the Rothschild myth.

After the first session in the Jewish family's one room home, Caroline took her lessons in the hôtel de Sens in Schanne's rented room, "elle vint plus d'une fois continuer ses études de lecture chez moi, dans mon Hôtel de Sens" (Schanne 88). Schanne soon realized that reading and writing were really not of great interest

to Caroline, “Mais je dois dire qu’elle se dissipa de plus en plus” and that she preferred dancing at one of the many Parisian dance halls to learning to read and write, “La danse était ce qu’elle aimait... La séduisante fille se livrait à des ébats chorégraphiques, et sur quel plancher” (Schanne 88). This real Jewish model has yet another characteristic in common with the actual Marix and the fictional Manette. Marix frequented the dance hall previously mentioned, *L’Astic* or *La Reine Blanche* in the Marais, that was popular amongst the Jewish population. It is also one of the presumed places where Manette and Coriolis meet in the Goncourts’ novel, “Coriolis also tracks down Manette at a Jewish dance hall (probably in reference to *L’Astic*) to finalize their agreement that she pose for him” (Lathers 123). Caroline, however, preferred the dance hall referred to as *le bal de l’île Louviers*, “Près de L’île Louviers, disparue aujourd’hui, et qui dans ce temps-là n’avait pour habitants que des buches de bois, se trouvait un marchand de vin, qui donnait à danser au premier étage. Il n’y avait pas alors, dans la grande ville, de coin plus noir et plus désert; excellent décor pour un acte ou un chapitre des *Mystères de Paris*... C’est dans ce bastringue, fréquenté par les oisifs du port, que Mademoiselle (sous prétexte de se dégourdir les membres après l’immobilité que lui imposait son métier de modèle,) donnait libre cours à sa nouvelle passion” (Schanne 89).

Marius Boisson wrote about this disappeared island, one of a few off the Ile Saint-Louis, no longer in existence, along with the makeshift dance hall housed within a wine seller’s establishment that Schanne describes, “On arrivait à la salle de danse par un escalier tournant ne permettant pas d’y passer deux de front... Il fallait un certain temps avant de se remettre et de percevoir les êtres qui se trémoussaient dans ce milieu, éclairé seulement par quelques quinquets fumeux, brûlant avec peine dans cette atmosphère épaisse... La place réservée à la danse était entourée d’une barrière en bois ; il y avait des tables à droite et à gauche laissant un étroit passage au milieu ; presque toutes étaient garnies de saladiers de vin sucré avec ronds de citron, et, que les consommateurs versaient à l’aide d’une cuillère à pot. Les rafraichissements délicats, à l’usage des dames, faisaient absolument défaut” (Boisson, qtd in Schanne 90). The crude and somber atmosphere of this impromptu dance hall reveals the still dilapidated state of the Ile Saint-Louis in

the middle of the nineteenth century, yet to be renovated, serving as a destination for the lower and sometimes criminal classes and well known for the *entrepôt de vin* later be mentioned in Proust's novel.

Schanne had only reluctantly agreed to meet Caroline at this makeshift dance hall, quite possibly due to an infamous reputation, "Elle m'avait engagé plus de dix fois à m'y rendre à sa suite. Prenant mon courage à deux mains (je devrais dire à deux jambes), je m'y rendis un soir" (Boisson, qtd in Schanne 89-90). His apprehensions are proven legitimate when he is accosted by the apparently numerous suitors of the Jewish model that he is also courting, "Immédiatement, une douzaine de ces malandrins m'entourèrent et, sans explication, m'entraînèrent dans l'escalier. Les coups pleuvaient... Sous cette énorme pression du nombre, j'étais arrivé en bas le chapeau cabossé, le nez en sang, toute ma personne en loques" (Schanne 91). After this disastrous dance hall encounter, Schanne concludes his lessons with Caroline, appalled by her apparent indifference to the beating he received from his many and unexpected rivals for the attention of the lovely but dissipated Jewish model, "Ce qui surtout me rendait Caroline répulsive, c'était son sang-froid pendant la bousculade... Tout était rompu... Le lendemain matin, je renvoyais son alphabet dans sa tribu, ses cahiers de bâtons, son matériel de classe enfin" (Schanne 92). Finding Caroline at a dance hall if not directly on the Ile Saint-Louis, but just beside it and considered a part of the conglomeration of small islands grouped together under the purview of the largest, recalls Baudelaire on the quai de Béthune, where he met Marix at Fernand Boissard's home and artists rendezvous in the hôtel Pimodan. The world of dance halls, Jewish models, and the artists that painted them appears thus very small, a tight-knit atmosphere that importantly inspired of the Goncourts' world of artists and their Jewish models in *Manette Salomon*.

All three Jewish females, Marix, Caroline, and Manette, real and fictional, were therefore of impoverished origins, never having learned to read or write. They were often found in the oldest or poorest neighborhoods of the city, the Maris, the Quartier Latin, or the Ile Saint-Louis. Their parents were most likely itinerant peddlers who happened to discover upon on their rounds selling various products a means to move beyond the business of peddling. Once the lovely Jewish daughters were engaged as models, paid

poorly but more than what their peddler parents made in a day or even week, they began to use their earnings in activities of amusement such as dancing at one of the various Parisian dance halls. Artists and their Jewish models frequently met in these places of entertainment. Both Caroline and Schanne would continue to frequent dance halls of somewhat ill repute and their paths crossed several years later at the well-known establishment, *La Grande-Chaumière*, boulevard Montparnasse, “Je crois que sept à huit ans plus tard, je la rencontrai à la Chaumière. Elle était suivie de sa femme de chambre, mais elle n’avait encore appris à lire ni à écrire, ayant eu probablement autre chose à faire” (Schanne 92). The first official meeting between the artist, Coriolis, and his desired model, Manette, also takes place in a dance hall, but this particular dance hall experience as imagined by the Goncourts is much more Jewish than any other dance hall in Paris.

The assumption that the dance hall where Coriolis makes Manette an offer to come to his studio to pose is *L’Astic* on boulevard Saint-Antoine in the Marais is however confounded by the account given in the Goncourts’ novel. The dance hall appearing in *Manette Salomon* is not located in the Marais, but in a neighborhood more associated with the theatrical setting of the *Grands Boulevards*, on rue du Château-d’Eau in the 10th arrondissement. The Goncourts were surely inspired by the greater proportion of Jewish attendees at *L’Astic*, but the dance hall mentioned in their novel was in reality much different. The *Salle Barthélemy* was a popular and multifunctional place for various events with a public far from limited to one particular religious identity. Alfred Delvau describes the history and ambiance of this large establishment, “Elle existe aujourd’hui rue du Château-d’Eau; mais, il y a une vingtaine d’années, elle existait rue de la Douane... elle s’appelle Salle Barthélemy, — ce qui est fort honorable; autrefois elle s’appelait le *Champ de navets*... Le *Champ de navets* durerait encore si le terrain ne coûtait pas si cher à Paris, où l’on a trop de profit à bâtir des maisons de dix étages pour laisser un arpent en friche : il dut donc disparaître, ainsi que les baraques avoisinantes, pour faire place à ce que vous savez, et, comme il ne fallait pas que ses habitués s’envolassent trop loin, son propriétaire songea à édifier, rue du Château-d’Eau, une salle plus en harmonie avec les besoins de l’époque... C’est ainsi que la *Salle Barthélemy* succéda au *Champ de navets*” (Delvau 114-

115). Originally located rue de la Douane, now rue Léon Jouhaux, in the 10th arrondissement, when the owner moved the dance hall to the new location on rue du Château-d'Eau the expanded capacity allowed for greater possibilities of hosting different events and spectacles, "Tout le monde connaît cette salle ambitieuse, qui voulait être à la fois bal, concert, théâtre, opéra, je ne sais plus quoi encore, et qui, après divers essais—malheureux—s'est décidée à n'être qu'un bal, assez fréquenté du reste, les dimanches, mardis, jeudis et samedis. Ses bals d'hiver jouissent aussi d'une certaine vogue—dans une certaine portion du public parisien : on y voit des pierrots et des pierrettes, comme dans les autres bals, mais surtout des titis, des chicards, et même des balochards, trois types qu'on pourrait croire aussi disparus que les mastodontes et le mégalonix antédiluviens" (Delvau 114-115). This popular venue was often rented by various ethnic or religious groups and communities for special occasions, such as the one during which the Goncourts' bohemian, aristocratic artist, Naz de Coriolis, serendipitously comes across the model he is seeking.

Recently returned to Paris from a long trip to the Orient, staying on in Turkey for several years, Coriolis finds himself at the dance hall in question with his long-time artist companion, Anatole, "Un soir qu'Anatole et lui battaient les boulevards, avec une soirée vide devant eux, Anatole tomba en arrêt devant l'affiche d'un grand bal à la salle Barthélemy. — Tiens ! — dit-il, — c'est le Carnaval des juifs... si nous y allions... Ils entrèrent rue du Château-d'Eau dans la salle où la fête de la Pourime, — le vieil anniversaire de la chute d'Aman et de la délivrance des Juifs par Esther, — était célébrée par un bal public" (Goncourt 255). Although this dance hall is nowhere designated as a particularly Jewish destination, the Goncourts reinvented it for an evening as the venue for the Jewish holiday of Purim. The Goncourts' have interpreted this religious holiday as a carnival due to the costumes and disguises that are worn. When Coriolis enters the salle Barthélemy, he becomes aware of, and uneasy with, the Jewish presence in Paris to which he previously paid no attention. Observing the dancers and the mingling crowd, the artist is unsettled by the subterfuge that easily tricks the untrained eye into believing the scene to be perfectly Parisian. At first glance, Coriolis sees an ordinary dance hall filled with Parisians disguised for a costume party. The artist, however, sees

through the subterfuge to discern, according to the Goncourts, the true nature of the group gathered there, “C’était un bal qui ressemblait, au premier aspect, à tous les autres bals parisiens où le cancan fait le plaisir. Cependant, au de deux ou trois tours, Coriolis commença à y démêler un caractère. Cette foule, pareille de surface et d’ensemble à toutes les foules, ces hommes, ces femmes sans particularité frappant, habillés des costumes, des airs de Paris, et tout parisiens d’apparence, laissèrent voir bientôt à son œil de peintre et d’ethnographe le type effacé, mais encore visible, les traits d’origine, la fatalité des signes où survit la race” (*Manette* I 256) The language that the Goncourts employ to describe the artist’s ability to see through the false Parisian appearance to the racial origins hidden beneath is of evidence of the influence of modern anti-Semitism taking root in France. The Jewishness that Coriolis distinguishes beneath the Parisian exterior is explained in racial terms with physical ethnic traits revealing Jewish origins, and no longer based on religion.

As Coriolis continues to observe the throng filling the dance hall, peeling away the disguise of a typically Parisian appearance and revealing the true racial identity beneath, it becomes clear that the sentiments of the aristocratic French public, of which the Goncourt brothers’ artist stands as a representative, are not friendly or compassionate when it comes to their Jewish neighbors. The portrait that this artist paints of the Jews gathered for Purim is filled with repulsion, “Il remarqua des visages brouillés, sur lesquels se mêlait la coupe fière de profil des peuples de désert à des humilités louches de commerces douteux de grande ville, des teints plombés tout à la fois par un ancien soleil et par une réverbération de vieil argent, des jeunes gens aux cheveux laineux, à la tête de bélier, des figures à cheveux papillotés, à gros diamant faux sur la chemise, étalant ce luxe de velours gras qu’aiment les marchands de choses suspectes, de petits yeux allumés de la fièvre du lucre, et des sourires d’Arabes dans des barbes de crin. Il reconnut, sous les capuchons et les palatines, ces femmes qu’il avait vues au plein air du Temple et dans les boutiques de la rue Dupetit-Thouars. C’étaient des blondes d’Alsace, à la blondeur dorée du blé mûr, des chevelures noires et crépées, des nez busqués, des ovales fuyant dans des pâtures ambrées de joue et de cou d’où se détachait la coquille rose de l’oreille, des coins de lèvres ombrées de poil follet, des bouches poussées en avant comme par un

souffle, des épaules décolletées avaient une ombre de duvet dans le creux du dos” (*Manette* I 255-257)

Despite the tangible disgust that the Goncourts impart in their description of the crowd at this Jewish holiday, the *carnavalesque* setting that they have imagined for the Jewish gathering of Purim and their observations of the Jewish partygoers are in fact appropriate for this particular event. During Purim, disguises and the consumption of alcohol are encouraged in order to blur and confuse. The Goncourts have, however, distorted the traditions of this Jewish holiday to fit their anti-Semitic agenda and the blurriness and confusion serve to label the Jewish crowd as racially grotesque.

Based on the location of the dance hall, rue du Château-d’Eau, another street mentioned, rue Dupetit-Thouars, and a reference to the marché du Temple, the Goncourts designate a relatively enlarged perimeter for the Jewish community of popular origins. From the triangle created in the Marais by the rue de Rivoli, the rue Vieille du Temple, and the rue de Turenne, with the rue des Rosiers cutting through the center, it is evident in the Goncourts’ novel that the lower income Jewish community had spread north and slightly west. With more and more Jewish immigrants arriving in the city throughout the nineteenth century and the existing Jewish population having already earned enough to begin to leave the Marais for more affluent areas, this section of Paris, not far from the Marais and the Sentier—another neighborhood privileged by Jewish cloth sellers—housed a burgeoning Jewish community. Furthermore, the salle Barthélemy on rue du Château-d’Eau was not far from one of the most important synagogues in Paris, the official temple of the Parisian Consistory, on the rue de Notre-dame-de-Nazareth. The various markets including *La rotonde du Temple*, *Le marché du Temple*, and *Le carreau du Temple*, would have been the closest to the original Jewish community in the Marais, and therefore frequented by the neighboring Jewish communities. That the Goncourts chose this location for “le Carnival des Juifs” in the middle of the Second Empire confirms both the expansion of the lower income Jewish community beyond the Marais and the movement away from the Marais of the earlier Jewish population of immigrants, mainly from the Alsace-Lorraine region of eastern France. Having become more financially comfortable and more integrated into the greater Parisian society,

the original community left the Marais to inhabit newer areas to the north. This movement opened the Marais to new waves of Jewish immigrants from increasingly more eastern regions of Europe who would name their new neighborhood in Paris *Le Pletzl*, little place in Yiddish.

Not only have the Goncourts endowed their aristocratic, bohemian French artist with the ability to see through the disguise of a popular Parisian appearance to an ancient racial Jewishness beneath the surface, they have also given him the science of an ethnographer. Having traveled to the Middle East and spent much time observing the various populations in the multicultural port city of Istanbul, Coriolis is especially well equipped for detecting the distant ‘Oriental’ origin of the Jews in Paris within the curious mixture of a modern cosmopolitan presentation and the remaining traces of a nomadic desert people in perpetual exile. With this flair of detection combined with his artistic talents and experience in traveling in the Orient, Coriolis is also associated with the tradition of French artists, painters, and writers traveling throughout the Mediterranean basin, most often to North Africa and, working almost as ethnographers, bringing back drawn and written sketches of the various ethnic and cultural representations they encountered. Although this genre of travel painting and writing existed before the nineteenth century, the French exploits in North Africa, beginning with Napoléon I in Egypt and continuing in Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco following the French colonial conquest of Algiers in 1830, greatly increased the number of artists traveling to these places that were often seen as the exotic Orient.

The Goncourts’ artist falls into the actual artistic lineage of Orientalists such as Ingres, Delacroix, and Chassériau, painters who traveled throughout North Africa and Asia Minor in search of inspiration. However, Coriolis is in the second generation of Orientalist’s and has learned the trade of painting in admiration of their work. When this heir of the French Orientalists returns from his travels, his painting takes on a new aspect that the first generation did not have, “Coriolis était revenu d’Asie Mineure avec un talent dont l’originalité, alors toute neuve, faisait sensation parmi le petit cercle d’amis qui fréquentaient l’atelier de la rue de Vaugirard... Il rapportait un Orient tout différent de celui que Decamps avait montré

aux yeux de Paris, un Orient de lumière aux ombres blondes, tout pétillant de couleurs tendres” (*Manette* I 210) Despite the Goncourts’ presentation of their Orientalist as an innovator of the movement, Coriolis has adopted an Ingres painting, *Le Bain turc*, begun in 1852 and completed in 1862, for his own Turkish bath scene. It is for this painting that the Goncourts’ painter is in search of the perfect female model of a mysterious and “Oriental” beauty. The artist faces great difficulty in finding the right female figure, complaining that there are no longer any decent models in Paris, “Il n’y a plus de corps à Paris... voilà six mois que nous n’avons pas pu avoir un modèle propre... Une femme qui ait pour un liard de race, de distinction, un ensemble pas trop canaille... où ça se trouve-t-il? sais-tu, toi? Oh! les modèles... une espèce finie... [...] Il n’y a plus de modèles! ...Et celles qu’on a encore la chance d’attraper, sont-ce des modèles? Ça n’a pas de tendons... ça ne *crispe* pas!... ça ne *crispe* pas!...” (*Manette* I 245) Changes in the industry led to a scarcity of Jewish female models in the 1850s and 1860s. The trend in artistic style had shifted away from historical and Oriental settings, for which Jewish models were ideal, to more modern Parisian scenes featuring the typically Parisian female. The few models that were available fit this new trend and Jewish models had become something of the past. Coriolis is however still enthralled by Oriental subjects and when he finally discovers the Jewish model that becomes his muse, her golden coloring fits perfectly with the artist’s new perspective of the Orient with warmer and more sparkling colors.

The artist’s lamentation for the loss of talented models reveals the void created in the wake of the domination of Jewish models. Despite their rumored superior modeling capabilities, they were also thought to have the tendency of working to advance their position in life, often succeeding in this endeavor with an advantageous marriage, and leaving their artists without a model to finish their work, “Ça vous donne deux séances... et puis, à la troisième, vous rencontrez votre étude, dans un petit coupé, coiffée en chien, qui vous dit: ‘Bonjour!...’ Une femme lancée, et plus de pose” (*Manette* I 245). Louis Leroy confirms this negative characteristic particularly associated with exactly the kind of model that Coriolis is searching for, “Les juives ont eu et ont encore le monopole de la pose. Leur beauté originelle et un certain dédain du qu’en

dira-t-on les prédisposent tout naturellement à l'état de modèle. Malheureusement, la *bicherie* fait concurrence à la peinture, et l'artiste n'est jamais sûr de garder jusqu'à la fin de son tableau la Vénus de longue qui lui a servi à le commencer" (Leroy 107). Joséphine Bloch, leaving behind her previous career of modeling after having married a Danish aristocrat, is a perfect example of a model's drive to socially ascend, "Il est cependant assez aisé de repérer une élite féminine émergente dont la rapide ascension sociale sous la monarchie de Juillet, liée à celle d'une bourgeoisie juive, capte l'attention. Certaines épouses de notables israélites tiennent des salons réputés. Plus visible encore est le succès fulgurant des comédiennes ou, dans un registre plus sulfureux, celui des courtisanes de haut vol" (Fournier 98). Although Jewish models are not mentioned, they fell into the categories of "comédiennes" or "courtisanes de haut vol" that model occasionally and became "épouses de notables". Abandonning Fernand Boissard and the Hôtel Pimodan, Joséphine Bloch's position in society only increased from model to wife of an aristocrat.

Based on the difficulty that Coriolis encounters in attempting to find a model to his liking, a Jewish model, the Goncourts demonstrate the actual shifts occurring in Paris in both the Jewish population and the artistic world across the nineteenth century, "During the end of the Restoration and the July Monarchy (about 1825-48), the mythical grisette and then the Jewish poser dominated the female modeling scenes of Parisian bohemia. Jules Clarétie notes that there were two distinct periods of female models prior to the Italian: the Parisian "grisette du faubourg" of the pre-1830 era and the "Juive d'Afrique" of the post-1830 era (*La vie à Paris*, 191) The second period relates to Napoleon III's Second Empire (1852-70), during which Italian immigrants who came to the urban centers of France as a result of the Industrial Revolution began to dominate the modeling trade. During this time female models were identified either as *Juives* or *Italiennes*, Jewish or Italian women with more emphasis on the Italian. The third period relates to the turn of the century (1870s to World War I), the "golden age" of the model... a period that witnessed the apex and decline of the Italian model and the rise of the Parisian type" (Clarétie, qtd in Lathers 24). Coriolis is seeking that which had become a rare commodity, a talented and equally beautiful Jewish model, not interested in

social ascension, who could represent the exotic Orient for his painting of a Turkish bath. The rarity of the Jewish model in Paris of the Second Empire proves that, with transformations in the in the Jewish population of Paris as more and more Parisian Jews moved into the middle and upper middle class, even into the haute bourgeoisie and occasionally the aristocracy, Jewish women no longer needed to model for financial survival. When Coriolis finally discovers Manette Salomon, one of the last Jewish models, he believes to have “déniché la perle rare”, a belief that will soon be revealed as an artistically fatal mistake.

As Coriolis begins to discover Manette’s character, it is revealed that she truly is *la perle rare* since there is nothing linking Manette to her literary Jewish female precedents. She shares no common traits with Balzac’s Jewish female icons that had in fact lent to the creation of the *belle juive* myth. She is not frivolous and emotional like Esther, nor is she ambitious like Josépha, she does not fall in love with Coriolis like Esther for Lucien, nor does she climb the social ladder like Josépha does on the backs of various men, each more socially elevated than the one before, financially and emotionally ruining all until reaching the top. Manette shows no interest in wealth, jewelry, fancy clothing, even marriage to an aristocrat, “Elle ne semblait pas avide. Pour la lier à lui, il n’avait pas la ressource dont use à Paris l’amant riche auprès de la fille, la ressource de la griser de luxe, de plaisirs, et de tout ce qui asservit à un homme les coquetteries et la sensualités d’une maîtresse. Manette n’avait point les petits sens friands de la femme” (*Manette* I 278) In their description of Manette’s strange personality, the Goncourts evoke a Jewish stereotype much older than the *belle juive*. Manette curiously recalls certain Jewish male literary figures like Shakespeare’s Shylock and Balzac’s characters that take after the Shylock figure: the Antique dealer, Gobseck, and Magus. Manette has what Balzac called a capacity to conserve her life force through abnegation, “De sa race, de cette race sans ivrognes, elle montrait la sobriété, une espèce d’indifférence pour le boire et le manger... elle était insensible aux bijoux, à la soie, au velours, à ce qui met du luxe sur la femme... elle avait gardé sa mise modeste de petite ouvrière honnête... des robes en laine, de petits châles malheureux en imitation de cachemire, une de ces toilettes de proprettes aux couleurs sombres et de coupe pauvre qui enveloppent d’ordinaire la maigreur

de trotteuses de magasin” (*Manette* I 278). Like Balzac’s Jewish characters who continue to dress as if they were still living in the ghetto, Magus in particular, Manette dresses for her lower class position, demonstrating a frugality strangely opposite to women in her situation as mistress to an aristocrat. Instead of representing the *belle juive* stereotype, Manette is in fact an expression of the dangerous *affreuse juive*.

Furthermore, Manette is extraordinarily lethargic, “Elle était paresseuse à désirer les distinctions. Elle n’aimait ni le plaisir, ni le spectacle, ni le bal. L’étourdissement, le mouvement, la vie fouettée dont a besoin la nervosité de la Parisienne lui paraissaient une fatigue. Il fallait qu’une autre volonté que la sienne l’entraînât à s’amuser; et s’agissait-il d’une partie, elle était toujours prête à dire: ‘Au fait, si nous n’y allions pas?’ Sa nature apathique et sans fantaisie se contentait de goûter une espèce de tranquille bonheur stagnant” (*Manette* I 279). The Goncourts associate her inactivity with that of the women from the southwest of France, “l’humeur casanière et ruminante de ces femmes du Midi qui se nourrissent et se bercent avec un ciel, un climat de paresse” (*Manette* I 279). However, this lifestyle full of lassitude is more appropriately associated with the Oriental female of North Africa. The dark and warm interior domain of North African women was exceptionally intriguing in France as the colonial exploits led the French collective imagination pondering about the impenetrable home environment of colonial subjects. Delacroix’s famous *Femmes d’Alger dans leur appartement* in which three traditionally dressed, dark haired, ivory skinned, “Oriental” appearing women lounge lazily on an abundance of cushions is an excellent example of how the French came to envision the interior occupied by North African women. The lassitude associated with the lifestyle in North Africa, either Muslim, Jewish, or Bedouin, was seen as unproductive to the colonial project, intoxicating for the French colonists, preventing them from completing their mission. Manette, as an “Oriental” female embodies this “Oriental” indolence that is contradictory to the nervous energy characterizing the artist’s genius. In making Manette more than just his model for an “Oriental” painting is a grave mistake and she will eventually corrupt Coriolis to the point that he stops producing.

Despite Manette's laziness, this Jewish female does cross Paris in a trajectory similar to, but not nearly so turbulent as, Esther's crisscrossing of Paris in Balzac's *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes*. Following Manette's movements throughout the Goncourts' novel the reader discovers various Parisian neighborhoods. Manette first appears as a child, a toddler of maybe two or three years, in Coriolis' first atelier where her mother proposes her as a model for the infant Jesus. The interior of the studio is simply described as small and filled with the traveling trunks that Coriolis has packed for a long journey to the "Orient". Furthermore, the whereabouts of this atelier are unknown, the Goncourts never designating a specific address for their artist's first atelier and Parisian residence. Nevertheless, there are many indications pointing to the Left Bank. In fact, all of the studios frequented by Coriolis, either as an apprentice or an experienced painter, are situated on the Left Bank. *L'atelier Langibout*, the studio in which Coriolis learns the trade of painting is located on the Left Bank, on the rue d'Enfer, "Enfin, dans tout l'atelier, Langibout était animé pour la simplicité de sa vie, une vie de petit bourgeois, en manches de chemise, quotidiennement promenée sur ce trottoir de la rue d'Enfer" (*Manette* I 57). The master painter, Langibout, is of a lower middle class origin, having carved out a very successful career with a large and highly frequented teaching studio. In describing the atelier Langibout, the Goncourts give a glimpse of the atmosphere of a typical artist's teaching studio, of which there were many, in the second half of the nineteenth century, "L'atelier de Langibout était un immense atelier peint en vert olive. Sur le mur d'un des côtés, sous le jour de la baie ouverte en face, se dressait la table à modèle, avec la barre de fer où s'attache la corde pour la pose des bras levés en l'air, les talonnières pour supporter le talon qui ne pose pas, le T en cuir verni où s'appuie le bras qui repose... Une boiserie montait le long de l'atelier, à une hauteur de sept à huit pieds. Des grattages de palette, des adresses de modèles, des portraits-charges la couvraient presque entièrement. In faux-col sur un pantalon représentait les longues jambes de l'un, un bilboquet caricaturait la grosse tête de l'autre ; un garde national sortant d'une guérite par une neige qui lui argentait le nez et les épaulettes, moquait les ambitions miliciennes de celui-ci. Un gentilhomme amateur était représenté dans un bocal, sous la figure d'un cornichon, avec la devise au-

dessous : *Semper viret*. Et ça et là, à travers les caricatures éparses, semées au hasard, on lisait : *Sarah Levy, la tête, rue des Barres-Saint-Paul ; et plus loin : Armand David, fifre sous Louis XVI, modèle de tête, fait la canne*” (Manette I 27-28). The style of painting that is studied at the atelier Langibout focuses on historical scenes and settings and the Jewish models of Paris have a great utility in the representation of biblical, Greek, Roman, or various Oriental figures. However, the fading dominance of Jewish models in the modeling industry is clear in the description of the models visiting the studio, after the Bloch sisters, “les trois Marix”, there is only “Julie Waill, aux formes pleines, à la tête de Junon, à la grande bouche romaine, aux grands beaux yeux énormes de la Tegée de Pompeï...” and “le corps fluet, maigriot, élancé et charmant de Cœlina Cerf, avec ses formes hésitantes de petite fille et de femme, ses lignes d’une ingénue de roman grec” (Manette I 45-46). Including the Bloch sisters and the two other models with Jewish names, there are only five models of potential Jewish origin compared to six of probable French origin.

After returning from his travels to the Orient, Coriolis first spots Manette in an omnibus traversing the city. The trajectory of the omnibus brings the reader on a modern and rapid discovery of the city, while the artist focuses on the play of lantern light on the woman that he is already imagining as an artist’s model: “Il n’y avait plus qu’une place au fond... Zing ! une voyageuse... complet ! Ça me fit tourner les yeux sur la femme qui venait de monter... Elle regardait les chevaux par-dessous la lanterne, le front presque contre la glace de la voiture... une pose de petite fille... l’air d’une femme un peu gênée dans un endroit rempli d’hommes... — La Madeleine ! le boulevard ! la Bastille ! Pas de correspondance ! ... — Tiens ! elle était comme ça... tournée, regardant, un peu baissée... La lueur de la lanterne lui donnait sur le front... c’était comme un brillant d’ivoire... et mettait une vraie poussière de lumière à la racine de ses cheveux, des cheveux floches comme dans du soleil... trois touches de clarté sur la ligne du nez, sur un bout de la pommette, sur la pointe du menton, et tout le reste, de l’ombre... Tu vois cela ? ... Très charmante cette femme... et c’est drôle, pas parisienne...” (251-252) Careening across Paris at a speed hitherto unheard of, the painter catches glimpses of his future model like flashes of a camera taking pictures in the dark, “—

Auteuil ! Bercy ! Charenton ! le Trône ! Palais-Royal ! Vaugirard ! n° 17 ! n° 18 ! n° 19 !... — Ici, une éclipse... elle a tourné le dos à la lanterne... sa figure en face de moi est une ombre toute noire, un vrai morceau d'obscurité... plus rien, qu'un coup de lumière sur un coin de sa tempe et sur un bout de son oreille où pend un petit bouton de diamant qui jette un feu de diable... L'omnibus va toujours son train... Le Carrousel, le quai, la Seine, un pont où il y a sur le parapet des plâtres de savoyard... puis des rues noires où l'on aperçoit des blanchisseuses qui repassant à la chandelle... Je ne la vois plus par éclairs... toujours sa pose... son oreille et le petit diamant... Et puis tout à coup, au bout de cette vilaine rue du Vieux-Colombier, elle a fait signe au conducteur... Mon cher, elle a passé devant moi avec une marche, des gestes !... des gestes de statue, parole d'honneur... Et ce n'est pas facile d'avoir un style, une femme en omnibus... Je ne l'ai un peu vue qu'à ce moment-là... elle m'a paru avoir un type, un type" (*Manette* I 252-253). The difference that the painter attempts to discern about Manette, an alterity that he finds intriguing but that he can't pinpoint in the half-light of the lanterns in the nighttime obscurity, draws him in. Coriolis won't understand until it is too late that the otherness that he is attracted to in Manette is her Jewishness, something that the painter, with the eye of an ethnographer, is usually more adept at detecting.

The next time that Coriolis encounters Manette at the *salle Barthélémy*, rue du Château-d'Eau, for Purim, the Jewish holiday that the artist and his friend, Anatole, stumble into with the sole expectation of experiencing a curious spectacle. Noticing Manette in the balcony above the dance floor, Coriolis and Anatole decide to approach and ask her to come to the painter's studio to pose. Manette is accompanied by her elderly aunts, described as "deux sibylles" of a particularly stereotypically Jewish appearance: "de vrais enfants de Moïse et de Polichinelle... L'une, les yeux troubles et louches, le visage rempli et gêné par un nez énorme et crochu, avait l'air d'une terrible caricature encadrée dans une ruche noire d'un immense bonnet noué sous son menton de galoche : un fichu de soie, aux ramages de madras, d'un jaune d'œillet d'Inde, croisait sur son cou décharné. Les yeux, la bouche, les narines remplis du noir qu'ont les têtes desséchées, la figure charbonnée comme par le poilu horrible d'une singesse, l'autre portrait, rejeté en arrière sur des

cheveux de négresse, un chapeau blanc de marchande à la toilette, orné d'une rose blanche ; et des effilés de poils de chèvre pendaient des épaulettes de sa robe" (*Manette* I 258). After much convincing, Manette agrees to come to the artist's studio at 23 rue de Vaugirard and pose. Fortunately for Coriolis, Manette has no trouble getting to the rue de Vaugirard that another painter has qualified as far from everything. The high society painter, Garnotelle, having won the prix de Rome and earning a fortune from commissions of the haute bourgeoisie and aristocracy, lives in the more chic Quartier Saint-Georges, avenue Frochot, and complains, "Comment habites-tu là ? C'est loin de tout. Pour peu qu'on aille un peu dans le monde... les ponts à traverser" (*Manette* I 219). The rue de Vaugirard might have been in an area of Paris that a person frequenting the high society of the Right Bank would find inconvenient, but Coriolis prefers the calm of the Left Bank, far from the commercial capitalism, rapid industrialization, and architectural recreation of the Right. The Left Bank was also where Eugène Delacroix, one of the most famous Orientalists, lived and painted, not far at all from the rue de Vaugirard, at 6 rue de Furstenbourg. The studio that Coriolis has found for himself on the Left Bank is spacious enough to house the painter, his artist friend, Anatole, a monkey called Vermillion, and eventually Manette. With all of the real estate speculation and urban renewal happening on the right, Coriolis was wise to choose a studio on the sleepy Left Bank.

The Monday following their encounter at the salle Barthélémy, Manette arrives promptly, undresses in a ceremonious manner, and begins posing immediately. Suffice it to say, Coriolis is overwhelmed by the perfection of Manette's "Oriental" appearance and he falls quickly and intensely in love. The feelings are however not mutual and Manette neither loves nor hates Coriolis, "Elle avait accepté Coriolis pour amant sans l'aimer" (*Manette* I 309). Despite his status as an aristocrat and hers as a lower-class Jewish artist's model, she finds it natural to frequent an artist that she considers "un homme de son monde". The one thing that does interest Manette, is the success of the artist that is painting her, "La femme chez elle n'était sensible qu'à un nom d'art, à un talent, à une réputation d'artiste" (*Manette* I 310). As a professional model, Manette has adopted a particular mentality, "Avoir un amant, pourvu qu'il fût peintre ou sculpteur, lui

semblait aussi convenable et aussi honnête que d'être mariée. Et pour elle, il faut le dire, la liaison était une sorte d'engagement et de contrat" (*Manette* I 310). Her relationship with an artist is dependent on the artist producing art and her interactions with Coriolis are understandably cold and professional.

As Manette continues to return to the studio to pose, eventually becoming the artist's mistress, Coriolis requests that Manette live with him more permanently. The Jewish model, however, resists the painter's invitations, preferring to maintain "un petit chez elle" and the liberty that having her own space entails. When he finally succeeds in convincing Manette to come live with him, he is however extremely disappointed that Manette is still insistent on keeping her own apartment, "Cependant, Manette, tout en venant et en s'installent chez lui, ne voulut pas donner de congé de son petit logement de la rue du Figuier-Saint-Paul" (*Manette* I 281-282). This street in Paris is decidedly one inhabited by Jewish models, being the same street on which Alexandre Schanne's Jewish model friend, Caroline, lived in reality. Since Caroline posed in several studios, including that of the painter Léon Cogniet and the sculpture artist James Pradier, it is plausible that many other Jewish artists' models lived in this area of the Marais and that the Goncourts took their inspiration for Manette's pied-à-terre from either the particular Jewish model that Schanne frequented or from any number of Jewish models living in the Marais and posing in various studios across Paris. Based on the frequency with which this street and this neighborhood are mentioned, it is likely that the three Bloch sisters also lived in the area. The fact that Schanne went specifically to the rue du Figuier-Saint-Paul in the Marais on the advice of a friend, who directed him there based on the street's reputation for Jewish models, indicates that the rue du Figuier-Saint-Paul was also most likely known to the Goncourt brothers as an area in Paris particularly inhabited by Jewish artists' models.

Even after moving into the artist's studio on the rue de Vaugirard, Manette continues to return to her home in the Marais. Coriolis finds this desire to maintain her own space highly disagreeable and begins to distrust Manette, believing that she is seeing other artists, "ce logement lui déplaisait encore pour être la cause des absences de Manette: sous prétexte de le nettoyer et d'y être le jour du blanchisseur, elle allait y

passer une journée chaque semaine. Mais quoi qu'il fit, il ne put la décider à l'abandon de ce caprice" (*Manette* I 282). Although the Goncourts do not present their artist's dislike of Manette's personal apartment explicitly in this way, the Jewish model's insistence on keeping her own apartment in the Marais reveals a deep, intrinsic connection to her Jewish identity. The Goncourts unwittingly confess their belief that the Jewish population remained under the surface Jewish while superficially presenting an assimilated French identity. This suspicion of crypto-Jews is intimately tied to the Sephardi Jewish identity as many of the Jews fleeing Spain and Portugal had already been living in public as recently converted Catholics and in secret as Jews. The mistrust of crypto-Jews had nevertheless disappeared by the end of the eighteenth century and the emancipation of 1790-1791 rendered a hidden Jewish identity unnecessary. With growing suspicion and distrust of the Jewish presence in Paris by the Second Empire, stereotypes of crypto-Jews began to resurface. Although he is filled with suspicion and follows her everywhere to discover her secret, Coriolis does not understand Manette's Jewishness until he finds her in the most Jewish of settings, a synagogue.

Conclusion:

One day, motivated by fear and frustration, the jealous artist sets out to follow again his model-mistress in order to discover the other artist that he believes her to be seeing. The destination to which he follows her is the most surprising part of the story. Beginning at the rue de Vaugirard, in the footsteps of Coriolis in pursuit of Manette, the Goncourts lead the reader across the city, from the Left Bank to the Right: "Manette était à une quinzaine de pas de la maison. Elle marchait d'un petit pas pressé, d'un air à la fois distrait et recueilli, ne regardant rien. Elle prit la rue Hautefeuille: elle n'allait pas chez sa mère. Elle passa devant une station de voitures sur la place Saint-André-des-Arts: elle ne s'arrêta pas. Elle prit le pont Saint-Michel, le pont au Change. Coriolis la suivait toujours. Elle ne se retournait pas, ne semblait pas voir... Au coin de la rue Rambuteau, elle acheta un bouquet de violettes. Coriolis eut l'idée qu'elle portait cela à un amant; il vit le bouquet chez un homme, sur une cheminée, dans un verre d'eau. Manette prit la rue Saint-Martin, la rue des Gravilliers, la rue Vaucanson, la rue Volta. Des figures d'hommes et de femmes passaient

que Coriolis reconnut pour des juifs, et auxquels Manette faisait en passant un petit salut. Tout à coup, passé la rue Vertbois, elle tourna une grande rue en pressant le pas. Dans une porte, au-dessus de laquelle il y avait un drapeau tricolore, que Coriolis ne vit pas, elle disparut. Coriolis se lança derrière elle, et, au bout de quelques pas, il se trouva dans un petit préau bizarre, un *patio* de maison d'Orient, une espèce de cloître alhambresque: Manette n'était plus là... Il eut le sentiment d'un cauchemar, d'une hallucination en plein Paris, à quelques pas du boulevard. Il lui sembla apercevoir une porte avec des points de lumière dans un fond. Il alla à cette porte, entra dans une salle d'ombre, il aperçut un grand chandelier autour duquel des têtes d'hommes en toques noires, en rabats de dentelle, psalmodiaient sur de grands livres, avec des voix de nuit, des chants de ténèbres... Il était dans la synagogue de la rue Notre-Dame de Nazareth" (*Manette* I 286-288). Not only is Coriolis not relieved to discover that Manette is not seeing other artists, but he is extremely distressed by the betrayal he feels when he uncovers Manette's attachment to her Jewish identity. Although Coriolis always knew that Manette was Jewish, he never considered it as a true part of her identity and he never realized the strength of her attachment to ancient Jewish traditions. Finding her in the synagogue of the rue Notre-Dame de Nazareth is a shocking revelation for the artist who feels as though he has been cheated. This discovery plays into the subterfuge that the Goncourts express from the perspective of the artist when he sees through the Parisian veneer of the Jewish partygoers at the salle Barthélemy. Manette's presence in the synagogue confirms and renders more personal the attack that such a subterfuge has on the artist's French identity that is threatened by his mistress's Jewish identity.

The architectural otherness of the synagogue, disguised from the street by an ordinary Parisian porte cochère, increases the threat that the French artist feels. Although there is never any discussion as to the details of Manette's Jewish identity, her presence at this particular synagogue indicates that she is most likely of Ashkenazi origin. The synagogue Notre-Dame de Nazareth was the preferred synagogue of the Parisian Ashkenazi community. With the Ashkenazi Jews in majority in the Marais, it was also the official synagogue of the *Consistoire de Paris*. The first Consistory and Ashkenazi synagogue was originally located on the rue du

Temple, then it was moved the rue Notre-Dame-de-Nazareth. As the first large-scale *grande synagogue* of Paris, it was also the most well-known of the Goncourts' time: "N° 15. — La communauté de juifs allemands n'avait en 1810 que deux synagogues, celles des rues *Sainte-Avoye* (du Temple) et du *Chaume* (des Archives). L'immeuble contenant la première ayant été vendu en 1818, par son propriétaire, la synagogue fut transférée au n° 14 rue *Neuve-Saint-Laurent* (du Vert-Bois), avec sortie au n° 15 rue Notre-Dame-de-Nazareth, où l'architecte Sandrié de Jouy construisit un grand temple que l'on inaugura en 1822 (la synagogue de la rue du *Chaume* avait été fermée l'an d'avant)" (Hillairet 187). The structure that Coriolis enters is however not the original synagogue, but a reconstruction inaugurated in 1852, "Cette synagogue avait été mal construite. Dès 1848, elle menaça de s'écrouler sur ses fidèles et la police la ferma, en 1850, par mesure de sécurité ; elle n'avait même pas duré trente ans" (Hillairet 187). The new building, "Reconstruite grâce aux libéralités de James de Rothschild, sur les dessins de l'architecte Thierry", was nevertheless still too small for the rapidly growing Jewish community, "la nouvelle synagogue fut trouvée trop petite après son inauguration, en 1852, Paris comptant alors 20,000 israélites de rite allemand. D'où la construction d'un second temple, celui du n° 44 de la rue de la Victoire" (Hillairet 187). When the now official synagogue of the Parisian Consistory was built in 1874 on the rue de la Victoire, the synagogue Notre-Dame de Nazareth remained unique in its particularly oriental decoration, "Extérieur de style oriental et byzantin; à l'intérieur, sanctuaire d'une grande richesse" (Hillairet 187). The synagogue de la Victoire is more inspired by French cathedrals than distant Jewish "Oriental" roots.

The Goncourts' artist is struck with the unexpected standing before the "Oriental" inspired architecture and decoration of the synagogue in which he so abruptly finds himself. For an artist belonging to the Orientalist movement he feels strangely trapped in an "Oriental" nightmare. For artists like Chassériau, Delacroix, Decamps, and Fromentin, the dangerous and foreign "Orient" of North Africa, Egypt, the Middle East, Asia Minor, Turkey, and Greece was mysteriously romantic and not at all nightmarish. As an Orientalist, Coriolis should be enthralled with such an "Oriental" setting in the middle of Paris. Instead, he

feels a strong sense of aversion to the “Oriental” atmosphere of this Parisian synagogue. For this Orientalist, the “Orient” must remain a distant almost imaginary place in order for the artist to thrive and glean inspiration from the far away mysterious land. When Coriolis invites Manette to live with him, he unknowingly invites the “Orient” into his home and allows himself to be consumed and corrupted by her overwhelming “Oriental” characteristics, described by the Goncourts as contagiously lethargic and languid. For the artist to succeed he must overcome the indolence of the Orient from both his travels, “Les huit ans passés par lui en Orient, la sauvagerie paresseuse qu’il en avait rapportée”, and from his “Oriental” Jewish mistress and model (*Manette* I 229). The artist’s relationship with the “Orient” is impossibly conflicted and Manette is as much a source of inspiration as she is a cause of destruction. Coriolis begins to grasp the peril of the Jewish presence in his home, in his art, and in his heart when he comes face to face with the “Orient” implanted in Paris on the rue Notre-Dame-de-Nazareth.

The artist’s reaction to synagogue, appearing oddly “Oriental” and incongruent with the surrounding Parisian architecture, is indicative of the Parisian perception of the Jewish population. This particular synagogue, designed by Alexandre Thierry, seems contradictory to the assimilation of the Jewish population in Paris to a modern, cosmopolitan, and western identity with such an emphasis on “Oriental” decorations. At the time of conception, a more classically French design proposed by a German-Jewish architect was overturned for the highly “Oriental” design of a French architect, “Deux solutions furent alors envisagées par les responsables communautaires. Soit la reconstruction sur place, solution la moins onéreuse mais ne réglant pas la question du nombre des places, soit le transfert ; cette dernière option était soutenue par le baron James de Rothschild, qui fit même préparer un projet par un très grand architecte allemand, Gottfried Semper (1803-1879)... Les deux projets sont passionnants, car Semper proposait un parti sur un plan centré dans le style néo-roman, selon une démarche qu’il avait expérimentée à Dresde, alors que l’architecte du Consistoire, Alexandre Thierry (1810-1890), optait pour des références orientalistes évoquant l’identité juive” (Jarrassé 66). Gottfried Semper, the German-Jewish architect, promoted the Rothschild agenda by

first proposing that the new synagogue be of a less Jewish-referenced appearance, putting forward a design more in accordance with the preferred style of architecture at the time, also planning for the building to occupy a new site “a Romanesque structure to be located on the corner of rues Chauchat and Pinon (now Rossalini)” (Coenen Snyder 237). Hoping to both rebuild the synagogue of Notre-Dame-de-Nazareth and have a new, larger synagogue built elsewhere, the Rothschilds nevertheless had little influence over the final decision and Thierry’s design was accepted over Semper’s: “Rothschild met with the prefect to discuss the matter of a second synagogue. The former suggested that it would ‘be better to repair the old synagogue and build another one at a larger plot of land in the center of the second and third districts’. The prefect evidently ‘responded very favorably to the explanations offered’ but... By the end of the year consistory minutes state that the Rothschild’s project had veered ‘off the right path’ ” (Coenen Snyder 237). The plan proposed by Rothschild, would later prove to have been more forward thinking when the renovated synagogue was immediately too small. It is clear that the Rothschilds endorsed a much more assimilated version of a synagogue with design and decorations that would not have shocked the Goncourts’ artist.

For the Parisian public at the time, it was somewhat expected the new synagogue should appear “Oriental”. That the Jewish community did not question this representation of Jewish identity by a non-Jewish French architect now comes across as curious. According to Saskia Coenen Snyder, it was in fact logical that the synagogue should be represented by Oriental imagery, “If Parisian Jews attended the opera on a night out, read Hugo’s *Les Orientales* or Balzac’s *Splendeurs et misères de courtisanes*, admired the paintings of Delacroix and Chassériau—all of which exoticized Jews—and refrained from publically denouncing statements in the national press that French Jews ‘professed a secret religion’ and were ‘foreign people’, then it should come as surprise that Thierry designed a Moorish-inspired synagogue and that the Jewish leadership accepted it” (Coenen Snyder 240). The Oriental design of the new synagogue therefore surprised neither Parisians of Catholic or Protestant confession nor Parisian Jews. Even the all-powerful Rothschild family could not prevent the Oriental design from being realized. Described by a French architect, the

references to a Jewish identity dating back to a biblical period are nevertheless overwhelming in this synagogue in the middle of Paris, “Victor Riglet, dans les *Archives israélites* de 1851, décrit l’entrée telle qu’elle était lors de son inauguration, le 1^{er} avril 1852: ‘La porte principale du temple, placée comme l’ancienne sur la rue Notre-Dame-de-Nazareth, donne entrée sur un petit atrium tenant la place occupée dans le temple de Salomon par les piscines ; à droite et à gauche de l’atrium on trouve les salles des mariages et des fêtes et d’autre part celle des archives ; plus loin deux escaliers conduisent aux tribunes des femmes. On entre ensuite dans le porche divisé en deux parties, l’une publique, l’autre occupée par des banquettes réservées. De là nous arrivons dans le temple, la Cella, le lieu Saint du temple antique, enfin le Sanctuaire, le lieu Très-Saint du tabernacle. Deux cours de tribunes règnent sur trois faces de l’édifice’ ” (Jarrassé 66-67). Thierry, the French architect, reveals himself the explicit “Oriental” references in his design of the synagogue, “Le symbolisme est d’ailleurs employé par Thierry, qui dessine dans la nef douze arcades et précise dans son devis: ‘Ce nombre exprime une pensée religieuse; il représente les douze tribus, de même qu’au premier étage, dans la grande tribune des Dames, les trois arcades figurent les trois prophètes. Le grand arc qui ferme le sanctuaire est également l’expression d’une pensée religieuse ; il personnifie l’arche sainte’ ” (Jarrassé 67). Both the Jewish attendees and the French public following the construction of the synagogue, under the influence of Orientalist paintings and romantically inspired “Oriental” novels of immense popularity, were convinced by the appropriateness of the “Oriental” design when the synagogue was inaugurated in 1852.

However, fifteen years after the inauguration of the synagogue, the opinion of the Parisian population had evolved. When the Goncourt brothers’ artist follows Manette into the synagogue, he is stunned to discover that such a place exists behind the an ordinary and unassuming porte cochère, “la façade elle-même, percée d’une rose, demeure assez sobre”, but the doorway into the synagogue from the courtyard is more obvious: “Ce qui demeure en revanche comme un trait d’orientalisme, c’est le couronnement du portail chargé de motifs empruntés à Byzance et au Moyen-Orient” (Jarrassé 67). The mixture of Orient and Occident found in the design and decoration of this nineteenth century synagogue in Paris, frequented by

the Ashkenazi community of Paris, despite Coenen Snyder's claim that it was logical for both Jewish and non-Jewish Parisians in the 1850s, came across as disturbing to the Goncourts in the 1860s, "Les contemporains furent, comme les frères Goncourt, très sensibles à l'exotisme de cet édifice" (Jarrassé 67). Obsessed with the idea that Manette is posing for other artists, Coriolis never thinks about Manette's Jewish identity or her attachment to the Jewish community of the Marais and therefore never imagines finding her in an "Oriental" inspired synagogue. The combination of realizing the Jewishness of the person for whom he has fallen madly and violently in love and finding himself in a completely unanticipated "Oriental" place doubles the shock for this French artist. The interior of the synagogue is truly rich and full of Jewish references that would have stunned any French aristocrat, like the Goncourts and their fictional artist: "La décoration intérieure, riche et colorée... contribue à cet effet: toutes les surfaces, des arcs et des balustrades aux plafonds, sont peintes de motifs polychromes, puisés dans l'ornementation orientale, et d'inscriptions hébraïque... l'arche sainte de marbre blanc... surmontée d'énormes références à l'art romain et à l'Orient, telles les colonnettes torsées aux chapiteaux cubiques. La voûte, selon une tradition bien établie, est peinte en bleu nuit parsemé d'étoiles dorées" (Jarrassé, 67). Nothing about this space in the middle of a familiar city appears familiar to the artist and he floats in a drug-like confusion until he gets his bearings enough to remember where he is, how he got there, and the purpose for his presence. Augmenting the "Oriental" allure of the synagogue, the Goncourts have also made the atmosphere intoxicating to their French artist as if he is stumbled into an opium den.

While the brightly painted and the dimly lit ambiance of the synagogue's interior throws Coriolis into a mystifying time warp, there are some remarkably contemporary architectural features in the construction. The use of a modern and utilitarian material for a spiritual space did however make Parisians of various religious identification question the religiosity of such a construction, "Son projet, prévu selon une partie de la reconstruction sur place, reposait aussi sur l'emploi de colonnettes de fonte afin de moins encombrer la surface au sol et offrir plus de sièges. Un tel parti mérite d'être signalé, car employer une structure métallique

pour un édifice de culte, et non pour des halles ou des bâtiments utilitaires, choquait l'opinion publique; il est vrai qu'une synagogue exigeait moins de décorum qu'une église" (Jarrassé, 66). Employing metal in a religious structure was a daring innovation that garnered neither enthusiasm nor support, "Some observers—Jews and Christians alike—found the use of metal for religious buildings highly inappropriate, even 'reckless', as metal was considered a type of material that belonged in hangars and harbors, not in churches and synagogues. These 'matériau sans noblesse', which reminded the editor of *l'Univers israélite*, Simon Bloch, of tubes of steam pipes, bestowed a sense of 'casualness' onto a spiritual space that some traditionalists considered all but profane" (Coenen Snyder 238). That the Goncourts' artist is able to spot his model quickly, "Une lueur éclairait une tribune ouverte: la première femme qu'il aperçut là fût Manette", is due to this theater-inspired design of the balconies, made possibly by the cast-iron columns. Taking a previously unheard of egalitarian approach in regards to the space reserved for women, the French architect strove to allow for the most visibility from the elevated areas, borrowing the idea of boxes surrounding and raised above the floor of a traditional theater auditorium. Unlike in the theater, where the audience is essential to the success of the production and the desire of the public to observe and be seen is taken into consideration as a key element in design, the theatrical appearance and visibility of the women's section was not entirely accepted in the Jewish tradition: "Très originale, mais parfois critiquée comme empruntée aux théâtres, est la disposition adoptée pour les tribunes donnant sur le sanctuaire; en effet, Thierry jugeait avec raison les deux programmes proches: donner à une assemblée la possibilité de voir une scène ou une cérémonie. Il est vrai, comme le montre une gravure illustrant le mariage d'une demoiselle de Rothschild, que les dames en atours, dans leurs corbeilles, évoquent inévitablement les mondanités qui envahissent parfois le culte sous le second Empire... Il en va de même pour les colonnettes de fonte laissées apparentes: elles dégagent complètement la vue dès l'entrée, mais étaient considérées comme manquant de dignité" (Jarrassée 67-69). Despite the disputes over the use of the less than noble building material, what intrigued the French public was above all the biblical "Oriental" references, turning the synagogue into a theatrical

setting of what Parisians dreamt of as Jewish identity. The final appearance of the synagogue Notre-Dame de Nazareth had little to do with the actual Jewish community inhabiting nineteenth-century Paris that was far less mystical than the Parisian imagination would have preferred. Furthermore, behind the exotic trappings and rich colors, the design of the structure turned out to be as simple as a Parisian theater.

With the rich decoration, the shadowy interior filled with dancing candle light, the prayers being recited by a crowd of men dressed in prayer shawls and bound by phylacteries, Coriolis is overwhelmed by strange feelings when he finds Manette in a synagogue and not in the studio of another. At first he is relieved: “Il respira, et tout plein de joie de ne plus soupçonner, le cœur léger dans la poitrine, soudainement heureux du bonheur d’un homme dont une mauvaise pensée s’envole, il laissa tout ce qu’il y avait de détendu et de délivré en lui s’enfoncer mollement murmurant d’un peuple qui prie, le mystère voltigeant et caressant de ces demi-bruits et de ces demi-lumières qui, s’accordant, se mariant, se pénétrant, semblaient chanter à voix basse dans la synagogue comme une soupirante et religieuse mélodie de clair-obscur” (*Manette* I 288). Then he is transported as if having stepped into a time machine. The sensations that overcome the artist send him in a trance-like state back to a biblical period described from the perspective of a modern artist, “Ses yeux s’abandonnaient à cette obscurité crépusculaire venant d’en haut, et teinte du bleu des vitraux que le soir traversait; ils allaient devant eux aux lueurs de la mourante polychromie effacée des murs assombris et noyés, aux reflets rose de feu des bobèches de bougies scintillant çà et là dans le roux des ténèbres, aux petites touches de blanc, qui éclataient, de banc en banc, sur la laine d’un *taletb*. Et son regard s’oubliait dans quelque chose de pareil à la vision d’un tableau de Rembrandt qui se mettait à vivre, et dont la fauve nuit dorée s’animerait. Il revenait à la tribune, aux figures de femmes, à ces têtes qui, sous les grands noirs que leur jetait l’ombre, n’avaient plus l’air de têtes de parisiennes, paraissaient reculer dans l’Ancien testament. Et par instants, dans le marmotement des prières, il entendait se lever des roulements de syllabes gutturales qui lui rapportaient à l’oreille des sons de pays lointains” (*Manette* I 288-289). Just as he experienced first in the salle Barthélemy, Coriolis sees through the Parisian appearance of the women in the tribunes to the true

Jewish identity below the surface. Just as Balzac imparts a mystical Jewish ambiance in the Antique dealer's shop when Raphaël de Valentin wanders in and encounters the Antique dealer with his magical and devious powers, the Goncourts have turned this Parisian synagogue on the rue Notre-Dame de Nazareth into an "Oriental" space of dark magic. This transformation of a Jewish space into a foreign scene as in an Orientalist painting reinforces the alterity of the Jewish population in Paris and encourages their French neighbors to see them not as French, but as Jewish foreigners with a deviant agenda.

For the first time in French literature, the French readership is brought into a purely Jewish setting and, while the French imagination might have associated Judaism with the Oriental, any expectation of signs of assimilation, indications pointing the shared French identity of the Jewish congregation in Paris, disappear in the face of an entirely foreign scene. The construction of a Moorish/Oriental inspired synagogue in Paris in the middle of the nineteenth-century, sixty-years following Emancipation and directly after the most important period of Jewish assimilation, the July Monarchy, is a grim admission of the underlying reality in which French Jews were either still, or again, seen as foreign. When Coriolis first encounters Manette, he is attracted by the mysterious quality that lurked just beneath her Parisian exterior. When their relationship evolves beyond that of an artist and a model, Coriolis presumes that, as a typical Parisian model, Manette's absences were due to her posing for other artists. Never did he suspect that, as a Jewish Parisian model, Manette might actually have any association with her Jewish identity beyond a distant memory and a family name. The relief of discovering her fidelity as a model and mistress is quickly dissipated by the revelation of Manette's place in the Jewish community and her own identification as Jewish. This unsolicited epiphany does not occur immediately upon entering the synagogue and discerning Manette in the crowd. At first, the artist is entranced, under the spell of the enchanting, otherworldly ambiance in the synagogue, existing as if by magic in the middle of Paris. However, when Coriolis slowly awakens from his stupor and begins to comprehend, he realizes that Manette's Jewish identity has always been immediately before his eyes, only artfully concealed beneath a beauty perceived as "Oriental", associated with the iconic *belle juive* whose

Jewishness is of secondary importance: “peu à peu, parmi les sensations éveillées en lui par ce culte, cette langue, qui n’était ni son culte ni sa langue, ces prières, ces chants, ces visages, ce milieu d’un peuple étranger et si loin de Paris dans Paris même, il se glissa dans Coriolis le sentiment, d’abord indéterminé et confus, d’une chose sur laquelle sa réflexion ce s’était jamais arrêtée, d’une chose qui avait toujours été jusque-là pour lui comme si elle n’était pas, et comme s’il ignorait qu’elle fût. C’était la première fois que cette perception lui venait de voir une juive dans Manette, qu’il avait sue pourtant être juive le premier jour” (*Manette* I 289). The realization of Manette’s Jewish identity leads the artist to another form of suspicion that is much different than the jealousy of a lover and an artist who desires to protect his Muse.

Coriolis begins to question everything about Manette: “Et avec cette pensée, il remontait à des souvenirs dont il n’avait pas conscience, à des petits riens de Manette qui ne l’avaient pas frappé dans le moment, et qui lui revenaient maintenant. Il se rappelait un petit pas sans levain apporté un jour par elle à l’atelier ; puis un soir, où en remontant avec elle, tout à coup, au beau milieu de l’escalier, elle avait posé le bougeoir sur une marche, sans vouloir, jusqu’au coucher du soleil du lendemain, toucher à rien qui fût du feu” (*Manette* I 289). Running through all of her traits, her expressions, her odd behaviors, and all the things that he once considered endearing peculiarities belonging exclusively to his mistress and model, Coriolis finally understands that Manette’s Jewish identity was obvious from the beginning and that he had been blinded by her beauty, tricked by her Jewish subterfuge. Seeing Manette in the synagogue on the rue Notre-Dame de Nazareth puts everything into context for the artist and he is overcome with a deep-seated and unidentifiable feeling that hints at a mixture of ancient anti-Jewish and modern anti-Semitic sentiments, “Et à mesure qu’il revoyait, retrouvait en elle de la juive, il se dégageait en lui, du fond de l’homme et du catholique, des instincts du créole, de ce sang orgueilleux qui font les colonies, une impression indéfinissable” (*Manette* I 289). From *belle juive*, Coriolis discovers that Manette is in reality an *affreuse juive*. The Goncourts, however, stopped short of explicitly defining their artist’s thoughts. Instead of clearly

expressing an anti-Jewish or anti-Semitic discourse, they left it up to the imagination of their readers, primarily Parisian, and of a particularly elevated social and economic level.

Despite the Jewish and non-Jewish community's acceptance of an "Oriental" inspired structure in the middle of Paris during the Second Empire, the evolution of the city, the modernization of the urban space, the increasingly negative perception of the Jewish population, and the continued Jewish assimilation to French culture all contribute to the description that the Goncourt brothers offer of the synagogue. The combination of an "Oriental" design, a biblical-Old Testament atmosphere, the murmuring of foreign sounds, and the setting of a shadowy but precisely illuminated Rembrandt painting of the scene that Coriolis has unwittingly stumbled into in the synagogue represents the strangeness of the modern Jewish situation in Paris as seen by Parisians. With the Jews of Paris becoming more and more French in appearance and manners, the "Oriental" presentation of the synagogue de Notre-Dame-de-Nazareth is a manifestation of the insistence of the Parisian community to impose difference, to create boundaries, and to confine Jewish identity to the mystical and foreign space. Aristocratic Parisians, like the Goncourt brothers, were beginning to seriously question the revolutionary decision to emancipate the Jews. Like Coriolis inviting Manette into his home and suffering the catastrophic consequences, the Goncourts communicate a message in their novel that France has invited the Jews into the French community and that the country is consequently experiencing the negative effects of the Jewish presence. As a couple, Coriolis and Manette represent the French relationship with the French Jewish population, forming a synecdoche, each representing their respective communities. In the end, the story of the French-Catholic, aristocratic, bohemian artist and his "Oriental" Jewish Muse becomes a metaphor for the how the Goncourts had come to envision the Jewish influence on the French nation. The story of Coriolis and Manette serves as an ominous warning, cautioning their non-Jewish French readers of the dangers of the Jewish presence while also sending a message to the Jews of France that their place in France was becoming jeopardized. Future events, such as the Dreyfus Affair and the much later Holocaust of the Second World War, are foreshadowed in the Goncourts' tale.

IV. Chapter Three: *The Anti-Jewish Republic—Social Ascent and Literary Descent of Jewish Figures in Paris During the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century*

Introduction:

From Honoré de Balzac's realism evolved the naturalism of Emile Zola and Guy de Maupassant. These two nineteenth-century French authors appear to have continued, only three decades later, the style of the Parisian novel resembling the closest those of Balzac's in the *Comédie humaine*. However, the accumulation of details describing the characters and their settings that defined Balzac's realism was transformed into a scientific dissection of characters and their settings in Zola and Maupassant's realism. One aspect linking Zola and Maupassant to their literary predecessor that is little discussed is their use of Jewish characters.

Both Zola and Maupassant wrote Jewish characters into their novels, proving their legacy as the legitimate successors of the tradition that Balzac had begun in the 1830s. What is more, the Parisian cityscape plays a central role, as in Balzac's *Comédie humaine*, in some of these authors' most important works with the urban space serving as an incubator for the growth and development of powerful Jewish figures. In the previous chapter we saw that in the nearly thirty years separating the *Comédie humaine* from Zola and Maupassant's representation of Parisian society, Balzac's diverse and realistic Jewish characters disappeared, replaced during the Second Empire by the Jewish prostitute, the actual anti-biblical beauty of Baudelaire's youth, and the Goncourts' Jewish artist's model, a dangerously beautiful female corrupting an aristocratic French artist. Zola and Maupassant took inspiration from Balzac and from the actual Parisian society, in which the stereotype of the financially and politically powerful Jewish figure, either banker, speculator, or monopolizing entrepreneur was again becoming prevalent, and brought back to life a panoply of Jewish characters to punctuate their fictional, but realistically inspired, Parisian society. Furthermore, Zola and Maupassant revived the disappeared Jewish male character.

Despite the thirty-year gap between the novels of Balzac and his successors in style, Zola filled the void by setting his novels in the Second Empire, when the emperor, Louis Napoléon, greatly favored financial and political associations with Jewish bankers, entrepreneurs, and investors in order to realize the transformation of the city. Maupassant, however, wrote his Jewish characters into the contemporary setting of the Third Republic. The role that Zola and Maupassant presented as being played by Jewish figures in the changing architectural, political, societal, and economic identity of Paris is however manifestly more negative than Balzac's curiosity inspired representation of various Jewish characters. In this chapter, following the evolution of the representation of Jewish identity in French fiction of the nineteenth century, the central theme is the expansion of Paris and the booming capitalist economy particularly characterized by wild speculation and the role that Jews played therein, both in fiction and in reality. In this chapter, I argue that the negative and notably regressive figuration of Jews as presented in the novels of Emile Zola and Guy de

Maupassant reveals an intricate link to the transformation of Paris into what Walter Benjamin called the nineteenth-century capital of Europe what David Harvey called the capital of modernity. While there was some ambivalence as to the role of Jewish characters as harbingers of modernity in Balzac's novels, the role of Jewish characters as veritable agents of modernity, at the forefront of change, is undeniable. Furthermore, when Balzac's Jewish characters were a part of French society in the July Monarchy of the *Comédie humaine*, mixed in and often working with French Catholic or Protestant characters, the Jewish characters of Zola's Second Empire and Maupassant's Third Republic are remarkably pitted against the French characters of non-Jewish persuasion.

While both Balzac and Zola were pioneers of nineteenth-century literary movements, realism and naturalism respectively, linked in the evolution of the nineteenth-century Parisian novel, there has been no scholarly work comparing the representation of Jewish characters as presented by these generationally separate but thematically and stylistically related writers. Maurice Samuels, professor of nineteenth-century French literature at Yale University, for example, writes on the Jewish characters in novels of these two authors, respectively *Splendeurs et misères des courtisanes* for Balzac and *L'Argent* for Zola. For Samuels, these two authors are distinct and he speaks about their Jewish characters without mentioning either possible similarities or differences in representation of Jewish identity between the two. Furthermore, in the literary progression from realism to naturalism the apparent interlude in time between Balzac's last novel with a Jewish character published in 1848 and the appearance of Jewish characters in novels of Zola and Maupassant beginning in the 1870s has been strangely unaccounted for. The two exceptions to this gap in the representation of Jewish identity in Paris, as discussed in the previous chapter, are Baudelaire's Sarah La Louchette and the Goncourts' Manette Salomon. Yet, the Jewish prostitute and the Jewish artist's model surely don't justly represent the greater Jewish community of Paris during the Second Empire. A diverse presentation of Jewish characters is thus lacking from the end of the July Monarchy up to several years into the Third Republic. The two isolated representations of Jews in Paris during the Second Empire, the Jewish

prostitute and the Jewish artist's model, also contrast starkly with the Jewish characters that Balzac imagined before and that Zola and Maupassant concocted after. This disconnect in Jewish characters in nineteenth-century Parisian literature can be explained in various ways. Governmental censorship, the widespread entrance of the Parisian Jewish community into the middle and upper classes, the loss of mystery after half a century of integration that Jewish individuals once embodied, are all valid reasons for the discontinuity of representation of Jewish characters in the fiction set in the French capital following Balzac.

While depictions of Jewish characters in literature lessened during the Second Empire, the Third Republic experienced an important revival. The reduction of negative figuration of Jews in the literary world coincided with the social, financial, and cultural success of Jews in Paris in the two or three decades preceding the Second Empire, "By the 1840s and 50s, many Jews (especially the Sephardi ones) had become wealthy and many achieved prominence in French banking, literature, music, art, and science" (Isser 95). Although the accomplishments of a few elite Jews made the Jewish community in general a favored target for non-Jewish majority of various religious and political beliefs, fighting against the emerging capitalist democracy, such ostracism served as impetus for Jews to strive for greater achievements. The Jews in Paris in particular achieved a great deal, especially with the safeguard provide by the government, "Indeed, their very success made them highly visible, and served to reinforce stereotypes and prejudices in French society at large. Nevertheless, they enjoyed protection from the government, and wide acceptance in many stratus of French life... Their success was also a reflection of their perceived inferior position and their sense of separateness, which was abetted by episodes of humiliation and discrimination... and [were] thus driven to seek dignity and status within the majority culture by attaining success in business and the arts. What was even more interesting about some of these Jews was that they were in the forefront of French modernization and development: a fact that further irritated those that deplored change" (Isser 95). Even when Napoleon III was working closely with Jewish bankers and developers to finance and realize the great

renovation and expansion of the city, appointing Jewish figures to positions in the government, or helping Jewish politicians win elections, anti-Semitic literary or artistic production was minimal.

As Minister of State, Achille Fould, son of Beer-Leon Fould, one of Balzac's main inspirations for the Baron de Nucingen, contributed significantly to the reduction in the representations of negative Jewish stereotypes, "Fould had created the precedent, which led the theatrical censors to treat the depiction of Jews in plays with great circumspection, subsequently forcing playwrights to eliminate unfavorable and distasteful portrayals. This practice continued throughout the Second Empire" (Isser 20). Although Fould focused on theater in his censorship of anti-Semitic characterizations, a general trend in the Parisian literary world throughout the Second Empire demonstrated a reduced appearance of typically anti-Semitic depictions. Nevertheless, there were some important exceptions, of which the Goncourts' *Manette Salomon* was of particular consequence. Appearing in 1866-1867, this exception corresponded, although somewhat belatedly, with Fould's resignation from his position as Minister of State in 1860. A loosening of the vigilance that existed under Fould's watch to erase anti-Semitic theatrical interpretations occurred and stereotypically anti-Semitic Jewish characters appeared during the Third Republic. While the July Monarchy experienced the transformation of the clichéd Shylock characterization into the modern, clever, and ruthless banker, of which Balzac's Baron de Nucingen became the archetype, it was not until the Third Republic that similar characters resurfaced. The Jewish financial figure, modeled not only after Nucingen, but also after actual Jewish individuals in the French and European world of banking, investment, and politics of nineteenth-century Paris, made an important reappearance in the literature of the Third Republic.

Shown in an increasingly adverse light, the Jewish characters emerging in the fiction produced in the last two decades of the nineteenth century demonstrate the mounting discontent within the Parisian population, troubled by the massive societal, economic, and architectural transformations occurring in concentration in Paris. Exploring the reappearance of Jewish characters in French fiction of the Third Republic, the characteristics, professions, neighborhoods frequented and lived in, and the styles and choices of housing of

these new Jewish characters, the increasingly negative opinion that the French harbored toward their fellow citizens of Jewish extraction becomes evident. Although the literary depiction of Jewish figures dramatically decreased during the Second Empire, the participation of Jewish individuals in diverse areas of Parisian life increased. The implication of Jewish figures in the transformation of the city during the Second Empire also contributed to the reawakening of injurious anti-Jewish opinions and the resulting emergence of anti-Semitic literary characterizations. The continued success of the Parisian Jewish elite, unchecked and even encouraged by the government, came under attack once the protection of the Second Empire was no longer in place. With the nearly constant metamorphosis of the urban landscape of Paris—beginning during the July Monarchy, increasing exponentially during the Second Empire under the direction of Napoléon III and the baron Haussmann, and continuing well into the Third Republic—the Parisian population grew ever more discontent with the more and more luxurious homes and neighborhoods and the explosion of the industrial, capitalist economy. The participation of Jewish figures in the continuous transformation of the city and the success of some highly visible Jewish individuals prompted Parisians to blame the Jews, unjustly, for the changes, undesired in their opinion, in their city. Opposition to the metamorphosis of Paris at the hands of Napoléon III and Haussmann was late to gain ground and the momentum of the great works was so strong that they continued even after the fall of the empire. The extent of the changes exerted on the city was not fully felt until the end of Napoleon III's reign, at which point the opposition was well established. The opposition accused both Napoléon III and Haussmann of excessive expenditure and considered the Jewish financial figures guilty of facilitating and participating in the rampant capitalism and unbridled speculation that led to disproportionate extravagance, favoring an extreme gentrification of the western half of the city and abandoning the eastern half to the impoverished manual laborers.

Through an analysis of the roles played by Jewish characters in the works of Emile Zola and Guy de Maupassant, how they are presented by the authors, where they are geographically located in Paris, and how the city appears to have changed over the course of the Second Empire, I will reveal how these authors

communicated the shared French sentiment of suspicion and hostility towards the multi-dimensional transformation of Paris. Furthermore, the evolving place of Jews in Parisian society in particular and how Parisians reacted to this evolution, becomes clear in the treatment that authors such as Zola and Maupassant gave to their Jewish characters. Unlike the thirty-some Jewish figures of the *Comédie humaine*, thirteen of which reappeared regularly, the Jewish characters that did resurface during the Third Republic no longer had the privilege of reoccurring in several different novels of the same author. The fictional Jews of the Third Republic were also never cast in the leading role, like Gobseck, Nucingen, Esther, and other principal protagonists of Balzac. The Jewish characters of Zola and Maupassant are always presented as complicating the aspirations of French Catholic figures that attempt without avail to retake control of France from them. They always work in some financially oriented field and are often involved in politics. Furthermore, the Jewish characters of Zola and Maupassant lack the in-depth character development that Balzac devoted to nearly every character appearing in the *Comédie humaine*, Jewish characters included. The trend that is discernable in comparing Balzac's treatment of Jewish characters with those of Zola and Maupassant involves a transition from Balzac's powerful, charismatic, but still approachable Jewish banker to the cold, calculating and impenetrable Jewish banking mogul of Zola and Maupassant. Furthermore, the Jewish characters of the 1880s and 1890s no longer exhibit the diversity of identity and profession, existing primarily, almost uniquely, within the world of banking and speculation and thus exemplifying the evolving reactions of the Parisian society to the transformation of Paris into a modern European capital.

The Setting

From being spread out and appearing in various neighborhoods of Paris under the July Monarchy in the *Comédie humaine*, to concentrated in the Marais and materializing sporadically on the Left bank in the works of just two authors during the Second Empire, the Jewish characters in the literature of the Third Republic are curiously grouped in the northwestern quarter of the city, often in the newest and most luxurious neighborhoods beyond the place de la Bourse and the Madeleine. As mentioned in the previous chapter,

Paris experienced the greatest amount of urban development in this northwestern portion, fanning out from the Bourse, the Chaussée d'Antin, the Madeleine and the Tuileries, expanding even beyond the wall of the *Fermiers généraux* when the Empire annexed the suburban communities of Clichy and les Batignolles in 1860. Zola and Maupassant preferred to place Jewish characters in the newer and more luxurious neighborhoods of Paris northwestern in novels about Parisian society depicting the Second Empire and the Third Republic. The excessive luxury involved in the renovation and expansion the northwestern Paris was severely denounced by the *commission de la rive gauche* as a grievous error of Louis-Philippe's administration: "de nouveaux quartiers autour de la Madeleine et du Faubourg Saint-Honoré, à qui il ne 'manque ni la salubrité ni la proximité des belles promenades ni la facilité de circulation ni, par l'établissement du chemin de fer, le voisinage de Versailles et de Saint-Germain'. Elle a facilité les 'embellissements' de la rive droite et laissé la rive gauche à l'abandon" (Bourillon 15). Spreading to the newer areas beyond the financial neighborhood surrounding the Bourse, the evolution of the city and the time period in which authors were writing facilitated the placement of Jewish characters farther and farther west to the neighborhoods either created or renovated at Haussmann's and Napoléon III's impetus or built during the Third Republic as a continuation of the Second Empire's projects. The objective of the Second Empire for the city transformed, however, over the course of Napoléon III's reign, "L'Empereur veut que Paris devienne la plus belle ville du monde. Il veut assainir les anciens quartiers où la population est entassée, rendre les abords des chemins de fer faciles, percer dans tous les sens de grandes voies de communication qui abrègent les distances et qui en cas d'insurrections, assurent une répression immédiate des attentats à l'ordre public'. La dernière partie de la phrase a disparu dans la version définitive. La commission a préféré présenter les opérations de rénovation urbaine dans la perspective de l'embellissement de la ville" (Bourillon 16). From facilitating the protection, sanitizing, and unencumbering of the city, and from aiming to make the city more efficient in terms of movement and communication between major centers, the *raison-d'être* of the great works of the

Second Empire morphed into an inflated ambition to create more and more affluent neighborhoods in Paris, pushing gentrification to an extreme and alienating the working classes.

As the elite Jews of Paris came to represent the extravagance of the Second Empire, they also became associated with the northwestern portion of the city where Napoléon III and Haussmann had lavished large amount of money in beautification. The choice of authors to place Jewish characters in the newest and wealthiest areas of the northwestern section of the city is supported by two historical facts of nineteenth-century Paris. The first is the flight of the wealthy classes from central Paris to the stylish, elegant, and modern neighborhoods beyond the Bourse and the Madeleine, “la population riche fuit les quartiers bruyants du centre pour s’en aller à l’extrémité ouest de la ville et même hors de Paris” (Lavedan 21). The second fact, coincidental to the movement of fortune from the center to the northwestern quarter of the city, is the participation of Jewish financial figures in the funding, development, and sale of the buildings, businesses, and homes in this area. Jacques-Séraphin Lanquetin had established the reality of this movement by the middle of the July Monarchy with the various *conseils* and *commissions* in which he was active: the *conseil général de la Seine*, the *conseil municipal de Paris*, the *commission de la rive gauche*, the *commission sur le déplacement de Paris*, and the *commission de l’embellissement de Paris*. Lanquetin revealed an unbalance separating Paris economically and geographically from East to West in a series of reports published between 1839 and 1842, “Lanquetin évoque la migration des populations riches fuyant le bruit et l’encombrement des quartiers centraux... L’ensemble du raisonnement semble tenir : le Centre et l’Est abandonnés par les élites... un Est parisien populaire et un Ouest bourgeois” (Bourillon 15). When Lanquetin presented his final findings to Claude-Philibert Barthelot de Rambuteau, the prefect of the Seine outright refuted the western migration of the capital. The phenomenon is now accepted as a real and consequential trend beginning as early of the sixteenth century: “l’irrésistible poussée ver l’ouest que Paris vivait depuis François I^{er}” (Assouline 21). Hard evidence was documented proving the movement of wealthier individuals, families, and businesses to the west, leaving the center and east of Paris to those who could not afford the more luxurious homes and

neighborhoods of western Paris, “Le haut commerce tend vers les grands boulevards et au-delà jusqu’à la rue Bleue, comme le prouve le changement d’adresse de 38 maisons de soieries en gros” (Lavedan 21). The Second Empire, thanks to the real estate genius of the Jewish brothers of Bordeaux, Emile and Isaac Pereire, saw neighborhoods around the rue de Rivoli, the Opéra, the plaine Monceau, and the Champs-Élysées, transform into elegant localities, destinations for affluent and international tourists, and privileged centers for the luxurious homes of Paris’ elite.

By the end of the Second Empire the turn that the urban renovations had taken dismayed the majority of the Parisian population. Grouped in the eastern half of Paris, the poorer populations felt abandoned, disenfranchised. Although Napoléon III and Haussmann were the first accused of having favored the wealthy in their remaking of the city, it was also believed that the Jewish population of Paris, represented by a large handful of inordinately wealthy and internationally connected families, was truly to blame for the excess of luxury that replaced the modest homes of those that the empire had expropriated with the banking, speculation, and urban foresight of the Pereire brothers. The myth of the all-powerful Jewish banker with designs to take over first France and then Europe, was already firmly rooted in popular French culture in pseudo-scientific/pseudo-intellectual discourse by the end of the July Monarchy. Alphonse Toussenel, for example, publishing a first edition of *Les Juifs, rois de l’époque* in 1844, was the first of a few socialist writers advancing the idea of a Jewish financial and political empire turning France into a capitalist state. The most obvious target of early anti-Jewish and anti-Capitalist writers such as Toussenel was the Rothschilds. However, with the appearance and importance of new Jewish figures, both financial and political, during the Second Empire—Achille Fould, Michel Goudchaux, Emile and Isaac Pereire, the Reinach family, and many others—blaming the Jewish community for the capitalist, luxury-driven society that had taken root in the French capital became logical. While the powerful Empire appeared to keep opposition, especially that of the anti-Jewish sort, only evolving into anti-Semitic by the end of the nineteenth century, in check, the ostentatious displays of luxury appearing in the northwestern corner of the

city along with the discovery of the unimaginably inflated price of Napoléon III and Haussmann's great works, increasing with each of the three phases, the control that the government had in suppressing racially negative literary production or political propaganda had severely decreased.

Socialist movements that had slowly begun to oppose the gentrification of the northwestern corner of Paris over the course of the Second Empire also became more and more suspicious of the Jewish involvement in the unequal attention bestowed on the wealthy and new neighborhoods beyond the Bourse and the Madeleine. Writers of a more socio-religious tendency continued the work of Toussenel and targeted Jews as the source of corruption that had lead France down the path of a capitalist-consumer society during the Second Empire. Following Toussenel, Arthur de Gobineau published *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* in 1853-1855, Joseph de Maistre published *Quatre chapitres inédits sur la Russie* in 1859, Roger Gougenot des Mousseaux published *Le Juif, le judaïsme et la judaïsation des peuples chrétiens* in 1869, Victorien Vidal published *L'Argent, voilà l'ennemi* in 1869, and Edouard Drumont published his infamous *La France juive* in 1886. Despite the fantastic and unrealistic clichés presented of Jewish identity in these works, their writers nevertheless did not write fiction. Some fiction writers, however, did become involved in the denunciation of the excessive luxury of the Second Empire urban renovations. Emile Zola is potentially the most well known novelist writing from a socialist perspective and questioning within his novels the morality of the disproportionate wealth in Paris and amongst its inhabitants. As one of the most popular writers of the second half of the nineteenth century, his socially oriented fiction enjoyed a large dissemination. With a few Jewish characters appearing sporadically throughout his opus, Zola participated in and encouraged the proliferation of negative Jewish stereotypes. Less known as a socialist-oriented writer, Maupassant also denounced the arrogant display of wealth and the unhealthy jealousy it incited in his novel in *Bel-ami* and, in so doing, also cultivated negative Jewish stereotypes. The Jewish bankers, investors, and entrepreneurs in Zola and Maupassant's fictional Parisian societies are also placed squarely in the center of the most iconic

neighborhoods of Paris' affluent elite, la Bourse, la Madeleine, le Faubourg Saint-Honoré, la plaine Monceau, and les Champs-Élysées.

In a few of Zola's novels in particular, in order of publication, *Nana*, *Au Bonheur des Dames*, and *L'Argent*, there is a clear transformation in the discourse concerning the author's appreciation of the Jewish presence in Paris, evolving from vague and uncertain to precise and opinionated. This trend in Zola's writing mirrors the general attitude of Parisians in particular, responding to the transformation of the city, and the war lost to Prussia, with visceral, although entirely displaced, anti-Semitism. Maupassant's *Bel-ami* published respectively one year before Drumont's publication of *La France juive* in 1886, also evidences the growing anti-Semitic sentiment that had insidiously permeated French thought and discourse. In placing their Jewish characters in the center of the modern, luxurious, and evidently wealthy neighborhoods of Paris, I argue that Zola and Maupassant exposed, intentionally or not, the link that had been created in the French collective imagination between the transformation of the city and all that the Second Empire and Haussmann imposed on the Parisian population and the various fortunate and unfortunate consequences with the elite Jewish community of Paris. Blame for the excessive speculation and gentrification was vehemently placed on the elite Jews of which only a tiny fraction had any real involvement.

Saccard or the Pereire Brothers:

Written as fiction but inspired by actual historical events, Zola's work is nearly inseparable from the transformation of Paris under the Second Empire. In the *Rougon-Macquart* series, the political, societal, and architectural metamorphosis of the French capital plays a central role as Zola follows the evolution of a provincial French-Catholic family in their transition to Paris from the fictional town of Plassans, modeled after the author's native city of Aix. The Parisian society is presented through the filter of this archetypical family transformation within the metamorphosis of the city. Aristide Saccard, the main protagonist in *La Curée*, the second novel of the *Rougon-Macquart* series, published in 1872, is an overly ambitious schemer that

is initially presented as a visionary of urban redesign, theatrically describing from atop Montmartre the imminent metamorphosis of Paris:

“ — Il ne se doute guère de l'armée de pioches qui l'attaquera un de ces beaux matins, et certains hôtels de la rue d'Anjou ne reluiraient pas si fort sous le soleil couchant s'ils n'ont plus que trois ou quatre ans à vivre... — On a déjà commencé, continua-t-il. Mais ce n'est qu'une misère. Regarde là-bas, du côté des Halles, on a coupé Paris en quatre... Et de sa main étendue, ouverte et tranchante comme un coutelas, il fit signe de séparer la ville en quatre... — Tu veux parler de la rue de Rivoli et du nouveau boulevard que l'on perce ? demanda sa femme. — Oui, la grande croisée de Paris, comme ils disent. Ils dégagent le Louvre et l'Hôtel de Ville. Jeux d'enfants que cela ! C'est bon pour mettre le public en appétit... Quand le premier réseau sera fini, alors commencera la grande danse. Le second réseau trouera la ville de toutes parts, pour rattacher les faubourgs au premier réseau. Les tronçons agoniseront dans le plâtre... Tiens, suis un peu ma main. Du boulevard du Temple à la barrière du Trône, une entaille ; puis, de ce côté, une autre entaille, de la Madeleine à la plaine Monceau ; et une troisième entaille dans ce sens, une autre dans celui-ci, une entaille là, une entaille plus loin, des entailles partout. Paris haché à coups de sabre, les veines ouvertes, nourrissant cent mille terrassiers et maçons, traversé par d'admirables voies stratégiques qui mettront les forts au cœur des vieux quartiers... — Il y aura un troisième réseau, continua Saccard, au bout d'un silence, comme se parlant à lui-même ; celui-là est trop lointain, je le vois moins. Je n'ai trouvé que peu d'indices... Mais ce sera la folie pure, le galop infernal des millions, Paris soûlé et assommé” (Curée 103-107).

Despite his provincial Catholic origins, Saccard possesses the keen instinct of a capitalist speculator and falls into the category of corrupt adventurers that have taken control of the capital, turning it into the center of excess, luxury, and financial debauchery, “L'Empire allait faire de Paris le mauvais lieu de l'Empire. Il fallait à cette poignée d'aventuriers qui venaient de voler un trône, un règne d'aventures, d'affaires véreuses, de consciences vendues, de femmes achetées, de soûlerie furieuse et universelle” (Curée 78-79). At the outset of the Second Empire, Saccard uncovers plans for great changes and plots his personal financial benefit, revealing himself to be less of urban redesign visionary than a devious opportunist, “Aristide Saccard, depuis les premiers jours, sentait venir ce flot montant de la spéculation, dont l'écume allait couvrir Paris entier. Il en suivit les progrès avec une attention profonde. Il se trouvait au beau milieu de la pluie chaude d'écus tombant dru sur les toits de la cité. Dans ses courses continuelles à travers l'Hôtel de Ville, il avait surpris le vaste projet de la transformation de Paris, le plan de ces démolitions, de ces voies nouvelles et de ces quartiers improvisés, de cet agio formidable sur la vente des terrains et des immeubles, qui allumait aux quatre coins de la ville, la bataille des intérêts et le flamboiement du lux à outrance” (Curée 79). Saccard sees the potential fortune to be made in the destruction and reconstruction of even some of the more modern and elegant neighborhoods, “Oh ! vois... C'est la colonne Vendôme, n'est-ce pas, qui brille là-bas ? ... Ici,

plus à droite, voilà la Madeleine... Un beau quartier, où il y a beaucoup à faire... Ah ! cette fois, tout va brûler ! Vois-tu ? ... On dirait que le quartier bout dans l'alambic de quelque chimiste... — Oui, oui, j'ai bien dit, plus d'un quartier va fondre, et il restera de l'or aux doigts des gens qui chaufferont et remueront la cuve" (*Curée* 79). Saccard's scheme consists of buying at a reduced price houses and apartment buildings that are to be destroyed in the creation of the classically Second Empire long and elegant façades lining broad new boulevards, profiting from the generous compensations dispersed by the government, "Saccard, depuis longtemps, avait étudié ces trois réseaux de rues et de boulevards... Là était sa fortune, dans ces fameuses entailles que sa main avait faites au cœur de Paris, et il entendait ne partager son idée avec personne, sachant qu'au jour du butin il y aurait bien assez de corbeaux planant au-dessus de la ville éventrée... Son premier plan était d'acquérir à bon compte quelque immeuble qu'il saurait à l'avance condamné à l'expropriation prochaine, et de réaliser un gros bénéfice en obtenant une forte indemnité... il achetait... la maison de la rue de la Pépinière... elle était située au beau milieu du tracé d'une voie dont on ne causait encore que dans le cabinet du préfet de la Seine. Cette voie, le boulevard Malesherbes l'emportait tout entière" (*Curée* 108). His first acquisition therefore sits squarely in the trajectory of the proposed boulevard Malesherbes and the forthcoming complete destruction of the home that he has acquired assures a large compensation.

Ever a devious character, Saccard is a slippery sleuth and expert eavesdrop. He sneaks around government buildings, studies maps and blueprints, listens in on important discussions, picks up on rumors and truths of the real imperial agenda unknown to the larger public, "C'était un ancien projet de Napoléon I^{er} qu'on songeait à mettre à exécution, 'pour donner, disaient les gens graves, un débouché normal à des quartiers perdus derrière un dédale de rues étroites, sur les escarpements des coteaux qui limitaient Paris'. Cette phrase officielle n'avouait naturellement pas l'intérêt que l'empire avait à la danse des écus, à ces déblais et ces remblais formidables qui tenaient les ouvriers en haleine. Saccard s'était permis, un jour, de consulter, chez le préfet, ce fameux plan de Paris sur lequel 'une main auguste' avait tracé à l'encre rouge les principales voies du deuxième réseau. Ces sanglants traits de plume entaillaient Paris plus profondément

encore que la main de l'agent voyer. Le boulevard Malesherbes, qui abattait des hôtels superbes, dans les rues d'Anjou et de la Ville-l'Évêque, et nécessitait des travaux de terrassement considérables, devait être troué un des premiers" (*Curée* 108-109). That Zola chose a provincial French Catholic as the character to be involved in the Second Empire's transformation of Paris is curious, but it is the way in which Saccard involves himself that is of significance. Saccard is a real estate predator, taking advantage of the information he usurps from the imperial plans for the city to step in as a middleman, cheating renters and owners of condemned structures out of the governmental compensation that they are due. Only interested in personal gain, not in the renovation and modernization of the city, Saccard is a cutting and critical interpretation of how expropriation and reparation occurred during the remaking of the capital. This character is a clear indication that Zola and the less privileged population of Paris held a negative opinion of the financial unfolding of Napoléon III and Haussmann's supposed great works. Although Zola does not mention anything about the participation of Jewish figures in the imperial schemes of urban renovation, his message of disapproval is largely understood and was shared by all but the wealthy elite of the times.

While Saccard is a French Catholic arriviste from a small city in the South of France, earning the label of a dangerous speculator willing to risk everything and put everyone and anyone in danger in order to first establish and then continue to grow his fortune, his involvement in the great works of the Second Empire resembles closely the role played by the Jewish banking and real estate moguls, Emile and Isaac Pereire. These Sephardi brothers of Bordeaux employed some of the most modern banking practices of the century, permitting them to participate in the transformation of the city from the beginning of the Second Empire. When Napoléon III and Haussmann solicited them to fund, construct, and manage a new hotel and *grand magasin* in the area of the Louvre, along the rue de Rivoli, they were not the first choice. However, they soon became essential in the realization of this first architectural feat of the Second Empire, "leur participation paraît indispensable pour conduire à son terme et en des délais rapprochés l'opération Louvre-Rivoli. L'Empereur et son préfet souhaitent en effet réaliser dans l'environnement du nouveau Louvre une

architecture d'accompagnement abritant un hôtel et un centre commercial... Quoi qu'il en soit, le projet ne provoque pas l'enthousiasme des hommes d'affaires ou des spéculateurs... Les Pereire sont approchés. Leur vigueur, leur acharnement sont maintenant célèbres. Leur jeune Crédit mobilier peut être un salubre adjuvant" (Autin 179-180). The Pereire brothers adjusted quickly to the challenge of constructing and then promoting the brand new and remarkably innovative luxury hotel and department store that Napoléon and Haussmann desired for the Louvre/Rivoli neighborhood.

The first step was to realizing this project was to establish a new society to meet the demands of this first transformation, "En quelques semaines ils créent la Société anonyme de l'hôtel et des immeubles de la rue de Rivoli" (Autin 180). The modernity of the Pereire brothers' banking practices appears in the organization of a new credit union that no longer resemble a one-family banking house: "Chez le notaire Emile Fould, comparaissant Adolphe d'Eichthal, vice-président et Casimir Salvador, administrateur, agissant au nom de la Société générale de Crédit mobilier, 15, place Vendôme, ainsi que MM. Emile Pereire, président du conseil d'administration de la Compagnie des chemins de fer du Midi et Isaac Pereire, président du conseil d'administration de la Société générale de Crédit mobilier, agissant en leurs noms personnels, et domiciliés 5, rue d'Amsterdam" (Autin 180). Having made a small but significant sum in the railway business and others beginning in the late 1830s, the Pereires were wealthy, but they didn't have a boundless family fortune like the Rothschilds. Their banking practices consequently consisted of uniting the wealth of many individuals and small banks and employing the combined financial capacity to fund industry and development. When the Pereires created their anonymous society to finance the Louvre/Rivoli project, they had not yet realized that this would become the primary financial institution to fund the forthcoming urban reconstruction, of which the *Grand Hôtel* and the *Grands Magasins du Louvre* were just the beginning.

The project for the *Grand Hôtel* and *Grands Magasins du Louvre* was dictated by Haussmann's terms, "le préfet de la Seine élargit la conception et suscite une plus vaste opération: plus de 17 hectares de terrain à viabiliser et à construire, au prix de 460 F le mètre carré. Il assure également l'appui du Crédit foncier né

d'hier. Parallèlement, il impose un cahier des charges rigoureux: pierre de taille, toits en dos d'âne et en zinc, galerie piétonne, arcades équilibrées, frise linéaire... et l'achèvement pour le 1^{er} mai 1855 — donc dans deux ans à peine — date impérative puisque ce sera celle de l'ouverture de l'Exposition universelle” (Autin 180). But Jean Autin goes on to say that the Pereire brothers' signature style dominated the creation that became the elegant *Hôtel du Louvre* with its *Grands Galeries*: “C'est à tous égards une affaire Pereire” (Autin 181). Their motivation to see this project succeed was justified by the large financial stake they had in the operation, “puisque sur les 240 000 actions, 106 665 appartiennent au Crédit mobilier et 21 110 à chacun des deux frères” (Autin 181). While they were not alone in the venture, “les autres [actions] se répartissant entre les partenaires et associés habituels: le duc de Galliera, le duc de Mouchy, Charles Mallet, Ernest André, Adolphe d'Eichthal et Charles Séguin”, their responsibilities were significant (Autin, 181). Not only were they responsible for the funding of the project: they had to acquire the superficial area necessary for the project in the form of land or homes and buildings to be razed; they had a say in the architectural appearance; they found entrepreneurs, business owners, and individuals seeking the most modern dwellings in Paris to rent the commercial and residential spaces; they developed, traded, or sold the leftover land, “La société se voit confier quatre types d'activités: des acquisitions de terrains rue de Rivoli, entre le passage Delorme et la rue des Poulies (devenue rue du Louvre); les constructions sur ces terrains; l'exploitation des hôtels garnis... élevés sur ces terrains; la location, l'échange ou revente desdits terrains” (Autin 181). The Pereires eventually became the owners of the whole enterprise, acquiring nearly all the boutiques around the square of which the great hotel and luxury department store had become the centerpiece.

The opportunity to create, exploit, and eventual own the *Grand Hôtel* and the *Grands Magasins du Louvre* served as a launching pad for the Pereires' real estate investment and speculation career, “Immédiatement, la nouvelle société qui achève l'hôtel et le futur magasin du Louvre ainsi que beaucoup des immeubles de la rue de Rivoli, participe à la rénovation du futur quartier de l'Opéra, prend position du côté des Champs-Élysées et se préoccupe des réalisations immobilières le long des voies nouvellement ouvertes, ou à ouvrir”

(Autin 181). The experience in developing urban space and promoting the businesses that came to occupy the buildings of which they supervised the construction led to many more ventures of a similar nature. The intersection at which the Opéra Garnier would be inaugurated in 1875, for example, was a Pereire project: “Très tôt en effet, la Compagnie achète l’hôtel d’Osmond, qui forme aujourd’hui l’angle du boulevard des Italiens et de la rue Halévy et s’étend jusqu’à la rue Meyerbeer” (Autin 181). The Pereires’ presence quickly spread throughout the northwestern portion of the city as they multiplied assets, acquiring multiple areas: “les terrains dits du Jardin d’Hiver, régissant ainsi sur presque tout le quadrilatère bordé par les Champs-Élysées, la rue Marbeuf, la rue François-I^{er} et l’avenue Montaigne, et [la compagnie] s’implante entre le boulevard de Sébastopol et la rue Saint-Denis le long de la rue du Caire” (Autin 181). The areas that they acquired would become important, even iconic, places in Paris, revealing their ability to envision and encourage urban development in soon to be fashionable parts of the city, “les deux promoteurs savent se poster dans les positions clés” (Autin 181). The Pereire’s involvement in the real estate aspect of the great works of the Second Empire proves their difference when compared to Zola’s reprobate character, Saccard, whose devious dealings diminish any inkling of genius and whose ambitions are contrary to altruistic.

The Pereires didn’t just purchase land and real estate for the government with the intention of helping to transform the city, they also had personal interests in the beautification of their adopted home. Although their objectives never resembled Saccard’s ambition of personal gain, the Pereires did participate in the Second Empire transformation by purchasing land, typically at a very low price, and constructing high-scale apartment buildings or private homes to be rented or sold for a profit, “À titre personnel, ils se lancent dans les acquisitions de terrain. La succession d’Aligre, qui fait l’objet d’une adjudication au Palais de Justice, leur permet d’acheter plus de deux hectares à la barrière de Monceau dont ils feront douze lots, 14 500 mètres carrés rue Marbeuf et l’espace constituant et avoisinant l’actuelle place François-I^{er}, le tout à 15, 16 F le mètre carré. À Levallois, en bordure de Seine, ils vont pouvoir créer 51 parcelles viabilisées. À peine ont-ils acquis un terrain à Clichy que le voisin propose de vendre ‘sans intermédiaire, (sa) pièce de terre’. Au cas où

ils l'oublieraient, un de leurs collaborateurs leur signale la vente par licitation qui aura lieu le mercredi 27 avril 1853 vers le boulevard Montparnasse, à hauteur de l'embarcadère de l'ouest" (Autin 182). Accelerating the pace at which they bought, constructed, and exploited land in Paris, their success was, however, not uniquely due to their ingenious foresight. They also had the advantage of insider information from the emperor and the prefect, who encourage their spirit for speculation while also depending on their financial participation to make the transformation of the city fiscally feasible.

One of the most elegant neighborhoods in modern Paris is the product of collaboration between Napoléon III, Haussmann, and Pereire brothers. Haussmann acquired for the Empire the area of Paris surrounding, and eventually including, the parc Monceau, originally belonging to the Orléans family, "Un décret dictatorial du 23 janvier 1852 devait en faire la propriété de l'Etat pour environ la moitié de sa superficie, l'autre moitié demeurant entre les mains des princes et princesses d'Orléans. En 1860, le préfet de la Seine, profitant de l'ouverture du boulevard Malesherbes, négocie avec les Orléans l'expropriation des parcelles privées" (Autin 185). Having become well-versed in the negotiations involved with the buying and selling of Parisian property, the Pereires were invited to oversee the sale and purchase of the Orléans family Parisian estate in exchange for the undeveloped land not reserved for the preservation of the duc de Chartres' whimsical garden, "Emile Pereire sert alors d'intermédiaire et il est convenu qu'une partie des terrains lui sera rétrocédée. C'est ainsi que la Ville rachète l'ensemble du domaine, qui représente quelque 25 hectares, pour en faire le parc actuel sur environ 9 hectares, dégager des emprises de voirie et revendre aux Pereire 81 000 mètres carrés à lotir... Par contrat notarié du 14 janvier 1861, les Pereire s'engagent à l'égard de la Ville sur toutes [les] clauses" (Autin 185). Just like Saccard envisions the transformations that awaits Paris from atop Montmartre, the Pereires had ingeniously envisioned where the city would grow and in what manner, "En hommes d'affaires avisés, ils prévoient l'évolution de Paris vers l'ouest. Or la plaine Monceau dispose d'une situation incomparable; elle est proche de l'Etoile, où l'on construit les hôtels des Maréchaux, elle a maintenant avec le parc un beau jardin public, et elle s'inscrit en zone d'accueil de la gare Saint-Lazare

qui lui sert également de débouché. Les deux frères, ou leur société immobilière, sont prêts à acheter, d'ailleurs à vil prix, toutes les surfaces disponibles, à procéder à des lotissements et à transformer en immeubles rentables les cultures maraîchères, les bicoques de faubourg et le dépôt de pavés de la Ville de Paris... Quoi qu'il en soit, voilà longtemps déjà que les Pereire ont lorgné du côté de cette plaine Monceau. Le nouveau quartier des affaires, autour de la Chaussée d'Antin, commençait déjà à repousser les habitations vers la périphérie. Or il y a vers l'ouest une zone pratiquement inoccupée et peu éloignée du centre. Ils s'entendent donc avec Haussmann et élaborent de concert des plans ingénieux, conciliant leurs intérêts respectifs" (Autin 185-186). Despite suspicions of conspiracy, the Pereire brothers' ability to predict where and when the city was about to develop, always the first on the scene, was purely due to their keen intelligence and fine-tuned awareness of the city and the market. This ability came to be seen as an unfair advantage, naturally acquired through Jewish genetic history, that predisposed them to succeeding over all other religious or genetic groups. Zola would unjustly perpetuate this common and particularly damaging misconception later in his career, "prenez un juif qui ne sache même pas la tenue des livres, jetez-le dans l'eau trouble de quelque affaire véreuse, et il se sauvera, et il emportera tout le gain sur son dos. C'est le don de la race, sa raison d'être à travers les nationalités qui se font et se défont" (*L'Argent* 137).

Comparing the trajectories of Emile and Isaac Pereire and Zola's fictional Aristide Saccard, their involvement in the remaking of the city is uncannily similar. Saccard appears all over the city during the transformations, involved in deals and exchanges that don't appear honest, but always profitable, "Il avait des décombres à lui aux quatre coins de la ville. Rue de Rome, il fut mêlé à une étonnante histoire du trou qu'une compagnie creusa, pour transporter cinq ou six mille mètres cubes de terre et faire croire à des travaux gigantesques, et qu'on dut ensuite reboucher, en rapportant la terre de Saint-Ouen... À Chaillot, il aida à éventrer la butte, à la jeter dans un bas-fond, pour faire passer le boulevard qui va de l'Arc de Triomphe au pont de l'Alma. Du côté de Passy, ce fut lui qui eut l'idée de semer les déblais du Trocadéro sur le plateau, de sorte que la bonne terre se trouve aujourd'hui à deux mètres de profondeur, et que l'herbe

elle-même refuse de pousser dans ces gravats. On l'aurait retrouvé sur vingt points à la fois, à tous les endroits où il y avait quelque obstacle insurmontable, un déblai dont on ne savait que faire, un remblai qu'on ne pouvait exécuter, un bon amas de terre et de plâtras où s'impatientait la hâte fébrile des ingénieurs, que lui fouillait de ses ongles, et dans lequel il finissait toujours par trouver quelque pot-de-vin ou quelque opération de sa façon. Le même jour, il courait des travaux de l'Arc de Triomphe à ceux du boulevard Saint-Michel, des déblais du boulevard Malesherbes aux remblais de Chaillot, traînant avec lui une armée d'ouvriers, d'huissiers, d'actionnaires, de dupes et de fripons" (*Curée* 216-217). The difference between Emile and Isaac Pereire's actual involvement in the transformation of Paris during the Second Empire and Saccard's fictional involvement is that Saccard's path is full of blunders while the Pereire's successfully concluded each project that they had begun. While Saccard's involvement appears more harmful than beneficial, the Pereires made real efforts to ameliorate the city. However, Saccard's appearance across Paris recalls the multiple addresses that the Pereire's owned or had touched.

By the end of the Second Empire, Emile and Isaac Pereire possessed several addresses throughout the city, "La liste montre l'importance des acquisitions et plus encore la perspicacité des emplacements : — l'immeuble, 158, rue de Rivoli (ce qui signifie que tous les autres ont été vendus) ; — le *Grand Hôtel du Louvre* ; — les immeubles, 6 et 18 boulevard des Capucines ; — place de l'Opéra, les maisons, 4, 6 et 8, plus des terrains ; le *Grand Hôtel*, boulevard des Capucines ; — les maisons des 1, 3, 5 et 7 rue Mogador ; — boulevard Malesherbes, les immeubles des 10, 43, 47 et 78, plus des terrains ; — de nombreuses maisons rue de Marignan (nouvellement créée) aux 1, 6, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21 et 23 ; on y a donc fortement œuvré et en peu de temps ; — des terrains dans la plaine Monceau, le long du boulevard Malesherbes prolongé et des rues de Courcelles et Cardinet ; — 40 lots de terrains sur toute la longueur du boulevard du Prince-Eugène... À cela s'ajoute les terrains et immeubles acquis au nom des deux familles" (Autin 187). Just as Zola multiplied Saccard's involvement in the transformation throughout the city in fiction, the Pereires did exactly the same in reality. Furthermore, Saccard shares with the Pereires a certain prescience concerning the

evolution of the city. Just as the addresses belonging to Emile and Isaac Pereire across Paris bore witness to their ability to invest in the right place at the right time, Saccard also appears to have a natural talent when it comes to land and real estate speculation, the morality of how Saccard makes use of this talent is however dubious, “Saccard avait enfin trouvé son milieu. Il s’était révélé grand spéculateur, brasseur de millions. Après le coup de la rue de la Pépinière, il se lança hardiment dans la lutte qui commençait à semer Paris d’épaves honteuses et de triomphes fulgurantes. D’abord, il joua à coup sûr, répétant son premier succès, achetant les immeubles qu’il savait menacés de la pioche, et employant ses amis pour obtenir de grosses indemnités. Il vint un moment où il eut cinq ou six maisons... quand il avait usé les baux, comploté avec les locataires, volé l’État et les particuliers, la finesse n’était pas grande, et il pensait que le jeu ne valait pas la chandelle. Aussi mit-il bientôt son génie au service de besognes plus compliquées” (*Curée* 214). While Saccard’s acquisitions were done without any honesty or integrity, all the land and addresses acquired by the Pereires during the Second Empire, although appearing at the time impossible to have been accomplished with the honesty and integrity of which Saccard was entirely devoid, there was in reality no cheating involved, despite the strong belief otherwise of many interested portions of the Parisian populace.

However, being falsely accused of questionable business techniques never stopped the Pereire brothers from pursuing their mission in participating in the renovation, expansion, and beautification of Paris, “On accuse Emile, président de l’Immobilière, de pratiques scandaleuses... Qu’importe les railleries ! Ils vont sans cesse de l’avant, continuant à participer à l’extension et à la modernisation de Paris. Et ils le font avec un merveilleux discernement, occupant des points stratégiques et renouvelant en matière immobilière ce qui leur a réussi dans le domaine ferroviaire” (Autin 186-187). Just like the Pereires, allegations of scandalous practices don’t hinder Saccard’s momentum. The Pereires’ business techniques were, however, entirely legitimate, motivated by the social and economic doctrines of Saint-Simonism, striving to create the most prosperous society for all, working with the permission of Napoléon III and Haussmann, and staying within the parameters set by the Emperor and his Prefect. On the contrary, in Zola’s representation of the

unfolding of the Parisian transformation, Saccard's business ploys are at best dishonest and at worst criminally fraudulent. Although Zola did not cast his speculating, real estate tycoon as a Jewish character, it is clear that the inspiration came from Emile and Isaac Pereire, revealing his disapproval of the practices and the success these two real-life Jewish figures.

Nevertheless, questionable work habits pose no disadvantage to Saccard, at least initially. In fact, cheating contributes greatly to his initial triumph. He is perpetually scheming and profiting from the troubles surfacing in the midst of such a drastic urban reconfiguration, "Saccard inventa d'abord le tour des achats d'immeubles faits sous le manteau pour le compte de la Ville. Une dernière décision du Conseil d'État créait à cette dernière une situation difficile. Elle avait acheté à l'amiable un grand nombre de maisons, espérant user les baux et congédier les locataires sans indemnité. Mais ces acquisitions furent considérées comme de véritables expropriations, et elle dut payer. Ce fut alors que Saccard offrit d'être le prête-nom de la Ville ; il achetait, usait les baux, et, moyennant un pot-de-vin, livrait l'immeuble au moment fixé. Et même, il finit par jouer double jeu, il achetait pour la Ville et pour le préfet. Quand l'affaire était trop tentante, il escamotait la maison. L'État payait. On récompensa ses complaisances en lui concédant des bouts de rues, des carrefours projetés, qu'il rétrocédait avant même que la voie nouvelle fut commencée. C'était un jeu féroce ; on jouait sur les quartiers à bâtir comme on joue sur un titre de rente" (*Curée* 214-215). Although Saccard's involvement in the renovation of Paris resembles too closely the role that Emile and Isaac Pereire played to not detect the similarities in the fictional tale and the actual history. Zola's negative portrayal of Saccard's morally corrupt business techniques exposes a critical opinion of these two Jewish brothers that were suspected of encouraging the excessive gentrification and expenditure involved in the renovation of the northwestern corn of the city, particularly around la Plaine Monceau and the boulevard de Malesherbes.

Furthermore, within the trajectories of Saccard and the real-life Pereire brothers, the names of two major and classically Second Empire localities, Rivoli and Monceau, appear. For Saccard, it is from his first apartment on the rue de Rivoli that his affairs take off, "...la rue de Rivoli, au milieu de ce Paris

nouveau...Singulier appartement, que ce premier étage de la rue de Rivoli. Les portes y battaient toute la journée ; les domestiques y parlaient haut ; le luxe neuf et éclatant en était traversé continuellement par des courses de jupes énormes et volantes, par des processions de fournisseurs... et des visiteurs de Saccard... L'éternel coup de vent qui entraînait dans l'appartement de la rue de Rivoli et en faisait battre les portes, souffla plus fort, à mesure... que Saccard élargit le cercle de ses opérations" (*Curée* 109, 137, 151). For the Pereires, it was their involvement in building the *Grand Hôtel* and the *Grands Magasins du Louvre* on the rue de Rivoli that jump-started their career in real estate development. Having successfully completed this mission within the remarkably short two-year delay set by the Emperor and his Prefect, the Pereire brothers were almost always granted permission for the real estate and development ventures that they initiated following this successful project. After the *Grand Hôtel* and *Grands Magasins du Louvre* and the *place de l'Opéra*, the neighborhood around the *parc Monceau* was their next most impressive accomplishment. The Plaine Monceau is also the Second Empire luxury neighborhood where Saccard moves when his apartment on the rue de Rivoli is no longer large enough to contain the speculator's rapidly growing fortune.

While the surface of the existing park came almost immediately under the control of the Empire in 1853, the future of the neighborhood now called La Plaine Monceau did not become a certainty until the Pereire brothers became the owners in 1860. In fact, before the Pereires' intervention, this area of Paris had an unappealing reputation, "Au reste, Haussmann n'est sans doute pas mécontent de nettoyer certains coins de ce nouvel arrondissement parisien qu'un contemporain Philippe Audebrand, décrit ainsi: 'En 1860, autour du parc Monceau, clos de murs et entouré de fossés, cachés par d'énormes marronniers, se trouvait un quartier étrange composé de ruelles mystérieuses, de sombres labyrinthes, de taudis, un vrai tapis franc. Ces bouges servaient de refuge à toute une population interlope' ...On dit aussi qu'Eugène Sue, déguisé en viveur de bas étage, s'y serait engagé une nuit et y aurait trouvé l'ambiance de ses *Mystères de Paris*. Car cette *Petite Pologne*, comme on dénomma l'endroit, était assurément le repaire du vice et le foyer de la misère" (Autin 185-186). When the Pereires became the owners of the land surrounding the parc Monceau, their

task was to develop the area, build homes, and then sell to new owners. Falling victim to the excesses of the Second Empire, the Pereires unfortunately sold the newly constructed homes along the parc Monceau for greatly inflated prices. When it came to design, they didn't, however, have complete creative liberty. There were important stipulations prescribed by the Emperor and his Prefect, of which one of the most important involved the exclusive usage of the homes as domiciles of the upper classes, "Il est interdit de bâtir dans une zone de quinze mètres sur les terrains situés en bordure du parc et à moins de cinq mètres le long des allées de sortie. Obligation est faite d'installer des grilles uniformes tout autour du parc selon le modèle arrêté par le préfet de la Seine. Les maisons ne peuvent dépasser seize mètres de hauteur et doivent être à l'usage exclusif d'habitation bourgeoise. Enfin toute enseigne ou indication est proscrite" (Autin 185). The numerous terms that regulated the constructions to be built by the Pereires permanently branded the neighborhood as the elitist head quarters of the city after the Second Empire. Proust reveals the exclusive nature of this neighborhood several years later in *Sodome et Gohmorre*: "et si un petit bout de jardin avec quelques arbres, qui paraîtrait mesquin à la campagne, prend un charme extraordinaire avenue Gabriel, ou bien rue de Monceau, où des multimillionnaires seuls peuvent se l'offrir" (X 283).

Saccard, always striving to climb to the highest point of Zola's fictional Parisian social hierarchy, chooses of course the plaine Monceau for his second high-standing Parisian dwelling after his apartment on the rue de Rivoli. According to Zola, the setting fits well with Saccard's criminal character and his mysteriously multiplying fortune, "Saccard venait de faire bâtir son hôtel du parc Monceau sur un terrain volé à la Ville. Il s'y était réservé, au premier étage, un cabinet superbe, palissandre et or, avec de hautes vitrines de bibliothèques, pleines de dossiers, et où l'on ne voyait pas un livre; le coffre-fort, enfoncé dans le mur, se creusait comme une alcôve de fer, grande à y coucher les amours d'un milliard. Sa fortune s'y épanouissait, s'y étalait insolemment" (*Curée* 162). The fact that Zola considers the land on which Saccard builds his mansion to have been stolen from the city clearly exposes what he must have personally felt towards the Pereire brothers and their complete acquisition of all the land south of the boulevard de

Courcelles and in between the avenue Hoche and the boulevard Malesherbes. According to Zola, the exchange tendered between the Emperor, his Prefect, the Pereire brothers, and the Orléans family for the acquisition of the duc de Chartres jardin de folies was equivalent to stealing. The Pereire's were seen as unjustly profiting from insider information, monopolizing the real estate market, and being offered all the prime pieces. The luxury homes that were thereafter built made Parisians feel as though they had been deprived or cheated of a splendid part of the city that became entirely exclusive and unwelcoming from the majority of the population once the Pereires had completed the transformation from a setting straight out of Sue's *Mystères de Paris* into a limited series of ornate, gilded palaces destined for single, privileged owners.

Zola must have visited this neighborhood in Paris many times for inspiration; the homes constructed by the Pereire brothers were, and remain today, notoriously lavish. Although he had many models after which he could have imagined the home that Saccard builds for himself, he chose the *hôtel particulier* of "M. Violet, entrepreneur de travaux publics" in which to install his reckless speculator (Assouline 22). However, in 1872, the same year as the publication of Zola's novel, Nissim de Camondo, one of two brothers of a Sephardi Jewish family that had just recently relocated to Paris from Istanbul, purchased the exact home after which Saccard's opulent mansion was inspired. Although Nissim de Camondo's son, Moïse, had the home raised and reconstructed as a perfect calque of the Petit-Trianon palace at Versailles, Zola's account of the home was made immemorial in *La Curée*. While the novel opens with a visit to the Bois de Boulogne, an exhaustive description of Saccard's home is given as the carriage returns to the plaine Monceau,

"La calèche prit l'avenue de la Reine-Hortense, et vint s'arrêter au bout de la rue Monceau, à quelques pas du boulevard Malesherbes, devant un grand hôtel situé entre cour et jardin. Les deux grilles chargées d'ornements dorés, qui s'ouvraient sur la cour, étaient chacune flanquées d'une paire de lanternes, en forme d'urnes également couvertes de dorures, et dans lesquelles flambaient de larges flammes de gaz. Entre les deux grilles, le concierge habitait un élégant pavillon, qui rappelait vaguement un petit temple grec... La calèche entra et vint s'arrêter devant le perron... Ce perron, aux marches larges et basses, était abrité par une vaste marquise vitrée, bordée d'un lambrequin à franges et à glands d'or. Les deux étages de l'hôtel s'élevaient sur des offices, dont on apercevait, presque au ras du sol, les soupiraux carrés garnis de vitres dépolies. En haut du perron, la porte du vestibule avançait, flanquée de maigres colonnes prises dans le mur, formant ainsi une sorte d'avant-corps percé à chaque étage d'une baie arrondie, et montant jusqu'au toit, où il se terminait par un delta. De chaque côté, les étages avaient cinq fenêtres, régulièrement alignées sur la façade, entourées d'un simple cadre de pierre. Le toit, mansardé, était taillé carrément, à larges pans presque droits.

Mais, du côté du jardin, la façade était autrement somptueuse. Un perron royal conduisait à une étroite terrasse qui régnait tout le long du rez-de-chaussée ; la rampe de cette terrasse, dans les style des grilles du parc Monceau, était encore plus chargée d'or que la marquise et les lanternes de la cour. Puis l'hôtel se dressait, ayant aux angles deux pavillons, deux sortes de tours engagées à demi dans le corps du bâtiment, et qui ménageaient à l'intérieur des pièces rondes. Au milieu, une autre tourelle, plus enfoncée, se renflait légèrement. Les fenêtres, hautes et minces pour les pavillons, espacées davantage et presque carrées sur les parties plates de la façade, avaient, au rez-de-chaussée, des balustrades de pierre, et des rampes de fer forgé et doré aux étages supérieurs. C'était un étalage, une profusion, un écrasement de richesses. L'hôtel disparaissait sous les sculptures. Autour des fenêtres, le long des corniches, couraient des enroulements de rameaux et de fleurs ; il y avait des balcons pareils à des corbeilles de verdure, que soutenaient de grandes femmes nues, les hanches tordues, les pointes des seins en avant ; puis, çà et là, étaient collés des écussons de fantaisie, des grappes, des roses, toutes les efflorescences possibles de la pierre et du marbre. À mesure que l'œil montait, l'hôtel fleurissait d'avantage. Autour du toit, régnait une balustrade sur laquelle étaient posées, de distance en distance, des urnes où des flammes de pierre flambaient. Et là, entre les œils-de-bœuf des mansarde, qui s'ouvraient dans un fouillis incroyable de fruits et de feuillages, s'épanouissaient les pièces capitales de cette décoration étonnante, les frontons des pavillons, au milieu desquels reparaissaient les grandes femmes nues, jouant avec des pommes, prenant des poses, parmi des poignées de joncs. Le toit, chargé des ces ornements, surmonté encore de galeries de plomb découpées, de deux paratonnerres et de quatre énormes cheminées symétriques, sculptées comme le reste, semblait être le bouquet de ce feu d'artifice architectural.

À droite, se trouvait une vaste serre, scellée au flanc même de l'hôtel, communiquant avec le rez-de-chaussée par la porte-fenêtre d'un salon. Le jardin, qu'une grille basse, masquée par une haie, séparait du parc Monceau, avait une pente assez forte. Trop petit pour l'habitation, si étroit qu'une pelouse et quelques massifs d'arbres verts l'emplissaient, il était simplement comme une butte, comme un socle de verdure, sur lequel se campait fièrement l'hôtel en toilette de gala. À la voir du parc, au-dessus de ce gazon propre, de ces arbustes dont les feuillages vernis luisaient, cette grand bâtisse, neuve encore et toute blafarde, avait la face blême, l'importance riche et sotté d'une parvenue, avec son lourd chapeau d'ardoises, ses rampes dorées, son ruisselement de sculptures. C'était une réduction du nouveau Louvre, un des échantillons les plus caractéristiques du style Napoléon III, ce bâtard opulent de tous les styles. Les soirs d'été, lorsque le soleil oblique allumait l'or des rampes sur la façade blanche, les promeneurs du parc s'arrêtaient, regardaient les rideaux de soie rouge drapés aux fenêtres du rez-de-chaussée ; et, au travers des glaces si larges et si claires qu'elles semblaient, comme les glaces des grands magasins modernes, mises là pour étaler au-dehors le faste intérieur, ces familles de petits bourgeois apercevaient des coins de meubles, des bouts d'étoffes, des morceaux d'plafonds d'une richesse éclatante, dont la vue les clouait d'admiration et d'envie au beau milieu des allées" (Curée 31-35).

With such a long and detailed description, there is, however, one sentence that sums-up Zola's impression, and decisively his disdain, "C'était une réduction du nouveau Louvre, un des échantillons les plus caractéristiques du style Napoléon III, ce bâtard opulent de tous les styles" (*Curée* 35). The nouveau Louvre, "inauguré par Napoléon III le 14 août 1857", is considered an example of the "style Napoléon III", imagined by the first architect to design the nouveau Louvre, Louis Visconti, as a combination of the French Renaissance and neo-classical designs of the existing buildings of the Palais du Louvre created by Pierre Lescot, Jacques Le Mercier, and Louis Le Vau in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Another building in Paris that is considered a hodgepodge of styles—baroque, rococo, and neoclassicism recycled from the three previous centuries mixed with new styles of the First Empire, the July Monarchy, and the Second Empire—is the Palais Garnier. Many Parisians accused Napoléon III of adopting a so-called

“Jewish” penchant for all that sparkled and shown with gold. Employing the most luxurious aspects of the aforementioned styles, Saccard’s home in the neighborhood of the Plaine Monceau is also a perfect representation the style classified as Napoléon III, a style for which Zola certainly makes no attempt to conceal his revulsion. Louis Napoléon’s preference in the reproduction of Ancien Régime architecture foreshadows the design of such architectural phenomenons as the Camondo family home on the rue de Monceau. Moïse de Camondo, a Sephardi Jew come to Paris via the Ottoman Empire, had an incredibly faithful copy of the Petit Trianon palace of Versailles built as his home along the parc Monceau in 1910.

Despite the similarities between the actual participation of the Pereire brothers and the fictional role of Saccard in the transformation of Paris, it is curious that Zola ultimately did not choose a Jewish character for this role. Although Zola’s thoughts on this matter will forever remain a mystery, it is possible that he was not quite prepared to fully commit to such an obvious caricature of the actual real estate developers, Emile and Isaac Pereire, for his extraordinarily reckless fictional speculator. Balzac was much less timid in his portraits of Jewish characters. The baron de Nucingen was most certainly modeled after one or two Jewish bankers of Balzac’s acquaintance, either James de Rothschild or Beer-Léon Fould. Although Balzac’s portrayal of Nucingen, physically resembling Fould alone and psychologically resembling Fould and Rothschild together, exposed an obvious sentiment of admiration tinted with envy coming from an individual who had been many times unlucky in risky business ventures, he did remain conservative in terms of judgment. On the contrary, Zola developed over the course of his literary career a true case of scorn and disdain for the ease with which Jewish bankers appeared to achieve astonishing feats of financial prowess. Saccard, however, is French, Catholic, and provincial, everything but the stereotypical omnipotent Jewish banker. It is not until 1891 and the publication of *L’Argent* that Zola’s anti-Semitism was revealed and it is possible that in writing *L’Argent*, Zola was influenced by recent publications such as Maupassant’s *Bel-ami* or Edouard Drumont’s *La France juive*, respectively in 1885 and 1886.

With *La Curée* being only the second volume of the *Rougon-Macquart* saga, Zola either had decided to err on the side of caution, wary of the possible censorship that his work might have faced if he had in fact cast Saccard as a Jewish character, or had not yet been exposed to the growing anti-Semitism. Although the Second Empire had already come to a close by the time Zola began publishing, the enduring censorship practices established by Achille Fould during the Second Empire to prevent overt representation of anti-Semitic attitudes may have still been standing firm. However, casting Saccard as a Jewish banker would have also contradicted Zola's greater project of painting the portrait, right down to the transmission of unfavorable genetic traits, of an ordinary, however extraordinary they do actually appear, French family of purely middle-class origins. *La Curée* comes at the beginning of the *Rougon-Macquart* series and casting Aristide Saccard as the rash and conniving brother of the sober politician, Eugène Rougon, was a key element in the telling of this particular family's story. Furthermore, Zola did not find inspiration for his own work in the *Comédie humaine* until later in his career and, while Balzac's plethora of Jewish characters disproportionately represented the amount of Jews that actually lived in Paris in the first half of the nineteenth century, Zola's choice to not include Jewish characters in this early novel was in reality proportionally more accurate. Nevertheless, despite Saccard's purely non-Jewish genetic or religious identity, Zola attributes to him a role in the transformation of Paris that could only have been inspired by Emile and Isaac Pereire's involvement in the great works of the Second Empire.

With all the real estate speculation in which Aristide Saccard involves himself in *La Curée* and throughout the *Rougon-Macquart* series, this character does not once deal in the very industries that had propelled the Pereires into their later booming career of speculation, development, and promotion. Although they were not the first to be involved in the innovation known as *les grands magasins*, Emile and Isaac Pereire did inaugurate the *Grands magasins du Louvre* in 1855, three years after the opening of the first store of this sort, *Au bon marché*, on the Left Bank. Either coincidence or source of creative inspiration, but the owner of *Au bon marché*, and consequently the inventor of the department store in Paris, Aristide

Boucicaut, shares first names with Aristide Saccard, Zola's speculating renegade. Despite Saccard's shared name with Boucicaut, there is no mention of any department stores in *La Curée*. However, Zola's *Au Bonheur des dames* is precisely dedicated to the milieu that was the revolutionary Parisian department store. Instead of Saccard, it is his nephew, Octave Mouret, that Zola casted as the equivalent to Aristide Boucicaut. In a novelistic twist of plot, Mouret conveniently becomes the owner of the department store, the *Bonheur des dames*, through marriage and a few unfortunate deaths, "Le *Bonheur des dames* avait été fondé en 1822 par les frères Deleuze. À la mort de l'aîné, sa fille, Caroline, s'était mariée avec le fils d'un fabricant de toile, Charles Hédouin; et, plus tard, étant devenue veuve, elle avait épousé ce Mouret. Elle lui apportait donc la moitié du magasin. Trois mois après le mariage, l'oncle Deleuze décédait à son tour sans enfants; si bien que, lorsque Caroline avait ses os dans les fondations, ce Mouret était resté seul héritier, seul propriétaire du *Bonheur*" (*Bonheur* 46-47). Although Zola's fictional entrepreneurs, the Deleuze brothers, might recall Emile and Isaac Pereire, founders in reality of the second Parisian department store, *Les Grands magasins du Louvre*, the enterprising Jewish pair did not inspire Zola's imagined department store brothers. In fact, the only character of Jewish extraction in this novel does not appear until the third chapter, proving Zola's resolve in preferring main characters of French, Catholic, and provincial origins, a preference to which he remains steadfast throughout his literary project dedicated to the genealogy of the *Rougon-Macquart* family.

Hartmann/Haussmann or Pereire:

If Aristide Saccard was an indirect, potentially even unwitting, allusion to the Pereire brothers in *La Curée*, there is no doubt that the baron Hartmann is a direct reference to the Jewish brothers in *Au Bonheur des dames*. Involved in banking, speculation, commercial development and residential real estate, the baron Hartmann is in fact the owner of the powerful financial group known as the *Crédit Immobilier*. This fictional, but clearly realistic, name appears to be a conflation of two of the Pereires' financial institutions, the *Crédit Mobilier* and the *Compagnie Immobilière*. The *Crédit Mobilier*, described as "un grand établissement de crédit destiné à secourir des entreprises momentanément gênées et à susciter des activités nouvelles", came to play

an important role in the operations of Napoléon III and Haussmann, “La création du Crédit mobilier est un acte fondamental qui va peser lourdement sur la vie économique du Second Empire” (Autin 111, 113). The Pereires’ *Compagnie Immobilière* in particular was created during the project of the *Grand Hôtel* and *Grands magasins du Louvre*, “Ce fut pendant l’année 1854, par actes des 4 et 5 décembre que fut aussi constituée la Société des Immeubles de la rue de Rivoli, fondée au capital de 24,000,000 et qui devint plus tard la fameuse *Compagnie Immobilière*” (Aycard 111-112). When the Pereires’ *Société Anonyme* become the *Compagnie Immobilière*, their implication in the transformation of Paris during the Second Empire was determined as essential and definitive. The completion of their project of the *Grand Hôtel* and *Grands Magasins du Louvre* and the creation of the financial institutions needed to support Napoléon III and Haussmann’s plans secured their involvement in the many other urban modifications that came in the two decades that followed, including the creation of new neighborhoods and the opening of new thoroughfares.

In *Au Bonheur des dames*, the baron Hartmann’s role, and that of his fictional *Crédit Immobilier*, is essentially the same as the role enacted in reality by the Pereire brothers. Hartmann is involved at the highest level with the opening and promotion after completion of a new street, something for which the main character, Octave Mouret, has a personal interest: “Lorsque Mouret eut repris sa place sur le canapé, près du baron Hartmann, il se répandit en nouveaux éloges à propos des opérations du Crédit Immobilier. Puis il attaqua le sujet qui lui tenait au cœur, il parla de la nouvelle voie, du prolongement de la rue Réaumur, dont on allait ouvrir une section, sous le nom de rue du Dix-Décembre, entre la place de la Bourse et la place de l’Opéra. L’utilité publique était déclarée depuis dix-huit mois, le jury d’expropriation venait d’être nommé, tout le quartier se passionnait pour cette trouée énorme, s’inquiétant de l’époque des travaux, s’intéressant aux maisons condamnées. Il y avait près de trois ans que Mouret attendait ces travaux, d’abord dans la prévision d’un mouvement plus actif des affaires, ensuite avec des ambitions d’agrandissement, qu’il n’osait avouer tout haut, tant son rêve s’élargissait. Comme la rue du Dix-Décembre devait couper la rue de Choiseul et la rue de la Michodière, il voyait le Bonheur des Dames envahir tout le pâté entouré par ces rues et la rue

Neuve-Saint-Augustin, il l'imaginait déjà avec une façade de palais sur la voie nouvelle, dominateur, maître de la ville conquise. Et de là était né son vif désir de connaître le baron Hartmann, lorsqu'il avait appris que le Crédit Immobilier, par un traité passé avec l'administration, prenait l'engagement de percer et d'établir la rue du Dix-Décembre, à la condition qu'on lui abandonnerait la propriété des terrains en bordure" (*Bonheur* 148-149). In comparison to the baron Hartmann, Octave Mouret is of little consequence in the Second Empire's transformation of Paris. While Mouret is simply waiting for the work to be done, for the new streets to be opened and for his store to become, almost by chance, the center-piece of a brand new intersection, the baron Hartmann directs these changes, just as the Pereire brothers were at the forefront of the promotion of the buildings around the intersection of the rue de Rivoli, the rue Saint-Honoré, and la place du Palais Royal. Mouret is therefore the equivalent of "les boutiquiers Chauchard et Hériot qui louent 41 travées (une par arcade) rue de Rivoli, faisant de la sorte un pari fabuleux sur l'avenir des... grands magasins du Louvre" (Autin 182). The real vectors of change were the Pereire brothers who offered Chauchard and Hériot the opportunity to set up shop in the space of the new *Grands Magasins du Louvre*. The two small-scale merchants had only to seize the opportunity. In Zola's fictional representation of department stores in Paris, Octave Mouret's grandiose dreams and aspirations are entirely dependent on how the Jewish banker, Hartmann, decides to organize the transformation of the neighborhood in which Mouret's store is found. Just as Chauchard and Hériot were the lucky beneficiaries of the Pereire brothers, Mouret can do nothing more than hope that the baron Hartmann will reveal himself equally as generous.

However, like his uncle, Aristide Saccard, Octave Mouret is not of a mind to wait and hope for the best. As soon as Mouret discovers the involvement of the Crédit Immobilier in the opening of the rue du Dix-Décembre, now the rue du Quatre-Septembre, he begins to foster a connection between himself and Hartmann, the director of the powerful financial institution in the hands of which lay the future of his store: "il flairait là le projet de quelque établissement futur, il était très inquiet pour les agrandissements dont il élargissait le rêve, pris de peur à l'idée de se heurter un jour contre une Société puissante, propriétaire

d'immeubles qu'elle ne lâcherait certainement pas. C'était même cette peur qui l'avait décidé à mettre au plus tôt un lien entre le baron et lui" (*Bonheur* 150-151). Becoming friends with this illusive and curious character proves to be not so simple. Zola provides very little details concerning Hartmann's life beyond his odd relationship with the widow of one of his financial friends, Henriette Desforges, his previous mistress for whom he guards paternalistic sentiments, his position at the Crédit Immobilier, and his involvement in the Second Empire renovations of the city. He first appears at Henriette's apartment for her weekly social event, "Chaque samedi, de quatre à six, Mme Desforges offrait une tasse de thé et des gâteaux aux personnes de son intimité... L'appartement se trouvait au troisième, à l'encoignure des rues de Rivoli et d'Alger; et les fenêtres des deux salons ouvraient sur le jardin des Tuileries" (*Bonheur* 124). Upon arriving, his physical description reveals his age, potential origin, and intelligence, "Justement, elle parut à la porte du petit salon, suivie d'un vieillard, âgé d'environ soixante ans... Un sourire pinçait les lèvres du vieillard. C'était un homme petit et vigoureux, à grosse tête alsacienne, et dont la face épaisse s'éclairait d'une flamme d'intelligence, au moindre pli de la bouche, au plus léger clignement des paupières" (*Bonheur* 146-147).

The baron Hartmann almost always appears uniquely at the home of his previous mistress become protégé, the very Parisian Henriette Desforges, at the corner of the rue de Rivoli and the rue d'Alger, but there is no indication of where he lives. The apartment of Henriette Desforges is in a more modern section of the city, the rue d'Alger only opened in 1830, "sur l'emplacement de l'aile ouest de l'hôtel de Noailles, de 1711, que ses derniers propriétaires, Périer et Chéronnet, venaient de lotir" (Hillairet 73). Cutting between the rue de Rivoli and the rue Saint-Honoré, this short street is in the neighborhood of the place de Vendôme, one of Paris' most privileged neighborhoods. The windows of Henriette Desforges' third-floor corner apartment look out across the rue de Rivoli onto the Tuileries gardens, placing her in the midst of the section of Paris that the Pereire brothers had worked to renovate and redesign when they completed the rue de Rivoli, the Grand Hôtel du Louvre and the Grands Magasins du Louvre, rendering the neighborhood clean, spacious, and quite expensive. The baron Hartmann, as a wealthy real estate speculator, although

characterized by “une grosse tête d’alsacien” his face is often lit by “une flamme d’intelligence”, fits into the setting of the modern and elegant apartment in the newly built Second Empire style building.

Hartmann has come somewhat grudgingly to this event, aware of Henriette’s intention to introduce him to yet another male friend with an interest in the Crédit Immobilier for reasons other than curiosity, “Depuis quinze jours, il résistait au désir d’Henriette, qui lui demandait cette entrevue; non pas qu’il éprouvât une jalousie exagérée, résigné en homme d’esprit à son rôle de père; mais parce que c’était le troisième ami dont Henriette lui faisait faire la connaissance, et qu’à la longue il craignait un peu le ridicule” (*Bonheur* 147). The wise and perceptive Hartmann is not deceived by Mouret’s desire to kindle a friendship, “Aussi, en abordant Octave, avait-il le rire discret d’un protecteur riche, qui, s’il veut bien se montrer charmant, ne consent pas à être dupe” (*Bonheur* 147). The description that Zola provides of Hartmann and the resistance with which Mouret’s interest in collaboration is met announce a subtle but sure change in Zola’s appreciation of the Jewish role in the transformation of Paris. Mouret, a French-Catholic of provincial origin finds himself impeded and challenged by a Jewish businessman that pulls all the strings. The competition that arises between the scrappy French-Catholic entrepreneur and the all-powerful Jewish banker foretells the imminent battle between Saccard and Gundermann towards the end of the *Rougon-Macquart* saga in *L’Argent*.

True to his character, Hartmann is not duped when Mouret presses him for information about his involvement in the creation of a new street to pass directly through the neighborhood in which the Bonheur des dames is located, “Lorsque Mouret eut repris sa place sur le canapé, près du baron Hartmann, il se répandit en nouveaux éloges à propos des opérations du Crédit Immobilier. Puis, il attaqua le sujet, qui lui tenait au cœur, il parla de la nouvelle voie, du prolongement de la rue Réaumur, dont on allait ouvrir une section, sous le nom de rue du Dix-Décembre, entre la place de la Bourse et la place de l’Opéra” (*Bonheur* 148-149). This area of Paris was in fact part of the Pereires’ contributions to the urban redevelopment of the city. Following their first project, referred to as “l’opération Louvre-Rivoli”, they quickly began working on

the place de l'Opéra, "Immédiatement, la nouvelle société, qui achève l'hôtel et le futur magasin du Louvre ainsi que beaucoup d'immeubles de la rue de Rivoli, participe à la rénovation du futur quartier de l'Opéra... la Compagnie achète l'hôtel d'Osmond, qui forme aujourd'hui l'angle du boulevard des Italiens et de la rue Halévy et s'étend jusqu'à la rue Meyerbeer" (Autin 181). By involving the baron Hartmann in projects similar to those realized by the Pereire brothers, Zola's future intentions to blame the Jews for the excessively luxurious outcome of the great works of the Second Empire become apparent.

The baron Hartmann is thus a stand-in figure for the Jewish bankers who had gained the confidence of the emperor, allowing them much liberty in the recreation of Paris' urban appearance. Those who inhabited the neighborhoods to be rebuilt were therefore not entirely at the mercy of the emperor, their fates were in the hands of those who were to decide what would be demolished and rebuilt and what would be simply renovated. In Zola's fictional representation of this real and, in Zola's opinion, unjust situation repeated throughout the Second Empire, Octave Mouret, despite his rapid rise to power as proprietor of the increasingly popular women's department store, is at the mercy of the Jewish banker, Hartman, who has been buying up all the buildings around the Bonheur des dames, "le Crédit Immobilier faisait, secrètement acheter les maisons du pâté où se trouvait le Bonheur des dames, non seulement celles qui devaient tomber sous la pioche des démolisseurs, mais encore les autres, celles qui allaient rester debout" (*Bonheur* 150). With this rivalry between the enthusiastic, young and enterprising Frenchman from the countryside and the Jewish banking figure, cosmopolitan but clearly of foreign origin, Alsatian at best or German at worst, Zola chronicles the changing sentiments in France created by the Jewish involvement in Napoléon III and Haussmann's transformation of Paris and the loss of the Alsace-Lorraine region to the Germans in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870. Although a great proportion of the Jewish population in Alsace-Lorraine left the region to resettle in France, often in Paris, after the war, their German-sounding accents and Yiddish language often made them the target of French animosity towards their German enemies.

This Jewish/German and French rivalry appears again later in the *Rougon-Macquart* story with much more explicit anti-Semitic rhetoric. However, for the rivalry between Mouret and Hartmann, Zola keeps race and religion out of the picture. Throughout his first encounter with Mouret Hartmann is reserved, listening to the young entrepreneur's projects, nearly as silent and calm as Mouret is anxious with zeal. Despite being a keen businessman, Mouret divulges his great plans for his department store too easily and with too much confidence to the shrewd Jewish banker and real estate speculator, " — Tenez ! monsieur le baron, j'ai l'honneur de vous rencontrer, il faut que je me confesse... Oh ! je ne vous demande pas vos secrets. Seulement, je vais vous confier les miens, persuadé que je ne saurais les placer en des mains plus sages... D'ailleurs, j'ai besoin de vos conseils, il y a longtemps que je n'osais vous aller voir" (*Bonheur* 151-152). While Hartmann listens quietly, reacting minimally, Mouret, in an excess of enthusiasm, hastily propositions him with a clearly fantastical business association: "il proposait au baron une association, dans laquelle le Crédit Immobilier apporterait le palais colossal qu'il voyait en rêve... — Qu'allez-vous faire de vos terrains et de vos immeubles ? demandait-il avec insistance. Vous avez une idée, sans doute. Mais je suis bien certain que votre idée ne vaut pas la mienne. Songez à cela. Nous bâtissons sur les terrains une galerie de vente, nous démolissons ou nous aménageons les immeubles, et nous ouvrons les magasins les plus vastes de Paris, un bazar qui fera des millions" (*Bonheur* 153-152). While the fictional Hartmann certainly does not reveal his plans to Mouret, "Il hochait la tête, il continuait de sourire, décidé à ne pas rendre confiance pour confiance. Le projet du crédit mobilier était de créer, sur la rue du Dix-Décembre, une concurrence au Grand-Hôtel, un établissement luxueux, dont la situation centrale attirerait les étrangers", Zola, the actual writer, directly alludes to the Pereires' first project and reveals another similarity that his fictional Jewish banker shares with the actual Jewish brothers (*Bonheur* 153). In planning their Grand Hôtel du Louvre, in the Palais Royal-Rivoli neighborhood, and the Hôtel de la Paix, in the Opéra neighborhood, the Perires hoped and expected that wealthy foreign visitors would also visit the stores that they had financed, "grands magasins du Louvre, de même ils facilitent l'installation dans l'immeuble qu'ils vont

construire boulevard des Italiens, sur l'emplacement de l'hôtel d'Osmond, de la Grande Maison de Blanc. Ils comptent, dans l'un et l'autre cas, sur la clientèle des hôtels qu'ils réalisent à proximité, et naturellement sur le passage" (Autin 182). Although Zola does not mention this possibility, but the baron Hartmann, in his projections for the creation of a luxurious establishment capable of competing with a Grand Hôtel, must be planning on capitalizing on the revenue of affluent visitors from abroad to the hotel.

Prior to meeting Octave Mouret, the baron Hartmann had not really considered a department store in his projections for the neighborhood between situated between the Bourse and the Opéra. His plans involve the opening of a new street, rue du Quatre-Septembre, and the development of the section of Paris triangulated between the following old streets, the rue Basse-du-Rempart, to be consumed by the boulevards des Capucines and des Italiens, the rue Neuve-Saint-Augustin, and the rue de la Michodière, amongst others. Once the new streets replace the old, Hartmann's goal is to build a hotel with a façade on the rue du Quatre-Septembre. Mouret's department store is of little interest to the ambitious banking baron. Mouret, however, is very interested in the baron's plans and believes that he can convince him to fund the expansion of the store with a monumental entrance on the rue du Quatre-Septembre, exactly the façade for which the baron was reserving his future great hotel. Once he has met Mouret, he is uneasily convinced, " — Sans doute, l'idée peut séduire, disait-il. Seulement, elle est d'un poète... Où prendriez-vous la clientèle pour emplir une pareille cathédrale? ...Le baron hochait de nouveau sa tête. Lui, qui avait accueilli les combinaisons les plus hardies, et dont on était encore les témérités... restait inquiet et têtard... — J'entends bien, répondit-il. Vous vendez bon marché pour vendre beaucoup, et vous vendez beaucoup pour vendre bon marché... Seulement, il faut vendre, et j'en reviens à ma question: à qui vendrez-vous? comment espérez-vous entretenir une vente aussi colossale?" (*Bonheur* 154-157). Hartmann is eventually seduced by Mouret's vision and agrees, hesitantly, to a business arrangement, "Maintenant, le baron comprenait. Quelques phrases avaient suffi, il devinait le reste, et une exploitation si galante l'échauffait, remuait en lui son passé de viveur. Il clignait les yeux d'un air d'intelligence, il finissait par admirer l'inventeur de cette

mécanique à manger les femmes. C'était très fort. Il eut... un mot que lui souffla sa vieille expérience. — Vous savez qu'elles se rattraperont... Mais Mouret haussa les épaules, dans un mouvement de dédain... C'était un dédain raisonné de méridional et de spéculateur. — Eh bien ! cher monsieur, demanda-t-il pour conclure, voulez-vous être avec moi ? L'affaire des terrains vous semble-t-il possible ? ... Le baron, à demi conquis, hésitait pourtant à s'engager de la sorte. Un doute restait au fond du charme qui opérait peu à peu sur lui" (*Bonheur* 163-164). Despite his hesitations, Hartmann finds Mouret's energy and daring remarkably attractive, "La campagne était donc définitivement gagnée, le petit commerce du quartier mis en pièces, le baron Hartmann conquis avec ses millions et ses terrains... il voyait déjà le Bonheur des dames grandir démesurément, élargir son hall, prolonger ses galeries jusqu'à la rue du Dix-Décembre" (*Bonheur* 248-149).

Mouret's influence is strong and he achieves concessions in Hartmann's plans for the neighborhood. First Hartmann relinquishes control of the hôtel Duvillard that Mouret had desired to purchase for some time. In competition with all the small boutiques in the neighborhood, Mouret's acquisition of the Hôtel Duvillard is particularly discouraging for Bourras, an umbrella fabricant, "Vous savez la nouvelle ? lui dit un soir le marchand de parapluies... — Eh bien ! les gredins ont acheté l'hôtel Duvillard... Je suis cerné... Il paraît que l'hôtel appartenait au Crédit Immobilier, dont le président, le baron Hartmann, vient de le céder à notre fameux Mouret... Maintenant, ils me tiennent à droite, à gauche, derrière... C'était vrai, on avait dû signer la cession la veille. La petite maison de Bourras, serrée entre le Bonheur des dames et l'hôtel Duvillard, accrochée là comme un nid d'hirondelle dans la fente d'un mur, semblait devoir être écrasée du coup, le jour où le magasin envahirait l'hôtel, et ce jour était venu, le colosse tournait le faible obstacle, le ceignait de son entassement de marchandises, menaçait de l'engloutir, de l'absorber par la seule force de son aspiration géante" (*Bonheur* 420-421). The invented story of the hôtel Duvillard appears inspired by the factual story of the hôtel d'Osmond. This aristocratic home on the rue Basse-du-Rempart belonged first to "M. Des Tillières, le confident du prince de Talleyrand, dont l'immensité de fortune avait eu une double origine, à laquelle aujourd'hui il est loisible de remonter" (Lefleuve 8). His only daughter, Angélique Aimée,

who married “le fils du duc d’Osmond”, taking on the aristocratic name for herself and her gilded home, then inherited it. The home was rumored to be so luxurious that the wife of M. Des Tillières, Angélique Aimée’s mother, supposedly died of exposure to excessive opulence, “La femme de cet heureux spéculateur avait une complexion trop délicate pour prendre longtemps part à cette rare opulence; elle en mourut au lieu d’en vivre, et comment ? pour avoir trop enrichi sa belle chambre à coucher de bronze et d’acajour de nouvelle mode. Le triple alliage du cuivre, du zinc et de l’étain exhalait des miasmes pernicieux dont l’influence, encore mal combattue, nuisait alors à la santé des ouvriers qui le manipulaient ; mais on aurait eu tort d’en dire autant des nouveaux meubles faits de cet arbre, innocemment rapporté d’Amérique par La Fayette avec la République. Empoisonnée par ces jouissances du luxe” (Lefleuve 8-9).

After the opulence of the countess d’Osmond, Angélique Aimée’s title by marriage, the hôtel d’Osmond became a gathering place for the musically and artistically inclined, “Néanmoins, depuis Ovide, chaque siècle ajoute son chapitre à l’art d’aimer, empreint du caractère général de l’époque, et notre temps n’a pas été du tout le plagiaire des siècles primitifs lorsqu’il a inventé Mabille et le Concert-Musard, dont le succès rend jalouses de Paris toutes les autres capitales. Les passants, les profanes n’y sont plus des bourgeois; ce sont au contraire des artistes; la naïveté a changé de côté, et je ne sais à présent rien de moins ingénu que la bourgeoisie parisienne... Par bonheur les profanes trouvent encore au Concert-Musard une charmante musique, tour à tour tendre et puis qui saute, et une invitation continuelle à la valse, sans compter maintes ritournelles imitatives qui invitent à la chasse, à la vie pastorale, et à déboucher du champagne, à défaut d’amour platonique. Outre cette harmonie intermittente, il y a place encore chez Musard pour une conversation qui cesse et qui reprend comme elle, pour une vive lumière et des pénombres distribuées avec art, pour des lambris aristocratiquement dorés, à côté des arcades improvisées en carton ou en toile, pour les salons où l’on boit, où l’on fume, où l’on peut lire les journaux du lendemain, où s’exposent aussi des peintures, des lithographies et des portraits photographiques, et enfin pour des jeux absolument nouveaux en ce qu’on y perd son argent sans la plus petite chance de gain” (Lefleuve 7). However, the Concert-

Musard's destiny fell into the hands of the Pereires when the descendants of the Osmond family sold to the Jewish banking brothers. Two rumors circulated concerning the fate of the aristocratic mansion and the popular musical art and social space, "Depuis que cette salle de concert anime la rue Basse-du-Rempart, on parle de démolir l'hôtel superbe qu'elle occupe, et le Crédit mobilier, qui en est le propriétaire, ne consent aux entrepreneurs qu'un bail de deux mois à renouveler. On dit aussi, et le souhaitons fort, que cette maison sera seulement restaurée et mise de niveau avec le boulevard. Chacun sait que c'est l'ancien hôtel d'Osmond" (Lefleuve 8). Unfortunately, the hôtel Osmond was not restored and brought up to the level of the boulevard. Instead, at 6 boulevard des Capucines, there is today a classically Second Empire block of Haussmannian apartment buildings, spanning from the place de l'Opéra to the rue de la Chaussée-d'Antin.

As for the fate of the fictional hôtel Duvillard, the façade remained while everything else beyond the façade was destroyed and replaced with a continuation of the department store taking over the neighborhood. What is left of the hôtel during construction haunts the owners of the small boutiques, failing under the competition of the Bonheur des dames, "de l'autre côté de la rue, les fenêtres béantes de l'ancien hôtel Duvillard ouvraient des trous sur le chantier, où les ouvriers s'agitaient, dans l'éblouissement des lampes électriques" (*Bonheur* 467). Just as Mouret succeeds in convincing the baron Hartmann, director of the Crédit Immobilier, and consequently the owner of the hôtel Duvillard, to relinquish this old aristocratic home for the expansion of his department store, he also accomplishes his greatest dream of turning the Bonheur des dames into a commercial palace replete with a palatial façade on a brand new street, "Depuis longtemps, Mouret caressait le rêve de réaliser son ancien projet, l'envahissement de l'îlot entier par le *Bonheur des dames*, de la rue Monsigny à la rue Michodière, et de la rue Neuve-Saint-Augustin à la rue du Dix-Décembre. Dans le pâté énorme, il y avait encore, sur cette dernière voie, un vaste terrain en bordure, qu'il ne possédait point; et cela suffisait à gêner son triomphe, il était torturé par le besoin de compléter sa conquête, de dresser, là, comme apothéose, une façade monumentale... il la voulait afficher devant le nouveau Paris, sur une de ces jeunes avenues où passait au grand soleil la cohue de la fin du siècle; il la

voyait dominer, s'imposer comme le palais géant du commerce, jeter plus d'ombre sur la ville que le vieux *Louvre*" (*Bonheur* 653-654). In order for Mouret to accomplish his dreams, the baron Hartmann is indispensable: "Ce fut le vingt-cinq septembre que commencèrent les travaux de la nouvelle façade du Bonheur des dames. Le baron Hartmann, selon sa promesse, avait enlevé l'affaire, dans la dernière réunion générale du Crédit Immobilier. Et Mouret touchait enfin à la réalisation de son rêve: cette façade qui allait grandir sur la rue du Dix-Décembre, était comme l'épanouissement même de sa fortune" (*Bonheur* 684). Always the shrewd businessman, Hartmann has not put all his bets on Mouret. In fact, he decides to fund the creation of a second department store with the intention of stimulating competition.

When Mouret's ex-mistress, Henriette Desforges, chooses to take revenge, she does so with a former employee of the Bonheur des dames, "— Vous savez qu'il m'a signifié mon congé, oh ! très gentiment... Mais du diable s'il ne s'en repent pas ! Je viens de trouver mon enseigne: Aux Quatre Saisons, et je me plante près de l'Opéra... — Comptez sur moi, j'en suis... Et elle attira le baron Hartmann dans l'embrassade d'une fenêtre" (*Bonheur* 681-682). As Henriette has done with all of her intimate male friends, she suggests that the baron Hartmann fund their business ventures, "Sans attendre, elle lui recommanda Bouthemont, le donna comme un gaillard qui allait à son tour révolutionner Paris, en s'établissant à son compte" (*Bonheur* 682). Despite the embarrassment that Hartmann experiences when his former mistress and forever protégée urges him to take on her next conquest, he still accepts, excited by the possibility of competition, "l'idée lui plaisait même assez; car il avait déjà inventé, en matière de banque, de se créer ainsi des concurrences, pour en dégoûter les autres. Puis, l'aventure l'amusait" (*Bonheur* 682). The baron Hartmann's presence in Mouret's story fades away when Mouret realizes his dreams and the Jewish banker is no longer necessary. The success of the Bonheur des dames is not hindered by the rivalry of the new store, *Aux Quatre Saisons*, and Mouret comes to no longer appreciate the Hartmann's less than scrupulous approach to investment, "Le dilettantisme financier du baron Hartmann, mettant de l'argent dans les deux affaires, l'énervait aussi" (*Bonheur* 821). Hartmann's role is greatly minimized in the end and Octave Mouret is portrayed as having

facilitated his own success. However, as it occurred during the Second Empire, to accomplish such a great business venture as the *Bonheur des dames*, funding from one of the various financial institutions, like the Pereires' *Crédit mobilier*, was requisite. The Pereire brothers had imagined the role of the *Crédit mobilier* for the precise purpose of business development, likening it to a home loan, "Elle est une situation semblable à celle du *Crédit foncier*: l'un prête sur immeubles par voie d'hypothèque... l'autre place ou prête sur valeurs mobilières ou industrielles" (Autin, 117). Although the *Crédit mobilier* eventually foundered under the continued pressure of intense competition and accusations of unorthodox and dangerous banking techniques, the baron Hartmann, their fictional double of a sort, experienced no such difficulty and appeared successful throughout. Hartmann, however, receives no praise for his important role in the creation of new streets and the promotion of homes and commercial spaces, something for which the Pereire brothers also did not receive acclaim. In the case of the Pereires, the Parisian Public was far too disgruntled by the increasingly garish luxury of the homes and business that the Jewish banking brothers funded, built, and promoted to appreciate their participation in the beautification of the capital.

However important the role of figures such as the fictional Hartmann and the actual Pereire brothers in the transformation of the city, Zola never casts Jewish figures in leading roles. While Octave Mouret is the star of the novel, *Au Bonheur des dames*, the baron Hartman is the actual source of urban transformation. On the one hand, as a young, energetic, attractive and motivated businessman, Mouret appeals easily to the sympathies of the French readership. On the other, Hartmann has the qualities of a potential villain in the making. Nevertheless, the story is not about Hartmann and his character flaws, his ethically dubious relationship with Henriette Desforges, and his financial "dilettantism" are therefore not further questioned. Nevertheless, this combination of a young French woman with a preference for multiple male companions and an elderly Jewish male with money to spare is not new to Zola. In fact, three years previous to the publication of *Au Bonheur des dames*, Zola had already presented the daringly racy and ultimately tragic story of Anna Coupeau, otherwise known as Nana, and her rich Jewish benefactor, Steiner.

Steiner at the Theater:

Published in 1880, *Nana*, features the daughter of Gervaise Macquart and a certain Coupeau. Nana's prospects in life are limited, growing up in a low class neighborhood to the north of Paris where both her mother and father are entangled in the snares of alcoholism. Originally outside of the city limits, but incorporated in 1859 with many other suburban villages circling Paris, the borders of this neighborhood, still known today as la Goutte d'Or, are formed by the rue Ordener to the north, the boulevard de la Chapelle to the south, the rue Marx Dormoy to the east and the boulevard Barbès to the west. In the nineteenth century, during Nana's childhood, la Goutte d'or was an area of transience and poverty, with a greater population of non-Parisians than the rest of the city. La Goutte d'Or is known today as an immigrant neighborhood, but in the 1850s and 1860s, it was more of a neighborhood where poor provincial French washed-up on the outskirts of the capital from the impoverished countryside. Rural exodus prompted the creation of these types of neighborhoods when feasible means of survival for farmers dwindled significantly with industrialization. Like her half-cousin, Aristide Saccard, Gervaise Macquart leaves the fictional Plassans for Paris, but her transition from a small rural town to a big, industrialized city is not successful. With the father of her first three children, Lantier, Gervaise moves into the hôtel Boncœur on the boulevard des Poissonniers. When Lantier leaves Gervaise, she begins working as a laundry worker on the rue Neuve de la Goutte-d'Or and meets and marries Coupeau with whom she has Nana.

Despite being Gervaise's first legitimate child, conceived in wedlock, unlike her three sons with Lantier, Nana is not privileged with structure or role models as a child. She leaves school early and becomes the leader of a band of mischief-seeking kids in her neighborhood. At thirteen, she attempts a floral apprenticeship, but a traditional career doesn't appeal to Nana and she quickly leaves for a less orthodox position as mistress to a noble *vicomte*. By the age of sixteen, Nana has an illegitimate son and, by the age of eighteen, she finds herself living in an unfinished, but potentially elegant apartment on the boulevard Haussmann, thanks to a "un riche marchand de Moscou, qui était venu passer un hiver à Paris... en payant

six mois d'avance" (*Nana* 63). The potential elegance of this "grande maison neuve" is however compromised from the beginning. The owner of the building in which Nana has her apartment rents only to a very specific female population, "le propriétaire louait à des dames seules, pour leur faire essayer les plâtres" (*Nana* 63). Nana and the other women renting in this *grande maison neuve*, while not official prostitutes, are most likely the mistresses of one or more men with the means to house them in decent lodgings in a more modern and trendy part of the city. Nana's apartment recalls Balzac's descriptions of the dwellings of some of his famous *lorettes*, of which Esther and Florine, both actresses and mistresses of various male characters. In each of their living situations, Balzac describes a combination of luxury, artistic disorder, and evidence of a prostitute's lifestyle. Zola provides a similar mixture in Nana's second floor apartment, "L'appartement, trop vaste pour elle, n'avait jamais été meublé complètement; et un luxe criard, des consoles et des chaises dorées s'y heurtaient à du bric-à-brac de revendeuse, des guéridons d'acajou, des candélabres de zinc jouant le bronze florentin. Cela sentait la fille lâchée trop tôt par son premier monsieur sérieux, retombée à des amants louches, tout un début difficile, un lancement manqué, entravé par des refus de crédit et des menaces d'expulsion... La chambre à coucher et le cabinet de toilette étaient les deux seules pièces qu'un tapissier du quartier avait soignées... on distinguait le meuble de palissandre, les tentures et les sièges de damas broché, à grandes fleurs bleues sur fond de gris" (*Nana* 63-64). Nana's apartment, in a brand new building, on the brand new boulevard Haussmann, reveals a vast improvement in living conditions from where she grew up in the hôtel Boncœur of the Goutte d'Or. However, the price at which this improvement has been acquired is that of prostitution. Nana has merely exchanged the precariousness of a low-class neighborhood in which she risked to catch the most common community ailment, alcoholism, for the vulnerability of a somewhat high-class prostitute with a whole different set of risks.

In order to maintain her lifestyle, including her appearance, parties, outings, and the chic apartment in an ideal location for an individual of her genre, Nana depends almost entirely on wealthy suitors. At the beginning of the novel, Nana has just made her début on stage and is hopeful that a career in acting and

singing will ameliorate her prospects for maintaining her expensive existence. For women like Nana in nineteenth-century Paris, the stage was a feasible means of income, although it was always associated with prostitution and never helped a woman's reputation. While Balzac's fictional Josépha Mirah became extremely wealthy and successful due to her immense talent, some actual female actresses and singers of this time period became great stars and were considered true artists, of which Rachel Félix and Sarah Bernhardt are just two very well known examples. The fictional Josépha and the actual Rachel and Sarah were all of Jewish origin, possessed artistic genius, and were of a dark and mysterious complexion that the French labeled Oriental at the time. Nana, however, is the polar opposite. She is of French-Catholic origin, is born in Paris of provincial immigrant parent, has no singing or acting ability to mention, and has nothing of the "Oriental" beauty of Josépha, Rachel, or Sarah: "très grande, très forte pour ses dix-huit ans, dans sa tunique blanche de déesse, ses longs cheveux blonds simplement dénoués sur les épaules descendit vers la rampe avec un aplomb tranquille" (*Nana* 31). Her voice is compared to a syringe and her presence on stage to a lump that doesn't know where to put her feet or her hands, "Jamais on n'avait entendu une voix aussi fausse, menée avec moins de méthode... Et elle ne savait même pas se tenir en scène, elle jetait les mains en avant, dans un balancement de tout son corps, qu'on trouva peu convenable et disgracieux" (*Nana* 31-32). Nana has only her blond appearance, charisma, and rather grotesque audacity to rely on for success, which in fact turn out to be more than enough to charm a crowd, "Nana, cependant, en voyant rire la salle, s'était mise à rire. La gaieté redoubla. Elle était drôle tout de même, cette belle fille. Son rire lui creusait un amour de petit trou dans le menton. Elle attendait, pas gênée, familière, entrant tout de suite de plain-pied avec le public, ayant l'air de dire elle-même d'un clignement d'yeux qu'elle n'avait pas de talent pour deux liards, mais que ça ne faisait rien, qu'elle avait autre chose" (*Nana* 32-31). As it is made abundantly clear by the reactions of those observing Nana on stage, there is something hypnotic about her that annuls her imperfections. By the end of her first performance, the audience is captivated, "Peu à peu, Nana avait pris possession du public, et maintenant chaque homme la subissait" (*Nana* 57)

This first sighting of Nana occurs at the Théâtre des Variétés on the boulevard Montmartre. Established by Marguerite Brunet, known as Mademoiselle Montansier, in 1790, the Théâtre des Variétés took its final form in 1807. Appearing as a two-story Greek or Roman temple, the Théâtre des Variétés that is featured in a painting from 1820 is taller than the buildings on either side. It is now sandwiched between typically Second Empire apartment buildings and is dwarfed by their height that is several stories greater. Although the reputation of actors and actresses was slowly changing towards the end of the nineteenth century, with theater and acting beginning to be recognized as a true form of art, the Théâtre des Variétés of Zola's novel continues to maintain a close association with actresses of ill repute, also working as prostitutes. It is in this theater that Nana makes her theatrical début as a scantily clad Venus who has just recently seduced Mars, steeling him from Diana. The charismatic and nonchalant beauty of Nana disguised as the goddess Venus captivates the crowd, especially a wealthy Jewish banker referred to as Steiner. The Jewish banker has, however, already glimpsed Nana elsewhere, “ — Mais je la connais ! cria Steiner, dès qu'il aperçut Fauchery. Pour sûr, je l'ai vue quelque part... Au Casino, je crois, et elle s'y était fait ramasser, tant elle était soûle” (*Nana* 36). The banker, Steiner, and the journalist, Fauchery, speculate that they encountered her “Chez la Tricon” another place of unpleasant reputation, “un sale endroit” (*Nana* 36). They have also spotted her on the street, “au coin de la rue de Provence” (*Nana* 46). Steiner, known for repeatedly squandering fortunes on women, is so taken by Nana that he is not able to focus on much else, including his current mistress, Rose Mignon, the actress playing Diana. In an extraordinarily unconventional arrangement, Rose's husband, known simply as Mignon, serves as his wife's procurer, keeping Steiner content in order to maintain the flow of money coming from the rich banker.

However, when Steiner sees Nana on stage, Mignon senses the danger of losing a client and the substantial income. When his attempts to dissuade Steiner with references to Nana's reputation fail, he then reminds Steiner of his engagement with his wife, “Laissez donc, mon cher, une roulure ! Le va joliment la reconduire... Steiner, mon petit, vous savez que ma femme vous attend dans sa loge” (*Nana* 15). Once

Mignon realizes that Steiner is irremediably infected by Nana's charm, he changes strategy, "Cependant Mignon venait d'entraîner Steiner au café des Variétés. Voyant le succès de Nana, il s'était mis à parler d'elle avec enthousiasme, tout en surveillant le banquier du coin de l'œil. Il le connaissait, deux fois il l'avait aidé à tromper Rose, puis, le caprice passé, l'avait ramené, repentant et fidèle" (*Nana* 50). Steiner's quick and unshakable attachment to Nana recalls Balzac's portrayal of the baron Nucingen's complete infatuation with Esther. Once these two Jewish bankers have spotted that which their heart desires, they stop at nothing to possess it. Steiner pays a working girl to throw flowers onto the stage at the end of the play to catch Nana's attention, "un grand trio terminait la scène; et ce fut alors qu'une ouvreuse parut dans la loge de Lucy Stewart, et jeta deux énormes bouquets de lilas blanc. In applaudit, Nana et Rose Mignon saluèrent... Une partie de l'orchestre se tourna en souriant vers la baignoire occupée par Steiner et Mignon" (*Nana* 56). Steiner has, nevertheless, tremendous competition. Every male in the Théâtre des Variétés on the night of Nana's début succumbs to her spell and desires her, something that only the regard of a journalist, trained to remain neutral and to observe, appears to be able to perceive without also becoming a victim, "Fauchery voyait devant lui l'échappé de collègue que la passion soulevait de son fauteuil. Il eut la curiosité de regarder le comte de Vandevres, très pâle, les lèvres pincées, le gros Steiner, dont la face apoplectique crevait, Labordette lorgnant d'un air étonné de maquignon qui admire une jument parfaite, Daguenet dont les oreilles saignaient et remuaient de jouissance. Puis, un instinct lui fit jeter un coup d'œil en arrière, et il resta étonné de ce qu'il aperçut dans la loge des Muffat: derrière la comtesse, blanche et sérieuse, le comte se haussait, béant, la face marbrée de taches rouges; tandis que, près de lui, dans l'ombre, les yeux troubles du marquis de Chouard étaient devenus deux yeux de chat, phosphorescents, pailletés d'or" (*Nana* 57-58).

Those appearing the most affected by the vision of Nana as Venus on the stage of the Théâtre des Variétés constitute a combination of individuals of the aristocracy and the haute-bourgeoisie who frequent la Bourse as well as the theater and other places of entertainment such as cafés and salons. The common theme that unites this disparate group of male representatives of various levels of French society is their

attraction for women of Nana's nature. In fact, the Théâtre des Variétés, for these men, becomes essentially an accepted and tolerated brothel, just as Bordenave, the theater's owner, insists on it being called, "Dites mon bordel" (*Nana* 10). Bordenave says this to the young and naïve aristocrat, Hector de la Faloise, "un jeune homme qui venait achever son éducation à Paris. Le directeur pesa le jeune homme d'un coup d'œil. Mais Hector l'examinait avec émotion. C'était donc là ce Bordenave, ce montreur de femmes" (*Nana* 10). When Hector compliments Bordenave on the success of the play, "En voilà pour deux cents représentations... Paris entier va défiler à votre théâtre", Bordenave insists again, "Dis donc à mon bordel, bougre d'entêté" (62). The theater director is the voice of honesty, revealing the societal opinion of what the theater had come to represent. Gérard Gengembre explains how the corruption of the theater exposes the greater corruption of the Second Empire: "tout est dit, sans inutiles circonlocutions, par Bordenave, directeur des Variétés... Le théâtre, ou lieu par excellence de la prostitution généralisée. Le Second Empire saisi par le théâtre. Une mise en abyme. La messe semble dite" (Gengembre 282). For Bordenave, the theater serves as a legitimate space, accepted by societal norms, in which women can be displayed and purchased by the highest bidder. For the aristocracy and haute-bourgeoisie, attending the presentation of a play filled with women known for their liberal and copious relations with men is a means of coming into contact with future mistresses without appearing to break any social morays. Amongst the men that the journalist observes at the end of Nana's appearance on stage, there are two counts, one marquis, and one rich Jewish banker. Although Zola resisted setting this scene in an actual brothel, the Théâtre des Variétés essentially becomes a glorified whorehouse in which the old feudal and the new financial aristocracy come together to compete for the attention of typically low-class but beautiful women. The triumph of Nana over all of these wealthy men uncovers deep-seated societal corruption: "au Théâtre des Variétés, se donne à voir une même société entraînée dans la circulation de l'or et de la chair, pour reprendre la formule bien connue de Zola. S'il correspond à un goût d'époque, le choix des sujets mythologiques se légitime par leur perversion érotisante qui emblématise le Second Empire selon Zola et par leur dégradation culturelle"

(Gengembre 286). All does not bode well for the state of imperial Paris when the leading figures, bankers, aristocrats, and haute-bourgeoisie alike, all lose composure before an alcoholic laundry worker's crude daughter in her less than mediocre performance. The shared reactions of each individual male to Nana's performance, place the Jewish banker, the aristocrats, and the men of the haute-bourgeoisie on exactly the same level. They are all willing to risk a fortune to be with the talentless star.

Appearing next at Nana's apartment, following a few other suitors, all determined to encounter the star of the night before, Steiner is however sent away. Only the comte Muffat de Beuille and the marquis de Chouard are received, their aristocratic names convincing Nana to see them. The two noble men justify their visit to such an ill-reputed actress by requesting a donation from Nana for the poor, " — Madame, dit gravement le comte Muffat, vous nous excuserez d'avoir insisté... Nous venons pour une quête... Monsieur et moi, sommes membres su bureau de bienfaisance de l'arrondissement... Le marquis de Chouard se hâta d'ajouter, d'un air galant : — Quand nous avons appris qu'une grande artiste habitait cette maison, nous nous sommes promis de lui recommander nos pauvres d'une façon particulière... Le talent ne va pas sans le cœur" (*Nana* 97). However, once Nana has given them some of her very meager funds, they have no legitimate reason to stay: "Ils n'avaient plus de prétexte, ils saluèrent, en se dirigeant vers la porte" (*Nana* 100). The ploy of the count and the marquis to court Nana through charity further reveals the societal corruption. While the two aristocrats take money from Nana and are quickly shown the door, Steiner, more honest in his approach, is not seen. However this Jewish banker's wealth makes him a useful person to have around and he is only sent away after waiting patiently as a ruse to increase his desire, "Après tout, si je veux l'avoir" Nana says, "le plus court est encore de le flanquer à la porte" (*Nana* 104).

Steiner is next found along with the aristocratic contingent of Nana's suitors at the Tuesday social hour of "La comtesse Sabine... dans son hôtel de la rue Miromesnil, au coin de la rue de Penthièvre... un vaste bâtiment carré, habité par les Muffat depuis plus de cent ans; sur la rue, la façade dormait, haute et noire, d'une mélancolie de couvent, avec d'immenses persiennes qui restaient presque toujours fermées; derrière,

dans un bout de jardin humide, des arbres avaient poussé, cherchant le soleil, si longs et si grêles, qu'on voyait les branches, par-dessus les ardoises" (*Nana* 112). On the rue de Miromesnil, in the 8th arrondissement, only become truly a destination after the renovations of the Second Empire, the aristocratic Muffat family appears as some the earliest settlers of this area that only contained one house in 1778, one year after the street was opened. The ambiance in this convent-like aristocratic mansion certainly inspires ancient aristocracy, "Le salon, d'ailleurs, était très grand, très haut; quatre fenêtres donnaient sur le jardin, dont on sentait l'humidité par cette pluvieuse soirée de la fin d'avril, malgré les fortes bûches qui brûlaient dans la cheminée. Jamais le soleil ne descendait là; le jour, une clarté verdâtre éclairait à peine la pièce; mais, le soir, quand les lampes et le lustre étaient allumés, elle n'était plus que grave, avec ses meubles Empire d'acajou massif, ses tentures et ses sièges de velours jaune, à larges dessins satinés. On entrait dans une dignité froide, dans des murs anciennes, un âge disparu exhalant une odeur de dévotion" (*Nana* 113). With the description of the exterior, then the interior, of the Parisian residence of the count and countess Muffat de Beuville following the first scenes at the theater and in Nana's apartment, Zola establishes a theme of contrast and conflict. The old aristocracy, found in a setting as gloomy as a graveyard, is in competition with the new society of money, theater, and irreligion. Sabine, the wife of Muffat, in contrast to the light, laughing, and liberal Nana, appears cold and rigid, "Elle ne couchait avec personne, cela sautait aux yeux. Il suffisait de la voir là, près de sa fille, si nulle si guindée sur son tabouret. Ce salon sépulcral, exhalant une odeur d'église, disait assez sous quelle main de fer, au fond de quelle existence elle restait pliée" (*Nana* 126). In this competition of the old aristocracy and new money, however, Zola never designates a clear winner, condemning the whole society.

It is through a friend of the countess Sabine that the Jewish banker is allowed to frequent such society, "introduit depuis peu dans la maison par Léonide de Chezelle, qui connaissait tout Paris" (*Nana* 116). This friend is however considered unreliable by her aristocratic pairs, "Mais madame de Chezelle, une amie de couvent de Sabine, plus jeune qu'elle de cinq ans... parlait étourdiment, avec des gestes vifs... Derrière elle,

son mari, un magistrat, écoutait d'un air grave. On racontait qu'elle le trompait, sans le cacher; mais on lui pardonnait, on la recevait quand même, parce que, disait-on, elle était folle" (*Nana* 115). Steiner is incongruous with the stuffy atmosphere of this aristocratic party. Installed on the couch, he attempts to glean information from a deputy, "il interrogeait un député, dont il tâchait de tirer adroitement des nouvelles au sujet d'un mouvement de Bourse qu'il flairait" (*Nana* 116). Unable to extract any information from the deputy, Steiner loses his composure, "on entendait au milieu du silence la voix nasillarde de Steiner, que la discrétion du député finissait par mettre hors de lui" (*Nana* 118). In this society Steiner is presented as having two principle interests, money and women. When he finally encounters someone who he believes to shares the same interests, the journalist, Fauchery, he becomes excited and must be asked to keep the conversation appropriate, " — Hein ! c'est pour demain... J'en suis, mon brave ! — Ah ! murmura Fauchery, étonné. — Vous ne saviez pas... Oh ! j'ai eu un mal pour la trouver chez elle ! Avec ça, Mignon ne me lâchait plus. — Mais ils en sont, les Mignon. — Oui, elle me l'a dit... Enfin, elle m'a donc reçu, et elle m'a invité... Minuit précis, après le théâtre... Le banquier était rayonnant. Il cligna les yeux, il ajouta, en donnant aux mots une valeur particulière: — Ça y est, vous ? — Quoi donc ? dit Fauchery, qui affecta de ne pas comprendre. Elle a voulu me remercier de mon article. Alors, elle est venue chez moi. — Oui, oui... Vous êtes heureux, vous autres. On vous récompense... Fauchery fit signe qu'on les écoutait; il fallait être convenable" (*Nana* 128-129). This cryptic conversation is in reference to a dinner at Nana's apartment planned for after her next theatrical presentation. Towards the end of the social hour, a curious surprise occurs. The youthful admirer of Nana, first seen at the Théâtre des Variétés, calling out "Très chic !" at a moment when the audience had still not decided whether or not to cheer or boo Nana, enters behind his mother, Madame Hugon. Many of the men that had previously experienced Nana's début, thus find themselves together in an entirely different setting, the religiously boring salon of Sabine Muffat de Beuville, setting a stark contrast for the scene that follows in which they all find themselves again at Nana's.

The dinner at Nana's apartment is punctuated with raucous conversation and copious bottles of champagne. There are familiar faces that had been present at the countess Sabine's the previous evening, the journalist, Fauchery, and his cousin, Hector de la Faloise, the young Georges Hugon is also of the party, as is comte Xavier de Vandevres, and of course Steiner, the unique Jewish banker. Those who respected the religious atmosphere in the countess Sabine's salon let their guard down and become loud and gregarious, mixing freely with all the actresses, mistresses, and prostitutes of Nana's entourage. Steiner, arriving with Rose Mignon and her husband, sits next to Nana on her invitation. Nana is however disappointed that the count Muffat de Beuville is not there and she decides to settle on the Jewish banker, "Elle se rabattait décidément sur le gros Steiner... c'était la faute de ce Muffat, qui n'avait pas voulu" (*Nana* 219). Steiner, whose reputation for making millions and then making them disappear for his each new love interests, is easy prey for Nana, and she steals without an effort him from Rose Mignon and her pimp husband, "On connaissait le banquier pour ses coups de cœur; ce terrible juif allemand, ce brasseur d'affaires dont les mains fondaient les millions, devenait imbécile, lorsqu'il se toquait d'une femme; et il les voulait toutes, il n'en pouvait paraître une au théâtre, sans qu'il l'achetât, si chère qu'elle fût. On citait des sommes. À deux reprises, son furieux appétit des filles l'avait ruiné... les filles vengeaient la morale en nettoyant sa caisse. Une grande opération sur les Salines des Landes lui ayant rendu sa puissance à la Bourse, les Mignon, depuis six semaines, mordaient fortement dans les Salines. Mais des paris s'ouvraient, ce n'étaient pas les Mignon qui achèveraient le morceau, Nana montrait ses dents blanches. Une fois encore, Steiner était pris, et si rudement que, près de Nana, il restait comme assommé, mangeant sans faim, la lèvre pendante, la face marbrée de taches. Elle n'avait qu'à dire un chiffre. Pourtant, elle ne se pressait pas, jouant avec lui, soufflant des rires dans son oreille velue, s'amusant des frissons qui passaient sur son épaisse figure. Il serait toujours temps de bâcler ça, si ce pignouf de comte Muffat faisait son Joseph". (191-192) From midnight past five in the morning, the party continues and Steiner stays until the very end, that is until Nana has a sudden craving

for milk and has Steiner take her to the Bois de Boulogne, “ — Ah ! vous ne savez pas ? dit-elle en revenant à Steiner, vous allez me mener au bois de Boulogne, et nous boirons du lait” (*Nana* 222).

Several months later and after forty-three successful presentations of the play in which Nana is the main attraction, this great blond prostitute become actress remains Steiner’s official mistress. Steiner has so thoroughly fallen victim to Nana’s charms that he has bought her a country residence. That Nana possesses something that normally only the aristocracy should have scandalizes the well-to-do neighbors, the Hugon family and their aristocratic visitors, the count and countess Muffat, “La conversation était tombée sur Paris, et le nom de Steiner fut prononcé. Ce nom arracha un léger cri à Madame Hugon. — À propos, dit-elle, monsieur Steiner, c’est bien ce gros monsieur que j’ai rencontré un soir chez vous, un banquier, n’est-ce pas ?... En voilà un vilain homme ! Est-ce qu’il n’a pas acheté une propriété pour une actrice, à une heure d’ici, là-bas, derrière la Choue, du côté de Guimières ! Tout le pays est scandalisé” (*Nana* 299). Following the 1789 Revolution, having a country residence with land outside of Paris became possible for any individual with enough financial resources. In fact, owning an estate outside of Paris was one of three important criteria for social acceptance amongst the highest rungs of Parisian society, “Désormais, on le voit, l’un des piliers du patrimoine, et cela depuis les dernières années de l’Ancien Régime, consiste dans la possession de façades prestigieuses dans le Paris de la rive droite... Le second pilier de prestige, c’est la possession d’un château avec son parc” (Bergeron 103-104). Before meeting Nana, Steiner had already promised this first pillar of prestige to his previous mistress Rose Mignon, “— Monsieur Steiner est parti hier pour le Loiret... Je crois qu’il va acheter là-bas une campagne... — Ah ! oui, je sais, la campagne de Nana... Mignon était devenu grave. Ce Steiner qui avait promis un hôtel à Rose, autrefois !” (*Nana* 239). This country estate is the only physical address associated with Steiner since Zola never mentions where he lives in Paris, indicating that this fictional Jewish banker is much less concerned about the impression he makes upon the French haute-bourgeoisie and aristocracy than the actual Jewish bankers of the Second Empire. In fact, both Steiner, in *Nana*, and the baron Hartman, in *Au bonheur des dames*, have no known address in Paris, appearing

only at the homes of other characters. Steiner is found at the Théâtre des Variétés, at the Muffat de Beuilles' home on the rue de Miromesnil, and at Nana's apartment on the boulevard Haussmann. The baron Hartmann is found at Henriette Desforges' apartment at the corner of the rue de Rivoli and the rue d'Alger and nowhere else. These two wealthy and influential Jewish bankers have nothing to anchoring them to Paris or even to France, epitomizing the stereotype of the Jewish figure with no nation with which to identify, wandering the land and taking advantage of every opportunity to financially exploit the innocent. Zola, however, never mentions this stereotype in either of these novels in reference to Steiner and Hartmann and these two characters are curiously without Parisian homes.

Although the country estate that Steiner purchases is certainly not a castle with a great domain for hunting, the idea that an actress, a profession almost always synonymous with prostitution, has moved in next door, and with the help of a Jewish banker, appalls the well-to-do French neighbors. Furthermore, possessing a country home puts Nana on a level much too close to the haute-bourgeoisie and aristocracy for their comfort, trivializing their position in society since it can be attained by a lowly and depraved prostitute with the money of an equally immoral Jewish banker. Madame Hugon and the countess Sabine Muffat are shocked and offended by the presence of Steiner, Nana, and the whole entourage of actresses and prostitutes that come to spend a week cavorting openly in what they consider their protected back yard. For wealthy Jewish families and individuals, owning a country estate was a common social right of passage. It demonstrated a willingness, and sometimes intense desire, to identify with France and the ancient French tradition of royalty and nobles possessing residences in the country along with the contiguous land, exhibiting, or at least attempting to exhibit, an appreciation for French culture and history while also establishing their financial and political success in French society. For Nana and Steiner, the situation is quite different. Steiner does not appear concerned about proving his financial success and his cultural affinity with France to the important figures of French society. In fact, in offering a country residence to an ill-reputed Parisian actress of low-class origins and no artistic talent, demonstrates a complete disregard for

French culture and history. In this, Zola points to the extent to which the general moral compass of Parisians has become corrupt, eroded by the newly established capitalist, consumer, speculation driven society of the Second Empire: “société entraînée dans la circulation de l’or et de la chair” (Gengembre 286).

As early as the 1830s, the baron James de Rothschild had collected a vast area of land, including forests, pastures, copses, and agricultural parcels, between the communes of Lagny and Pontcarré. Although the château, called Ferrières, was not completed until 1859, the aristocratic, albeit financial, symbol was established with the acquisition of the land, known as Ferrières-en-Brie. The Fould family also purchased land, but with existing aristocratic dwellings already in place, beginning in the 1840s with the Château de Beaucens near Tarbes and the Château du Val just outside of Paris in the Yvelines. Isaac and Emile Pereire joined the elite group of Jewish bankers acquiring land and renovating existing castles or building new ones. The Pereires imitated almost exactly James de Rothschild, purchasing land immediately to the south of the Rothschild property: “les Pereires acquièrent en 1852 les forêts de Crécy et d’Armainvilliers appartenant au duc de Montpensier... En 1862 ils y font construire un grand édifice” (Autin 209). Almost as if sealing the fate of the Second Empire for future opposition, often anti-Semitic, the Rothschilds’ Château de Ferrières was inaugurated in 1862 in the presence of Napoléon III and the high society of Paris. However, both the acquisition of land, either including an existing aristocratic dwelling or having one built, was subject to mockery and the actions and ambitions of these Jewish financial figures of the nineteenth century were not taken seriously, “C’est extravagant de bêtise et de ridicule, écrivent les Goncourt, un pudding de tous les styles, la stupide ambition d’avoir tous les monuments en un” (Autin 209). Considering that Nana is not Steiner’s wife, but an actress of little talent and a very well known prostitute, the situation is much worse in the case of Steiner and the country residence that he has purchased for her. Zola is clearly exaggerating the complaints of the French public, ridiculing the respectable and family oriented Jewish banking figure like James de Rothschild or Isaac and Emile Pereire that, having purchased a country estate, offends French sensibilities by not respecting the long established hierarchy disbanded by 1789 Revolution.

That Steiner buys a country estate for Nana, a Jewish banker for a prostitute, makes the scandal even more theatrical and grotesque than wealthy Jewish husbands and fathers purchasing land and residences for their families to escape from the city. In this sense, Zola invents what Edouard Drumont will claim as fact six years later, “Ces niais de tant d’esprit, ces ambitieux et ce imprévoyants, dupes de gens plus forts qui les menaient, ne se doutaient guère qu’en les conviant à rebâtir le temple de Salomon, qui ne les intéressait aucunement, on les invitait à servir d’instruments à la démolition de ce noble édifice de la vieille France, qui pendant tant de siècles les avait abrités tous: noblesse, tiers état et peuple. On les eût fort étonnés si on leur avait annoncé qu’avant moins de cent ans révolus les plus beaux châteaux du pays appartiendraient à des Juifs” (Drumont 274-275). In the case of Steiner, he is however not alone in destroying “la vieille France”, his accomplices are a band of prostitutes, actors, and even some French aristocrats. With Steiner’s money, they all have the means to come to the country and disrupt the ancient traditions that the Hugon and Muffat de Beuville family represent. Cavorting across the countryside, Steiner, Nana, and their raucous companions ruin the tranquility of the Hugon and Muffat de Beuville families that have come there precisely to escape the corruption of the city. The corruption is however inescapable since Nana succeeds in seducing the men Hugon and Muffat de Beuville men, pulling them into the corruption of the Second Empire theatrical society. Although Zola offers no description of the interior of the country house that Steiner has offered Nana, one can only surmise that the style is as garish and grotesque as their personalities.

While Zola ventures outside the city and into the countryside with his token Jewish banking character, Steiner’s place within the city remains vague, lacking in precision and definition. Similar to the baron Hartmann of *Au bonheur des dames*, Steiner has no physical address to speak of in Paris. While the baron Hartman only appears at the apartment of Henriette Desforges, at the corner of the rue d’Alger and the rue de Rivoli, the modern setting fitting his modern and entrepreneurial spirit, Steiner is rarely found in modern and elegant settings and his portly appearance is never described as intelligent. In fact, Steiner seems to often find himself in places and situations of an unhealthy nature. Discovering Nana at the Théâtre des

Variétés, Steiner appears to be on the verge of a heart attack, “le gros Steiner, dont la face apoplectique crevait” (*Nana* 57). The atmosphere at the Café des Variétés is suffocating, “les consommateurs trop nombreux se serraient autour des tables de marbre; quelques-uns buvaient debout, précipitamment; et les larges glaces reflétaient à l’infini cette cohue de têtes, agrandissaient démesurément l’étroite salle, avec ses trois lustres, ses banquettes de moleskine, son escalier tournant drapé de rouge” (*Nana* 50-51). Luckily, Steiner chooses a table open to the street from which he invites two fellow admirers of Nana to join for a drink. After seeing Nana at the theater, Steiner becomes a regular at her apartment on the boulevard Haussmann, “entre la rue de l’Arcade et la rue Pasquier, au troisième étage...” where the guests range from family members with strange friends to various prostitutes, actors, actresses, other individuals associated with the theater, to all the male admirers, diverse in age, but primarily of high-society (*Nana* 150).

Steiner and the baron Hartmann, although they do frequent some high-society spaces, respectively the salon of Henriette Desforges and the social hour of the comtesse Sabine Muffat de Beuville. It is, however, clear that Steiner and Hartmann, respectively a Jewish banker and a Jewish real estate tycoon, are not fully accepted in Zola’s fictional Parisian society, especially in these high society settings. In Zola’s inclusion of these two characters in his recreation of the Parisian social scene of the Second Empire they are designated as social outliers. They are both single, unmarried men engaged in somewhat dubious business activities, involved with young women with a reputation for having relations with a variety of men, and both of a particularly round physical appearance, showing intelligence for Hartmann and a life of excess for Steiner. For these two Jewish characters appearing in approximately the first half of the *Rougon-Macquart* series, there is very little character development. Both Hartmann and Steiner are not the principal protagonists of the novels in which they figure and there is no detailed history about where they are from and where they live in Paris. It is obvious that their Jewish identity negatively influences their place in Zola’s fictional, yet reality inspired, Parisian society, but they fade away towards the end of the story and their influence is after all of little consequence. As Jewish bankers, entrepreneurs, or real estate developers, Hartmann and Steiner are

seen as corrupt individuals causing damage to French traditions or preventing the French from succeeding, but the outcome for the principal protagonists, Octave Mouret and Nana, is ultimately independent of these Jewish characters. Zola's use of Jewish characters is thus vastly different from Balzac's, leading to the conclusion that the shift from a curiosity driven and Orientalist inspired representation of Jewish characters, inserted into the urban environment of Paris, to an increasingly negative figuration, focusing nearly solely on harmful stereotypes, was accomplished. Despite the lasting and apparently blanket effect, reaching beyond theater to diverse areas artistic expression, including literature, of the governmental censorship of anti-Semitic theatrical representation established by Achille Fould during the Second Empire, the trend of increasingly injurious presentations of Jewish characters continued to gain momentum throughout the Third Republic. This trend is visible directly within Zola's *Rougon-Macquart* series. Not only does the *Rougon-Macquart* family evolve across the Second Empire, Zola's appreciation of the Jewish community in Paris also changes. While Steiner and Hartmann are certainly not likeable Jewish characters, Zola does not express, either through the voice of the narrator or through the voices of the various characters, any obvious anti-Jewish or racially negative sentiments on their behalf. It is unclear if Zola intended their Jewish identity to influence in any way in which his fictional Parisian society and the actual Parisian readership of the Third Republic received Steiner and Hartmann. Furthermore, the physical place in Paris of these two early Jewish characters is entirely amorphous, untethered. While Hartmann influences the creation of the rue du Dix-Décembre, Steiner is an avid theatergoer, and these are in fact two clues as to their role in Parisian society. The creation of a new street is highly significant and recalls the role of the Second Empire in the restructuring of the city that led to the displacement of lower-income families and Steiner's presence at the Théâtre des Variétés is a direct association with what Zola deemed as the heart of Second Empire corruption. The link between displacement and corruption with these two Jewish characters is however subtle, as if Zola had not fully realized the implications of associating Jewish characters with the detrimental

aspects of the Second Empire. Zola, however, did eventually realize the implications of such an association later in his writing career when he published the highly anti-Semitic *L'Argent* in 1891.

Monsieur Walter's Schemes:

Before coming to Zola's most unapologetic, bigoted depiction of Jews in Paris, there is however Guy de Maupassant's novel, *Bel-ami*, published in 1885, that includes two Jewish characters. Similar to Balzac, Guy de Maupassant's literary career was short but prolific, writing three hundred short stories and six novels between 1880 and 1890. Unlike Balzac, Maupassant never over-represented the Jewish presence in French society. In fact, in *Bel-ami*, Maupassant only places two Jewish characters in Paris of the Third Republic. The first is a fairly unexceptional Jewish prostitute, known as Rachel, although there is no certainty of this being her actual name, considering that Maupassant had already imagined a prostitute called Rachel in the short story, *Mademoiselle Fifi*, published in 1882. The second is a Jewish banker, businessman, and owner of the newspaper *La Vie Française*, known as Monsieur Walter. Analogous to Steiner and Hartmann in Zola's novels, *Nana* and *Au bonheur des dames*, Monsieur Walter is not the main character. Monsieur Walter is introduced to the main character, Georges Duroy, an ex-army bachelor in Paris with a penchant for spending more than he possesses and without a source of revenue sufficient enough to compensate, at the home of Charles Forestier, Duroy's army friend. Before encountering Monsieur Walter, Duroy is living on the tiny salary of an office employee for the "chemin de fer du Nord". He has come to Paris in hopes of making a fortune and simply for the glory and prestige of living in Paris, a city of grandeur for Duroy and his Normandy peasant origins. The day that Duroy is on the verge of abandoning his dreams of living in luxury in Paris, he recognizes by chance Forestier by the place de l'Opéra. Happy to run into an old friend, Forestier invites Duroy to accompany him on an errand at work, then buys him a drink, lends him some money, and encourages him to come to a dinner party at his home the next evening. Although weakened by a bronchial illness contracted just after returning from his time in the army, Forestier has succeeded in creating a flourishing career in journalism, " — Je dirige la politique à *La Vie Française*. Je fais le Sénat au

Salut, et, de temps en temps, des chroniques littéraires pour *La Planète*”, and he generously offers Duroy the possibility of following in his footsteps (*Bel-ami* 15). Inviting Duroy to dinner, Forestier facilitates an encounter with Monsieur Walter. But, the owner of *La Vie Française* must find Duroy interesting enough to allow him a chance in the field of journalism, an area in which Duroy has no experience to speak of. Duroy’s charm and his military adventures in Algeria intrigue Monsieur Walter, convincing the shrewd Jewish businessman to let the somewhat insincere and heedless ex-army bachelor prove himself.

Taking place during the Third Republic, Monsieur Walter is a Jewish character purely of the times, a Parisian arriviste with questionable taste. The first appearance of Monsieur Walter occurs at the dinner party hosted by Charles Forestier and his wife, Madeleine, at 17 rue Fontaine. The Forestiers live in a building with a concierge who indicates to Duroy that their apartment is on the third floor, “Au troisième, la porte à gauche” (*Bel-ami* 38). With only two apartments by floor, the Forestiers most likely have a fair amount of space, without overstated luxury. But for Duroy, the bourgeois lifestyle of his old army friend appears very elegant. Welcomed by a valet who announces his name, Duroy is continuously startled by this new world of bourgeois manners that he has just recently entered. A few minutes after his arrival, Monsieur Walter and his wife are also announced by the valet, “Mais la porte s’ouvrit de nouveau, et un petit gros monsieur, court et rond, parut, donnant le bras à une grande et belle femme, plus haute que lui, beaucoup plus jeune, de manières distinguées et d’allure grave. C’était M. Walter, député, financier, homme d’argent et d’affaires, juif et méridional, directeur de La Vie Française, et sa femme, née Basile-Ravalau, fille du banquier de ce nom” (*Bel-ami* 25). With the entry of Monsieur Walter, Maupassant describes this Jewish businessman as short and round, traits that he shares with Zola’s fictional Jewish businessmen, Steiner and Hartmann.

However, unlike Zola’s two Jewish characters of similar appearance, short and round, Monsieur Walter is not portrayed as Jewish of a Germanic origin. Instead, Monsieur Walter has the complexion of someone from the Mediterranean. Although Maupassant gives no other indication as to Monsieur Walter’s southern origins, it is important to note that he is one of the rare, fictional representations of the Jewish communities

in existence along the Mediterranean for centuries. The Jews of Avignon and the Pontifical States, for example, made up some of the earliest Jewish communities in France. Monsieur Walter, despite the complete lack of physical and professional resemblance, might possibly be the only Jewish character inspired by the famous lawyer, Isaac-Jacob Adolphe Crémieux, from the region in the South of France around Avignon. Monsieur Walter's connection to Crémieux nevertheless goes no farther than their shared *méridonal* origins. This character's table manners, "[il] mangeait comme un ogre, ne parlait presque pas, et considérait d'un regard oblique, glissé sous ses lunettes, les mets qu'on lui présentait", indicate that he most likely did not have the same well-groomed presentation as the famous lawyer nor a similar education that would have allowed him to fit seamlessly into the French high-society as Crémieux did with much success during the July Monarchy, Second Empire, and Third Republic. Maupassant's portrayal of Monsieur Walter, *juif méridonal*, is far from the intelligent, charitable, and engaged portrait of Adolphe Crémieux, benevolent advocate for an enlightened French Jewish identity for the whole of the Jewish population.

In describing Monsieur Walter as a *juif méridonal*, Maupassant might be more specifically referencing the Jewish population he encountered in colonial Algeria. Considering that the discussion at the Forestiers' diner party returns several times to France's colonial exploits in North Africa, "Mais la causerie qui allait sans cesse, accrochant les idées les unes aux autres, sautant d'un sujet à l'autre sur un mot, un rien, après avoir fait le tour des événements du jour et avoir effleuré, en passant, mille questions, revint à la grande interpellation de M. Morel sur la colonisation de l'Algérie", Maupassant's inspiration for Monsieur Walter must in reality have come from the Jews of the Maghreb (*Bel-ami* 51). In fact, Maupassant had published four years earlier a work based on his travels in North Africa, *Lettres d'Afrique*. The subject seems to not particularly interest Monsieur Walter, who "fit quelques plaisanteries, car il avait l'esprit sceptique et gras", until Duroy makes a pertinent interjection, showing his knowledge, "Ce qui manque le plus là-bas, c'est la bonne terre. Les propriétés vraiment fertiles coûtent aussi cher qu'en France, et sont achetées, comme placements de fonds, par des Parisiens très riches" (*Bel-ami* 52-53). Having spent several months of military

service in Algeria, Duroy has first-hand experience, something that a journalist needs in order to tell an accurate story, and Monsieur Walter's wife spots Duroy's potential talent, " — Vous feriez avec vos souvenirs une charmante série d'articles", stirring the curiosity of the newspaper owner, "Alors Walter considéra le jeune homme par-dessus le verre de ses lunettes comme il faisait pour bien voir les visages" (*Bel-ami* 29). Monsieur Walter is taken by the idea immediately and, although he arranges an interview at the request of Forestier, he also asks for his wife's idea to be made into reality, with a fantastical account of Duroy's experiences in Algeria, "Walter devint sérieux et releva tout à fait ses lunettes pour regarder Duroy bien en face. Puis il dit: — Il est certain que M. Duroy a un esprit original. S'il veut bien venir causer avec moi, demain à trois heures, nous arrangerons ça. — Puis, après un silence, et se tournant tout à fait vers le jeune homme: — Mais faites-nous tout de suite une petite série fantaisiste sur l'Algérie. Vous raconterez vos souvenirs, et vous mêlerez à ça la question de la colonisation, comme tout à l'heure" (*Bel-ami* 29). As any crafty businessman, or director of a newspaper desiring to have the most up-to-date and sensational articles, Monsieur Walter, demands the first draft immediately, planning to grab the attention of the Parisian readership before everyone else, "C'est d'actualité, tout à fait d'actualité, et je suis sûr que ça plaira beaucoup à nos lecteurs. Mais dépêchez-vous ! il me faut le premier article pour demain ou après-demain, pendant qu'on discute à la Chambre, afin d'amorcer le public" (*Bel-ami* 29).

Greatly different from Zola's earlier representations of Steiner and Hartmann, two stocky Jewish bankers of fairly unremarkable personality, Maupassant's Jewish newspaper owner and entrepreneur, Monsieur Walter, appears remarkably contemporary. Despite the stereotypically unattractive appearance, a common literary depiction of Jewish men in the second half of the nineteenth-century, Monsieur Walter is more than just a banker. He is an observer of modern French culture and, in directing a newspaper with the title *La Vie Française*, is practically dictating the latest trends in ideas and information to the Parisian public. This role played by Monsieur Walter is far more insidious than the one played by the fairly boring Jewish bankers of Zola's earlier Parisian society. As the director of the highly popular and pervasive newspaper, *La*

Vie Française, Monsieur Walter's role is played behind the scenes and with the Parisian public none the wiser. The only literary precedent for such an original Jewish character is Balzac's Raoul Nathan in the 1838 novel, *Une fille d'Ève*. Nathan, the son of a Jewish moneylender, having made a successful career for himself in theater, attempts to transition to political journalism during the 1830 revolution, and finishes "en faillite". Jewish individuals in Paris were, however, present in the world of Parisian journalism as early as 1840. Samuel Cohen founded the liberal *Archives Israélites* in 1840, while Simon Bloch founded the conservative *Univers Israélite* in 1844. These two flourishing Jewish newspapers based in Paris beginning in the 1840s, written in French for French Jews, reported on mainly Jewish subjects and targeted a Jewish readership. Monsieur Walter's newspaper, *La Vie Française*, is certainly not Jewish themed nor directed at the minority Jewish population. *La Vie Française* is a French newspaper, aimed at a public representing the majority population in France. If there is any Jewish figure in French history that might have informed the creation of the character of Monsieur Walter, Arthur Meyer, was without a doubt Maupassant's inspiration.

Grandson of a rabbi, born in Le Havre to modest Jewish parents in 1826, Arthur Meyer became the secretary of the famous *demi-mondaine*, model, and actress Blanche d'Atigny in 1862, before buying *Le Gaulois* in 1879 and finally stepping in as the newspaper director in 1882. Similar to *La Vie Française*, Arthur Meyer's *Le Gaulois* was the preferred newspaper of the Parisian high-society, read by the haute-bourgeoisie and the aristocracy, with stories and reports specifically envisioned and fabricated for a French, Catholic, and upper-class readership. Meyer's sophisticated sensibilities led him to take on various literary figures as writers of articles and fiction for the feuilleton. Famous French authors of the nineteenth century, including Emile Zola, Octave Mirabeau, Léon Daudet, and Guy de Maupassant, made this newspaper a great success amongst the French high-society and for all who dreamed of becoming a part of the Parisian elite. Maupassant, already in collaboration with *Le Gaulois* at the request of one of the two founders, Edmond Tarbé des Sablons, was sent to Algeria by Arthur Meyer, hoping to transfer some of Maupassant's growing popularity to the paper, in 1881 to chronicle the uprising of the local population in Ouled-Sidi-Cheikh in the

region of Oran, “In 1881 Maupassant’s eminence was growing almost weekly and this had a great deal to do with his journalism and a series of articles criticizing patriotism, colonialism and war. In an attempt to capitalize on Maupassant’s name and boost the circulation of his paper, Meyer decided to unbridle Maupassant and send him as a special envoy to an Algeria seemingly on the precipice of a general Arab insurrection” (Wilson x). Based on this information, Maupassant appears to play the role of his character, Georges Duroy, while Arthur Meyer becomes Monsieur Walter. Just as Monsieur Walter shows a great interest when he hears that Duroy had spent several months in Algeria as a soldier, inviting him to write a series of articles called *Souvenirs d’un chasseur d’Afrique*, Arthur Meyer presented a similar opportunity to Maupassant in exchange for articles to be published in *Le Gaulois*. Between leaving from Paris on July 6 and returning to Paris in October, Maupassant forwarded nearly twenty letters, each fairly long, for publication in *Le Gaulois*, about his experiences, observations, and impressions of the culture and situation in Algeria (Wilson ix-xii). Maupassant’s personal familiarity with writing on North Africa for a French newspaper, owned and directed by a French Jew, Arthur Meyer, is far too real to ignore the similarity with the story of Georges Duroy and the Jewish owner and director of *La Vie Française*, Monsieur Walter. Although Maupassant never confirmed the “autobiographical” nature of *Bel-ami*, only “play[ing] up to suggestions that Georges Duroy was based upon himself in signing copies of the novel”, it is clear that the writer’s collaboration with Arthur Meyer at *Le Gaulois* led to the creation of his novel and the characterization of both Duroy and Walter.

Arthur Meyer’s newspaper was a highly successful with the upper crust of Parisian society and the priority was to remain elitist, catering to the sentiments of the traditionally French Catholic population with which Meyer shared a royalist, then bonapartist, and anti-Dreyfus perspective. In fact, Meyer was so dedicated to his newspaper and to the positions that he advanced that he converted to Catholicism in 1901. His success with the particularly anti-Jewish portion of the Parisian population is explained by his overt rejection of his Jewish identity. Like Arthur Meyer, Monsieur Walter is incredibly successful at reaching

precisely the portion of the French population that would have not appreciated his Jewish origins. Considering the growing anti-Jewish sentiments in France during the Third Republic, it is possible, although unlikely, that Monsieur Walter's Jewish identity was unknown to the majority of the readership of *La Vie Française*. Nevertheless, despite having a fairly unlikable Jewish figure at the head of this newspaper, the popularity of *La Vie Française* is such that even the less than intellectual Duroy was reading it on tour in Algeria, "— Si vous saviez, Madame, quels bons moments m'a fait passer *La Vie Française* quand j'étais là-bas dans le désert. C'est vraiment le seul journal qu'on puisse lire hors de France, parce qu'il est plus littéraire, plus spirituel et moins monotone que les autres. On trouve de tout là-dedans" (*Bel-ami* 61). Maupassant implies with little subtlety the inspiration for the invented newspaper and the fictional newspaper owner and director. The *Gaulois*, like the fictive *Vie Française*, had both a column based on the happenings of the high society and an important section in which popular and respected writers had short stories or novels printed. The *Vie Française*, as Duroy indicates, is more literary and spiritual, referencing most likely the high society of Paris for whom the society column and the literature were of most interest.

However, the fictional *Vie Française* appears to be a newspaper of far greater popularity than the actual *Gaulois*. The fact that Monsieur Walter's newspaper reached soldiers in Algeria proves his superior business capacities, something that is quickly linked to, even blamed on, his Jewish identity, "Le patron ? Un vrai juif ! Et vous savez, les juifs, on ne les changera jamais. Quelle race ! — Et il cita des traits étonnants d'avarice, de cette avarice particulière aux fils d'Israël, des économies de dix centimes, des marchandages de cuisinière, des rabais honteux demandés et obtenus, toute une manière d'être usurier, de prêteur à gages" (*Bel-ami* 65). Monsieur Walter's Jewishness is therefore, according to those working at *La Vie Française*, the source of his success. Drastically opposite to Zola's lack of judgment of Steiner and Hartmann's Jewish heritage, Maupassant presents a clear opinion, the same that had begun to pervade French society throughout the Second half of the nineteenth century, particularly during the Third Republic, of the Jewish figure succeeding in a dishonest manner and at the expense of Frenchmen and the French nation. Monsieur

Walter's Jewishness makes him a target for criticism, jealousy, and anti-Jewish remarks within the ranks of those working at *La Vie Française*. Inspiring such disagreeable sentiments in his non-Jewish co-workers doesn't seem to bother Monsieur Walter, who is only interested in making money and climbing the social ladder. Arthur Meyer, however, found it difficult not to react when Edouard Drumont attacked him outright in his spectacularly popular and thoroughly anti-Semitic work, *La France juive*, "C'est le vrai maître du monde parisien ce Meyer, l'arbitre de toutes les élégances, l'organisateur de toutes les fêtes. Jamais la Juiverie n'a produit un type aussi réussi. Fils d'un marchand d'habits-galons, il débuta à Paris, il y a quelques vingt ans, comme secrétaire de Blanche d'Antigny. Il cumulait ces fonctions, qui ne devaient pas être une sinécure, avec celles de *reporter*; cramponné à chacun pour avoir un renseignement, on l'entendait à toutes les belles représentations, crier: 'des noms! des noms!' Les noms recueillis, il les écrivait fiévreusement sur la manchette de sa chemise" (Drumont 182-183). Despite his royalist, bonapartist, aristocratic, Catholic, and clearly anti-Jewish stance in French society, Arthur Meyer was above all a parasitic Jew in the opinion of Drumont. In an attempt to defend his identity as a Frenchman and not a Jew, Arthur Meyer fought Edouard Drumont in a duel and, stabbing him in the thigh while simultaneously disarming him, came out triumphant.

Monsieur Walter, a character imagined and appearing before the publication of the work that provoked the duel between Meyer and Drumont, possesses, however, some traits incredibly similar to those revealed by Drumont in *La France juive* concerning Arthur Meyer. The same worker who accuses Monsieur Walter of being "un vrai Juif" also criticizes the opportunistic, political, wishy-washy nature of this fictional newspaper owner, "Et avec ça, pourtant un bon zig qui ne croit à rien et roule tout le monde. Son journal, qui est officieux, catholique, libéral, républicain, orléaniste, tarte à la crème et boutique à treize, n'a été fondé que pour soutenir ses opérations de bourse et ses entreprises de toute sorte. Pour ça il est très fort, et il ne gagne des millions au moyen de sociétés qui n'ont pas quatre sous de capital" (*Bel-ami* 116). However, this anti-Jewish rhetoric is articulated by a character with the nickname, Saint-Potin, patron saint of slanderous

gossip, that diminishes his credibility, “le nom de Saint-Potin sert de repoussoir à ses propos, dénonce la médisance et désamorce la portée de l'accusation” (Grandadam 6). Despite the irony imparted by the nickname of the character recounting all of the anecdotes revealing Monsieur Walter’s deceptive character and dishonest business practices, Maupassant’s intentions are fairly evident. He has purposefully written Monsieur Walter as a Jewish businessman without an ounce of compunction, ready to dupe and deceive in all in order to get ahead, a characteristic that Edouard Drumont would apply not only to Arthur Meyer, but to the whole Jewish population in his intensely libelous work of 1886.

For Monsieur Walter, journalism is just a cover for his more lucrative stock-market activities. Drumont, accusing Arthur Meyer of desiring to gain fame and fortune, echoes the fictional critics proffered by the journalist working for Monsieur Walter, “Ce fut la première manière de Meyer. Il avança vite grâce à la grande poussée juive qui se fit après la guerre. Aujourd’hui il a maquignonné, boursicoté, trafiqué, il a un coupé, un hôtel, un journal” (Drumont 65). For both Monsieur Walter and Arthur Meyer, their Jewish identity is cause to question their financial, business and political motivations. Fortunately for Monsieur Walter, he never needs to physically defend his honor like Arthur Meyer against Edouard Drumont. In fact, Monsieur Walter is clever enough to outwit any adversaries without them even realizing and his chosen battlefield, such as a game of cards, is less risky. The second time Monsieur Walter appears he is doing just that, playing a game of cards and winning. Despite all the individuals waiting in the lobby to talk with director of *La Vie Française*, Monsieur Walter is in his office at the headquarters of his newspaper deeply focused on the game of cards he is playing with his associates, “M. Walter tenait les cartes et jouait avec une attention concentrée et des mouvements cauteleux, tandis que son adversaire abattait, relevait, maniait les légers cartons coloriés avec une souplesse, une adresse et une grâce de joueur exercé” (*Bel-ami* 98). Monsieur Walter’s adversary is not experienced enough to beat the sly newspaper director, or maybe just smart enough to not win. The ambiance in the office is particularly associated with the male environment of the world of journalism, also characterized by a disorder, “On sentait là-dedans le renfermé, le cuir des meubles,

le vieux tabac et l'imprimerie; on sentait cette odeur particulière des salles de rédaction que connaissent tous les journalistes... Sur la table en bois noir aux incrustations de cuivre, un incroyable amas de papier gisait: lettres, cartes, journaux, revues, notes de fournisseurs, imprimés de toute espèce” (*Bel-ami* 98). In this environment, Monsieur Walter plays the role of a crafty cheat, cutting corners and employing all kinds of schemes to reduce expenses and increase earnings. To the unwitting administrator, Montelin, Monsieur Walter reveals an important and, more importantly, dishonest and deceptive ploy to avoid paying what is due, “Figurez-vous que l'autre jour, je me trouvais dans son cabinet avec cette antique bedole de Norbert, et ce Don Quichotte de Rival, quand Montelin, notre administrateur, arrive... Walter leva le nez et demanda ‘Quoi de neuf?’ Montelin répondit avec naïveté : ‘Je viens de payer les seize mille francs que nous devons au marchand de papier’. Le patron fit un bond, un bond étonnant. ‘Vous dites ? — Que je viens de payer M. Privas. — Mais vous êtes fou ! — Pourquoi ?’ ...Il ôta ses lunettes, les essuya. Puis il sourit, d'un drôle de sourire qui court autour des ses grosses joues chaque fois qu'il va dire quelque chose de malin ou de fort, et avec un ton gouailleur et convaincu, il prononça: ‘Pourquoi ? Parce que nous pouvions obtenir une réduction de quatre à cinq mille francs’. Montelin, étonné, reprit: ‘Mais, monsieur le directeur, tous les comptes étaient réguliers, vérifiés par moi et approuvés par vous’ ...Alors le patron, redevenu sérieux, déclara: ‘On n'est pas naïf comme vous. Sachez, monsieur Montelin, qu'il faut toujours accumuler ses dettes pour transiger’ ” (*Bel-ami* 117-118).

When Georges Duroy begins working at Monsieur Walter's newspaper, the Walter family is living in an elegant, albeit practical, shared home on the boulevard Malesherbes. The street, one of the most recent and trendy upon opening under the Second Empire, reveals the novelty of the Walter family fortune, combining Jewish and Catholic bourgeois wealth. The description of Monsieur Walter's home is presented through the lens of Georges Duroy, of Normand peasant roots, and the luxury is thus always exaggerated, “M. Walter habitait, boulevard Malesherbes, une maison double lui appartenant, et dont une partie était louée, procédé économique de gens pratiques. Un seul concierge, gîté entre les deux portes cochères, tirait le cordon pour

le propriétaire et pour le locataire, et donnait à chacune des entrées un grand air d'hôtel riche et comme il faut par sa belle tenue de suisse d'église, ses gros mollets emmaillotés en des bas blancs, et son vêtement de représentation à boutons d'or et à revers écarlates" (*Bel-ami* 124). There are a few things about the Walters' family home that confound the still naïve Duroy, the vastness of the home and the rooms that give the impression of being in fact empty and the reflective decorations that confuse him as to where the gathering is actually occurring, "Les salons de réception étaient au premier étage précédés d'une antichambre tendue de tapisseries et enfermée par des portières. Deux valets sommeillaient sur des sièges. Un d'eux prit le pardessus de Duroy, et l'autre s'empara de sa canne, ouvrit une porte, devança, de quelques pas le visiteur, puis, s'effaçant, le laissa passer, en criant son nom dans un appartement vide... Le jeune homme, embarrassé, regardait de tous les côtés, quand il aperçut dans une glace des gens assis et qui semblaient fort loin. Il se trompa d'abord de direction, le miroir ayant égaré son œil, puis il traversa encore deux salons vides pour arriver dans une sorte de petit boudoir tendu de soie bleue à boutons d'or où quatre dames causaient à mi-voix autour d'une table ronde qui portait des tasses de thé" (*Bel-ami* 124). At this teatime social hour at the home of his boss, Duroy diverts his regard to the surrounding walls out of malaise, something that Monsieur Walter, in a display of vanity, takes for an interest and appreciation for his collection of paintings.

For the first time since Balzac's famous art dealer, Elias Magus, a Jewish character is again presented as taking a great interest in works of art. The major difference between Balzac's art dealer and Maupassant's businessman is that Magus hides his immense collection of masterpieces, keeps them to himself in stereotypical greed, and Monsieur Walter puts the pieces of art that he has acquired on display, desiring to show them to guests in order to impress with his affluence and give the impression of being cultured. Monsieur Walter takes advantage of what he mistakes for Duroy's appreciation of his refined taste in art and imposes a tour, "Duroy ayant levé par désœuvrement les yeux vers le mur, M. Walter lui dit, de loin, avec un désir visible de faire valoir son bien: 'Vous regardez mes tableaux ? ... Je vais vous les montrer'. Et il prit une lampe pour qu'on pût distinguer tous les détails... Un sourire passa sur la figure grave du patron en

indiquant le panneau suivant : — Ici les fantaisistes. — On apercevait d’abord une petite toile de Jean Beraud, intitulée : “Le haut et le bas”... Puis il éclaira: ‘Un sauvage’, par Lambert... Puis le patron montra un Detaille: ‘La leçon’, qui représentait un soldat dans une caserne, apprenant à un caniche à jouer du tambour, et il déclara : — En voilà de l’esprit !... Il montrait maintenant une aquarelle de Maurice Leloir : “L’obstacle”... M. Walter disait toujours: — J’en ai d’autres dans les pièces suivantes, mais ils sont de gens moins connus, moins classés. Ici c’est mon Salon carré. J’achète des jeunes en ce moment, des tout jeunes, et je les mets en réserve dans les appartements intimes, en attendant le moment où les auteurs seront célèbres. — Puis il prononça, tout bas: — C’est l’instant d’acheter des tableaux. Les peintres crèvent de faim. Ils n’ont pas le sou, pas le sou” (*Bel-ami* 135-137). Similar to Magus, Monsieur Walter is very efficient at accumulating artwork. But, he doesn’t just buy the work of masters, like Magus, he buys the work of artists that he imagines will be one day famous and whose paintings will eventually worth something. Furthermore, just as Magus takes advantage of the unassuming painter, Pierre Grassou, exploiting the desperate situation of an artist unable to sell a painting in order to make a fortune for himself, Monsieur Walter insists on buying works of art from starving artists precisely because they are starving and will take even a meager compensation. The difference between Magus and Walter is the treatment of the artist. Magus, after making a fortune by turning Pierre Grassou’s work into antiqued reproductions of the masterpieces of long past masters and selling them to an entirely unsuspecting buyer, he proceeds to arrange an incredibly beneficial marriage for the artist to the same unsuspecting buyer, assuring Pierre Grassou’s place and financial stability permanently. Maupassant endows no such generosity, however unusual for a character of the likes of Magus, on the Jewish Monsieur Walter who is purely concerned by the impression his collection makes on the guests invited to his home.

While Monsieur Walter’s home on the boulevard Malesherbes betrays this Jewish characters fortune, the elegance of such a contemporary dwelling eventually becomes insufficient for Monsieur Walter’s desire to impress. The boulevard Malesherbes was during the Second Empire and Third Republic a truly modern

street that had turned the neighborhood known as *la Petite-Pologne*, “un quartier mal famé”, into an upper-class corner of the city. The original conception of this street was presented in 1800, “Lucien Bonaparte, ministre de l’intérieur, prescrivit l’ouverture d’un boulevard entre La Place de la Madeleine et la *barrière de Monceau*... Ce boulevard n’avait pas encore atteint la rue d’Anjou [et vers] 1829, le tracé initial fut dévié vers l’ouest... et ce fut la rue *Malesherbes* (du Général-Foy) qui fut ouverte (1840) en ligne droite en place de celui prévu pour le boulevard... L’ouverture de la partie intra-muros du boulevard Malesherbes fut commencée en 1854 et inaugurée solennellement par Napoléon III le 13 août 1861” (Hillairet 92-93). The modernity of the location of the Walter family home and the fact that it becomes inadequate for Monsieur Walter’s public persona in Parisian high-society indicates the absurdity of this Jewish character’s social ambitions. However, in order to acquire something more fancy and prestigious than an expansive home on the boulevard Malesherbes, Monsieur Walter must have more income than the earnings from *La Vie Française*.

Monsieur Walter is far from just owner and direct of *La Vie Française*. As the stereotypes of the times would have approved, he is Jewish businessman involved in all sorts of affaires where money is to be made. In fact, Monsieur Walter shrewdly stays behind the scenes of *La Vie Française*, allowing the newspaper to become to be represented by typically French figures, like Georges Duroy, Monsieur Firmin, and Monsieur Laroche-Mathieu, “députés, rédacteurs anonymes de *La Vie Française*” (*Bel-ami* 240). With these irreproachable French individuals serving as the public face of the newspaper, Monsieur Walter also appears beyond reproach of rumored suspicious activities, “*La Vie Française* avait gagné une importance considérable à ses attaches connues avec le Pouvoir. Elle donnait, avant les feuilles les plus sérieuses, les nouvelles politiques, indiquait par des nuances les intentions des ministres ses amis ; et tous les journaux de Paris et de la Province cherchaient chez elle leurs informations. On la citait, on la redoutait, on commençait à la respecter. Ce n’était plus l’organe suspect d’un groupe de tripoteurs politiques, mais l’organe avoué du cabinet. Laroche-Mathieu était l’âme du journal et Du Roy son porte-voix. Le père Walter, député muet et directeur cauteleux, sachant s’effacer” (*Bel-ami* 290). The newspaper and the clean and honest, at least in

appearance, reporters and politicians working for Monsieur Walter, allow this conniving Jewish businessman to be involved in questionable affaires, especially in North Africa, without attracting attention. Always scheming behind the scenes, Monsieur Walter “s’occupait dans l’ombre, disait-on, d’une grosse affaire de mines de cuivre, au Maroc” (*Bel-ami* 290). In fact, it is this “*grosse affaire*” in Morocco that will eventually make Monsieur Walter the richest, and most despised, man in Paris.

The machinations concerning Morocco involve speculation on a debt for which the payments cannot be guaranteed until the French government enters the country and enforces the obligation to pay through military presence. Monsieur Walter’s wife, having become the mistress of Duroy, explains the whole elaborate plan to him in confidence, “L’expédition de Tanger était décidée entre eux dès le jour où Laroche a pris les affaires étrangères; et, peu à peu, ils ont racheté tout l’emprunt du Maroc qui était tombé à soixante-quatre ou cinq francs. Ils l’ont racheté très habilement, par le moyen d’agents suspects, véreux, qui n’éveillaient aucune méfiance. Ils ont roulé même les Rothschild, qui s’étonnaient de voir toujours demander du marocain. On leur a répondu en nommant les intermédiaires, tous à la côte. Ça a tranquilisé la grande banque. Et puis maintenant on va faire l’expédition, et dès que nous serons là-bas, l’État français garantira la dette. Nos amis auront gagné cinquante ou soixante millions” (*Bel-ami* 302-302). Monsieur Walter’s involvement in North Africa extends beyond the Moroccan debt and once the news breaks, everyone becomes aware of this previously, yet purposefully, attention-shy Jewish businessman, “Quant à Walter, personne dans Paris n’ignorait qu’il avait fait coup double et encaissé de trente à quarante millions sur l’emprunt, et de huit à dix millions sur des mines de cuivre et de fer, ainsi que sur d’immenses terrains achetés pour rien avant la conquête et revendus le lendemain de l’occupation française à des compagnies de colonisation” (*Bel-ami* 326). From this point on, Monsieur Walter’s status as a Jewish banker in Paris is catapulted beyond even that of the Rothschild family, “Il était devenu, en quelques jours, un des maîtres du monde, un de ces financiers omnipotents, plus forts que des rois... Il n’était plus le juif Walter, patron d’une banque louche, directeur d’un journal suspect, député soupçonné de tripotages véreux. Il était Monsieur

Walter, le riche israélite” (*Bel-ami* 326-327). Once Monsieur Walter has the funds and the status, his home on the particularly elegant boulevard Malesherbes is no longer enough for his new public image of *banquier roi*. Monsieur Walter’s home on the boulevard Malesherbes was already of a more fancy standing than fitting for the job title and description of newspaper owner and director. Literally overnight, Monsieur Walter acquires the princely castle of an actual prince on rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré: “Il le voulut montrer. Sachant le gêne du prince de Carlsbourg qui possédait un des plus beaux hôtels de la rue du Faubourg-Saint-Honoré... il lui proposa d’acheter, en vingt-quatre heures, cet immeuble, avec ses meubles, sans changer de place un fauteuil. Il en offrait trois millions. Le prince, tenté de la somme accepta” (*Bel-ami* 326). This new home fits the image of a man with as much, or more, financial importance and consequential political power than the Rothschild banking empire that he has been working so deviously behind the scenes to cultivate.

Despite the recent prestige of the boulevard Malesherbes, found in a chic and modern part of Paris just recently built and renovated during the Second Empire, the rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré does constitute an elevation in status. The neighborhood in which the rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré is found was first incorporated into Paris during in the seventeenth century and this particular street did not receive in its entirety the name that it now carries until the end of the July Monarchy, “Cette rue remplace l’ancien chemin qui, au Moyen Age, conduisait de Paris au village du Roule, formé des agglomérations du Haut-Roule et du Bas-Roule. Cette dernière fut érigée end un faubourg parisien en 1722, et ce qui était alors la *chaussée du Roule* (1635) devint le rue du *Faubourg-du-Roule* que l’on appela, vers 1725, du Faubourg-Saint-Honoré depuis la dernière *porte Saint-Honoré* (r. Royale) jusqu’à la hauteur du n° 114 actuel, où l’on installa un poste d’octroi dit de la *Fausse-Porte-Saint-Honoré*. Au-delà, elle s’appela du Bas-Roule, du Haut-Roule, puis Faubourg-du-Roule avant de recevoir, en 1847, le nom de la section précédente” (Hillairet 503). The development of this neighborhood into an aristocratic center began during the reign of Louis XIV and continued, although somewhat slowly, with Louis XV on the throne, benefiting from the historical association with one of the most sumptuous periods of the Ancien Régime, “De nombreux hôtels furent

élevés dans la première de ces sections dès la fin du règne de Louis XIV, sous la Régence et pendant tout le XVIII^e siècle. Mais cette construction ne fut que progressive ; c'est ainsi qu'en 1734, on ne retrouvait, avant la *Fausse-Porte-Saint-Honoré*, qu'une demi-douzaine d'hôtels sur le côté sud" (Hillairet 503). Like the homes built in the seventeenth century along the rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré, "tous avec un jardin", the land on Monsieur Walter's home comes with a garden along the Champs-Élysées, "avec jardin sur les Champs-Élysées" (*Bel-ami* 327). Whether or not the intention was to exaggerate the uniqueness of the new Walter family home with a garden on the Champs-Élysées, the homes on this south side of the rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré are actually separated from the Champs-Élysées by a street, rendering their relation to the park of the Champs-Élysées less exclusive. Maupassant's description is thus inaccurate, since the avenue Gabriel separated the gardens of the expansive and aristocratic homes from the Champs-Élysées as early as the seventeenth century, "Cette avenue a été formé en 1670 entre les avenues Matignon et Marigny et en 1818 entre l'avenue Marigny et la place de la Concorde; cette dernière section avait jusqu'alors fait partie de l'avenue des Champs-Élysées; la première avait porté (1772) le nom de l'avenue de l'Élysée. L'ensemble a reçu, en 1818, le nom de l'architecte Jacques Ange Gabriel (1698-1782) qui construisit la place de la Concorde et les deux grands hôtel qui la décorent... La plupart des jardins des hôtels qui ouvraient sur la rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré entre la rue Boissy-d'Anglas et l'avenue de Marigny s'étendaient jusqu'à cette avenue, ainsi que le font encore de nos jours ceux du palais de l'Élysée et de l'ambassade de l'Angleterre" (Hillairet 560). The homes along the parc Monceau, however, do have an intimate relationship with the park and the gardens of these homes are directly contiguous. It is possible that the style of the gardens of the homes lining the parc Monceau inspired the garden that Maupassant imagined for Monsieur Walter's extravagant home. In Zola's *La Curée*, Renée, Saccard's wife, slips away without her husband's knowledge through the parc Monceau since the garden of the *hôtel Saccard* contains a gate through which the inhabitants can enter the park at night when the main gates are locked and the park is closed to the general public.

Monsieur Walter is so eager to impress and so keen on appearing royal that he doesn't even move his own furniture to his new home, he simply buys everything that already exists in the prince's mansion, with the exception of the prince himself. But his audacity does not stop there. Around the same time that he is triumphing with his North-African financial schemes, the Parisian public is enamored with the work of a certain artist, "Toute la ville allait voir en ce moment un grand tableau du peintre hongrois Karl Marcowitch, exposé chez l'expert Jacques Lenoble, et représentant le Christ marchant sur les flots. Les critiques d'art, enthousiasmés, déclaraient cette toile le plus magnifique chef-d'œuvre du siècle" (*Bel-ami* 327). Unable to support the idea that a painting might drum up more discussion, draw more interest, and pull larger crowds than his acquisition of the prince of Carlsbourg's home, Monsieur Walter buys the painting, "Walter l'acheta cinq cent mille francs et l'enleva, coupant ainsi du jour au lendemain le courant établi de la curiosité publique, et forçant Paris entier à parler de lui pour l'envier, le blâmer ou l'approuver" (*Bel-ami* 327). For the public inauguration of his new home, Monsieur Walter makes an announcement in his paper inviting all of Paris' high society to come see the work of art, "Puis, il fit annoncer par les journaux qu'il inviterait tous les gens connus dans la société parisienne à contempler, chez lui, un soir, l'œuvre magistrale du maître étranger" (*Bel-ami* 327). The house-warming party, with the oddly incongruous iconic Catholic work of art featuring the miracle of Jesus walking on water purchased for millions on display, is however not open to the public, there is an invitation involved, "Sa maison serait ouverte. Y viendrait qui voudrait. Il suffirait de montrer à la porte la lettre de convocation. Elle était rédigée ainsi: 'Monsieur et Madame Walter vous prient de leur faire l'honneur de venir voir chez eux, le trente décembre, de neuf heures à minuit, la toile de Karl Marcowitch: 'Jésus marchant sur les flots' éclairée à la lumière électrique.' Puis en post-scriptum, en toutes petites lettres, on pouvait lire: 'On dansera après minuit.' Donc ceux qui voudraient rester resteraient, et parmi ceux-là les Walter recruteraient leurs connaissances du lendemain" (*Bel-ami* 327-328).

The invitation to view the religious painting at the home of the most recently richest man in Paris serves as a challenge to the Parisian elite to dare and venture an appearance in such a morally questionable

environment. In a battle between curiosity and conscience, curiosity wins, and every single member of the high society comes to gawk at the overly lavish home and furnishing and at the Jew who had the nerve to practically steal the painting of Jesus and sequester it from the majority Catholic population of Paris, “Il fallait d’abord qu’ils entrassent dans sa maison, tous les pannés tirés qu’on cite dans les feuilles; et ils y entreraient pour voir la figure d’un homme qui a gagné cinquante millions en six semaines; ils y entreraient aussi pour voir et compter ceux qui viendraient là; ils y entreraient encore parce qu’il avait eu le bon goût et l’adresse de les appeler à admirer un tableau chrétien... Il leur semblait dire: ‘Voyez, j’ai payé cinq cent mille francs le chef-d’œuvre religieux de Marcowitch... Et ce chef-d’œuvre demeura chez moi, sous mes yeux, toujours, dans la maison du juif Walter’ ” (*Bel-ami* 328). Monsieur Walter has clearly won the contest of becoming the most talked about Jewish figure in Paris of the Third Republic and he has certainly attained the goal of infiltrating the scope of consideration of the Parisian elite who, unaware of the extent of his devious machinations, come to the conclusion that they in fact risk little in presenting themselves at the Walter family home to view the painting, “Dans le monde des duchesses et du Jockey, on avait beaucoup discuté cette invitation qui n’engageait à rien, en somme. On irait là comme on allait voir des aquarelles chez M. Petit. Les Walter possédaient un chef-d’œuvre; ils ouvraient leurs portes un soir pour que tout le monde pût l’admirer. Rien de mieux” (*Bel-ami* 328-329). Duroy attends the inauguration of the ex-prince’s home despite his intense anti-Semitic tinted jealousy of his employers success, “Il avait déclaré d’abord qu’il n’irait point à la fête du patron, et qu’il ne voulait plus mettre les pieds chez ce sale Juif”, and he provides a description of the sumptuous setting almost as if touring a royal palace, “La cour d’honneur de l’hôtel Carlsbourg était illuminée par quatre globes électriques qui l’air de quatre lunes bleuâtres, aux quatre coins. Un magnifique tapis descendait les degrés du haut perron et, sur chacun, un homme en livrée restait roide comme une statue... Le vestibule énorme était tendu de tapisseries qui représentaient l’aventure de Mars et de Vénus. À droite et à gauche partaient les deux bras d’un escalier monumental, qui se rejoignaient au premier étage. La rampe était une merveille de fer forgé, dont la vieille dorure éteinte faisait courir une lueur

discrète le long des marches de marbre rouge... À l'entrée des salons, deux petites filles, habillées l'une en folie rose, et l'autre en folie bleue, offraient des bouquets aux dames... Cinq salons se suivaient, tendus d'étoffes précieuses de broderies italiennes ou de tapis d'Orient de nuances et de styles différents, et portant sur leurs murailles des tableaux de maîtres anciens. On s'arrêtait surtout pour admirer une petite pièce Louis XVI, une sorte de boudoir tout capitonné en soie à bouquets roses sur un fond bleu pâle. Les meubles bas, en bois doré, couverts d'étoffe pareille à celle des murs, étaient d'une admirable finesse" (*Bel-ami* 330-332).

Monsieur Walter, however, has no responsibility for the beauty of his new home and that is the irony and absurdity of this scenario that Maupassant presents, revealing the decrepit state of ancient French traditions in which the beautiful furnishings and decorations accumulated by royal or noble families for their majestic residences over many generations can be purchased and appropriated overnight by not just a commoner, but by a Jew. The anti-Semitic intonations of Maupassant's description of this situation and the sentiments of envy and hatred that the main character feels fall perfectly in line with the general atmosphere of times and appear almost to preface Drumont's *La France juive*, published just one year later.

Monsieur Walter's new home is complete with a magnificent winter garden—an early greenhouse of glass, steel, and brick like those that one can still tour today in the Jardin de Plantes. It is in this exotic indoor garden that Monsieur Walter has chosen to display the religious masterpiece of Karl Marcowitch, a fairly ingenious idea that requires those in attendance, for the sole purpose of seeing the painting, to cross through nearly the entire home and greenhouse before catching a glimpse, "Ils arrivaient au dernier salon, et, en face d'eux s'ouvrait la serre, un large jardin d'hiver plein de grands arbres des pays chauds abritant des massifs de fleurs rares. En entrant sous cette verdure sombre où la lumière glissait comme une ondée d'argent, on respirait la fraîcheur tiède de la terre humide et un souffle lourd de parfums. C'était une étrange sensation douce, malsaine et charmante, de nature factice, énervante et molle. On marchait sur des tapis tout pareils à de la mousse entre deux épais massifs d'arbustes... à sa gauche, sous un marge dôme de palmiers, un vaste bassin de marbre blanc où l'on aurait pu se baigner et sur les bords duquel quatre grands cygnes en

faïence de Delft laissaient tomber l'eau de leurs becs entr'ouverts... Le fond du bassin était sablé de poudre d'or et l'on voyait nager dedans quelques énormes poissons rouges, bizarres monstres chinois aux yeux saillants, aux écailles bordées de bleu, sortes de mandarins des ondes qui rappelaient, errants et suspendus ainsi sur ce fond d'or, les étranges broderies de là-bas... Au milieu d'un bosquet de plantes singulières qui tendaient en l'air leurs feuilles tremblantes, ouvertes comme des mains aux doigts minces, on apercevait un homme immobile, debout sur la mer... L'effet était surprenant. Le tableau, dont les côtés se trouvaient cachés dans les verdure mobiles, semblait un trou noir sur un lointain fantastique et saisissant" (*Bel-ami* 334-335). Although Monsieur Walter had absolutely no role in the design, creation, or decoration of his new home, his decision to display the religious work of art amongst the exotic plants and watery environment of the greenhouse is truly fantastic, creating a sort of fantasy world in which the sacred figures take on a fully awe-inspiring appearance, "Il fallait bien regarder pour comprendre. Le cadre coupait le milieu de la barque où se trouvaient les apôtres à peine éclairés par les rayons obliques d'une lanterne, dont l'un d'eux, assis sur le bordage, projetait toute la lumière sur Jésus qui s'en venait... Le Christ avançait le pied sur une vague qu'on voyait se creuser, soumise, aplanie, caressante sous le pas divin qui la foulait. Tout était sombre autour de l'Homme-Dieu. Seules les étoiles brillaient au ciel... Les figures des apôtres, dans la lueur vague du fanal porté par celui qui montrait le Seigneur, paraissaient convulsées par la surprise... C'était bien là l'œuvre puissante et inattendue d'un maître, une de ces œuvres qui bouleversent la pensée et vous laissent du rêve pour des années" (*Bel-ami* 335-336). Those who see the painting are utterly stunned, confused by the setting and the intensity of the work of art, completely speechless, and don't seem able to really comprehend the situation. Everything about Monsieur Walter—the acquisition of a prince's home, the fantasy-like indoor garden, the boundless fortune—is surreal for the guests and, but it is the price of the only thing that is truly priceless that arouses their curiosity, "Les gens qui regardaient cela demeuraient d'abord silencieux, puis s'en allaient, songeurs, et ne parlaient qu'ensuite de la valeur de la peinture" (*Bel-ami* 336).

The lasting image left after this spectacular scene at the previous home of the prince de Carlsbourg, become *chez les Walter*, is in fact the strangest of all combinations, only possible in nineteenth-century Paris, “un tableau chrétien chez lui, fils d’Israël” (*Bel-ami* 328). The setting of Paris during the Third Republic presents an entirely new breed of French-Jewish identity that will be explored in the following chapter. Maupassant hints at this evolution in making Monsieur Walter a secular patron of the arts for whom having a Christian inspired work of art in his home appears entirely plausible. Between the two Jewish characters that Zola imagined in the first half of the *Rougon-Macquart* series and this one particular Jewish character of Maupassant, Monsieur Walter appears to embody the most accurately how the wealthy Jews of Paris had come to be seen by their Parisian neighbors. Although labeled Jewish, the only thing that the non-Jewish Parisian public perceives as Jewish about Monsieur Walter is his advanced acumen in financial affairs. Monsieur Walter lacks any other of distinctive characteristics that define him as Jewish and it is exactly this lack of absence of obvious Jewishness that was making the Parisians uneasy in reality. Mentioned in the first chapter, authors of the mid-nineteenth century, Heinrich Heine and Alexandre Dumas in particular, were already pointing to the extent to which the Jews of France had melted into the surrounding population. While Dumas reveals his impression of the Jewish population in France in traveling to colonial North Africa, “Le Juif chez nous n’existe plus comme type, il s’est fondu dans la société; il n’a rien qui le distingue des autres hommes, ni dans son langage, ni dans sa tournure, ni dans son costume”, Henri Heine evokes a similar perception, “Les Juifs en France sont émancipés depuis trop longtemps déjà pour que les liens de race ne se soient pas beaucoup relâchés; ils se sont presque entièrement perdus ou, pour mieux dire, absorbés dans la nationalité française. Ces Juifs sont des Français tout comme les autres, et ils ont donc aussi des mouvements d’enthousiasme, qui durent vingt-quatre heures, et quand le soleil est bien chaud, même trois jours !... Beaucoup d’entre eux pratiquent encore leur vieux culte cérémonial, le culte extérieur, ils l’exercent tout mécaniquement, par ancienne habitude et sans savoir pourquoi; quant à une croyance intime, il n’en est resté aucune trace, car dans la synagogue aussi bien que dans l’église chrétienne le spirituel corrosif

de la critique voltairienne a exercé son influence dissolvante. Pour les Israélites de France, comme pour les autres Français, l'or est le dieu du jour, et l'industrie la religion dominante" (Dumas 48, Heine 65). Dumas and Heine both reveal the disappearance of Jewishness and the end of difference between French Catholics and French Jews. Heine goes even farther to indicate that Parisians of all religious backgrounds have come to worship gold as the only spiritual entity guiding their actions and that religious distinctions are obsolete in nineteenth-century France. Monsieur Walter certainly worships the god gold as he strives to accumulate more and more wealth, but his success is still attributed to a Jewish predisposition to managing money.

Monsieur Walter's growing fortune only becomes problematic when he displays it publically. In so doing, Monsieur Walter incites immense jealousy, "Du Roy rageait du triomphe du patron... Il s'était cru riche avec les cinq cent mille francs extorqués à sa femme, et maintenant il se jugeait pauvre, affreusement pauvre, en comparant sa piètre fortune à la pluie de millions tombée autour de lui, sans qu'il eût su en rien ramasser... Sa colère envieuse augmentait chaque jour. Il en voulait à tout le monde, aux Walter qu'il n'avait plus été voir chez eux, à sa femme qui, trompée par Laroche, lui avait déconseillé de prendre des fonds marocains... Il avait déclaré d'abord qu'il n'irait point à la fête du patron, et qu'il ne voulait plus mettre les pieds chez ce sale Juif... Du Roy murmura : 'En voilà de l'épate'. Il levait les épaules, le cœur crispé de jalousie... Et l'envie, l'envie amère, lui tombait dans l'âme goutte à goutte, comme un fiel qui corrompait toutes ses joies, rendait odieuse son existence... Il se disait : 'Voilà, voilà du luxe. Voilà les maisons où il faut vivre. D'autres y sont parvenus. Pourquoi n'y arriverais-je point ?' " (*Bel-ami* 330-335). What is so strange and complex about Monsieur Walter, his fortune, and the envy it creates is that, from the perspective of the non-Jewish Parisian public, the more rich he becomes and the more unashamedly he parades his wealth before the eyes of jealous Parisians, the more Jewish he is. However, the tenants of Judaism specifically forbid exactly that which makes Monsieur Walter appear Jewish to the non-Jewish Parisian public, "l'argent, outil au service de Dieu, devint un concurrent de Dieu, un objet d'idolâtrie, un danger s'il devient une fin en soi. Autrement dit, l'enrichissement est une forme d'idolâtrie s'il n'est pas encadré par des règles morales...

Il est recommandé de faire fortune, car, disent les juges, un homme riche est préservé de la tentation de voler et il peut plus facilement étudier et surtout donner... Mais la fortune doit rester discrète, elle ne doit pas monter à la tête, ni conduire à des comportements orgueilleux... De plus, on réaffirme que la richesse est précaire, réversible. Alors que la vie, elle, ne l'est pas. Être riche n'est qu'un moyen de servir Dieu, de faire le bien. Pas une fin en soi" (Attali 34, 54-55, 56). The concept of wealth in Jewish law is very specific: being rich is acceptable as long as the purpose is not being rich but serving a higher purpose; wealth must not be exhibited or lead to arrogant behavior; any excess is to be given back to the community to benefit those that are lacking.

The Jewish law known as *tsedaka* dates back to a period in which the Jews of Judea were still nomadic and were in fact working the land, "Justice et charité se confondent en un concept particulier, *tsedaka*, mot qui renvoie à 'charité' autant qu'à 'solidarité', à 'justice' autant qu'à 'justesse'. La *tsedaka* s'applique à tous ceux qui risquent d'être exclus de la communauté par leur pauvreté ou par leur rébellion... Le pauvre doit recevoir de la communauté non seulement de quoi manger, mais aussi de quoi créer une nouvelle activité et vivre dignement de son travail. Une communauté est tenue d'assister tout pauvre qui réside en son sein en y consacrant au moins le dixième de ses revenus... À l'inverse, la richesse ne doit pas être sans limites. Il ne faut pas être trop riche... Pour en freiner l'accumulation excessive, et conformément aux exigences de l'agriculture, il est impératif de laisser la terre reposer un an sur sept (c'est l'année sabbatique) et d'abandonner cette année-là les produits de la terre aux plus pauvres. En outre, tous les quarante-neuf ans, chaque terre est rendue à son propriétaire initial, c'est-à-dire à celle des douze tribus qui l'a reçue en partage (c'est le jubilé). Cette obligation s'étend aux prêts, qui, eux aussi, doivent être annulés tous les quarante-neuf ans. Ce mécanisme revient à interdire la constitution de grandes propriétés, à rendre inutile la possession d'esclaves agricoles, à empêcher surtout de transmettre des richesses au-delà de deux générations et de réduire l'attachement à la terre" (Attali 58-59). Everything that renders Monsieur Walter Jewish to the Parisian public is the opposite of what is truly Jewish. Maupassant thus reveals, most likely unconsciously,

the heart of the “Jewish question”. The handful of Jews that constitute the Jewish financial elite had become so wealthy and, while many were giving back to the whole community through charitable and philanthropic works, some appeared to have adopted accumulation of wealth as the ultimate goal. This phenomenon was however not limited to the rich Jews of France and greater Europe, the practice of accumulating wealth for the sake of accumulating wealth was an international and multi-religion occurrence. Maupassant’s *Bel-ami* reveals the extent to which French society had become infected with the desire to become rich. Georges Duroy has as much ambition to accumulate wealth as Monsieur Walter, but Monsieur Walter is more successful and his success is blamed on his Jewishness, however falsely. The crux of the problem, in fiction as in reality, lay in the hypocrisy of accusing the Jewish population of being the sole vectors of this global crisis that Karl Marx called capitalism. The solution that Marx proposed was to eliminate Judaism, which in turn would lead to the end of capitalism and the injustice and misery it causes. Marx, however, failed to see that what he considered capitalism was in fact the exact opposite of Judaism despite being Jewish himself.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, a poor economic climate combined with the notorious, both fictional and actual, wealth of the elite Jews lead to a massive increase in anti-Semitic thought and action, “Avec la crise économique de 1883, l’antisémitisme jusqu’ici théorique se fait pratique... En reliant dans l’esprit du peuple haine du capital, haine du pouvoir et haine des Juifs, on impute à ces derniers toutes les faillites, toutes les inégalités, toutes les misères sociales” (Attali 468). Furthermore, just one year after the publication of *Bel-ami*, came the publication in 1886 of *La France juive* in which the previously emancipated and assimilated Jew becomes a monstrous hybrid human-beast threatening French society, “Édouard Drumont publie un des plus grands succès de la fin du siècle... qui désigne le Juif comme un être inhumain, quasi bestial, un monstre physique: ‘Les principaux signes auxquels on peut reconnaître un Juif restent donc: ce fameux nez recourbé, les yeux clignotants, les dents serrées, les oreilles saillantes, les ongles carrés, le torse trop long, le pied plat, les genoux ronds, la cheville extraordinairement en dehors, la main moelleuse et fondante de l’hypocrite et du traître’ ” (Attali 469). With this perspective in mind, Maupassant’s curiously

anti-Semitic treatment Monsieur Walter is no longer so surprising. The author was merely appealing to the general sentiments, however hateful and erroneous, of his readership at that time. Following the publication of *La France juive*, all that remained for the anti-Semite was a particular event that would confirm the imminent threat posed by the Jewish population to the success and well-being of the French nation, “L’antisémitisme n’a plus alors qu’à trouver une occasion de se cristalliser si possible autour d’un étranger inassimilable placé au cœur du pouvoir d’État, en situation de trahir la patrie” (Attali 469). This event to which Attali is referring is the Dreyfus Affaire. However, this societal catastrophe did not explode upon the nation, bitterly dividing France, until 1894. Before the Dreyfus Affair took center stage with anti-Semitism as a national, political movement, Zola took the opportunity to add to Maupassant’s modern interpretation of the Jewish stereotype with his personal rendition of the all-powerful Jewish banker in 1891.

Gundermann’s Bourse:

Between the 1880 and 1883 publications, respectively, of *Nana* and *Au Bonheur des dames* and the appearance of Zola’s third to last novel in the *Rougon-Macquart* series, *L’Argent*, in 1891, Zola’s feelings about the Jewish presence in France evolved from minor suspicion or a mild aversion to systemic anti-Semitism. In an insightful and thorough review of *L’Argent*, Paul Lafargue declares this late novel of Zola to be the complete opposite of *Pot-Bouille*, published in 1882, between *Nana* and *Au Bonheur des dames*, “*L’Argent* peut être considéré comme la réplique et le complément de *Pot-Bouille*, où Zola, avec une acuité et une sévérité impitoyables, a décrit la petite bourgeoisie... Dans son roman *l’Argent*, Zola nous introduit dans un monde différent, en opposition complète avec les milieux petits-bourgeois, un monde où l’on calcule non par centime, mais par des billets de mille” (Lafargue 6). Furthermore, Zola brings back one of his earliest characters, Aristide Saccard, as the representative of the Catholic bank in an intense battle with Gundermann, representing the Jewish bank, “A la Bourse, la banque catholique de Saccard et la banque israélite de Gundermann—pseudonyme de Rothschild—sont aux prises... le Juif froid et flegmatique laisse le chrétien nerveux et fiévreux user de ses forces dans une série de spéculations qui font monter les actions

de l'Universelle du cours initial de 500 francs à 3 000 Francs. Quand Saccard est épuisé par sa victoire à la Pyrrhus, Gundermann jette brusquement ses millions sur le marché, ruine et écrase son concurrent" (Lafargue 6). This Jewish character's triumph in the religious war of the banks represents Zola's pessimistic vision of the evolution of French society, especially in Paris where the whole population appears to be striving individually, in competition with one another for one thing, money. Lafargue illustrates the importance that the race for riches had taken in general in France, and in particular in Paris, "Ici, nous voyons l'or liquide et mobile rouler en vagues plus rapides, plus précipités, plus bouillonnantes que dans les eaux aurifères du Pérou; ici, l'or est devenu le sens et le but de toute vie, de toute pensée, de toute action. Cet or, on le pourchasse, non pour assurer son existence ni celle de sa famille, ni pour donner une réponse à l'éternelle question: 'Comment réussir à manger et à se vêtir?' On travaille et l'on souffre non par nécessité, mais pour entasser millions sur millions, par amour de l'or, pour l'or" (Lafargue 6).

The setting of this novel is consequently the Parisian stock market, la Bourse, and Lafargue makes a credible argument when saying, "Zola aurait dû intituler son roman non pas *l'Argent*, mais la Bourse, car il nous peint des milieux que la spéculation boursière maintient dans une tension fiévreuse et une excitation perpétuelle, des hommes dont elle détraque le système nerveux" (Lafargue 7). Lafargue, however, neglected to see the use of metonymy in Zola's title: money is the most essential part of the whole stock market and money is the *raison d'être* of Zola's novel. By the end of the nineteenth century in France, money had become a synonym of Jewishness and it is therefore perfectly plausible that Zola would include more Jewish characters in *L'Argent* than any other novel. Not only is there the all-powerful Gundermann, head of the Jewish bank, but the story also includes, in order of appearance, Busch, his brother, Sigismond, Jacoby, and Nathansohn, all Jewish and all, with the exception of Sigismond, involved in the financial affairs of the Bourse. This exceptional showing of Jewish characters all in one novel rivals Balzac's use of Jewish characters that rarely appeared in quantities greater than one in each story. As Malesherbes revealed in a report for Louis XVI, the cultural conflation of Jews and money was present, even well-rooted, in the

French psyche as early as the eighteenth century, “Malesherbes, ministre de Louis XVI, pouvait conclure à ‘une haine très forte contre la nation juive’, avant tout en raison du fait que les juifs se livrent ‘à des commerces que les chrétiens regardent comme leur ruine’. Le mot ‘juif’ est alors devenu synonyme d’usurier. Leur émancipation politique à la fin du XVIII^e siècle coïncidant—sur fond de décollage industriel et capitaliste—à l’essor de la haute banque allait favoriser la naissance de banques juives. C’en est fait : le nom de Rothschild devait définitivement associer dans l’imaginaire collectif les juifs au commerce de l’argent” (Winock 30-31). Toussenel confirmed this association in the 1840s, “J’appelle, comme le peuple, de ce nom méprisé de juif, tout trafiquant d’espèces, tout parasite improductif, vivant de la substance et du travail d’autrui. Juif, usurier, trafiquant sont pour moi synonymes” (Toussenel 33). By the time Zola was writing *L’Argent*, the direct association of banking, speculation, the stock market and Jews was universally accepted in France. When Lafargue says that Zola should have entitled his novel, *La Bourse*, one could also say that, for the time period in which the novel was published, it might have been entitled *Les Juifs*, like Toussenel’s or Drumont’s pieces of non-fiction, *Les Juifs, rois de l’époque* (1844-1846) and *La France juive* (1886).

Including Sigismond, a communist intellectual in constant epistolary communication with Karl Marx, working as a unsuccessful translator, who never leaves the two-room apartment that he occupies with his brother and protector, Busch, “rue Feydeau, au coin de la rue Vivienne”, all the Jewish characters appear only in the vicinity of the place de la Bourse. In fact, the entire novel is restricted to a tiny portion of the city between Saccard’s home on the rue Saint-Lazare and la place de la Bourse, with the most action happening in the streets immediately around the Bourse, including the rue Vivienne, the rue Richelieu, and the rue Montmartre. Zola communicates the bustling activity of everyday life in this financial neighborhood dominated by the stock market from the perspective of Saccard, forever transfixed by his dreams of unattainable fortune: “C’était l’heure active où la vie de Paris semble affluer sur cette place centrale, entre la rue Montmartre et la rue Richelieu, les deux artères engorgées qui charrient la foule. Des quatre carrefours, ouverts aux quatre angles de la place, des flots interrompus de voitures coulaient, sillonnant le pavé, au

milieu des remous d'une cohue de piétons. Sans arrêt, les deux files des fiacres de la station, le long des grilles, se rompaient et se reformaient; tandis que, sur la rue Vivienne, les victorias des remisiers s'allongeaient en un rang pressé, que dominaient les cochers, guides en main, prêts à fouetter au premier ordre. Envahis, les marches et le péristyle étaient noirs d'un fourmillement de redingotes; et, la coulisse, installée déjà sous l'horloge et fonctionnant, montait la clameur de l'offre et de la demande, ce bruit de marée de l'agio, victorieux du grondement de la ville. Des passants tournaient la tête, dans le désir et la crainte de ce qui se faisait là, ce mystère des opérations financières où peu de cervelles françaises pénètrent, ces ruines, ces fortunes brusques, qu'on ne s'expliquait pas, parmi cette gesticulation et ces cris barbares. Et lui, au bord du ruisseau, assourdi par les voix lointaines, coudoyé par la bousculade des gens pressés, il rêvait une fois de plus la royauté de l'or, dans ce quartier de toutes les fièvres, où la Bourse, d'une heure à trois, bat comme un cœur énorme, au milieu" (*Argent* 54-54). Zola further describes the area just around the Palais de la Bourse, a modern Greek temple built during the First Empire by Alexandre-Théodore Brogniart, that housed the Parisian stock exchange, "Il faisait le tour de la colonnade sous des prétextes, traversant le jardin, marchant d'un pas promeneur, à l'ombre des marronniers. Dans cette sorte de square poussiéreux, sans gazon ni fleurs, où grouillait sur les bancs, parmi les urinoirs et les kiosques à journaux, un mélange de spéculateurs louches et de femmes du quartier, en cheveux, allaitant des poupons, il affectait une flânerie désintéressée, levait les yeux, guettait, avec la furieuse pensée qu'il faisait le siège du monument, qu'il l'enserrait d'un cercle étroit, pour y rentrer un jour un triomphateur" (*Argent* 55-56). Saccard dreams to one day dominate the Parisian stock market, but he is in fact not even in the financial position to participate in lesser version that deals with actions that have little to no value: "Il pénétra par l'angle de droite, sous les arbres qui font face à la rue de la Banque, et tout de suite il tomba sur la petite bourse des valeurs déclassées, les 'Pieds humides', comme on appelle avec un ironique mépris ces joueurs de la brocante, qui cotent en plein vent, dans la boue des jours pluvieux, les titres des compagnies mortes. Il y avait là, en un groupe tumultueux, toute une juiverie malpropre, de grasses faces luisantes, des profils desséchés d'oiseux voraces,

une extraordinaire réunion de nez typiques, rapprochés les uns des autres, ainsi que sur une proie, s'acharnant au milieu des cris gutturaux et comme près à se dévorer entre eux" (*Argent* 56). Despite the stereotype of Jews having an advanced capacity for playing the stock market, Saccard describes the participants of the market of worthless actions as a Jewry defined by stereotypical profiles and noses, a vulture-like comportment, and Germanic-sounding language.

Despite the Jewishness of those involved in speculating on actions worth less than a penny, the Jewish identity of nearly all the other Jewish characters in Zola's novel predestines them to working with money and to succeeding at the stock market. This belief is revealed in a discussion between three non-Jewish characters reflecting on one Jewish character's apparently quick and easy success, "Saccard, qui écoutait, fit tout haut une réflexion. — Tiens ! c'est vrai, on m'a dit que Nathansohn était entré en coulisse. — Un garçon très gentil, Nathansohn, déclara Jantrou, et qui mérite de réussir. Nous avons été au Crédit mobilier... Mais il arrivera, lui, car il est juif. Son père, un autrichien, est établi à Besançon, horloger, je crois... Vous savez que ça l'a pris un jour, là-bas, au Crédit, en voyant comment ça se manigançait. Il s'est dit que ce n'était pas malin, qu'il n'y avait qu'à avoir une chambre et à ouvrir un guichet; et il a ouvert un guichet... vous avez raison de dire qu'il faut être juif; sans ça, inutile de chercher à comprendre, on n'y a pas la main, c'est la déveine noire" (*Argent* 68). While it is not clear if Zola actually believed in reality that being Jewish automatically meant an innate possession of superior financial knowledge and capacities, but the lesson learned in the novel is apparent: the general perspective in France was that the Jewish community had come to dominate the financial market in Paris with an unfair advantage.

Nevertheless, not all the Jewish characters in Zola's novel experience what Saccard considers as unjust and unnatural success. In passing by "la petite bourse des valeurs déclassées", Saccard encounters Busch in this setting that does not communicate financial triumph, "Il passait, lorsqu'il aperçut un peu à l'écart un gros homme, en train de regarder au soleil un rubis, qu'il levait en l'air, délicatement, entre ses doigts énormes et sales" (*Argent* 56). While Jewish figures like Gundermann inhabit vast mansions, Busch and his

brother Sigismond live in an apartment consisting of just two rooms and a kitchen, “Depuis vingt ans, Busch occupait tout en haut, au cinquième étage, un étroit logement composé de deux chambres et d’une cuisine” (*Argent* 67). However, like Gundermann, Busch and his brother live and work in the same place, only their offices are also their bedrooms, “Né à Nancy, de parents allemands, il était débarqué là de sa ville natale, il y avait peu à peu étendu son cercle d’affaires, d’une extraordinaire complication, sans éprouver le besoin d’un cabinet plus grand, abandonnant à son frère Sigismond la pièce sur la rue, se contentant de la petite pièce sur la cour, où les paperasses, les dossiers, les paquets de toutes sortes s’empilaient tellement, que la place d’une unique chaise, contre le bureau, se trouvait réservée” (*Argent* 67). Their tiny apartment is however ideally located on one of the corners of the place de la Bourse, at the intersection of rue Vivienne and rue Feydeau. When Saccard visits the Busch brothers’ apartment, hoping to have a letter translated from Russian to French, he has the opportunity to see la Bourse from a very new perspective, “ — Tiens ! vous voyez la Bourse. Oh ! qu’elle est drôle, d’ici !... Jamais, en effet, il ne l’avait vue sous un si singulier aspect, à vol d’oiseau, avec les quatre vastes pentes de zinc de sa toiture, extraordinairement développées, hérissées d’une forêt de tuyaux. Les pointes des paratonnerres se dressaient, pareilles à des lances gigantesques menaçant le ciel. Et le monument lui-même n’était qu’un cube de pierre, strié régulièrement par les colonnes, un cube de gris sale, nu et laid, planté d’un drapeau en loques. Mais, surtout, les marches et le péristyle l’étonnaient, piquetés de fourmis noires, toute une fourmilière en révolution, s’agitant, se donnant un mouvement énorme, qu’on ne s’expliquait plus, de si haut, et qu’on prenait en pitié” (*Argent* 79). However, the bird’s eye view of the building housing the Parisian stock market and all the figures appearing as ants scurrying about, is not the only perspective that is presented. Sigismond Busch offers a Jewish perspective that was not yet fully known in France at the time. In fact, Sigismond represents an entirely new sort of Jewish identity, both in fiction and in reality, appearing in France with the arrival of waves of poor Jewish immigrants mainly from Eastern Europe beginning in the 1880s. These Jewish immigrants were fleeing the poverty and pogroms of the pale of settlement, including parts of Russia, Lithuania, and Poland,

the most western portion of the Russian empire in which Jews were allowed to live, with exception to large cities. Highly influenced by the communist theory of Karl Marx, Sigismond appears to be an adept of the socialist ideas circulating in Jewish communities of the pale of settlement that led to the creation of socialist organizations such as the General Jewish Labor Bund of Lithuania, Russia, and Poland (Green).

When Saccard asks Sigismond about his ideas concerning the stock market, the view of which Sigismond has directly from the windows of his fifth floor, sparsely furnished room, he launches into a long explanation of the future from the point of view of a fervent communist, “Puis, connaissant les idées de son interlocuteur, il ajouta en riant: — Quand balayez-vous tout ça, d’un coup de pied? Sigismond haussa les épaules... — À quoi bon? vous vous démolissez bien vous-mêmes... Et, peu à peu, il s’anima, il déborda du sujet dont il était plein. Un besoin de prosélytisme le lançait, au moindre mot, dans l’exposition de son système. — Oui, oui, vous travaillez pour nous, sans vous en douter... Vous êtes là quelques usurpateurs, qui expropriez la masse du peuple, et quand vous serez gorgés, nous n’aurons qu’à vous exproprier à notre tour... Tout accaparement, toute centralisation conduit au collectivisme. Vous nous donnez une leçon pratique, de même que les grandes propriétés absorbant les lopins de terre, les grands producteurs dévorant les ouvriers en chambre, les grandes maisons de crédit et les grands magasins tuant toute concurrence, s’engraissant de la ruine des petites banques et des petites boutiques, sont un acheminement lent, mais certain, vers le nouvel état social... Nous attendons que tout craque, que le mode de production actuelle ait abouti au malaise intolérable de ses dernières conséquences. Alors, les bourgeois et les paysans eux-mêmes nous aideront” (*Argent* 79-80). Although stunned by this completely opposite opinion of all that has to do with money and the actual order of things in the world, Saccard is still keen enough to ask what might be the outcome for someone like Gundermann in such a scenario, “Ainsi, Gundermann, vous lui prenez son milliard? — Nullement, nous ne sommes pas des voleurs. Nous lui rachèterions son milliard, toutes ses valeurs, ses titres de rente, par des bons de jouissance, divisés en annuités. Et vous imaginez-vous ce capital immense remplacé ainsi par une richesse suffocante de moyens de consommation: en moins de cent années,

les descendants de votre Gundermann seraient réduits, comme les autres citoyens, au travail personnel; car les annuités finiraient bien par s'épuiser, et ils n'auraient pu capitaliser leurs économies forcées, le trop-plein de cet écrasement de provisions, en admettant même qu'on conserve intacte le droit d'héritage" (*Argent* 81). Not only will Gundermann and his heirs be left with fairly useless shares, *bons de jouissance*, but they will be forced to give them away and commence manual labor, "Ah ! Gundermann étouffant sous l'accablement de bons de jouissance ! les héritiers de Gundermann n'arrivant pas à tout manger, obligés de donner aux autres et de reprendre la pioche ou l'outil, comme les camarades" (*Argent* 81). Saccard wishes nothing other than to conquer Gundermann, his despised Jewish enemy, but the communist concepts that Sigismond proposes for accomplishing this are not at all to Saccard's liking. Saccard is in fact terribly envious of Gundermann's wealth and power and would prefer to have it for himself than share it with the rest of the population.

The irony of the Jewish communist looking out over the Paris stock market and imaging ways of destroying it, "Tenez ! vous voyez ce monument devant vous... Vous le voyez ? — La Bourse ? dit Saccard. Parbleu ! oui, je la vois ! — Eh bien ! ce serait bête de la faire sauter, parce qu'on la rebâtirait ailleurs... Seulement, je vous prédis qu'elle sautera d'elle-même", explaining his vision of the stock market exploding, is doubled by the geographical history and architectural expression of the building. In fact, the entire place de la Bourse was occupied by a monastery with gardens and a convent, "Place de la Bourse, La Bourse des valeurs a été construite sur l'emplacement du couvent des *Filles Saint-Thomas* à partir du 24 mars 1808" (*Argent* 83, Hillairet 235). The design of the building that now houses the Paris stock market, "d'après les plans de l'architecte Brongniart" recalls that of a classical temple. The Bourse is in an essence the temple of money. One of the major social and political contentions of the times was the destruction of religion, as it had been understood before the Revolution of 1789, and the adoption of the religion of capitalism in which each individual strived to accomplish a personal and private fortune. Alexis de Tocqueville describes the evolution of this situation in a society that had not only been stripped of religion, but also of social hierarchy, "Dans ces sortes de sociétés, où rien n'est fixe, chacun se sent aiguillonné sans cesse par la crainte

de descendre et l'ardeur de monter; et comme l'argent, en même temps qu'il y est devenu la principale marque qui classe et distingue entre eux les hommes, y a acquis une mobilité singulière, passant de mains en mains sans cesse, transformant la condition des individus, élevant ou abaissant les familles, il n'y a presque personne qui ne soit obligé d'y faire un effort désespéré et continu pour le conserver ou pour l'acquérir. L'envie de s'enrichir à tout prix, le goût des affaires, l'amour du gain, la recherche du bien-être et des jouissances matérielles y sont donc les passions les plus communes" (Tocqueville 51). From an Ancien Régime monastery and convent to the center of Parisian, French, even European, capitalism, the Bourse was in nineteenth-century Paris "le temple du Veau d'or", as Paul Lafargue adeptly coined it (Lafargue 9). Saccard, despite presenting himself as the head of the Catholic bank, is not aware of the history of the place de la Bourse, of the religious building, condemned by the revolution and replaced by the stock market.

Notwithstanding Saccard's designation as the head of the Catholic bank, as opposed to Gundermann's as the head of the Jewish bank, his relationship with Gundermann resembles the one that existed in reality between the Jewish bankers, Emile Pereire and James de Rothschild. In fact, Saccard and Gundermann have a history of working together, contentiously, and not seeing eye to eye on questions concerning speculation and investment, similar to Pereire and Rothschild, "Autrefois, dans les spéculations sur les terrains de la plaine Monceau, Saccard avait eu des discussions, toute une brouille même avec Gundermann. Ils ne pouvaient s'entendre, l'un passionné et jouisseur, l'autre sobre et de froide logique" (*Argent* 54). Lafargue evokes the similarities in the rivalries between Saccard and Gundermann and Pereire and Rothschild, "Au cours de la seconde moitié du siècle, il y a eu souvent des batailles acharnées entre la maison Rothschild et les banques qui lui avaient déclaré la guerre et qui s'attaquaient à son hégémonie. Dans les premières années du règne de Napoléon III, Rothschild, enrichi par le placement des emprunts d'Etat, s'en tenait à l'ancienne manière de spéculer; il n'entreprenait que des opérations sûres et manipulait exclusivement les millions qui lui appartenaient ou dont répondait sa banque. Mais les Péreire et autres, imbus des théories de Saint-Simon, dirigeaient la spéculation dans d'autres voies. Ne possédant pas de fortune, ils se faisaient verser par le

public les capitaux dont ils avaient besoin, et, comme ils spéculaient avec l'argent des autres, ne couraient aucun risque et n'avaient rien à perdre, ils se jetèrent à corps perdu dans les aventures financières les plus osées. C'est de cette époque que date la fièvre de spéculation qui tient depuis la nation française dans une agitation perpétuelle. Les spéculateurs de la nouvelle école essayèrent de ruiner Rothschild, mais celui-ci les abattit les uns après les autres... Le vieux Juif avait une foi si inébranlable dans sa victoire finale qu'il laissa innocupée... la table où son plus terrible ennemi, Péreire, avait travaillé du temps où il était employé dans sa banque; à une remarque qu'on lui fit, Rothschild répondit froidement: 'Il reprendra un jour sa place' ” (Lafargue 8). The situation in *L'Argent* is thus identical to the conflicts of practice and theory between the banks represented by Emile Pereire and James de Rothschild. Like Pereire, Saccard does not possess the capital necessary to participate in speculation and the bank that he has created must therefore rely on the capital that others have entrusted to the bank. Gundermann, like James de Rothschild in reality, has an enormous personal fortune and only speculates with his own money. Saccard, however, takes enormous risks with the money that the bank was able to pool together with the investments of multiple parties. This new method of debt-financed speculation was highly criticized at the time and, while Saccard is painted as the victim and Gundermann as the villain, it is Saccard who is responsible for the financial ruin of investors and not Gundermann, who only risks his own money.

After moving from the rue de Rivoli to the rue de Monceau in *La Curée*, Saccard is found living on the rue Saint-Lazare. Forced to sell his splendid mansion bordering on the parc Monceau, Saccard has taken up residence in new but second hand lodgings of the hôtel Orviedo. Saccard's home in *L'Argent* is however unremarkable since all the action of *L'Argent* takes place in the streets surrounding la place de la Bourse. Gundermann in particular comes to be seen as a permanent fixture of the few small blocks in Paris between his home on the rue de Provence and la place de la Bourse. Gundermann is introduced in the very first setting of the novel, at lunch in the restaurant, Chez Champeaux, where all those involved in the stock market congregate and wait in great anticipation for news of the daily exchange rates. Lafargue details the

setting in his review, emphasizing the sense of total immersion into Paris' financial world, "Dès la première page, le lecteur plonge au sein de cette vie tumultueuse; Zola le mène dans un restaurant où ceux qui vivent de la Bourse déjeunent et attendent l'heure bénie où ils pourront adorer le Veau d'or. Là, dans le tohu-bohu, des spéculateurs mangent, boivent, fument, vont et viennent, se saluent mutuellement, s'interpellent à voix haute ou échangent à voix basse leurs avis, leurs impressions et leurs pensées sur le seul objet qui les intéressent, la seule question qui les passionne : les cours de la Bourse, et les événements politiques qui peuvent les influencer" (Lafargue 8). As the meeting place of Parisian financiers, the reader first encounters Gundermann in this restaurant that was in fact an actual historical location of the place de la Bourse, "Ce restaurant se trouvait en 1890 sur la rue du Quatre-Septembre, entre la rue de la Banque et la rue Vivienne. Il existait déjà en 1864. Mais la rue du Quatre-Septembre (appelée d'abord, jusqu'en 1870, rue du Dix-Décembre) ne fut percée qu'en 1868-1869" (*Argent* 41, note 528). It is unclear whether the restaurant was or replaced between 1953 and 1961 by the concrete construction housing l'Agence France Presse or destroyed in an accidental explosion, "C'est sur cette place que se tenait le *restaurant Champeaux* que détruisit, en novembre 1898, une formidable explosion due au gaz qui, dans les caves, fit éclater un fût plein d'alcool" (Hillairet 235). The restaurant was particularly characterized by a beautifully planted courtyard, filled with rose bushes and acacia trees, that went from a *jardin d'été* to a *jardin d'hiver*, covered with glass for the colder seasons. Zola does not do this remarkable place in Paris justice in his novel, failing to describe the beauty and novelty previously extolled in the newspaper, *Le Monde Illustré*, in 1864, "Le restaurant Champeaux, situé au centre d'un des quartiers les plus riches de Paris, est une des maisons dont l'antique réputation s'est des plus constamment soutenue. On va chez Champeaux, comme on va chez Véfour, ce qui pour nous veut dire que c'est un restaurant de première ligne, et nous pouvons ajouter que jamais on n'en est sorti avec une déception... Ce que le restaurant Champeaux possède en plus que ses concurrents, plus ou moins renommés, c'est un magnifique jardin d'été qui se transforme en jardin d'hiver à l'approche de la mauvaise saison, et dont cet établissement est redevable à son propriétaire actuel, M. Trap... On donne volontiers à

Paris le nom de jardin d'hiver à de simples terrasses vitrées, où s'étiolent quelques malheureuses plantes qui ne voient jamais plus de soleil que n'en voyaient les anciennes rues de la Cité. Notre dessin suffit pour prouver qu'au restaurant Champeaux il n'en est pas de même. Son jardin d'hiver est véritablement digne du nom de jardin ; il se compose de l'exacte étendue du jardin d'été dont il n'est qu'une ingénieuse transformation ; on y dîne sous des arbres et sous de vrai feuillage, et la mauvaise saison n'existe jamais pour l'heureux restaurant de la place de la Bourse... L'exécution de ce charmant jardin a été confiée à M. Profflet, un architecte de goût, qui, tout en restant dans la simplicité, a su allier le bon goût à l'élégance... Le hardin d'hiver du restaurant Champeaux, place de la Bourse, est une des curiosités de la capitale et les illustrations de l'époque, ainsi que les étrangers s'y donnent volontiers rendez-vous" (*Le Monde Illustré* 288).

In the world of the Parisian stock market, Chez Champeaux appears as permanent a fixture of the setting of la place de la Bourse, just as Gundermann, or the figure of the Jewish banker, is a permanent a fixture of the surrounding neighborhood. But Gundermann does not actually eat when he makes an appearance at the Restaurant Champeaux, "jamais non plus il ne déjeunait dans un lieu public", neither does he enter the building housing the stock market, just across the street, "Jamais il n'allait à la Bourse, affectant même de n'y pas envoyer de représentant officiel" (*Argent* 53). However, whether eating or not, the presence of this Jewish banking king in the designated restaurant of the Parisian stock market is purely symbolic, reminding all those involved in the business of speculation that he is the master. This message is sent and clearly received when Saccard exchanges a few words with Gundermann, his ultimate rival, "Aussi le premier, dans sa crise de colère, exaspéré encore par cette entrée triomphale, s'en allait-il, lorsque l'autre appela. 'Dites donc, mon bon ami, est-ce vrai ? vous quittez les affaires... Ma foi, vous faites bien, ça vaut mieux.' Ce fut, pour Saccard, un coup de fouet en plein visage. Il redressa sa petite taille, il répliqua d'une voix nette, aigüe comme une épée: 'Je fonde une maison de crédit au capital de vingt-cinq millions, je compte aller vous voir bientôt' " (*Argent* 54). Gundermann, as Lafargue indicates, is modeled after James de Rothschild, just as Balzac modeled Nucingen after both Beer-Léon Fould and Rothschild. However, unlike

Balzac's Jewish banker, easily seduced by Esther Von Gobseck and not known to go without eating, Gundermann is devoid of human needs and the only thing that concerns him, that keeps him alive, is the movement of money: "Le millionnaire juif Gundermann... n'a aucun besoin... Gundermann n'arrive même pas à ingurgiter un déjeuner par jour, la femme n'existe pas pour lui. Son estomac détraqué ne supporte que le lait, et quand il veut mener joyeuse vie, il savoure du jus de raisin; son cœur ne bat que pour la hausse et la baisse des valeurs de Bourse" (Lafargue 6). He has concentrated all of his energy in growing his fortune: "En moins d'un siècle, la monstrueuse fortune d'un milliard était née, avait poussé, débordé dans cette famille, par l'épargne, par l'heureux concours aussi des événements. Il y avait là comme une prédestination, aidée d'une intelligence vive, d'un travail acharné, d'un effort prudent et invincible, continuellement tendu vers le même but" (*Argent* 136). And Gundermann is wildly successful in attaining his goal, eventually dominating not just the entire Parisian economy, but controlling the finances of the world, "Maintenant, tous les fleuves de l'or allaient à cette mer, les millions se perdaient dans ces millions, c'était un engouffrement de la richesse publique au fond de cette richesse d'un seul, toujours grandissante; et Gundermann était le vrai maître, le roi tout-puissant, redouté et obéi de Paris et du monde" (*Argent* 135). In describing Gundermann as the master and all-powerful king to whom the whole world obeys, Zola exploits the Rothschild myth of world domination that had been fully formed by the Second Empire.

Although Zola's presentation of Gundermann led Lafargue to the conclusion that this Jewish banker is completely indifferent to the female sex, Gundermann is in fact the patriarch of a large family. Zola describes the Gundermann family compound in a manner that clearly recalls the Rothschild home on rue Laffitte and the one on rue Saint-Lazare that Balzac had imagined for his Jewish banker, the baron de Nucingen. Furthermore, similar to the Rothschild family, nearly all of Gundermann's offspring are housed in his expansive home on the rue de Provence. From Saccard's perspective, a character who has come to loath all things Jewish and, above all, all things Gundermann, Zola offers a description sufficient enough to impart the immensity of the space, "Gundermann occupait là un immense hôtel, tout juste assez grand pour

son innombrable famille. Il avait cinq filles et quatre garçons, dont trois filles et trois garçons mariés, qui lui avaient déjà donné quatorze petits-enfants. Lorsque, au repas du soir, cette descendance se trouvait réunie, ils étaient, en les comptant sa femme et lui, trente et un à table. Et, à part deux de ses gendres qui n'habitaient pas l'hôtel, tous les autres avaient là leurs appartements, dans les ailes de gauche et de droite, ouvertes sur le jardin" (*Argent* 135). Similar to the Rothschild home, the family occupies the wings and the bank is housed in the main building, "le bâtiment central était pris entièrement par l'installation des vastes bureaux de la banque" (*Argent* 135). While the bank is filled with activity and workers, "Le large escalier de pierre, aux marches usées par le continuel va-et-vient de la foule, plus usées déjà que le seuil des vieilles églises... En haut, au moment d'entrer dans la vaste antichambre... pleine de remisiers, de solliciteurs, d'hommes, de femmes, de tout un grouillement tumultueux de foule", Gundermann's office is reserved for members of the family working for the bank "Le cabinet de Gundermann était une immense pièce, dont il n'occupait qu'un petit coin, au fond, près de la dernière fenêtre... Au milieu du cabinet, à des bureaux plus vastes, deux de ses fils et un de ses gendres l'aidaient, rarement assis, s'agitant au milieu des allées et venues d'un monde d'employés" (while 137). Shared with two sons and one son-in-law, Gundermann's office is the nerve center of the whole operation "Mais c'était là le fonctionnement intérieur de la maison. La rue traversait toute la pièce, n'allait qu'à lui, au maître dans son cabinet modeste" (*Argent* 135-137). Despite the grandeur of the home and the offices, Zola finishes by describing Gundermann's office as modest, a curious detail that leads to the conclusion that it is not the exterior that makes Gundermann and his bank great, but the interior, the focus and concentration on attaining the ultimate goal, the accumulation of wealth. Gundermann and his home are just shells for the greater project of controlling the world's resources.

Much later in the story, the Jewish banker is spotted strolling in Paris in the neighborhood between the place de la Bourse and his bank on the rue de Provence. Saccard glimpses Gundermann from afar on the rue Vivienne, the street that forms the western axe of the place de la Bourse, "Comme il revenait sur la place de la Bourse, la vue de Gundermann, au loin, débouchant de la rue de Vivienne, lui donna un nouveau

frisson au cœur” (*Argent* 260). Saccard qualifies Gundermann’s distinctive walk as that of a king alone in his kingdom and unaware of the crowd, “Si rapetissé qu’il fût par l’éloignement, c’était bien lui, avec sa marche lente, sa tête qu’il portait droite et blême, sans regarder personne, comme seul dans sa royauté, au milieu de la foule” (*Argent* 260). Attempting to gauge his own position in the stock market from Gundermann’s demeanor, Saccard observes Gundermann’s every move, but this calm and composed Jewish banker gives nothing away, “Il trouvait décidément au banquier son air de tous les jours. Puis, brusquement, son cœur sauta de joie: Gundermann venait d’entrer chez le confiseur faire son achat de bonbons pour ses petites-filles; et c’était là un signe certain, jamais il n’y entrait, les jours de crise” (*Argent* 260). Just as Gundermann’s office appears modest, his actions appear simple, taking a daily walk to buy candies for his grandchildren. Despite Gundermann’s apparent modesty and simplicity, Saccard feels such an intense rage for the ease with which Gundermann appears to succeed, always emerging victorious. He expresses such an immense hatred for not only this Jewish banker, but for the entire Jewish population. Saccard’s hatred for Gundermann and the Jews translates to immensely troubling anti-Semitic slurs, repeated in various forms and combinations, “sale juif” or “sale gueux”, attributing to the entire Jewish population the desire to take over the world, conquering all other peoples. Saccard goes as far as accusing the Jews of blood libel, using exactly the same words as Toussenet—“usurier”, “trafiquant”, “parasite”—in an enraged rant, “il exhala sa haine héréditaire, il reprit ses accusations contre cette race de trafiquants et d’usuriers, en marche depuis des siècles à travers les peuples, dont ils sucent le sang, comme les parasites de la teigne et de la gale, allant quand même, sous les crachats et les coups, à la conquête certaine du monde, qu’ils posséderont un jour par la force invincible de l’or” (*Argent* 244). Such anti-Semitic language coming from an author that is now internationally known for his letter to the president of France, “J’accuse...!”, in support of the wrongly accused Jewish captain Alfred Dreyfus, published in the newspaper *L’Aurore* in 1898, is truly confounding. With such recurrent anti-Semitic language throughout the novel, it is difficult to not get the impression that Zola himself believed the words with which he animated his character’s speech. However, it is possible that Zola’s novel is purely

representative of the times and essentially a journalistic piece that follows the actual crash of the Catholic bank, l'Union Générale, in 1882.

In light of this historical event, Zola's novel takes on a new appearance as a conflicted apology of the financial machinations of Eugène Bontoux, inventor and director of the Catholic, conservative, and monarchist bank, l'Union Générale. Starting out as an engineer, educated at the École Polytechnique and working on the railroads in Austria for the Pereires and then the Rothschilds, Bontoux later ambitioned the opening of a railroad between Europe and Asia Minor, from Vienna through Turkey, into Syria, and beyond. In Zola's novel, Bontoux is split between two characters, the conservative, Catholic engineer, Georges Hamelin, that has traveled to Egypt and Syria, "envoyé en Syrie pour assurer les approvisionnements ... il se lança dans une grosse affaire, patronnée par une compagnie française, le tracé d'une route carrossable de Beyrouth à Damas, la première, l'unique voie ouverte à travers les gorges du Liban... lui visitant les montagnes, s'absentant deux mois pour un voyage à Constantinople... Il avait amassé tout un portefeuille débordant d'idées et de plans, il sentait l'impérieuse nécessité de rentrer en France, s'il voulait donner un corps à ce vaste ensemble d'entreprises, former des sociétés, trouver des capitaux", and Saccard, the financial figure behind Hamelin's transportation and metal exploitation plans (*Argent* 97). Hamelin is, however, unable to incite interest in his plans on his own, "Mais, à Paris, une malchance noire attendait Hamelin. Depuis quinze mois, il s'y débattait avec ses projets, sans pouvoir communiquer sa foi à personne, trop modeste, peu bavard, échoué à ce deuxième étage de l'hôtel Orviedo, dans un petit appartement de cinq pièces qu'il louait douze cents francs, plus loin du succès que lorsqu'il courait les monts et plaines de l'Asie" (*Argent* 98). Always attracted by possible fortune-making schemes, Saccard sees dollar signs when Hamelin's describes an unexploited silver mine, "Tenez ! entre les calcaire crétaqués et les porphyres qui ont relevé ces calcaires, sur tout le flanc de la montagne, il y a là un filon d'argent dont l'exploitation, d'après mes calculs, assurerait des bénéfices énormes. — Une mine d'argent, répéta vivement Saccard... — Le Carmel, ah ! quel désert, quelles journées de solitude ! C'est plein de

myrtes et de genêts, cela sent bon, l'air tiède en est embaumé. Et il y des aigles, sans cesse, qui planent très haut... Mais tout cet argent qui dort dans ce sépulcre, à côté de tant de misère ! On voudrait des foules heureuses, des chantiers, des villes naissantes, un peuple régénéré par le travail" (*Argent* 102). When the rail system is explained, Saccard is convinced to help find investors for Hamelin's great Oriental project, "Il s'animait, il donna de nouveaux détails. Pendant son séjour en Orient, il avait constaté combien le service des transports était défectueux. Les quelques sociétés, installées à Marseille, se tuaient par la concurrence, n'arrivaient pas à avoir le matériel suffisant et confortable; et une de ses premières idées, à la base même de tout l'ensemble de ses entreprises, était de syndiquer ces sociétés, de les réunir en une vaste Compagnie, pourvue de millions, qui exploiterait la Méditerranée entière et s'en assurerait la royauté, en établissant des lignes pour tous les ports de l'Afrique, de l'Espagne, de l'Italie, de la Grèce, de l'Égypte, de l'Asie, jusqu'au fond de la mer Noire. Rien n'était, à la fois, d'un organisateur de plus de flair, ni d'un meilleur citoyen: c'était l'Orient conquis, donné à la France, sans compter qu'il rapprochait ainsi la Syrie, où allait s'ouvrir le vaste champ de ses opérations... — Imaginez alors quelle révolution, si des lignes ferrées pénétraient jusqu'aux confins du désert ! Ce serait l'industrie et le commerce décuplés, la civilisation victorieuse, l'Europe s'ouvrant enfin les portes de l'Orient" (*Argent* 101, 103).

Hamelin's motivation behind his Oriental project closely resembles the ambition of the Union Générale, Bontoux's Catholic bank that attempted to finance expansive industrial projects in the Balkans with the hope of reclaiming power over the market from the Jewish banks. When Hamelin and Saccard's grandiose plans fail and their Catholic bank, l'Universelle, goes bankrupt, Hamelin thinks that it must be a terrible, divine intervention, "Surtout, sa voix se brisait, lorsqu'il cherchait en punition qu'elle faute Dieu ne lui avait pas permis de réaliser la grande banque catholique destinée à transformer la société moderne, ce Trésor du Saint-Sépulcre qui rendrait un royaume au pape et qui finirait par faire une seule nation de tous les peuples, en enlevant aux juifs la puissance souveraine de l'argent" (*Argent* 474). Saccard, however, blames Gundermann and again spews in a hateful anti-Semitic rant, " — Ah ! ce Gundermann, ce sale juif, qui

triomphe parce qu'il est sans désirs !... C'est bien la juiverie, cet royaume du monde, au milieu des peuples achetés un à un par la toute-puissance de l'or. Voilà des siècles que la race nous envahit et triomphe, malgré les coups de pied au derrière et les crachats... Je m'entête depuis des années à crier cela sur les toits, personne n'a l'air de m'écouter, on croit que c'est un simple débit d'homme de Bourse, lorsque c'est le cri de mon sang. Oui, j'ai la haine du juif, je l'ai dans la peau, oh ! de très loin, aux racines même de mon être ! ...toute banque catholique trop puissante écrasée, comme un danger social, pour assurer le définitif triomphe de la juiverie, qui nous mangera, et bientôt" (*Argent* 481). Whether divine intervention of the fault of a Jewish bank, Saccard and Hamelin's projects disappear with the spectacular crash of their bank.

Despite their Catholic-inspired ambitions, Saccard and Hemelin are found guilty of excessive and false speculation: "l'évidente bonne foi de Hamelin, l'héroïque attitude de Saccard qui tin tête à l'accusation pendant les cinq jours, les plaidoiries magnifiques et retentissantes de la défense, n'empêchèrent pas les juges de condamner les deux prévenus à cinq années d'emprisonnement et à trois mille francs d'amende" (*Argent* 486). Two men were also condemned in reality for the crash of the Union Générale, "Les tribunaux annulèrent les augmentations de capital, condamnèrent Bontoux et Feder à cinq ans se prison et 3000 francs d'amende" (Kurgan 519-521). The similarity in sentencing reveals Zola's explicit inspiration for his novel, but Zola highly exaggerated the rivalry between two banks, one Catholic and one Jewish, "La chute de l'Union a provoqué de nombreuses polémiques et ses partisans n'ont pas hésité à déclarer qu'elle avait été 'assassinée' par certains groupes financiers et en raison des circonstances de la politique intérieure. Une autre thèse fait valoir que les 'seules réalisations des détenteurs de titres de l'Union ont été suffisantes pour provoquer sa chute'. Objectivement... il n'est pas possible de donner une réponse définitive à cette question. On peut tout au plus déterminer les ennemis que se fit Bontoux, mais leur coalition dans un 'syndicat à la baisse' reste à prouver. Si des manœuvres ont existé, elles s'inséraient dans un cadre plus général: la restriction des crédits pratiquée par certaines banques dès la seconde moitié de 1881, en vue de limiter la hausse, vu la tension du marché" (Kurgan 520). In reality, there was never any clear indication that

a Jewish bank had anything to do with the failure of Bontoux's Catholic bank. It was in fact Bontoux's own hazardous financial machinations that were to blame, "Les débats judiciaires qui ont suivi la chute de l'Union, mirent en lumière des irrégularités de gestion, des opérations aventureuses sur le plan financier" (Kurgan 520). While Zola's novel closely follows the details of Bontoux's projects for an Oriental railway and metal mining in Syria in Hamelin's fictional plans and the unfolding of the speculation and eventual failure of Saccard's bank, l'Universelle, mirrors the bankruptcy of the Union Générale, the rivalry between Saccard's Catholic bank and Gundermann's Jewish bank was entirely fabricated based on the negative rumors of the times. Unfortunately, Zola manipulated the true story of the Union Générale in order to play to the accusations of the press implicating certain Jewish banks in the collapse of a Catholic bank. It is still extremely difficult to understand Zola's personal perspective on the matter, but his interpretation of the events around the failure of the Union Générale clearly indicates that he might have believed the rumors of an all-powerful Jewish bank taking over France and the world.

Conclusion:

Between Steiner, Hartmann, Monsieur Walter, and Gundermann, the Third Republic was not lacking in negative stereotypes of Jewish figures in nineteenth-century Paris. Each of these Jewish characters, whether imagined by Zola or Maupassant, is physically short, round, and stinky. They all have extraordinary financial capacities: Steiner is forever capable of regenerating the fortune that he is continuously spending on women; Hartmann is the financial mastermind behind the creation of the rue du Quatre Septembre, including the architectural reorganization of the neighborhood between the place de la Bourse and l'Opéra; Monsieur Walter is behind spectacular financial machinations in Morocco that allow him to become the richest man in Paris; and Gundermann, with his boundless fortune, controls the whole European financial market, crushing any and all competition. With these four Jewish characters, it is clear that the collective perspective of Jewish men in Paris of the Third Republic was that they were all working with money and that they were all extremely financially savvy, much more so than their Catholic competitors. Placed in chronological order

of appearance—*Au Bonheur des dames* in 1880, *Nana* in 1883, *Bel-ami* in 1885, and *L'Argent* in 1891—the portrayal of Jewish characters also becomes increasingly violent and anti-Semitic.

The Baron Hartmann's Jewishness in *Au Bonheur des dames* is nearly imperceptible and has no consequence on his interactions with other, non-Jewish characters. In *Nana*, Steiner's Jewishness allows him to quickly regenerate his fortune, but the non-Jewish, bourgeois and aristocratic high-society that he frequents on occasion is equally repelled by his Jewishness and by the prostitutes with whom he associates. In Maupassant's *Bel-ami*, Georges Duroy, the non-Jewish protagonist, labels Monsieur Walter "sale juif", the first racial epithet of the novels up to this point. Duroy is also exceedingly jealous of Monsieur Walter's ability to accumulate wealth and, no matter how wealthy Duroy becomes, he always feels poor in comparison to Monsieur Walter. Gundermann's Jewishness in *L'Argent* is a source of intense hatred from the non-Jewish character, Saccard. Similar to the relationship between Georges Duroy and Monsieur Walter, Saccard is immeasurably jealous of Gundermann's fortune and financial dominance. Throughout the novel, Zola employs hateful racial epithets to communicate Saccard's hatred for Gundermann and for all Jews and even indicates that this hatred of the Jewish race is a part of French cultural and historical genetics. *L'Argent* is by far one of the most anti-Semitic novels of the nineteenth-century and appears to have garnered inspiration from Edouard Drumont's *La France juive*. The evolution in the treatment of Jewish characters is clear, the closer the novels come to the Dreyfus Affair, the more intensely negative are the stereotypes attributed to Jewish characters. The growing anti-Semitism in French fiction followed closely the mounting anti-Semitism in French society that would soon erupt violently with the Dreyfus Affair in 1894.

With each novel analyzed in this chapter, *La Curée*, *Nana*, *Au Bonheur des dames*, *Bel-ami*, and *L'Argent*, it is also clear that the Jewish character in general had become closely associated with a very specific area of Paris, the northwestern corner, from the place de la Bourse and beyond, the area that Napoléon III and Haussmann had turned into a center of luxury where only the most wealthy could afford to live. In *La Curée*, while there are no Jewish characters, Saccard has built for himself a lavish hotel on the rue de Monceau, the

neighborhood financed, built, and lived in by Emile and Isaac Pereire. In *Nana*, Steiner is found in theaters of the boulevard Montmartre, not far from the rue Vivienne and the Bourse, and in homes on the boulevard Haussmann and on the rue Miromesnil. The baron Hartmann, although orchestrating the construction of the rue du Quatre Septembre from the place de l'Opéra to the Bourse, is only found at the corner of the rue d'Alger and the rue de Rivoli in a chic and modern apartment. As the owner of a newspaper known for its society column, Monsieur Walter is naturally found in a few different places in Paris, but all within the northwestern quarter. The offices of his newspaper, *La Vie française*, are located on the boulevard Poissonnière, the section of the Grands Boulevards between the rue du Faubourg Poissonnière and the rue du Faubourg Montmartre. Monsieur Walter is seen at a colleague's home on the rue Fontaine in a bourgeois apartment. He first inhabits a modern home on the boulevard Malesherbes and then a princely palace on the rue de Faubourg Saint-Honoré. Monsieur Walter's movements are thus restricted to the western half of the Right Bank. As we saw in *L'Argent*, the Jewish characters are limited to the neighborhood of the Bourse, with Gundermann inhabiting a large hôtel particulier on the rue de Provence and Busch occupying a two-bedroom apartment with his brother on the rue Feydeau.

Whether it was Zola or Maupassant who imagined the Jewish characters, they are infallibly situated on the Right Bank and in the western quarter of this half of the city. Following the great works of the Second Empire, this portion of Paris had become the center of wealth and luxury. As Jews had come to be associated with financial success and excessive display of wealth due to a small and extremely affluent elite that represented only a fraction of the whole Jewish population in Paris, it was natural for authors like Zola and Maupassant to place rich, money-driven Jewish characters in this geographical area. While the first and second districts of Paris fall into this western quarter of the city in which authors of the Third Republic place their Jewish characters, the well-to-do Jewish population was actually found in a variety of neighborhoods, "Sous le Second Empire, bien avant l'arrivée des grandes vagues d'immigrés d'Europe de l'Est, la bourgeoisie juive parisienne se concentrait naturellement dans les IX^e et II^e surtout, ainsi que dans

les X^e, III^e, I^{er}, IV^e et XI^e. Autant de lieux où sa culture se manifestait à travers les synagogues, l'artisanat et les commerces, à l'exception notable du VIII^e” (Assouline 22). Prior to the Second World War, following the influx of Eastern European Jewish immigrants beginning in the 1880s, the majority of the Jewish population was located in the eastern quarter of the Right Bank as opposed to the luxurious neighborhoods of the western quarter of the Right Bank, “Les 2/3 de l'agglomération juive sont situés dans les dix arrondissements orientaux et centraux de la rive droite ouvrière et commerçante” (Roblin 82). In placing Jewish characters solely within the limited radius of the western quarter of the Right Bank, Zola and Maupassant contributed to the myth of Jewish wealth and suspicions of Jewish world domination by further and falsely associating the Jews of Paris with the excessive luxury of the Second Empire architecture and the millionaire neighborhoods created by Napoléon III, Haussmann, and the Pereire brothers. This association, while misrepresenting the whole Jewish population in Paris, did accurately represent the tiny but magnificently wealthy Jewish elite that had in fact come to inhabit the neighborhoods built, financed, and promoted by Emile and Isaac Pereire. Although misrepresentative of the majority Jewish population, Zola and Maupassant's placement of Jewish characters in the western quarter of the Right Bank supports the movement of wealth in the city and opens the door to the exclusive society of Proust's Belle Époque.

V. Chapter four: *The Belle Époque of Proust—The Princes of Israel No Longer Welcome in the Salons of the Aristocracy*

Introduction:

In *À la recherche du temps perdu*, Marcel Proust's multi-volume novel published between 1913 and 1927, the narrator depicts the Parisian high-society of the Belle Époque, from approximately 1879 through the First World War. The characters of this novel were inspired by actual figures, the plot follows real historical events, and the writing paints a true picture of the urban environment of Paris during the Belle Époque. Like the novels explored in the first three chapters of this dissertation, Proust's fictional Parisian society includes Jewish characters. Charles Swann and Albert Bloch are the most remarkable Jews of *La Recherche*, but we also find Rachel, a prostitute become actress, and the Bloch family, including Bloch's father, sisters, and uncle, Nissim Bernard. While Charles Swann frequents the aristocracy of the Belle Époque, the Bloch family is a part of the Jewish bourgeoisie, but these Jewish characters are all of the Parisian affluent high society, like Proust himself and his Jewish and non-Jewish friends and acquaintances. Proust's use of Jewish characters is however different than the authors considered previously in this dissertation for the simple reason that he imagined them after the cataclysmic Dreyfus Affair. However, Proust wrote the Dreyfus Affair into his novel, writing, like Zola, about the period just before his own. In analyzing Proust's Jewish characters, with special attention to Charles Swann and Albert Bloch, I argue that Proust, of all the others considered in this dissertation, offers an entirely novel and accurate perspective of the Jewish place and role in Parisian society.

Setting Proust apart from the other authors explored in this dissertation, all authors of nineteenth-century France, all writers living in Paris, writing in and about the city, is Proust's own Jewish identity. While Proust's mother, Jeanne Weil, was Jewish, his father, Adrien Proust, was Catholic and Marcel was baptized three weeks after his birthday in August 1871. Whether or not Proust considered himself Jewish, Catholic, or neither is not entirely pertinent and the author's own discretion on this subject has left the question

unanswered, and unanswerable. Proust's relationship with his mother and maternal family is however significant since his extended Jewish family, friends, and acquaintances largely influenced his literary portrayal of Jewish characters. This genetic difference can therefore either completely change how the Jewish characters in Proust's novel are studied and understood, or it might not have any influence at all if we consider Proust as novelist in line with Balzac, Zola, Maupassant and others who wrote about nineteenth-century Paris. Whether Proust's Jewish identity influenced his treatment of Jewish characters is a subject of infinite discussion, a debate that has not ceased since the release of the first half of *La Recherche* in 1913, and it might be an even more controversial debate than Proust's sexual preferences. Throughout this chapter this essential question concerning the influence that Proust's Jewishness had on his portrayal of Jewish characters will be taken into careful consideration. While Balzac, the Goncourts, Zola, and Maupassant approached Jewish characters in their novels from a French-Catholic point of view, Proust's combined Jewish and French-Catholic identity adds another level of complexity to the expression of Jewishness of the Jewish characters in *La Recherche*.

Not only was Proust of Jewish origin on his mother's side, but his ancestors also played a part in the establishment of the French Jewish community as early as the First Empire. Proust's maternal great-grandfather, Baruch Weil, participated in the creation of the Consistoire de Paris and was an active member of the Consistoire Central from 1819, the official organization uniting and governing French Judaism. Baruch's wife, Marguerite, contributed to the creation of a Jewish school for girls along with women of the Jewish high-society in Paris, "Quant à Marguerite, elle... participe à la fondation de l'école des filles. Elle y retrouve les dames du Comité, elles aussi issues de ces familles de notables, sœurs, mères ou épouses d'hommes d'affaires impliqués dans les institutions israélites, les Worms de Romilly, les Rodrigues, les Halphen, les Cerfbeer ou, bien sûr, les Rothschild" (Bloch-Dano 43). Baruch's eldest son, Goudechaux, championed integration through adapting, but certainly not abandoning, Jewish traditions to French culture in *Les Matinées du Samedi* and the *Archives israélites*. (Bloch-Dano, 66-67) The Weil family was nevertheless

considered “nouveaux riches” and fairly rough around the edges. Baruch’s son, Nathé, made a sizeable fortune working as a *coulissier* in the world of banking and speculation. A traditionally clichéd profession of nineteenth-century French Jews, Nathé was a stock market investor, “Même Zola, pourtant peu suspect d’antisémitisme, affirme dans ses notes: ‘Peut-être la moitié des boursiers était-elle juive... Fasquelle, Busnach, et les autres me donnent l’impression que les cervelles françaises répugnent au côté abstrait des opérations’. Et il ajoute: ‘C’est un métier de Juif, il y faut une construction particulière de la cervelle, des aptitudes de race’. Comme le père de Charles Swann, Nathé Weil exerce donc ‘un métier de Juif’ ” (Bloch-Dano 60). Nathé’s Jewish identity thus predisposes him, according to Zola, to financial success, which he attains quickly, but not without hard work. However, Nathé did not spend his newly won fortune on lavish material objects. Instead, he married advantageously: “La rudesse des Weil, leur piété, leur caractère entier vont s’allier à la fortune plus ancienne, aux mœurs plus policées d’une famille liée aux cercles du pouvoir” (Dano 52). Nathé’s wife, Adèle Berncastel, was from the same family, by marriage, as the famous lawyer Jewish lawyer, Adolphe Crémieux. Her aunt, Amélie, was Crémieux’s wife.

While Crémieux fought for Jewish rights in French society, traveling to Egypt in 1840 to negotiate the liberty and exoneration of the Jews falsely accused of ritually murdering a Catholic priest, having the *more judaico* abolished in 1844, establishing the Alliance Israélite Universelle in 1860, and passing the law making all Algerians of Jewish profession French citizens in 1870, Amélie held a highly literary and musical salon in Paris, “Dans le salon d’Amélie Crémieux, se rencontre l’élite libérale et romantique: Lamartine, Victor Hugo, Lamennais, Odilon Barrot, George Sans, mais aussi des saint-simoniens comme Rodrigues ou des franc-maçons comme Gambetta, Carnot, Arago, Jules Simon ou Charles Floquet. Grand Maître du Rite écossais, Adolphe Crémieux ne fait pas mystère de son appartenance à la franc-maçonnerie. On peut également croiser dans le grand appartement de la rue Bonaparte, meublé à la mode troubadour, Alexandre Dumas ou Eugène Sue ainsi que la princesse Mathilde, à qui le jeune narrateur de *La Recherche* sera présenté par Swann. Les Crémieux sont surtout passionnés de musique et de théâtre. Rossini, Meyerbeer, Chopin, la cantatrice

Pauline Viardot sont leurs hôtes. L'avocat fait répéter ses rôles à la comédienne Rachel, qui l'appelle Papa ! Amélie et sa sœur Rose, la grand-mère de Jeanne, sont d'excellentes pianistes" (Bloch-Dano 51-52). Nathé's wife, Adèle Berncastel, spent much of her youth in her aunt Amélie's Parisian salon that was filled with literary, musical, and political figures. Having absorbed all the knowledge she could glean, Adèle brought this aspect of her family's identity to the conjugal home when she married Nathé, passing on to her daughter, Jeanne, her love for politics, literature and music. Jeanne, in turn, passed it on to her son, Marcel.

Following the trajectory of Proust's maternal ancestors, there is an essential theme that becomes evident with each successive generation. Two clear parallel paths appear when observing the Weil family tree, one defining their place in the Jewish community and one emphasizing the importance of modern French culture over Jewish traditions, "Ainsi, de Baruch à ses fils et à ses gendres, s'édifie une dynastie occupant une place de choix dans les institutions juives et unie à ces dernières par de multiples liens familiaux, communautaires, professionnels. Parallèlement, s'effectue l'intégration des Weil dans la société française. Intégration et affaiblissement de la pratique religieuse vont aller de pair pour de nombreux israélites français. C'est moins un calcul qu'une nécessité sociale dont la famille Weil est la parfaite illustration" (Bloch-Dano 67). While Jewish traditions slowly faded with assimilation to French culture across the nineteenth century, one last bastion to withstand a total loss of Jewish identity was endogamy, marrying between Jews. Marriages in the Weil family remained endogamous until Proust's mother's generation. Jeanne Weil, as it is said, completed the transition from Jewish to French with her exogamous marriage to Adrien Proust, "Nathé Weil—comme Moïse, son demi-frère, dont deux des filles seront mariées à des non-Juifs—fait un autre choix, celui de l'assimilation. Avec le mariage de Jeanne, le processus trouve son accomplissement. Il aura fallu trois générations" (Bloch-Dano 68).

While the Jewish identity of the Weil family slowly dissipated, their trajectory was also particularly characterized by diligence and industry. The Weil family is a perfect example of what the French hoped for in granting citizenship, that is diversity of profession and active participation in society. Their success came

from a motivation to forever better their situation, “Un architecte, un agent de change, un industriel, un militaire, un huissier, un banquier: Moïse, Nathé, Lazare, Abraham Weil, Benoît Cohen et Joseph Lazarus, les fils et les gendres de Baruch Weil ont tous réussi, chacun à leur manière. Des Alsaciens, un Hollandais. Ces hommes n’ont pas la légèreté des oisifs fortunés de l’aristocratie, ils ne savent pas jouir sans arrière-pensée de leur fortune. Ils ont gravi les échelons de la société française à force de travail, d’opiniâtreté et d’ambition” (Bloch-Dano 64). The social climbing and the accumulation of wealth through intense activity were in fact quite typical of the generation following immigration. This generational evolution included a first generation during which the foundations of the family’s wealth were built, a second generation during which the accumulation of wealth continued but with less attachment to traditions, and a third or fourth generation during which the family business was traded for more intellectual, artistic, or social ambitions. The Weil family fit perfectly this model of assimilation and movement away from Jewish traditions, professions, and association. With each generation, the Jews of Paris become less Jewish and more French. For Proust’s ancestors this shift in identity and affiliation began with Proust’s grandfather, Nathé and continued all the way to Proust’s generation, a progression slowed by the social insistence that the Jews of France were in fact Jews before they were French, “Les Weil sont des israélites français; pas encore des Français israélites. Encore moins des Français comme les autres” (Bloch-Dano 65). This evolution was however not restricted to identity and national or religious affiliation. With each generation becoming more and more financially and socially successful, the farther west they moved following the nineteenth-century trend in Paris of wealth moving away from the center and towards the northwestern quarter of the city.

Factually established in the 1830s and 1840s, the movement of wealth and industry from the east and center of the city to the west continued to intensify with the urban transformations of the Second Empire. Towards the end of the Second Empire, leaving the center for the more western corner of the city became a rite of passage, an important rung to climb on the ladder to the upper reaches of society. For Parisian Jews, an address in the modern or newly renovated western quarter of the city was evidence of their arrival among

acceptable society. For the most fortunate, an address to which a large and lavish *hôtel particulier* was attached was physical proof of their belonging to the high society. This evolution is seen on the Jewish side of Proust's family, "Nathé Weil est né et a grandi rue Boucherat, l'actuelle rue de Turenne. Il s'installe ensuite rue d'Hauteville, dans le X^e arrondissement. Cette rue longue et étroite qui va de l'église Saint-Vincent-de-Paul au boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle deviendra, avec son mariage, un véritable fief familial. Qu'on en juge plutôt: au 18 habiteront ses futurs beaux-parents, Nathaniel et Rose Berncastel qui en 1845 demeurent déjà au 57, tandis que lui-même et sa femme Adèle se sont installés à quelques numéros de là, au 43. Quant à son frère Louis, il loge un peu plus bas de la rue, au 33 ! Rue de Paradis, rue des Petites-Écuries, rue Richer, rue du Faubourg-Poissonnière où les Weil emménagent juste avant la naissance de Jeanne, rue de la Boule-Rouge où sa belle-mère maternelle finit ses jours, rue de Trévise où sa mère à grandi : nous sommes en plein quartier juif où aujourd'hui encore les magasins *cascher*, les synagogues, les commerces de peaux et de fourrures, les magasins de verrerie, les librairies témoignent d'une implantation aussi vivante qu'ancienne. Les séfarades d'Afrique du Nord ont remplacé les ashkénazes d'Europe de l'Est qui eux-mêmes avaient pris la place laissée par les Juifs de l'Est, Alsaciens, Lorrains ou Allemands" (Bloch-Dano 61-62). The farther west the family moved, the more distance they put between themselves and their traditional Jewish identity, "Le même mouvement de poussée vers l'ouest de Paris se poursuit, parallèle à l'ascension sociale: Baruch s'est installé près de la République, Nathé, faubourg Poissonnière, et Jeanne habitera avec son mari et ses enfants boulevard Malesherbes puis rue de Courcelles. Quant à Louis Weil, l'oncle de Jeanne, fortune faite, il achètera un immeuble au 102, boulevard Haussmann, à l'autre bout des Grands Boulevards, et une propriété à Auteuil. La réussite se signe de l'appartenance à un quartier" (Bloch-Dano 62). While Jeanne left for a neighborhood with no visible Jewish markers, her grandfather and father, still faithful to Jewish traditions, remained in Jewish neighborhoods.

The neighborhoods of Jeanne Weil's youth were punctuated by signs of a thriving Jewish community found in some less attractive or industrial corners of the city, "Les Weil habitent donc 'ces arrondissements

sordides' si étrangers au narrateur de *À la recherche du temps perdu* mais qui ne devaient pas l'être à leur auteur, puisque sa chère maman y avait vécu et que lui-même allait y rendre visite à ses grands-parents... Le 40 *bis* dont Proust fera le domicile de l'oncle Adolphe tout en le situant boulevard Malesherbes (où habiteront ses propres parents), sera jusqu'à la mort des parents de Jeanne leur domicile. Dans la famille, on dit 'le 40 *bis*' sans préciser la rue. Métonymie d'un groupe et d'un mode de vie, le 40 *bis* désigne les Weil comme dans *La Recherche*, il désigne le grand-oncle... Mais le 40 *bis* appartient aussi à un ancien quartier résidentiel devenu industriel, vivant de ses artisans, à deux pas des Grands Boulevards et des théâtres. Les magasins de nouveautés, comme Au Petit Saint-Antoine ou le Comptoir général du vêtement y côtoient le Bazar des Comestibles qui s'étend jusqu'à la rue d'Hauteville, ou plus tard, L'Alcazar d'hiver, très en vogue sous le Second Empire. Une fonderie, des entreprises de petite métallurgie, une cristallerie font pendant aux petites industries de la rue du Faubourg-Saint-Denis, fabrique de calorifères, de 'boutons de métal imitant l'Anglais' ou filature de coton" (Bloch-Dano 63). These places in Paris later served as inspiration for Proust, like the 40 *bis* that was the model for the narrator's great-uncle's residence in Paris. The ambiance of the Grands Boulevards and the Faubourg Poissonnière is evoked in *La Recherche*—by a Jewish character not assuming his Jewish identity—as streets teeming with Yiddish-accented caricatures, comparing the Jewish tourists in the seaside town of Balbec to the rue d'Aboukir in Paris with a high density of Jews and Jewish stores, "nous entendîmes d'une tente de toile contre laquelle nous étions, sortir des imprécations contre le fourmillement d'Israélites qui infestait Balbec. 'On ne peut faire deux pas sans en rencontrer disait la voix. Je ne suis pas en principe irréductiblement hostile à la nationalité juive, mais ici il y a pléthore. On n'entend que 'Dis donc Apraham, chai fu Chakop'. On se croirait rue d'Aboukir'. L'homme qui tonnait ainsi contre Israël sortit enfin de la tente, nous levâmes les yeux sur cet antisémite. C'était mon camarade Bloch" (IV 285-286). But, leaving designated Jewish neighborhoods, did not guarantee acceptance by the majority population.

In fact, the most efficient method of assimilation was inter-marriage and baptism or baptism of one's children. This was the route taken by Proust's mother who married a French-Catholic doctor and baptized

her children. Furthermore, Jeanne Proust, born Weil, had migrated to the west of Paris and no longer lived in an area where exterior indications of Jewish identity or affiliation were visible. Jeanne concluded the cycle of assimilation by marrying Adrien Proust, by living in a neighborhood not seen as Jewish, and by raising her children in a modern, secular, French manner. Appearances can nevertheless be deceiving since the Proust family settled in the Plaine Monceau, first on the boulevard Malesherbes, then on the rue de Courcelles. Although there were no external signs of Jewish presence, this area of Paris was developed by Emile and Isaac Pereire and, while it was an exclusive, high society neighborhood for aristocrats and haute-bourgeoisie, wealthy Jewish families were in good company. Despite leaving the Jewish neighborhoods behind, Jeanne, Adrian, and their two sons, Marcel and Robert, found themselves in an area of Paris inhabited by other Jewish families, but their new neighbors had also attained a higher social and economic standing, having followed the same financial, social, religious, and geographical itinerary. It appears that even if there were no other Jewish families in the neighborhood, a Jewish legacy followed the assimilated Jewish figures of France, even in Paris where anonymity and disappearance of religious practices facilitated blending into the surrounding society. Marcel Proust and others of Jewish or mixed Jewish and Catholic, Protestant, even Atheist origins found themselves in this same position. Having left the “ghetto” and having reached a point of practically seamless integration, there was always someone to point out their Jewishness and question the authenticity of their French identity.

Proust and the Jewish Collectors:

Jewish families throughout Paris experienced an evolution identical to that of Marcel Proust’s maternal ancestors and, while there are many examples, the Ephrussi and Camondo families are particularly explanatory. While the story of the Camondo family is told by Pierre Assouline in *Le Dernier des Camondo*, that of the Ephrussi family is told in Edmund de Wall’s *The Hare with Amber Eyes*. The Camondo family came to Paris towards the end of the Second Empire via Spain, Italy, Turkey and two different empires, the Ottoman and the Austrian. In 1869, the two grandsons of Abraham Salomon de Camondo, Abraham and

Nissim, moved their bank and merchant trading business from Istanbul to Paris, bringing the whole family along, including the bank's most important figure, "le noble vieillard" Abraham Salomon, at the advanced age of eighty-nine (Assouline 96). Although a generation was skipped with Abraham Salomon's son, Raphaël Salomon, who did not have the banking gene and who also died at the age of fifty-six of a heart attack, the generational evolution, as seen in Proust's family, is still present. Abraham and Nissim de Camondo continued to grow the family's wealth from the bank's new headquarters in Paris, on the rue de Monceau, in the heart of the Pereire's luxurious neighborhood. Abraham's son, Isaac, and Nissim's son, Moïse, were however no longer interested in participating in the world of banking and continuing the ancient family business of merchant trading. Like Jeanne Weil and her son, Marcel Proust, Isaac and Moïse were far more captivated by the artistic world of Paris, especially music and the collection of contemporary and eighteenth-century pieces of art. When Abraham and Nissim passed away, the generation that had immigrated to Paris, the last generation gifted in business, there was little chance for the family business, "1889 fut une année noire pour la famille... Coup sur coup, à quelques mois d'intervalle, ses deux chefs disparaissaient. Nissim d'abord, emporté à cinquante-neuf ans par une pneumonie. Puis Abraham Bohor, décédé à soixante ans des suites d'une fluxion de poitrine... Désormais, il ne restait plus que deux Camondo pour assurer la relève dans les affaires, et la pérennité du nom. Deux, c'est peu. Surtout quand l'un n'avait pas l'intention de fonder une famille, et que l'autre ne se voyait pas mourir banquier" (Assouline 140). The Camondo cousins remaining in 1889 fall into the category of the generation that traded Jewish family tradition for French culture. Both Isaac and Moïse de Camondo began to distance themselves from their family history as Sephardi Ottoman Jews by collecting art and furniture, beginning with the popular trend of *chinoiseries* and *japanaiseries*, and continuing with impressionism and the eighteenth century. Becoming avid collectors, Isaac and Moïse de Camondo filled their homes luxurious homes on the rue Glück and the rue de Monceau, respectively, with modern and eighteenth-century masterpieces.

For Isaac, his passion for art began early: “Le virus de la collection l’avait atteint assez tôt. Dès 1874, on le voyait réunir des œuvres d’art asiatique. Il ne tarda pas à en élargir le spectre puisque six ans après il procédait à son premier achat d’importance : la fameuse pendule des Trois Grâces, chef-d’œuvre en marbre blanc de Falconet... on aurait dit qu’il avait décidé de tout collectionner à condition que ce fût à chaque fois ce qu’il y avait de mieux. Rien de secondaire, rien de second ordre, qu’il s’agisse du XVIII^e siècle, des estampes japonaises, des impressionnistes, du Moyen Âge ou de la Renaissance” (Assouline 143). Isaac’s collection became so extensive and the pieces of such superior quality that the Musée du Louvre accepted certain items into the museum’s own collection, “Quelques années avant que le siècle ne s’achevât, Isaac de Camondo souhaita, à l’instar de la marquise Arconati-Visconti, que certains de ses objets entrassent au Louvre. De son vivant. La réception de ce royal cadeau fut l’occasion de vérifier son goût de collectionneur: bas-relief de marbre provenant d’un retable du XV^e siècle, saint moine en bronze espagnol du XVII^e siècle, buste de Saint-Trond en bois de chêne flamand du XVI^e, Saint-Georges s’apprêtant à percer le dragon de sa lance en bois peint et doré du XV^e, crucifixion sur un bas-relief en bronze attribué à Donatello... Dans cette étourdissante réunion, le conservateur d’un Département japonais encore balbutiant eut même le choc de découvrir des estampes Sha-Rakou représentant des têtes d’acteurs fardés et grimés, série que jusqu’alors nul n’avait réussi à colliger avec des épreuves de cette qualité. Même si on y devinait les conseils avisés de l’expert Manzi, cet exceptionnel cabinet portait désormais la signature de M. de Camondo et c’est cela qui passerait à la postérité” (Assouline 143). Bequeathing parts of his collection to the Louvre did not however render society more accepting of what Paris considered an Oriental Jew adopting airs of a prince. In fact, it only sharpened the tongs of jealous Parisians who found fault no matter how impeccable Isaac’s taste, “Ambroise Vollard, qui l’avait convié dans sa fameuse cave pour y partager un cari de poulet avec ses peintres, notait qu’Isaac avait cru devoir s’intéresser ‘aussi’ aux manifestations de l’art. On n’était pas plus méprisant. De même, le marchand estimait-il que son client avait usé pour la peinture du flair qui lui avait si bien réussi dans la finance. Qu’il achetait avec ses oreilles plutôt qu’avec ses yeux. Et qu’après tout, s’il

défendait les impressionnistes, ce n'était point par dilection pour l'avant-garde mais pour ne pas passer pour un arriéré... on aurait pu dire de lui ce qu'on disait d'autres mécènes cosmopolites, à savoir qu'ils s'enrichissaient le patrimoine de leurs pays d'adoption afin de payer leur ticket d'entrée dans cette civilisation qui n'était pas la leur. Pour les mécènes juifs notamment, c'était s'acquitter d'une taxe pour se faire accepter. Comme une réponse de seigneur à l'antisémitisme qui s'épanouissait sous la plume des meilleurs auteurs, ou dans la conversation des plus grands artistes" (Assouline 145-146). Fortunately, these cutting remarks of Ambroise Vollard, just an example of what many were saying at the time, did not diminish Isaac's enthusiasm for the arts.

Isaac's involvement in the arts only multiplied with time. His activities were far from limited to collecting, stretching far into the realms of patronage and funding for institutions involved in promotion and preservation, "Souper en habit au Café Anglais, boulevard des Italiens, avec des collectionneurs nécessaires. Prendre une part active dans la création de la Société des amis du musée du Louvre afin de conserver en France les œuvres du patrimoine. Subventionner le tout nouveau Salon de la Société nationale des Beaux-Arts. Supporter avec humour les saillies antisémites de Degas pour ne pas perdre son amitié" (Assouline 144-145). Isaac was so involved in so many aspects of the art world that he appeared everywhere, even Marcel Proust did not succeed in meeting with this famed, or infamous to some, patron of the arts, "À la charnière des deux siècles sa silhouette devint familière dans tous les lieux où l'art se négociait. On le vit avec Cernuschi et Guimet fréquenter les japonistes de la galerie Samuel Bing. Suivre les peintres français qui s'en inspiraient. S'enthousiasmer pour Cézanne. Acheter au prix record de 6 200 francs *Maison du pendu* à la vente Chocquet quand une autre de ses toiles de la même importance était partie pour 200 francs cinq ans avant la vente Tanguy. Faire des folies raisonnables à la vente Goncourt pour des esquisses de Watteau et des folies déraisonnables pour *Le Masque* de La Tour, pastel criblé de taches de rouilles auxquels les experts ne donnaient que dix ans... Se délester de 30 000 francs pour acquérir son *Défilé*. Acheter à Monet quatre *Cathédrales de Rouen* d'un coup. Ne pas rechigner chaque fois que le marchand Paul Durand-Ruel lui faisait

payer le prix fort nonobstant leur vieille amitié... Donner de nombreux coups de menton à la vente du baron Double. Rater plusieurs rendez-vous avec Marcel Proust pour finalement ne jamais le voir parce que l'un ne recevait que le matin et l'autre ne visitait que le soir" (Assouline 144-145). Isaac was at the center of Parisian high society, yet he was never really accepted, despite his enthusiasm, demonstrated exponentially, for French culture. In fact, Isaac de Camondo had so much appreciation for French art that he left the rest of his collection to the Louvre upon his death in 1911.

Moïse de Camondo, Isaac's cousin, similarly donated his collection to the French state at the time of his death in 1935, although Moïse's collection never left the home that he had created to house it at 63 rue de Monceau. After inheriting the family home following his mother's passing in 1910, Moïse de Camondo made a bold and potentially pretentious decision to raze it and put in its place a faultlessly faithful copy of Jacques Ange Gabriel's Château du Petit Trianon at Versailles. While Isaac had left his family home nearby at 61 rue de Monceau, selling it in 1893 to Gaston Menier, inheritor of the Menier Chocolate dynasty, preferring the proximity of the apartments in a building on the rue Glück for their view of the Opéra-Garnier, Moïse remained in the neighborhood of the plaine Monceau and left a permanent mark. The family home of Nissim de Camondo and his wife, Élise Fernandez, had only just been built in 1864 at the height of the Pereire brothers' promotion of this modern and luxurious corner of the city. Mentioned in the previous chapter, the home that Nissim and Élise purchased with encouragement of Emile and Isaac Pereire in 1872 was that of a certain monsieur Violet, "entrepreneur des travaux publics", made famous by Zola that very same year with the publication of *La Curée* (Assouline 22-23). Moïse took a very large risk in demolishing the structure that had come to be known as the *Hôtel Saccard* in the Parisian literary world. Not only was Moïse destroying a famous façade and a literary relic, he was also an Ottoman Jew recreating an *Ancien Régime* palace as his personal home in Paris of the Belle Époque. Moïse risked a lot, but the result was also a triumphant success. Moïse's personal Petit Trianon was testament to his willingness to put everything on the line to prove his appreciation, maybe even obsession, for the culture and history of his adopted country.

Moïse did not just choose any time period of French history; he chose the eighteenth, “Il était frappé d’un mal délicieux, une affection annonciatrice de toutes les voluptés esthétiques. On appelait cela le syndrome du XVIII^e. Ce jour-là, le siècle des Lumières fit une victime de choix, une des rares capables de lui rendre hommage à sa mesure” (Assouline 27-28). This so-called sickness, “mal délicieux”, with which Moïse was infected was also afflicting the high society of the second half of nineteenth-century Paris. Everyone became obsessed with the eighteenth-century style of the Ancien Régime and it was in large part due to the Goncourt brothers, “Dans le Paris fin de siècle, ils furent indéniablement les plus convaincants ambassadeurs de l’esprit du XVIII^e... En un temps où l’on ne se pressait pas pour le réhabiliter, Jules et Edmond firent les brillants intercesseurs. Un jour, grâce à eux, il apparut à nouveau évident que le XVIII^e était le décor naturel de la grande société” (Assouline 28). Anyone in Paris who had the resources began collecting art, furniture, and basically anything that came from the most decadent period in French history as defined by Louis XIV, XV, and XVI, the last bearers of the Ancien Régime, “de grands collectionneurs tels que le maître de forges Eugène Schneider, le banquier Achille Seillière, le duc de Morny, les Rothschild ou les Pereire allaient se consacrer de plus en plus à ce que l’art français du XVIII^e siècle avait laissé de mieux” (Assouline 28). While Jules and Edmond de Goncourt had decreed the eighteenth century to be the natural environment for the Parisian high society of the nineteenth, they were not the first to collect pieces from that period. The baron Double had already begun his collection of eighteenth-century works of art in the form of paintings, tapestries, furniture, sculptures, vases, jewelry, dining service, and basically anything representative of the pre-Revolution aristocracy. The sale of his estate in 1881 attests to the baron Léopold Double’s interest in collecting rare pieces of the French past as early as the 1830s, “Il y a trente ans, un jeune officier d’artillerie s’amusait déjà à réunir une collection de meubles et d’objets d’art historiques, c’est-à-dire ayant appartenu à des personnages célèbres des dix-septième et dix-huitième siècles, et se recommandant, de la sorte, de la tradition de leur origine et de leur provenance, non moins que par le mérite de leur exécution artistique, par leur beauté, leur rareté et leur valeur intrinsèque” (Lacroix 6). While Isaac de Comando was

present at the sale of the baron Double's collection, "Donner de nombreux coups de menton à la vente du baron Double", indicating his active participation in purchasing items of the collection, there is no record of his cousin's presence (Assouline 145). Nevertheless, Moïse's presence at the sale of the baron Double's collection is inconsequential since his own collection would soon attest to his participation in the whole frenzy of the race to recreate the eighteenth century in Paris of the nineteenth.

Before even dreaming of recreating Versailles along the parc Monceau, Moïse had to accumulate the collection that his personal Petit Trianon would later accommodate. It is said that he first began to collect after seeing the inside of the Rothschild home at 45-47 rue de Monceau, "Il n'avait pas à chercher trop loin ses modèles. Dans la même rue, sur le même trottoir, à quelques dizaines de mètres de l'hôtel familial, décoration intérieure de l'hôtel Rothschild était un somptueux témoignage de ce que le XVIII^e français avait produit de plus beau" (Assouline 30). There was something more than envy of the interior decorations of the Rothschilds that drew him to the eighteenth century *art de vivre*. "Moïse paraissait secrètement attiré par toute traduction esthétique de cette époque. À croire qu'il était entré dans le champ magnétique des Lumières pour n'en plus jamais sortir" (Assouline 30). The Rothschild home was just another Pereire building like so many others in the neighborhood and Adolphe de Rothschild purchased it from Isaac Pereire in 1868. For Moïse, however, a typically Second Empire Pereire construction was not sufficiently eighteenth-century. When he began collecting, he must have come to the conclusion that it was not just the collection that mattered, but the surroundings in which the collection was located mattered just much, maybe even more. It was then that Moïse decided to fully live in the eighteenth century, "Il entendait faire de cet extraordinaire univers de l'Ancien Régime le décor ordinaire de sa vie quotidienne", and it was only logical to recreate the home in which the extraordinary pieces of his growing collection had once lived (Assouline 31). But, Moïse could not just recreate any eighteenth-century home; he required a royal home to do justice to the princely appearance and origins of his collection. This endeavor of an Ottoman Jew recreating Versailles in Paris must have appeared extraordinarily audacious at the time, "À sa manière, il

rétablissait la monarchie sans s'embarrasser de prudences politiques. Comme si, de très longue date, il avait eu partie liée avec l'aristocratie orléaniste ou légitimiste. Ainsi, il se réinventait un royaume intérieur, introduisant les fantômes de Louis XV et de Louis XVI entre ceux des patriarches de des sultans. Désormais, dans son monde, le château de Versailles s'inscrivait naturellement entre la Judée-Samarie des premiers temps et l'empire de la Sublime Porte" (Assouline 31). Unlike his cousin, Isaac, who was haunted by the judgment of the Parisian public, Moïse was unperturbed by the opinions of Parisians and continued on his quest to recreate the eighteenth century no matter what was said or by whom.

Society, however, especially the remaining members of the old aristocracy of the Left Bank, did have an opinion. While no one specific person had the authority to dictate who could live or act as a noble, since the aristocracy's power to control class distinction was eradicated in the 1789 Revolution, the remaining aristocracy was outraged all the same by the audacity of an Ottoman Jew decorating his home with the art and furniture of their fallen peers and ancestors, "Il y avait tout de même une certaine prétention, quand on était né quelque part du côté du Bosphore, à vouloir vivre à Paris dans un univers entièrement façonné aux couleurs de l'Ancien Régime. C'était s'approprier en bloc et par la banque ce que des Noailles ou des Rohan avaient mis des siècles à constituer par la seule vertu de la transmission. Du moins est-ce ainsi que les gens du noble faubourg l'entendaient. Mal... à leurs yeux, rien n'était plus symbolique que de retrouver dans les murs d'un Camondo le bureau à cylindre, signé Jean-François Œben, qu'ils avaient vu autrefois chez le conte de Castellane" (Assouline 31-32). The disapproval of the disgruntled aristocracy had nevertheless never stopped any other successful non-aristocratic, non-Catholic businessman in Paris from living in what society saw as usurped luxury and privilege, and it had not stopped wealthy and influential Jewish figures from doing the same. Unaware of the adverse opinion of the old aristocracy, or in spite of it, Moïse was determined to realize his dream of living in the eighteenth century surrounded by the art, furniture, and everyday objects of that precious era of French history. By the time he inherited his family home, he had amassed a sizeable collection, to the point that creating a venue in which to house it had become necessary.

When choosing the architect for the project, Moïse was again unperturbed by the judgment of the Parisian public and instead of choosing an architect in vogue with the rest of high society, he chose one that was equally as passionate as his patron for all that the eighteenth century had produced, “Tout à son idée de replacer dans son élément un certain art de vivre hérité d’un autre temps, il trouva en René Sergent un dixhuitièmiste aussi fervent qui lui” (Assouline 34). Working together, the architect well aware of desires of client, “L’architecte, le tout premier, savait que son client attendait de lui qu’il réalisât une œuvre d’art pour y accueillir des œuvres d’art, qu’il reconstituât une belle demeure aristocratique du XVIII^e siècle et qu’une petite famille moderne pût y vivre avec sa domesticité”, Moïse and René Sergent designed and built a home that was a perfect representation the eighteenth-century neoclassical style, “La conception d’ensemble était déjà classique. Dans la tradition de l’hôtel particulier parisien, résidence aristocratique par excellence, celui-ci devait surgir entre cour et jardin, quitte à ce que le monument paraisse s’y épanouir telle une sculpture, dans un splendide isolement. Les deux bâtiments avaient été édifiés selon la même échelle. La façade sur cour se voulait une fidèle réplique de l’illustre modèle, en dépit des inévitables licences prises par l’architecte, notamment l’agrandissement du plan... La façade sur parc reflétait une volonté de traduction libre, comme en témoignait le changement d’axe par rapport à l’entrée principale” (Assouline 38). The interior, however, was uniquely devised for the collection that Moïse had so meticulously accumulated over the thirty years, “La distribution des salons, l’agencement des pièces, l’organisation des volumes obéissaient à un autre impératif: la mise en valeur de la collection... L’architecture intérieure devait s’adapter aux exigences du mobilier, la hauteur des fenêtres plier aux caprices des boiseries et non le contraire” (Assouline 39) Moïse clearly favored furniture over all other forms of art and the amount of masterpieces in his collection is staggering, so large and so filled with exquisite pieces, that even the most exacting experts would not remark a flaw, “Les experts les plus avisés, ceux-là même qui ne parlaient de perfection en art qu’avec une infinie prudence, devaient en rester le souffle coupé. Car il y avait là la mesure d’une vraie collection, conçue comme telle par un seul homme en un laps de temps relativement bref” (Assouline 39).

Despite his impeccable taste, Moïse could not escape the condemnation of the Parisian high society. Just as Isaac was always an Ottoman Jew, so was Moïse, and this quality made sure that the two cousins were never truly accepted amongst their aristocratic French peers, despite having been granted a title of nobility three generations earlier by Victor-Emanuelle II, king of Italy. The recreation of the Petit Trianon palace in Paris and the aristocratic collection of furniture once belonging to a variety of noble families appeared both excessive and embarrassing for the individual who displayed so overtly his desire to be accepted, as if inhabiting Versailles with the furniture of the fallen aristocracy would have proven him worthy to be welcomed into the fold of the ancient aristocratic elite, “Il y avait tout de même une certaine prétention, quand on était né quelque part du côté du Bosphore, à vouloir vivre à Paris dans un univers entièrement façonné aux couleurs de l’Ancien Régime. C’était s’approprier en bloc et par la banque ce que des Noailles ou des Rohan avaient mis des siècles à constituer par la seule vertu de la transmission. Du moins est-ce ainsi que les gens du noble faubourg l’entendaient. Mal... à leurs yeux, rien n’était plus symbolique que de retrouver dans les murs d’un Camondo le bureau à cylindre, signé Jean-François Eben, qu’ils avaient vu autrefois chez le conte de Castellane” (Assouline 31-32). Moïse must have believed that he was simply following the tradition of social success, “Dans le milieu que fréquentait Moïse, on faisait volontiers des folies pour tout ce qui relevait de l’étiquette, de l’image ou de la représentation. C’était la consécration d’une réussite sociale. On pouvait y voir l’expression la plus spectaculaire d’une soif de reconnaissance de l’aristocratie de fortune par l’aristocratie de naissance. L’hôtel parisien en était le symbole, avant même d’autres signes plus campagnards tels que le château ou les chasses” (Assouline 35). Nearly every other individual of any religious or ethnic background who had succeeded in Paris purchased the symbolic *hôtel particulier*, thereby announcing his arrival amongst the elite. Few, however, rebuilt Versailles in the middle of Paris. For many, purchasing an existing home, albeit lavish and extravagant, sufficed. When the Rothschilds made themselves a target for ridicule with their Château de Ferrières, inaugurated in 1862 with the royal visit of Napoléon III, many heeded the lesson and exercised restraint, but Moïse did not.

This Ottoman Jew's extravagance might have been forgiven as a profound appreciation for French history and culture, but Moïse had exposed himself, put his deepest desires on display, "Cependant, on sentait une telle détermination derrière son projet, on découvrait un tel engagement personnel, que sa volonté de prouver en devenait presque gênante. Il en faisait trop pour que son rêve de monument ne fût qu'un hommage au génie français" (Assouline 36). The high society of the Belle Époque no longer suffered such exhibition of ostentation from an Ottoman Jew and it was impossible for Moïse to obtain the acceptance of the French public, "S'il s'était agi de la maison du duc de Lévis-Mirepoix, on aurait dit qu'il a rassemblé là ce que le siècle des Lumières avait de mieux. Mais de Moïse de Camondo, on dit plus volontiers qu'il la fait 'pour' la France. Pour le rayonnement français, pour la plus grande gloire du génie français... À croire que par son geste, Camondo voulait rappeler la France au devoir de mémoire et lui imposer le culte de son passé délaissé" (Assouline). Instead of coming across as a true expression of his adoption of French culture and history as his own, the personal Petit Trianon along the parc Monceau filled with the furniture of an almost extinct pedigree, was received more as a challenge, "Étrange, tout de même, cette fixation sur l'authenticité de ce qui n'en demeurerait pas moins une copie. C'est que Moïse voulait être inattaquable. Critiquer son œuvre édifiée *ad majorem Franciae gloriam* revenait à mettre en doute sa sincérité dans la dévotion à la civilisation des Lumières. Et l'on sait bien, en toutes choses, l'intransigeance des nouveaux convertis. Celui-ci avait certainement idéalisé la France des Lumières" (Assouline 38). Moïse was also a latecomer in expressing his passion for the eighteenth century, building his own Petit Trianon after the turn of the century and just before the Great War. The heyday of the elite Jews of Paris had already eclipsed with the Dreyfus affair in 1894, making sure that these princes of Israel were no longer welcome in the salons and at the tables of the last remaining traces of the old aristocracy.

Before coming to Paris, the Camondo family had earned the epithet of "les Rothschild de l'Orient", but their arrival and stay in the French capital found them in much less in a position to be considered equal to the Rothschilds. It is not that they were no longer extraordinarily wealthy and involved in many facets of

international banking, trading, and philanthropy, but their numbers had dwindled and those who remained after the deaths of Abraham and Nissim in 1889 were no longer interested in banking and trading, although they did continue philanthropic activities. Unlike the Rothschild family, the Camondo clan was small and did not “croyez et multipliez” as commanded in Genesis. The ten children and tenfold grandchildren of Mayer Amschel Rothschild were spread across Europe and reproduced prolifically, creating a remarkably solid and international foundation for the family bank. To the contrary, the Camondo family was in a precarious situation by the end of the nineteenth century with only two heirs who were more interested in the arts and collecting eighteenth-century pieces than in keeping the Camondo banking house afloat. While Isaac obstinately refused to marry, although he did have two illegitimate children with the dancer, Mathilde Salle, Moïse married Irène Cahen d’Anvers. The mother of the betrothed, Louise Cahen d’Anvers, was a Morpugo of Trieste with potential ancestral connections with Istanbul. The Morpugo and Camondo families were both part of the group that called themselves *Franco*, the elite Sephardi community of the Ottoman Empire, “Par ce mariage, Moïse de Camondo s’allie à une famille de financiers juifs avec laquelle son père et son oncle ont été souvent en relations d’affaires. Ils se sont installés en France une vingtaine d’années avant l’arrivée des Camondo” (Seni, Le Tarnac 201). Married in 1891, Irène and Moïse were together for only ten years, long enough to produce two heirs, but not long enough to reinvigorate the banking traditions of the Camondo family through new connections with the Cahen d’Anvers. Moïse and Irène divorced in 1901 following Irène’s affair with the man that Moïse had hired to manage their horse stables. Moïse must not have been warned that the Cahen d’Anvers women had a reputation of frequenting men other than their husbands. Louise Cahen d’Anvers, Irène’s mother, maintained a long affair with Charles Ephrussi, an heir of the Jewish banking family of Odessa that did indeed resemble the Rothschilds.

Beginning with Charles Joachim Ephrussi and Belle Levensohn in Ukraine, Berdichev, Brody, and then Odessa, two sons set out for two different European financial capitals. In the 1860s, Leon Ephrussi went to Paris and Ignace von Ephrussi went to Vienna, each bringing along his children. Jules, Ignace, Charles, and

Betty went with Leon while Stefan, Anna, and Viktor went with Ignace. Charles Joachim Ephrussi, the patriarch, had married Henriette Halperson after the death of his first wife, Belle, in 1841. Four more children came of this marriage, Michel, Maurice, Thérèse, and Marie, and they followed Leon to Paris. Joachim's Parisian grandsons of his first marriage, Jules, Ignace, and Charles, all lived together with their widowed mother on the rue de Monceau, "It is a huge house, but the three brothers must have met every day on those black-and-gold winding stairs, or heard each other as the noise of the carriage being readied in the courtyard echoed from the glazed canopy. Or encountered friends going past their door on the way up to an apartment above. They must have developed a way of not seeing each other, too: to live so close to your family takes some doing... They must have got on well. Perhaps they had no choice in the matter. Paris was work, after all... The Hôtel Ephrussi was a family house, but it was also the Parisian headquarters of a family in its ascendancy" (Waal 23). Just as the Camondo family chose the Plaine Monceau for their arrival in Paris, so did the Ephrussi family. There is one major difference however, the Ephrussi family home would remain forever inconspicuous, "Number 81... is a house that cannily disappears into its neighbours: there are other houses that are grander, some are plainer, but few are more discreet", while the Camondo home at number 63 morphed into a palace fit for Versailles (Waal 22).

This neighborhood of the Plaine Monceau had after all become the new center of Jewish money when the Pereires developed the land surrounding the duc de Chartres' whimsical park. The Plaine Monceau was thus "an appropriate landscape for the newly arrived Jewish families from Russia and the Levant. These streets became a virtual colony, a complex of inter-marriage, obligation and religious sympathy" (Waal 27). With the Camondo family at three different addresses on the rue de Monceau, numbers 60, 61, and 63, the Ephrussi family were in good Jewish company, "The banker Henri Cernuschi... had come to Paris from Italy and lived in chilly magnificence with his Japanese treasures on the edge of the park. At number 55 is the Hôtel Cattai, home to a family of Jewish bankers from Egypt. At number 43 is the palace of Adolphe de Rothschild, acquired from Eugène Pereire and rebuilt with a glass-roofed exhibition room for his

Renaissance art collection” (Waal 28). This corner of Paris was the premier destination for the elite Jews of Europe and, while the elder generations continued the family affairs after arriving, the beauty, art, society, and whole way of life that the romantic parc Monceau had come to represent swept up the younger generations, carrying them far from the clichéd world of Jewish banking and trading. Just as Isaac and Moïse de Camondo drifted away from the financial activities of their ancestors towards the high society culture of art, music, and collection of modern and historical pieces, Charles Ephrussi, the third and youngest son of Leon, also demonstrated no proclivity for the family business. Edmund de Waal, whose grandmother, Elizabeth, was the granddaughter of Ignace, the founder of the Vienna branch of the family, reflects on the lack of interest that Charles Ephrussi demonstrated for the family company, “I suspect that the family know this boy is not cut out for the life of the Bourse. His uncles Michel and Maurice have moved to Paris: perhaps there were enough sons for the offices of Ephrussi et Cie at 45 rue de l’Arcade not to miss this pleasant bookish one, with his habit of withdrawing when money comes up and that aptitude for losing himself in conversation” (Waal 32). Charles Ephrussi fits perfectly into the model of the generational evolution in Jewish families. Charles Joachim, the first generation, began the family company, his sons of both his first and second marriages, Leon, Ignace, Michel, and Maurice, the second generation, continued to grow the fortune of the company expanding beyond the city of origin, and his grandchildren, of which Charles is the best example, took advantage of the family’s accumulated wealth to dive headfirst into the world of the *art de vivre* that characterized the *fin de siècle* Parisian atmosphere.

Similar to Isaac de Camondo who left the rue de Monceau permanently for the rue Glück, Charles eventually left the neighborhood of the Plaine Monceau. Even Moïse de Camondo, who seemed forever drawn to the aristocratic history of the place that had been the Parisian estate of the Orléans branch of the royal family, had left the family compound and the “haute colonie israélite” of the Plaine Monceau for several years, living at 9 rue Hamelin in the sixteenth arrondissement. Although it is not known when exactly he began living at this address and when he returned to 63 rue de Monceau, it is certain that it was

first as a bachelor, then as a newly-wed with his wife, Irène, and their two children, Nissim and Béatrice, arriving in quick succession after their wedding, and then finally with his children alone when his wife, Irène, left with her paramour, Charles Sanpieri, in 1896. The rue Hamelin was a modern street, only opened in 1864, with much less aristocratic history than the Plaine Monceau (Hillairet 621). Proust lived on this street from 1919 to 1922, spending the last three years of his life at 44 rue Hamelin (Hillairet 221). The particularly western location of this street reaffirms the western movement of the Jewish population, following the common trend of the wealthy class moving west. The Ephrussi siblings also moved west; Charles and his brother moved to avenue Iéna in 1891, “Number 11 is larger than the Hôtel Ephrussi on the rue de Monceau... This new area is even grander than the rue de Monceau... The bachelor brothers’ house was 300 yards down the hill from the grandeur of Jules and Fanny’s mansion, with its emblems of ears of corn above the windows and their entwined initials over the huge gateway into the courtyard. Louise’s [Charles’ mistress] palace was directly across the road in the rue de Bassano” (Waal 97). Although the building in which Charels and his brother lived was destroyed and rebuilt in 1920, the home of Jules and Fanny at 2 place des Etats-Unis, at the corner of the avenue Iéna, still stands. This part of Paris became a destination for the collections of those that lived there. When Charles outgrew his Asian art phase, he was in the ideal location to donate to the National museum of Asian arts, just down the street at 6 place d’Iéna, “The area is on the hill to the north of the Champ de Mars, where the Eiffel Tower had just been erected. It was the place to be: it was talked of as the ‘hill of arts’ ” (Waal 97). While the appellation of this area of Paris as the *colline des arts* at the turn of the century appears unfounded, the *Conseil de la création artistique* did propose in 2009 the creation of a network of museums known as the *colline des musées* around the Chaillot neighborhood. This area of Paris is populated by various museums including the musée Galliera, the Cité de l’architecture et du patrimoine, the musée d’Art moderne de la ville de Paris, and others. Becoming stately and elegant during the Belle Époque, it was the next destination for the upper crust of Parisian society, replacing the Plaine Monceau as the most impressive area to inhabit. In leaving the Plaine Monceau, the Ephrussi family

was making a statement, disassociating themselves with the image of Jewish nouveaux riches that the parc Monceau had come to represent. Their choice in neighborhood confirms the movement of wealth to the west in conjunction with the force of assimilation. With each generation, the Jews of Paris became more prosperous, more modern in their *mode de vie*, more Parisian and their movement to the more and more western climbs of the city stands as solid evidence.

Before moving to the avenue Iéna, Charles Ephrussi was collecting *chinoiseries* and *japoniseries*—via Italian Renaissance art following a trip to Italy—that had become fashionable in the first decade following the close of the Second Empire. Also following his travels to Italy and with time and exposure to the culture of art in Paris, Charles becomes more and more involved in art beyond just collecting. In fact, he began writing for the *Gazette des beaux-arts* and later wrote an artistic study, *Albert Dürer et ses dessins*. His role at the Gazette and his general fascination with the arts brought him into contact with the impressionists. He later published the letters of his friend and previous secretary, Jules Laforgue for *La Revue Blanche*, to whom he had introduced impressionism, “Le 14 juillet 1881, Laforgue devient le secrétaire de l’érudit et collectionneur d’art Charles Ephrussi, ami de Manet et Renoir, collaborateur et futur propriétaire (1885) puis directeur (1894) de la *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, la revue d’art la plus renommée de l’époque. Cette rencontre confirme les goûts de Laforgue, mais les oriente différemment, ou plutôt les précise: c’est chez Ephrussi qu’il découvre les Impressionnistes et les ‘modernes’ qui sont encore controversés. Dans une lettre souvent citée, il énumère lyriquement les peintres dont il a pu voir les œuvres dans la chambre de son patron: Pissarro, Sislet, Monet, Renoir, Berthe Morisot, Mary Cassatt, Degas, Manet, mais aussi Gustave Moreau” (Dottin 12). Charles Ephrussi, privileged heir of a Jewish banking dynasty, thus proved himself capable of integrating the Parisian high society, not just because he has the financial funds to do so, but because he was truly fascinated by the intellectual aspect of the arts. Charles did not just collect art for the sake of accumulating and displaying an extensive collection; he did so for the intellectual curiosity he found in artistic expression. He was very serious about art, coming across almost a bit tedious and overly pedantic, “Ephrussi est un

collectionneur d'impressionnistes, mais un critique d'art aux jugements plutôt conventionnels: érudit tourné vers le passé... Laforge admire sa puissance de travail, son sérieux, ses connaissances... Le critique d'art, pour Ephrussi, doit être 'sans phrase, sans remplissage, concise et serré, appuyé sur le triple autorité d'un coup d'œil exercé, d'une société profonde, d'une mémoire inépuisable': programme austère, sans fantaisie ni modernité excessives" (Dottin 16-17). Despite his somewhat snobbish pretensions when it came to his work as an art critic, Charles Ephrussi was innovative and avant-garde when it came to the work of the impressionists that he reviewed and supported in the *Gazette*. As a friend of and advocate for many of the impressionist painters of the times, Charles also appeared in their work, "il est l'ami de Renoir qui le peint dans *Le Déjeuner des Canotiers*" (Dottin 16).

Charles found his place in Paris as an avid art aficionado. He was very social and frequented several salons across the city. After moving to the avenue Iéna, a party that he hosted with his brother was commented in the rubric *Mondanités* of the newspaper, *Le Gaulois*, "Très brillant *five o'clock*, hier, chez MM. Charles et Ignace Ephrussi, en l'honneur de la princesse Mathilde. A cinq heures, Son Altesse Impériale, accompagnée de la baronne de Galbois est arrivée dans les splendides salons de l'avenue d'Iéna, où plus de deux cents personnes, le dessus du panier du grand monde parisien et étranger, se trouvaient réunies... Très appréciés les élégants appartements, notamment le grand salon Louis XVI, où l'on admire la tête du roi Midas, une merveille de Lucca della Robbia, et la chambre de L. Charles Ephrussi plus pur Empire. La réception a été très animée, et on a entendu un très beau programme musical exécuté par les tziganes" (*Gaulois* 2). However, Charles was not just exceptional in the social department, he also created a promising career for himself in the art world, with resources from his wealthy family making collecting and patronage possible and relatively easy. Furthermore, there was less suspicion surrounding Charles' collection since Impressionist paintings had never been the property of an eclipsed aristocracy, were completely modern, and little appreciated by what was left of the old nobility. Although the Camondo cousins did most likely collect art and furniture for their love and appreciation of beautiful things, the Parisian public interpreted

their collections as excessive and unwarranted and particularly indicative in bad taste, appearing. Parisians harbored resentment for the audacity of Ottoman Jews ability and insistence to acquire through the bank that which aristocratic families had once passed down over several generations. Charles Ephrussi, however, appeared to be collecting with a genuine admiration of art and his preference for Impressionist paintings did not concern the remaining aristocracy who found this type of art to be inconsequential. The Camondo cousins, Isaac and Moïse, risked stepping on the toes of the old aristocracy when they began to accumulate the furniture that had once belonged to fallen noble families.

In terms of assimilation, Charles was more adept than Isaac and Moïse. The Camondo cousins continued to be seen as entirely foreign, “Des Levantins, des Ottomans un peu à part, des gens de l’Est lointain, des orientaux fous d’Occident. Sûrement des juifs, mais certainement pas des italiens. Vingt ans après leur installation en France, dix ans avant la fin du siècle, c’est encore que les Camondo étaient perçus. Il ne leur suffisait pas d’habiter dans le VIII^e arrondissement pour modifier le regard que les autres posaient sur eux. Un chroniqueur mondain s’en était fait l’écho: ‘Nissim I^{er} et Abraham y vécurent comme ils le faisaient devant la Corne d’Or et il arrivait que les promeneurs du parc Monceau les entrevissent dans leur jardin coiffés de leur fez, prenant le frais les soirs d’été’ ” (Assouline 134-135). Charles Ephrussi blended in with the crowd, although the top hat that he wears in Renoir’s painting, *Le Déjeuner des canotiers*, did set him apart as Proust’s aristocratic character, the duc de Guermantes, so pointedly remarks, “Ce que je peux vous dire, c’est que ce monsieur est pour M. Elstir une espèce de Mécène qui l’a lancé, et l’a souvent tiré d’embarras en lui commandant des tableaux. Par reconnaissance—si vous appelez cela de la reconnaissance, ça dépend des goûts—il l’a peint dans cet endroit-là où avec son air endimanché il fait un assez drôle d’effet. Ça peut être un pontife très calé, mais il ignore évidemment dans quelles circonstances on met un chapeau haut de forme. Avec le sien, au milieu de toutes ces filles en cheveux, il a l’air d’un petit notaire de province en goguette” (Proust 243-244). But, Charles closeness to the impressionists made him an easy target for anti-Semitism when these French artists began to show their true colors.

Renoir, in particular, turned out to have strong anti-Semitic sentiments waiting to surface, which made his otherwise excellent relationship with Charles Ephrussi, his patron and advocate, then appear somewhat superficial. When Renoir was in need of work, Charles organized a commission for his mistress, Louise Cahen d'Anvers. Over the summer of 1881, Renoir produced two paintings of Louise's three daughters, the first of Irène, future wife of Moïse de Camondo, and the second of Alice and Elisabeth. These paintings are famous now, easily recognizable by the flowing red hair that the three girls inherited from their mother. Payment for the paintings was however late and lacking in generosity, most likely leading to the abrupt downturn in Charles' relationship with the painter, whom he had taken for a friend. What brought out Renoir's spiteful side was strangely not Louise's stinginess and disregard for punctuality, but Charles' patronage of, and friendship with, painters that the Impressionists loathed. Gustave Moreau, in particular, was accused of attracting Jewish patrons by using lots of gold tones in his art, mythical scenes painted with the colors of precious stones, "And Renoir was absolutely furious. 'Ah that Gustave Moreau, to think he is taken seriously, a painter who never even learnt how to paint a foot... he knew a thing or two. It was clever of him to take in the Jews, to have thought of painting with gold colours... Even Ephrussi fell for it, who I really thought had some sense! I go and call on him one day, and I come face to face with Gustave Moreau! ...It is 'Jew art', Renoir writes, galled to find his patron, the editor of the *Gazette*, with this *goût Rothschild* stuff on his walls, jewelled and mythic, contaminatingly close to his own paintings" (Waal 85). Renoir was not the only one pointing to the golden quality of Moreau's work for which Jewish patrons appeared to have an appreciation, "Charles had bought two paintings by Gustave Moreau. Goncourt described his work... 'C'est curieux, ces aquarelles de Gustave Moreau, ces aquarelles de poète-orfèvre, qui semblent lavées avec le rutillement des trésors des *Mille et une nuits*.' They were rich, highly symbolic, Parnassian paintings of Salomé, Hercules, Sappho, Prometheus. Moreau's subjects are barely clothed, except for a fall of gauze. The landscapes are classical, full of ruined temples, the details exactingly coded" (Waal 84). Charles' relationship with Gustave Moreau was just the beginning of the outburst of anti-Semitic thought that reached far beyond

the art world, also infecting the literary community and the Parisian high society. However, before the Impressionists turned on Charles, he had devoted time, reflection, and money to advance their cause.

When it came to the Impressionists, Charles was something of a pioneer: “Charles was becoming an advocate in print for the living artists he was getting to know... In three years he put together a collection of forty Impressionist works—and bought twenty more for his Bernstein cousins in Berlin. He bought paintings and pastels by Morisot, Cassatt, Degas, Manet, Monet, Sisley, Pissarro and Renoir: Charles created one of the great early collections of Impressionists... Charles was in the vanguard. He needed audacity. The Impressionists had their passionate supporters, but they were assailed in the press and by the Academy as charlatans. His advocacy was significant; he had the gravitas of a prominent critic and editor. He also had straightforward utility as a patron for painters who were struggling... Charles acted as a mahout to other wealthy friends, persuading Madame Straus, giver of a fiercely aesthetic salon, to purchase one of Monet’s *Nymphéas*... But he was much more than this. He was a real interlocutor, a visitor to their studios to see work in progress, to buy a picture from the easel... He and Renoir talked at length about which paintings might be best to send to the salon, Whistler asked him to check on of his pictures for damage... And he was a friend of the artists” (Waal 74-75). Charles’ interest in the Impressionist movement brought him into close contact with the actual artists producing during his lifetime, making him an important source of funding and motivation, encouraging artists personally to complete their work, while also buying their work for more than what they were asking, “Charles bought a picture of some asparagus from Manet, one of his extraordinary small still lifes... It was a bundle of twenty stalks bound in straw. Manet wanted 800 francs for it, a substantial sum, and Charles, thrilled, sent him 1,000. A week later Charles receives a small canvas signed with a simple M in return. It was a single asparagus stalk laid across a table with an accompanying note: ‘This seems to have slipped from the bundle’ ” (Waal 75). The story of the bundle of asparagus became legendary when Proust wrote it into *La Recherche*.

Proust's most famous character, Charles Swann, for whom Charles Ephrussi was one of two models, is the art patron and Elstir plays the role of Manet, "Swann avait le toupet de vouloir nous faire acheter une *Botte d'Asperges*. Elles sont même restées ici quelques jours. Il n'y avait que cela dans le tableau, une botte d'asperges précisément semblables à celles que vous êtes en train d'avalier. Mais moi je me suis refusé à avaler les asperges de M. Elstir. Il en demandait trois cents francs. Trois cents francs une botte d'asperges ! Un louis, voilà ce que ça vaut, même en primeurs" (Proust 244-245). In this passage Proust reveals the difficulty the Impressionists faced, even when supported and encouraged by respected art critics like Charles Ephrussi. Their work was not taken seriously and, when they did find buyers they were refused a just compensation. Proust's duc de Guermantes exposes the opinion of the aristocratic portion of the Parisian society of the Impressionists, "il n'y a pas lieu de se mettre autant de martel en tête pour creuser la peinture de M. Elstir que s'il s'agissait de la Source d'Ingres ou des Enfants d'Édouard de Paul Delaroche. Ce qu'on apprécie là dedans, c'est que c'est finement observé, amusant, parisien, et puis on passe. Il n'y a pas besoin d'être érudit pour regarder ça. Je sais bien que ce sont de simples pochades, mais je ne trouve pas que ce soit assez travaillé" (Proust VIII 244). Proust knew Charles enough for him to swap his fictional Charles Swann for the real Ephrussi in Renoir's painting, as a patron of the arts, and as the one who had admired Manet's asparagus. In Proust's novel, the Guermantes paid the fictional painter, Elstir, a measly three hundred francs when Charles Ephrussi offered Manet the generous sum of one thousand francs.

The Jewish Princes of *La Recherche*:

How did Proust know Charles Ephrussi well enough to weave intricate details of Charles' life into *La Recherche*? Like Proust, Charles was a fixture of the Parisian salons at the turn of the century, especially those with more artistic ambition, "[he] walked, seemingly without effort, into the formidable, fashionable salons of the day... There were many, but the three principal salons were those of Madame Straus, of the Countess Greffulhe, and of a rarefied painter of watercolours of flowers, Madame Madelaine Lemaire... Mme Lemaire's Thursday salon is mentioned in an early essay of the young Marcel Proust. He evokes scents of

lilacs filling her studio and drifting into the rue de Monceau, crowded with the carriages of the beau monde... Proust notices Charles. There is a hubbub and he moves closer through the throng of writers and socialites. Charles is there in a corner talking to a portrait painter, their heads bowed and conversing so softly and intensely that, though he hovers nearby, Proust cannot overhear even a scintilla of their conversation” (Waal 39-40). Proust and Charles were of the same high society and found themselves in the same artistically inclined salons frequented by artists, writers, and those who admired their work. However, it is possible that Proust first spotted Charles Ephrussi not at Madeleine Lemaire’s, but at Madame Straus’: “Proust avait fait connaissance très tôt avec le monde des collectionneurs, souvent juifs et dreyfusards. Tout d’abord Mme Straus chez qui il put voir des tableaux de Moreau, plus tard de Boudin et un Monet... C’est sans doute chez les Straus que Proust entra en rapport avec Charles Ephrussi” (Keller 37). If not friends, Ephrussi and Proust had become acquaintances and Proust was known to be a guest at the Ephrussi home avenue d’Iéna, “Proust, a neophyte if not yet quite a regular friend, had become a regular visitor to the apartment, drinking in Charles’ empyrean conversation, the way he arranged his new treasures, his span across society. Charles knows the socially ravenous Proust well enough to tell him that it is time to leave a dinner after midnight, as the hosts are desperate for bed. For some long-buried slight, Ignace in the apartment next door pins him down as the ‘Proustaillon’—a rather adept description of Proust’s butterfly flitting from one social occasion to another” (Waal 88). Proust later wrote for Ephrussi at the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, “Proust has also become a presence in the offices the *Gazette* in the rue Favart. He is diligent here: sixty-four works of art that will later appear in the twelve novels that make up *À la recherche du temps perdu* were illustrated in the *Gazette*, a huge proportion of the works’ visual texture. Like Laforgue before him, he has sent Charles his early writings on art and has received a tough critique and then a first commission. For Proust it is to be a study of Ruskin” (Waal 88). When Proust began writing *La Recherche*, the time that he has spent in the society also frequented by Charles Ephrussi and his work at the *Gazette*

greatly influenced his novel. While Charles Haas has for a very long time held the title as the official model for Charles Swann, it is clear that Charles Ephrussi was also an important figure of inspiration.

Marcel Proust's novel features the world in which Jewish individuals such as Moïse de Camondo and Charles Ephrussi were central figures. Proust's connection to his mother, the maternal side of his family, and the Jewish identity he therein inherited influenced the representation of Jewish characters, their place in Paris, and their situation in society in *La Recherche*. With the novel being set in the Third Republic, the period after the participation of wealthy and innovative Jewish figures like the Pereire brothers in the gentrification of the French capital and following the Franco-Prussian War, in which the regions of Alsace and Lorraine with the largest Jewish population in France were lost to the North German Confederation and the Prussian Kingdom, the general suspicion of German-accented French Jews underlies the discourse of various *Proustien* characters. Furthermore, the Dreyfus affaire is an essential event around which the novel orbits, written into the plot beginning with the volume, *Du côté des Guermantes*. Proust's participation in this event, the opinions of the company he kept, both for and against Dreyfus, *dreyfusards* and *anti-dreyfusards*, and the reaction of the greater French public to the accusation of Dreyfus as having committed treason all had an immense impact on Proust's writing. The history of Jewish assimilation to French culture, their integration into French society, and their adoption of a French identity from the point of emancipation in 1791 across the long nineteenth century is questioned, doubted, put on trial in 1894 with Captain Alfred Dreyfus. Proust chronicles the Dreyfus affaire and the cataclysmic societal rift that it created in French, especially Parisian, society in *La Recherche*, providing a unique window through which to observe the "Jewish question". Proust's most prominent Jewish characters, Charles Swann and Albert Bloch, tell the story of Jewish assimilation and integration, but the success of this process for these two characters is debatable. Where Proust places his Jewish characters in Paris—geographically, architecturally, and socially—and what this says about their relative assimilation or integration in society is of primary importance.

Although not restricted in terms of time period or linearity, Proust's novel begins and takes place for the most part in the past. The storyline weaves back and forth, meandering towards the author's present between various points of time with frequent jumps to past instances due to voluntary and involuntary memory that bring long lost recollections to the surface. *La Recherche* stretches between 1879 and 1919 and includes two major events of the period, the Dreyfus Affair and the First World War from 1914 to 1918. It is approximately 1885, during the narrator's childhood, when the novel opens in the fictional town of Combray, based on Illiers, a small town southwest of Chartres, where the narrator has come from Paris to visit his aunt Léonie. The narrator begins with a long explanation of his feelings of distress and rare consolation concerning the moment when his mother comes to say goodnight and give him a kiss before falling asleep. The presence of visitors, especially dinner guests, distresses the narrator to the point that his bedtime routine is completely disturbed, taking on catastrophic proportions, "Mais ces soirs-là, où maman en somme restait si peu de temps dans ma chambre, étaient doux encore en comparaison de ceux où il y avait du monde à dîner et où, à cause de cela, elle ne montait pas me dire bonsoir" (Proust I 29). But, there is really only one person who visits, "Le monde se bornait habituellement à M. Swann, qui, en dehors de quelques étrangers de passage, était à peu près la seule personne qui vint chez nous à Combray, quelquefois pour dîner en voisin (plus rarement depuis qu'il avait fait ce mauvais mariage, parce que mes parents ne voulaient pas recevoir sa femme), quelquefois après le dîner, à l'improviste" (Proust 29). Charles Swann, "visage au nez busqué, aux yeux verts, sous un haut front entouré de cheveux blonds presque roux, coiffés à la Bressant", is the son of a wealthy Jewish *agent de change* (bill-broker).

The Swann family owns an estate, modeled after the Château de Tansonville, near the narrator's Aunt Léonie's home and Charles Swann continues to regularly visit the narrator's grandparents and great aunt, friends of his parents, long after their death, "Pendant bien des années, où pourtant, surtout avant son mariage, M. Swann, le fils, vint souvent les voir à Combray" (Proust I 33). Swann, however, no longer has any connection to the society that was his parents'. He has moved on, or more appropriately, moved up and

his parents' friends are none the wiser, "ma grand-tante et mes grands-parents ne soupçonnèrent pas qu'il ne vivait plus du tout dans la société qu'avait fréquentée sa famille et que sous l'espèce d'incognito que lui faisait chez nous ce nom de Swann, ils hébergeaient—avec la parfaite innocence d'honnêtes hôteliers qui ont chez eux, sans le savoir, un célèbre brigand—un des membres les plus élégants du Jockey-Club, ami préféré du comte de Paris et du prince de Galles, un des hommes les plus choyés de la haute société du faubourg Saint-Germain" (Proust I 33-34). The portrayal of Swann that begins to develop closely resembles Charles Ephrussi. Like Ephrussi, Swann is an elegant figure of the high society, frequently in the company of those of noble origins while not being noble himself, but of another "caste", as Proust puts it, and yet somehow able to penetrate the upper reaches of the closed aristocracy. The narrator's family remains unaware, maybe willfully, of Swann's social ascension, "L'ignorance où nous étions de cette brillante vie mondaine que menait Swann tenait évidemment en partie à la réserve et à la discrétion de son caractère, mais aussi à ce que les bourgeois d'alors se faisaient de la société une idée un peu hindoue et la considéraient comme composé de castes fermées où chacun, dès sa naissance, se trouvait placé dans le rang qu'occupait ses parents, et d'où rien, à moins des hasards d'une carrière exceptionnelle ou d'un mariage inespéré, ne pouvait vous tirer pour vous faire pénétrer dans une caste supérieure" (Proust I 34). Swann has taken a completely different path than one would presume for the son of a wealthy Jewish bill-broker. Like so many Jewish figures of the generations following those in which fortunes were made, Swann has emancipated himself from the "Jewish" profession of his ancestors and is living as a true Parisian *mondain*, frequenting artistic salons, collecting historical art, writing about art, and inhabiting an artistically incongruous setting.

Charles Swann is also presented as exemplifying the most extreme form of Jewish assimilation to French culture. Swann is a Parisian dandy, an art aficionado, an antique collector, an intellectual, a fashionably dressed bachelor who is admitted to the most sophisticated and elitist salons of the capital, a confidant of princes and princesses. Throughout his childhood and adolescence, the narrator is platonically infatuated with Charles Swann, believing him to be the ultimate expression of refinement. The narrator's childhood

friend, Albert Bloch, is however the exact opposite of Charles Swann. These two characters have been compared to the two major groups of Jews in France during the nineteenth century, the Sepharadim and the Ashkenazim (Marks). The Sephardi Jews of nineteenth-century France were primarily grouped in the southwestern corner of France, in the regions of Bordeaux and Bayonne. They had come to France either as Jews fleeing the Spanish inquisition in 1492 or later as crypto-Christians due to continued suspicion of their religious identity, having publically converted to Catholicism, but believed to be practicing Judaism in secret. The Ashkenazi Jews were grouped in eastern France, around Alsace and Lorraine, and were connected to the larger European Germanic Jewish populations from Germany to the eastern borders of the continent, speaking Yiddish and various local languages. The Ashkenazi Jews were considered highly orthodox and very isolated from the surrounding majority communities. There was great tension and animosity between local Catholic or Protestant populations and the Ashkenazi Jews. During the *Assemblée Nationale*, when the fate of the Jews was being decided, the Sephardi Jews of Bordeaux and Bayonne along with the much smaller population of the Jews of Avignon were granted full rights and citizenship first in 1790, more than a year before the same privileges were extended to the Ashkenazi Jews. The Sephardi Jews were seen as French in their style of dress, way of living, and practices in business. The Ashkenazi Jews were regarded as a separate, foreign nation existing within France which first had to be deprived of group privileges in order to isolate the individuals from the mass and integrate each one into the greater French nation. The Ashkenazi Jews dressed, spoke, lived, and worked differently than the majority French population and had to undergo an extensive, multi-generational transformation in order to identify as French. The Ashkenazi population of eastern France was particularly despised for their work as moneylenders, seen as avaricious and devious, preying on innocent French peasants and encouraged to do so by religious creed. The Sephardi Jews appeared to blend seamlessly into the greater French population. Although there is little possibility that Proust might have imagined Charles Swann as representing the more civilized and integrated Sephardi Jews

and Albert Bloch as embodying the less easily assimilated, Yiddish speaking, Ashkenazi Jews, the comparison is nevertheless enlightening and deserves further reflection.

Like the Sephardi Jews, Swann blends in with the highest society, becoming a privileged member of the aristocracy. However, Swann's potential association with Sephardi Jews stops there. He has only one relative, a very rich and important aunt, Lady Israels, married to Sir Rufus Israels, but there is no evidence that the Lady Israels or her husband are of Sephardi origin, and as Swann was their sole relation, he also lacks evidence of a Sephardi origin (Proust III 187-189). Albert Bloch's Ashkenazi origin is however certain. His father, Salomon, and uncle, Nissim, communicate in French sprinkled with Yiddish, "Les demoiselles Bloch furent plus intéressées par Bergotte... — Je l'ai rencontré à plusieurs générales, dit M. Nissim Bernard. Il est gauche, c'est une espèce de Schlemihl?... l'épithète de Schlemihl faisait partie de ce dialecte mi-allemand, mi-juif, dont l'emploi ravissait M. Bloch dans l'intimité, mais qu'il trouvait vulgaire et déplacé devant des étrangers. Aussi jeta-t-il un regard sévère sur son oncle... Celui-ci était surtout froissé qu'on le traitât si grossièrement devant le maître d'hôtel... Il murmura une phrase inintelligible où on distinguait seulement 'Quand les Meschorès sont là'. Meschorès désigne dans la Bible le serviteur de Dieu. Entre eux les Bloch s'en servaient pour désigner les domestiques et étaient toujours égayés, parce que leur certitude de n'être pas compris ni des chrétiens ni des domestiques eux-mêmes exaltait chez M. Nissim Bernard et M. Bloch leur double particularisme de 'maîtres' et de 'juifs' " (Proust V 15-18). Bloch's father and uncle also possess certain negative qualities historically associated in French culture with Ashkenazi Jews. They consider themselves 'masters', delight in the fact that they are at once 'Jewish' and 'masters,' and rejoice in their secretive language in the company of those they consider inferior, rendering themselves, in their own opinion, superior. Yiddish is however not to be used in front of acquaintances of important standing, fearing that it will make them appear too Jewish and foreign, "M. Bloch entendant son oncle dire 'Meschorès' trouvait qu'il laissait trop paraître son côté oriental" (Proust V 18). Nissim, Bloch's uncle, also has a pronounced "goût d'ostentation", a stereotype attributed to Jewish figures since the rise to fortune and

power of the Rothschild family in the first half of the nineteenth century, whose Ashkenazi heritage greatly contributed to an association between Jews of Germanic origin and wealth, venality, and superiority.

The negative stereotypes attributed to Ashkenazi Jews appear to be firmly rooted in the Bloch family, passing from one generation to the next. When the narrator meets Bloch's family, he is able to better understand his friend's strange nature, "Il y avait donc, enclavé en mon camarade Bloch, un père Bloch... C'est ainsi qu'après avoir dit les choses les plus intelligentes, Bloch jeune, manifestant l'apport qu'il avait reçu de sa famille, nous racontait pour la trentième fois quelques-uns des mots que le père Bloch sortait seulement... les jours solennels où Bloch jeune amenait quelqu'un qu'il valait la peine d'éblouir" (Proust V 7-8). Furthermore, the Bloch family has an immoral predisposition of trumping up its position in society, feigning to have high-ranking friends, like Swann's uncle, Sir Rufus Israels, with whom Mr. Bloch pretends to belong to the same social circle, "Saint-Loup demanda si ce cercle était le cercle de la rue Royale, lequel était jugé 'déclassant' par la famille de Saint-Loup et où il savait qu'étaient reçus certains Israélites. 'Non, répondit M. Bloch d'un air négligent, fier et honteux, c'est un petit cercle, mais beaucoup plus agréable, le Cercle des Ganaches. On y juge sévèrement la galerie. — Est-ce que sir Rufus Israël n'en est pas président ?' demanda Bloch fils à son père, pour lui fourner l'occasion d'un mensonge honorable et sans se douter que ce financier n'avait pas le même prestige aux yeux de Saint-Loup qu'aux siens. En réalité, il y avait au Cercle des Ganaches non point sir Rufus Israël, mais un de ses employés" (Proust V 15). Bloch and his father are also characterized by specific character flaws often associated with the Jewish populations in eastern France and beyond. While Albert is utterly tactless and rude, his father is portrayed as greedy and money-pinching, he also lies about quality and price, "Seulement, si le défaut de son fils... était la grossièreté, celui du père était l'avarice. Aussi, c'est dans une carafe qu'il fit servir sous le nom de champagne un petit vin mousseux et sous celui de fauteuils d'orchestre il avait fait prendre des parterres qui coûtaient moitié moins, miraculeusement persuadé par l'intervention divine de son défaut que ni à table, ni au théâtre... on ne

s'apercevrait de la différence" (Proust V 23). The younger Bloch's flaws, however, extend beyond rudeness and tactlessness.

Albert Bloch is also excessively snobbish, "Bloch était mal élevé, névropathe, snob, et, appartenant à une famille peu estimée, supportait comme au fond des mers les incalculables pressions que faisaient peser sur lui, non seulement les chrétiens de la surface, mais les couches superposées des castes juives supérieures à la sienne, chacune accablant de son mépris celle qui lui était immédiatement de son mépris celle qui lui était immédiatement inférieure. Percer jusqu'à l'air libre en s'élevant de famille juive en famille juive eût demandé à Bloch plusieurs milliers d'années. Il valait mieux chercher à se frayer une issue d'un autre côté" (Proust IV 299). Although the narrator and Bloch have been friend since childhood, the narrator's family has always considered him a bad influence. Invited to lunch, Bloch arrives excessively late, displays false concern for the grandmother's illness, and spreads rumors about the narrator's aunt's previous life as a high-class mistress. Bloch is consequently no longer welcome in their home. The narrator, nevertheless, continues to see his friend, appreciating the challenge that Bloch's literary perspective brings to discussions. Bloch is also the one that introduces the narrator to the secrets of sexuality, confirming his role in the narrator's life as the rule breaker, helping the narrator loosen the somewhat suffocating hold of his family, "Bloch bouleversa ma conception du monde, ouvrit pour moi des possibilités nouvelles de bonheur... en m'assurant que... les femmes ne demandaient jamais mieux que de faire l'amour. Il compléta ce service en m'en rendant un second... ce fut lui qui me conduisit pour la première fois dans une maison de passe" (Proust III 310-311). Although there is no indication as to the location in Paris of this "maison de passe", it is conceivable, even probable, that it was found in the rue Blondel or the rue Saint-Apolline, two streets parallel to the boulevards de Bonne Nouvelle and Saint-Martin, historically the neighborhood of prostitution in Paris. It is also this "maison de passe" in which the narrator encounters a Jewish prostitute that later becomes an actress and the mistress of the narrator's best friend, Saint-Loup, famous for her association with the line from an opera of Halévy, "Rachel quand du Seigneur" (Proust III 314). If this

“maison de passe” was truly located in either the rue Blondel or Saint-Apolline, it was also in proximity to the Jewish working class neighborhood, including the rue Poissonnière, the rue d’Aboukir, the rue du Caire, the rue René Boulanger, the rue Hauteville, and others. This area was thus the one in which the second generation of Proust’s Jewish Parisian family lived after leaving the Marais and was considered the “sordid” neighborhood that future generations escaped for wealthier areas to the west. Bloch’s familiarity with this “maison de passe” in particular reveals where Bloch’s family was also initially established in the city, not far from the Ashkenazi synagogue, rue Notre-Dame-de-Nazareth.

From childhood friend, literary companion, rude and precocious youth barred from the narrator’s family home in the first volume of *La Recherche*, Albert Bloch evolves throughout the novel and in Parisian society. By the time the Dreyfus affair takes over French media and French cultural conscience, Bloch has become a writer with some initial entries into the aristocratic world of which he had previously only dreamt to become a part, “Bloch, maintenant jeune auteur dramatique, sur qui [Mme de Villeparisis] comptait pour lui procurer à l’œil des artistes qui joueraient à ses prochaines matinées” (Proust VII 18). It is also at this time that the situation for the Jews in France, especially those in high society Paris, began to be affected by the negative association with a Jewish army captain presumed to have committed national treason, “Il est vrai que le kaléidoscope social était en train de tourner et que l’affaire Dreyfus allait précipiter les Juifs au dernier rang de l’échelle sociale. Mais, d’une part, le cyclone dreyfusiste avait beau faire rage, ce n’est pas au début d’une tempête que les vagues atteignent leur plus grand courroux” (Proust VII 18). Despite the unfavorable position of Jews in Paris during the Dreyfus affair, Bloch is all the same invited to the morning salon of Mme de Villeparisis. As an artist and apparently not politically motivated, Mme de Villeparisis is an aristocrat more focused on attracting artists to her studio for their quality as artists rather than for their religious or social identity. In fact, this particular aristocrat doesn’t involve herself initially with any of the political confusion and societal conflicts surrounding the affair, leaving this to her very opinionated, politically-oriented, and socially-concerned family members, “Mme de Villeparisis, laissant toute une partie

de sa famille tonner contre les Juifs, était jusqu'ici restée entièrement étrangère à l'Affaire et ne s'en souciait pas" (Proust VII 18). The seemingly un-aristocratic, open-minded comportment of Mme de Villeparisis is however simply a lack of political awareness and social rigor in favor of a penchant for variety and the exotic, "Enfin un jeune homme comme Bloch, que personne ne connaissait, pouvait passer inaperçu, alors que de grands Juifs représentatifs de leur parti étaient déjà menacés... Les Roumains, les Égyptiens et les Turcs peuvent détester les Juifs. Mais dans un salon français les différences entre ces peuples ne sont pas si perceptibles, et un Israélite faisant son entrée comme s'il sortait du fond du désert, le corps penché comme une hyène, la nuque obliquement inclinée et se répandant en grands 'salams', contente parfaitement un goût d'orientalisme" (Proust VII 18).

Since Bloch is not yet known in Parisian high society or, as Proust calls it, "le monde", there is less risk that he will come across as the typical socially awkward Jewish individual who has lost his exoticism for an altered and unattractive false French appearance, "Seulement il faut pour cela que le Juif n'appartienne pas au 'monde', sans quoi il prend facilement l'aspect d'un lord, et ses façons sont tellement francisées que chez lui un nez rebelle, poussant comme les capucines, dans des directions imprévues, fait penser au nez de Mascarille plutôt qu'à celui de Salomon" (Proust VII 19). For Bloch, "le menton ponctué d'un bouc, il portait un binocle, une longue redingote, un gant, comme un rouleau de papyrus à la main", his "Oriental" aspect still makes him an interesting figure for the salon of an artist, just as the "Oriental" figure in general had become a curiosity in various cultural and artistic representations for the Parisian high society throughout the nineteenth century, "Mais Bloch n'ayant pas été assoupli par la gymnastique du 'Faubourg', ni ennobli par un croisement avec l'Angleterre ou l'Espagne, restait, pour un amateur d'exotisme, aussi étrange et savoureux à regarder, malgré son costume européen, qu'un Juif de Decamps. Admirable puissance de la race qui au fond des siècles pousse en avant jusque dans le Paris moderne, dans les couloirs de nos théâtres, derrière les guichets de nos bureaux, à un enterrement, dans la rue, une phalange intacte stylisant la coiffure moderne, absorbant, faisant oublier, disciplinant la redingote, demeurant, en somme toute pareille à

celle des scribes assyriens peints en costume de cérémonie à la frise d'un monument de Suse qui défend les portes du palais de Darius" (Proust VII 19-20). This phase for the narrator's best friend is however limited, and Bloch comes out as a steadfast, even obnoxious, supporter of Dreyfus, grilling the ambassador, M. de Norpois, on the subject with obstinate insistence, unaffected by the presence of members of the Guermantes family, clearly against Dreyfus.

Bloch's early entry into the milieu of the aristocracy, despite his multiple physical and social blunders, is somewhat successful. He is able to create, maintain, and elevate his position in this level of French social hierarchy until the very last volume of *La Recherche*. In the last volume, the narrator encounters Bloch at the morning salon of the princesse de Guermantes, who is in reality Mme Verdurin after two socially advantageous marriages, first to the duc de Duras, then to the prince de Guermantes. The narrator finds Bloch utterly transformed, with all of his previously distinctive Jewish traits artfully concealed, "J'eus de la peine à le reconnaître. D'ailleurs, il avait pris maintenant non seulement un pseudonyme, mais le nom de Jacques du Rozier, sous lequel il eût fallu le flair de mon grand-père pour reconnaître la douce vallée de l'Hébron et les chaînes d'Israël que mon ami semblait avoir définitivement rompues. Un chic anglais, avait en effet, complètement transformé sa figure et passé au rabot tout ce qui se pouvait effacer. Les cheveux jadis bouclés, coiffés à plat avec une raie au milieu, brillaient de cosmétique. Son nez restait fort et rouge mais semblait plutôt tuméfié par une sorte de rhume permanent qui pouvait expliquer l'accent nasal dont il débitait paresseusement ses phrases, car il avait trouvé de même qu'une coiffeur appropriée à son teint, une voix à sa prononciation où le nasonnement d'autrefois prenait un air de dédain particulier qui allait avec les ailes enflammées de son nez. Et grâce à la coiffure, à la suppression des moustaches, à l'élégance du type, à la volonté, ce nez juif disparaissait comme semble presque droite une bossue bien arrangée" (Proust XV 137-138). Bloch has become what Sartre would later coin in 1946 in *Réflexions sur la question juive* as an inauthentic Jew, a Jewish person who denies their Jewish heritage, inventing a whole new one or adopting an existing one, and therefore living a lie. While Bloch is originally rude, tactless, a staunch *dreyfusard*, a

literary critic with piercing and poignant ideas towards the beginning of the novel, living fully as the Albert Bloch who had inherited curious but intriguing personality traits from his father and Jewish ancestors, by the end of the novel he has sought to erase all trace of his genetic history. There are, however, cracks in the surface. Bloch's new identity as Jacques du Rozier would not have fooled the narrator's grandfather, always adept at detecting Jewishness beneath a well-polished, seemingly French exterior. Furthermore, the surname that Bloch has chosen for his pseudonym recalls the rue des Rosiers in the Marais, a street at the center of the Yiddish speaking Parisian community. However, while Bloch disguises himself with an English chic and a monocle that distracts observers from searching for Jewish traits beyond the round glass wedged between his eye and nose, the narrator sees an entirely different and frightening evolution in Bloch. The consequence of such invested social climbing for Bloch is the appearance of the most hated Jewish literary character, "De près, dans la translucidité d'un visage où, de plus loin et mal éclairé, je ne voyais que la jeunesse gaie... se tenait le visage presque effrayant, tout anxieux, d'un vieux Shylock attendant, tout grimé dans la coulisse, le moment d'entrer en scène, récitant déjà les premiers vers à mi-voix" (Proust XV 222). Bloch ultimately disguises his Jewish appearance, although not for all, under the exterior of an eccentric French intellectual and pseudo-aristocrat. This final stage in his evolution brings him to a point similar to the one at which Swann was before meeting Odette, "[Bloch et Swann] répondent au modèle de mimétisme proposé par Hannah Arendt: la volonté de faire fortune dans d'autres milieux par l'art du déguisement... Bloch, un auteur de comédies... Swann, c'est un cabotin-né, conscient et de haute volée... tout les [deux] ont de grandes aspirations intellectuelles, mais ne réussissent pas, pour des raisons diverses (liées naturellement au snobisme et à l'esthétisme) à devenir des artistes accomplis au sens où l'entend et le souhaite Proust (défini par la profondeur et le désintéressement)" (Arendt qtd in Piperno 75-81). While Bloch perfects his high society persona, becoming a snob and an aesthete to the extreme, Swann returns to a Jewish appearance with age. Furthermore, while Bloch disassociates himself with his Jewish origins after strongly defending Dreyfus in his younger years, Swann rediscovers his own long lost Jewish heritage in his later years,

deserting the aristocratic milieu to take the side of the wrongly accused Jewish army captain. However, before seeing Swann at “à l’âge du prophète”, he is a Jewish character at the beginning of *La Recherche* with no connection to the religion or the history of his ancestors.

When Albert Bloch is banished from the narrator’s home due to his uncouth manners, Charles Swann is the image of politeness and continues visiting the narrator’s family even after his disadvantageous marriage. Nevertheless, the regular visits to the narrator’s home, either in Paris or in Combray, maintain Swann in a perpetual position of inferiority in relation to the narrator’s family of the haute bourgeoisie. They consider Swann inferior not only because he is the son of a Jewish bill-broker but also because he has curious taste, collecting antiques that the narrator’s great aunt finds irrational and impure, asking “Êtes-vous seulement connaisseur ? Je vous demande cela dans votre intérêt, parce que vous devez vous faire repasser des croûtes par les marchands”, and strange social interactions outside his assigned social class. The narrator’s relatives find it impossible to believe that Swann frequents the same society as princes and princesses, “Si l’on avait voulu à toute force appliquer à Swann un coefficient social qui lui fût personnel, entre les autres fils d’agents de situation égale à celle de ses parents, ce coefficient eût été pour lui un peu inférieur parce que, très simple de façons et ayant toujours eu une ‘toquade’ d’objets anciens et de peinture” (Proust I 35). Swann is nevertheless invited to the events held by figures of a higher social standing than the narrator’s family, “Mais une fois, mon grand-père lut dans son journal que M. Swann était un des plus fidèles habitués des déjeuners du dimanche chez le duc de X..., dont le père et l’oncle avaient été les hommes d’État les plus en vue du règne de Louis-Philippe. Or mon grand-père était curieux de tous les petits faits qui pouvaient l’aider à entrer par la pensée dans la vie privée d’homme comme Molé, comme le duc Pasquier, comme le duc de Broglie. Il fut enchanté d’apprendre que Swann fréquentait des gens qui les avaient connus. Ma grand-tante au contraire interpréta cette nouvelle dans un sens défavorable à Swann: quelqu’un qui choisissait ses fréquentations en dehors de la caste où il était né, en dehors de sa ‘classe’ sociale, subissait à ses yeux un fâcheux déclassement” (Proust I 44-45). When Swann marries, he falls further in esteem in the view of the

narrator's family, "Cette opinion de mes parents sur les relations de Swann leur parut ensuite confirmée par son mariage avec une femme de la pire société, presque une cocotte que, d'ailleurs, il ne chercha jamais à présenter, continuant à venir seul chez nous" (Proust I 44). Swann is respectable in the eyes of the narrator's family as long as he remains within the mold of the rich bill-broker's son. Any break in the mold in either direction, frequenting those of a higher or a lower class than that of a rich bill-broker's son, serves to diminish Swann's respectability. Curiously, Swann's Jewish heritage plays no part in the narrator's parents' opinion of him, but rather all depends on him remaining in his predetermined place in society.

As Swann does not live in a neighborhood fit for the respectable bourgeoisie, the narrator's great aunt insists on reestablishing this element of inferiority each time she finds herself in his company, and certainly when there are others to overhear, "il demeurait... dans un vieil hôtel où il entassait ses collections et que ma grand-mère rêvait de visiter, mais qui était situé quai d'Orléans, quartier que ma grand-tante trouvait infamant d'habiter... elle avait soin de faire remarquer aux étrangers, quand on parlait de Swann, qu'il aurait pu, s'il avait voulu, habiter boulevard Haussmann ou avenue de l'Opéra, qu'il était le fils de M. Swann qui avait dû lui laisser quatre ou cinq millions, mais que c'était sa fantaisie. Fantaisie qu'elle jugeait du reste devoir être si divertissante pour les autres, qu'à Paris quand M. Swann venait le 1^{er} janvier lui apporter son sac de marrons glacés, elle ne manquait pas, s'il y avait du monde, de lui dire: 'Eh bien ! M. Swann, vous habitez toujours près de l'Entrepôt des vins, pour être sûr de ne pas manquer le train quand vous prenez le chemin de Lyon ?' Et elle regardait du coin de l'œil, par-dessus son lorgnon, les autres visiteurs" (Proust I 35-37). The narrator's great aunt reveals the extent to which Jacques Séraphin Lanquetin's predictions of the 1830s and 1840s had been realized; by the end of the century central Paris was seen as a place of ill repute where the respectable bourgeoisie would not live, decidedly not an area in Paris where one breathed the aristocratic air of the faubourg Saint-Germain (Balzac, *Duchesse de Langeais* 45-52). Neither was it the Plaine Monceau where the *haute colonie Israélite* had taken-up residence. The Ile-Saint-Louis was dark, grimy, and associated with wine warehouses. That Swann insists on living on Ile-Saint-Louis when it was no longer an

appropriate location for anyone concerned about their position in society, particularly when Swann has the means to move to a much more modern and socially acceptable area in Paris makes him even more curious to the narrator's family, increasing their perception of Swann as inferior. Swann thus does not follow the accepted trends of the society to which he is believed to belong; he remains in the place from which all the wealth has already fled, placing him below what the narrator's family believes to be his position in society.

As the son of a Jewish bill-broker, Swann is wealthy by inheritance, interested in art, not in the same profession as his father, and not in the least worried by what others think of him. His continued residence on the Ile-Saint-Louis is testament to his lack of concern for the opinions of others. This character is at once similar and different in comparison to the actual Jewish art collectors, art patrons, and artistic intellectuals, including the Ephrussi and Camondo families, that Proust frequented in the 1890s (Keller 37). Furthermore, like Charles Ephrussi and Isaac and Moïse de Camondo, Swann's eccentricity makes it impossible for him to be perceived as truly French, despite his aristocratic acquaintances and his taste in historical art. The comportments of these Jewish figures in late nineteenth-century Paris—Isaac de Camondo donating his collection to the Louvre, Moïse de Camondo insisting on living in his own Petit Trianon, Charles Ephrussi defending the Impressionist movement—demonstrated at once their appreciation of French culture and set them apart, making them suspicious to the French society who required that people remained within their assigned “caste” and not engage in any activities that would lead society to think otherwise. However, just as Moïse de Camondo's home along the parc Monceau was the ultimate proof of his complete devotion to the *art de vivre* of eighteenth-century France, Charles Swann also lives in a home that stands as a monument to the past. The Ile-Saint-Louis is where the bohemian art salon took root in the Hôtel de Lauzun, also known as Pimodan. It was where Charles Baudelaire met with Théophile Gautier and the *club des Haschischins* and where Ferdinand Boissard held his artistic salon with his mistress, Joséphine Marix, the famous Jewish artist's model. The Hôtel de Lauzun is a truly Ancien Régime dwelling constructed from 1650 to 1658 and inhabited by a mixture of important financial figures and

nobility such as the duc de Lauzun, the marquis de Richelieu, the marquis de Tessé, and others before welcoming the early bohemian mixture of artists, intellectuals, and aristocracy. Charles Swann's oddities and his continued residence on the Ile-Saint-Louis serve as a homage to those who had initiated the alternative salon in which artists and intellectuals of all "castes" met and mingled on an aesthetic and scholarly level.

Nevertheless, Swann does not have a salon on the Ile-Saint-Louis, and his house is more of a museum for his collection of Renaissance art and a library for this biographic work on Vermeer than a residence where one would host guests for tea or dinner. Instead, as a typical bachelor, Swann goes out into the world, to the illustrious salons' of others. Swann's social life, despite his unassuming and bookish appearance, is filled with important figures in Paris, something that the narrator's family is remiss to accept, "Un jour qu'il était venu nous voir à Paris après dîner, en s'excusant d'être en habit, Françoise ayant, après son départ, dit tenir du coucher qu'il avait dîné 'chez une princesse'—'Oui, chez une princesse du demi-monde' avait répondu ma tante en haussant les épaules sans lever les yeux de sur son tricot avec une ironie sereine" (Proust I 38). Swann's brilliant social life begins to change once he meets his future wife, Odette de Crécy, a *cocotte parisienne* for whom he falls desperately and mistakenly in love. Odette is known to the narrator's family as an inappropriate friend of the narrator's great uncle Adolphe and to the narrator as the *dame en rose*. On first impression, Odette has no influence over Swann, "...quand un jour au théâtre il fut présenté à Odette de Crécy par un de ses amis... elle était apparue à Swann non pas certes sans beauté, mais d'un genre de beauté qui lui était indifférent, qui ne lui inspirait aucun désir, lui causait même une sorte de répulsion physique... Pour lui plaire elle avait un profil trop accusé, la peau trop fragile, les pommettes trop saillantes, les traits trop tirés. Ses yeux étaient beaux, mais si grands qu'ils fléchissaient sous leur propre masse, fatiguaient le reste de son visage et lui donnaient toujours l'air d'avoir mauvaise mine ou d'être de mauvaise humeur" (Proust I 414-415). Of all his acquaintances, Odette is the only one to visit him in his home on the Ile-Saint-Louis, apparently undeterred by the unsavory neighborhood, "Quelque temps après cette présentation au théâtre, elle lui avait écrit pour lui demander à voir ses collections qui l'intéressaient tant,

‘elle, ignorante qui avait le goût des jolies choses’, disant qu’il lui semblait qu’elle le connaîtrait mieux, quand elle l’aurait vu dans ‘son home’ où elle l’imaginait ‘si confortable avec son thé et ses livres’, quoiqu’elle ne lui eût pas caché sa surprise qu’il habitât ce quartier si devait être si triste et ‘qui était si peu smart pour lui qui l’était tant’ ” (Proust I 414-415). When Odette also finds Swann’s neighborhood unappealing and unfashionable, Swann is still unconcerned by the reputation of the Ile-Saint-Louis.

The unpleasant setting of Swann’s home assures that Odette will invite him to her place in what had recently become a more socially appropriate, even socially impressive, setting of the sixteenth arrondissement on the rue La Pérouse. Despite its location, however, Odette’s street is described in unappealing terms by the narrator, “L’isolement et le vide de ces courtes rues (faites presque toutes de petits hôtels contigus, dont tout à coup venait rompre la monotonie quelque sinistre échoppe, témoignage historique et reste sordide du temps où ces quartiers étaient encore mal famés)” (Proust II 5). Although located in the western corner of the city, an area into which wealth and fortune had been spreading throughout the nineteenth century, Odette’s street shows traces of its previous existence as a boulevard situated just outside the walls of the city, “Le mur des Fermiers-Généraux suivait, de 1785 à 1860, entre nos places du Trocadéro et de l’Étoile, un tracé marqué de nos jours par l’avenue Kléber, puis, à partir de la rue de Belloy, par les rues La Pérouse et Dumont-d’Urville. Il était compris ici entre deux barrières, celles de l’Étoile et des Bassins. La rue La Pérouse recouvre l’emplacement du boulevard extérieur à ce mur d’octroi, appelé boulevard de Passy avant de recevoir, en 1864, le nom du navigateur de Galaup de La Pérouse” (Hillairet 20). Unlike the Ile-Saint-Louis, the architecture in this section of Paris lacks character and the only historical aspect are the wooden-framed shops that stand as evidence to the previous identity of the street as external to the city. There does however appear to be more green space since Odette’s home includes a small garden, “la neige qui était restée dans le jardin et aux arbres, le négligé de la saison, le voisinage de la nature, donnaient quelque chose de plus mystérieux à la chaleur, aux fleurs qu’il avait trouvées en entrant” (Proust II 5-6). Although the narrator finds this “short street” to be empty and isolated, it is actually located

parallel to the avenue Kléber and at an angle with the avenue d'Iéna, both streets which are now lined with classically Second Empire apartment buildings, all part of the most luxurious phases of the three implemented by Napoléon III and Haussmann in their remaking of the city.

If the narrator does not find the rue La Pérouse all that fashionable, Odette's apartment certainly displays the trends of the times. Immediately upon entering, it is clear that Odette has devoted her entire interior decoration to the Asian styles that had become so popular beginning in the 1860s. Many Jewish collectors began their collections with the *choinoiseries* and *japonaiseries* proliferating the Parisian art scene in the second half of the nineteenth century. Charles Ephrussi and his mistress, Louise Cahen d'Anvers, were united by their interest in Asian art, collecting netsuke sculptures from Japan and Chinese lacquered wooden jewelry boxes. While Charles Swann takes shape as the literary double of Charles Ephrussi, Odette takes form as an interpretation of Louise Cahen d'Anvers, and Swann therefore falls in love with Odette in her Asian-themed apartment. In leading the reader through Odette's apartment, the narrator emphasizes two themes, Oriental and floral, "Laissant à gauche, au rez-de-chaussée surélevé, la chambre à coucher d'Odette qui donnait sur une petite rue parallèle, un escalier droit entre des murs peints de couleur sombre et d'où tombaient des étoffes orientales, des fils de chapelets turcs et une grande lanterne japonaise suspendue à une cordelette de soie (mais qui, pour ne pas priver les visiteurs des derniers comforts de la civilisation occidentale, s'éclairait au gaz) montait au salon et au petit salon. Ils étaient précédés d'un étroit vestibule dont le mur quadrillé d'un treillage de jardin, mais doré, était bordé dans toute sa longueur d'une caisse rectangulaire où fleurissaient comme dans une serre une rangée de ces gros chrysanthèmes encore rares à cette époque, mais bien éloignés cependant de ceux que les horticulteurs réussirent plus tard à obtenir. Swann était agacé par la mode qui depuis l'année dernière se portait sur eux, mais il avait eu plaisir cette fois, à voir la pénombre de la pièce zébrée de rose, d'orange et de blanc par les rayons odorants de ces astres éphémères qui s'allument ans les jours gris. Odette l'avait reçu en robe de chambre de soie rose, le cou et les bras nus. Elle l'avait fait asseoir près d'elle dans un des nombreux retraits mystérieux qui étaient

ménagés dans les enfoncements du salon, protégés par d'immenses palmiers contenus dans des cache-pot de Chine, ou par des paravents auxquels étaient fixés des photographies, des nœuds de rubans et des éventails. Elle lui avait dit : 'Vous n'êtes pas confortable comme cela, attendez, moi je vais bien vous arranger'... [elle] avait installé derrière la tête de Swann, sous ses pieds, des coussins de soie japonaise qu'elle pétrissait comme si elle avait été prodigue de ces richesses et insoucieuse de leur valeur... Elle trouvait à tous ses bibelots chinois des formes 'amusantes' ” (Proust II 5-8). Although Swann does not appear to have been as interested in Asian art as some actual Jewish collectors at the time, he is interested in art in general and is incessantly seeing the world through the works of art that he has seen and studied.

Despite not being initially attracted to Odette, something changes when Swann visits her for the second time. In fact, he sees her in a different perspective, an artistic perspective, “Debout à côté de lui, laissant couler le long de ses joues ses cheveux qu'elle avait dénoués, fléchissant une jambe dans une attitude légèrement dansante pour pouvoir se pencher sans fatigue vers la gravure qu'elle regardait, en inclinant la tête, de ses grands yeux, si fatiguaient et maussades quand elle ne s'animait pas, elle frappa Swann par sa ressemblance avec cette figure de Zéphora, la fille de Jéthro, qu'on voit dans une fresque de la chapelle Sixtine... Il la regardait ; un fragment de la fresque apparaissait dans son visage et dans son corps, que dès lors il chercha toujours à y retrouver, soit qu'il fût auprès d'Odette, soit qu'il pensât seulement à elle, et bien qu'il ne tînt sans doute au chef-d'œuvre florentin que parce qu'il le retrouvait en elle, pourtant cette ressemblance lui conférait à elle aussi une beauté, la rendait plus précieuse. Swann se reprocha d'avoir méconnu le prix d'un être qui eût paru adorable au grand Sandro, et il se félicité que le plaisir qu'il avait à voir Odette trouvât une justification dans sa propre culture esthétique” (Proust II 11-14). In her Oriental-themed apartment, Odette transforms into the biblical figure of Zipporah, daughter of Jethro, wife of Moses, as interpreted by Botticelli in the Sistine Chapel. Although Odette is not Jewish, this scene recalls the one in which the baron de Nucingen falls in love with Esther, her biblical, “Oriental” appearance as the only possible form of beauty capable of seducing Balzac's implacable Jewish banker. Swann easily falls in love

when the woman who he once found lacking in any particularly splendid beauty suddenly reveals herself to be a masterpiece of art, seducing and bewitching the art aficionado. After Swann and Odette have met and Swann has fallen in love Odette as the figure of Botticelli's Zipporah, there is a long and treacherous courtship in which Swann must suffer the company that Odette frequents, including another suitor.

Odette's influence manifests itself in a change in the society that Swann typically frequents. Instead of the high society salons, Swann begins to spend great amounts of time with a very middle-class group in the salon Verdurin. While Swann pays homage to the type of salon invented on the Ile-Saint-Louis by artists, writers, and aristocrats by living on the Ile-Saint-Louis, the salon Verdurin has nothing in common with the artistic milieu of Baudelaire, Gautier, and Boissard. Madame and Monsieur Verdurin, a wealthy bourgeois couple, hold the salon in question on the quai De Conti, just over the river on the Left Bank from the most western tip of the Ile-de-la-Cité. The guests vary from a musician, a painter, to a doctor, all of whom are obliged to never attend any other salon and must pledge their full fidelity to Madame Verdurin, "Toute 'nouvelle recrue' à qui les Verdurin ne pouvaient pas persuader que les soirées des gens qui n'allaient pas chez eux étaient ennuyeuses comme la pluie, se voyait immédiatement exclue" (Proust I 398). Very few women are welcomed by Madame Verdurin who does not appreciate the curiosity that they demonstrate for other social settings that Madame Verdurin considers as competition, "Les femmes étant à cet égard plus rebelles que les hommes à déposer toute curiosité mondaine à l'envie de se renseigner par soi-même sur l'agrément des autres salons, et les Verdurin sentant d'autre part que cet esprit d'examen et ce démon de frivolité pouvaient par contagion devenir fatal à l'orthodoxie de la petite église, ils avaient été amenés à rejeter successivement tous les 'fidèles' du sexe féminin" (Proust I 398-399). Odette, Dr. Cottard's wife, and the musician's aunt are the three women allowed in the salon Verdurin. In the world of *La Recherche* Madame Verdurin is an important figure. She is particularly characterized by an ambition to climb ever higher on the social ladder. She accomplishes her ambition by marrying the widowed prince de Guermantes, becoming the princesse de Guermantes, after being twice widowed herself. Nevertheless, when Madame Verdurin is still

just a very rich member of the bourgeoisie, her envy of the salons of the aristocracy is palpable. In fact, her guests are wisely chosen, and easily convinced that her salon is truly better than any aristocratic gathering, “personnes ignorantes du monde et à la naïveté de qui il avait été si facile de faire accroire que la princesse de Sagan et la duchesse de Guermantes étaient obligées de payer des malheureux pour avoir du monde à leurs dîners, que si on leur avait offert de les faire inviter chez ces deux grandes dames, l’ancienne concierge et la cocotte eussent dédaigneusement refusé” (Proust I 399). Odette, a regular participant of the nightly dinner at the Verdurin home and Madame Verdurin’s favorite as the only guest with an aristocratic particle, invites Swann.

When Swann arrives in the middle of this “petit noyau”, as the group of regular guests at the Verdurin home is called, it is quite clear that this is not his typical environment, “le ‘petit noyau’ n’avait aucun rapport avec la société où fréquentait Swann, et de purs mondains auraient trouvé que ce n’était pas la peine d’y occuper comme lui une situation exceptionnelle pour se faire présenter chez les Verdurin” (Proust I 398). Swann continues to come to dinner at the Verdurins despite their difference in position with the company that he usually keeps. He is appreciated as the privileged friend of Madame Verdurin’s favorite until the day that he unwittingly reveals the society that he frequents outside of the Verdurin milieu and promises Madame Verdurin a special authorization to not have to wait in line with the masses for parties or concerts, “Swann qui ne parlait jamais de ses relations brillantes, mais seulement de celles mal cotées qu’il eût juger peu délicat de cacher, et au nombre desquelles il avait pris dans le faubourg Saint-Germain l’habitude de ranger les relations avec le monde officiel, répondit : — Je vous promets de m’en occuper, vous l’aurez à temps pour la reprise des *Danicheff*, je déjeune justement demain avec le Préfet de police à l’Élysée. — Comment ça, à l’Élysée ? cria le docteur Cottard d’une voix tonnante. — Oui, chez M. Grévy, répondit Swann, un peu gêné de l’effet que sa phrase avait produit... les derniers mots de Swann, au lieu de procurer l’apaisement habituel, portèrent au comble son étonnement qu’un homme avec qui il dînait, qui n’avait ni fonctions officielles, ni illustration d’aucune sorte, frayât avec le Chef de l’État... — Comment ça, M.

Grévy ? vous connaissez M. Grévy... — Je le connais un peu, nous avons des amis communs (il n'osa pas dire que c'était le prince de Galles), du reste il invite très facilement et je vous assure que ces déjeuners n'ont rien d'amusant, ils sont d'ailleurs très simples, on n'est jamais plus de huit à table, répondit Swann qui tâchait d'effacer ce que semblaient avoir de trop éclatant, aux yeux de son interlocuteur, des relations avec le Président dans la République... — Ah ! je vous crois qu'ils ne doivent pas être amusants ces déjeuners, vous avez de la vertu d'y aller, dit Mme Verdurin, à qui le Président de la République apparaissait comme un ennuyeux particulièrement redoutable parce qu'il disposait de moyens de séduction et de contrainte qui, employés à l'égard des fidèles, eussent été capables de les faire lâcher. Il paraît qu'il est sourd comme un pot et qu'il mange avec ses doigts... Quant à M. Verdurin, il remarqua le mauvais effet qu'avait produit sur sa femme la découverte que Swann avait des amitiés puissantes dont il n'avait jamais parlé" (Proust I 457-459). After revealing to the Verdurins and their guests the high society of which Swann is an honorary member, Madame Verdurin no longer appreciates his presence and he slowly stops appearing at their nightly salon.

Despite the efforts of Mme Verdurin to damage the relationship between Swann and Odette by encouraging an affair between Odette and M. de Forcheville, Swann still marries Odette, only several years later and after Odette has already given birth to their daughter, Gilberte. Once married, Swann leaves behind the Ile-Saint-Louis for the western most corner of the city, nearly in the Bois de Boulogne, a neighborhood then called the quartier du Bois, now called des Ternes. Swann has therefore finally succumbed to the general westward movement of the Parisian high society that he had resisted for so long in his seventeenth-century bunker on the Ile-Saint-Louis. Leaving the constricted center for the more spacious, private, and exclusive neighborhoods beyond the Madeleine, his new home is located even farther to the west than the Plaine Monceau. However, now that Swann is living in the neighborhood, the narrator no longer finds unpleasant evidence of the previous existence of this part of Paris as once external to the capital. The rue des Acacias is even farther from the center than Odette's rue La Pérouse. The difference in appreciation shows how quickly this area of Paris developed into an elegant and desirable neighborhood in the years

following the Second Empire. The rue des Acacias is even more modern than the rue La Pérouse, “Cette rue résulte d’une impasse créée en 1814 et prolongée, en 1820, jusqu’à l’avenue des Ternes; c’était alors une allée d’acacias, qui disparurent vers 1877” (Hillairet 65). The Swann family, Charles, Odette, and their daughter, Gilberte, are found in the 1890s living on the avenue des Acacias, known today simply as the rue des Acacias. Despite being called the rue des Acacias, it is in the Bois de Boulogne on the allée des Acacias where Odette walks daily under the acacia trees that no longer line the street where she lives with Swann and her daughter. The narrator also walks in the Bois de Boulogne, observing Odette on both the allée des Acacias and the allée de la Reine-Marguertie, “Mme Swann à pied, dans une polonaise de drap, sur la tête un petit toquet agrémenté d’une aile de lophophore, un bouquet de violettes au corsage, pressée, traversant l’allée des Acacias comme si ç’avait été seulement le chemin le plus court pour rentrer chez elle et répondant d’un clin d’œil aux messieurs en voiture qui, reconnaissant de loin sa silhouette, la saluaient et se disaient que personne n’avait autant de chic” (Proust II 422-423). At the time, the rue des Acacias was therefore considered so close to the Bois de Boulogne that members of the Swann family easily crossed the park on their way home.

While Swann’s new home in the neighborhood of les Ternes is not quite as luxurious as one might imagine, the narrator believes it to be quite magical, especially the stairs, despite the overwhelming evidence of normality, “Cet escalier, d’ailleurs, tout en bois comme on faisait alors dans certaines maisons de rapport de ce style Henri II qui avait été si longtemps l’idéal d’Odette et dont elle devait bientôt se déprendre, et pourvu d’une pancarte sans équivalent chez nous, sur laquelle on lisait ces mots: ‘Défense de se servir de l’ascenseur pour descendre’, me semblait quelque chose de tellement prestigieux que je dis à mes parents que c’était un escalier ancien rapporté de très loin par M. Swann. Mon amour de la vérité était si grand que je n’aurais pas hésité à leur donner ce renseignement même si j’avais su qu’il était faux, car seul il pouvait leur permettre d’avoir pour la dignité de l’escalier des Swann le même respect que moi... Mais comme je n’avais aucun esprit d’observation, comme en général je ne savais ni le nom ni l’espèce des choses qui se trouvaient

sous mes yeux, et comprenais seulement que, quand elles approchaient les Swann, elles devaient être extraordinaires, il ne me parut pas certain qu'en avertissant mes parents de leur valeur artistique et de la provenance lointaine de cet escalier, je commis un mensonge" (Proust III 160-162). The narrator's father, however, clues him into the unfortunate and disappointing truth that there is nothing extraordinary about the Swann family home, "mon père m'interrompt en disant: 'Je connais ces maisons-là; j'en ai vu une, elles sont toutes pareilles; Swann occupe simplement plusieurs étages, c'est Berlier qui les a construites'. Il ajouta qu'il avait voulu louer dans l'une d'elles, mais qu'il y avait renoncé, ne les trouvant pas commodes et l'entrée pas assez claire; il le dit; mais je sentis instinctivement que mon esprit devait faire au prestige des Swann et à mon bonheur les sacrifices nécessaires, et par un coup d'autorité, j'écartai à tout jamais de moi, comme un dévot la *Vie de Jésus* de Renan, la pensée dissolvante que leur appartement était un appartement quelconque que nous aurions pu habiter" (Proust III 162-163). The narrator spends a good amount of time in the Swann home, first for the elegant snack given by Gilberte and later as a guest of Madame Swann. However, the narrator first becomes acquainted with Gilberte in the park of the Champs-Élysées where he walks with the family help, Françoise. Although this western corner of the city is quite lush with gardens, it is still not as luxurious and mythical as the area around the parc Monceau, "Un petit bout de jardin avec quelques arbres qui paraîtrait mesquin à la campagne, prend un charme extraordinaire avenue Gabriel, ou bien rue de Monceau, où des multimillionnaires seuls peuvent se l'offrir..." (Proust X 283). Swann, on the rue des Acacias, ultimately leads a fairly normal existence, unlike Ephrussi or the Camondo cousins.

Over the course of the novel and his marriage to Odette, Swann slowly falls from grace, at least in the eyes of the narrator's family, if not for the whole of Parisian high society. When the narrator's parents invite M. de Norpois, the French Ambassador to Russia, to dinner, they are careful not to offend the good taste of the aristocratic politician and refrain from inviting Swann, "mon père répondit qu'un convive éminent, un savant illustre, comme Cottard, ne pouvait jamais mal faire dans un dîner, mais que Swann, avec son ostentation, avec sa manière de crier sur les toits ses moindres relations, était un vulgaire esbrouffeur que le

marquis de Norpois eût sans doute trouvé, selon son expression, ‘puant’... il était arrivé qu’au ‘fils Swann’ et aussi au Swann du Jockey, l’ancien ami de mes parents avait ajouté une personnalité nouvelle (et qui ne devait pas être la dernière), celle de mari d’Odette” (Proust III 5). All of Swann’s pre-Odette acquaintances are stunned to find a once elegant and refined man changed to someone utterly opposite, “Adaptant aux humbles ambitions de cette femme, l’instinct, le désir, l’industrie, qu’il avait toujours eus, il s’était ingénié à se bâtir, fort au-dessous de l’ancienne, une position nouvelle et appropriée à la compagne qui l’occuperait avec lui. Or il s’y montrait un autre homme. Puisque... c’était une seconde vie qu’il commençait, en commun avec sa femme, au milieu d’êtres nouveaux” (Proust III 5-6). For Swann the process of social ascension has been reversed. He has married below his social station and is seeking to create a new identity, a new family, with Odette’s relations and not his own that are particularly distinguished with aristocratic titles, “Mais, même quand on savait que c’était avec d’inélégants fonctionnaires, avec des femmes tarées, parure des bals de ministères, qu’il désirait de se lier, on était étonné de l’entendre, lui qui autrefois et même encore aujourd’hui dissimulait si gracieusement une invitation de Twickenham ou de Buckingham Palace, faire sonner bien haut que la femme d’un sous-chef de cabinet était venue rendre sa visite à Mme Swann” (Proust III 6-7). The narrator’s family witnesses this strange reversal in Swann’s status, going backwards through a process of assimilation, from French to Jewish, “comme certains israélites, l’ancien ami de mes parents avait pu présenter tour à tour les états successifs par où avaient passé ceux de sa race depuis le snobisme le plus naïf et la plus grossière goujaterie, jusqu’à la plus fine politesse... Swann empressé avec ces nouvelles relations et les citant avec fierté, était comme ces grands artistes modestes ou généreux qui, s’ils se mettent à la fin de leur vie à se mêler de cuisine ou de jardinage, étalent une satisfaction naïve des louanges qu’on donne à leurs plats ou à leurs plates-bandes pour lesquels ils n’admettent pas la critique qu’ils acceptent aisément s’il s’agit de leurs chefs-d’œuvre; ou bien qui, donnant une de leurs toiles pour rien, ne peuvent en revanche sans mauvaise humeur perdre quarante sous aux dominos” (Proust III 5-8). In Swann’s

complete devotion to, and infatuation with, Odette, he is entirely blind to this significant and permanent change in his personality.

The narrator's parents are, however, stunned when they find out that the aristocratic ambassador, M. de Norpois, accepted an invitation to the Swann's home, choosing to attend a party at the Swanns' instead of attending an important business event, " — Est-ce que vous étiez hier au banquet des Affaires étrangères ? je n'ai pas pu y aller, dit mon père. — Non, répondit M. de Norpois avec un sourire, j'avoue que je l'ai délaissé pour une soirée assez différente. J'ai dîné chez une femme dont vous avez peut-être entendu parler, la belle Madame Swann" (Proust III 76). M. de Norpois describes the curious male to female ration, at the parties held by Charles and Odette Swann, largely unbalanced with the male side of the scale heavier, similar to the salon held by the Verdurin couple, " — Mon Dieu... c'est une maison où il me semble que vont surtout... des messieurs. Il y avait quelques hommes mariés, mais leurs femmes étaient souffrantes ce soir-là et n'étaient pas venues, répondit l'Ambassadeur avec une finesse voilée de bonhomie et en jetant autour de lui des regards dont la douceur et la discrétion faisaient mine de tempérer et exagéraient habilement la malice" (Proust III 77). The variety of guests in attendance at the Swann home is nevertheless poorly considered and reflects badly on Swann, "En tout cas, il y a une chose curieuse, c'est de voir combien Swann, qui connaît tant de monde et du plus choisi, montre d'empressement auprès d'une société dont le moins qu'on puisse dire est qu'elle est fort mêlée" (Proust III 79) The few women present are of a certain genre with which proper company would not like to spend an evening, " — Je dois ajouter, pour être tout à fait juste, qu'il y va cependant des femmes, mais... appartenant plutôt... comment dirais-je, au monde républicain qu'à la société de Swann" (Proust III 78). Although Swann has already moved from the Ile-Saint-Louis by the time M. de Norpois is a guest at his dinner party, his chance to revive the group of artists, writers, and their female muses, models and companions in an artistic literary and socially liberal salon has not expired "Qui sait ? Ce sera peut-être un jour un salon politique ou littéraire" (Proust III 78). Swann, however, lacks the kind of company needed for an artistic gathering, and Odette's entourage is not worthy

of reviving the artistic, aristocratic, and bohemian atmosphere of the Hôtel Pimodan on the Ile-Saint-Louis. The change in his social standing that his marriage with Odette has brought about leaves Swann in an unfavorable light, “il semble qu’ils soient contents comme cela. Je trouve que Swann le montre un peu trop. Il nommait les gens chez qui lui et sa femme étaient invités pour la semaine suivante et de l’intimité desquels il n’y a pourtant pas lieu de s’enorgueillir, avec un manque de réserve et de goût, presque de tact, qui m’a étonné chez un homme aussi fin. Il répétait: ‘Nous n’avons pas un soir de libre’, comme si ç’avait été une gloire, et un véritable parvenu, qu’il n’est pas cependant” (Proust III 77-78). Similar to the actual Jewish figures of the Third Republic, Swann remains welcome in the high society as long as he knows his place and does not overtly flaunt his wealth and social success. When his comportment changes from refined to ostentatious with his marriage to Odette, he is no longer entirely welcome in the high society that he previously frequented.

Before his marriage to Odette, Swann was what the Parisian high society considered the ideal Israelite, intellectual, artistic, wealthy, but also modest and humble. Once Swann marries Odette, he begins listing his friends to others and bragging about his busy social life. It would have been more understandably had Swann boasted about the company he kept before Odette, “on eût encore compris que pour mesurer le rang de ceux-ci, et par conséquent le plaisir d’amour-propre qu’il pouvait éprouver à les recevoir, il se fût servi, comme un point de comparaison, non pas des gens les plus brillants qui formaient sa société avant son mariage, mais des relations antérieures d’Odette” (Proust III 6). Although Swann cannot visit his aristocratic friends with his wife, due to her reputation, he seems to have never given up his social ambitions. He secretly hopes to one day present his wife and daughter to the duchesse de Guermantes, a dream realized only after his death, “Il n’y avait eu dans le monde qu’une seule personne dont il se fût préoccupé, chaque fois qu’il avait pensé à son mariage possible avec Odette, c’était, et non par snobisme, la duchesse de Guermantes... quand Swann dans ses heures de rêverie voyait Odette devenue sa femme, il se représentait invariablement le moment où il l’amènerait, elle et surtout sa fille, chez la princesse des Laumes, devenue

bientôt la duchesse de Guermantes par la mort de son beau-père. Il ne désirait pas les présenter ailleurs, mais il s'attendrissait quand il inventait, en énonçant les mots eux-mêmes, tout ce que la duchesse dirait de lui à Odette, et Odette à Mme de Guermantes, la tendresse que celle-ci témoignerait à Gilberte, la gâtant, le rendant fier de sa fille. Il se jouait à lui-même la scène de la présentation avec la même précision dans le détail imaginaire qu'ont les gens qui examinent comment ils emploieraient, s'ils gagnaient, un lot dont ils fixent arbitrairement le chiffre. Dans la mesure où une image qui accompagne une de nos résolutions la motive, on peut dire que si Swann épousa Odette, ce fut pour le présenter elle et Gilberte, sans qu'il y eût personne là, au besoins sans que personne le sût jamais, à la duchesse de Guermantes. On verra comment cette seule ambition mondaine qu'il avait souhaitée pour sa femme et sa fille fut justement celle dont la réalisation se trouva lui être interdite, et par un veto si absolu que Swann mourut sans supposer que la duchesse pourrait jamais les connaître" (Proust III 87-89).

Swann's possibility of greater social ascension disappears with his marriage to Odette despite the place that he had carved himself in the exclusive aristocratic society of which very few of Jewish heritage were welcome, "Parmi les gens qui trouvaient ce genre de mariage ridicule, gens qui pour eux-mêmes se demandaient: 'Que pensera M. de Guermantes, que dira Bréauté, quand j'épouserai Mlle de Montmorency?', parmi les gens ayant cette sorte d'idéal social, aurait figuré, vingt ans plus tôt, Swann lui-même. Swann qui s'était donné du mal pour être reçu au Jockey et avait compté dans ce temps-là faire un éclatant mariage qui eût achevé, en consolidant sa situation, de faire de lui un des hommes les plus en vue de Paris" (Proust III 85-86). Even if he had remained friends with some of his pre-Odette aristocratic friends, he loses any chance of recuperation when the Dreyfus Affair erupts in France and he chooses to support the Jewish army captain, "Pareille aux kaléidoscopes qui tournent de temps en temps, la société place successivement de façon différente des éléments qu'on avait crus immuables et compose une autre figure. Je n'avais pas encore fait ma première communion, que des dames bien pensantes avaient la stupéfaction de rencontrer en visite une Juive élégante. Ces dispositions nouvelles du kaléidoscope sont produites par ce

critère. L'affaire Dreyfus en amena un nouveau, à une époque un peu postérieure à celle où je commençais à aller chez Mme Swann, et le kaléidoscope renversa une fois de plus ses petits losanges colorés. Tout ce qui était juif passa en bas, fût-ce la dame élégante, et des nationalistes obscurs montèrent prendre sa place” (Proust III 186). According to the narrator, the Dreyfus Affair was a major turning point for the Jewish community of France, “Au moment où j’allai chez Mme Swann, l’affaire Dreyfus n’avait pas encore éclaté, et certains grands Juifs étaient forts puissants” (Proust III 187-188). The Dreyfus Affair, however, was not the first event to rattle the position of Jews in French society and Proust’s narrative neglects to reveal the extent to which anti-Semitism had already made the Jews in France very unfavorable.

By mid-nineteenth century, several events had led to the decline in relations between Jews and their non-Jewish neighbors in France. The Damascus Affair in 1840, in which the Jewish community of Damascus was accused of ritually killing a Catholic priest, had renewed beliefs in France that it was Jewish tradition to consume Catholic blood. The Egdardo Mortara Affair in 1858, in which a Jewish boy in Bologna Italy was baptized by a Catholic servant and subsequently taken away by Pope Pius IX to be raised as a Catholic, incited a dangerously heated debate in France, particularly between the Catholic ultramontane journalist, Louis Veuillot, writing for *L’Univers*, and different writers of *Le Journal des débats*. The collapse of the Catholic bank, the Union Générale in 1882, encouraged the myth of a Jewish plot of world domination. Edouard Drumont’s highly anti-Semitic work of non-fiction, *La France juive*, published in 1886, was wildly popular and perilously injurious to the Jews of France. After all of these events, the Dreyfus Affair was merely the culmination of a century of increasing discontent within the French population that increasingly blamed society’s ills on the Jews, represented by a small but very visible and excessively affluent elite. However, the Dreyfus Affair did not simply pit French-Catholics against French-Jews, it drove rifts between every level of society. In Proust’s novel, this division is seen at the level of the haute bourgeoisie and aristocracy where the *dreyfusards* are few and far between. The aristocracy is in particular decidedly against

Dreyfus with one exception, the narrator's best friend, the marquis de Saint-Loup, sole member of the Guermantes to rebel against family solidarity in support of the Captain Dreyfus.

When Swann comes out as a supporter of Dreyfus, his once glorious position in the aristocratic society falls even lower. If Alfred Dreyfus betrayed France, Charles Swann is seen as betraying his aristocratic friends in siding with the Jewish Captain. Members of the Guermantes family express feelings of betrayal concerning Swann and his support of Captain Dreyfus. The discussion between Monsieur de Guermantes and the Général de Froberville concerning Swann's choice to side with Dreyfus is highly revealing in terms of how the French opinion of the Jews in France changed drastically for the worse with the Dreyfus Affaire, “ — Je ne discuterai pas de politique avec vous, Froberville, dit M. de Guermantes, mais, pour ce qui concerne Swann, je peux dire franchement que sa conduite à notre égard a été inqualifiable. Patronné jadis dans le monde par nous, par le duc de Chartres, on me dit qu'il est ouvertement dreyfusard. Jamais je n'aurais cru cela de lui, de lui un fin gourmet, un esprit positif, un collectionneur, un amateur de vieux livres, membre du Jockey, un homme entouré de la considération générale, un connaisseur de bonnes adresses qui nous envoyait le meilleur porto qu'on puisse boire, un dilettante, un père de famille. Ah ! j'ai été bien trompé. Je ne parle pas de moi... mais rien pour Oriane, il n'aurait pas dû faire cela, il aurait dû désavouer ouvertement les Juifs et les sectateurs du condamné... Oui, après l'amitié que lui a toujours témoignée ma femme, reprit le duc, qui considérait évidemment que condamner Dreyfus pour haute trahison, quelque opinion qu'on eût dans son for intérieur sur sa culpabilité, constituait une espèce de remerciement pour la façon dont on avait été reçu dans le faubourg Saint-Germain, il aurait dû se désolidariser. Car, demandez à Oriane, elle avait vraiment de l'amitié pour lui... — Mais c'est vrai, je n'ai aucune raison de cacher que j'avais une sincère affection pour Charles ! — Là, vous voyez, je ne lui fais pas dire. Et après cela, il pousse l'ingratitude jusqu'à être dreyfusard ! ...À propos de dreyfusards... il paraît que le prince Von l'est. — Ah ! vous faites bien de me parler de lui, s'écria M. de Guermantes, j'allais oublier qu'il m'a demandé de venir dîner lundi. Mais, qu'il soit dreyfusard ou non, cela m'est parfaitement égal puisqu'il est étranger... Pour un

Français, c'est autre chose. Il est vrai que Swann est juif. Mais jusqu'à ce jour—excusez-moi, Froberville—j'avais eu la faiblesse de croire qu'un juif peut être Français, j'entends un juif honorable, homme du monde. Or Swann était cela dans toute la force du terme. Hé bien ! il me force à reconnaître que je me suis trompé, puisqu'il prend parti pour ce Dreyfus (qui, coupable ou non, ne fait nullement partie de son milieu, qu'il n'aurait jamais rencontré) contre une société qui l'avait adopté, qui l'avait traité comme un des siens" (Proust IX 163-164). The remarks exchanged between the Guermantes and their friends concerning Swann and his position on the Dreyfus Affair expose both the social situation in which Swann finds himself after coming out as a supporter of Dreyfus and the disadvantaged position of the Jews of France. The Dreyfus affair made France question profoundly the revolutionary decision taken over a century earlier to emancipate the Jews. The non-Jewish French population was rife with intense feelings of betrayal, believing that their Jewish neighbors, who they once believed capable of becoming French and in whom they once had confidence as equal French citizens, had duped them. In Proust's novel, the Guermantes family, believing in their superiority as members of the aristocracy, also believes that Swann should have condemned Dreyfus out of respect for the family's reputation and for their benevolent friendship to him, as if Swann were indebted to the Guermantes for having accepted him in their society on nearly equal footing.

Paying little attention to the implications of a national crisis, the aristocracy is more concerned about their reputation and more worried that it has been damaged by association with a Dreyfus supporter than interested in finding the truth concerning the affair of treason. When the marquise de Villeparisis finds herself in the company of Albert Bloch, the duc and duchesse de Guermantes, and her *anti-dreyfusard* archivist, M. Vallenères, her greatest fear is what her esteemed guests will think of her once they have understood that she has invited a Jew into her home, "Cependant, ayant entendu le nom de Bloch, il le voyait poser des questions à M. de Norpois avec une inquiétude qui éveilla une différente mais aussi forte chez la marquise. Tremblant devant l'archiviste et faisant l'antidreyfusarde avec lui, elle craignant ses reproches s'il se rendait compte qu'elle avait reçu un Juif plus ou moins affilié au 'syndicat' " (Proust VII

118). The aristocracy of Proust's Parisian society and those who aspire to belong to this highest level of society believe that it is necessary to profess their opinions against Dreyfus as a form of allegiance. The Guermantes in particular see any sympathy for Dreyfus as a treason, " — De quoi palabrent-ils là-bas dans un coin, demanda M. de Guermantes à Mme de Villeparisis en montrant M. de Norpois et Bloch. — De l'affaire Dreyfus. — Ah ! diable ! À propos, saviez-vous qui est partisan enragé de Dreyfus ? Je vous le donne en mille. Mon neveu Robert ! Je vous dirai même qu'au Jockey, quand on a appris ces prouesses, cela a été une levée de boucliers, un véritable tollé. Comme on le présente dans huit jours... — Évidemment, interrompit la duchesse, s'ils sont tous comme Gilbert (prince de Guermantes) qui a toujours soutenu qu'il fallait renvoyer tous les Juifs à Jérusalem... — Qu'est-ce qu'il vous prend de nous parler de Gilbert et de Jérusalem ? dit-il enfin. Il ne s'agit pas de cela. Mais, ajouta-t-il d'un ton radouci, vous m'avouerez que si un des nôtres était refusé au Jockey, et surtout Robert dont le père y a été président pendant dix ans, ce serait un comble. Que voulez-vous, ma chère, ça les a fait tiquer, ces gens, ils ont ouvert de gros yeux. Je ne peux pas leur donner tort; personnellement vous savez que je n'ai aucun préjugé de races, je trouve que ce n'est pas de notre époque et j'ai la prétention de marcher avec mon temps, mais enfin, que diable ! quand on s'appelle le marquis de Saint-Loup, on n'est pas dreyfusard, que voulez-vous que je vous dise" (Proust VII 114-115). Swann's own wife is willing to betray her husband in order to maintain and even elevate her social standing, "Mme Swann, voyant les proportions que prenait l'affaire Dreyfus et craignant que les origines de son mari ne se tournassent contre elle, l'avait supplié de ne plus jamais parler de l'innocence du condamné. Quand il n'était pas là, elle allait plus loin et faisait profession du nationalisme le plus ardent; elle ne faisait que suivre en cela d'ailleurs Mme Verdurin chez qui un antisémitisme bourgeois et latent s'était réveillé et avait atteint une véritable exaspération. Mme Swann avait gagné à cette attitude d'entrer dans quelques-unes des ligues de femmes du monde antisémite qui commençaient à se former et avait noué des relations avec plusieurs personnes de l'aristocratie" (Proust VII 151-152). The Dreyfus Affair thus appears to bring out both the best and the worst in the Parisian world of Proust. Those who support Dreyfus do so for

honorable reasons, believing in justice over religiously or racially biased persecution. Those who are against Dreyfus are however characterized by a profound lack of sincerity and a deep-seeded insecurity concerning their position in society.

As an outspoken supporter of Dreyfus, Swann is a Jewish figure in the minority. In reality, the Jewish community in France was not forthcoming about their opinions concerning the affair, expressing affinities neither for those who proclaimed Dreyfus' innocence nor for those who denounced his guilt. Many French Jews did not come out in defense of Dreyfus, preferring to remain silent simply because they feared losing their privileges as French citizens and their comfortable place in French society, "le non-engagement politique raffiné et intelligent des intellectuels juifs au début du siècle était en effet la garantie de leur rédemption sociale, de leur vivacité d'esprit, mais aussi de l'absence de sentiment de caste et de solidarité" (Piperno 73). There were however some rare figures, like Bernard Lazare, who devoted nearly the remainder of his life to the Dreyfus Affair and the Jewish situation in Europe, who did speak out in support of Dreyfus. The terrain was nevertheless slippery and demanded that one make exceptions or be willing to show some tolerance. Proust, like Swann, frequented individuals and various milieu in which his belief in the innocence of Dreyfus was not shared, "*seuls deux apolitiques comme Marcel Proust et Charles Swann pouvaient supporter la fréquentation l'un de Mme Greffulbe et l'autre de Mme de Guermantes en ne tenant pas compte du sentiment aigre que les deux dames inénarrables devaient éprouver pour la race juive*" (Piperno 73). The opinions of the aristocracy as represented by the Guermantes in Proust's novel demonstrate the complexity of the Jewish position in French society during the Dreyfus Affair. When French Jews supported Dreyfus' innocence, they were accused of choosing Jewish solidarity over French nationalism and were seen as reneging a century of assimilation to, and integration in, French culture. The Jewish community of France had to be very cautious in their position concerning the Dreyfus Affair since they risked appearing to professing anti-French, pro-Jewish, pro-German ideals. The Jews of France found themselves in an impossible position when it came to the Dreyfus Affair.

In advocating on the behalf of Dreyfus, Swann ultimately completes his disassociation, begun with his marriage to Odette, with the aristocratic company that he had kept earlier in his life. Instead, he finds a new place in a small group, including Albert Bloch, the narrator, and Robert de Saint-Loup-en-Brey, the sole Guermantes to break with the rest of the family and support Dreyfus. The Guermantes are however convinced that Saint-Loup, their nephew, has been influenced by his Jewish girlfriend, Rachel, a prostitute who becomes an actress, “Il y a une donzelle, une cascadeuse de la pire espèce, qui a plus d’influence sur lui et qui est précisément compatriote du sieur Dreyfus. Elle a passé à Robert son état s’esprit” (Proust VII 116-118). Swann’s disaffiliation with the aristocratic society, where he was once accepted without question despite his non-aristocratic, Jewish origin, is compared to Stefan Zweig’s experience with Nazi Germany in the 1930s and 1940s, “La découverte que fait Zweig de la souffrance de la discrimination nazie, suivie de son adhésion tardive au judaïsme... est en tous points semblable au dreyfusisme ultime de Swann qui à la fin de sa vie—après une existence passée dans l’aisance de l’aristocratie et après avoir considéré le faubourg Saint-Germain, lors de son éloignement du salon Verdurin, comme le berceau confortable prêt à l’accueillir et à soigner ses peines d’amour—comprend qu’un mur infranchissable le sépare des membres de ce milieu... Cette incompréhension est illustrée justement par la peine profonde qu’il éprouve à l’égard du sort terrible du capitaine Dreyfus, qu’aucun non-Juif ne pourrait jamais éprouver. À travers les dernières images compatissantes de Swann, Proust nous repropose l’ancienne formule schopenhauerienne, le leitmotiv funèbre qui parcourt toute l’œuvre : *seul un juif peut être indulgent pour un juif, seul un aristocrate peut connaître un aristocrate, seul un bourgeois peut être ému par un bourgeois*” (Piperno 74). After spending the majority of his life in societies that were ultimately not his own, the aristocracy of the Guermantes and the bourgeoisie of Odette and the Verdurin, Swann eventually finds himself without any society at all, except the friendship of the narrator, Bloch, and Saint-Loup, a sort of “petite société juive” and a mixture of marginalized figures.

Conclusion:

Although it is far from the last in *La Recherche*, it is with a particular scene in the home of the princesses de Guermantes in the volume *Sodome et Gomorrhe* that this chapter will close. This scene is made possible by the possible revision of the Dreyfus Affair and future exoneration of the Jewish army captain. Despite the difference in opinion between the “petite société juive”, including Swann, Bloch, Saint-Loup, and the narrator, and the majority of the Parisian high society and aristocracy, they all find themselves at the home of Oriane, princesse de Guermantes. As the narrator is a close neighbor of the princesse de Guermantes, living in apartments contiguous to the Parisian Hôtel Guermantes, he is invited to an evening salon. The narrator, along with the Guermantes, live in a hôtel particulier that is most likely located in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré neighborhood, despite the aristocratic Faubourg Saint-Germain identity of the Guermantes family, proving Balzac’s belief that the quartier Saint-Germain is a culture and not a limited, physical location in the city. Earlier in the novel the narrator offers a glimpse of the setting inhabited by the narrator and the Guermantes: “...notre nouveau quartier paraissait aussi calme que le boulevard sur lequel nous avions donné jusque-là était bruyant... Françoise, avec l’infidélité des femmes, revint en disant qu’elle avait cru étouffer sur notre ancien boulevard, que pour s’y rendre elle s’était trouvée toute ‘déroutée’, que jamais elle n’avait pas vu des escaliers si mal commodes, qu’elle ne retournerait pas habiter là-bas ‘pour un empire’... que tout était beaucoup mieux agencé dans notre nouvelle maison. Or, il est temps de dire que celle-ci—et nous étions venus y habiter parce que ma grand-mère ne se portant pas très bien, raison que nous étions gardés de lui donner, avait besoin d’un air plus pur—était un appartement qui dépendait de l’hôtel de Guermantes” (Proust IV 7-9). If one imagines the narrator’s story as paralleling Proust’s own history, or a creative mixture of his mother’s and his mother’s family’s trajectory across the city, the move made by the narrator’s family then resembles Jeanne Weil’s move from her parent’s home on rue Hauteville, in the increasingly cramped and industrial neighborhood of the faubourg Poissonnière, to the boulevard Malesherbes and later the rue de Courcelles. Although Proust’s mother most likely never shared a hôtel

particulier with an aristocratic family, the neighborhood of the Plaine Monceau, was certainly an aristocratic destination.

The trend of movement away from crowded areas corresponds historically to social ascension, “À toutes les phases de l’histoire, le Paris de la haute classe et de la noblesse a eu son centre... Cette singularité périodique offre une ample matière aux réflexions de ceux qui veulent observer ou peindre les différentes zones sociales ; et peut-être ne doit-on pas en rechercher les causes seulement pour justifier le caractère de cette aventure, mais aussi pour servir à de graves intérêts, plus vivaces dans l’avenir que dans le présent, si toutefois l’expérience n’est pas un non-sens pour les partis comme pour la jeunesse. Les grands seigneurs et les gens riches, qui singent toujours les grands seigneurs, ont, à toutes les époques, éloigné leurs maisons des endroits très habités. Si le duc d’Uzès es bâti, sous le règne de Louis XIV, le bel hôtel à la porte duquel il mit la fontaine de la rue Montmartre, acte de bienfaisance qui le rendit, outre ses vertus, l’objet d’une vénération si populaire que le quartier suivit en masse son convoi, ce coin de Paris était alors désert. Mais aussitôt que les fortifications s’abattirent, que les marais situés au-delà des boulevards s’emplirent de maisons, la famille d’Uzès quitta ce bel hôtel, habité de nos jours par un banquier. Puis la noblesse, comprise au milieu des boutiques, abandonna la place Royale, les alentours du centre parisien, et passa la rivière afin de pouvoir respirer à son aise dans le faubourg Saint-Germain, où déjà des palais s’étaient élevés autour de l’hôtel bâti par Louis XIV au duc de Maine, le Benjamin des ses légitimes. Pour les gens accoutumés aux splendeurs de la vie, est-il en effet rien de plus ignoble que le tumulte, la boue, les cris, la mauvaise odeur, l’étroitesse des rues populeuses ? Les habitudes d’un quartier marchand ou manufacturier ne sont-elles pas constamment en désaccord avec les habitudes des Grands ? Le Commerce et le Travail se couchent au moment où l’aristocratie songe à dîner, les uns s’agitent bruyamment quand l’autre se repose; leurs calculs ne se rencontrent jamais, les uns sont la recette, et l’autre la dépense” (Balzac, *Duchesse de Langeais* 45-47). We saw that Proust’s own maternal family, the Weil and the Berncastel, followed this pattern first traced by the nobles and the royalty. Moving from the Marais, to the faubourg Poissonnière, to the neighborhood around

the parc Monceau, boulevard Malesherbes and rue de Courcelles. While both the narrator and Charles Swann follow this westward trajectory, it is only the narrator who ascends socially. Contrary to the societal trend, Swann descends socially when he moves to the avenue des Acacias, but his social descent corresponds first to his marriage to Odette and then to his support of Captain Dreyfus and not the neighborhood in which he has chosen to move.

In years that the narrator spends living in proximity to the Guermantes family, sharing a courtyard with opposing windows, the Guermantes home, originally mystical and enchanting, eventually becomes fairly ordinary, “et ce qui m’était apparu autour de Mme de Guermantes comme sa demeure, ç’avait été son hôtel de Paris, l’hôtel de Guermantes, limpide comme son nom, car aucun élément matériel et opaque n’en venait interrompre et aveugler la transparence. Comme l’église ne signifie pas seulement le temple, mais aussi l’assemblée des fidèles, cet hôtel de Guermantes comprenait tous ceux qui partageait la vie de la duchesse, mais ces intimes que je n’avais jamais vus n’étaient pour moi que des noms célèbres et poétiques, et, connaissant uniquement des personnes qui n’étaient elles aussi que des noms, ne faisaient qu’agrandir et protéger le mystère de la duchesse en étendant autour d’elle un vaste halo qui allait tout au plus en se dégradant... Puis quand Saint-Loup m’eut raconté des anecdotes relatives au chapelain, aux jardiniers de sa cousine, l’hôtel de Guermantes était devenu—comme avait pu être autrefois quelque Louvre—une sorte de château entouré, au milieu de Paris même, de ses terres, possédé héréditairement, en vertu d’un droit antique bizarrement survivant, et sur lesquelles elle exerçait encore des privilèges féodaux. Mais cette dernière demeure s’était elle-même évanouie quand nous étions venus habiter tout près de Mme de Villeparisis un des appartements voisins de celui de Mme de Guermantes dans une aile de son hôtel. C’était une de ces vieilles demeures comme il en existe peut-être encore dans lesquelles la cour d’honneur—soit alluvions apportées par le flot montant de la démocratie, soit legs de temps plus anciens où les divers métiers étaient groupés autour du seigneur—avait souvent sur ses côtés des arrière-boutiques, des ateliers, voire quelque échoppe de cordonnier ou de tailleur, comme celles qu’on voit accotées aux flancs des cathédrales que

l'esthétique des ingénieurs n'a pas dégagées, un concierge savetier, qui élevait des poules et cultivait des fleurs—et au fond, dans le logis 'faisant hôtel', une 'comtesse' qui, quand elle sortait dans sa vieille calèche à deux chevaux, montrant sur son chapeau quelques capucines semblant échappées du jardinet de la loge (ayant à côté du cocher un valet de pied qui descendait corner des cartes à chaque hôtel aristocratique du quarter), envoyait indistinctement des sourires et de petits bonjours de la main aux enfants du portier et aux locataires bourgeois de l'immeuble qui passaient à ce moment-là et qu'elle confondait dans sa dédaigneuse affabilité et sa morgue égalitaire... Dans la maison que nous étions venus habiter, la grande dame du fond de la cour était une duchesse, élégante et encore jeune. C'était Mme de Guermantes" (Proust VI 18-22). Over time, the narrator becomes a regular in this aristocratic setting and the charm and mystery of the place dissipate. By the time he meets Swann in the Hôtel de Guermantes for the evening social of the princesse the narrator appears to be comfortable enough in this setting to move around freely and to astutely observe without being influenced by what has turned out to be somewhat superficial splendor.

Despite dissenting opinions, with the majority of the guests being *anti-dreyfusard* at the home of the princesse de Guermantes, those in favor of Dreyfus are still invited and present at the party. When the narrator encounters Swann, the visible physical signs of his friend's sickness catch him by surprise. Swann's condition has influenced his appearance to a point that it has become impossible for him to pass unobserved, "J'eus enfin le plaisir que Swann entrât dans cette pièce, qui était fort grande, si bien qu'il ne m'aperçut pas d'abord. Plaisir mêlé de tristesse, d'une tristesse que n'éprouvaient peut-être pas les autres invités, mais qui chez eux consistait dans cette espèce de fascination qu'exercent les formes inattendues et singulières d'une mort prochaine, d'une mort qu'on a déjà, comme le dit le peuple, sur le visage. Et c'est avec une stupéfaction presque désobligeante, où il entraît de la curiosité indiscreète, de la cruauté, un retour à la fois quiet et soucieux... que tous les regards s'attachèrent à ce visage duquel la maladie avait si bien rongé les joues, comme une lune décroissante, que, sauf sous un certain angle, celui sans doute sous lequel Swann se regardait, elles tournaient court comme un décor inconsistant auquel une illusion d'optique peut seule

ajouter l'apparence de l'épaisseur" (Proust IX 188-189). Furthermore, age and ailments have brought out some significant Jewish traits that had once been so artfully disguised under the artistic, eccentric, and intellectual persona that Swann had so long cultivated for Parisian society, "Soit à cause de l'absence de ces joues qui n'étaient plus là pour le diminuer, soit que l'artériosclérose, qui est une intoxication aussi, le rougît comme eût fait l'ivrognerie, ou le déformât comme eût fait la morphine, le nez de polichinelle de Swann, longtemps résorbé dans un visage agréable, semblait maintenant énorme, tuméfié, cramoisi, plutôt celui d'un vieil Hébreu que d'un curieux Valois. D'ailleurs peut-être chez lui, en ces derniers jours, la race faisait-elle apparaître plus accusé le type physique qui la caractérise, en même temps que le sentiment d'une solidarité morale avec les autres Juifs, solidarité que Swann semblait avoir oubliée toute sa vie, et que greffées les unes sur les autres, la maladie mortelle, l'affaire Dreyfus, la propagande antisémite, avaient réveillée. Il y a certains Israélites, très fins pourtant et mondains délicats, chez lesquels restent en réserve et dans la coulisse, afin de faire leur entrée à une heure donnée de leur vie, comme dans une pièce, un mufler et un prophète. Swann était arrivé à l'âge du prophète" (Proust IX 189-190). Swann appears to have greatly suffered over the last several years, worn down by various events and circumstances that have greatly destabilized his place in society. His perpetual jealousy of Odette, who never stops cheating on him, the Dreyfus Affair and his belief in the innocence of Dreyfus, and his rejection from the Parisian high society due to his marriage and his support of Dreyfus, have all contributed to his the progressive decline in his health.

Seeking out like-minded company, Swann evokes their common belief in the innocence of Dreyfus when he reaches the narrator and Saint-Loup across the busy salon, "Swann m'ayant aperçu s'approcha de Saint-Loup et de moi. La gaieté juive était chez Swann moins fine que les plaisanteries d'un homme du monde. 'Bonsoir, nous dit-il. Mon Dieu ! tous trois ensemble, on va croire à une réunion de syndicat. Pour peu on va chercher où est la caisse !' Il ne s'était pas aperçu que M. de Beuserfeuil était dans son dos et l'entendait. Le général fronça involontairement les sourcils" (IX 204-205). In a private conversation Swann designates the narrator as his worthy confidant and Swann divulges a discussion that he had with the prince

de Guermantes. We learn that the prince de Guermantes has admitted to avoiding Swann for two years due to Swann's Jewish identity and his support of Dreyfus. The Prince, however, eventually confesses his mistake in not supporting Dreyfus' innocence. Revealing to Swann his appreciation of the military stemming from a long family tradition of participating in the military, he also concedes how difficult it was to accept at once that Dreyfus was innocent and that the army was in fact guilty of a grievous error. Swann, who had once been close friends with the prince de Guermantes, is so intensely moved by this admission that he shields the Prince from the eagerness Bloch, desiring to solicit the Prince for his signature on behalf of Picquart, the military man who had uncovered all the lies behind the Dreyfus affair, "Mais Swann, mêlant à son ardente conviction d'Israélite la modération diplomatique du mondain, dont il avait trop pris les habitudes pour pouvoir si tardivement s'en défaire, refusa d'autoriser Bloch à envoyer au Prince, même comme spontanément, une circulaire à signer. 'Il ne peut pas faire cela, il ne faut pas demander l'impossible, répétait Swann. Voilà un homme charmant qui a fait des milliers de lieues pour venir jusqu'à nous. Il peut nous être très utile. S'il signait votre liste, il se compromettrait simplement auprès des siens, serait châtié à cause de nous, peut-être se repentirait-il de ses confidences et n'en ferait-il plus' " (Proust IX 236). While Swann's small gesture on behalf of his old aristocratic friend brings him back to his old socially graceful self, the concern that he shows for his friend who has been avoiding him for two years is described as a negative Jewish trait, "Chez Swann, il est possible de reconnaître aussi une contrefaçon de la douceur: son indulgence cosmique, qui pourrait correspondre à une bonté d'âme authentique, est au contraire une des nombreuses manifestations du snobisme juif, une tare congénitale" (Piperno 79-80). Finding even his own name too revelatory of his Jewish origins to put on the petition for Picquart, Swann refuses to sign despite his previous enthusiasm and engagement in the cause. The renewal of Swann's friendship with the prince de Guermantes brings out in Swann the unfortunate attitude that characterized the majority of the Jewish population in Paris during the Dreyfus Affair for whom silence was the privileged reaction, "selon le mot de Théodore Reinach, 'le silence du dédain'... La plupart des Juifs français acceptent la condamnation de

Dreyfus... Ils redoutent par-dessus tout de marquer une solidarité qui serait interprétée comme un soutien sectaire à l'un des leurs" (Bloch-Dano 291, 293-294). Despite Swann's continued support for the Captain Dreyfus, a possible rehabilitation in the Parisian high society convinces him to keep silent at the end.

Furthermore, Swann adopts his aristocratic friend's love of the military despite the horrendous treatment given the Captain Dreyfus and the explosion of anti-Semitism that resulted from the affair, "Et puis, s'il approuvait tout ce qui touchait à la révision, il ne voulait être mêlé en rien à la campagne antimilitariste. Il portait ce qu'il n'avait jamais fait jusque-là, la décoration qu'il avait gagnée comme tout jeune mobile, en 70, et ajouta à son testament un codicille pour demander que, contrairement à ses dispositions précédentes, des honneurs militaires fussent rendus à son grade de chevalier de la Légion d'honneur" (Proust IX 135-136). Swann's sudden re-admittance to the Parisian high society is nevertheless tempered by his illness, "Il était arrivé à ce degré de fatigue où le corps d'un malade n'est plus qu'une cornue où s'observent des réactions chimiques. Sa figure se marquait de petits points bleu de Prusse, qui avaient l'air de ne pas appartenir au monde vivant, et dégageait ce genre d'odeur qui, au lycée, après les 'expériences', rend si désagréable de rester dans une classe de 'Sciences'... C'était vrai, et pourtant, commencer à causer lui avait déjà rendu une certaine vivacité... Certes, Swann n'était pas tout à fait de ces infatigables épuisés qui, arrivés défaits, flétris, ne se tenant plus, se ranimant dans la conversation comme une fleur dans l'eau et peuvent pendant des heures puiser dans leurs propres paroles des forces qu'ils ne transmettent malheureusement pas à ceux qui les écoutent" (Proust IX 209, 219). The narrator describes Swann's symptoms in terms of Jewish genetics, again rendering his second acceptance into the fold of the Parisian aristocracy bitter sweet, "Mais Swann appartenait à cette forte race juive, à l'énergie vitale, à la résistance à la mort de qui les individus eux-mêmes semblent participer. Frappés chacun de maladies particulières, comme elle l'est elle-même, par la persécution, ils se débattent indéfiniment dans des agonies terribles qui peuvent se prolonger au delà de tout terme vraisemblable, quand déjà on ne voit plus qu'une barbe de prophète surmontée d'un nez immense qui se dilate pour aspirer les derniers souffles, avant l'heure des prières

rituelles, et que commence le défilé ponctuel des parents éloignés s'avancant avec des mouvements mécaniques, comme sur une frise assyrienne". (217-220) The treatment that Proust reserves for Swann is revealing of his own troubled relationship with his Jewish identity and to the greater Jewish population, "Proust semble parfois le décrire avec une indulgence attendrie, sinon avec une pointe d'ironie subtile. Dans cette irrésolution même à nous donner un jugement définitif sur Swann nous pouvons voir l'ambiguïté proustienne sur la question juive et sur celle qui en est la conséquence directe, celle du mimétisme juif" (Piperno 80). Swann's vacillation between sympathy for Dreyfus and affinity for, and flattery by, the aristocratic milieu makes this Jewish character suspicious, unclear, and vague, all qualities that appear to be often attached to the Jewish figures of the Belle Époque. Like Charles Ephrussi, Isaac and Moïse de Camondo, and many others, their initial eccentricity and wealth made them famous, but their ambiguity in identity, Jewish, Ottoman, Russian, or French, eventually led society to reject their company, to find them ambiguous in their national, religious, and societal affiliations. During the Dreyfus Affair, the tenuous seams stitched between the old and new aristocracies, the aristocracy of blood, originating in feudal France, and the aristocracy of money, of which Jews were a significant part, were ripped apart and, as Edmund de Waal relates, the Jewish contingent of the financial aristocracy were no longer welcome in high society, "In 1894, as the painter, J. E. Blanche put it, 'the Jockey club deserted the table of the Princes of Israel' " (Waal 102). In accordance with the opposing social ascent and descent of the narrator and Swann respectively, Swann fades from the pages of *La Recherche* as a living and breathing character and becomes a memory, of great importance, but not as significant as the real person.

The damage done to the French and Jewish relations during the Dreyfus Affair was not reparable. Once the Princes of Israel were no longer welcome in the high society, they never found their place there again. When Charles Ephrussi and his brother Ignace gave a fabulous party in 1893 to which all of the Parisian high society was invited and in attendance, they could not have realized that it was a rare last opportunity for such a mixture of French and Jewish aristocracy to come together and that there would be no such

magnificently socially eccentric events for several years. Charles Ephrussi's untimely death in 1905, one year before the revision of the guilty judgment given to Alfred Dreyfus and his rehabilitation to the military, assured that he would no longer host any heteroclitic festivities of the sort ever again. It is not clear if Swann's ultimate wish was granted, "Avant de laisser Swann, je lui dis un mot de sa santé. 'Non, ça ne va pas si mal que ça, me répondit-il. D'ailleurs, comme je vous le disais, je suis assez fatigué et accepte d'avance avec résignation ce qui peut arriver. Seulement, j'avoue que ce serait bien agaçant de mourir avant la fin de l'affaire Dreyfus. Toutes ces canailles-là ont plus d'un tour dans leur sac. Je ne doute pas qu'ils soient finalement vaincus, mais enfin ils sont très puissants, ils ont des appuis partout. Dans le moment où ça va le mieux, tout craque. Je voudrais bien vivre assez pour voir Dreyfus réhabilité et Picquart colonel'" (Proust IX 338-339. Although there is discussion of revision in the first half of *Sodome et Gomorrhe*, Swann passes in the next volume of Proust's novel. The narrator learns of Swann's death in *La Prisonnière*, "La mort de Swann m'avait à l'époque bouleversé. La mort de Swann ! Swann ne joue pas dans cette phrase le rôle d'un simple génitif. J'entends par là la mort particulière, la mort envoyée par le destin au service de Swann. Car nous disons la mort pour simplifier, mais il y en a presque autant que de personnes... Et c'est cette diversité des morts, le mystère de leurs circuits, la couleur de leur fatale écharpe qui donnent quelque chose de si impressionnant aux lignes des journaux: 'Nous apprenons avec un vif regret que M. Charles Swann a succombé hier à Paris, dans son hôtel, des suites d'une douloureuse maladie. Parisien dont l'esprit était apprécié de tous, comme la sûreté de ses relations choisies mais fidèles, il sera unanimement regretté, aussi bien dans les milieux artistiques et littéraires, où la finesse avisée de son goût le faisait se plaire et être recherché de tous, qu'au Jockey-Club dont il était l'un des membres les plus anciens et les plus écoutés. Il appartenait aussi au Cercle de l'Union et au Cercle Agricole. Il avait donné depuis peu sa démission de membre du Cercle de la rue Royale. Sa physionomie spirituelle comme sa notoriété marquante ne laissaient pas d'exciter la curiosité du public dans tout *great event* de la musique et de la peinture, et notamment aux 'vernissages', dont il avait été l'habitué fidèle jusqu'à ces dernières années, où il n'était plus sorti que

rarement de sa demeure. Les obsèques auront lieu, etc.’ ” (Proust XI 400-402). The obituary that informs the narrator of his friend and previous hero’s death resembles one that might have been written for one of the so called Princes of Israel, for Charles Ephrussi, for one of the Camondo cousins, or for any high society, second or third generation French Jew whose family had achieved financial success, allowing children and grandchildren to branch out into domains other than banking, trading, speculation, or industry.

However, what is lacking in this obituary is Swann’s Jewish identity. There is no indication of his Jewish roots, no participation in a Jewish community, no interest in Jewish traditions, no contact or connection with his Jewish relatives. Charles Swann appears as the perfect manifestation of Sartre’s inauthentic Jew. Proust’s own treatment of Swann also leads one to think that the author, despite the special attention given to this character—“même s’il y a une différence chez Swann, si la force créatrice que Proust a mise dans ce personnage est autre”—also had a personal problem with the undefined Jewish identity of Charles Swann, the character that he had imagine, “Swann, qui aurait peut-être eu le talent d’un grand spécialiste de l’art ou aurait pu puiser dans son histoire personnelle de jalousie pour y consacrer une œuvre immortelle, cède au contraire à son indolence, dépourvu de la conscience et de la force morale qui font la grande artiste” (Piperno 81). Piperno suggests that Swann’s misfortunes could have informed him as an artist, that his relationship with Odette, the jealousy he feels followed by intense deception when he realizes that he has wasted his best years loving a woman who was not even his type, “ ‘Dire que j’ai gâché des années de ma vie, que j’ai voulu mourir, que j’ai eu mon plus grand amour, pour une femme qui ne me plaisait pas, qui n’était pas mon genre !’ ” could have inspired artistic creativity in Swann (Proust II 346). In the last scene in which Swann appears, at the evening party of the princesse de Guermantes, Swann confirms Piperno’s impression that this “histoire personnelle de jalousie” really could have served as artistic inspiration, “Moi, je n’ai jamais été curieux, sauf quand j’ai été amoureux et quand j’ai été jaloux... Quand on l’est un peu, cela n’est pas tout à fait désagréable, à deux points de vue. D’une part, parce que cela permet aux gens qui ne sont pas curieux de s’intéresser à la vie des autres personnes, ou au moins d’une autre. Et puis, parce que

cela fait assez bien sentir la douceur de posséder, de monter en voiture avec une femme, de ne pas la laisser aller seule. Mais cela, ce n'est que dans les tout premiers débuts du mal ou quand la guérison est presque complète. Dans l'intervalle, c'est le plus affreux des supplices. Du reste, même les deux douceurs dont je vous parle, je dois vous dire que je les ai peu connues; la première, par la faute de ma nature qui est capable de réflexions trop prolongées ; la seconde, à cause des circonstances, par la faute de la femme, je veux dire les femmes, dont j'ai été jaloux... Le souvenir de ces sentiments-là, nous sentons qu'il n'est qu'en nous; c'est en nous qu'il faut rentrer pour le regarder. Ne vous moquez pas trop de ce jargon idéaliste, mais ce que je veux dire, c'est que j'ai beaucoup aimé la vie et que j'ai beaucoup aimé les arts. Hé bien ! maintenant que je suis un peu trop fatigué pour vivre avec les autres, ces anciens sentiments si personnels à moi, que j'ai eus, me semblent, ce qui est la manie de tous les collectionneurs, très précieux. Je m'ouvre à moi-même mon cœur comme une espèce de vitrine, je regarde un à un tant d'amours que les autres n'auront pas connus. Et de cette collection à laquelle je suis maintenant plus attaché encore qu'aux autres, je me dis, un peu comme Mazarin pour ses livres, mais, du reste, sans angoisse aucune, que ce sera embêtant de quitter tout cela' ” (Proust IX 215-217). Although Swann did not creatively exploit his own history of jealousy, Proust does subtly insist on the characteristic of collecting that ties Swann to the various models that Proust frequented prior to writing *La Recherche*, including Charles Ephrussi and other Jewish collectors. Swann, however, finishes by collecting sentiments of love, jealousy, longing, possession, and all other feelings that memories of his past relationships with women evoke.

Despite the actual Jewish artists that Proust knew for inspiration, Piperno notes, not one was used to create a Jewish artist character in *La Recherche*. Instead, Proust's Jewish artist friends, acquaintances, and idols, became purely French characters in his novel, “Si nous prêtons attention aux biographes de Proust qui paraissent si désireux de retrouver dans la réalité les modèles de son œuvre, nous demeurons perplexes en apprenant que Sarah Bernhardt, qui était juive, a constitué le modèle essentiel de la Berma, qui ne l'était pas ; de même pour Anatole France et Henri Bergson, tous deux juifs, qui se fondent dans le personnage non-juif

de Bergotte. Comme si, dans ce procédé d'épuration auquel Proust soumet le judaïsme du Narrateur, étaient aussi impliquées les figures d'éminents artistes juifs, contraints à une stérilisation génétique pure et simple". Proust, according to Piperno, has planned a curiously warped social itinerary for his Jewish characters, "Ils se sont égarés parmi les miroirs aux alouettes de l'esthétisme pseudo-aristocratique" (Piperno 82). Proust's portrayal of Jewish characters is therefore more of a representation of his personal, confused and conflicted, Jewish identity than a manifestation society's impression of the Jews of France after more than a century of assimilation and integration along with immigration and evolution. Proust focuses his depiction of Jewish characters with a personal lens that is also lost in the optical illusions of a false or superficial aristocracy, false in that it should have disappeared with the 1789 Revolution, superficial in that the exterior splendor never matches the interior mundane reality, and a potentially inauthentic sense of beauty, guided by the opinions of the false and superficial aristocracy. Proust himself was lost in the labyrinth of what appeared to be, or at least presented itself as the high society of Paris, a wallflower in the salons of the wealthy and famous, even serving as secretary to Charles Ephrussi, writer and director of the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*.

However, like other Jewish identified, artistically inclined, socially elevated individuals of the Parisian Belle Époque society, Proust questioned his legitimacy to belong. Furthermore, Proust reserved a sad sort for his Jewish characters, punishing them for their interest in, and desire to become a part of, the adored and venerated aristocracy and not living within their designated "caste", "Proust a déjà fustigé les Juifs parce qu'ils refusent l'immersion indispensable dans leur propre mythologie pour aller mettre leur nez dans l'histoire des autres, celle de la noblesse carolingienne par exemple. Cette invasion de terrain est la marque de leur vice congénital, dont Proust veut se corriger: le désir de plaire, d'être bien accueillis, de s'élever dans la société par des armes de séduction illicites: tout cela ne leur permet ni la distance ni la liberté voulues, et surtout cela disperse leur regard dans de vains intérêts mondains plus éphémères que le vent. Cela rend les Juifs insupportables aux yeux de Proust. Et le mimétisme devient donc sans nul doute une arme à double tranchant : si d'un côté il permet à Proust (sa moitié juive) de se glisser sans bruit parmi les autres jusqu'à

s'emparer de leur moindre petit secret de style, gestuel ou langagier, de l'autre il est le gardien sacré des pièges ténébreux de l'éclectisme, du donjuanisme, de la vie dissipée à la Charles Swann. Les Juifs, qui avec un effort de vérité et de courage auraient pu se soustraire à tout cela et entreprendre la longue recherche de leurs origines (bien plus lointaines que celles de l'aristocratie française), on retiré un vague plaisir d'être accueillis et tolérés, sinon respectés, par la noblesse française... on peut dire que leur vie a été sacrifiée sur l'autel de la promotion, de l'ascension sociale, jusqu'à confluer par des voies diverses dans l'œcuménique et funèbre salon Guermantes" (Piperno 84-85). In reproaching his Jewish characters their social ambitions, is Proust not also reproving himself? Does Proust not fall into the category of those with full or partial Jewish heritage who devoted themselves to fitting in to the setting of the aristocracy, and with phenomenal success? Was Proust not "le prince du mimétisme" capable of "ces continuelles mutations épidermiques indéfinissables qui savent s'accorder, telle la peau d'une salamandre, aux tons dominants d'un canapé ou d'un fauteuil Louis XV, avec le langage d'une princesse ou la naïveté renfrognée d'un ambassadeur. La renommée, le rachat est la seule arme que possède le jeune Juif pour parvenir finalement à faire oublier au milieu auquel il aspire ses origines méprisables" (Piperno 75-76)? Charles Ephrussi, Isaac and Moïse de Camondo, and the fictional Charles Swann are all guilty of muting their skin tone to the colors of the eighteenth century, of speaking the language of the royalty, of becoming famous, whether or not fame was sought. However, is Proust sincerely punishing this comportment by vulgarizing and ridiculing his Jewish characters? Or is Proust expressing a personal confusion and conflicting relationship with his own Jewish identity, ultimately punishing himself for not searching for his own Jewish roots and obsessing instead over the insignificant and frivolous life of the Parisian high society of the Belle Époque?

Maurice Samuels proposes a somewhat more positive answer to these questions that in fact aligns Proust with the more Balzacien approach to Jewish characters, that is curiosity, mystery, questioning, often employing clichés but always innovating. Samuels refers to the scene on the beach in Balbec when the narrator and Saint-Loup overhear Bloch spewing anti-Semitic remarks to demonstrate how Proust's novel is

questioning Proust's own relationship to Jewishness and Judaism, "One could in fact argue that Proust is never more Jewish than in this passage. By mocking Bloch's vulgarity, by laughing at the vulgar Jew for laughing at the vulgar Jews, Proust repeats the very conduct he ridicules, tares himself with his own brush. In a sense, Proust becomes Bloch in this passage. He is the Jew he mocks. And Jewish readers might then mock Proust for mocking Bloch for mocking the Balbec beachgoers if this doesn't lay us too open to the very same mocking (in an endless *mise-en-abyme* of Jewish self-hatred). I prefer instead to believe that the text is conscious of the effects it produces and that what comes out of the tent, or what Freedman calls 'the Jewish closet', along with Bloch on the beach at Balbec is Proust's own tortured relationship to a community he binds himself to even while ridiculing it... Proust satirizes both anti-Semitic stereotypes and Jewish assimilation... struggling to define what it might mean to be a Jew in modern France" (Samuels 252-253). Instead of admonishing all the Jews of France post-emancipation, as Piperno claims, might Proust not be playing with the various possible expressions of his own complex French-Jewish identity through the flaws of his Jewish characters? Proust is therefore at once Charles Swann and Albert Bloch in *La Recherche*, he is the elegant and eccentric intellectual artist and the awkward Jewish chameleon attempting to fit into a society that will never allow him to enter entirely.

The expression of space and place of Jewish characters in Proust's novel is far less clear than in the works of the authors previously explored. Balzac, Zola, and Maupassant all mention specific neighborhoods, streets and addresses, detailing the exterior and interior appearances of the spaces and places in which they maneuver their Jewish characters. Proust, however, remains in the realm of sentiments and the places and spaces in Paris are defined not by what the characters see physically and geographically, but by what they feel, what they say, how they act and interact with the setting and those that are found therein. In this sense, Proust has mastered the mental topography of Jewish Paris of the Belle Époque, putting thoughts and ideas to the famed Princes of Israel at a time when the bright and shiny new city of Paris, capital of Europe, is still settling into itself. However, just as Zola and Maupassant have installed their Jewish characters in west Paris,

Proust's Paris, the Paris of the society frequented by Charles Swann and desired to be frequented by Albert Bloch, is also west Paris, "Tout Proust... 'se passe' dans ce quadrilatère qui va du parc Monceau à la place de la Concorde, de la Concorde à Auteuil, d'Auteuil au bois de Boulogne et à l'Étoile. C'est en gros le Paris haussmannien de l'aristocratie (à la fois d'Ancien Régime, certes, mais aussi culturelle, telle qu'elle a éclos de façon fulgurante au Second Empire, dans la période qui précède immédiatement la naissance de Proust" (Raczymow 6). In Proust's novel, Charles Swann moves from the Ile Saint-Louis to the rue des Acacias, beyond the Arc de Triomphe and Albert Bloch, from the "sordides quartiers" of the tenth arrondissement becomes a guest of the princesse de Guermantes, most likely in west Paris. In Proust's own history, his Jewish family members followed this western movement, "La famille maternelle est issue d'une longue lignée judéo-lorraine... ils 'montent' à Paris après la Révolution et s'installent dans un quartier industriel de l'est parisien, le faubourg Poissonnière... où Baruch Weil est fabricant de porcelaine et où naîtra Jeanne Weil, la mère de Marcel, en 1849. Quand celle-ci épouse Adrien Proust en 1870, le couple ira habiter non loin de la place Saint-Augustin, le quartier proustien par excellence. Ce glissement de Jeanne de l'est à l'ouest de Paris n'est pas le fait du seul hasard. Il correspond symboliquement au déplacement de ce qu'on appelle les 'beaux quartiers', déplacement qui suit précisément la précellence, au cours du XIX^e siècle, de l'est à l'ouest de la capitale" (Raczymow 7-8). This idea of the "précellance", or the most excellent of the excellent, moving to the west was not a Jewish phenomenon, but a societal fact, "Au début du XVII^e siècle, le quartier résidentiel de l'aristocratie est le Marais... Puis, 'Paris' se déplace vers l'ouest... C'est le fameux faubourg Saint-Germain, ouvrant la route de Versailles, qui devient le nouveau quartier aristocratique, avec, dans le même temps, son vis-à-vis sur l'autre rive, le faubourg Saint-Honoré... Il est significatif que Napoléon I^{er} ait d'abord songé à installer l'Arc de Triomphe à la Bastille... Mais ses architectes l'en dissuadèrent et l'incitèrent à l'installer sur la colline du Roule (l'Étoile), dans le prolongement du palais des Tuileries" (Raczymow 8-10). Also characterized by financial status, only those who could afford it moved to the west. That Proust's family and Proust's Jewish characters followed this movement indicates their desire to belong

to a certain portion of French society, the Parisian high society in which financial success was coupled with cultural cultivation, education, exposure to the arts, and literary predilections. Proust and his Jewish characters prove the generational evolution of the Jewish population in Paris. With each generation, with greater assimilation to and integration in French society, the more artistic and intellectual the Jews of Paris became. Charles Swann, Albert Bloch, and Proust himself are the ultimate expression of the unique French-Jewish identity that had developed a century after emancipation. With the Dreyfus Affair, however, it is clear that, while the Jews of France adopted French culture, the majority population did not successfully adapt to the presence of their Jewish neighbors and Swann, Bloch, and Proust himself were therefore forever in the margins of the high society

VI. Dissertation Conclusion:

In chapter one, I explored Paris of the July Monarchy and Balzac's Jewish characters. In this first chapter, it is clear that Balzac took a very novel approach to Jewish representation. The number of Jewish characters in the *Comédie humaine* far out-distances the actual percentage of Jews living in Paris at that time. Balzac also displayed a particular and unexpected diversity of profession for his Jewish characters, including a retired world traveler become moneylender, a magical antique dealer, a powerful banker and businessman, exquisite female prostitutes and artists, a journalist and playwright, a clever art dealer, and famous doctor. Geographically speaking, the Jewish characters of the *Comédie humaine* are spread across Paris, inhabiting diverse neighborhoods of the city. All if these aspects of Balzac's use of Jewish characters led Marthe Spitzer to claim that he was the first writer to portray the modern Jew. But, Balzac didn't just portray the modern Jew, he employed Jewish characters as representatives of the burgeoning modernity transforming the city during the July Monarchy, "The decades of the 1830s and 40s also saw the transformations associated with modernity... begin to take root in French culture... the Jew comes to serve as a privileged screen for the projection of anxieties about modernity in both literature and other discourses... the male Jew tends to

incarnate the negative aspects of modernity” (Samuels 171). With each Jewish character, the street on which they live in Paris and the parts of the city that they frequent, Balzac also tells a story of architectural and urban transformation. The baron de Nucingen on the rue Saint-Lazare, for example, is a beacon of the new and eclectic capitalist neighborhood in which bankers, aristocrats, artists, and prostitutes mingle in the area defined by modern transportation with the first rail station and the bustling commerce of the Grands Boulevards and the docteur Halpersohn, with his modern health clinic in the less populated and not yet popular western portion of Paris, on the “rue Basse-Saint-Pierre, à Chaillot”, indicates the western movement of the city with the wealthy population fleeing the center for the more open and airier neighborhoods beyond the Tuileries gardens. Balzac’s treatment of Jewish characters reveals the still open-minded relationship that the non-Jewish Parisian population had with their Jewish neighbors, one defined by curiosity instead of animosity.

In the second chapter, we saw an important shift in the appearance of Jewish characters that virtually disappear from literature for the entire Second Empire and a few years into the Third Republic. The limited exceptions, Baudelaire’s *affreuse juive* and the Goncourts’ Jewish artist model, Manette Salomon, mark a clear departure from the curiosity that the non-Jewish Parisian felt towards their Jewish neighbors. Jules and Edmond de Goncourt in particular, express a new sentiment of suspicion, distrust, and hatred towards the Jewish population, well-established, highly assimilated, bourgeois, and socially and financially successful by the middle of the Second Empire. This shift continues in the third chapter with the reappearance of male Jewish characters that are highly stereotypical and restricted to negative figurations. From the diversity of Balzac in the 1830s and 40s, the Jewish characters of Emile Zola and Guy de Maupassant are bankers and businessmen. However, as bankers and businessmen, these Jewish characters are linked to the great transformations of the Second Empire, involved in the banking and speculation necessary to fund the creation of a gentrified, luxurious, and elitist northwestern quarter of the city, accessible only to financially fortunate. The Jewish characters of this period are confined to the financial neighborhood around the

Bourse and the Grands Boulevards. With the obvious and seemingly magical and unjustified success of these Jewish characters come intense feelings of jealousy and revulsion expressed in the voices of non-Jewish characters. Through the voices of characters like Octave Mouret, Madame Hugon, Georges Duroy, and Aristide Saccard, the birth of modern anti-Semitism is recounted. The Parisian population's negative reaction to the great works of the Second Empire, to the advent of modern capitalism and an industrial society, and to the seemingly unmerited success of bourgeois society, led essentially to blaming the Jews. The explosion of the Dreyfus Affair in 1894 is testament to the power of resentment felt by French society to the metamorphosis to modernity. In the last chapter, the Jewish characters of Marcel Proust mark a unique change in the Jewish population of Paris and the sons of bankers have become artists and aesthetes.

When Maurice Samuels published *Inventing the Israelite* in 2010, he featured several Jewish authors writing in French as early as the 1830s. The question of Jewish identity in France is a central theme uniting the authors that Samuels considers. The conundrum of being Jewish and French surfaced repeatedly in the works of Eugénie Foa, Ben-Lévi (Godchaux Baruch Weil), Ben Baruch (Alexandre Créhange), Alexandre Weill, Daniel Stauben (Auguste Widal), and David Schornstein. Following the Jewish emancipation of 1790 and 1791, the Jews of France continuously confronted the conflict between assimilation to French culture and loss of Jewish communal and religious identity. The Jewish characters in the works of fiction of these French-Jewish authors must decide to either assimilate and become French or remain Jewish and continue to follow the traditions of Judaism. For the Jewish authors and their Jewish characters, modernity was defined by the struggle between assimilation and loss of identity. On top of this already challenging situation, they also had to adjust to life in a rapidly modernizing and industrializing nation. This theme of transformation to modernity was however not taken into consideration in the fiction of non-Jewish French writers of the same period. Considering only French-Jewish writers in his book, Samuels skips over a whole other genre of literature that entails French writers employing Jewish characters to express their reaction to the vast societal, political, architectural and urban changes sweeping across nineteenth-century France, with

the epicenter in Paris. The *raison d'être* of the literature of both Jewish and non-Jewish French writers was surprisingly similar. All writers of nineteenth-century France appear to have grappled with modernity through fiction, “non-Jewish fiction writers, such as Balzac, used Jewish characters to frame their vision of modernity” and “[Alexandre Weill’s] tales of life in France’s eastern provinces dramatize the conflicts faced by poor rural Jews in their confrontation with modernity” (Samuels 20, 35). While Balzac’s Jewish characters are “objects of scorn or envy or lust”, the Jewish characters of Jewish writers are transformed “into subjects of social processes who reveal what it meant to become modern” (Samuels 20). This perspective of the Jewish characters of non-Jewish French writers as “objects of scorn or envy or lust”, is however extremely limited. In this dissertation, one essential aspiration is to reveal how the Jewish characters of non-Jewish writers, such as Balzac, Baudelaire, Goncourt, Zola, and Maupassant were in fact much more than just “objects of scorn or envy or lust”. Their Jewish characters also show what it means to become modern and their modernity is found in where they live in Paris, where they go in the city, and how they participate in architectural renovations of the urban landscape.

Samuels concludes his book with Marcel Proust, declaring Proust’s work to be a key element in understanding Jewish identity in France not just at the turn of the century, but throughout French history, “If Jewishness has come to be seen as one of the major keys to the puzzle of Proust, then Proust’s representation of Jewishness has, in turn, come to be seen as one of the key sources for understanding the history of Jews in France” (Samuels 244). Although Proust’s novel reveals nothing about the Jewish communities spread throughout France during the Middle Ages, it is true that it speaks poignantly to the process of assimilation of Jews to French culture underway since emancipation in 1790 and 1791. There is, however, some question as to where Proust falls in the categorization of authors. Is Proust a Jewish author, or is Proust a French author? In this dissertation, Proust is in fact both Jewish and French and serves as a bridge between the Jewish fiction writers that Samuels discusses and the non-Jewish authors that included Jewish characters in their stories that I discuss here. In Proust’s novel the difficult condition of being French

and Jewish in the modern and transformed capital is laid bare. Characters like Charles Swann and Albert Bloch find themselves in a perpetually exceptional situation, never belonging to either the French or the Jewish communities, lost in the middle of either failed or exaggeratedly successful assimilation. Proust himself represents a culmination of the assimilation process. Born to a Jewish mother and a Catholic father, Proust had one foot in each world, very close to his Parisian Jewish relatives while having friends and frequenting the social setting of the Parisian, upper class society. Proust's own conflicted relationship to the Jewish half of his identity comes across in his treatment of Jewish characters, ridiculing them and thus ridiculing himself, pointing out their difficulties of fitting into a society that will never entirely be accepting and thus indicating his own unstable position.

Just as Samuels has placed Proust at the end of a few generations of Jewish writers writing in French, I have placed Proust at the end of a few generations of French writers writing Jewish characters into their work. Both of these cases are appropriate thanks to Proust's double identity, French—born in France, baptized, and presenting himself as such—and Jewish—born to a Jewish mother and closest with his Jewish relatives on her side of the family. However, Proust is French or Jewish depending on the person reading him and what that person projects onto the author. Proust's identity as perceived and conceived across his novel is slippery and malleable, again describing the culmination of the process of assimilation in France. The Jews of France became flexible in their expression of identity, modifying themselves for different situations and settings. This possibility of change is something that was at the source of the emancipation effort. France wanted the Jews to change, but they were seen as the most obstinate and unchangeable group of people, holding onto ancient traditions and practicing in the same manner since the beginning of the religion, hundreds of thousands of years ago. Despite their famous obstinacy, emancipation was highly successful. The Jews of France changed to the point of no longer being recognizable as Jews. They became so French that they surpassed the French in the expression of French identity. Jewish bankers in France became the most adept and influential. French-Jewish industrial figures contributed to the modernization of

the nation. French-Jewish politicians rose to elevated positions in the political arena. Jewish collectors in France united more precious pieces of French art and furniture than any aristocratic family had ever accumulated over several generations. This advanced capacity of excelling in becoming more French than the French was a problem for France and, although France had originally wanted the Jews to change and become French, the non-Jewish French population began to have a different opinion and eventually came to the conclusion that they preferred having a feasible method, a visible difference, to aid in the distinguishing and differentiation of Catholics and Jews. Absence of external markers of Jewishness made the non-Jewish French population highly suspicious, believing that the Jews of France were taking control of their country, usurping their place as rightful Frenchmen.

This conflict of French Jews appearing and acting more French than their French-Catholic neighbors fueled modern anti-Semitism. Ernest Renan, philologist and chair of Hebrew language at the Collège de France from 1862—believed by some to have had anti-Semitic sentiments, thought of by others as a great admirer of Judaism and the Jewish people—criticized the Jews of modern France for having allowed themselves to be contaminated by the culture of individualism. Alexis de Tocqueville, French writer, historian, philosopher, and politician, also condemned the culture of individualism encouraged by a drive to become rich that had been cultivated by the Ancien Régime as early as the fifteenth century, “Dans ces sortes de sociétés, où rien n’est fixe, chacun se sent aiguillonné sans cesse par la crainte de descendre et l’ardeur de monter; et comme l’argent, en même temps qu’il y est devenu la principale marque qui classe et distingue entre eux les hommes, y a acquis une mobilité singulière, passant de mains en mains sans cesse, transformant la condition des individus, élevant ou abaissant les familles, il n’y a presque personne qui ne soit obligé d’y faire un effort désespéré et continu pour le conserver ou pour l’acquérir. L’envie de s’enrichir à tout prix, le goût des affaires, l’amour du gain, la recherche du bien-être et des jouissances matérielles y sont donc les passions les plus communes” (Tocqueville 51). Following emancipation, the Jews of France, or at least a very noticeable minority, excelled in financial industries, making immense fortunes. With their great

wealth, they were therefore able to integrate, by force of their financial influence, the highest societies of the French nation, even garnering political persuasion, funding and advising the successive rulers of France. Nineteenth-century anti-Semitism thus sprang from the envy that those less fortunate felt for the prosperity and position that the only recently emancipated Jews of France had attained. The Jews were seen as having an unjust advantage that allowed them to become rich while the French-Catholic population remained poor.

This sense of injustice was magnified when the wealthy Jews of France began purchasing the homes of the aristocracy, dispossessed by the 1789 Revolution. As early as 1802, Beer Léon Fould purchased the aristocratic hôtel particulier of Nicholas Duprés de Saint-Maur. James de Rothschild acquired the home of Fouché, duc d'Otrante, in 1818. After the Parisian aristocratic hôtel particulier, the Jewish bankers of nineteenth-century France expanded their properties to the countryside, buying estates and castles. This trend spread across the whole banking and business community of Paris, with Jewish representatives either leading or much more remarkable due to their Jewish identity. Opposition to wealthy Jews paying for the property of the fallen aristocracy began with Alphonse Toussenel's work, *Les Juifs, rois de l'époque: histoire de la féodalité financière*, first appearing in 1844 and directly accusing the Jews of France of taking over the homes and land that the aristocracy had lost during the Revolution. Like the title of Toussenel's work, the wealthy Jews of France were revered as kings and despised for their success, "Les très grands banquiers sont en quelque sorte victimes d'une fortune trop heureuse qui les projette hors de la société... Populaires, ils se voient qualifiés de 'rois'... Impopulaires, ils s'entendent rappeler leurs appartenances confessionnelles minoritaires et volontiers suspectes, comme si le juif ou le protestant trop puissant était désigné pour endosser les accusations de complot, de monopole ou la responsabilité des malheurs collectifs" (Bergeron 115-116). When recalled of their Jewish origin and blamed for society's ills, the Jews of France attempted to render their fortune legitimate through an overt appreciation of French culture, "Aussi la grande fortune recherche-t-elle volontiers d'autres légitimations que celle de sa propre importance et de son éclatante splendeur. On voit ses titulaires... manifester un patriotisme flamboyant... rechercher avec passion toutes

les marques de la reconnaissance sociale: anoblissement, distinctions, fonctions représentatives de la profession... Toutefois, les usages de la fortune elle-même à d'autres fins que proprement économiques, financières ou de jouissance personnelle prennent chez les banquiers du XIX^e siècle une ampleur et une signification qui dépassent tout en les intégrant les habitudes d'une vieille tradition, et qui expriment à leur tour ce souci de légitimation" (Bergeron 116). This quest for legitimacy led the Jews of France to such extravagant exhibitions of admiration of French culture as the Rothschild's Château de Ferrières en Brie and Moïse de Camondo's exquisite personal Petit Trianon along the parc Monceau. These passionate displays of veneration for French culture only made the position of Jews in France more tenuous, as their affection for French culture demanded large sums of money to realize. The negative reaction to the Jewish adoption of French culture through financial means is expressed in the growing anti-Semitic discourse in the fiction writing throughout the long nineteenth century.

Across the three major ruling bodies discussed in this dissertation, the July Monarchy, the Second Empire, and the Third Republic, anti-Semitic discourse developed. During the July Monarchy and the beginning of the Second Empire, this term did not yet exist in France. Balzac's treatment of Jewish characters is thus characterized by curiosity, with a mild aversion to Judaism tempered by the mystery and intrigue that this religion and its people stimulated for this writer. Balzac envied the facility with which some famous Jewish bankers grew their fortune, but he did not express any visceral hatred for those belonging to the Jewish community. If the term "anti-Semitism" was in fact invented in the 1860s, then it is plausible that French writers with an antipathy for their Jewish neighbors wrote in a manner that expressed anti-Semitic sentiments beginning in the 1860s. The Goncourt brothers in particular demonstrate the intensity with which anti-Semitism had taken root in French culture by the end of the Second Empire. Their aristocratic artist, Naz de Coriolis, is first enthralled, then dominated, subjugated, exploited, and corrupted by his model, mistress, and then wife, the Jewish Manette Salomon. The failure of this artist to thrive and produce art is blamed on the contaminating presence of Manette and her female relatives. During the Third Republic, Guy

de Maupassant's Monsieur Walter is a detestable social climber, imposing himself on the high society by the will of his wealth and Emile Zola's Gundermann is accused of financially controlling France and causing the collapse of a fledgling Catholic bank. By the time Proust imagined Charles Swann and Albert Bloch, who appear fairly innocuous, the Jewish characters of the previous century take on a fantastical aspect.

However, the criticism of Swann and Bloch as Jewish figures is much more subtle than anything written in the preceding century. The anti-Semitism that Proust defines in *La Recherche* is entirely based on appearance. The French have become exceptionally suspicious of who is actually an aristocrat and who is posing as one. Charles Swann has in fact seamlessly entered the Parisian aristocracy, his wealth, intelligence, and appreciation of art easily paving the way. Albert Bloch, an awkward but highly literary youth strives to achieve a position similar to the one held by Swann in the aristocracy previous to Swann's degrading marriage to Odette de Crécy. Both Swann and Bloch master the art of mimesis that allows them to penetrate the high society of Paris, Swann much earlier than Bloch and later experiencing rejection from the milieu in which he had once fit without a hitch, Bloch slowly and fraught with bumps and obstacles transforms himself, masking his Jewishness and adopting an intimidating arrogance that impresses enough for him to gain entry. Both infiltrate the aristocracy, each at a different point in time and it is the techniques employed to do so that are at the heart of French anti-Semitism. Proust defines the reason for which France has come to express such an innate abhorrence for Jewish figures such as Charles Swann and Albert Bloch, "L'ignorance où nous étions de cette brillante vie mondaine que menait Swann tenait évidemment en partie à la réserve et à la discrétion de son caractère, mais aussi à ce que les bourgeois d'alors se faisaient de la société une idée un peu hindoue et la considéraient comme composée de castes fermées où chacun dès sa naissance, se trouvait placé dans le rang qu'occupaient ses parents, et d'où rien, à moins des hasards d'une carrière exceptionnelle ou d'un mariage inespéré, ne pouvait vous tirer pour vous faire pénétrer dans une caste supérieure. M. Swann, le père était agent de change; le 'fils Swann' se trouvait faire partie pour toute sa vie d'une caste où les fortunes, comme dans une catégorie de contribuables, variaient entre tel et tel revenu.

On savait quelles avaient été les fréquentations de son père, on savait donc quelles étaient les siennes, avec quelles personnes il était ‘en situation’ de frayer. S’il en connaissait d’autres, c’étaient des relations de jeune homme sur lesquelles des amis anciens de sa famille, comme étaient mes parents, fermaient d’autant plus bienveillamment les yeux qu’il continuait, depuis qu’il était orphelin, à venir très fidèlement nous voir; mais il y avait fort à parier que ces gens inconnus de nous qu’il voyait, étaient de ceux qu’il n’aurait pas osé saluer si, étant avec nous, il les avait rencontrés” (Proust I 34-35). Charles Swann has made the mistake of climbing out of his social, economic, and religious caste into the aristocracy. This is seen as a grievous error in a society that is still haunted by the feudal organization of society previous to the French Revolution. Imitating Swann, Albert Bloch makes the same mistake later in the novel. For both Swann and Bloch, it is their social ambition that is condemned. As Jews and as bourgeois, their place is not within the aristocracy.

For Jews in fiction as for Jews in reality, navigating Parisian society was an arduous task and the risk of overstepping one’s place was forever present. Real life models or echoes of characters like Charles Swann and Albert Bloch, Charles Ephrussi and Isaac and Moïse de Camondo, were perpetually on the cusp of the high society, neither fully accepted nor outright rejected. The end of the Second Empire saw the majority of the Jewish members of the high society grouped in the newer neighborhoods in the northwestern quarter of the city. The 8th, the 16th, and the 17th arrondissement of Paris had become the home of the Parisian Jewish elite. Both living in these luxurious and sparkling new neighborhoods of Paris and the fact that Jewish money had helped to finance their creation, made the Jewish aristocracy a target for envy and jealousy, fostering the naissance of anti-Semitism. Furthermore, the lack of distinguishing qualities made the French uneasy. The Jews of France had become far too adept at the game of assimilation, as Alexandre Dumas said, “Le juif chez nous n’existe plus comme type, il s’est fondu dans la société; il n’a rien qui le distingue des autres hommes, ni dans son langage, ni dans son tournure, ni dans son costume; il est officier de la Légion d’honneur, il est académicien, il est baron, il est prince, il est roi” (Dumas 48). This complete, even excessive, form of assimilation might have, instead of fostering anti-Semitism, made the French question

their approach to the integration of non-French individuals into the French nation. Historically, French intellectuals have admired Judaism: Jean-Jacques Rousseau found Judaism to be one of the most laudable religions “Rousseau lavished the biblical legislator with praise. His judgment comes across most vividly in his *Considérations sur le gouvernement de la Pologne*, where he marked that Moses ‘executed the astonishing enterprise of instituting into the body of a nation a swarm of miserable refugees, without arts, without arms, without talent, without virtue, without courage, and who, not having a single inch of land, made up a foreign band on the face of the earth... Moses dared to make a free people out of this errant and servile gang... giv[ing] them that durable constitution [i.e., the law], which withstood the force of time, of fate and of conquerors” (Rousseau qtd in Schechter 54-55). Voltaire, despite professing intense anti-Judaic opinions, estimated that the Jews had no reason to change since their religion was as logical as the Christians’ trying to convert them. Ernest Renan admired the endurance of the cohesive nature of Judaism against all odds and across thousands of years. Jean-Paul Sartre argued that the Jews had an obligation to affirm, accept, and live fully their Jewish identity, rather than deny it, in order to be authentically Jewish and eliminate anti-Semitism. However, those who fought for the French Revolution of 1789 and those who argued for emancipation at the Assemblée Nationale in 1790 and 1791 insisted that the French nation must be made up of individual citizens and that any affiliation to a group other than the French nation was therefore un-French. Furthermore, the Jews of France were emancipated on condition that they change, become less Jewish and more French. The Jews of France and nearly all newly arrived Jews from across Europe into Russia and throughout the Mediterranean basin took this condition very seriously and adopted a modern French mode of living within one or two generations. The French Revolution and the Assemblée Nationale had thus laid the foundation for the anti-Semitism that would later plague the nation. France was in fact so attached to and so historically formatted by the Ancien Régime system of social differentiation that they regretted the eighteenth century and sought to reestablish social hierarchy in the nineteenth. That a small, but elite group of Jews were able to cheat social order through excessive wealth did not sit well with the

French nostalgia for the Ancien Régime and the simplicity of social standing assigned at birth, despite the Revolution having disbanded with such social differentiation.

The assimilation project of the French Revolution was however far too strong to be reversed. By the time the non-Jewish French society came to realize that they might have preferred to allow for distinctions between religions, ethnicities, and social classes, the Jews of France were already entirely integrated into the greater French culture. The overwhelmingly French appearance and attitude of French Jews did not however prevent first the Dreyfus Affair of the Belle Époque and then the catastrophe of Nazi extermination camps during the Second World War. French individuals, families, communities either denounced their Jewish neighbors, recuperating their homes with all the furniture, art, and material wealth included, or sought to hide and protect them. Nevertheless, the Jewish population throughout France lost nearly 80,000 members during the Second World War, either assassinated in France, deceased in French internment camps, or deported to either Auschwitz, Sobibor, or Bergen-Belson, never to return. If the Jews of France had in fact not felt so French, they might have been more alarmed by the attitude of their non-Jewish neighbors earlier in the war and would not have trusted the French nation to protect them. The majority of those who were deported were of Ashkenazi origin, with some exceptions such as Sephardi Jews having come to Paris from the Ottoman Empire at the end of the nineteenth century. While the Parisian Jewish population was decimated during the war, the North African Jewish populations fleeing newly independent Algeria or Morocco and Tunisia following the end of French presence revived the Parisian Jewish community in the 50s, 60s, and 70s. Furthermore, the Jews of North Africa tended to be more religious and less prone to forgoing their religious and cultural traditions to better assimilate to French society. The North African Jewish presence thus played a role of reinvigorating the religiosity of Parisian Jews who had little to no attachment to or knowledge of religious Jewish customs.

In a curious turn of the kaleidoscope, as Proust would say, the Ashkenazi Jews of Paris came to symbolize the assimilated French Jew for the newly arrived North African Jews and the subsequent

generations born in France, “Ashkenazim... were invisible precisely because they embodied mainstream French values... Assimilated Jews of whatever origin were even characterized as “Ashkenazim” (Arkin 76). Kimberly Arkin, professor of anthropology at Boston University, reveals the new and still complex forms of Jewish identity amongst the second and third generations of North African Jews in Paris in her study, *Rhinestones, Religion, and the Republic, Fashioning Jewishness in France*, published in 2014 after working in the field in France for several years. Observing middle school, high school, and college age students at various private Jewish schools and public French schools in Paris, Arkin discovered that the North African Jews of Algerian, Moroccan, or Tunisian origins are rebelling against the form of assimilation that the Ashkenazi Jews of France had espoused since the time of emancipation at the end of the eighteenth century. These young Jews are in fact seeking ways to display their Jewish identity externally through clothing, jewelry, and other accessories, “Jewish teenagers used widely circulating commodities to construct their Jewishness, therefore presumably accepting identity as a malleable, situational ‘choice’. But adolescents understood their self-fashionings as reflections, rather than constructions, of Jewish authenticity. This strange doubling of choice and essence is part of the contradictions inherent in the postmodern moment. It powerfully illustrates the ways in which social forces associated with postmodernism may actually reinvigorate ‘modern’ conceptions of self—particularly race as a mode of reading interior essence from exterior form” (Arkin 207). This approach to identity is nevertheless not novel. The “Ashkenazi” Jews of the nineteenth century did exactly the opposite, dressing expressly in French clothing in order to give the impression that their internal essence was in fact French and not Jewish.

In her last chapter, “Looking Jewish in Paris”, Arkin includes in her exploration of this modern and externally affirmed Jewish identity the various places that the young generation of “Sephardi”—as opposed to “Ashkenazi” in the sense that it has come to designate assimilated Jews rather than solely those of Germanic or Eastern European origin—congregate in Paris, “In addition to traveling in groups, [Jewish] day school students bought clothing together, gathered in defined locations, patronized particular Parisian

stores, and stopped to snack at certain restaurants. The Opéra Métro stop, with its regional rail-line connection, has long been a gathering place for suburban Jews spending an afternoon or evening in the city. Some adolescents shopped on the Rue de Rivoli and/or the Rue Etienne Marcel in the heart of the garment district on Wednesday and Friday afternoons. Le Paradis du Fruit, a restaurant chain specializing in fruit smoothies that contained no milk or meat products was a preferred watering hole. Certain nightclubs had acquired a reputation for being *feuj*, the slang word for Jews. On Saturday night, the Champs-Élysées... was a (fading) haunt for contemporary Jewish *flâneurs*. And on Sundays, when almost all stores in Paris except those located in the Marais were closed, the neighborhood teemed with Jewish adolescents eating in kosher restaurants, shopping in local boutiques, and strolling in packs down the middle of the street” (Arkin 218-219). This study of the modern geographical expression of Jewish identity in Paris is an anthropological compliment to what I have attempted to accomplish in this dissertation of the literary expression of the Jewish presence in Paris in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In another curious turn of the kaleidoscope, the areas of Paris favored by the “contemporary Jewish *flâneurs*” are in fact in the very neighborhoods that were created during the nineteenth-century and with the help of Jewish bankers and entrepreneurs. In this dissertation, I have shown how French authors, in a demonstration of modernity, employed Jewish characters. Following the western movement of the city, from Balzac to Proust, the Jewish characters became more and more centered in the financial and modern neighborhoods of northwestern Paris. The geographical location of these Jewish characters is not surprising, “La croissance d’une capitale telle que Paris a constamment été, à l’époque moderne, financièrement soutenue, physiquement et psychologiquement orientée par le pouvoir central et par les élites de toutes natures gravitant autour de lui. C’est en fonction d’une telle dynamique que l’on peut affirmer que l’agencement spatial, le paysage urbain, le spectacle de la ville, auxquels nos contemporains ne cessent d’être toujours plus sensibles, dépendent pour les habitants et les habitués de Paris central dans une très large mesure de l’influence déterminante exercée, tout au cours du XIX^e siècle et au début du XX^e siècle, par les

divers représentants du capitalisme triomphant, parmi lesquels les familles de la haute banque” (Bergeron 148). The western movement of the city was a movement of money, driven by the elite, their banks and the businesses, but the development of western Paris was due to new forms of banking championed by Emile and Isaac Pereire, “la marque des banquiers sur la ville a-t-elle été particulièrement forte, parce qu’elle résulte à la fois d’une décision d’inclure la spéculation sur les terrains et les immeubles dans l’éventail diversifié des sources de profit, et d’une participation volontaire à la désignation des nouveaux beaux quartiers, comme au balisage de la nouvelle centralité parisienne” (Bergeron 148-149). In this dissertation, it is the role of actual Jewish figures involved in the transformation of Paris that I have teased out of the fiction of the period. Although the evidence is easier to spot in some works, in Balzac, Zola, and Maupassant, for example, the trace of Jewish influence in the urbanization of Paris is still present in the works of Baudelaire, the Goncourts, and Proust. Although it is rarely discussed or acknowledged, the architectural and urban renovation of nineteenth-century Paris is in large part due to Jewish figures whose role is hidden behind the epithet of bankers, as Louis Bergeron reveals in his work, *Les Rothschild et les autres*, “Expansion et recentrage, à la fois topographique et symbolique, de la capitale; remodelage et réunification de la ville dans toutes ses parties: vieux noyaux historiques et villes nouvelles proliférant autour du cœur—c’est là, on le sait, la grande œuvre urbaine du XIX^e siècle et plus particulièrement de l’ère haussmannienne et post-haussmannienne. Dans cette œuvre, on ne saurait trop souligner la part prise par l’initiative des banquiers. Le Parisien d’aujourd’hui déambule dans un cadre urbain dont beaucoup de traits, implicites ou ostentatoires, révèlent la part décisive prise dans son façonnement par le capitalisme financier post-révolutionnaire. Les banquiers... du XIX^e siècle sont pour une bonne part responsables du décor de nos activités et de nos déplacements” (Bergeron 151). Through the literature of Balzac, Baudelaire, the Goncourts, Zola, Maupassant, and Proust, there is a literary archive that tells the story of the influential Jewish figures of the nineteenth century that left their mark on the city. The literature bares witness to the explosion of modernity during which nineteenth-century Paris become a major pole of attraction for Jews across Europe all seeking the same

success as the fictional baron de Nucingen and the real Jewish figures that authors portrayed, making Paris the unlikely and certainly unofficial Jewish capital of Europe.

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