ABSTRACT

FRAMING THE DOMINANT AND THE DOMINÉ:
SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE IN BALZAC’S
EUGÉNIE GRANDET AND LE PÈRE GORIOT

By Alison G. Pryweller

This thesis applies Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of *la violence symbolique* to two nineteenth century novels by Honoré de Balzac: *Eugénie Grandet* and *Le Père Goriot*. Symbolic violence is based on the idea that a dominant can exert power, and a dominé will blindly accept the dominant as an authority given the right social environment. This concept is flexible; a man or woman can play either role. Symbolic violence is shown to form a bond between dominés and serve as a means for seducing the dominé, but it is only successful as allowed by the habitus, a subjective structure that moderates the effect of social norms on the body. This thesis also explores the possibility of breaking symbolic violence, and assesses whether or not the dominés in each novel are successful in doing so.
FRAMING THE DOMINANT AND THE DOMINÉ: SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE IN BALZAC’S EUGÉNIE GRANDET AND LE PÈRE GORIOT

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Alison G. Pryweller

Miami University

Oxford, Ohio

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Advisor____________________________________

Dr. Patricia Reynaud

Reader_____________________________________

Dr. Jesse Dickson

Reader_____________________________________

Dr. Elisabeth Hodges
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER ONE</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exploring Symbolic Violence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER TWO</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbolic Violence: Forming a Bond</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER THREE</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love and Symbolic Violence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER FOUR</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaking and Symbolic Violence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER FIVE</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitus and Symbolic Violence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
After completing my reading list exam, I knew I wanted the concentration of my thesis to be nineteenth-century texts. I explored different ideas with Patricia, my advisor, who specializes in this area, and narrowed my focus to two Balzac narratives: *Eugénie Grandet* and *Le Père Goriot*. I changed the direction of my thesis several times, becoming interested in new possibilities as I read and re-read the novels. I never doubted, though, the choice of my texts.

Early this summer, both of my paternal grandparents passed away two weeks apart. They belonged to a book club several decades ago, receiving classics by mail. After their deaths, my mom found two Balzac books on one of their shelves and gave them to me, knowing my thesis focused on two works by the same author. Of all Balzac’s writings, the books on their shelf were *Eugénie Grandet* and *Le Père Goriot*. I think finding of these two books, hardback with slick pages and color illustrations, was meant to be a sign of encouragement—an indication that I was on the right path for success. This thesis is dedicated to Ruth and Leonard Pryweller, two role models with whom I wish I could share this milestone.

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So many people helped me reach this goal—I owe all of you more than just thanks. To my advisor Patricia Reynaud, who put our meetings above her grading and research, so she could offer her valuable feedback and suggestions. To both of my parents, for telling me how proud they are of me every step along the way. To my Mom, who signed me up for my first French class in Kindergarten, where I learned my first French word (“papillon:” butterfly). To my Dad, for letting me drain his ink cartridge, printing draft after draft of my thesis (maybe I will replace that sometime soon). To my sister Jen, who helped me find research materials I needed at the Vanderbilt library (when are those books due again?). To my sister Jordyn, because she went away to college this year, leaving the house quiet and empty so I could finally get some work done. To Elisabeth Hodges and Jesse Dickson for being readers on my thesis committee. And, to my grad school support network—Ellen Schaf, Erin Wheeler and Valerie Krock, for France 2005, laughs, drinks and apps, and reading list study sessions.

Thank you to all of the inspiring French teachers and professors that have worked with me over the years… I credit all of you for helping me earn my Masters degree.
INTRODUCTION

Over centuries of time, factions of people, notably women, have sustained oppression based on the fact they were unaware they were being oppressed—they considered their forced submissive nature to be normal. This is due to the success of the dominant, who functions by controlling another so successfully that the controlled, the dominé, is not even conscious of the fact he/she are being controlled. Such behavior is explained by Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of la violence symbolique, which this thesis will explore in-depth as it pertains to two nineteenth century novels by Honoré de Balzac: Eugénie Grandet and Le Père Goriot. There are many facets of symbolic violence; it is executed differently by men than by women. Stereotypically, today’s society would consider men more likely to play the role of the dominant as he is considered the more powerful sex. This is the case in Eugénie Grandet, Eugénie’s father exerts symbolic violence over her and her mother as they, two females, are constituted as the weaker sex. Conversely, in Le Père Goriot, a male character, Goriot, falls victim to symbolic violence as the dominé and his daughters control him as the dominantes.

Victims of symbolic violence are more likely to come together, forming a bond over their unfavorable situations. The already strong mother-daughter connection between Eugénie and her mother only grows stronger as a result of Grandet’s oppression. Likewise, Goriot finds a new friend in a fellow resident of the Maison Vauquer, Rastignac, as both fall victim to the symbolic violence of Goriot’s daughters, Anastasie and Delphine. The daughters, however, exert symbolic violence in different ways because of their different relationships with the men: they exploit Goriot’s unconditional love for them to an extreme and take advantage of his filial love while Delphine uses her sexual prowess to seduce Rastignac in a sexual way. The idea of how love plays into symbolic violence is also explored. If the dominé is in love with the dominant, he/she is much more likely to surrender himself/herself to the control of the dominant. We see examples of how this phenomenon functions by looking at the relationships between Eugénie and her cousin Charles, and Rastignac and Delphine. There is another kind of love, however, to be considered: filial love, which controls the relationship between Eugénie and her father and also between Goriot and his daughters. We are then left with the lingering question of whether or not
symbolic violence can be broken, and if so, how? According to Bourdieu’s theory, this cycle can be broken with the domina's realization that he/she is being controlled by the dominant. Eugénie fails to escape the symbolic violence her father imposed upon her for her entire lifetime; even after his death she continues the same habits as if he were still alive instructing her how to live. Goriot does succeed in breaking the symbolic violence of his daughters as, on his death bed, he realizes they will not come to his bedside because they are ashamed of him and was only important to them as he continued to provide financial support.

Another factor that contributes to the success, or lack thereof, of symbolic violence is Bourdieu’s concept of habitus, or the social conditions within which one functions. All of the principal characters in both Eugénie Grandet and Le Père Goriot share a common habitus of bourgeoisie, though they differ within their respective sub-classes: petite, moyenne, or grande bourgeoisie. Different habitus are explored, as Eugénie Grandet takes place in rural Saumur and Le Père Goriot’s setting is Paris. Both novels share the common feature of being political and social commentaries of the time; they were written only a year apart, in 1833 and 1834, and take place at the same time, 1819. The residences in which the principal characters live are also examined, as the external tends to represent the internal. The weathered, dilapidated Grandet house reflects the emotions of the oppressed Grandet women who live inside. Similarly, the Maison Vauquer is isolated with lots of greenery which hide part of the house, much like how its residents are isolated and have deep secrets that they are hiding from one another. This thesis is a reading of how Bourdieu’s theories, developed almost 150 years after these two novels were written, apply to the characters and social situations in Eugénie Grandet and Le Père Goriot as relationships of power rule society.
I. EXPLORING SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE

*La violence symbolique*, a theory created by Pierre Bourdieu to describe the subconscious interaction between *dominants* and *dominés*, will be the subject of this thesis as it frames both *Eugénie Grandet* and *Le Père Goriot*. The concept involves a dominant who exerts power, and a dominé who blindly accepts the dominant as an authority. The dominant presents his way as the only way, and consequently the dominé is unaware of any other ways because he has only been exposed to one primary *habitus*: that of the dominant. The dominé’s unconscious consent becomes second nature; he/she rarely disagrees with the dominant. The concept is based on the ignorance of the dominé: he/she does not rebel against the oppressive and vindictive ways of the dominant because he/she has been conditioned to blindly accept them. Bourdieu summarizes the concept: “La violence symbolique est, pour parler aussi simplement que possible, cette forme de violence qui s’exerce sur un agent social avec sa complicité… c’est le fait d’accepter cet ensemble de presupposés fondamentaux, pré-réflexifs…”

Symbolic violence is most easily recognized in relationships between men and women; men are the dominants and women are the dominées. In *Réponses*, Bourdieu uses Kabyle women as his primary example to demonstrate how the relationship between the two entities, assuming men as the dominants and women as the dominées, functions:

Pour essayer de dégager la logique de la domination masculine qui me semble être la forme paradigmaticque de la violence symbolique, j’ai choisi de fonder mon analyse sur mes recherches ethnographiques chez les Kabyles d’Algérie… je traite le cas des Kabyles comme une sorte d’‘image agrandie’ dans laquelle nous pouvons déchiffrer plus facilement les structures fondamentales de la vision masculine du monde: la cosmologie ‘phallonarcissique’ dont ils donnent une manifestation publique et collective hante nos inconscients.

Bourdieu justifies using Kabylian society (“cette société montagnarde d’Afrique”) as a model for his research as it is a “vérifiable conservatoire culturel” which has maintained several elements of a culture-rich society: rituals, poetry and oral tradition, and most

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2 Ibid., p. 145-146
3 Ibid., p. 145
4 Ibid.
importantly a preservation of Mediterranean “principes de vision et de di-vision”\textsuperscript{5} which have survived to determine social structures. Though the theory itself will be discussed more in-depth, it is essential at this point to explain the significance of symbolic violence as it pertains to the purpose of this thesis: the premise of symbolic violence defines the relationship between fathers and daughters in both \textit{Eugénie Grandet} and \textit{Le Père Goriot}. In \textit{Eugénie Grandet}, it is obvious Grandet plays the role of the dominant and Eugénie the dominée. Conversely, however, in \textit{Le Père Goriot}, the daughters, Anastasie and Delphine, play the role of the dominantes and Goriot is the dominé. This theory can be applied in such a manner as Bourdieu specifies the concept pertains to gender, but does not limit it to only males exercising the dominant power. It is implied that men are most often identified as the dominant, but because the theory rests on the concept of complicity, either sex can be identified as complicit thus playing the role of the dominé. When women play the role of the dominantes, however, domination is often executed by way of seduction, which will be shown in the case of \textit{Le Père Goriot}.

In his work \textit{Introduction à une sociologie critique: Lire Pierre Bourdieu}, Alain Accardo dedicates a sub-chapter to “breaking down” the Bourdieusien concept of symbolic violence. He begins, “Retenons ici que, pour qu’une domination soit durable, il faut que la violence se transforme en contrat, en échange réciproque, en un consensus qui n’exclut jamais la violence de façon definitive mais qui la maintient à l’horizon des échanges sociaux, latente et toujours prête à ressurgir en cas de besoin.”\textsuperscript{6} This passage speaks to the unconscious nature of symbolic violence; the “échange réciproque” takes place when the dominant imposes himself and his habits, behavior and traditions upon the dominé. Bourdieu implies the dominé accepts symbolic violence because it is executed in a form that is virtually unrecognizable. “Du fait que nous sommes nés dans un monde social, nous acceptons un certain nombre de postulats, d’axiomes, qui vont sans dire et qui ne requièrent pas d’inculcation. C’est pourquoi l’analyse de l’acceptation doxique du monde… est le véritable fondement d’une théorie réaliste de la domination…”\textsuperscript{7} Because this form of manipulation cannot be identified by the dominé, a vicious cycle of misidentification results:

\textsuperscript{5} Ibid., p. 146
Symbolic violence is a subtle, euphemized, invisible mode of domination that prevents domination from being recognized as such and, therefore, as misrecognized domination, is socially recognized.”

Consequently, it is difficult to determine if we are able to fully comprehend the concept of symbolic violence as it pertains to society and class structure.

The idea of the “échange réciproque” and the level of unconscious associated with symbolic violence lead to, for the purpose of this chapter, the most important element of Bourdieu’s concept: complicity. “‘Complicity’ implies, then, that the person who is confronted by acts of symbolic violence is disposed to perceive the violence in these acts, to decode the relevant signals, and to understand their veiled social meaning, but without recognizing them consciously as what they are namely, as words, gestures, movements, and intonations of domination.”

The dominé’s willingness to accept the power exerted over him by the dominant legitimizes the scenario. “Le consentement des dominés implique donc une forme de cécité qui les empêche de percevoir ni concevoir l’arbitraire de la domination, ce qui du même coup la fait apparaître comme légitime… une violence symbolique qui est, elle, socialement et psychologiquement acceptable par les dominés.”

Complicity is often caused by naïveté which, arguably, is a characteristic that applies to the principal characters in the two novels who will be identified as dominés.

Eugénie Grandet is a prime candidate to be subjected to symbolic violence as the system is based on naïveté and she, the dominée, is unaware such violence is being imposed upon her. Eugénie’s sheltered upbringing leads her to blindly accept her father’s every word and action as correct. She fears the wrath of her father, but fails to identify what causes such panic which results in obedience. “Symbolic violence is exercised only through an act of knowledge and practical recognition which takes place below the level of consciousness and will and which gives all its manifestations—injunctions, suggestions, seduction, threats, reproaches, orders or calls to order—their ‘hypnotic power.’”

In her father’s presence, Eugénie lacks the ability to make the most basic decisions. She looks to her father for

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9 Ibid.
permission and reassurance even in simple matters, such as accepting a birthday gift from a friend: “En l’ouvrant, Eugénie eut une de ces joies inespérées et complètes qui font rougir, tressaillir, trembler d’aize les jeunes filles. Elle tourna les yeux sur son père, comme pour savoir s’il lui permis d’accepter, et monsieur Grandet dit un ‘prends, ma fille!’ dont l’accent eût illustré un acteur” (“On opening it, Eugénie experienced one of those moments of complete happiness which make girls blush, quiver, and tremble with joy. She turned her eyes to her father as if to ask whether she might accept the gift, and Monsieur Grandet replied with a ‘Take it, my child,’ in tones that would have done credit to an actor.”)\(^{12}\) She was raised to understand the family hierarchy and abide by its rules. Similarly, Grandet exerts symbolic violence on his wife. As master of the house, he shares no authority with Madame Grandet, who dutifully obeys her husband. In the case of the Grandet women, the intergenerational success of symbolic violence should be noted: because Eugénie models so much of her behavior after her mother, it should be expected that her passivity can be related to her mother’s passivity. There is conformity between the habits and behavior of the two women as Eugénie is prone to imitate her mother’s conduct. The oppression of the Grandet women results in a special bond they share, which will be discussed more in-depth later.

Symbolic violence is seen through, among other ways, how Eugénie and her mother react to situations which they know would not earn Grandet’s approval. When Eugénie’s cousin Charles comes to Saumur for a visit and learns his father has committed suicide at home in Paris, the women try to make his stay as comfortable as possible. They attempt to hide the extravagant breakfasts they prepare for Charles out of fear Grandet will punish them for being too generous. Concerned Grandet will walk in and reprimand the women for their charity, Eugénie warns her mother: “‘Voilà papa,’ dit Eugénie. Elle ôta la soucoupe la sucre, en laissant quelques morceaux sa la nappe. Nanon emporta l’assiette aux oeufs. Madame Grandet se dressa comme une biche effrayée. Ce fut une peur panique de laquelle Charles s’étonna, sans pouvoir se l’expliquer. ‘Eh bien, qu’avez-vous donc ?’ leur demanda-t-il. ‘Mais voilà mon père,’ dit Eugénie” (“That’s papa,” said Eugénie. She took away the saucer of sugar, leaving a few lumps on the tablecloth. Nanon removed the egg plate. Madame Grandet stared up like a frightened deer. It was a moment of complete panic that

\(^{12}\) Honoré de Balzac, *Eugénie Grandet* (Livre de Poche), p. 90; *Eugénie Grandet* (Oxford World’s Classics), p. 29. All subsequent references to these editions will be included in the text.
amazed Charles, who could not understand it. ‘But what’s the matter?’ he asked. ‘My father’s coming,’ said Eugénie’” [p. 142-143/72]). As an outsider not conscious of Grandet’s authority, Charles cannot comprehend why the women would be disciplined for having a breakfast that to him seemed ordinary. Grandet’s frugal nature prevented such excessive meals in his house, regardless of what Charles may have been accustomed to at his home in Paris. Later in the same scene, Charles again fails to understand the relationship between Eugénie and her father as Grandet expresses his dissatisfaction with the breakfast the women prepared for Charles, deeming it too festive: “‘Oh! si on ne les arrête, elles mettront Saumur au pillage pour vous, mon neveu…’ Charles ne devait jamais être dans le secret des profondes agitations qui brisaient le cœur de sa cousine, alors foudroyée par le regard du vieux tonnelier” (“‘Oh, if they’re not stopped, they’ll plunder all of Saumur for you, nephew…’ Charles, however, would never know the secret of the deep emotions which were breaking his cousin’s heart as she stood devastated by the old cooper’s look” [p. 144/73]). Such anxiety about Grandet’s reaction cannot be understood by an outsider who has not experienced symbolic violence for himself, at least in a home setting.

Throughout the novel, several situations arise which show the effect of symbolic violence on the Grandet women. They lack an ability to make decisions, even Madame Grandet has no authority as the family’s matriarch. She does not even feel comfortable giving approval to Eugénie to mourn her uncle’s death and support her cousin Charles during his time of mourning. “‘Maman,’ dit Eugénie, ‘nous porterons le deuil de mon oncle.’ ‘Ton père décidera de cela,’ répondit madame Grandet” (“‘Mama,’ said Eugénie, ‘let’s wear mourning for my uncle.’ ‘Your father will decide about that,’ replied Madame Grandet” [p. 151/80]). Eugénie is naïve to believe her father always has her best interest in mind and puts blind faith in all of her father’s decisions. He agrees to pay part of his bankrupt nephew’s way to the Indies, and Eugénie is overwhelmed with gratitude that her father will help her cousin though she does not understand how little of the voyage he is willing to pay. She only recognizes his generosity, insufficient as it may be. “Eugénie sauta d’un bond au cou de son père. ‘Ah! mon père, vous êtes bon, vous!’ Elle l’embrassait de manière à rendre presque honteux Grandet, que sa conscience harcelait un peu” (“Eugénie jumped up and threw her arms round her father’s neck. ‘Oh, father, how kind you are!’ She hugged him so warmly that Grandet became almost ashamed, for his conscience was
pricking him a little” [p. 149/78]). Grandet has raised Eugénie to believe he always does the right thing, thus she assumes his willingness to help Charles is adequate enough for him to have the opportunity to get to the Indies and earn a fair living. Eugénie never questions her father.

Symbolic violence often works with another component, further enabling the success of domination. In this case, the other component is filial love, which plays a significant role in why both Eugénie and her mother so easily fall victim to symbolic violence. Eugénie, as a daughter, truly loves her father, thus enabling her role as the dominée. Likewise, Madame Grandet loves and respects her husband, wanting to please him. Filial love largely accounts for the behavior of the dominés in both Eugénie Grandet and Le Père Goriot; consequently it should be an important consideration in an analysis of these texts.

Madame Grandet demonstrates equal blind faith toward Grandet in thought and action. Eugénie arranges for Charles to have a wax candle for light at night, and Grandet discovers this luxury and blames Madame Grandet. At this point it is late at night and he insists that the two will discuss the matter the following morning; “La pauvre femme s’endormit comme l’écolier qui, n’ayant pas appris ses leçons, craint de trouver à son réveil le visage irrité du maître” (“The poor woman fell asleep like a schoolboy who has not done his homework and who is afraid of being confronted with his teacher’s angry face when he wakes up” [p. 157/85]). This teacher/student metaphor is worth noting as it parallels the relationship between the dominant and the dominé. The dominant teaches the dominé his way, much like how the teacher relates information to the student. The student is considered naïve like the dominé, and the teacher is the knowing authority like the dominant. Similar to a teacher/student relationship, the relationship between the dominant and the dominé operates on the premise of complicity: the student is eager to learn as the dominé unconsciously agrees to symbolic violence. The morning after this episode takes place, “…elles [madame Grandet et Eugénie] vinrent s’asseoir à leurs places devant la fenêtre et attendirent Grandet avec cette anxiété qui glace le coeur ou l’échauffe, le serre ou le dilate suivant les caractères, alors que l’on redoute une scène, une punition…” (“… they [Madame Grandet and Eugénie] went and sat down at their places by the window and waited for Grandet, full of anxiety that, according to temperament, makes the blood run cold or puts on in a fever, oppresses or dilates the heart, when one is dreading a scene or a punishment” [p.
The women are conditioned through symbolic violence to dread confrontation with Grandet as they know it will result in punishment. They are often described as waiting for Grandet; they are so dependent on him that they fear acting without his permission. Both Eugénie and her mother have been subjected to symbolic violence for so many years that they never question Grandet’s authority or their own submissive behavior.

In *Le Père Goriot*, Jean-Joachim Goriot is defined according to his daughters much like how Eugénie Grandet is defined according to her father. After the death of his wife, “…le sentiment de la paternité se développa chez Goriot jusqu’à la déraison. Il reporta ses affections trompées par la mort sur ses deux filles…” (“… paternal feeling developed to the point of mania in Goriot: the wealth of affection which death had frustrated was transferred to his two daughters…”). He adapts his late wife’s “fine and sensitive nature” and goes to great lengths to spoil his daughters, Anastasie and Delphine. As Goriot takes on this feminine role, he becomes more likely to be subjected to symbolic violence. Women most often play the role of the dominé, and adapting woman-like characteristics enables him to fall victim to symbolic violence more easily than the typical male. His daughters are all he has left, and he wants nothing more than to see them marry well and continue happy and successful lives. In conversation with Rastignac, Goriot describes his love for his daughters: “‘Ma vie, à moi, est dans mes deux filles. Si elles s’amusent, si elles sont heureuses, bravement mises, si elles marchent sur des tapis qu’importe de quel drap je sois vêtu, et comment est l’endroit où je me couche? Je n’ai point froid si elles ont chaud, je ne m’ennuie jamais si elles rient. Je n’ai de chagrins que les leurs’” (“‘My life is lived through my two girls. If they are enjoying themselves, if they are happy and finely dressed and have carpets to walk on, what does it matter what sort of cloth covers me or what sort of place I sleep in? I don’t feel cold if they are warm, and I’m never dull if they are laughing. The only troubles I have are their troubles’” [p. 112/153]). As Goriot becomes increasingly generous with his daughters, they exploit their father’s generosity and manipulate him into a situation of symbolic domination. Anastasie and Delphine hold the one prize Goriot covets: their undying love and affection. In this relationship, Goriot goes to any extreme to maintain their

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13 Honoré de Balzac, *Le Père Goriot* (Classiques Universels) p. 79; *Old Goriot* (Penguin Classics), p. 113. All subsequent references to these editions will be included in the text.
love; he is complicit as a dominé. The dominantes control their father emotionally and financially; nevertheless, his love is unconditional. “Il aimait jusqu’au mal qu’elles lui faisaient” (“He even loved them for the pain they caused him” [p. 80/114]).

As the dominé, he is conditioned to accept the circumstances under which his daughters visit him. “Il se jeta dans cette pension par suite du désespoir qui l’avait saisi en voyant ses deux filles obligées par leurs maris de refuser non seulement de le prendre chez elles, mais encore de l’y recevoir ostensiblement” (“Goriot had buried himself in the boarding-house in despair when his daughters were forced by their husbands to refuse not only to have him staying under their roof, but also to allow him to call on them, except in private” [p. 80/114]). It is, however, questionable that the husbands forbidding their wives from seeing their father is the only reason for this secret relationship. It is more believable that Anastasie and Delphine have shunned their father and use their husbands as the excuse as to why they only see him in secret. This feeling of shame that has overcome Goriot’s daughters is caused by their embarrassment of their father’s social class. The description of their shame acts as a social commentary, telling of the importance of social structure in nineteenth century France. Anastasie and Delphine’s father reminds them of their bourgeois origin, which they are trying to escape by marrying into and associating themselves with a higher social class, the aristocracy. Shame about their social origin reveals the daughters’ failure to return the unconditional filial love continuously demonstrated by their father. They most often call on Goriot at his residence, the Maison Vauquer, so he is not seen arriving at or leaving their beautiful homes. When Rastignac first sees Goriot leaving Anastasie’s residence and comments on their common acquaintance, the Countess “rougit, et fut évidemment embarrassée” (“…blushed and showed obvious embarrassment” [p. 58/86]). Goriot dreams of being able to see his daughters more often and share in their lives, but does not question their authority when they explain it is not possible. He even shares this excuse with others as a valid reason he is unable to see his daughters on a regular basis: “Mes deux filles m’aient bien. Je suis heureux père. Seulement, mes deux gendres se sont mal conduits envers moi. Je n’ai pas voulu faire souffrir ces chères créatures de mes dissensions avec leurs maris, et j’ai préféré les voir en secret. Ce mystère me donne mille jouissances que ne comprennent pas les autres pères qui peuvent voir leurs filles quand ils veulent” (““My two girls are very fond of me. I am a happy father; but my sons-in-law have behaved
badly. I did not want my darlings to suffer because of my differences with their husbands, so I prefer to see them in secret. My clandestine glimpses of them give me far more pleasure than other fathers enjoy who can see their daughters whenever they like”’ [p. 101/139]).

Over the years, Goriot makes many sacrifices to be able to meet the financial demands of Anastasie and Delphine. He marries them both into good families hoping for a stable life for his daughters. They only visit him at his boarding house residence when they need money, taking advantage of the love he offers them regardless of how he is treated in return. “‘Ce père avait tout donné. Il avait donné, pendant vingt ans, ses entrailles, son amour; il avait donné sa fortune en un jour. Le citron bien pressé, ses filles ont laissé le zeste au coin des rues’” (“‘This father had given everything. Throughout twenty years he had given his love, his whole heart; he gave his fortune in one day. When the lemon was well squeezed his daughters left the rind in the gutter’” [p. 70/102]). Goriot is subject to his daughters’ wishes and authority. When Anastasie and Delphine find themselves in unhappy marriages, they are quick to blame their father. In a conversation with Delphine, Goriot learns of his daughter’s financial troubles in her marriage: “‘Mais c’est donc un fripon?’ ‘Eh bien! oui, mon père,’ dit-elle en se jetant sur une chaise en pleurant. ‘Je ne voulais pas vous l’avouer pour vous épargner le chagrin de m’avoir mariée à un homme de cette espèce-là!’” (“‘Is the man nothing but a swindler, then?’ ‘Well, yes, Father,’ she said, throwing herself into a chair and bursting into tears, ‘that’s what he is! I wanted to keep it from you. I wanted to spare you the mortification of knowing you had married me to a man of that sort’” [p. 190/248]). Above all, Goriot tries to maintain financial security for his daughters so they may have access to any material things they want in order to remain beautiful and desirable in the higher social circles of Parisian society. Delphine tells him the worst thing he can hear and makes him feel responsible for it. She continues: “‘Oui, je suis dans un abîme, il y a peut-être de votre faute,’ dit Delphine. ‘Nous avons si peu de raison quand nous nous marions! Connaissions-nous le monde, les affaires, les hommes, les moeurs? Les pères devraient penser pour nous’” (“‘Yes, if I am in the depths of despair, it’s perhaps partly your fault,’ said Delphine. ‘We have so little sense when we get married. What do we know of the world, or business, or men, or life? Fathers ought to think for us’” [p. 191/250]). She immediately apologizes for blaming him, but this does not change the situation—the seed has already been planted for Goriot to feel like he has failed his daughter. To make matters
worse, Anastasie, miserable in her position as well, confronts her father about her unsuccessful marriage: “Pouvais-je empêcher qu’il ne vît enfin les suites naturelles de nos déplorables mariages? Pourquoi ne les a-t-il pas empêchés? N’était-ce pas à lui de réfléchir pour nous? Aujourd’hui, je le sais, il souffre autant que nous; mais que pouvions-nous y faire?” (“Could I prevent his seeing in the end natural consequences of our deplorable marriages? Why did he permit them? Was it not his duty to think for us? Now, I know, he suffers as much as we do; but what can we do about it?” [p. 201/263]). Goriot again blames himself for the inadequate husbands he allowed his daughters to marry. He is in such agony after learning of his daughters’ unhappiness that he eventually dies, knowing he has no money to resolve their situations. On his death bed, Goriot realizes, “L’argent donne tout, même des filles” (“Money buys everything, even daughters” [p. 218/284]). The scene when Goriot learns of his daughters’ unhappiness emphasizes again the masculine/feminine role reversal as it pertains to symbolic violence. Anastasie and Delphine lead Goriot to believe he has exercised domination on them—that his daughters are the victims of the situation in which they find themselves. They convince Goriot it was his job to protect them, and through his paternal domination, he convinced his daughters to marry men that have now left them poor and unhappy. At the time the novel takes place, it was typically the mother’s responsibility to look after the children, to protect them and approve their choices. As Goriot has taken on the maternal role, he is accountable for his daughters’ poor choices, thus accounting for how Anastasie and Delphine put their father at fault.

Goriot, as the dominé, knows no other way but to continuously offer his daughters money, buying their happiness. He also gains happiness from this relationship of symbolic domination; he believes, “Les pères doivent toujours donner pour être heureux. Donner toujours, c’est ce qui fait qu’on est père” (“To be happy, fathers must always be giving; it is ceaselessly giving that makes you really a father” [p. 176/231]). This role, however, is usually reserved for mothers, thus Goriot taking on this responsibility again proves how he plays a maternal character. Anastasie and Delphine have no reservations about asking their father for money to the point that he has no more money to give. Their love, which is earned by the money he gives them, runs out when Goriot goes bankrupt. “Goriot’s devotion to his daughters moves from conventional paternal love through self-sacrifice to ennobling obsession when he starts stripping himself of the bare necessities of life in order to satisfy
their caprices."14 Unable to continue without the love of his daughters, the dominé can no longer survive. Goriot dies and Anastasie and Delphine, as the dominantes, go on living their lives.

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II. SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE: FORMING A BOND

In the case of Eugénie Grandet, the effect of symbolic violence on mother and daughter in the Grandet family only leads to the strengthening of their bond. As victims of the same situation, they turn to one another for support. Aside from Nanon, the domestic help, neither has a friend outside the house. The oppressed tend to form a strong connection as they understand the sadness the other endures. The already innate mother/daughter bond is intensified as the two women are subjected to symbolic violence by Grandet. Balzac describes in detail on several occasions how the two spend their days working together; Madame Grandet acts as Eugénie’s confidante as she falls in love for the first time. When describing the two, he often refers to them as “mother and daughter,” grouping them together as one entity to further emphasize the strength of their relationship. “Une travailleuse en bois de merisier déteint remplissait l’embrasure, et le petit fauteuil d’Eugénie Grandet était placé tout auprès. Depuis quinze ans, toutes les journées de la mère et la fille s’étaient paisiblement écoulées à cette place, dans un travail constant, à compter du mois d’avril jusqu’au mois de novembre” (“A bleached cherrywood worktable filled the window-bay and Eugénie Grandet’s little armchair stood right beside it. For fifteen years mother and daughter had spent peaceful days, from April to November, sitting in this spot constantly at work” [p. 78/18]). This scene depicts the passivity of the women, and the authority of Grandet remains an undertone as Balzac implies they are at work for his sake. “La mère et la fille entretenaient tout le linge de la maison, et employaient si consciencieusement leurs journées à ce véritable labeur d’ouvrière, qui, si Eugénie voulait broder une colerette à sa mère, elle était forcée de prendre sur les heures de sommeil en trompant son père pour avoir de la lumière” (“The mother and daughter kept all the household linen in repair and spent their days so conscientiously at this work, which was real working-woman’s toil, that if Eugénie wanted to embroider a little collar for her mother she was forced to take time off her sleep, deceiving her father so she could have a light” [p. 78/18]). The notion of deception described at this point in the novel is important as it sets the tone for Eugénie’s further deception which surfaces as the story progresses. These passages which in part help set the scene for the novel also make the reader aware of the strong bond that exists between Eugénie and her mother.
Eugénie seeks comfort in her mother when she becomes aware of her uncle’s suicide. She feels the sadness soon to be felt by Charles once he learns the news of his father’s death. “Madame Grandet, au cou de laquelle Eugénie sauta pour l’embrasser avec cette vive effusion de cœur que nous cause un chagrin secret…” (“Eugénie threw her arms round her mother’s neck and kissed her with the sudden expression of emotion which is aroused by a secret sorrow” [p. 134/65]). She entrusts her mother with her most secret and intimate emotions. In turn, Madame Grandet attempts to comfort and protect her daughter. When Grandet talks of Charles leaving to start a new life in the Indies, Eugénie feels a deep pain which she hides until she can confess her sadness to her mother alone: “‘Ah! maman, j’étouffe,’ s’écria Eugénie quand elle fut seule avec sa mère. ‘Je n’ai jamais souffert ainsi’” (“‘Oh, mama, I can’t breathe,’ cried Eugénie when she was alone with her mother. ‘I have never felt pain like this before’” [p. 135/66]). Madame Grandet responds by looking at “… sa fille avec cette intuition sympathique dont sont douées les mères pour l’objet de leur tendresse, et devina tout. Mais, à la vérité, la vie des célèbres soeurs hongroises, attachées l’une à l’autre par une erreur de la nature, n’avait pas été plus intime que ne l’était celle d’Eugénie et de sa mère, toujours ensemble dans cette embrasure de croisée, ensemble à l’église, et dormant ensemble dans le même air” (“… her daughter with the intuitive sympathy mothers have for the object of their love, and guessed everything. But, indeed, the lives of the two famous Hungarian sisters, joined to each other by an error of nature had not been more intimately linked than those of Eugénie and her mother; they were always together in the bay window, together at church, and breathing the same air as they slept” [p. 136/66]). Balzac speaks to the intimate nature of their relationship through repetition of the word “ensemble” and describing how they are as one in even in one of their most vulnerable states: while they are sleeping. Their bond exists not only during the day as they fear the master of the house, but also as they escape him in a state of relaxation. Furthermore, the two share similar emotions and thoughts throughout the novel: “‘Maman, nous dirons des neuvaines pour lui.’ ‘J’y pensais,’ répondit la mère… En ce moment une plainte sourde… retentit dans les greniers et glaça de terreur Eugénie et sa mère… Quand Grandet eut tiré la porte, Eugénie et sa mère respirèrent à leur aise” (“‘Mama, we shall have novenas said for him.’ ‘That’s just what I was thinking,’ replied her mother… Just then a dull moan… could be heard coming from the loft, and it petrified Eugénie and her mother with terror… When
Grandet shut the door behind him, Eugénie and her mother breathed more freely” [p. 149/78]).

Madame Grandet continues to protect her daughter as she lives vicariously through Eugénie; she wants her daughter to feel all the joys of falling in love that she perhaps never experienced. Eugénie fears her father will consider the special breakfast she prepared for Charles too excessive and she “trembled in every limb” hoping Charles would have time to enjoy the meal before her father returned home. Madame Grandet reassured her daughter: “‘Sois tranquille, Eugénie, si ton père vient, je prendrai tout sur moi’” (“‘Don’t worry, Eugénie, if your father comes in, I shall take responsibility for everything’”). Eugénie exclaimed in response, “‘Oh! ma bonne mère,’ s’écria-t-il, ‘je ne t’ai pas assez aimée!’” (“‘Oh how kind you are, mother… I’ve never loved you enough” [p. 148/68]). Though Madame Grandet is frightened by the wrath of Grandet equally as much as her daughter, she sets her fear aside in support of Eugénie’s love for Charles. “Enfin sa mère, sa bonne et indulgente mère, voulut bien se prêter aux fantasies de son amour, et lorsque la chambre de Charles fut faite, elles allèrent toutes deux tenir compagnie au malheureux” (“Her mother, her kind, indulgent mother, was willing to go along with the caprices of her love, and when Charles’s room was done, they both went up to keep the unfortunate young man company” [p. 161/90]).

As the novel evolves, Balzac uses the principal characters in Eugénie Grandet to demonstrate fundamental differences between men and women. Balzac uses Madame Grandet and Eugénie to stereotype the fragile, gentle nature of women. Through thought and action, the two characters are unified under one general category—female. They extend themselves to Charles, their houseguest, attempting to make their home comfortable with luxuries to which he is accustomed at his home in Paris, despite Grandet’s frugal ways of running the house. When Charles receives news of his father’s death, Eugénie and her mother care for him while he mourns and plans for his future. The two women identify with Charles’s pain. “[L]es trésors de sa pitié, l’une des sublimes supériorités de la femme, la seule qu’elle veuille faire sentir, la seule qu’elle pardonne à l’homme de lui laisser prendre sur lui” (“Pity is one of the qualities in which women are sublimely superior; it is the only one that they are willing to reveal, the only one they will forgive men for allowing them a greater share of” [p. 161/90]) The tone of this passage is envious, revealing a certain respect
for women; “sublimes” is used to emphasize “superiorité,” which alone stands as a superlative. Balzac further comments: “La femme a cela de commun avec l’ange que les êtres souffrants lui appartiennent” (“Women have in common with angels the special care of suffering beings” [p. 164/93]). Angels evoke thoughts of purity and serenity; this is the life Eugénie has led since she knows little other than the inside of her house in Saumur. It is fate that Charles, during a time of suffering, would be under the care of two women, his “angels” who tend to his comfort and well-being. Balzac satirizes the common view of women in the following gender commentary:

En toute situation, les femmes ont plus de douleur que n’en a l’homme, et souffrant plus que lui. L’homme a sa force, et l’exercice de sa puissance: il agit, il va, il s’occupe, il pense, il embrasse l’avenir et y trouve des consolations. Ainsi faisait Charles. Mais la femme demeure, elle reste face à face avec le chagrin dont rien ne la distrait, elle descend jusqu’au fond de l’abîme qu’il a ouvert, le mesure et souvent le comble de ses vœux et de ses larmes. Ainsi faisait Eugénie. Elle s’initiait à sa destinée. Sentir, aimer, souffrir, se dévouer, sera toujours le texte de la vie des femmes.

In every situation, women have more cause for grief than men and suffer more. A man has his strength and the exercise of his powers. He is active, he comes and goes, he is busy, he thinks, he plans for the future and finds consolation in it… But a woman stays at home; she remains face to face with her sorrow, with nothing to distract her from it; she plumbs the depths of the abyss it has opened up, and often fills it with tears. That is what Eugénie did. She was starting out on her destiny. To feel, to love, to suffer, to be devoted, will always be the theme of women’s lives. (p. 210/134)

To draw another parallel between the dominés in Eugénie Grandet and Le Père Goriot, this “texte de la vie des femmes” which describes Eugénie’s life cycle also explains, word for word, how Goriot lives. He sees this maternal role as the purpose of his existence; he loves his daughters and is devoted to them, and he suffers as they take advantage of him. Again, because Goriot’s sensitive characteristics are typically female, he is more inclined to suffer as the dominé by taking on a female role.

In a literary analysis, Mandakranta Bose explains the treatment of women at the time Eugénie Grandet takes place: “Not only are the lives of the men self-centered, they are based on the assumption that women are born to obey men and accept whatever role is
imposed on them.”

The Grandet women are so obedient they constantly question whether or not Monsieur Grandet will approve their actions; Madame Grandet wonders: “‘Mais, que dira ton père?... Mais ton père?’” (“‘But what will your father say?... But what about your father?’” [p. 105/40]). Grandet imposed a certain fear that led to panic and self-doubt for Eugénie. “[E]lle eut dans le coeur de la terreur à l’aspect de son père, vit en lui le maître de son sort, et se crut coupable d’une faute en lui taisant quelques pensées” (“…her heart was filled with terror at the sight of her father; she saw in him the master of her fate and felt guilty at keeping some of her thoughts from him” [p. 126/58]). Bose continues: “The image of women as dependents is so powerful that men cannot conceive of women as independent beings with a right to shape their own lives. Monsieur Grandet expects and exacts total obedience in every matter from his womenfolk, indifferent to their individual preferences.”

Grandet is confident in his position as the powerful authority of the family; his fortune is solidified by Madame Grandet’s dowry and inheritance of over three hundred thousand francs. Though Madame Grandet “… s’était toujours sentie si profondément humiliée d’une dépendence et d’un ilotisme contre lequel la douceur de son âme lui interdisait de se révolter… la pauvre femme, heureuse de pouvoir faire quelque chose pour un homme que son confesseur lui représentait comme son seigneur et maître” (“…had always felt so deeply humiliated by a dependence and slavery against which the gentleness of her heart forbade her to rebel… the poor woman [was] happy to be able to do something for a man whom her confessor represented to her as her lord and master” [p. 85-86/24]). The fact that “her confessor” encouraged Madame Grandet’s subservient behavior further indicates the social expectations of women in Saumur during the time in which the novel takes place. Saumur, the epitome of “provincial simplicity,” has a much more traditional familial hierarchy than that of Paris. In this setting, the nineteenth century was a turning point in the treatment and level of autonomy women were awarded.

For most cultures of the world, the nineteenth century was a period of radical social change which affected men and women economically, politically and spiritually. It was a period of great complexity and contradictions… it was

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16 Ibid., p. 276
equally the age of experiments and revolutions. Among the many issues of social life... was the question of the rights and duties of women.\textsuperscript{17}

The structure of the Grandet family reproduces the structure of the state at the time both \textit{Eugénie Grandet} and \textit{Le Père Goriot} were written. Both systems are based on hierarchy and absolute power given to the authority: the head of the household for the Grandets, and the head of the State for France. The novels were written and take place during la Restauration which immediately followed Napoleon’s overthrow from power. The conservative Bourbon dynasty was restored to the throne in 1814 with Louis XVIII as the nation’s king. He stood for absolute monarchy and overturning what the Revolution had achieved. Upon his death in 1824, he was succeeded by his brother, Charles X, who was also extremely anti-democratic in his ruling. Charles X, who was unpopular with the bourgeoisie and the working class, became even more disliked after he began enforcing the July Ordinances in 1830. These ordinances dissolved his chamber of deputies, restricted the press and restricted voting privileges. The result was “Les Trois Glorieuses,” the July Revolution which led to the abdication of Charles X and the creation of a constitutional monarchy. “‘1830’ was seen as complementing ‘1789,’ ending the aristocratic revival, permitting the bourgeoisie to capture the bureaucracy and, by extending the vote to 200-franc taxpayers, guaranteeing its electoral control, so as to enjoy the profits of capitalist expansion.”\textsuperscript{18} Louis-Philippe d’Orléans was brought to power by the wealthy bourgeoisie and ascended to the throne as “Citizen King” of the July Monarchy. This monarchy, which remained in power until the Revolution of 1848, stood for reform and increased bourgeois involvement within the French government.

As for social and economic life in the nineteenth century, “A person’s condition in life was marked most of all by their age, gender, and social class. Age was the dominant factor only during infancy and old age; social class and gender predominated during the rest of an individual’s life.”\textsuperscript{19} Social class, more important than gender, was determined by three main factors which influenced its formation: “First came an economic class, a group of people with common economic interests. These then formed a social class, where the group

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., p. 273
became conscious of itself and formed a common social identity. Finally this became a class in action, when its members acted together in their joint interests.\textsuperscript{20} The bourgeoisie formed a common social identity to form a social class; they became the masses and took over the ruling aristocracy. Both \textit{Eugénie Grandet} and \textit{Le Père Goriot} illustrate the bourgeois lifestyle in nineteenth century France, though the novels take place in geographically different places.

While both narratives comment on the importance of wealth in nineteenth century France, \textit{Le Père Goriot} takes the economic commentary to another level by exploring class structure. It will later be discussed how class differences led to Goriot’s estrangement from his daughters, but it should also be noted how class similarities, along with symbolic violence, play a part in bringing two friends together. Goriot is seen as a social outcast by the rest of the residents at the Maison Vauquer. They speak to him in a derogatory manner, and refer to him as “père” (“old”), recognizing his lower income; they treat him as a pauper. He is not respected at the boarding house, in fact, the residents even question the credibility of his past as Goriot is a self-described retired vermicelli maker. They wonder why beautiful young women wearing expensive dresses come to the pension to call on Goriot, and why he must reduce his living expenses every year by paying less rent, thus forcing him to move up a floor in the boarding house. The most expensive rooms in the house are on the lowest floor, and the rooms become progressively less expensive as one moves up to a higher floor. Consequently each time Goriot moves up a floor, he moves down the social hierarchy among the boarders. As one former boarder, Madame la Comtesse de l’Ambermesnil tells a friend: “…vous ne tirerez rien de cet homme-là! il est ridiculement défiant, c’est une grippesou, une bête, un sot, qui ne vous causera que du désagrément” (“… you will never make anything of that man! He is ridiculously suspicious. He’s a mean old miser, a blockhead, an old fool. He will bring you nothing but vexation!” [p. 27/47]). At the dinner table, Goriot is ridiculed for systematically smelling the bread to determine its quality: “Assis au bas-bout de la table, près de la porte par laquelle on servait, le Père Goriot leva la tête en flairant un morceau de pain qu’il avait sous sa serviette, par une vieille habitude commerciale qui reparaissait quelquefois” (“Goriot was seated at lower end of the table, near the door through which Christophe was bringing the food, and with his head thrown back was sniffing at a

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., p. 38
piece of bread which had been placed under his napkin. This was an old business habit of his to which he sometimes reverted” [p. 50/76]). In disbelief of his former occupation, one resident cries, “‘Laissez-donc, il fait ça pour nous persuader qu’il a été vermicellier’” (“‘Never mind him, he does that to persuade us that he has been a vermicelli-maker” [p. 50/76]).

Rastignac takes part in this group as he fails to defend Goriot; Rastignac’s conduct is generally passive. He sees no reason to stand up for Goriot and shares the opinion of his fellow boarders. Rastignac’s true judgment of Goriot surfaces as he visits the Comtesse Anastasie de Restaud after meeting her at Madame de Beauséant’s ball. He comments that the two have common acquaintances: “‘Mais,’ reprit l’étudiant, ‘je viens de voir sortir de chez vous un monsieur avec lequel je suis porte à porte dans la même pension, le père Goriot.’ À ce nom enjolivé du mot père, le comte, qui tisonnait, jeta les pincettes dans le feu, comme si elles lui eussent brûlé les mains, et se leva. ‘Monsieur, vous auriez pu dire monsieur Goriot! s’écria-t-il” (“‘Just now,’ the student went on, ‘I saw a gentleman leave your house who lives next door to me in the same boarding house, old Goriot.’ At this name, embellished with the word ‘old,’ the Count who was mending the fire threw the tongs into it as if they burnt his fingers and stood up. ‘Sir, you might have said Monsieur Goriot!’ he exclaimed” [p. 58/86]). It is only through this confrontation that Rastignac learns Goriot has been telling the truth: he has two beautiful daughters, one of whom is Anastasie. After this social faux-pas, he again visits Madame de Beauséant to ask for advice on how to rectify the situation. She, along with her close friend Madame de Langeais, explains how “‘…ce bonhomme avait deux filles dont il est quasi fou, quoique l’une et l’autre l’aient à peu près renié’” (“‘The worthy man has two daughters whom he is half mad about, although they both have virtually cast him off” [p. 68/99]). He gains a new respect for Goriot, understanding how Anastasie and her sister, Delphine, have rejected him:

‘… leur père, le père, un père,’ reprit la vicomtesse, ‘un bon père qui leur a donné, dit-on, à chacune cinq ou six cent mille francs pour faire leur bonheur en les mariant bien, et qui ne s’était réservé que huit à dix mille livres de rente pour lui, croyant que ses filles resteraient ses filles, qu’il s’était créé chez elles deux existences, deux maisons où il serait adoré, choyé. En deux ans, ses gendres, l’ont banni de leur société comme le dernier des misérables.’
‘...the father, a father, a good father, who, they say, gave each of them five or six hundred thousand francs to ensure their happiness by marrying them well, and kept only eight or ten thousand livres a year for himself, believing that his daughters would remain his daughters, that in their new lives he had gained existence for himself, gained two houses where he would be made much of and adored. Within two years his sons-in-law had banished him from their company as if he were the lowest of social outcasts.’ (p. 68-69/100)

Out of admiration, embarrassment and pity, Rastignac begins to defend Goriot when he is teased by the other residents. Similar social status also brings the two men together—they would not have had the chance of meeting if both were not residents at the Maison Vauquer. But, both men’s limited income led them to this boarding house. A strong friendship forms, and Rastignac pursues the other daughter, Delphine, with Goriot’s full support. The two men become a team and work together to benefit one another; Rastignac updates Goriot on his daughters whereabouts, their physical appearances and emotional states as Goriot encourages Delphine to love Rastignac. Rastignac serves as Goriot’s emotional guard; he protects Goriot not only from the other residents but also from potential hurt his daughters may cause him. When Rastignac returns from the Italiens and informs Goriot that he has met Delphine for the first time, Goriot asks what message Delphine sent for her father. Though she sent no message at all, he lies, saying, “...qu’elle vous envoyait un bon baiser de fille’” (“...that your daughter sent you a loving kiss” [p. 113/154]). “Depuis cette conversation, le père Goriot vit dans son voisin un confident inespéré, un ami. Il s’était établi entre eux les seuls rapports par lesquels ce vieillard pouvait s’attacher à un autre homme’” (“This conversation made old Goriot perceive that his neighbour was an unlooked-for confidant and friend. They were joined together by the only bond with which this old man could be attached to another man” [p. 114/155]). Goriot’s sacrifices even expand to include Rastignac—he saves his money for a new residence for Delphine and Rastignac to live together, and he plans on living upstairs so he can be close to his daughter and share the couple’s happiness. Goriot sees Rastignac as an opportunity to correct his previous mistake: he let Delphine marry a man who spent her dowry and left her poor in her own marriage. Both men see themselves benefiting from this friendship, which proves more meaningful as the novel develops.

The true value of the bond formed between Rastignac and Goriot is best illustrated at the end of the story. Anastasie and Delphine both visit Goriot at the Maison Vauquer, and
the two argue over who needs their father’s money more desperately. The sisters’ passionate dispute causes Goriot physical agony: “‘Mes enfants, je meurs si vous continuez,’ cria le vieillard en tombant sur son lit comme frappé par une balle. ‘Elles me tuent!’ se dit-il” (“‘Children, I shall die if you go on like this,’ cried the old man, and he fell on his bed as if a bullet had struck him. ‘They are killing me!’ he murmured to himself” [p. 198/259]). The daughters put their father on his death bed; their argument causes his body such shock it results in irreversible damage and Goriot is destined to die soon after. Anastasie and Delphine both return home, and the two prepare for Madame de Beauséant’s ball. A messenger is sent to notify the girls that their father is dying, and they continue to dress for the ball. Rastignac calls on each daughter personally to inform them of their father’s state, and they choose to attend the ball. That night, Rastignac returns home to realize, “‘Allons,’ dit Eugène, ‘je serai donc le seul à soigner ce pauvre vieillard par affection’” (“‘Well, well,’ said Eugène, ‘so I’m the only one to care for the old man through affection for him’” [p. 215/281]). Goriot dies, and neither daughter is willing to pay funeral expenses so the liability falls on Rastignac, his only faithful friend. “À six heures, le corps du père Goriot fut descendu dans sa fosse, autour de laquelle étaient les gens de ses filles…” (“At six o’clock Father Goriot’s body was lowered into his grave in the presence of his daughters’ servants” [p. 233/302]). Though Goriot fails to have an ideal relationship with his daughters, he forms a strong bond with Rastignac as the two are both victims of symbolic violence imposed by Anastasie and Delphine. In this case, the two men are the dominés and the two women are the dominantes. As Goriot and Rastignac are subjected to symbolic violence by the daughters, they find true friendship in one another. The circumstances under which the two men become dominés are different: filial love is a condition for Goriot as passionate love is a condition for Rastignac, whose specific case will be discussed in the next chapter.
III. LOVE AND SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE

The consequences of symbolic violence can also be seen in a different situation: when one person is so in love with another that he/she becomes blinded by his/her emotions; he/she is willing to do anything for the person with whom he/she has fallen in love. Again, a characteristic of this situation is naïveté—it is more often those who fall in love for the first time that fall victim to the ways of another. Eugénie, for example, never left her house without her father and thus was not exposed to the same opportunities as many young women her age. Consequently, when her cousin Charles came to visit Saumur and stayed at the Grandet house, she was more susceptible to falling in love for the first time as she was enamored by his presence. As she falls in love with Charles, Eugénie defines herself according to him. Her family is not as wealthy because she does not have the material luxuries that Charles brings with him; she associates superiority, elegance and charm with her cousin. An attribute of symbolic violence, Eugénie situates her own life in relation to his.

La violence symbolique s’institue par l’intermédiaire de l’adhésion que le dominé ne peut pas ne pas accorder au dominant (donc à la domination) lorsqu’il ne dispose, pour le penser et pour se penser ou, mieux, pour penser sa relation avec lui, que d’instruments de connaissance qu’il a en commun avec lui et qui, n’étant que la forme incorporée de la relation de domination, font apparaître cette relation comme naturelle…

Symbolic violence is instituted through the adherence that the dominated cannot fail to grant to the dominant (and therefore to the domination) when, to shape her thought of him, and herself, or, rather, her thought of her relationship with him, she has only cognitive instruments that she shares with him and which, being no more than the bodied form of the relation of domination, cause that relation to appear as natural.

Eugénie begins to doubt herself, thinking, “Je ne suis pas assez belle pour lui.” Telle était la pensée d’Eugénie, pensée humble et fertile en souffrances” (“I am not beautiful enough for him.” This was Eugénie’s humble thought, a thought giving rise to much suffering” [p. 124/56]). Consistent with a characteristic of a dominé under symbolic violence, “Les

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dominés appliquent des catégories construites du point de vue des dominants aux relations de domination, les faisant ainsi apparaître comme naturelles. Ce qui peut conduire à une sorte d’auto-dépréciation, voire d’auto-dénigrement systématiques.”

("The dominated apply categories constructed from the point of view of the dominant to the relations of domination, thus making them appear as natural. This can lead to a kind of systematic self-depreciation, even self-denigration…")

Eugénie finds the sad letters in which Charles confesses his detrimental financial situation to Annette, a lover at home in Paris, and Alphonse, a friend, “À chaque phrase, son coeur se gonfla davantage, et l’ardeur piquante qui anima sa vie pendant cette lecture lui rendit encore plus friands les plaisirs du premier amour” (“At each sentence her heart grew heavier, and the keen emotion which stirred her as she read made her long even more for the joys of first love” [p. 180-181/107]). She feels inclined to help Charles by offering him the gold coins she has accumulated as gifts over the past twenty-two years and in return, Charles gives Eugénie his mother’s dressing case to look after during his travels in the Indies. Such an exchange forms the basis of their “love:”

“Oui, Eugénie, j’aurais l’âme bien petite, si je n’acceptais pas. Cependant, rien pour rien, confiance pour confiance… non, je ne veux ni détruire [le nécessaire], ni le risquer dans mes voyages. Chère Eugénie, vous en serez dépositaire. Jamais ami n’aura confié quelque chose de plus sacré à son ami’… En entendant les mots qu’elle venait de dire à son cousin, elle lui jeta son premier regard de femme aimante” (“Yes, Eugénie, I should be very mean-spirited if I did not accept. But, nothing for nothing, trust for trust… No, I don’t want to break [the dressing case], nor to risk it on my travels. Dear Eugénie, I shall leave it in your care. Never has one friend entrusted anything more sacred to another’… On hearing her cousin’s words, she looked at him for the first time with the eyes of a woman in love” [p. 190-191/115-116]). Charles kisses Eugénie to show his promise, and upon his departure, the two agree to love one another forever; Eugénie will wait for Charles to return from his trip and they will marry.

Eugénie remains committed to Charles in his absence and longs for the day of his arrival home. As for their vow to one another: “Aucune promesse faite sur ce terre fut plus pure” (“No purer promise was ever made on earth” [p. 204/127]). Her days are filled with

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dreaming about her cousin, where he may be and what he may be doing. She buys a map of the world to chart the route of Charles’s ship to the Indies which she carefully pins next to the mirror in her room; she imagines she is on the ship with him to ensure his comfort and safety. “Enfin ce fut l’amour solitaire, l’amour vrai qui persiste, qui se glisse dans toutes les pensées et devient la substance… de la vie” (“In short, her love was that solitary, genuine lasting love which pervades every thought and becomes the substance… of life” [p. 211-212/135]).

Eugénie’s ignorance about the rest of the world pre-determined her disappointment as she waits eight years for Charles without hearing a word from him. “À trente ans, Eugénie ne connaissait encore aucune des félicités de la vie… Le premier, le seul amour d’Eugénie était, pour elle, un principe de mélancholie… Eugénie commençait à souffrir… elle ne pouvait exister que par l’amour, par la religion, par sa foi dans l’avenir. L’amour lui expliquait l’éternité” (“At the age of thirty, Eugénie had not yet experienced any of the joys of life… Eugénie’s first and only love was a source of sadness to her… Eugénie was beginning to suffer… her existence lay only in love, religion and faith in the future. Love explained to her the meaning of eternity” [p. 248-249/169]). To Eugénie, love is the only source of happiness. She is not concerned with the immense wealth she inherits after the death of her parents; wealth does not bring her happiness. She constantly wonders where her cousin might be and when he will return to marry her. Charles’s thoughts, however, are far from Eugénie and Saumur:

Pendant que ces choses se passaient à Saumur, Charles faisait fortune aux Indes… Au contact perpétuel des intérêts, son cœur se refroidit, se contracta, se dessécha… Si la noble et pure figure d’Eugénie l’accompagna dans son premier voyage… plus tard, les négesses, les mulâtres, les blanches, les Javanaises, les almées, ses orgies de toutes les couleurs, et les aventures qu’il eut en divers pays effacèrent complètement le souvenir de sa cousine, de Saumur… du baiser pris dans le couloir… Eugénie n’occupait ni son cœur ni ses pensées… Cette conduite et ces idées expliquent le silence de Charles Grandet.

While all this was happening in Saumur, Charles was making his fortune in the Indies… From unremitting contact with selfish interests, his heart grew cold; his feeling for other contracted and withered away… If, on his first voyage, Eugénie’s pure, noble face accompanied him… later on, negresses, mulattoes, whites, Javanese women, dancing girls, orgies of every kind, and adventures in different countries completely wiped out the memory of his
cousin, of Saumur… and the kiss snatched in the passage… Eugénie filled no place in his heart of thoughts… This way of life and these ideas explain Charles Grandet’s silence. (p. 252-254/172-174)

Through his silence, Charles plays the role of the dominant and imposes symbolic violence on his cousin. During his travels, he knows at anytime he can write Eugénie to tell her he no longer loves her and she should not wait for his return home. He is the cause of her distress as she waits to hear from him for several years. Eugénie, in her naïveté, believes she has a reason to wait thus agrees; she demonstrates complicity as the dominée. Once Charles returns to Paris to marry Madamoiselle d’Aubrion, he writes Eugénie to tell her of his alternate plans: “Aujourd’hui, je possède quatre-vingt mille livres de rente. Cette fortune me permet de m’unir à la famille d’Aubrion, dont l’héritière, jeune personne de dix-neuf ans, m’apporte en mariage son nom, un titre, la place de gentilhomme honoraire de la chambre de Sa Majesté, et une position de plus brillants” (“Today I have an income of eighty thousand livres. This fortune allows me to marry into the d’Aubrion family, whose heiress, a young lady of nineteen, will bring me, as a dowry, her name, a title, the post of honorary gentleman of the bedchamber to His Majesty, and a very brilliant position in society” [p. 261/180]). As a result, Eugénie is crushed, and has nowhere to turn but the church. She believes her mother’s prophesy of the lives of all women has come true: she will only suffer and die. Eugénie is a victim of symbolic violence not only as her father plays the dominant, but also as Charles plays the dominant.

Similarly, in Le Père Goriot, Rastignac’s naïveté and desire to be included in the higher social circles of Paris cause him to fall victim as the dominé under the symbolic violence of Delphine. He is blinded by his love for Delphine as Eugénie is blinded by her love for Charles. Rastignac writes his mother and his sisters asking for their savings so he can afford the appropriate clothes to visit Delphine; his family agrees and sends him the money. This is only the beginning of Rastignac’s financial difficulties—he must uphold this image in order to continue seeing Delphine. By this point, Rastignac has fallen in love with Delphine and, because of his complicity, she plays the role of the dominante and he the dominé. The issue of social structure surfaces here again: Delphine is more easily able to seduce Rastignac enabling her role as the dominante because she is part of a higher social
If Delphine was part of a lower class than Rastignac, he would not be as attracted to her as she would not have as much to offer him. Over the course of their relationship, he surrenders to her, going so far as to give her the ability to control his emotions, and, equally as important, his confidence. When Rastignac feels Delphine’s love, he feels reassured, though she withholds this comfort in order to maintain his dependence:

Si, dans les premiers moments de sa liaison, l’étudiant s’était cru le maître, madame de Nucingen était devenue la plus forte… Quelles que fussent ses raisons, Delphine se jouait de Rastignac, et se plaisait à se jouer de lui, sans doute parce qu’elle se savait aimée et sûre de faire cesser les chagrins de son amant, suivant son royal bon plaisir de femme… Ses anxiétés, son amour-propre offensé, ses désespoirs, faux ou véritables, l’attachaient de plus en plus à cette femme.

If the student had thought himself that master in the early days of his attachment, Madame de Nucingen had since gained the upper hand… Whatever her reasons, Delphine was playing with Rastignac, and took pleasure in playing with him, no doubt because she knew that he loved her, and was sure she could put an end to his troubles as soon as it suited her woman’s royal good pleasure… His anxiety, his wounded vanity, his despair, however groundless it may have been, bound him more and more closely to this woman. (p. 131-132/177-178)

Because Delphine asserts her authority in playful ways, she is able to continue her control over Rastignac. “‘Ah! ah! vous me résistez déjà,’ dit-elle d’un petit air d’autorité railleuse en faisant une de ces jolies moues que font les femmes quand elles veulent se moquer de quelque scrupule pour le mieux dissiper” (“‘Oh, so you are resisting me already?’ she said with a teasing little air of authority, screwing up her face in a charming pout as women do when they want to laugh some scruple out of existence” [p. 176/232]). Delphine decides when she will see him, and, like a lapdog, he consents to her every wish. In this case, as in the case of Eugénie and Charles, the other component that works with symbolic violence to enable the behavior of the dominé is passionate love; Delphine seduces Rastignac.

As Goriot lies on his death bed, Delphine insists that Rastignac accompany her to Madame de Beauséant’s ball. Against his better judgement, he attends the ball and leaves his friend. “Eugène voulait se tromper lui-même, il était prêt à faire à sa maîtresse le sacrifice de sa conscience. Depuis deux jours, tout était changé dans sa vie. La femme y avait jeté ses désordres, elle avait fait pâlir la famille, elle avait tout confisqué à son profit” (“Eugène sought to delude himself; he was ready to sacrifice his conscious to his mistress. Within the
last two days the whole orientation of his life had changed. A woman’s disturbing influence had brought confusion to his world: she had eclipsed his family, and made his entire being subservient to her ends” [p. 208/272]). A close friend of Goriot’s, one would imagine the disappointment and frustration Rastignac should feel that neither daughter attended her father’s funeral nor did they help pay funeral expenses. Rather, Rastignac overlooks his lover’s insensitivity and lack of priorities and after the funeral, “Rastignac alla diner chez madame de Nucingen” (“Rastignac went to dine with Madame de Nucingen” [p. 233/304]). He is able to forgive Delphine more easily and misplaces his blame for the events of Goriot’s death upon society rather than on Delphine and Anastasie. The final words of the novel, “À nous deux maintenant!” (“It’s war between us now!”) express Rastignac’s frustration with how Parisian society functions, holding the city’s culture responsible for Delphine and Anastasie’s decisions leading up to Goriot’s death and even after his death as they choose not to attend their father’s funeral.
IV. BREAKING SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE

The notion of symbolic violence and how it functions in relation to Eugénie Grandet and Le Père Goriot has been discussed, but the question remains: how can this cycle be broken? According to Bourdieu’s theory, “… on ne peut attendre une rupture de la relation de complicité que les victimes de la domination symbolique accordent aux dominants que d’une transformation radicale des conditions sociales de production des dispositions qui portent les dominés à prendre sur les dominants et sur eux-mêmes le point de vue même des dominants.”25 (‘…the relation of complicity that the victims of symbolic domination grant to the dominant can only be broken through a radical transformation of the social conditions of production of the dispositions that lead the dominated to take the point of view of the dominant on the dominant and on themselves.’)26 Thus, it must now be examined if any of the characters subjected to this violence in either novel succeed in breaking its pattern.

While reading Eugénie Grandet, the reader wonders whether Eugénie will rebel against her father or continue to live a life of melancholia and suffering. When Charles comes to stay in Saumur, Grandet’s miserliness becomes worse—he does not care that his guest feels the comforts of his own home as do Madame Grandet and Eugénie. The arrival of this visitor serves as a turning point in Eugénie’s view of her father as he lacks sensitivity regarding Charles’s father’s—Grandet’s brother’s—suicide. “Eugénie frissonna en entendant son père s’exprimant ainsi sur la plus sainte des douleurs. Dès ce moment, elle commença à juger son père” (“Eugénie shuddered to hear her father talk in this way about the holiest of sorrows. From that moment she began to be critical of her father” [p. 146/76]). This critical perception of her father results in a lack of guilt as Eugénie gives her precious gold coins to Charles and faces the wrath of her father when he learns of Eugénie’s actions. She hints of an awareness that she has lived the life as the dominée and stands up to her father: ‘‘Mon père, si vous me faites des présents dont je ne sois pas entièrement maîtresse, reprenez-les,’ répondit froidement Eugénie en cherchant le napoléon sur la cheminée et le lui présentant” (“Father, if you give me presents that I can’t do as I like with, take them

back,’ answered Eugénie coldly, taking the napoleon from the mantelpiece and holding it out to him” [p. 220/143]). Her tone of voice calms, but she maintains a strong position against her father. “‘Mon père, je vous aime et vous respecte, malgré votre colère; mais je vous ferai fort humblement observer que j’ai vingt-deux ans. Vous m’avez assez souvent dit que je suis majeure, pour que je le sache. J’ai fait de mon argent ce qu’il m’a plu d’en faire, et soyez sûr qu’il est bien placé” (“‘Father, I love and respect you in spite of your anger, but I must very humbly point out to you that I am twenty-two years old. You’ve told me often enough for me to know by now that I am of age. I have disposed of my money as I chose to, and you can rest assured that it is well invested” [p. 220-221/143]).

Though she shows signs of a desire to be independent, the symbolic violence is not broken. As the dominée, Eugénie fails to become conscious of her father’s domination at two essential points. When Grandet discovers she has given her gold pieces to Charles, he locks her in room as punishment. Consequently, Madame Grandet falls sick and all of Saumur is wondering, “‘Qu’est-il donc arrivé dans la maison Grandet? Il y a quelque chose de nouveau chez les Grandet” (“‘What’s happened in the Grandet household? Something’s happened at the Grandet’s’” [p. 226-227/148-149]). Eugénie has not been seen outside of her house for quite some time, and the townspeople are aware of Madame’s serious sudden illness. They figure out Eugénie has been imprisoned and attempt to confront the situation. Eugénie overhears the conversation from her bedroom and responds:

‘Messieurs,’ dit-elle en s’avancant par un mouvement plein de fierté, ‘je vous pris de ne pas vous occuper de cette afaire. Mon père est maître chez lui. Tant que j’habiterai sa maison, je dois lui obéir. Sa conduite ne saurait être soumise à l’approbation ni à la désapprobation du monde, il n’en est comptable qu’à Dieu. Je réclame de votre amitié le plus profond silence à cet égard. Blâmer mon père serait attaquer notre propre considération. Je vous sais gré, messieurs, de l’intérêt que vous me témoignez; mais vous m’obligeriez davantage si vous vouliez faire cesser les bruits offensants qui courent par la ville, et desquels j’ai été instruite par hasard.’

‘Gentlemen,’ she said, coming forward proudly, ‘I beg you not to concern yourselves with the matter. My father is master in his own house. As long as I love in this house, I must obey him. His conduct should not be subject to approval or disapproval of other people; he is answerable only to God. In the name of our friendship, I ask you to observe the utmost silence about this. To blame my father is to attack our own reputation. I am grateful to you, gentlemen, for the interest you are taking in me, but you would oblige me even more if you would put an end to the offensive rumours that are
Eugénie remains faithful to her father’s authority and defends his character to those who question it. She does not recognize the domination to which she has been subjected for so many years because, though it is brought to her attention, her primary habitus is the one she shares with her father.

In an equally important example, Grandet learns that upon his wife’s death, Eugénie is the sole beneficiary to her mother’s inheritance; he will have no access to these riches unless Eugénie signs them over to him. Grandet promises Eugénie a monthly allowance and uses his position as the dominant to convince her that he should control the inheritance. Living a life of unrequited love, Eugénie sees no importance for wealth and she agrees: “‘…donnez-moi l’acte, et montrez-moi la place où je dois signer’… Le lendemain… fut signée la déclaration par laquelle Eugénie accomplissait elle-même sa spoliation” (“‘Give me the deed and show me the place where I have to sign’…The next day… Eugénie… divested herself of all her inheritance” [p. 242-243/162-163]). Eugenie fails to fully realize her position as the dominée and she denies her rights to her mother’s inheritance not only due to her lack of interest in money, but also because of the symbolic violence that had been imposed on her for so many years. Again, because she is only aware of the habitus she shares with her father, she cannot break her father’s domination. Regardless of her negative thoughts about Grandet, in the end, she recognizes her father’s authority; she is inferior to him and should do as he asks, as long as she lives under his roof. The effect of symbolic violence on Eugénie becomes even more evident after Grandet’s death: she still conforms to his principles by maintaining a frugal existence driven by subservience. “[E]lle vit comme avait vécu le pauvre Eugénie Grandet, n’allume le feu de sa chambre qu’aux jours où jadis son père lui permettait d’allumer le foyer de la salle, et l’éteint conformément au programme en vigueur dans ses jeunes années. Elle est toujours vêtue comme l’était sa mère” (“… she lives as poor Eugénie Grandet used to live. She lights her fire only on the days when her father used to allow the fire to be lit in the living-room, and puts it out according to the rules of force when she was young. She always dresses as her mother did” [p. 274/191-192]). After Grandet dies, when she can no longer live under his authority, she turns to the church as an authority to guide her. Monsieur le Curé convinces her that “burying herself in a
convent would be selfish,” and she marries le Président de Bonfons to fulfill her need for a male who can act as her authority. As a female, Eugénie is constituted as the weaker sex and is therefore at a disadvantage in her ability to recognize, thus break, the symbolic domination under which she lives her entire life.

The domination to which Goriot is subjected is different from that of Eugénie as she has been under this domination for her whole life. Goriot did not become the dominé under symbolic violence until after his wife’s death when he adapted maternal characteristics to be a better care-taker for his daughters. Goriot does, however, let himself act as the dominé for several years, until it leads to his eventual death. Anastasie and Delphine come to their father so distressed about money that the two daughters begin to argue to needs more of their father’s money more desperately. Goriot, knowing he has no more money to give, is so pained by his daughters’ misery that when they fight over whose situation is worse, the “violent shock” causes permanent physical damage which later results in Goriot’s death. He chooses this maternal role, whereas Eugénie’s obedience to her dominant, her father, began at birth.

Similar to Eugénie Grandet, the reader wonders whether Goriot will be able to break the cycle of domination and realize how his daughters are using him for money. He craves nothing but their affection and attention, and learns while on his death bed what he has been choosing to ignore for most of his life. First, the effect Anastasie and Delphine’s symbolic domination is underlined as Goriot is quick to blame himself for his daughters’ unhappiness: “‘...je ne suis plus père! non. Elle me demande, elle a besoin! et moi, misérable, je n’ai rien. Ah! tu t’es fait de rentes viagères, vieux scélérat, et tu avais des filles! Mais tu ne les aimes donc pas ? Crève, crève comme un chien que tu es!’” (“‘I am not worth calling a father now. No, no. She asks for my help in her need, and I, miserable wretch that I am, have nothing to give her. Ah! you bought yourself a life annuity, you old scoundrel, although you had daughters. Do you not love your daughters, that you could do such a thing? Die, die miserably, like the dog you are!’” [p. 197-198/258]). Even as Anastasie and Delphine blame their financial troubles that they have caused themselves on their father, and he takes the responsibility for their unhappiness, his daughters still occupy all of his thoughts. He constantly wonders where they are and with whom, and how they look, specifically what they are wearing. As soon as Eugène returns from la Vicomtesse de Beauséant’s ball, Goriot
immediately asks “‘Se sont-elles bien amusées?’” (“‘Did they have a good time?’” [p. 214/280]). His selflessness is evident to everyone who is there to comfort Goriot just before he dies: “‘Oh! il ne pense qu’à ses filles,’ dit Bianchon. Il m’a dit plus de cent fois cette nuit: ‘Elles dansent! elle a sa robe’” (“‘Oh! He thinks of nothing but his daughters,’ said Bianchon. ‘He said to me dozens of times last night, ‘They are dancing now! She has her dress’” [p. 215/280]). Goriot is so blinded by symbolic domination, inflated by filial love, that such a cycle seems difficult to break.

Goriot believes that, once informed of his physical condition, his daughters will immediately tend to their sick father. Through a lengthy internal dialogue, he convinces himself that Anastasie and Delphine are on their way because they love him so much: “‘Elles vont venir bientôt, elles accourront aussitôt qu’elles me sauront malade… Mes filles vous ont dit qu’elles allaient venir, n’est-ce pas, Christophe?... Elles vont venir, je les connais… Elles ne savaient rien de ma maladie, n’est-ce pas? Elles n’auraient pas dansé, pauvre petites!’” (“‘They’re coming here directly, they will rush here as soon as they know I am ill… My daughters told you they were coming, didn’t they, Christophe?... They are sure to come, I know them… Do you think they are on the way?... They didn’t know anything about my illness, did they? They would not have danced, poor little things, if they had known’” [p. 215-217/281-283]). Without outside help, however, Goriot comes to the realization himself that Anastasie and Delphine have no true concern for him. This recognition of his daughters’ lack of compassion represents Goriot becoming conscious of symbolic domination and thus his ability to break the cycle immediately before his death. He is able to see his daughter for who they truly are:

‘Aucune,’ répondit le vieillard en se dressant sur son séant. ‘Elles ont des affaires, elles dorment, elles ne viendront pas. Je le savais. Il faut mourir pour savoir ce que c’est que des enfants. Ah! mon ami, ne vous mariez pas, n’ayez pas d’enfants! Vous leur donnez la vie, ils vous donnent la mort. Vous les faites entrer dans le monde, ils vous en chassent. Non, elles ne viendront pas ! Je sais cela depuis dix ans. He me le disais quelquefois, mais je n’osais pas y croire… Et j’étais a genoux devant elles. Les misérables ! elles couronnent dignement leur conduite envers moi depuis dix ans… Enfin elles me disaient mes filles, et elles m’avouaient pour leur père… Tout a été à son adresse et m’a percé le cœur… Elles se sont bien vengées de mon affection, elles m’ont tenaillé comme des bourreaux.
‘Neither of them!’ cried the old man, sitting up. ‘They are busy, they are sleeping, they will not come. I knew it. You have to die to know what your children are. Ah! my friend, do not marry; do not have children! You give them life; they give you death in return. You bring them into the world, and they push you from it. No, they will not come! I have known that for the last ten years. I sometimes told myself so, but I did not dare believe it… I let them trample on me. Ah, the wretches! In this last act their conduct towards me during the last ten years reaches its proper climax… In short they publicly call themselves my daughters, and owned me as their father… It was all calculated for a purpose, and that cut me to the heart… They themselves have been the instruments of vengeance, they have tortured me like executioners.’”

(p. 217-219/284-286)

Goriot comes to the realization that he does not hold the same position in his daughters’ lives as they do in his. He even comments that sleeping might be more important to them than seeing their dying father. Goriot has gained life-long pleasure from spoiling Anastasie and Delphine and they have hurt him so badly that he advises Rastignac to never put himself in the same position—he should not marry and have children as he would then be putting himself at risk to feel the pain that Goriot is experiencing. If he was not about to die, this awareness might not have been verbalized as it was. Goriot becomes fully conscious of how his daughters take advantage of him.

Goriot is more likely than Eugénie to break the cycle of symbolic violence and actually succeeds before he dies because he only acts in a feminine way. Because he is a male, he is at an advantage: he can escape the female role he has been playing for so long and more easily recognize the reality of symbolic domination. Though he blames himself and the way he raised his daughters, he is still able to realize how Anastasie and Delphine have subjected him to symbolic violence for several years. “It is important to recognize that symbolic violence is legitimate, and therefore literally unrecognizable as violence… In the very moment it is recognized, however, it can no longer function as symbolic violence.”

Because Goriot becomes conscious of how his daughters have taken advantage of him, the symbolic violence is broken.

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V. HABITUS AND SYMBOLIC VIOLENCE

Understanding another Bourdieusien concept, *habitus*, is essential in framing the behavior of the dominés in a situation of symbolic violence. “Symbolic violence is a subtle, euphemized, invisible mode of domination that prevents domination from being recognized as such and, therefore, as misrecognized domination, is socially recognized. It works when subjective structures—the habitus—and objective structures are in accord with each other.”\(^{28}\) Therefore, the physical and emotional environments of the dominant and the dominé must also be explored. “Habitus expresses the idea that bodily identity is not natural but involves the inscription of dominant social norms or the ‘cultural arbitrary’ upon the body;” it is “a system of durable, transposable dispositions that mediates the actions of an individual and the external conditions of production.”\(^{29}\) This “incorporation of the social into the corporeal”\(^{30}\) explains how, according to their respective surroundings, the dominés in *Eugénie Grandet* and *Le Père Goriot* conform to social norms. Both novels address the behavior of the bourgeois class though these behaviors differ because of the characters’ environments: the rural bourgeois of Saumur functions differently, thus has different social norms, than the bourgeois of the capital city of Paris. Because the bourgeoisie is number-wise the largest social class in France at the time the novels were written, it is natural there is the most variation between habitus within the bourgeoisie. Each sub-class has its own habitus defined by “…les styles de vie, c’est-a-dire de ces ensembles de goûts et de pratiques systématiques caractéristiques d’une class ou d’une fraction de classe donnée.”\(^{31}\) Still, there are different habitus, thus different life styles, within a particular class:

> Du fait que des conditions d’existence différentes produisent des habitus différents… les pratiques qui engendrent les différents habitus se présentent comme des configurations systématiques de propriétés exprimant les différences objectivement inscrites dans les conditions d’existence sous la forme de systèmes d’écarts différentiels qui, perçus par des agents dotés de schèmes de perception et d’appréciation nécessaires pour en repérer, en


\(^{30}\) Ibid.

interpréter et en évaluer les traits pertinents, fonctionnent comme des styles de vie.\textsuperscript{32}

Because different conditions of existence produce different habitus… the practices engendered by the different habitus appear as systematic configurations of properties expressing the differences objectively inscribed in conditions of existence in the form of systems of differential deviations which, when perceived by agents endowed with schemes of perception and appreciation necessary in order to identify, interpret and evaluate their pertinent features, function as life-styles.\textsuperscript{33}

Variation within a particular social class’s habitus is accounted for through the idea of a ‘double and obscure’ relation between individual habitus and the social circumstances or ‘field’ from which it emerges.\textsuperscript{34} The concept of the “double and obscure” is seen in contrasting the differences between the bourgeois characters in \textit{Eugénie Grandet} and \textit{Le Père Goriot}. Two main habitus are presented: the habitus of men vs. that of the women. These categories can be further broken down for the purpose of our analysis: the habitus of Parisian men vs. the habitus of men in Saumur and the habitus of Parisian women vs. the habitus of women in Saumur. The habitus is an important theory to study in contrasting character dispositions as one’s habitus truly defines the person:

The concept of habitus refers to an ensemble of schemata of perception, thinking, feeling, evaluating, speaking, and acting that structures all the expressive, verbal, and practical manifestations and utterances of a person. Habitus has to be thought of as a \textit{modus operandi}, a ‘generative principle of regulated improvisations’… It is ‘embodied history, internalized as a second nature,’ as Bourdieu says, ‘the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product.’\textsuperscript{35}

In both novels, Parisian-born men and women are obsessed with appearance and social status. “[A]n important aspect of [social education] is the inscription of social power relations on the body: our \textit{habitus} is at once produced and expressed through our movements, gestures, facial expressions, manners, ways of walking, and ways of looking at


\textsuperscript{34} McNay, Lois. \textit{Gender and Agency: Reconfiguring the Subject in Feminist and Social Theory}. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000. p. 38

As he travels from Paris to Saumur, “Charles emporta donc le plus joli costume de chasse, le plus joli fusil, la plus jolie gaine de Paris. Il emporta sa collection de gilets les plus ingénieux… et son linge le plus fin… il avait fait la toilette de voyage la plus coquette, la plus simplement recherchée… un coiffeur venait de lui refrier ses beaux cheveux châtain...” (“Charles took with him the prettiest hunting-costume, the prettiest gun, the prettiest knife, and the prettiest sheath in Paris. He took all his fanciest waistcoats… and his finest linen… he had put on his smartest traveling dress, an outfit of the most elegant simplicity… a hairdresser had just recurled his beautiful chestnut hair…” [p. 97-99/35-36]).

This is the impression the notables, or the bourgeois of Saumur are given of the men of Paris. “Un Parisien, un Parisien de la sphère la plus élevée, pouvait seul et s’agencer ainsi sans paraître ridicule, et donner une harmonie de fatuité à toutes ces niaiseries…” (“Only a Parisian, a Parisian from the highest social sphere, could bring himself out in this way without looking ridiculous and could give a fatuous harmony to all such nonsense” [p. 100/37]). Charles, however impressive he may appear in a provincial context, has bourgeois roots: his father, Guillaume, is the brother of the simple and frugal Monsieur Grandet of Saumur. Parisian society and its elaborate and highly structured codes, has made a petit bourgeois man into the stereotypical high bourgeois. Because the people of Saumur tend to have a more limited knowledge about Parisian society, Charles is able to deceive them into believing that he comes from the high society of Paris. If he were at home, he would not be able to deceive other Parisians as easily as they are more familiar with the social codes of the capital city. Similarly, Anastasie and Delphine demonstrate their desire toward social ascension; they marry wealthy men and attempt to leave their bourgeois roots, including their father, behind. Appearance and social status is far more important to Goriot’s daughters than family or maintaining their values. Rastignac also forgoes his family by asking for their savings to invest in the appropriate clothes for him to be able to visit Delphine and attend social functions with her. Though these four characters, all of bourgeois origin, attempt to be part of Parisian aristocracy, they are all unable to escape their primary habitus. “L’habitus primaire est constitué des dispositions les plus anciennement acquises et donc les plus durables. Ce sont celles d’ailleurs qui nous donnent les plus fortement l’impression de posséder des dons innés, des traits de personnalité qui ne devrait rien à l’expérience

They cannot escape their bourgeois tendencies, like discussing their need for money. True aristocrats would not discuss such a topic, nor would they ever be in a position where money would not be readily available to them. It is the habitus of these Parisian characters of the bourgeoisie, both men and women, that make all efforts toward social ascension; they strive to be part of something bigger and more exclusive than they really are. Further, “En effet, l’assurance que donne la certitude de sa propre valeur, et en particulier de la valeur de son propre corps ou de son propre langage est très étroitement liée à la position occupée dans l’espace social… ainsi, la part des femmes qui s’estiment au-dessous de la moyenne pour la beauté… décroit très fortement quand on s’élève dans la hiérarchie sociale…” (“The self-assurance given by the certain knowledge of one’s own value, especially that of one’s body or speech, is in fact very closely linked to the position occupied in social space... Thus, the proportion of women who consider themselves below average in beauty… falls very rapidly as one moves up the social hierarchy.”) Anastasie and Delphine, often jealous of one another, take advantage of their father’s filial love in order to get money from him, he reassures the girls of his unconditional love for them, and the cycle repeats itself. Rastignac is also confident of his physical appearance: once he has the appropriate clothes and learns the rules of Parisian upper society, he never doubts that he will be able to become Delphine’s lover. In contrast, Eugénie, who loves Charles but does not know her own value because of her social position, doubts her own physical appearance: “‘Je ne suis pas assez belle pour lui… Je suis trop laide, il ne fera pas attention à moi’” (“I am not beautiful enough for him… I am too ugly; he won’t take any notice of me”) [p. 124-125/56-57]). Eugénie, though she is unaware, is part of two social classes: the inferior petite bourgeoisie because of her origin like many other habitants of Saumur, and the superior grande bourgeoisie because of her family’s riches. She does not know the value of her family’s fortune, but this wealth gives her access to marrying into another wealthy family. Eugénie falls somewhere between these two habitus though she has the ability to claim part of either. With several possibilities open before her, she does not trust either her origin or her inheritance as she gives serious consideration to a secondary habitus: the church.

37 Ibid., p. 159  
The men and women of Saumur, part of the petite bourgeoisie, maintain their own habitus. The men are authoritative and business-oriented, whereas the women are subservient and obedient to the powerful and rich men. The reader of Eugénie Grandet is given the feeling that this provincial town is isolated as its habitants are rather naïve and easily impressed. Returning back to Bourdieu’s example of how symbolic violence functions in Algeria, “Women in Kabyle society realize in their conduct the negative identity that has been socially imposed upon them and in doing so naturalize this identity.”

Likewise, both Eugénie and Madame Grandet naturalize their identities—the habitus of a female living in Saumur—which involves subservience and obedience to the male authority of the family. Goriot, a character whose habitus can be considered male or female, also naturalizes his identity not as a father but as a mother. “[M]en and women have deep-seated, often unconscious investments in conventional images of masculinity and femininity which cannot easily be reshaped…” and the “proper” female identity is to be at the service of your children, meeting their needs and desires, as both Goriot and Madame Grandet do for their daughters.

As Alain Accardo summarizes, “Cet ensemble de dispositions à agir, penser, percevoir et sentir d’une façon déterminée constitue ce qu’il est convenu d’appeler un habitus.” The habitus is one’s internal domain whose characteristics are not innate; rather, they are shaped by one’s environment and experiences. “L’habitus est une structure susceptible d’être modifiée par des expériences nouvelles et donc capable d’adaptation.”

Though there are two different types of habitus—primary and secondary—we are principally concerned with the primary habitus for the purpose of this analysis. In addition to seeing the durability of the primary habitus in Charles, Anastasie, Delphine and Rastignac, we see the strength and stability of the primary habitus as demonstrated by Eugénie. This habitus defines such a big part of her persona that she cannot escape it, similar to how she cannot escape her role as the dominée in a situation of symbolic violence. As previously discussed, even after her father’s death, she does not change her habits: she remains frugal,

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41 Ibid., p. 41
43 Ibid., p. 157
only lights a fire when her father would have permitted her to and puts it out as he would have instructed, and continues to dress like her mother. As Accardo describes, it is the closest a habitus can become to inherent behavior. Eugénie has been, for her entire life, at a disadvantage in acquiring social skills. Social environment greatly impacts the formation of the habitus, and she lacks certain social experiences that would help shape her habitus. This is a big difference between men and women of the petite bourgeoisie at the time the novel takes place. The women are limited in their mobility; they rarely travel thus they do not have access to a variety of social experiences, except the ones in which their husbands allow them to take part. Conversely, men at the time, like Grandet, travel for business and have a broader range of familiarity with different social situations.

*The external exposes the internal*

Because external appearances are essential in understanding one’s habitus, Balzac begins both novels by describing the principal characters’ places of residence. When closely examined, the housing itself reveals truths about each character to better understand his/her disposition, in addition to foreshadowing misfortunes which occur later in each novel.

In *Eugénie Grandet*, the weather metaphor Balzac uses to describe the external condition of the Grandet house serves to illustrate the emotional state of its occupants: unstable and decaying. The women of the Grandet house, Madame Grandet and Eugénie, prove on several different occasions that they accept an inferior female role as dictated by the despotic Monsieur Grandet. What they feel internally, however, is exposed externally as Balzac describes how changes in weather have expedited the worn-down nature of the house. The exterior appearance of the house acts as a mirror, reflecting the authority maintained by and the oppression experienced by its inhabitants.

Les trous inégaux et nombreux que les intempéries du climat y avaient bizarrement pratiqués… Au dessus du cintre régnait un long bas-relief de pierre dure sculptée, représentant les quatre Saisons… La porte, en chêne massif, brune, desséchée, fendue de toutes parts, frêle en apparence, était solidement maintenue par le système de ses boulons qui figuraient des dessins symétriques. Une grille carrée, petite, mais à barreaux serrés et rouges de rouille, occupait le milieu de la porte bâtarde et servait, pour ainsi dire, de motif à un marteau qui s’y rattachait par un anneau, et frappait sur la
tête grimaçante d’un maître-clou. Ce marteau, de forme oblongue… ressemblait à un gros point d’admiration…

The inclemencies of the weather had pitted the stone with numerous irregular holes of various sizes… Above the arch was a long bas-relief carved in hard stone, with figures, already worn and quite black, representing the four seasons… The brown, solid oak door was weatherbeaten and cracked all over, but though it looked shaky it was strongly secured by bolts, systematically arranged in a symmetrical pattern. In the middle of the oak door a smaller door contained a square grating, not very big, but with close-set bars. These were red with rust, and they served as a kind of background decoration for a door-knocker, which hung from the grating by a ring and struck against the grinning head of a huge iron stud. This knocker, oblong in shape… looked like a large exclamation mark. (p. 75-76/16)

An accurate reflection of its interior, this passage is crucial to understanding the structure and lifestyle of the Grandet family. It serves as a metaphor for identifying the role each member plays in the family.

“La porte, en chêne massif, brune” (The “brown, solid oak door”) is a main support for the façade of the house; it describes Madame Grandet as she is “desséchée, fendue de toutes parts” (“weatherbeaten and cracked all over”) from the years of marriage to an oppressive spouse. Her strength is seen through the lifetime of oppression she has lived under Grandet’s, not because she is strong enough to be able to stand up to him. In conversation, “Sa femme, qu’il avait réduite à un ilotisme complet” (“[Monsieur Grandet’s] wife, whom he had reduced to a state of absolute submission” [p. 70/12]), often responds “…en regardant son mari d’un air timide qui, vu son âge, annonçait l’entièr e servitude conjugale sous laquelle gémissait la pauvre femme” (“…giving her husband a timid glance which, given her age, proclaimed the total conjugal servitude under which the poor woman suffered” [p. 84/23]). She is “frêle en apparence” (“shaky”) from fear that she will upset her husband and later feel the repercussions—“une de ces femmes qui semblent faites pour être tyrannisées” (“one of those women who seem made to be tyrannized” [p. 84/23]). Madame Grandet is, however, “solidement maintenue par le système de ses boulons” (“secured by bolts”): her relationship with Eugénie, which will be discussed more in-depth. Bolts denote strength; they are a permanent fixture which cannot easily be removed, much like how mother and daughter rely on one another for strength. Their innate bond cannot easily be changed. The bolt pattern described as a symmetrical, systematic arrangement implies
Eugénie’s—it will mirror her mother’s fate and she will be a submissive housewife. Another
door, meant to describe Eugénie, a smaller version of the first, her mother, is decorated with
grating which depicts Eugénie’s prison-like life. Not only does her father control her actions,
but also her whereabouts. This physical description foreshadows the climax of the novel
when Eugénie is condemned to her room by her father, making her mother so ill she
eventually dies. The Grandet house is truly Eugénie’s prison and when she attempts to break
out by offering her gold to her cousin Charles, the family literally collapses.

The door knocker is the most powerful part of the house as it notifies the family that
an outsider is about to enter. It also gives access to the inside of the house. The knocker is
used to describe Monsieur Grandet; he is the powerful head of house. Eugénie’s prison bars
serve as its background as she is forever her father’s shadow. She rarely appears in public
without him and fears his rage, as does her mother. Thus Eugénie continues a submissive
role until early adulthood. Her reaction when she first sees her cousin Charles is indicative
of the sheltered life she leads: “Enfin, si toutefois cette image peut résumer les impressions
que le jeune élégant produisit sur une ignorante fille sans cesse occupée à rapetasser des bas,
à ravauder la garde-robe de son père, et dont la vie s’était écoulée sous ces crasseux lambris
sans voir dans cette rue silencieuse plus d’une passant par heure…” (“It is hardly possible to
sum up the impression which the young dandy made on an ignorant girl, who spent all her
time darning socks and mending her father’s clothes, and whose life had been spent in the
shadow of that filthy wainscoting without seeing more than one passer-by an hour in the
silent street outside…” [p. 102/38]). The most central part of the door, which is central to the
façade of the house, is described as “de forme oblongue” (“oblong in shape”) like “un gros
point d’admiration” (“a large exclamation mark”). It is now clear, according to this
interpretation, that the most important detail in understanding the Grandet house is
recognizing its phallocentric nature. Though as the brown, solid oak door Madame Grandet
seems to be a physically bigger presence as the family’s matriarch, Monsieur Grandet,
represented by the phallus, shares neither power nor authority in the Grandet household.

Still, inside the house, “Au rez-de-chausée de la maison, la pièce la plus considérable
était une salle” (“On the ground floor of the house, the most important room was a living-
room” [p. 76/17]), which one would expect to be decorated more ornately as this is where
the Grandet family received and entertained guests. Rather,
Cette pièce, dont les deux croisées donnaient sur la rue, était planchéée, des panneaux gris, à moulures antiques, la boisait de haut en bas; son plafond se composaient de poutres apparentes également peintes en gris, dont les entre-deux étaient remplis de blanc en bourre qui avait jauni. Un vieux cartel de cuivre incrusté d’arabesques en écaille ornait le manteau de la cheminée en pierre blanche, mal sculpté…

The room, whose two windows gave on to the street, had a wooden floor. Grey, wooden paneling with antique moulding lined the walls from top to bottom. The ceiling consisted of exposed beams, also painted grey, the spaces between them being filled with a yellowing mixture of whitewash and sand. An old copper clock, inlaid with tortoiseshell arabesques, adorned with white, badly carved, stone chimney-piece. (p. 76-77/17)

Neutral tones are used to describe the everyday blandness of their monotonous lives. “Gris” (“Grey”), “gris” (“grey”), “jauni” (“yellowing”), “blanc en bourre” (“whitewash and sand”), “écaille” (“tortoiseshell”), and “blanche” (“white”) are all descriptors with little or no color, giving the impression that the interior of the house is as dreary and tired as the exterior. Further, “…le croquis de la salle où éclatait toute le luxe du ménage peut faire soupçonner par avance la nudité des étages supérieurs” (“…the sketch of the living-room, where all the luxury of the household was displayed, may give an advance idea of the bareness of the upper floors” [p. 82/22]). The theme of a dull life, reproducing what has come before Eugénie, is maintained through descriptions of both the interior and the exterior of the Grandet house with Monsieur Grandet’s oppressive ways lying at the root of the issue. This vivid narrative should be remembered throughout the novel as, at the end, the description comes full circle and truly describes Eugénie’s life of misfortune: “La maison de Saumur, maison sans chaleur, sans cesse ombragée, mélanicolique, est l’image de sa vie” (“The house in Saumur, sunless, devoid of warmth, gloomy, and always in the shade, reflects her life [p. 274/192]).

Similarly, in Le Père Goriot, a description of physical living space tells of the life of its inhabitants and foreshadows the hardship of principle characters. The Maison Vauquer is depicted early in the story:

La maison où s’exploite la pension bourgeoise appartient à madame Vauquer. Elle est située dans le bas de la rue Neuve-Sainte-Geneviève, à l’endroit où le terrain s’abaisse vers la rue de l’Arbalète par une pente si brusque et si rude que les chevaux la montent ou la descendent rarement.
Cette circonstance est favorable au silence qui règne dans ces rues serrées entre le dôme du Val-de-Grâce et le dôme du Panthéon, deux monuments qui changent les conditions de l’atmosphère en y jetant des tons jaunes, en y assombrissant tout par les teintes sévères que projettent leurs coupoles… Le jardinet, aussi large que la façade est longue, se trouve encaissé par le mur de la rue et par le mur mitoyen de la maison voisine, le long de laquelle prend un manteau de lierre qui la cache entièrement, et attire les yeux des passants par un effet pittoresque dans Paris. Chacun de ces murs est tapissé d’espaliers et de vignes…

The lodging-house is Maison Vauquer’s own property. It stands at the lower end of the Rue Neuve-Sainte-Geneviève where it slopes so abruptly towards the Rue de l’Arbalète that carriages rarely use it. The absence of wheeled traffic deepens the stillness which prevails in these streets cramped between the domes of the Val-de-Grâce and the Panthéon, two buildings that overshadow them and darken the air with the leaden hue of their dull cupolas… The garden, as wide as the house-front is long, is enclosed by the street wall and the party wall of the house next door, which is covered from top to bottom and completely hidden by a mantle of ivy. People in the street look up this ivy-clad wall as they pass, attracted by its picturesqueness, rare in a city like Paris. Each of the garden walls has a trellis of espalier fruit-trees and vines… (p. 12-13/28-29)

This description alludes to the feeling of confinement experienced by the residents at the Maison Vauquer. The neighborhood itself is isolated as is the house within the neighborhood: “dans le bas” (at the lower end”). Repetition of the words “murs/murailles” (“walls”) tells of the residents’ inability to escape the pension; its walls are like that of a “prison.” The abrupt slope in the street represents Goriot’s life; he has suffered since his wife’s death when his daughters began taking advantage of him. The abruptness is his sudden death: after all he has endured, Goriot’s demise is caused by his recognition that he can no longer provide for Anastasie and Delphine. Le “silence qui règne” (the “stillness which prevails”) at the end of the slope signifies Goriot’s silence—it is “serrées entre les domes” (“cramped between the domes”) of two buildings, which are Goriot’s daughters. In the scene immediately before Goriot’s death, he begs and pleads with Anastasie and Delphine to stop their violent argument over whose financial situation is worse and needs more of their father’s money. He is “cramped” in several ways: both daughters want their father to side with them, he has no more financial resources, and he feels physical pain because of his daughters’ argument. Anastasie and Delphine are the “two buildings that overshadow” as they “darken the air with leaden hue.” They overshadow their father,
literally, as they have moved up a social class and refuse to publicly acknowledge him; they only see him in private. He is more of a secret from their childhood than a true father figure. Goriot’s daughters also overshadow him by controlling him, mentally and emotionally, through symbolic violence and their role as the dominantes.

The prison metaphor is continued throughout the passage as the “jardinet” (“garden”) is an enclosed space communicating further entrapment of the boarders. One interpretation is the residents at the Maison Vauquer, like Anastasie and Delphine, are confined by the secrets they feel they must hide. Madame Vauquer worries about her finances and whether she will be able to keep the boarding house full enough to make a profit. Vautrin, or “Trompe-la-Mort,” attempts to conceal his true identity as a wanted bandit while he lives a “normal” Parisian life. Rastignac hides his difficulties in producing the funds to be able to afford to socialize with Delphine. Goriot hides his shame because of his limited income and his inability to provide further financial support for his daughters.

Despite the misery of the residents at the Maison Vauquer which is depicted as the external exposes the internal, those passing by are still strangely attracted to “le mur… qui prend un manteau de lierre” (“the ivy-clad wall”). The greenery signifies new life and represents hope for Paris and all of France in spite of the political turmoil at the time.
CONCLUSION

Balzac, well-known for his misogynistic beliefs, conveys two opposing views of women in *Eugénie Grandet* and *Le Père Goriot*. On one hand, women are submissive to men who are the authorities in a rural community. On the other, women control the social circles and make the rules as to when they will go out, who will visit them and when they will accept visitors in the high society of Paris. In both situations, however, there is a higher force of manipulation: symbolic violence. Whether it is Eugénie and her mother that are oppressed, or Goriot and Rastignac, it seems that in both novels, there is always a party suffering to the point of misery. Though the suffering parties are complicit in the symbolic domination, it is only because of their own naïveté: the oppressed do not choose to be oppressed, rather, it is the only way they know how to live. Balzac was also known to be a strong political activist, advocating for the monarchy. Perhaps his thoughts on the post-revolutionary period in France surface in these novels as a warning to the French people: they should understand those who control the State and not fall victim to the position of the dominé as their relatives had before.

This thesis has demonstrated how Bourdieu’s theories apply to Balzac’s novels, *Eugénie Grandet* and *Le Père Goriot*. Though the concepts surface in different ways because of the different characters, we have seen how the results of symbolic violence manifest themselves in parts of our everyday lives, such as how we form friendships with one another and how prone we are to falling in love. The habitus plays an equally important role, as “Parler de l’habitus, c’est poser que l’individuel, et même le personnel, le subjectif, est social, collectif. L’habitus est une subjectivité socialisée.”44 Because the habitus defines one’s persona, he/she must have a habitus that allows him/her to be prone to symbolic violence, whether it is as the dominant or as the dominé. Though Bourdieu developed these concepts long after the novels were written, we can understand the accuracy of his principles as symbolic violence is applied to two nineteenth century narratives.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY


