funerary architecture. This duly gives a new potency to the kindred cultivation of the sublime. Not the least telling part of the author’s analysis is provided by the extensive illustration of her claim that ‘[l]e rêve néoclassique d’une résurgence présente de l’Antiquité s’incarne encore en la personne même de Napoléon Bonaparte, géant des temps modernes façonné à l’antique par le concours des différents arts’ (p. 49), although, as she notes, the Emperor never made it to ‘la città eterna’. The writers who constitute her principal focus, and who are consistently, and revealingly, compared and contrasted, are Chateaubriand, Mme de Staël, and Stendhal, with Staël’s Corinne in particular being imbued with a new importance. If the works of the neoclassical artists and sculptors invoked are not subjected to similar scrutiny, it is because Saliceto’s purpose is specifically to identify ‘des paradigmes transartistiques susceptibles de faire état de configurations néoclassiques en littérature’ (p. 16). There are, nonetheless, some apt observations on, for example, Tischbein’s portrait of Goethe in the Roman countryside, in which ‘chaque élément […] s’insère dans un véritable système, élaborant un discours néoclassique’ (p. 329). Questionably, though, Saliceto’s neoclassicism remains stubbornly chaste, despite her references to Girodet and her acknowledgement of the fascination of Winckelmann and Latouche with the hermaphrodite. The volume is frequently designated an essay but retains the format of its earlier status as a doctoral thesis. This is most visible in its organization, but also in the amount of space devoted at times to literary, artistic, and philosophical antecedents, and in the tendency in earlier sections for the author’s fundamental purpose to be obscured by the wealth of information provided. Her volume is, nevertheless, a landmark study.

Michael Tilby
Selwyn College, Cambridge

doi:10.1093/fs/knv173


As Dominique Massonnaud states in her Introduction, she has written a description of Balzac’s La Comédie humaine as ‘une “œuvre-monde”, fondée sur une poétique du “vrai”’ (p. 23). The book is not easy to read, on the one hand because of the jargon and, on the other, the plethora of quotations, each of which is set in its context. Massonnaud’s admirable erudition sometimes blurs the focus on Balzac. Nevertheless, firmly in the tradition of great French Balzacians, she has gone on to provide an excellent, superbly documented summary and integration of scholarship bearing on the organization of Balzac’s magnum opus. Like Max Andréoli’s Le Système balzacien: essai de description synchronique (Paris: Aux Amateurs de livres, 1984) and my own Balzacian Montage: Configuring ‘La Comédie humaine’ (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), she understands that Balzac organized La Comédie humaine in an original way. For her, Balzac’s work is a cross between memoir, epic poem, and the popular panoramas, presenting a mosaic of chronological reflections of major characters moving across the Restoration/Monarchie de Juillet world. The interstices of the creations, the reappearing themes, characters, and settings, and the integrative power of French history allow the reader to experience Balzac’s world as a unity. Massonnaud focuses on Balzac’s links with predecessors such as Voltaire and Saint-Simon, and contemporaries such as Vigny, Stendhal, Jouy, and Mercier, not to mention foreign authors like Scott and Cooper, recently translated and significantly inflecting the contemporary French novel. Balzac acts especially as ‘un historien du présent’ (p. 57). Indeed, as Massonnaud recognizes, he is both novelist and historian. His sensitivity to detail quickens his world with life, while he exploits the ambiguity of the eighteenth-century word ‘histoire’, which may be translated as ‘history’ and ‘story’. With many shrewd insights into reappearing characters and character types,
chronologies, and themes, Massonnaud also recognizes the novelist’s interest in Buffon, Cuvier, and Saint-Hilaire. As she says, Balzac’s ‘espèces sociales’ are considerably more than ‘un jeu de mots sans enjeux’ (p. 161). Massonnaud also points to the concept of ‘tableau’ to suggest that there is a thematic taxonomy that overrides sequence and the microstructures of youth, old age, politics, justice, and war. As an example, she points to the unification of collections in La Peau de chagrin. Similarly, the unique characteristics of Balzac’s continuing narrator join with a single object to strengthen the connections. Otherwise, encyclopaedias and art expositions influenced the novelist, since like mosaics they illustrate the fragmentary aspect of reality. Massonnaud follows the various influences more or less chronologically, and knowledgeably. All had impact on the novelist. Balzac successfully provided the reader with the opportunity to bring substantial unity to his work despite texts that move from one étude, scène, story, or passage to another, as texts were extensively rewritten, as genres shifted, and as Balzac exploited the amusing and the serious, invention and analysis, fiction and science, imagination and observation. La Comédie humaine stands as a gigantic text in which everything moves, creating significant disturbances to frames and taxonomies, although without affecting the unity of the whole.

ALLAN H. PASCO
UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS
doi:10.1093/fs/knv179


Hugo’s reception has always been uneasily poised between reverence and neglect, denigration and celebration. This tension is perhaps most marked in the way in which Les Misérables fired the imagination of the public even before the commercial success of the musical Les Mis, despite the relative critical neglect of such a major novel. The paradox holds true of his plays, also: it is not now difficult to find performances of Hugo’s plays taking place (although it is true that before 1955 Marie Tudor had not been performed for eighty-one years), but his drama has not received the weight of critical attention it deserves, in spite of the lucid and compelling work of critics such as Gaudon, Ubersfeld, and Naugrette. It is, therefore, a real pleasure to read Clélia Anfray’s carefully researched and probing Introduction to this play. Anfray begins by reminding us of the play’s stormy history — its first performance took place on 6 November 1833 where it was met with howls of derision. The hapless Juliette Drouet took the role of Jane: Gustave Planche cruelly observed that she ‘n’a pas été mauvaise, elle a été nulle’ (qtd p. 264). Indeed she received such venomous reviews of her performance that she never worked as an actress again. As well as evoking all the dramatic controversy surrounding the play’s beginnings, Anfray probes the importance of the play’s themes of capital punishment, mob psychology, and the relationship between monarch and people within the context of Hugo’s wider œuvre. Of particular value is her attention to the Shakespearean elements of the play. She explicitly locates Hugo’s work within a Shakespearean tradition: ‘Si la reine hugolienne aime tant le spectacle, c’est que l’auteur anticipe de libére´ment la grande époque du théâtre élisabéthain et inscrit son drame dans le sillage de Shakespeare’ (p. 13). Hugo’s relationship with Shakespeare shaped his entire literary career, of course, and there are rich and complex Shakespearean echoes within works such as Le Dernier Jour d’un condamné (1829), which Hugo had recently published. Anfray traces the ‘structure abyme´e’ (p. 13) of Marie Tudor back to similar techniques used in A Midsummer Night’s Dream or Hamlet, while also perceiving Hugo’s Jew as a direct literary descendant of Shylock. As well as this thoughtful and thorough Introduction, the edition also carries a useful chronology; a ‘version primitive du premier acte’; an extremely rich account of the reception of Marie Tudor, both by the critics and in the ways in which it has been