

journals, his almost sixty years of research on Homeric sites was eulogised, and his position as the first excavator of Hisarlik recognised. Interestingly Hueck Allen does not break off with the death of Calvert but continues her narrative to the present day following the losses and rediscoveries of artefacts and the arguments between Germany, Russia and Turkey over current ownership of the various “treasures” found at Troy: gold, marble and pottery which had been more often than not illegally spirited away to Europe in contravention of Ottoman legislation.

The discovery of Troy has become almost anecdotal, thanks in the main to Schliemann himself whose archaeological aims included fame, academic credibility and acceptance into Germany’s nineteenth-century literati as much as they did discovery and science. Frank Calvert was professionally and personally swamped by the consummate showmanship and consequent glory of his wealthy rival. The photographic portraits on the dust jacket of this book are symbolic of the places each of the two subjects was to occupy for posterity: Frank Calvert’s is a blurred detail from an extended family portrait, the thin bearded face lacking definition and contrasting dramatically with the sharp studio portrait of the proud mustachioed visage of Heinrich Schliemann. The retiring character in the background versus the bold self-promoter. Hueck Allen has done a thorough job in giving equal clarity to both faces.

### **Paul Donnelly**

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#### ***Apartment Stories: City and Home in Nineteenth-Century Paris and London,* by Sharon Marcus. Berkeley: U of California P, 1999.**

There have been surprisingly few critical studies which have explored the role of house and apartment in the nineteenth-century urban novel. It is possible that early nineteenth-century “microcosmic” studies of cities such as Ackermann’s “Microcosm of London,” which first appeared in 1808 collaboratively illustrated by A.C. Pugin and T. Rowlandson, promoted a popular association of urban architecture and lively scenes of human interest. It was from the 1830s, however, that writers such as Balzac and Dickens, at once fascinated and repelled by the teeming multiplicity of city life, were not only recording the distinctive character of city streets and buildings but suggesting a close correspondence between the character of houses and their occupants.

Balzac’s careful depiction of Mme Vauquer’s pension in the opening pages of *Père Goriot* for example with its seedy neighbourhood, mean exterior façade and grubby, shabby interior—even its distinctive smell, (an “odeur de pension” which has a “stuffy, musty and rancid quality”)—serves as a compelling metaphor for Mme Vauquer the landlady who is, as Balzac perceives:

at once the embodiment and interpretation of her lodging house, as surely as her lodging house implies the existence of its mistress. . . . The very knitted woollen petticoat that she wears beneath a skirt made of an old gown, with the wadding protruding through the rents in the material, is a sort of epitome of the sitting-room, the dining-room and

the little garden; it discovers the cook; it foreshadows the lodgers-the picture of the house is completed by the portrait of its mistress.

Balzac's descriptive method, which in this passage foreshadows Dickens's portrayal of "Todgers" lodging house in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, reveals how the novelist could turn apparently random domestic elements to a particular purpose. In France Balzac's technique of detailed observation was hailed after his death by the "realist" school; in England it was often deplored, G.H. Lewes complaining memorably that "considerable languor would be spared did [Balzac] pay less attention to upholstery. He cannot mention a single room in the house but he must instantly make an inventory of the furniture, as if with an eye to distraining for rent. . . . As Canaletto painted every individual brick, so Balzac describes every bit of a house, from the gables to the doorsteps; and this without being a Canaletto." While Balzac's "realism" needs to be viewed with some reservations (he is often like Dickens said to have invented a society rather than observed one), his monumental cycle of *La Comédie Humaine* (of which *Père Goriot* was an early work) preserved elements of the microcosmic view of city life. In tracing the fortunes of over two thousand characters drawn from all strata of French society from the time of the Consulate to the July monarchy, Balzac gave prominence to scenes of Parisian life (the city being variously described as a "stucco cage" and a "beehive") and was careful to "place" his characters within a defined architectural and decorative context.

As the French novel developed from the 1840s to the 1880s the association between character and setting intensified from Balzac's "realism" (where characters are defined by their environment) to Zola's "naturalism" (where characters are determined by the interaction of heredity and environment), and where Paris itself emerges in novels such as Zola's *Le Ventre de Paris* (1873) as a dominant organism. In England Dickens's novels of the 1840s and 1850s suggested a closer symbiosis of character and setting through the imaginative use of depersonification and animism; but by the time of *Our Mutual Friend* (1865), where London too emerges as a powerful, malignant force, Dickens had begun to question the validity of such associations.

Sharon Marcus's *Apartment Stories* makes an important contribution to understanding some of the complexities which shaped these developments. Using a variety of contemporary sources, which include the famous Parisian "tableaux" and "physiologies," architectural works, builders' pattern books and household manuals, she compares and contrasts French and English attitudes towards "maison" and "home" with the aim of "bringing to light the domesticity of Parisian urbanism and the urbanism of London's domesticity." Marcus draws a forcible distinction between the essentially private sanctuary of the Londoner's "home" which strove to emulate, irrespective of urban or suburban context or of rented or leased status, the ideals of detached country cottage, and the sophisticated domicile of the Parisian who in the 1830s and 1840s typically lived in the new apartment buildings which proliferated during the last years of the Restoration and during the July monarchy.

Making no differentiation in vocabulary between houses and apartments (both of which were referred to indiscriminately as "maisons") the Parisian of these decades, Marcus notes, was proud to belong to a city of public spectacle and display, where the grand new apartment buildings became in themselves a form of street sculpture and

theatre. In contrast to the traditional hotels prives, which had been enclosed behind gates and courtyard, with principal façade and rooms overlooking the garden rather than the street, these apartment buildings deliberately faced the public thoroughfare. With their grandiose architecture, large vestibules, windows overlooking the street, communal stairs and corridors, and all-knowing portières (the precursors of the modern concierges) these apartments were impressive but not private. With their graded accommodation, which became cheaper on the higher floors, the apartments also presented to the casual view a microcosm of urban life. Marcus demonstrates how the idea of strangers of mixed fortunes living under one roof was exploited by the profusely decorated "tableaux de Paris" as well as by contemporary novelists such as Balzac, who used the casual and often promiscuous encounters of apartments to advance the plot in novels such as *La Cousine Bette* and *Le Cousin Pons*.

By the 1860s, when Haussmann was widening the streets of Paris and enclosing Les Halles and the lavoirs, apartment buildings were increasingly associated with immorality and disease. Favouring the English notion of "home" as a sanctuary, contemporary Parisian writers exhorted their countrymen to develop clean private houses which were to be differentiated in as many ways as possible from the public spaces of restaurant and shop. This led, as Marcus posits, to an "interiorisation" of Paris where protected and often hermetically sealed private interior spaces confine middle-class life and ostensibly enclose feminine virtue. Examining in some detail Zola's *Pot-Bouille* (which was published in 1882 as part of the Rougon-Macquart cycle) where the potent metaphor of the title reinforces imagery of simmering bourgeois containment and consumption, Marcus demonstrates how Zola manipulates the spaces and proximities of an apartment building in a tale of middle-class hypocrisy and opportunistic promiscuity.

While Marcus has placed a decided emphasis in *Apartment Stories* on French developments, and has deliberately concentrated on the articulation of urban spaces rather than their interior decoration, her argument would have been strengthened at times by a more secure understanding of the decorative arts. In her interpretation of the 1860s distaste for the "dissembling" façades of the apartment blocks for example and the associated dislike of perspective and trompe-l'oeil painting in the interior (which she attributes to a desire for more secure, undeceptive domestic barriers), there might have been some acknowledgement of the contributing influence of contemporary notions of "moral taste." But this is a small cavil about an illuminating book, which makes a sound contribution to our understanding of nineteenth-century Paris and London, in fact and in fiction.

**Anna Clark**

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