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# Le Pere Goriot

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Honoré de Balzac (20 May 1799 – 18 August 1850) was a French novelist and playwright best known for a sequence of short stories and novels collectively entitled *La Comédie humaine*, which presents a panorama of French life in the years after the 1815 fall of Napoleon.

Due to his keen observation of detail and unfiltered representation of society, Balzac is regarded as one of the founders of realism in European literature. He is renowned for his multi-faceted characters, who are complex, morally ambiguous and fully human. **His writing influenced many subsequent novelists such as Charles Dickens, Edgar Allan Poe, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Gustave Flaubert, Henry James, and William Faulkner.** Many of Balzac's works have been made into or have inspired films, and they are a continuing source of inspiration for writers, filmmakers and critics.

*Le Père Goriot* (Old Goriot or Father Goriot) is an 1835 novel set in Paris in 1819 that follows the intertwined lives of three characters: the elderly doting Goriot; a mysterious criminal-in-hiding named Vautrin; and a naive law student named Eugène de Rastignac. The novel takes place during the Bourbon Restoration, which brought about profound changes in French society; the struggle of individuals to secure upper-class status is ubiquitous in the book. The city of Paris also impresses itself on the characters – especially young Rastignac, who grew up in the provinces of southern France. Balzac analyzes, through Goriot and others, the nature of family and marriage, providing a pessimistic view of these institutions.

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