

From the margins to the centre: women as  
witnesses to history in Victor Hugo's *Notre-Dame  
de Paris*

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**Abstract.** A deeply dated fiction, *Notre-Dame de Paris* is the product of Hugo's paradoxical conception of the novel as a journey into the past that allows us to look back at the present, while at the same time transcending this historicism with an immanent moral dimension. Situated close to the key dates of the period in question, the Hugolian novel offers a sideways view of history and, as a result, develops marginal figures, including women - anonymous voices in the Parisian crowds watching and commenting, good gossips who judge historical facts and figures with a sharp eye, anachronistic nobles nostalgic for bygone days, bohemians and hoodlums - who shed light on the workings of power and the centre and contribute to the ideal vision of a bright future for the people.

**Keywords:** history, ethics, immanence, marginality, women, *Notre-Dame de Paris*, Victor Hugo.