In the first week of December of 1819, Eugène Rastignac, the protagonist of Honoré de Balzac’s *Père Goriot* (1835), receives two letters from Angoulême that ‘contained a sentence of life or death for his hopes’. The first, from his mother, admonishes him for the course ‘on which you are embarking[,] Your life and happiness [are] dependent on appearing to be what you are not, on seeing a world which you can only frequent by spending money you cannot afford’. The second letter, from Rastignac’s sister, provides the young student 350 francs. This second letter opens the world for the *arriviste*. Indeed, thanks to this sum of money,

The most phenomenal changes take place within him. His aspirations are as boundless as his ability to achieve them. He desires everything and anything, he is gay, generous and expansive. … Paris is all his. At that age everything glows, sparkles and flashes! Age of joyful strength, which no one, man or woman, ever turns to full account. Age of debts and anxious fears which increase every pleasure! Anyone who does not know the Left Bank of the Seine, between the rue Saint-Jacques and the rue des Saints-Pères knows nothing of human life.

That the spaces of the French capital become opened and available to Rastignac only upon the receipt of the 350 francs highlights a fundamental truth that undergirds the genre of the *Bildungsroman*, especially since the nineteenth century: these novels of development exhibit a dependence upon the protagonist’s relationship to ‘institutional and financial power’ in a way that imbricates the narrative process of *Bildung* with the socio-economic process of capitalism. Although critics like Franco Moretti and others have addressed the economic nature of the *Bildungsroman*, this article will focus on another aspect of Rastignac’s dictum. Only after receiving the money from his mother and sister, Rastignac begins his journey towards achieving his dreams in the heart of Paris.
sister in the provinces can Rastignac feel, let alone claim, that ‘Paris is all his’. More specifically, at this point, the 350 francs only open ‘the Left Bank of the Seine, between the rue Saint-Jacques and the rue des Saints-Pères’, a rather circumscribed area between the Sorbonne in the 5th arrondissement and the eastern edge of the 7th arrondissement. As the novel charts Rastignac’s attempts at development, this geography becomes more expansive, ultimately ending with the sweeping ‘epic challenge: “It’s between the two of us now”’ that Rastignac issues to ‘the area between the column in the place Vendôme and the dome of the Invalides, home to that fashionable society to which he had sought to gain admission’.

Issued from the heights of the Père Lachaise cemetery in the north-eastern 20th arrondissement, Rastignac ends his Entbildungsroman with a threat to gain access to the fashionable world that lies between the place Vendôme in the 1st arrondissement and Les Invalides in the 7th arrondissement, an area that takes in the Louvre, the Tuileries, and the Faubourg Saint-Germain.

Geography in Balzac’s Père Goriot provides three key insights for a broader analysis of the Bildungsroman. First, it highlights the role of capital in the ability of an individual even to engage in the process of development that underlies the very genre. The access to the 350 francs is the sine qua non not only for this novel, in particular, but also for the Comédie humaine and the entire genre of the Bildungsroman, especially when it is set in Paris. This leads to the second key insight; the city of Paris, broadly, and the specific spaces within the French capital determine the experience, type, and efficacy of Bildung. Moretti has argued that, ‘[w]ithout the Latin Quarter, I mean, and its tension with the rest of Paris, we wouldn’t have the wonder of the French Bildungsroman, nor that image of youth … that has been its greatest invention’. This article will seek to demonstrate the underlying claim in Moretti’s analysis: that the specific spaces that these novels inhabit within the French capital matter for the narratives they are able to tell. Third, the combination of the individual’s response to these specific spaces as well as the specific socio-historical nature of the spaces themselves means that the Bildungsroman must be read in light of what Michel de Certeau has termed a ‘spatial story’. As de Certeau explains, narratives are ‘spatial syntaxes’ that ‘regulate changes in space (or moves from one place to another).’

By reading each of the novels of Kate O’Brien’s oeuvre as ‘a travel story’, just as we read Balzac’s Père Goriot, it becomes necessary to read them as ‘a spatial practice’, a narrative that locates itself in, and responds to, a specific space. The specific geography of Kate O’Brien’s Parisian novels of development, Without My Cloak (1931), The Flower of May (1953), and As Music and Splendour (1958), influences and determines the type of Bildung available to each protagonist. In Without My Cloak, the
use of the monumental and authoritarian space of Versailles and the Champs-Élysées, specifically following the renovations of Georges-Eugéne Haussmann and Napoleon III, enacts a dictatorial and imposed development. In As Music and Splendour, the opening emphasis on the Place de la Bourse and the 2nd arrondissement highlights the dominance of economics in Clare Halvey’s Bildung, which ultimately ends in a paradigmatic crisis in the Place de la Concorde on her journey to the Gare de l’Est. Last, The Flower of May is the only novel to achieve the type of legitimate self-determination that is the hallmark of the classical Bildungsroman; this is also the only novel to include the Latin Quarter and the neighbourhood surrounding the Sorbonne, without which, as Moretti claims, the French Bildungsroman is impossible.14 Thanks to incorporating the spatial turn in an analysis of O’Brien’s Parisian fiction, it becomes clear that, to paraphrase Père Goriot, anyone who does not know the Left Bank of the Seine cannot truly know Kate O’Brien’s œuvre.

Since space largely determines the type of growth available to the protagonists, an analysis of O’Brien’s œuvre must pay particular attention to the specific spaces that dominate these novels, especially for her many Bildungsromane that take place in Paris. In Without My Cloak, Mary Lavelle (1936), The Flower of May, and As Music and Splendour, her four non-historical European-based novels, Rome is mentioned nearly 100 times; Paris is mentioned nearly 75 times; Dublin and London are both mentioned nearly 35 times.15 These data not only bolster Eibhear Walshe’s description of O’Brien’s Mary Lavelle as a novel that contains an ‘open ending, this movement away from Mellick and Ireland and towards voluntary exile in Europe’, but extend Walshe’s claim to a much broader range of her career.16 Clearly, Mary Lavelle does not signal the point at which O’Brien’s œuvre leaves Ireland behind. Instead, this 1936 novel points to an increasing attention to, and oftentimes a tension between, the Continent and Ireland. This tension comes to influence, if not dominate O’Brien’s career. Indeed, the three novels that this article explores cover the early, middle, and later parts of her career. As such, the consistent geographical range of O’Brien’s fiction cannot be sidelined as an aberration; indeed, based on these three novels, the expansive geography of her fiction is an undeniable and essential aspect of her literary career. Each of her novels, then, ‘is a travel story – a spatial practice’.17 Moreover, these novels become a countervailing force to the dominant role Irish geography has played in criticism of O’Brien’s fiction, specifically, and Irish literature more broadly.18 As I have argued elsewhere, the need to ‘re-present a series of representations concerning the island of Ireland’ in one of the seminal collections of Irish literature ‘has left little room for novels that take place on the Continent … as though Irish literature occurs only in one space
and one place’. The centrality of Europe in O’Brien’s oeuvre necessitates a re-examination of her work within a broader framework, while also providing a much-needed ‘spatial turn’ in Irish literature toward the type of open horizon that characterizes her fiction. By relocating O’Brien’s fiction in a Parisian map, this article not only reads the forms of Bildung located within Paris in a European framework, but also seeks to complicate and challenge the “proper” and distinct location’ of Irish literature.

Despite its voluminous recounting of the rise of the Considine family through Mellick society, Without My Cloak is perhaps the most prototypical Bildungsroman in O’Brien’s career; the 1931 James Tait Black Prize winner is one of only two of her novels to focus on a male protagonist, in this case the heir apparent of the Considine estate, Denis Considine. As Susan Fraiman argues, dominant criticism surrounding the genre of the Bildungsroman has ‘define[d] development in emphatically masculine terms’, which has produced numerous critical debates over whether ‘fictional female development (at least before the twentieth century) is an oxymoron’. I will discuss the possibility and difficulty of a female Bildungsroman below, but the paradigmatic examples of Goethe’s Wilhelm Meister (1776), Balzac’s Illusions perdues (1837–43), Dickens’s David Copperfield (1850), and Joyce’s A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (1916) all prioritise and privilege a type of development intimately associated with ‘the image of man in the process of becoming’. Additionally, this novel ends with a socially-agreed-upon marriage that results in the protagonist taking his place in the ‘plot [that was] patiently weaved “around [him]”. Thus, on its surface, Without My Cloak functions as a typical Goethian Bildungsroman, the hallmark of which is the achievement of ‘maturity by means of a symbiotic relationship between the Bildungsheld and the socializing institutions’ that produces a symbolic and double legitimation for both the individual and social order.

Despite these clear associations with the Goethian Bildungsroman, when we examine the novel’s representation of Paris, the narrative pattern of Bildung in Without My Cloak more accurately adheres to Moretti’s definition of the crisis phase in the European Bildungsroman. In this phase of its development, the Bildungsroman ‘neglects the subjective side of the process: the legitimation of the social system’, resulting in the protagonist succumbing to ‘sheer coercion’ instead of socialization. The first hint of this crisis comes from Denis’s Uncle Eddy who notes that the Considine family is ‘making chains round him’ in a way that will ‘trap Denis’ even though ‘[he] will want to find life for himself, out of the workings of his own mind, out of his own personality’. The language here is significant for its explicit reference to trapping and chains, images that bespeak the type of coercion that
characterizes Moretti’s crisis, because Denis will employ similar diction when he first articulates this same recognition of developmental crisis after his trip to Paris.

Denis dines with this same Uncle Eddy in London after celebrating his eighteenth birthday in Antwerp with his father as part of ‘a long business tour’ that includes ‘London, Paris, Bordeaux, Marseilles, Paris again, then Antwerp and Amsterdam and Haarlem, then Hamburg and Copenhagen, then Brussels, then Antwerp again, then London, then home’.\(^{29}\) During this meal, Eddy notices that Denis looks ‘more a young man than a boy now’ and decides ‘he had not yet made up his mind between being a stupendous masher and a dreaming, heedless poet’.\(^{30}\) Despite expectations that he enter the Considine family business, Denis has always expressed more interest in gardening, poetry, and the world beyond the confines of business. Throughout this novel, he is still, to borrow from Bakhtin, in the ‘process of becoming’, deciding how to balance what he wishes to become with and against the pressures of his family.\(^{31}\) By asking Denis ‘[h]ow did you like Paris,’ Eddy sparks an existential crisis:

Ah, how to explain? A tempest of words and emotions swept over Denis—for in Paris he knew that he had found himself—found his own ghost, his own projection of himself, his own future, his own unchained, unchallenged, unclaimed personality—waiting for him, as a dream-self waits for every imaginative egoist in Paris. He had felt then as if some nostalgia of years had gone from him, as if he were in a place known a long time ago. He had hurried about the quiet streets as if identifying them out of things remembered. He had been fantastically, obliviously happy. He had felt at home. How to explain that?\(^{32}\)

The description of Denis while in Paris echoes that of countless protagonists from the tradition of the French Bildungsroman, young men, whom Moretti describes as ‘hungry, dreamy, ambitious’.\(^{33}\) As a result, it should come as no surprise that Paris performs a key role in Denis’s development, providing him an alternative model to the trap of his life within the Considines. Yet it is unclear from this passage precisely how Paris contributes to his development; instead, the French capital performs an alternatively undefined but liberative role, one which contrasts sharply with the life available to him in the over-determined space of Mellick and the Considine family.\(^{34}\) The repetition of ‘his own’, alongside the opening and closing question of how to explain, creates a sense of privacy that contrasts sharply with the string of ‘unchained, unchallenged, unclaimed’ to highlight the degree to which he is chained, challenged, and claimed at home.\(^{35}\)
Denis’s reveries of the French capital provide insight into the specific spaces in which this Bildung occurs, which in turn shape the type of Bildung available to him while in Paris. Without My Cloak only mentions two specific locations during this Paris interlude. One night, while in Paris, Denis and his father dine ‘in the garden of a restaurant of the Champs Elysées’, during which, the narrator recounts, ‘Denis was dreamy and tired. He had spent a day of exquisite excitement in the Little Trianon … the loveliest ghost of a place’.36 That Denis’s description of Paris, quoted above, makes use of the same Gothic trope of ghosts as the gardens in Versailles suggests that this is the site most critical to the type of development he experiences in the French capital. The role of the garden deserves critical scrutiny. As David Harvey claims, gardens, like Versailles and the Tuileries, are crucial in the Parisian geography precisely because they help make the city legible, ‘casting a net of meanings over urban life that would otherwise appear totally opaque’.37 For Denis, gardens function as an alternative space of leisure and self-expression seemingly beyond the realm of the Considine business. Describing his future self as ‘an architect of gardens’, he imagines ‘a vocation’ that would allow him to participate in ‘the great art which in one form or another had decorated every civilisation of the world’.38 In his attempt to ‘restore it, give it new formulas, new philosophic and aesthetic significances … fresh and living in their own expression’, Denis becomes ‘infatuated with straight lines, obliterating each existing pathway as if its coquettish curlings had been a crime against all life’.39 Anticipating his fascination with Petit Trianon, the renovations of the gardens at River Hill not only echo the French classical style of gardening that dominates Versailles, but also, perhaps more importantly if also contradictorily, the urban renovations of Baron Haussmann, Prefect of the Seine under Napoleon III. Strikingly, all three of O’Brien’s Parisian novels take place during the Third Republic (1870–1940), a landscape that bears the mark and legacy of Haussmannisation. The ‘most striking feature’ of Haussmann’s renovations, like Denis’s, is ‘a new and more highly integrated system of straight and broad roadways which tore through the antique fabric of what was already coming to be called le Vieux Paris’.40 But, as Colin Jones makes clear, Haussmann’s creation of this new Paris expresses a kind of ‘insouciant authoritarianism’.41 A quintessential example of Haussmannisation is the extension of the Rue de Rivoli in the 1st and 4th arrondissements, which connects with the Champs-Élysées in order to prioritise the monumental view of the Arc de Triomphe. The fact, then, that Denis recalls the ‘day of exquisite excitement in the Little Trianon’ from ‘the garden of a restaurant in the Champs Elysées’ becomes increasingly significant for O’Brien’s Parisian geography.42
This is a surprising constellation; on the one hand, the gardens mirror precisely Moretti’s claim of self-expression, but, on the other, Petit Trianon cannot escape its association with the monarchical rule of Louis XIV, nor can they escape the disciplinary modernisation of Haussmann’s Paris. The odd nature of these specific spaces mirrors the uneven development on offer to Denis. While Paris provides him the briefest of opportunities to find himself ‘unchained, unchallenged [and] unclaimed’, his Uncle Eddy ultimately proves too right in his belief that ‘[i]f you live among the Considines, making their life and interest yours, you’ll do so out of unconvinced affection – your personality will be wounded, exasperated, and insulted’.43 Wounded, exasperated, and insulted, Denis completes his Bildung by marrying Anna Hennessy, the match that restores him to the Considine family. A *deus ex machina* restores the symbolic legitimacy of the socialisation process, one always under the watchful gaze of Denis’s authoritarian father whose ‘brilliant eyes blazed love on him’.44 The combination of this male and patriarchal gaze along with the intensity of the word ‘blazed’ calls attention to the Haussmann-like regulation that orders and structures the options available to Denis Considine in O’Brien’s first Parisian Bildungsroman.

Moving to the Bildungsroman that concludes O’Brien’s oeuvre, Paris remains a complex socio-geographic site that conveys the contradictory nature of the development of Clare Halvey, one of the two protagonists in *As Music and Splendour*. Following the development of two young Irish women sent first to Paris and then to Rome to begin their operatic careers, O’Brien’s last novel is one that embraces all the contradictions of Marianne Hirsch’s failures of the Künstlerroman when applied to women seeking self-expression through art. Focusing on the tensions between Clare’s professional development as an opera singer, her sexual development as a lesbian, her religious development as a Catholic, *As Music and Splendour* highlights the complex and interwoven pressures of socialisation and formation that affect Bildung. As Hirsch explains, whereas the nineteenth-century tradition of the Künstlerroman depicts the development of artists providing young men ‘a solution that saves them’ through the ‘solution of art’, this option is ‘virtually unavailable to the young woman of the nineteenth-century novel’.45 For women, Hirsch argues, withdrawal becomes ‘the only viable response to deep inner needs’ in a way that highlights ‘an impossible contradiction’.46 It might seem as though opera provides a solution for these two protagonists, but Clare’s repeated and exasperated expressions of ‘I want to be free’ undermines the symbolic legitimacy that undergirds a successful Bildung by highlighting the debilitating effect that debt and lack of access to capital play in closing down the opportunities of development.47 Instead, Clare often feels condemned or at least forced to study ‘all the soprano parts in’ operas such as
'Don Giovanni, The Magic Flute, Idomeneo, L’Elisir d’Amore, Norma, The Barber, Lucia, Faust, and Don Carlos’ to pay back ‘an awful lot of his money to Uncle Matt – and you’ll be beginning on the twenty per cent to Rue des Lauriers’. Because of the prominence of, and control exerted, by debt As Music and Splendour raises significant questions about the ability of an individual to accede to the forces of Bildung under late capitalism.

The forces and contradictions that characterise Clare’s enforced Bildung are most clearly embodied in the specific Parisian geography that begins and ends the novel: namely, the Place de la Bourse in the 2nd arrondissement and then the Place de la Concorde as she makes ‘her way down the Rue Royale’ in the novel’s last sentence. Although the novel never specifically mentions the Place de la Bourse, the novel’s internal logic of contracts and gambling implicitly associates the world of opera with the world of the stock markets, referring to the girls explicitly as ‘these Irish investments’. This association of art with economics emerges through the unwavering route the girls take home from the Conservatoire de Musique, then located in the 9th arrondissement. Following around from the Conservatoire to ‘the Pont de la Concorde, they followed the Quai d’Orsay to the Champ de Mars, re-crossed the Seine at Pont d’Iena into the Quai de Passy, and shortly, through dull, ugly streets, reached the ugly Rue des Lauriers. This mapping suggests that O’Brien’s young women would be marched past the Opera Garnier and the Bourse, a geography that governs the characters’ struggles for self-determination. Indeed, the detail that ‘the route of the long march home never deviated’ highlights the degree to which the girls are denied the opportunity to engage the city, to look around, to participate in the social scene that is fundamental to the experience of Bildung in Paris; the very freedom to choose the route is denied them, restricting the possibilities of self-expression in de Certeau’s ‘rhetoric of walking’. That this geography remains both hidden and obvious recalls the power of money in Balzac’s representation of Paris. As Moretti explains, the Balzacian narrator is he who is able ‘‘[t]o see’, [which] for nineteenth-century mentality, is more than ever before a prerogative of power’, but this omniscient power, ‘in the Comédie, resembles a bank, not a Ministry’. Indeed, throughout Balzac’s oeuvre, those who most resemble the narrator are ‘[t]hose who know life “as it really is”’ and those ‘are characters such as Jacques Collin, “the banker of convicts”, or the usurer Gobseck, a veritable semi-legal financial power’. Thus, the central role of Mère Marie Brunel, the ‘hidden yet all-powerful’ nun whose ‘severe’ contracts dictate the entirety of the novel, associates her with the type of power and language Moretti locates in Balzac’s Place de la Bourse. This means that Mère Marie, like Anthony Considine before her, functions in
order to enforce the girls’ accession to the social order, to the severe terms of her contract.

As mentioned, the novel ends in the Place de la Concorde and the Rue Royale in the 8th arrondissement, not far from Clare’s and Rose’s routine journeys across the Seine from the Conservatoire to the Couvent des Pieuses Filles de Sainte Hélène in the 16th arrondissement. Yet, the ending of *As Music and Splendour* is ambivalent, at least in terms of Clare’s achievement of *Bildung*. After the death of her grandmother in Galway, Clare returns to Paris only briefly to continue her singing career after being ‘engaged to Dresden and Vienna’ for the autumn and winter seasons.58 This return is in many ways enforced. While in Galway, she finds herself ‘saddened’ after realizing that ‘she could not ever live now the simple, clean, courageous and uncomforted life from which her grandmother was departing in holy and collected peace’; similarly, as the narrator relates Clare’s imminent departure from the Gare de l’Est to Dresden, there is a submission to a male authority:

Thomas had had his way; her contracts were good, and he would choose her operas and in the main conduct when she sang. Tomorrow, after almost a year of half-silence and separation, he would meet her on the station platform in Dresden. Professionally, for a time at least, he would be her master.59

The language here demonstrates a continuation of Clare’s lack of freedom and self-determination, despite her lesbianism. The geography of the Place de la Concorde and the Rue Royale reinforce this lack of freedom, despite Moretti’s claims regarding the role of social spaces in the Parisian *Bildungsroman*.60 The Place de la Concorde, originally the Place Louis XV, emerged as an initial response to honour Louis XV’s success in the War of Austrian Succession (1740–48).61 In the eighteenth century, the Place exemplified ‘dynamic power-building of a sort which accentuated the popular contemplation of royal authority’.62 In this way, the Place de la Concorde, so named in 1795 under the Directory, functions as a monumental space, conveying ‘ideals of formal perfection, duration or immortality’.63 For Henri Lefebvre, monumental space ‘effect[s] a “consensus”’ through the commingling of ‘[t]he element of repression in it and the element of exaltation’, which leads to a recognition of, for each member of society ‘an image of that membership, an image of his or her social visage’ as well as ‘the conditions of a generally accepted Power’.64 The Place Louis XV may effect an image of membership that belongs to the royal subject and the Place de la Concorde a membership that belongs to the State more broadly, but the image of membership that this space evokes for Clare is decidedly less associated with the French monarchy or the State.
Instead, it signals the twinned and imbricated authorities of capitalism and opera. These twinned forces are embodied in her submission to her new ‘master’. As such, O’Brien describes Clare’s return to the Place de la Concorde and to the world of opera in unsurprisingly despondent tones, explaining that the ‘Place de la Concorde struck exaggeratedly against the sad quiet of her heart’. The exaggeration of this antagonistic relationship as well as the physical term ‘struck’ together emphasize the ‘traces of violence and death, negativity and aggressiveness’ that Lefebvre associates with monumental space. Thus, much like Without My Cloak, the individual’s quest for self-determination is thwarted by and succumbs to the pressures of social authority. O’Brien’s Paris, in her first and final novel, cannot provide the space for Bildung.

The Flower of May, however, provides a significant difference in O’Brien’s representation of Paris through the inclusion of a different space that enables this 1953 novel to tell a different kind of story. Much like both Without My Cloak and As Music and Splendour, Paris is not the central site of The Flower of May, a novel that focuses on the development of Fanny Morrow of Mespil Road, Dublin during what amounts to a Grand Tour of Europe with her schoolmate’s well-to-do Belgian family. Again, like As Music and Splendour, there are two competing representations of Paris that deserve attention in scholarly appraisals of this understudied novel. Before beginning their Grand Tour that will stretch down the Italian Peninsula, Fanny and the de Mellins pause in Paris. This initial representation of the French capital is worth quoting in full:

Paris, where the luxuriously travelling de Mellin party had paused for two days and nights, had indeed been an encounter she would reflect upon very much—when she had time for reflection. But, confused though she was in Paris, she did fumblingly apprehend that it was a city that she must postpone; certainly she had wit enough to know that in two days and from the foyer of the Meurice she could only be confounded by the place. Almost deliberately, certainly in a strong mood of self-defence, she let its first impact run over her like water. Paris was for the adult, and she looked about it eagerly, and understood that in French terms she was not adult. She would become adult, and would return to Paris. But she was relieved that she need spend no more than two extremely silly tourists’ days there now.

This passage employs a language of self-defence that replicates the antipathetic relationship between Paris and the Bildungsheld of O’Brien’s two previous representations of the French capital. In this initial urban
foray, Fanny ‘fumblingly’ apprehends that she must remain passive and allow the city itself to dictate her experience. In terms of the *Bildungsroman*, Paris is no longer the site of ‘becoming’, but now ‘Paris [is] for the adult’, shifting the nature of the narratological function of the French capital. More accurately, *this* Paris is for the adult.

The specific geo-social location of Fanny’s initial encounter determines the kind of experience she is able to have just as it determines the kind of story she is able to create. Fanny begins her confounding Parisian encounter ‘from the foyer of the Meurice’, which is located in the 1st arrondissement on the Rue de Rivoli. Facing the Jardin des Tuileries as well as the Louvre and the Palais Royal, the Meurice is deeply implicated in the same politics of monumentality and authoritarianism as the Place de la Concorde, especially through the renovations of Napoleon I and then Haussmann. Created to accommodate ‘increased volume of traffic along the prosperous Rue Saint-Honoré’, the Rue de Rivoli was part of Napoleon I’s attempts to extend ‘the line of the Champs-Élysées eastwards towards the site of the Bastille’ as part of ‘a well-established symbolic axis of power’. Under Haussmann, the Rue de Rivoli was central to a ‘complete remodelling of the densely occupied Right Bank neighbourhood’, which was entirely designed in order to consolidate power under the Emperor. Throughout these urban renovations, Haussmann combined two strategic elements to convey spatially this consolidation of power: a ‘desire to have every boulevard vista focusing on a monument [that] became a little overdone and fetishistic’ and ‘the wish to undermine Parisian popular militancy’. By placing the space of the Meurice and the Rue de Rivoli in its proper socio-historical context, Fanny’s first experience of Paris from this landmark can be read as controlled and provoking a need for ‘self-defence’. Indeed, that this position belongs to the adults recalls Lefebvre’s claim that monumental space ‘offer[s] each member of a society an image of that membership’. For Fanny, that image of membership denies self-determination; it refuses her the opportunity to decide what shape that membership will take. To preserve that right of self-determination, she must ‘postpone’ the city; however, she promises that ‘[s]he would become adult, and would return to Paris’ on her own terms.

Following the inheritance of the family estate in Glasalla, Co. Clare, Fanny and Lucille de Mellin declare their intentions to ‘go off to Paris’. This inheritance becomes a ‘terrific weapon’ that enables the return to Paris in a way that highlights the necessity of money for the beginning of any *Bildungsroman*, similar to the pattern in *Père Goriot* with which this article began. And, as in Balzac’s paradigmatic *Bildungsroman*, Fanny’s return to the French capital begins roughly in the streets ‘between the rue Saint-Jacques and the rue des Saints-Pères’, the area around the
These same streets resonate with so much literary significance that Fanny and Lucille plan to go ‘and cram for the baccot whilst provisionally taking university lectures’. The only representation of Paris in O’Brien oeuvre that achieves the possibility of open ‘becoming’ that defines the Bildungsroman includes the Latin Quarter and the Right Bank; as Moretti has claimed, in a passage quoted above, without the area surrounding the Sorbonne, ‘we wouldn’t have the French Bildungsroman, nor that image of youth – hungry, dreamy, ambitious – that has been its greatest invention’. Moretti has demonstrated that the vast majority of Balzac’s Bildungshelden first arrive in this area around the Sorbonne, but, for O’Brien, this second arrival is associated with the suggestion that Fanny and Lucille ‘shall… begin there’. French historian James F. McMillan notes that it was only in 1880 that the College Sévigné led the way in allowing women to sit for the baccalauréat, which in turn allowed them to enter the University. McMillan notes that, despite the fact that ‘women had established their right to a university education from the 1860s’, it was ‘only in 1890 that Julie Chauvin became the first woman to graduate in Law, and later in the same decade that institutions like the Ecole des Chartes and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts opened their doors to women students’. By 1900, seven years before The Flower of May takes place, there were 624 native French women enrolled in the French higher educational system; these numbers reached 1148 in 1905 and 2547 in 1914. Just when Fanny and Lucille are beginning in Paris, they are joining an increasing cadre of women enrolling in French higher education. The landscape that belongs to Balzac’s young men is becoming increasingly open to women, creating space for women to begin their own stories. The Flower of May ends with what Eibhear Walshe has described as ‘this open ending, this movement away’ and ‘towards voluntary exile in Europe’. For O’Brien’s protagonists, the novel ends with the intention to travel to Europe, but that space, the Europe of the adult, remains private because it is unnarrated. Lying outside of the purview of the narrator and the reader, the space of the Quartier Latin, the space of Balzacian Bildung, becomes Fanny’s own space, just as the self she develops is promised to be her own self. Thus, though O’Brien does not re-present Fanny’s return to the Sorbonne, its promise is more manifest because of this privation, and more promising because of its privacy.

O’Brien’s 1962 travelogue, My Ireland, offers her readers a self-described ‘invitation to travel’. Her literary output offers the same invitation, stretching across the continent of Europe. As it becomes clear that her oeuvre is a spatial one, it becomes increasingly important to investigate each space because, as de Certeau and Moretti have demonstrated, each space enables a specific type of story. For O’Brien’s representation of Paris, it is only with the inclusion of the Rive Gauche
and its literary tradition that the geography of Bildung becomes accessible. For Balzac, when the medieval streets ‘between the rue Saint-Jacques and the rue des Saints-Pères’ open up to Rastignac, ‘Paris is all his’, but, following The Flower of May and Fanny Morrow’s return to the French capital with a similar access to money, the city’s geography of Bildung opens up even further and Paris is now all hers, too.

NOTES
1. Portions of this article are based on a chapter in Matthew L. Reznicek, The European Metropolis: Paris and Nineteenth-Century Irish Women Novelists (Liverpool: Clemson University Press, 2017).
15. Reznicek, The European Metropolis, p.181. These calculations are the result of running these four novels through the Stanford Name-Entity-Recognition Software, which produces a list of names, places, and organisations in a given text. I then exported specific references to these cities, but a broader and more thorough analysis would include the references to individual spaces within each of these cities.
18. There have been some notable exceptions that have focused on foreign and non-Irish elements in recent studies of O’Brien. See, specifically, Aintzane Legarreta Mentxaka, Kate O’Brien and the Fiction of Identity: Sex, Art and Politics in Mary Lavelle and Other Writings (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2011); Jane Davison, Kate O’Brien and Spanish Literary Culture (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2017). For works that explore non-Irish geographies in Irish literature more broadly, see Tony Murray, London Irish Fictions: Narrative, Diaspora and Identity (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2014); Anne Goarzin, ed., New Critical Perspectives on Franco-Irish Relations (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2015).


22. *Without My Cloak* invites comparisons to these classical *Bildungsromane* through repeated references to the works of both Goethe and Dickens. Indeed, it marks the family’s seemingly private milestones in the summer of 1870 alongside the fact that ‘[in] June Charles Dickens died and Millicent’s betrothal to Gerard Hennessy was announced’, as well as noting that Denis receives a copy of *Great Expectations* from one of his childhood friends. Kate O’Brien, *Without My Cloak* (London: Virago, 2001), p.210, p.211.


34. Reznicek, *The European Metropolis*, p.182.


42. O’Brien, *Without My Cloak*, p.239.


46. Hirsch, ‘‘Spiritual Bildung’’, p.28.


49. For more in-depth analysis of the role of economics in *As Music and Splendour*, see Matthew L. Reznicek, ‘These Irish Investments: Money as Organizing Principle in Kate O’Brien’s *As Music and Splendour* (1958)’, *Women’s Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 44.2 (2015), pp.197–223.

67. It should be noted, however, that Rome functions as the main locus for *As Music and Splendour*, as such it becomes the site in which most of Clare’s *Bildung* occurs. Paris, it seems, functions as a site of transitoriness.
73. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p.220.
75. Fanny inherits the estate through a line of female relatives, which is not the first time that a female line of credit has been used to ‘promote the freedom of action’ of O’Brien’s protagonists; this is a recurring trend in several nineteenth- and twentieth-century novels by Irish women writers. O’Brien, *The Flower of May*, p.297.
83. Walshe, *Kate O’Brien: A Writing Life*, p.66. Walshe argues that the ending of all of O’Brien’s novels, following *Mary Lavelle*, share this geographic impulse away from Ireland and toward Europe.