ABSTRACT OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS

PSYCHOLOGY AND LITERATURE: EPISTEMICALLY DEPENDENT CHANGE IN CHARACTER CONSTRUCTION IN THE VICTORIAN AGE

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Cultural Studies

PhD Candidate:

Melinda BARTA-MIHALY (GORGAN)

Doctoral Supervisor:

Prof. dr. habil. Maria-Ana TUPAN

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As its title suggests, the research project *Psychology and Literature: Epistemically Dependent Change in Character Construction in the Victorian Age* is an interdisciplinary study interested in diachronically observing character construction changes throughout the Victorian era. Closely related to the epistemological turns, the shift in the construction of literary characters is pursued as they are altered over the fifty years, which separate Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* from Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. The research, aligned with the contemporary directions of literary studies[1], is a legitimating narrative, an attempt to delineate the narratorial discourse's undeniable change from the beginning to the end of the Victorian age.

The **originality** of our research consists mainly in its diachronical perspective and interdisciplinarity, no precedent study of character with changes explained in light of epistemological turns having come to our knowledge.

In our approach, we are setting out from the **hypothesis** that epistemological change, more precisely, the progress of psychology from Herbart's perceptual and associationist version to the end-of-the-century depth psychology, was responsible for the way the workings of the mind were understood and consequently for the way literary characters were constructed. Having as a starting point the primary **research question** *Why did the narratorial discourse change from the beginning to the end of the Victorian age?* and deriving from our aim to demonstrate the well-defined causality of stylistic changes that accompany shifts in the history of ideas, the **objectives** of the study are to identify the distinction between the anatomy of perception believed to determine characters, their inner life and psychological traits, at the beginning and, comparatively, at the end of the Victorian age, to provide evidence of the fact that the differences between these character constructions are echoes of other nonliterary discourses, and finally, to cast light on the interconnectedness between literature and nonliterary discourses, especially of psychology and philosophy.

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[1] Our research has got fruitful insights from two courses attended at Oxford University in 2022: "Investigating the Victorians" and "Trollope, Eliot, Dickens and Hardy: Reading Victorian Fiction", taught by Liz Woolley and Octavia Cox, respectively.

Consequently, the study takes a look at a few representative works of the timespan covering Queen Victoria's long reign from the perspective of present-day criticism, regarding "the question of text and history not as a relationship of text and context or foreground and background, but instead […] an understanding of the text as a privileged moment within a network of discursive and material praxes" (Wolfreys et al., 2006, p. 137).

The influence of psychology on literature is tracked step by step through the Victorian age, starting with Dickens's realism, and ending with the inward turn, the focus on the psychological mechanisms of the individual, on the self, the *I* in Henry James, Robert Louis Stevenson, Oscar Wilde, and Bram Stoker. The works we analyse are not viewed as mimetic representations of life as seen from a linear perspective but as epistemic offshoots pressing home a holistic cultural standpoint.

In *Introducing Criticism at the 21st Century*, Julian Wolfreys identifies several "new modes of 'hybrid' criticism which are emerging at the beginning of the twenty-first century" (2002, p. 2). Sceptical about procedures which "ossify into protocols, mere programmed excuses for limiting the act of reading, or, worse still, not reading at all and avoiding reading in the name of methodology, ideology or institutionalized demand" (2002, pp. 8- 9), Wolfreys encourages the "making of new perceptions from within particular conventions of critical discourse". Believing, along with Heidegger, that "a boundary is not that at which something stops but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something begins its presencing" (1971, p.154), the **method** we assume is a blend of Critical Theory and New Historicism.

The Critical Theory design advances the possibility of reaching out to the entire cultural semiosis of an age. Access to the whole Victorian culture, to life itself, opens the door to discourse about the human condition under specific historical circumstances. Moreover, this context is historicized in the sense that it is culture-specific, mediated by language and by a double perception— as perceived by the Victorians and as the 21st -century researcher approaches it. Victorian literature is divided between the realist camp (presenting a reality considered to be material, unitary, unique, and given in common to all members of the respective society) and the phenomenological camp, who believe that reality appears to each human subject according to his psychological condition, to the ideas to which they have been exposed to, to the epistemology of the age.

In the Preface to *Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poetics and Politics*, Isobel Armstrong (1996) advances the idea that "The poetry and poetics of the Victorian period were intertwined, often in

arresting ways, with theology, science, philosophy, theories of language and politics" (p. vii). Maria-Ana Tupan (2023) specifies that interdisciplinarity is cross-paradigmatic, her argument "tracing the ideas germinating into modernism back to the middle of the nineteenth century, in that long Victorian Age, as the other side of the positivist, realist and naturalist dominant" (p. 3) and endorsing Armstrong's views, who "characterizes Victorianism as the passage to phenomenology" (p. 3). Armstrong finds that "the link between cultural complexities and the complexities of language is indirect but can be perceived" (1996, p. 11). In an age when "hermeneutic doubt and suspicion continued to be woven into the literature of the century from Carlyle to the post-romantics" (Tupan, 2023, p. 3), Isobel Armstrong perceives "a shift from ontology to epistemology, a shift from investigating the grounds of being to a sceptical interrogation of the grounds of knowledge, which becomes phenomenology, not belief" (1996, p. 15). A historicist perspective is thus open to research, as the world of experience appears to human observers in changing ways over time. Stephen Greenblatt's famous opening for his book *Shakespearean Negotiations* (1988), about his desire to talk with the dead points precisely to this generational limitation of a certain social semiosis, but also suggests the possibility to go back in time through the surviving artefacts in order to get "insight into the half-hidden cultural transactions through which great works of art are empowered" (1988, p. 4). According to him, studying social semiology in its entirety does not mean an abandonment of "the enchanted impression of aesthetic autonomy" (Greenblatt, 1988, p. 5) but an analysis of "the objective conditions of this enchantment, to discover how the traces of social circulation are effaced" (Greenblatt, 1988, p. 5). Perceiving the text as a favourable point in time within a system of discursive conventions (Wolfreys et al., 2006), following in the footsteps of Foucault, who urges for the establishment of "those diverse converging, and sometimes divergent, but never autonomous series that enable us to circumscribe the 'locus' of an event, the limits to its fluidity and the conditions of its emergence" (1972, p. 230), Greenblatt finds social energy to be the trigger of the literary works' perenniality.

Believing, as Stephen Greenblatt suggests, that "the work of art is itself the product of a set of manipulations" (1992, p. 158), we analyse the different forces working closely or against each other, capturing the effects of discursive negotiations during the timespan comprising Queen Victoria's long reign. Since we believe that "the literary work is a site of dialogic interaction of multiple voices or modes of discourse" (Baker, 1996, p. 230), sharing the views of Stephen Greenblatt regarding the "mutually profitable exchange" (1992, p. 158) between different discourses, we examine the

negotiations of semantic energy whose effect is the dissolving of boundaries between disciplines. The attempt to reproduce these negotiations proved to be a quest to capture complexity: "a subtle, elusive set of exchanges, a network of trades and trade-offs, a jostling of competing representations, a negotiation between joint-stock companies" (Greenblatt, 1988, p. 7). Viewing the written materials of the Victorian age as "products of extended borrowings, collective exchanges, and mutual enchantments" (Greenblatt, 1988, p. 7) is a dynamic act of researching an entanglement specific for the period from which we arrive to the conclusion that "every text is necessarily embedded in a complex network of social, economic and political practices (similar to Foucault's episteme); literary and non-literary texts circulate inseparably within this network" (Mason Vaughan, 2006, p. 105).

In his essay, *Towards a Poetics of Culture*, Stephen Greenblatt urges for the development of the "terms to describe the ways in which material […] is transferred from one discursive sphere to another and becomes aesthetic property" (1992, p. 157). He believes that viewing this as a uni-directional movement is misleading since "the aesthetic discourse […] is so entirely bound up with capitalist venture" (Greenblatt, 1992, p. 157) and "the social discourse is already charged with aesthetic energies" (Greenblatt, 1992, p. 157). We are informed in *Stephen Greenblatt and the New Historicism* that the method of analysing discursive negotiations and exchanges undertaken by Greenblatt results in demonstrating that "the social energies which circulate between the two texts are, presumably, characteristic of the culture at large" (Mason Vaughan, 2006, p. 105). Thus, the study we propose is not only an investigation of discursive negotiations and a search for meaning "not outside interpretation, but in the hidden places of negotiation and exchange" (Greenblatt, 1992, p. 159), but also an inquiry into discursive formations which share in common, not autonomous and discrete textual units, but networks of intertexts which demand from the interpreter an "archaeology of knowledge," as Foucault describes this hermeneutic circle in his book of this title:

> The frontiers of a book are never clear-cut: beyond the title, the first lines, and the last full stop, beyond its internal configuration and its autonomous form, it is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network. (1972, p. 23)

Considering that "Victorian literature provides the reader with almost limitless possibilities of inclusion and exclusion – sometimes even within the same text" (Robbins& Wolfreys, 1996, p. 4), the lacing of literature and scientific treatises contributes to a relatively unstable field of study. This type of inquiry is among the reasons Victorian literature still matters: the webbing of the mutually enriching

areas offers endless possibilities of interpretation. Since Virginia Mason Vaughan perceives Greenblatt's perspective as "a brilliant intertextual dance" (2006, p. 105), our study is an attempt to reveal the steps of the dance that psychology and literature performed in the Victorian age, from putting on their dancing shoes to the final pose at the end of the century.

Concerning its **structure**, our research is divided into three chapters: *Discursive Networks: Psycho-Physics as the "Science Maîtresse" of the Age*, *From Herbartian Psychic Mechanics to Mid-Century Positivism* and *Abysmal Psychology and Pragmatism in the Late Victorian Age*, framed by the *Introduction* and the *Conclusions* at the beginning, and respectively in the final part.

The *Introduction* of the study focuses on theoretical questions, presenting the rationale and the objectives of the research. It defines the study's conceptual framework, illustrating the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to the proposed subject. The adopted method is also explained in light of the theory of discursive negotiations launched by Stephen Greenblatt in a celebrated book on Shakespeare (*Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England*, 1988). We also argue that the research is an up-to-date inquiry since, nowadays, we can notice a revival of scholarly interest in Victorian literature. Throughout our investigation, we have found several universities which recommend Victorian-themed on-site and online courses, MA programmes and even PhD projects and programmes. Furthermore, there are several associations which focus on the Victorian period, such as the *British Association for Victorian Studies*, *Interdisciplinary Nineteenth Century Studies*, the *International Centre for Victorian Women Writers*, *Victorian Popular Fiction Association*, *The Victorian Interdisciplinary Studies Association of the Western United States*, and many others. Apart from such societies, there are also various scholarly journals interested in the age we have chosen to analyse: the *Victorian Review*, the *Journal of Victorian Culture*, *19: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Long Nineteenth Century*, *Victorian Network*, *Victoriographies: A Journal of the Long Nineteenth Century*, and others. A quick online search reveals that nowadays, there are also many calls for conferences on Victorianism and the literature that appeared during this period. Many publishers distribute a great amount of books which discuss Victorian themes from an interdisciplinary perspective. The critical preoccupation with the period's literature is apparent from the various bibliographical sources we have included. Looking at the last few years, we observe, for instance, that Edinburgh University Press announces their interest in this subject by publishing the *Edinburgh Critical Studies in Victorian Culture* series featuring no less than fourteen titles in 2022. Cambridge University Press has released eight titles related to Victorianism since 2022, Anthem Press announces eight titles for the year 2023, while Routledge has eleven

published or forthcoming titles for the current year. Palgrave Macmillan has released several titles in their series, *Palgrave Studies in Nineteenth-Century Writing and Culture*. However, throughout our research, we have not encountered a diachronic study which accompanies on a step-by-step basis the changes that occurred as a result of the epistemological shift throughout the century. Relatively related to our investigation are Natasha Rebry's *Disintegrated Subjects: Gothic Fiction, Mental Science and the fin-de-siècle Discourse of Dissociation* (2013), which covers, however, only the final part of the Victorian age; and Anna Marie Gibson's *Forming Person: Narrative and Psychology in the Victorian Novel* (2014), which includes parallel evaluations of fictional and scientific experiments, but it looks only into the first and mid part of the century, from Charlotte Brontë to George Eliot. None of the works we have analysed covers the entire century and the change in its entirety as our investigation does.

The first chapter of our study, *Discursive Networks: Psycho-Physics as the "Science Maîtresse" of the Age*, explains the importance of the German psychological developments for British psychology and literary representations, as well. As a starting point of the doctoral research, this chapter introduces some general aspects of nineteenth-century continental and British intellectual life, accentuating the unprecedentedness of the age under various aspects. We speculate that the synergetic discourse of science and literature results from the fragility of disciplinary boundaries. Endeavouring to spotlight the core of the discursive networks, first of all, we list the intellectuals whose influence we consider meaningful, tracing some of the main ideas of their work. In our attempt to identify the authoritative European figures in scientific thought, we proceed to analyse the four intellectuals whose relevance we believe to be decisive for the further development of our research. The continental sources whose work we closely examine are Johann Friedrich Herbart, Gustav Theodor Fechner, Wilhelm Maximilian Wundt, and Max Dessoir. Finally, reducing the array of our research, we arrive at the representatives of English thought, providing a survey of Thomas Carlyle, William Whewell, John Stuart Mill, and William James's works. The investigation of the intellectual and literary atmosphere of the age contributes to our understanding of the reception of various works, be they scientific discoveries or fictional works.

"The subtle interplay of Victorian science with its social and cultural context" (Lightman, 1997, p. 4) is demonstrated by the comparative examination of different scientific and literary resources. The unmistakable German influence upon Victorian scientists and writers is a feature that is observable throughout the century. The emerging discipline of psychology was a characteristic of the

age in German scientific research. We can observe that a tendency towards exact sciences, mathematical calculus, and physics surrounds the discourse formed around the conception of this field of study. From Herbart, through the work of Fechner and to Max Dessoir's double-layered mind, every specialist in psychology intended to measure the mechanics of the mind in one way or another. They either proposed mathematical calculus or physical computation, approaching the same subject of the mind from different perspectives. For all that, the purpose of each of them was to understand the workings of the human mind. These struggles to find the appropriate method and the proper explanations of the functioning of the brain and human soul have affected many fields of study, including literature, as we shall see in the following chapters. We conclude our first chapter confident that discussing the prevailing themes of the age's scientific research is the basis for demonstrating the permeability of boundaries between science and literature and the shift in character construction from the beginning to the end of the Victorian period.

The second chapter, *From Herbartian Psychic Mechanics to Mid-Century Positivism,* spotlights the development from Herbart's associationism to Auguste Comte's positivism, focusing on several literary works which reflect the dominant scientific theories of the age.

The first half of this chapter, *Coming of Age and Development*, focuses on the genre of *Bildungsroman*, a concept whose German origins, definition and characteristics are subsequently presented. Julian Wolfreys, Ruth Robbins and Kenneth Womack define *Bildungsroman* as an originally German concept "meaning 'education [*bildung*] novel [*roman*]' a novel that traces the formative years and spiritual education of its principal protagonist" (2006, p. 17) and find *David Copperfield* and *Great Expectations* as proper English examples of the genre. Franco Moretti (1987) discusses that the emergence of the youth as the central theme of the *Bildungsroman* in the dawn of modernity is not accidental because it has the potential to emphasize the vitality and vulnerability of modernity: "Youth is, so to speak, modernity's 'essence', the sign of a world that seeks its meaning in the *future* rather than in the past" (p. 5).

The *Bildungsroman*, presenting the "portrait of a Governess, disconnected, poor, and plain" (Brontë, 2001, p. 137), is anything but the story of the coming-of-age of *plain* Jane: it is the pilgrimage of a governess who proved throughout the novel that she is not straightforward at all, a complex character with an interior turmoil that does not frighten her: "though I am bewildered, I am certainly not afraid" (Brontë, 2001, p. 118). The clash between rationality, obedience and her irrational raging

self is "a secret dialogue of self and soul on whose outcome the novel's plot, Rochester's fate, and Jane's coming-of-age all depend" (Gilbert, 2001, p. 484). She dared to confront the threat of Victorian censorship, acting as a subverter of the patriarchal order. Attempts have been made to apply Philip Anderson's concept of localization to social communities. Jane is that impurity which steals into a system, acting as an attractor and changing in time the system's characteristics.

Dickens's "favourite child", David Copperfield, adds up experiences through the years which shape a young man's formation. His identity and final accomplishment are based on his past experiences and memory, through associations, which have a central role being the only means of recollecting what happened throughout his life and pouring them into the narrative of the artist figure doubling the mature man at the end. The taming of his "undisciplined heart" leads David to a new apprehension of himself. Only when reaching maturity can he make the right choice of wise and devoted Agnes and achieve happiness. Dickens explores throughout his novel the interchange between consciousness and repressed ideas. Through David's quest for cognizance, he emphasizes the importance of experiencing disquietude both on the internal and external levels for finally obtaining unity with oneself. According to Goldie Morgentaler (2000), once David surpasses the pattern entrenched in his childhood and heredity and is mature enough to distinguish between good and bad influences upon him, he is prepared to close the circle of repetitions and settle to be a successful novelist and husband. All the characters with whom the young and credulous hero interacts form the identity of David, who, in the end, seems to understand what life is about. The accent on the interiority is growing, and the act of self-contemplation is a proper means of acting in the tumult of life. Vladiv-Glober believes that

> […] a new episteme […] is being laid out before the 19th century reader by the European Realists. This is the episteme which is grounded in a new understanding of individual and social identity, which takes into account the invisible ('occult') processes of the unconscious in social and individual cultural formations. (2019, p. 124)

After inspecting the two young, *undisciplined heart*s, we examine several aspects of the dramatic monologue, exemplified by Robert Browning's experienced, obsessive duke in *My Last Duchess* and a few other works. Elizabeth Barrett Browning's novel in verse, *Aurora Leigh,* also contributes to the idea of duality in Victorian beliefs regarding identity, relations and faith.

The second part of this chapter, *Identity and Environment*, focuses on the problem of selfhood and the milieu, having Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* and George Eliot's *Silas Marner* as a basis for demonstrating the ongoing shift in character construction. Both Pip and Silas Marner's journeys end in a positive aura, both finding redemption, although their progress and relation to society prove challenging throughout their evolution. A starting point in studying the mechanics of Pip's mind in Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* is the observation of Herbart and Mill's shared belief regarding the circumstances under which one is born and brought up to be definitory for their character. Since Pip has no foundation in defining himself other than the name he has given himself, he strives to form his identity through the lens of others. George Eliot's *Silas Marner* is an instrument for exploring the connection between self, society and some kind of religious faith. Eliot suggests that identity is socially constructed based on each individual's relationship with the rest of the community. The question is whether a person rooted so profoundly in a milieu can be reintegrated as a full member of another culture or not. The conflict between the individual and the community, which lies at the heart of positivist philosophy, is resolved by the appearance of Eppie and Silas's choice of goodness and morality. Silas Marner's experience related to Eppie's arrival can be associated with the scientific study of the age regarding stimulus perception. Silas's cataleptic fits are as well proof of Eliot's interest in physiology.

All the novels discussed in this chapter have hints, characters or situations which describe the interest in the inner life and the working of the human mind. For example, *Jane Eyre* presents Jane's torments, Bertha Mason, the madwoman from the attic, independence, feeling and judgement; *David Copperfield* tackles the problem of memory, past, personal development, and morality; *Aurora Leigh* introduces social justice, the status of women, emotions; *Great Expectations* proposes ideas of ambition, guilt, social class, education, doubles, insanity; and *Silas Marner* advances ideas of loneliness, betrayal, human relationships, trust, catalepsy, etc. According to Dames (2005), the century started with associationist ideas, and the combination of different sensations provided the basis for the predictability of the mind. In their intent to theorize the mental and to provide explanations for the functioning of the human brain, psychology evolved toward the middle of the century to different theories regarding the study of the nerves, impulses, physiology and several fields which can hardly be called science, such as physiognomy, mesmerism or phrenology.

According to Dames (2005), the interwovenness of psychology and literature was more than merely a matter of genre definition, as it had the side consequence of posing new questions for

psychology to consider. For example, the fundamental question for early Victorian psychology about the means through which we gain cognizance of the world was of major importance to realist fiction. Still, new questions arose with the rise of other aspects of psychology, such as physiology. For instance, knowing the extent to which unconscious or innate abilities and processes influence human behaviour became of utmost importance. Another question that arose was the possibility of understanding themselves and others by their facial or bodily features and what elements of personality are observable in the human body.

> As the century progressed, and accounts of the 'unconscious' proliferated, the newly revealed world of the reflexes, the body's autonomic or purely mechanical functions, and even heredity provided novelists with a range of vocabularies for actions not solely explicable by conscious motivations. […] the newer psychologies of the period provided answers to some of the mysteries of everyday social encounters that it was the novel's usual task to describe. (Dames, 2005, p. 100)

Completing Dames's ideas, Meegan Kennedy (2013) postulates that literature inclined to examine human behaviour used the new psychological theories to illustrate how human physiology and psychology contributed to the formation of an identity of an individual.

The last chapter, *Abysmal Psychology and Pragmatism in the Late-Victorian Age,* focuses on the last decades of the Victorian Age when the development of psychology and the influence of the evolutionary theory, degeneration, psycho-physical parallelism and pragmatism changed the construction of characters, novelists shaping characters which are entirely different from the socially determined realist novel heroes previously analysed. Characters from the late-Victorian age are driven by unconscious desires, libidinal forces, irrational drives, split selves, dual identities and atavism.

The first subchapter, *Heredity and Fate*, explores aspects of ancestry and destiny in Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*. Mirroring the construction of the second chapter's first subchapter, where the emphasis is laid on a young woman, Jane Eyre, and a young man, David Copperfield, this part also investigates the prospects of a young woman and a young man, Tess and Jude—this time the protagonists appearing in novels by the same author.

While Darwin was promoting the idea of evolution, which consorted well with the optimistic view inspired by James Prescott Joule's mechanical equivalent (enforcing the conservation of energy principle), the degeneration/atavism theories (Ray Lankester, Max Nordau, among others) in the late

century biology found a scientific correlative in the law of entropy (progressive loss of energy). The second law of thermodynamics projects life as a continuum towards extinction. The perspective of entropy didn't seem a comforting thought for the Victorians. Ernst Haeckel coined the theory of the biogenetic law in his 1866 *Generelle Morphologie der Organismen*, where he posited that the embryo repeats the stages of development of the past forms of evolution of the species it represents. In some cases, this undertaking is interrupted at a subordinate level, hence the appearance of the atavistic forms. Haeckel's views altered Darwin's hopeful narrative regarding evolution towards a superior species. Commenting on the bleak prospects for Victorians, Herbert Spencer questioned whether the advancement was a clear-cut road to demise or growth towards a higher form.

Since the scientific theories of the age did not circulate along isolated channels, and since science did not have an exact field of study, the ideas proposed by some intellectuals in one area were bearing upon others in some other disciplinary field. In a world where theories appeared as a necessity for the intellectuals to find a direction, some of them proposing optimistic viewpoints about mankind and existence, others leading to impending catastrophes, a new approach made its way towards the end of the century: pragmatism—which appeared as the "new way for some old ways of thinking", as William James (1907) observes. In a world where the subject of moral values versus psychology, volition, will, determinism, mind and body reign in the academic field, the Victorians find themselves on the threshold of a new beginning, and the dawn of modernism starts shedding light on them: "The signs of advent are not few. Science itself is also in travail. Assuredly some mighty new birth is at hand" (Lewes, 1874, p. 4).

Some of the crucial landmarks of psychology going under the last part of the Victorian age are considered by Maria-Ana Tupan to provide an epistemological arch of literary modernism (2009, p. 40)[2]. Additionally, she believes that the emergence of science imposed the abandonment of realist poetics upon the prose writers, the novelistic discourse executing a differential movement between the social-historical and the mental reality of the centre of consciousness or character. The multiplication of narratives around the same events, depending on the perceiving subject, was another formal reflex of the dominant epistemological models in the era of the triumph of psychology (Tupan, 2009, p. 42) [3].

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[2] (Trans) „[…] un fel de boltă epistemologică a modernismului literar."
[3] (Trans) „Știința obliga prozatorul să abandoneze poetica „realistă", discursul romanesc executa acum o mișcare de diferențial între realitatea social-istorică și cea mentală, a centrului de conștiință/personajului. Multiplicarea narațiunilor

Predestined to be a victim, Tess of the d'Urbervilles acts accordingly. She is unable to control her life, and what is more, she is conscious that her lineage determines her actions. Thomas Hardy, deepening Tess's dramatic life experience, hints at the primacy of biological determinism, which not only controls her inner life but seems to take over her entire being. According to Hardy's description, body and soul do not seem to be in accordance anymore since Tess's body has been taken over by evolution, and different parts of her body appear to be on different levels of growth. The body perceived as a desynchronized container of the human self might be an allusion to schizophrenia or split personality since there is a rupture between different aspects of the same person. Hardy's belief in determinacy triggered by heredity is apparent throughout the novel since we encounter many words such as *fate*, *destiny/destined*, *doom, chance* – building a semantic field of human life being under the control of obscure forces. Since ontogeny, according to Haeckel (1866), repeats phylogeny, Tess recounts various aspects of her ancestors. She bears the exact characteristics of her forerunners; not only her traits of personality but her physical appearance leads in the same direction, undeniably "traceable in these exaggerated forms" (Hardy, 2005, p. 236).

"The sort of man who was born to ache a good deal before the fall of the curtain upon his unnecessary life" (Hardy, 2002, p. 11), Jude Fawley seems to be conducted towards demolition not by destiny, supreme power or wickedness, but by his character. The psychological insight into the inner lives of the protagonists, the character of Jude and the personality of Sue prove to be a successful attempt at gathering information from different scientific sources and rendering them in a great literary mirroring of the fin-de-siècle intellectual atmosphere. Throughout his work, we witness how "Hardy's extraction of elements of an affective human psychology from diverse sources coheres, and develops, as the discipline itself becomes established during Hardy's working life" (Keen, 2014, p. 5). Thomas Hardy is considered to be "a transitional figure between the Victorians and the Modernists" (Moffett, 2004, p. 90), and through his last novel, *Jude the Obscure*, he anticipates Freudian ideas regarding the id-ego-superego problem. Sue Bridehead, Jude's double, seems to be a fine observer of his psychological state: she inadvertently echoes Wilhelm Wundt's theories regarding the connections between physical events and inner perceptions, concluding that he might be "a victim to the spirit of mental and social restlessness, that makes so many unhappy in these Days" (Hardy, 2002, p. 316). Rosemary Sumner (1986) believes that although Hardy explored different aspects of personality and

în jurul aceloraşi evenimente, în funcţie de subiectul care le percepe, era un alt reflex formal al modelelor epistemologice dominante în epoca de triumph a psihologiei."

identity throughout his other characters as well, it is Sue Bridehead who marks the passage to a genuinely diverse, perceivably changed character construction.

> With Sue, he made tremendous advances on all fronts: he explored psychological problems in greater depth than ever before; he dealt with taboo subjects with clarity and honesty; he raised questions about mental health and psychological balance which were to become central in psychological and educational writing and in novels during the following 30 years and beyond. (Sumner, 1986, pp. 165-166)

The second subchapter, *The Self and the Double*, commences with an exploration of the idea of the self and different selves in Henry James's *The Portrait of a Lady* and some of his short stories: *The Private Life*, *The Figure in the Carpet* and *The Jolly Corner*. The interest in the question of identity is undoubtedly an outcome of the changes perceived by the Victorians at the end of the century. The departure from their traditional religious views and the increasing instability in all aspects of life was an aperture for the entrance of different beliefs and queries, explorations and explanations, possibilities, certainties and uncertainties, which together shaped their viewpoint. As a result, dark nights, foggy streets, blood, crime and terror seem to overtake the literary scene, changing its bright, natural colours, which described the realist gardens and sun-lit sceneries with brownish, earth-like, bloody remnants and even dark grey, black dreamy states. Plunging deeper into the interior of the human souls implies the absence of light and the shadowy atmosphere, and dream-like states seem to offer the proper scene for developing tenebrous characters.

The effervescent scientific discoveries—Darwin's hereditary biology, Fechner's psychophysics and experimental psychology, Wundt's psychophysical parallelism, Max Dessoir's theory of double consciousness, research of Mesmerism, hypnotism, hysteria studies, and phrenology—all contributed to the shift in character construction. Atavistic impulses, the question of single or double identities, split-self, hysterical manifestations and vampire figures emerged from the interior of literature, creating interconnections which sprung from the focus on the psychological realm, which seemed to take over on all levels because: "The quest into the mind is simultaneously the quest into the individuality and integrity of the self, which can exhibit puzzling contradictions and obscurely understood drives and impulses" (Rank, 1971, p. xx).

Apparently it was William James's ideas about the multiple self that Henry James applied in his construction of characters in *The Portrait of a Lady*, especially of the protagonist as the subject of the

others' gaze. Since "a man has as many social selves as there are individuals who recognize him and carry an image of him in their mind" (James, 1950, p. 294), the colours of Isabel's portrait are brought together from the different selves she represents for the other characters. While she is submissive to Osmond and seems inexperienced to Madam Merle, her male suitors find her intangible or free. Her final choice appears to be a representation of one of her selves which might not be according to the expectations some have regarding her character. As William James observed, the partition of a person into various selves "may be a discordant splitting" (James, 1950, p. 294) since it brings forward aspects which are unknown to a particular group acquainted with another viewpoint of the same self, accustomed with another social self. The same problem of selfhood in analysed in Henry James's short stories, as well. Cases in point are Lord Mellifont (*The Private Life*), who does not even exist except when he has public manifestations, Clare Vawdrey, his opposite, who has one self maintaining social relationships and the other preoccupied with writing; and Spencer Brydon , the protagonist of *The Jolly Corner* who is caught between his repressed American self and his accomplished European self. Drawing on William James's belief that "The truth of an idea is not a stagnant property inherent in it" (1907, p. 201), in the blurry atmosphere of *The Figure in the Carpet*, both the characters and the reader find out that neither the artist's identity nor a person's true self can be fully understood, which brings along the impossibility of finding the intended *figure in the carpet*.

We go on to examine theories of doubling and atavism in Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, whose story provides several indications of the science-literature merger. Drawing on investigations into hypnotism, hysteria and personality disorders carried out in France during Stevenson's lifetime by Jean-Martin Charcot and Eugène Azam or Max Dessoir's *Das Doppel Ich*, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* is "a marvellous exploration into the recesses of human nature" (Noble, 1886, p. 55). Throughout the novel, the language used serves as an ingenious resource for self-expression. As the events unfold, the overshadowing of Jekyll's identity and the progressive disclosure of Hyde's savagery, are rendered by the strategically used indexicals, unusual collocations, striking inaccuracies in order to convey the most appropriate expression of the tormented human condition. The progressive loss of self in favour of the atavistic double is indicated by the convergent linguistic elements employed to scaffold the identity construction:

> We carry our past with us, to wit, the primitive and inferior man with his desires and emotions, and it is only with an enormous effort that we can detach ourselves from this burden. […] The

educated man tries to repress the inferior man in himself, not realizing that by so doing he forces the latter into revolt. (Jung, 1958, pp. 76, 79)

From here, we proceed with a reading of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, which also proves to be a rewarding choice in our inquiry into the subject of the double motif and the interference of scientific theories in fictional works. Often taken for a continuation of the ideas proposed by Stevenson's novella with the double perceived as an internal force, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, takes the idea of the double one step further where it becomes the correlative of an aesthetic cult. Wilde explores the Faustian myth through the development of the young Dorian Gray, "one of the vilest of human creatures" (Douglas, 1914, p. 257), whose internal degradation we witness through the changes his picture undergoes. As the chasm between Dorian's outer looks and his soul starts growing, the downward spiralling of the action seems to hasten to destruction. Since the lack of harmony between the beautiful face and the monstrosity of the soul grows more profound, the work of art loses its stability, rendering what the protagonist is in his essence.

> Wilde's portrait of fin de siècle England is of a land reeling back to the beasts, but with no hope for a second coming of a King Arthur to save it. The fantasy of Dorian Gray's portrait is not a Faustian story of a hero giving up life for knowledge, but a black fairy tale in which a spoiled boy gets his one wish—endless youthfulness and sensuality—and becomes a suicide because he cannot handle its implications. (Gates, 1988, p. 124)

Several excerpts from the text clearly show evidence of the amalgamation of literature with other types of discourses. For instance, Wilde's interpretation of the relationship between body and soul echoes the contemporary debates on psycho-physical parallelism:

> Soul and body, body and soul – how mysterious they were! There was animalism in the soul, and the body had its moments of spirituality. The senses could refine, and the intellect could degrade. Who could say where the fleshly impulse ceased, or the physical impulse began? How shallow were the arbitrary definitions of ordinary psychologists! And yet how difficult to decide between the claims of the various schools! Was the soul a shadow seated in the house of sin? Or was the body really in the soul, as Giordano Bruno thought? The separation of spirit with matter was a mystery also. He began to wonder whether we could ever make psychology so absolute a science that each little spring of life would be revealed to us. As it was, we always

misunderstood ourselves, and rarely understood others. Experience was of no ethical value. It was merely the name men gave to their mistakes. (Wilde, 2000, p. 57)

Last, but not least, we advance with our investigation into the issue of vampirism and hypnosis in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* to demonstrate that the borderline Gothic explorations take over the literary scene in the fin-de-siècle. Considered to be "one of the most important expressions of the social and psychological dilemmas of the late nineteenth century" (Punter, 2013, p. 16), *Dracula* presents the story of the eponymous protagonist, perceived not as an individual, but a descendant of a dynasty whose survival he strives to maintain. The amalgamation of the points of view and the consciousness of different characters present in the novel offers access to the interiority of the mind. Maria-Ana Tupan considers Van Helsing a literary embodiment of Wilhelm Wundt, the German experimental psychologist whose description of the vampire, including the spirit of kinship, lordship, conquest and blood revenge, is remarkably similar to the Dracula figure. Whereas Dr Seaward is an embodiment of the ideas drawn from the School of Charcot, famous for its publicly presented experiments, case studies and hypnotism, Abraham Van Helsing represents abysmal psychology in its complexity. Furthermore, Van Helsing is a pragmatist, having broad-ranging knowledge from hypnotic practices to folk superstitions.

The last part of our research, the *Conclusions*, sums up the changes in fictional works during the Victorian age, looking at some significant viewpoints regarding the alteration. Moreover, it draws a parallel between several novels or characters, pointing to the perceivable differences in their construction. Besides their focus on recounting the research findings, the final pages underline the employed method's efficiency in producing an explanatory narrative of the character construction shift from the beginning to the end of the Victorian age.

Starting our research work with faith in Queen Victoria's principle that *We will not have failure-only success and new learning,* we have chosen to explore aspects that connect the discourses of psychology and literature during the Queen's long reign. The choice of investigating the nineteenth century, and implicitly the Victorian culture, proved to be a rewarding journey since the age in itself is considered unprecedented. Therefore, in search of a specific direction of study, we have chosen the relevant relationship between science (psychology) and literature to lead the path of our inquiry, which permits us to glimpse at the countenance of an epoch which is in accordance with Harrison's recommendation to "fix our attention on special features as the true physiognomy of an epoch" (1927, p. 156).

Although we feel our enterprise to be an original and successful initiative since it demonstrates the hypothesis we proposed, still, we believe that the possibilities for further study are countless. First, the multitude of primary sources, especially novels, provides numerous opportunities for immersion into the complex world of Victorian fiction. Secondly, the interdisciplinary perspective makes an entire webbing of sources available for interpretation and, depending on the direction we want to follow, abundant sources of creative insights. Lastly, empirical experience has taught us that Victorian culture has such points of intensity that it seems alive even today. There will always be new aspects to be interrogated and rewardingly searched. For instance, an aspect worth considering is the possibility of expanding the study to other theoretical directions, such as gender studies or feminism but also broadening the analysis to other pieces of literature of the period, not necessarily written by English writers. For instance, American Charlotte Perkins Gilman's short story, *The Yellow Wallpaper*, first published in 1892, is a persuasive example of the interconnectedness of psychology and literature. Another thought-provoking perspective for expanding this study might be the emergence of sociology as a discipline, which also appears to have been initially grounded in biology, and its effect on fictional works and character construction. Although sociology appears as a discipline at the end of the period, the British were interested in the social dimension of human character throughout the entire century. The prospect of investigating *Sociology and Literature* using a similar, interdisciplinary method, such as the one we used to examine *Psychology and Literature*, gradually accompanying the development of the two fields and their interface, looks like a stimulating new research direction.

> After all, what could be more natural? Literature must reflect the interests of its time or lose its vitality. There are certainly eternal laws of beauty which cannot be evaded, there are just as certainly eternal laws of life which cannot be neglected, and the ever-insistent problem of art is to keep these two harnessed together, a task as difficult as that of driving the famous chariot of Pluto. (Garwood, 1911, p. 6)

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