

THE VICTORIAN BILDUNGSROMAN: TOWARDS A FICTIONAL TYPOLOGY

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This study focuses on the Victorian Bildungsroman, its certain characteristic features, principles and devices, and a number of structural elements correlated within one fictional pattern. The importance of this study lies in its particular interpretative organization which represents a factor of novelty among the existing possibilities of approach to the literary tradition of Bildungsroman, and which considers diachronically the consolidation of the Bildungsroman writing tradition, its Victorian developing climax, an attempt to define the Bildungsroman, yet primarily it emphasizes the existence of certain typological elements (thematic and narrative) that form a unique fictional structure, the mythic dimension of some of these elements, the principle of character *formation*, the principle of *chronotope* and its importance for the structure of Bildungsroman, as well as a number of other factors that constitute aspects of my theoretical and critical argumentation.

The most important stage of development and the final consolidation of the Bildungsroman as a literary tradition in English literature belong to the Victorian Age, though the antecedents of such a fictional discourse are to be found diachronically throughout the entire process of prose development from Antiquity; and it has been continued in 20th century novel writing with necessary new nuances and deviations (to mention only the modern rejection of the idea of progress, or the sense of crisis, chaos and confusion, or the multiple point of view with regard to the narrative organization of the literary discourse, and many others which suggest new, interesting perspectives of analysis).

The ancient narratives provide a number of thematic attributes involving the character's life-time as life-experience, for instance adventure, ordeal, trial, moral issues of personal conduct, love, struggle for survival, autobiographical substratum, and many others, none of which, however, though diachronically applied and developed by many authors until the end of the 18th century (especially by the writers of the picaresque novel), ever offered premises for the formation of personality, which is actually the final literary appeal and desired culmination of every Bildungsroman (yet suggesting evolution, change of condition with respect to social background, and many others).

I regard these attributes as elements of the developmental fiction rather than of Bildungsroman, though it provides the fictional substratum for the existence of the latter.

The rise and development of novel writing from Antiquity until the 18th century also suggests the existence of other fictional devices that appear

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as literary concerns in the Bildungsroman, such as sin, arrest, imprisonment, penance, escape. The original thematic essence of these elements—applied and used to render the hero's exterior change and condition within social relationships—has been shifted by the Victorian author of Bildungsroman in order to reveal the very essence of the hero's inner life. In this respect, they become elements of a psychological, mental process of change which may determine the hero's maturation in the sense of formation of his personality.

The Victorian Bildungsroman involves the principle of crisis, revelation and change leading to the formation of personality, while the elements in the fiction from Antiquity until the end of the 18th century reveal the static presentation of a static process of development, hence the character is static and the change is actually a pseudo-change, for it asserts primarily the outward condition of the hero, lacking the concern with the spiritual component. I believe that the formation of a personality should account for both the inward and the outward, emphasizing the former aspect, and the idea of difference in the process of inner change.

I believe that it was not until Goethe's **Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre** that the formation of personality was equated as a literary concern to the rendering of social background, or ever considered as a literary concern. Until Goethe produced his novel, at the end of the 18th century, the experience of life, following the scheme of the ancient and picaresque novel, was important only for the evolution and development of the character's condition: the chronotope of roadway contributes to the hero's relations and contacts with different social layers, where the author's critical outlook is more or less predominant. The character remained fixed, with his inner life static from the beginning till the end, and the unchanged spiritual essence determined the linear movement of the entire narrative structure, as well as the logical succession of events.

That it is to say, the fiction from Antiquity until the 18th century has in some respects a confessional quality—which is an aspect of my concern—and the hero, whether a narrator of his own story within a first-person narration or not, may have sinned, done penance, developed, but he is hardly matured in the process of development. In turn, Goethe does not merely recount a number of adventures and love encounters; he rather introduces the theme of formation (in the sense of maturation) of a human personality amid the vortex of life, as the author himself noted (against Rousseau's conception expressed in **Emil**, for example, or by Emily Brontë in **Wuthering Heights**, where the evolution and education of a young personality should exclude any social determinism).

As it is, the development of world literature, particularly fiction, from Antiquity until the end of the 18th century, provided the Victorian Bildungsroman with a number of elements of narrative technique and strategy, such as the identification between narrator and character, the

interest in the readers' response to the text, the linear narrative movement, the chronotope of roadway, that of city, the introspective and retrospective account of events and states of mind, the ethical component of the narrative distance between author and character, and between narrated events and reader, and others.

The Victorian Bildungsroman was also influenced and anticipated by a number of literary concerns of the English Romantic Movement, especially regarding its insight into human psychology and the experience of childhood. What I mean is that every Victorian Bildungsroman focuses on the individual that can be defined by his experience of the past and growing self. The essential experience is that of childhood, and the essential mode of operation of the hero's psyche is memory. The hero in the final stage of his mature formation of consciousness and the physical entering upon maturity attempts, as David or Pendennis do, to return to the past, to establish a mythic circle between the present moment and the moment which has sparked off the moments of a temporal and spatial reality that constitutes actually the very developmental process undertaken by the protagonist.

Those like David or Pendennis find completeness and their formation can be considered a success in that they are able to find a suitable end to their developmental process in relation to their beginnings. Others, like Pip, Richard Feverel, or Maggie, are committed to live in the infinite time which becomes a fictional principle that appears to render the ambiguity of formation, for, though it suggests the possibility of acquiring a new identity through a change in consciousness, it also implies that this new identity will presumably—not definitely—come into existence.

Generalizing these aspects, one may conclude with the idea that in terms of the romantic impulse in the Victorian novel of formation, the writers of Victorian Bildungsromane have thus continued the original romantic emphasis on the identity of the child and the symbolic significance to mature individuals of their experience of childhood. Along with the assertion of childhood's lasting importance, Victorian novelists have also considered its vulnerability to conventional opinion.

With Blake, Wordsworth and other representatives of the romantic trend in English literature the child is the only character who keeps his mind always inquisitive, open to external phenomena, which in the long run turns to become trite and conventional for a mature person. Wordsworth himself and others remain highly subjective in matters of pursuing the transformations of the mind. Their comprehension of the universe being most personal and egotistic (self-centered), it focuses the reader's attention upon the germination of the inner self of an individual, together with the implied theme of the lasting importance of childhood impressions, especially of natural forces, in the process of development of a human personality. The polar interrelation between life and death, black and white, childhood and maturity, joy and sorrow, innocence and experience, visionary relief and

rationality, instinct and action, feeling and will, emotion and mind, which can be traced in the works of the English romantic poets, seems to serve the same purpose. In other words, this method of contrasting opposition serves as a means of emphasizing the contradictions as a result of perceiving the external world through the perspective of the inner self and its expectations. In this respect, the concern with childhood was part of a broader tendency to re-emphasize the significance of the individual and the possible validity of individual judgment even when they clash with social victimization. Also, it represented a polemical response to the excessive cast of mind and morality of the 18th century dominant assertion of rationality.

The literature of the romantic period becomes psychologically oriented, and the poetry of the time has the retrospective concept as a dominating one, giving one the right to call it 'poetry of the past' (Bakhtin felt in the works of romantic writers the remoteness of the past, solitude and, on the whole, very specific coloring of the mood), for this aspect is the direct consequence of the authors' alienation from reality and their incapability to fit in the contemporary process, their unwillingness, originating from obedience to destiny, though not fatal, to change the future.

In the atmosphere of uncertainty and unsteadiness within the new social and cultural system, and rejection of the old system of values, personality gets alienated (the reflection in the literary works of the position 'between Heaven and Hell'). Thus, as in every modern and experimental literary enterprise, personality is determined to become the focus of investigation of the romantic author whose tools are imagination and emotional intensity, and the invented matter would fit the outbursts and aspirations of this subjective creator. To live in an imaginary world is easier than in reality—the one deprived of imagination will never be able to escape from frustrating convention—and this becomes a widespread leitmotif in a number of literary works. The temptation to live in a dream world related to the past, to come back to what has already been before and does not exist any more, to a fabulous arabesque of nerves as the brain can bring anyone to the beginning of one's life, where one felt so secure, compels the imagination to constantly undertake the trip to childhood as it is seen in a number of literary works belonging to English romantic period.

As for the succeeding periods (trends) in English literature dealing with the theme of childhood, they need a special critical approach, especially the Victorian fiction as Bildungsroman, for one may detect there the same lasting concern with the infantile experience and its importance for the general process of character formation, a concern which was anticipated, as I have attempted to reveal in my study, by the literary writings belonging to the romantic movement (the main influence and the most familiar model was provided, however, as it is often hypothesized, by Goethe's **Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre**).

As it is, a number of English romantic writers revealed a willingness to explore the less conscious aspects of feeling and thought which was accompanied by a concern with the experience and insights of childhood more serious than many previous periods would have thought reasonable.

In turn, the Victorian authors of Bildungsromane expressed a twofold vision of the child and the experience of childhood: (1) the actual childhood and its limited circumstances, and (2) the archetype of the child. The former underlines the romantic assertion of the importance of childhood and its vulnerability to social circumstances, or rather to frustration and victimization provided by mature rationality in the treatment of actual children. This aspect finds its interpretative modality through Freudian theory applied to the narrator's remembrance of his upbringing, as for example in Dickens' or Eliot's remembrance of themselves in the early stages of their process of development and life experience.

The latter vision considers the idea of the child, the symbolic image for the mature narrator of his childhood. To follow Jung's conception, the archetype of the child suggests the psychic wholeness of man, for, as it is rendered in the Victorian novel of formation, some of the unconscious aspects of the psyche are being repressed almost to the point of exclusion (I consider primarily the destruction of feeling and instinctive conduct).

I believe that by emphasizing the visionary capacity of the child, his strong sensitivity and imaginative creativity, his instinctive action, set up against the rationality and excessive morality of the adults, the Victorian writers of Bildungsromane express the truth that only when the protagonist in formation realizes himself as a whole of mind and emotion, action and instinct, that is to say, the hero acquires a sense of himself, the formation of personality becomes a reality (as in **The History of Pendennis**, **David Copperfield**, **Jane Eyre**, or **The Way of All Flesh**), a possible culmination of his entire process of development and initiation (as in **Great Expectations**). Otherwise, when the division between mind and feeling, morality and instinct dominates the fictional material and the reconciliation between the outward and the inward is impossible, the entire process of development renders formation as tragedy or mere failure (as in **Wuthering Heights** or **The Mill on the Floss**).

The formation of a mature personality is also provided by the symbolical return to the basic values of the experience of childhood in a kind of cyclical structuring of the narrative material. As it is, the rendering of the experience of childhood as a definite thematic component in Bildungsromane and as an important factor in the entire process of formation of personality is just one element in the fictional complexity which involves both content and structure, both thematic and narrative contexts of the Victorian novel of formation.

Victorian fiction itself is a complex, often contradictory literary phenomenon, which dominated the 19th century cultural background. The

dominance of the novel in this age emerged from the intimate connection between a particular form of the Victorian novel, which can best be called realism, with the desires, aspirations, and anxieties of its readers. For all their awareness of the contradictions involved in writing realistic fiction and their consciousness that language could not provide a transparent objective verisimilitude, novelists as realists still believed that language could represent the world beyond the text and convey a meaning outside of language, a non-verbal truth, as much as, for all its deconstruction of the possibility of a single reliable narrator, Eliot's masterpiece, **Middlemarch**, indicates the author's faith in her power to record the process of change in the English provincial society.

Realism, seen as a set of literary conventions, inscribes and presents as 'natural' a specific version of reality, an equation of the 'real' with the material life of a commercial, industrial society. The mode focuses on interpersonal relations and the protagonist's desire for social status in a highly stratified society. In a society that praised the virtue of individualism and lauded the 'self-made man', the naming of the self and the reconciliation of this self to society became a central issue and Bildungsroman or the novel of development a central fiction form. For male protagonists, the primary issue of the novel turned upon whether social aspirations within the class system could be reconciled with authentic desire and moral feeling. This conflict in the lives of men, often with autobiographical resonance, is played out in **David Copperfield**, **Great Expectations**, **Pendennis**, **The Ordeal of Richard Feverel**, **Jude the Obscure**, **The Way of All Flesh**.

Like all forms of Victorian fiction, the Bildungsroman must be classified by gender, for this was the age in which women were, for the first time, ranked equally with men as writers within a major genre. The Bildungsroman pattern is now embodied in such novels as **Jane Eyre**, **Wuthering Heights**, **The Mill on the Floss**.

As much as novelists were concerned with the development of individual consciousness, they also sought to represent the transformations within their society—a world both urban and rural, commercial and traditional, fragmented yet coherent. Painting on a large canvas, writers shaped what might be called panoramic novels that move across the various classes and social settings. Dickens' **Bleak House**, for example, shifts from the estate of the highest aristocracy to the slums of London to represent the paradox of coherence amid fragmentation.

Rather than following the traditional plot/subplot structure, these fictions are 'multiplot' with no one central figure and with manifold patterns of action (also Thackeray's **Vanity Fair**, for instance, with its focus on the lives and interactions of many sets of characters in the years around Waterloo; similarly, Eliot's **Middlemarch** is concerned less with the life of a single character than with the web that binds together this provincial community).

With these representations of a shifting fragmented society, coherence is often achieved through a narrative voice that comments upon the action and is unrelated to the consciousness of a single character. This often-misunderstood narrative method is appropriate to its subject, a society that a single participant cannot fully understand, and is employed with a complexity and multiplicity of functions—sometimes omniscient and reliable; sometimes merely another character among multiple centers of consciousness; sometimes indeterminate and ironic; sometimes the voice of the community, the standard by which action may be judged and a guide to readers facing a new world which they, like the narrative voice, cannot fully comprehend.

In my approach to the Victorian Bildungsroman with regard to its level of a literary discourse, I consider the importance of the interpretative arrangements of Bakhtinian criticism (whose stature and importance have only recently been acknowledged in the West), structuralist approach (especially its focus on literary text as a whole, with no need to consider the extra-aesthetic particularities, and the relationship established between content and form/technique, thematic level and structural perspectives), and narratology as offering an ordered system of study, a set of methods which find their direct applicability to such a specific area as the Victorian novel of formation. Narratology is best applicable in my consideration of Bildungsroman as a literary system, because the interpretative strategy of this discipline is largely founded on the ultimate assumption that the stories/narratives of one cultural background reveal certain common elements which are interrelated.

Other approaches, however, must not be excluded, for they also have contributions to make to a theoretical and practical analysis of the Victorian Bildungsroman. I also believe that it is important to avoid the shortcomings of a number of these schools, or modify them according to the essence of such a research. In matters of structuralist approach, for example, one may attempt to avoid its concern primarily with literary text as a system of synchronically framed elements, for one may also concentrate diachronically on Bildungsroman development.

The multiplicity of theories and approaches provides also a multiplicity of definitions of the term Bildungsroman. Rather than repeat the details of some of the well-known definitions, I attempt to present one of my own, hoping to disclose some of the main elements and general principles of the Bildungsroman as a unique fictional system.

I regard 'Bildungsroman' as a type of autobiographical fiction (an autobiographical type of fiction) which renders the process of evolution, growth, and formation of a character in his both biological and intellectual development usually from childhood till early maturity according to the principle of chronotope whose spatial and temporal components form the basis of its entire narrative structure and the basis for its analysis.

It is mainly the Victorian Bildungsroman which is my concern here. Its unique literary essence is provided by the fact that, focusing on the spiritual progress of the protagonist, the narration, as conceived by Victorian novelists, concentrates also on his growth and development within the context of a defined social background, and thus the final formation and initiation may also imply a search for a meaningful existence within society.

The formation of personality is the self-conscious, thematic and narrative category of every Bildungsroman. I have attempted to find and describe the premises for the formation as the essence of each Victorian novel discussed in this study, among which I should mention:

1 the fictional reality of a process of character development and evolution from childhood to adulthood framed as a literary discourse; the autobiographical substratum expresses here the author's attempt to create a new consciousness and his search for a repetition of the past as a means of self-recapture as well as self-knowledge

2 the change, reconfiguration of the inner structure of the hero as a result of certain moments of psychological crisis leading to moments of revelation/epiphany (the change of the outer condition is an element of development of the self rather than its formation); the change is in this respect more than necessary, it is inevitable as well as reified by action which determines inner perspectives of existence

3 the capability of the real author to dissociate the archetypal symbol/image of the child (which leads to the realization of the being's wholeness—hence to formation) from the actual childhood (consisting of memory's image of his childhood self and/or invented images of childhood, that is, in remembrance and imagination)

4 the juxtaposition of the differences between childhood and adulthood with the continuity of maturity and childhood—in other words, the correlation between past and present in terms of departure from and return to the original chronotope (the asymmetry of departure and return implies, I believe, only the process of development)

5 the proper correlation of inner/spiritual/romantic perspectives in the process of formation (intelligence, emotional and imaginative capacity) with exterior/practical/realistic perspectives of formation (social integration, professional and financial success); that is to say, the hero in development must avoid unilateral, one-sided consideration of the formative process, for, though successful as distinct parts, their division causes the failure of psychic completeness and individual formation.

In this respect, through separate textual, intertextual and contextual analyses of both narrative strategies and contents of a number of Victorian novels which I regard as Bildungsromane—**The History of Pendennis**,

David Copperfield, Great Expectations, The Ordeal of Richard Feverel, Jane Eyre, Wuthering Heights, The Mill on the Floss, The Way of All Flesh, Jude the Obscure—in terms of their form, I hypothesize the following general fictional structure (the Bildungsroman as literary discourse):

Society/Cultural Context

Author Narrator Text = **Bildungsroman** Narratee Reader

Text as History/Literary Work/the Level of Thematic Organization:	
Character	Inter-Human and Inter-Social Relationships Change of the Inner/Outer the Process of Development (Physical and Intellectual)
Autobiographical Substratum	Formation
the Principles of Time and Space (Chronotope) Involved in Narrative and Thematic Relations	
Text as Story/Literary Discourse/the Level of Narrative Organization:	
intro-/retrospective narration/narrative (linear text) or narrations/narratives (concentric text) of the omniscient narrator (or rather the omniscient point of view of the author expressed through the voice of the narrator)	

Related Texts/Intertextual Perspectives

Language

and, in terms of their contents, with deeper consideration of the thematic level of the text, the following general elements (some of them in any order) of a typical Bildungsroman literary pattern (the Bildungsroman as literary work):

- 1 a child (sometimes orphaned or fatherless) lives in a village or provincial town
- 2 he/she is in conflict with his actual parents, especially father, or any parental figures (the trial by older generation)
- 3 he/she leaves home to enter a larger society (usually city, especially London, definitely not a *ultima Thule*); the departure is determined by 2 or other external stimulus, or an inner stimulus (for instance the desire for experience that the incomplete, static atmosphere of home does not offer)
- 4 he/she passes through institutionalized education and/or self-education
- 5 a young person now, he/she seeks for social relationships with other humans
- 6 his/her experience of life is a search for a vocation and social accomplishment
- 7 he/she has to undergo the ordeal by society (professional career)
- 8 he/she has to resist the trial by love (sentimental career)

9 he/she passes through moments of spiritual suffering and pain

10 now in his/her early manhood, he/she experiences epiphanies which lead to (or should determine) his/her final initiation and formation (complete or relativistic, or not existing at all—that is to say, the final stage of the formative process implies the dichotomy success/failure, or a third possibility of partial success/partial failure)

which render a syntagmatic structure as follows:

1 2 3 4 (or 4 3) 5 6 7 8 (5-8, in any order) 9 10.

These numbers represent the ‘motifs’, and the unifying ‘theme’ is formation. Against this proposed regularity, whose structural elements occur in every Bildungsroman, I attempt to identify in this study a number of narrative and thematic ‘deviations’, certain paradigmatic substitutions of particular events and actions, and a number of exceptions that prove the rule.

Above all, I believe that the very essence of Victorian Bildungsroman, its deep contextual meaning, is the fact that the presentation of the process of formation of personality—this process being rendered within the framework of a fictional system (and in that sense an indirect confession)—represents actually an expression of the writer’s unconscious need for attaining his own wholeness of the self, his own move towards greater consciousness.

The realization of every being as a whole of rationality and emotion, mind and soul, the inside and the outside—especially through the correlation between the desired fulfillment of inner formative perspectives and the exterior considerations of social integration and accomplishment—as I have suggested in the study, is one of the most important premises for the success and completeness of formation.

The psychic totality is achieved at the moment of appearance of archetypes and mythic perspectives, namely those linked to the human process of evolution and development (for example the archetypal symbol of the child). The failure of Victorian writers of Bildungsromane to separate the archetypal/mythic images from their memory’s images of growing selves (that is, the failure to get beyond the past by constructively remembering it) leads inevitably to divisions of psychic wholeness, for example to emphasizing anger and self-pity, which renders the formation of personality a mere failure.

In other words, the attempt of the real author to recreate himself, through the voice of the narrator and the experience of life of the character within the narrative, in a verbalization of his life, succeeds up to a certain point—hence formation and completeness are sometimes ambiguous, which is determined by the failure of constructive memory to bring liberation, *for*

the theory of memory holds out the hope of success, at least (Westburg 1977: 109).

As it is, one of the unifying factors of all Victorian Bildungsromane, as well as that of their 20th century connections, would be the principle of verisimilitude which renders similar formative elements in the experience of life and personality of the author and of the protagonist in development. As it is, the real author of a Victorian Bildungsroman, through his alter ego (that is his character), attempts to create a consciousness with a '*redoubled time-sense*' (ibid.: 50), in that the hero expresses the desire to be representational and literal about his past, as well as creative of himself in the present, at the moment of formation of his personality.

The former aspect regards fiction as a mimetic representation of memory's images and of social and moral issues of the writer's epoch; the latter considers the imaginative essence of the Bildungsroman, its abstractness and freedom from the direct reference to the reality of Victorian life—the capability of the real author to shift from the former to the latter aspect renders, on the one hand, the artistic completeness of the writer, and, on the other hand, the validity of the character's formation (as in **David Copperfield**, for example, or **Jane Eyre**). Otherwise, as in **The Mill on the Floss**, the accomplishment of formation is a mere failure.

Another achievement of the Victorian writer of Bildungsromane is the confessional mode in the novel which dramatizes the author's imaginative development as the writer of the narrative, its hero and narrator. The Victorian Bildungsroman displays thus elements of the fictional autobiography, where the autobiographical consideration is the source and origin of the narrative, and the author's own artistic development is both a verbal return to his experience of the past (childhood, education, and so on) and a written account of his way out of it.

In the process of my analysis I have come to consider the principle of chronotope as the unifying factor of all Bildungsromane discussed in the present study, and, in this respect, I hypothesize the existence of four types of chronotope within the fictional framework of the novel of formation. The study/analysis of chronotope may be achieved through horizontal representation (synchronically) or vertical representation (diachronically). Also, the principle of chronotope is applicable to the analysis and interpretation of both the narrative structure of the Bildungsroman and its range of motifs, themes, emblems, characters, images, details (thematic level of the text).

The types of chronotope and their specific features, along with their applicability in the approach to the Victorian Bildungsroman, as I consider them, are the following:

1 *the chronotope of home* (suggesting the temporal and especially the spatial origins of the character, the relations within the family circle, or simply the

reality or non-reality of a spatial category of inner/outer stability or instability)

2 *the chronotope of roadway* (determining the spatial and temporal movement as premises for the experience of life in the form of a process of formation)

3 *the chronotope of city* (in other words a larger society as another element of synthesis which constitutes an important factor for the evolution and formation of the hero; it sometimes can become a new home)

4 *the existential chronotope* (viewed as the existence/experience of life of a human in formation).

In terms of these hypothesized types of chronotope, I consider another textual model of the fictional system of Bildungsroman, which has been suggested to me by Umberto Eco ([1990] 1996: 168), but whose interpretative arrangement, that has no reference to the Bildungsroman or fiction whatsoever, I have modified according to the vector of analysis which I apply in my study. In his discussion of metaphor as an element of content and encyclopedia, Eco considers the dictionary definition of ‘life’ (developed in time) and ‘road’ (conveyed in space) as elements of a process.

As applied to the analysis of the textual and intertextual perspectives of the fictional system of Bildungsroman, I hypothesize the following structure:

Process of Character Development/Evolution

Devolved in Time

Existence

(day, week, childhood, youth, maturity, etc.)

Conceived in Space

Roadway

(house, church, school, city, woods, etc.)

Formation of Personality

The analysis of Victorian Bildungsromane reveals that all four types of chronotope are intermingled and interrelated: the chronotope of roadway determines the hero’s departure from home and family circle—itsself a chronotope—and brings him to the city, which becomes another chronotope, or to another chronotope of home, all of them reifying the existential chronotope.

I believe that the problem of such an approach consists of the difficulty of correlating the chronotope and the mythological background it recreates. Actually two mythological backgrounds, I hazard to say, each according to the two components of chronotope: *cronos* (time, temporal element) and *topos* (place, setting, spatial element).

On the one hand, given the spatial component, I find the problem being determined by the mythologization of a particular setting or place, say,

city, for instance, which is involved in the process of character formation. That is to say, the symbol of the city as presented in Victorian Bildungsromane—the universe of London the capital, for example, or that of a provincial town, or rather the entire provincial setting—becomes a myth when it assumes the position of a point of reference for the entire character's existence and experience of life rendered as the process of formation of his personality.

On the other hand, given the temporal component, according to Northrop Frye's (1957) conception about mythos/mythoy—where the four seasons correspond to a number of thematic modes regarded as generic determinants of thematic universals (spring - romance, summer - comedy, autumn - tragedy, winter - irony), representing also the diachronical development of the literary phenomenon—the mythos would correspond to the development of the human personality, which is the essence of every Bildungsroman.

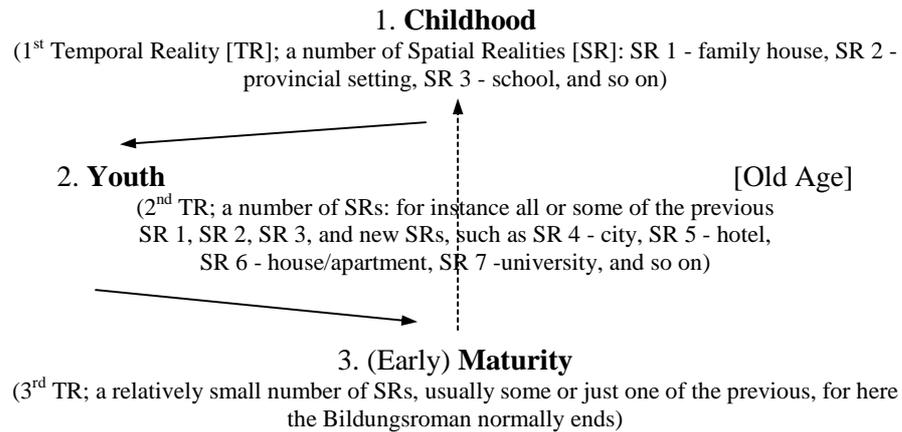
In other words, childhood corresponds to spring, romance; youth to summer, comedy; manhood to autumn, tragedy; decrepitude to winter, irony. It appears that the personality in formation is again mythologized by being included in the cosmic cycle of human existence. An exception is the latter element, that is old age, which is not the literary concern of a Bildungsroman, for this type of novel often ends with the time when its protagonist enters maturity, along with an attempted return, as in Wordsworth, to the universe of childhood.

However, the physical return impossible (for a temporal reversal process is impossible), the mature hero seeks a reevaluation or revival of the basic human values imbued in him at home in the stage of childhood, but repressed later in the process of formation. In this respect, on a more general level and in terms of the above ten elements of the literary pattern of the Victorian novel of formation, I hypothesize the following fictional model of the Victorian Bildungsroman—that consists of three main thematic elements which determine a syntagmatic structure—which is rendered according to the principle of chronotope and which corresponds to the natural biological stages of evolution of a human being.

The three thematic elements are:

- 1** childhood: the stage at home, where the experience of life, though static, is incomplete
- 2** youth: the stage determined by the departure from home and consisting of a larger society to which the hero must accommodate himself, and where his evolution and development actually take place
- 3** (early) maturity: the final stage of desired formation, completeness and change determined by the experience in the second stage.

These elements determine the following structure which, I believe, renders the character's experience of life as a process of personality formation, and which would be also helpful in any attempt to correlate the chronotope and myth in the approach to Bildungsroman¹:



This fictional model which I suggest is applicable to the analysis of Victorian Bildungsromane in general, of course with necessary schematic deviations, especially in matters of (3), in both form and content.

As I have attempted to suggest in this study, on the level of technique the deviations, that is, certain modifications of the narrative arrangement of the literary discourse, are related to and may be revealed through the analysis of the narrative construction of Victorian Bildungsromane, especially with respect to the so-called linear narratives and concentric narratives. Though it seems to lack any critical and theoretical interpretative precision, I hope to have at least suggested the linearity and, respectively, the concentricity of each novel.

In terms of the above scheme, such an analysis may take new perspectives, to mention only **David Copperfield**, whose fictional discourse renders a linear movement in representing the events of the story and the hero's experience of life, but towards the end the narration seems not to be far removed from a textual concentricity, or rather a circular process of formation of the hero's personality.

¹ I regard the four stages as aspects of myth, while the elements provided in brackets are linked to the principle of chronotope. Mention should be made of the fact that while temporal realities change only according to the natural growth of a person, the spatial realities offer a variety of different narrative and thematic perspectives, as the Victorian novels themselves are differently conceived by their authors. In terms of narrative analysis, however, the temporal component of narration renders the relationship narrative time vs. narrated time, which sometimes is freely handled by the narrator and determines digressions on the narrative level.

The deviations on the level of themes, motifs, symbols, and third-person strategies are no less important and should be discussed in relation to the narrative construction of Victorian Bildungsromane. Though they have been asserted and discussed in this study, I think the following explanatory conclusions are needed. Their generality, which may appear as an undetailed opinion or point for consideration, is yet formed by consideration of specific facts in each novel.

Firstly, the hero's process of development may end with a state of being reminiscent of (1), that is to say, having the characteristic features of the original one, but on a greater level of the hero's consciousness, thus performing a circular movement where the formation is complete because of the meaningful correlation between beginning and end, or is incomplete (as in **David Copperfield**, and, respectively, in the story of Tom in **The Mill on the Floss**). Significantly, the pattern exists in many great literary works of different cultural systems and historical periods—to mention just the story of Ulysses in **The Odyssey** and the tale of the prodigal son in the **Bible**, or the state of mind of the lyrical I in **Tintern Abbey**.

Another deviation would show a greater form of departure, when the return to a home is more of a transfiguration rather than a reestablishment of the original one (as in **The History of Pendennis** or **Wuthering Heights**).

The third possibility implies an even more radical departure, when the hero makes a new spatial reality into a new home (congenial, as in **Jane Eyre**, or obstructing, as for Maggie in **The Mill on the Floss**).

Finally, the circular movement may disappear, and the process of development is a linear journey of the hero; he is not returning or establishing any homes, but becomes a rolling-stone, a pilgrim with perspectives of accomplishment ambiguous or even absent (**Great Expectations**, **The Ordeal of Richard Feverel**, **The Way of All Flesh**, **Jude the Obscure**).

According to these four hypothesized schematic deviations, the principle of formation, as well as that of chronotope, works differently, determining the existence of a varied fictional typology of the novel of formation, or various types of it, especially because of important personal emphases of each writer.

The formation of a personality, for example, may be complete, ambiguous, or even absent. But the fact that it is rendered ambiguous or as not existing does not imply at all the exclusion of a certain novel from the literary range of Bildungsroman (e. g. George Meredith's **The Adventures of Harry Richmond** (1871) or Walter Pater's **Marius the Epicurean** (1885)).

In the discussion of Victorian Bildungsromane, both through generalization and in the detailed consideration of each novel, one may more or less clearly emphasize the idea that in spite of all vivid differences between the Victorian Bildungsromane approached in a particular study, all

of them should be considered, in matters of literary theory and criticism, as narrative and thematic hypostases of one definite fictional system, one literary tradition, one artistic pattern, and should be labeled as such.

I believe that the common features, devices and elements are stronger and more numerous (say, the idea of change of a character's inward, thirst for completeness, moments of revelation, search for a meaningful experience of life, and many others), which would eventually allow the literary synthesis rather than dissension of these novels.

The above suggested structures are also applicable to both the Victorian Bildungsroman and the 20th century fictional continuations of the tradition, and in both cases, again, with necessary structural and thematic deviations—given the differences on the general level of two distinct cultural systems—and similitudes.

Some of the Victorian writers, for example Dickens and George Eliot, through their assertion of the individual consciousness in development as a literary concern, already anticipated a number of modern perspectives in the 20th century novel of formation—say, the move towards a deeper exploration of the human psyche and interior universe, that is to say, towards modernism and aestheticism in terms of an artistic attempt to render the human existence independently of social determinism in both the fictional system and the concern with readers' response to the literary discourse.

The main concern of this study is the Victorian novel of formation; the 20th century continuation of its literary tradition needs an independent study, primarily because of its complexity of discourse, in both content and technique.

The vector of methodology, as I have conceived it, determines here the only direction of my research—the Victorian Bildungsroman.

The vector of methodology, as I have applied it, renders the typological circle of the Victorian Bildungsroman.

'Circle' means the circular structure of Bildungsroman less than its closeness and concentricity of a complex fictional system, a definite literary pattern rendered in terms of the communicative situation of a literary discourse.

The term 'typological', related to both the Greek and Roman root words from which 'type' derives, does not imply here the biblical interpretation, or any references to allegorical symbols, particularly in the religious sense, especially in the **Bible**—my ultimate argument is that Christian typology (say, from the **Old Testament**) considers the fulfillment (formation) of individuals within their earthly life less than it emphasizes the possibilities of their moving towards completion in Christ.

It is only this scheme of progressive revelation that anticipates the religious notions of typology as patterning a later secular character with

literacy and fictional consideration of the process of formation, that is to say, the character of Victorian Bildungsromane.

Instead, I apply 'typological' to my concluding reflections about the Bildungsroman as a wholeness of definable common characteristic features in both form (literary discourse—narrative level) and content (literary work—thematic level) that distinguish them as representing certain elements of a definite literary system (say, the omniscient point of view of the author, usually the linear development of the narrative, the autodiegetic narrator, etc., and, respectively, orphan child, ordeal by love, social frustration, adventure, romantic emotionality, realistic behaviorism, etc.).

Though the novels discussed in this study reveal a significant number of such common features, there are certain thematic and narrative devices and principles which differ in many respects, their pseudo-similarity turning these novels into distinct hypostases of one literary pattern.

I hope to have asserted a number of structural and thematic deviations, for instance the different vision of formation, the linear and concentric movement of the narration, different narrative principles or kinds of the narrator, or the fact that David's *'everything was as it used to be'* is definitely in no respect the *locus classicus* of the Bildungsroman as a distinct type/system of novel.

The word 'typological' is also applicable to the character who becomes representative of this system. The real author of Victorian Bildungsromane attempts to create an individual, that is to say, a type. In this respect, his hero, revealing qualities borrowed from tradition (say, the picaresque novel) and being highly individualized, is a type character who embodies a number of distinguishing features of the fictional system of the Victorian Bildungsroman.

Typology encourages certain habits of mind which determine the writers of Victorian Bildungsromane to think in terms of prior models. Although such strategies may derive from religious typology, they have little in common with it (except, perhaps, for the case of **Jane Eyre**) and should not be confused.

The Victorian sensibility was generally moral and physiognomic, besides the intrusion of romantic cultural considerations, and what is regarded in the Bildungsroman as a realistic motivation is often correlated with type fulfillment.

What I mean is that within the suggested typological circle of Victorian Bildungsromane the protagonist is determined to fulfill a type by completing a pre-established pattern, that is to say, the process of development and formation of the human personality.

The characters of the romantic literature act according to spiritual arrangements of passion and rebelliousness; those of the modern, 20th century fiction display an experience founded on complexes and neuroses. Instead, the protagonists of Victorian Bildungsromane reveal recognized,

predictable combinations of inner and outer attributes that eventually reify conventional types (conventions of character) of the literary system of the Bildungsroman.

The vector of methodology, as I have conceived and applied it, determines also the interpretative modality applied to the analysis undertaken in this study.

Admitting and provisionally adopting the multitude of interpretative points of view (a methodological complexity), which may have provided pluralism and synchronization to my study, it tends towards synthesis—that is to say, it allows the freedom to choose critical and theoretical categories mostly efficient and applicable to the essence of my research.

As it is, from the ultimate incompleteness and failure of all criticism and theory I hope to have progressed to some new interpretative arrangements of my own, which consider the complexity of the Victorian novel of formation and its wholeness as a fictional system, and which are compatible with its analysis, and whose validity is suggested and supported by the contextual approach—through the interpretative generalization as well as detailed consideration of each novel separately, and in matters of both content (thematic level) and form (the level of narrative structure)—to the reality of the Victorian Bildungsroman.

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