English 35301

Professor Benjamin Morgan

Winter 2011

Psychology and Literature in the Nineteenth Century

One of the major intellectual developments in Victorian England was the formation of psychology as an independent scientific discipline. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, consciousness was conceived of largely in terms of abstract mental faculties and processes of association; questions about how the mind worked were the domain of philosophy. Over the course of the century, this model and the disciplinary assumptions upon which it was based were hotly contested. In this course, we examine the relevance of these debates to the predominant aesthetic form in which Victorians represented minds and the relations between them. By examining four major Victorian novels that focus on how the mind works, we will reflect on the historical and theoretical intersections of science and literature. We will pay particular attention to how increased interest in the physiological basis of mental functions posed questions for literary form. If all thought is embodied, for example, is it possible to write fiction that speaks to the nerves rather than to the mind? If consciousness is determined by biological mechanisms, does it no longer make sense to tell stories in which human agency is the driving narrative force? As we examine these questions in a particular historical context, we will think critically about how to understand interactions and draw distinctions between literary and non-literary spheres.

**Requirements**

*Presentation and annotated bibliography*. Each member of the seminar will give one eight- to ten-minute presentation during the quarter, which should address both the literary and psychology texts assigned for that class meeting. The aim of the presentation is to propose an interpretation, question, or problematic that merits further discussion. You may either speak from notes or read a paper; you’ll also be responsible for fielding some questions afterward (the format will mimic that of a conference paper). As part of your presentation, please compile and distribute a 1-2 page annotated bibliography of critical works about the topic and/or relevant nineteenth-century texts.

*Research groups*. We will divide into several five-person reading and research groups within which you’ll exchange work throughout the quarter. Each week, one person will be responsible for posting to the group’s forum on the chalk website some reflections on his/her current reading and writing (this may be either the assigned reading for that week, or other reading related to the course); the other four members will be responsible for posting responses and reactions within the next few days. These postings may be formal or informal, as long or as short as you wish.

*Papers*. You may write either two short papers or one long paper. If you write two papers, I’ll expect a 6-8 page paper from you at mid-term and a 14-16 page paper from you at the end of the course. The second paper may be based on the first paper. If you write one paper, I’ll expect a 20-25 page paper from you at the end of the course. You may, but are not required to, submit a short proposal (~500ww.) for the final paper.

**Office Hours**

Rosenwald 415A, T/Th 12:30-1:30

I use the scheduling system on chalk.uchicago.edu for my office hours. When you log in to chalk, you will see a section with the heading “office hours” on the main page (**before** you click the link to our class in “My Courses”). Click on the link to view my availability and to make an appointment. You may also drop in, but if someone has made an appointment online, they will have priority.

**Grading**

30% presentation and research group postings

70% paper(s)

**Required Texts**

George Eliot, *The Lifted Veil* (Oxford)

Wilkie Collins, *The Woman in White* (Oxford)

George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda* (Oxford)

Robert Louis Stevenson, *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Norton Critical)

Henry James, *What Maisie Knew* (Oxford)

All other selections are available on the course website at chalk.uchicago.edu. Please print them prior to class.

Optional texts that haven’t been scanned and uploaded include enough citation information that you will be able to easily find them in article databases (most are available through jstor ([www.jstor.org.proxy.uchicago.edu)](http://www.jstor.org.proxy.uchicago.edu))). These citations are provided as starting points for research should you choose to write on that week’s reading.

**Schedule**

**Week 1**

1/11:

Introduction

George Eliot, *The Lifted Veil* (1859)

1/13:

George Eliot, *The Lifted Veil*

George Henry Lewes, “Feeling and Thinking,” from *The Physiology of Common Life*

Unsigned, *Westminster Review* 55, “Electro-Biology”

Gillian Beer, “Translation or Transformation? The Relations of Literature and Science”

George Levine, “Why Science Isn’t Literature” in *Realism, Ethics and Secularism: Essays on Victorian Literature and Science*

Optional:

Terry Eagleton, “Power and Knowledge in *The Lifted Veil*” [course reserves]

**Week 2**

1/18:

Eliot, *The Lifted Veil*

Lewes, from *The Physiology of Common Life*:

“The Structure and Uses of our Blood”

“Life and Death”

Kate Flint, Blood, Bodies, and *The Lifted Veil* (*Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 1997)

B.M. Gray, Pseudoscience and George Eliot’s “The Lifted Veil” (Nineteenth-Century Fiction, 1982)

OPTIONAL:

Michael S. Kearns, “The Problem of Metaphors of Mind,” in *Metaphors of Mind in Fiction and Psychology*

Lorraine Daston, “British Responses to Psycho-Physiology, 1860-1900,” *Isis* (1979)

1/20:

Wilkie Collins, *The Woman in White* installments 1-4

William Carpenter, from *Principles of Human Physiology* (1842 ed.)

Introduction PDF 32-39 TEXT 25-32

Chapter 3: Functions of the nervous system, General summary PDF 98-101 / TEXT 91-93

Functions of the Cerebrum: PDF 207-220 TEXT 201-213

Of sensation in general PDF 228-238 TEXT 221-231

**IN 1842 ed., FOCUS ON sections 284 - 293**

Carpenter, from *Principles of Human Physiology* (1859 ed.)

* Of the mind and its operations TEXT 537-609 / PDF 540 - 612
* General recapitulation, and pathological applications: TEXT 623 – 649 / PDF 626 – 652
* **IN 1859 ed., FOCUS ON sections 579-588; 591-602; 619-626; 648-664; 674-679; 701-711**

OPTIONAL:

Robert Chambers, “Mental Constitution of Animals,” from *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*

Patrick Brantlinger, “What is Sensational about the ‘Sensation Novel’?” *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 1982

Sally Shuttleworth, “Preaching to the Nerves,” *A Question of Identity*, ed. Marina Benjamin

**Week 3**

1/25:

Collins, *The Woman in White* installments 5-16

Alexander Bain, from *The Emotions and the Will*

-Mind distinct from, and yet allied with, Matter

-Physical Accompaniments of Emotion

-The Primitive Elements of Volition

-Deliberation, Resolution, Effort

D.A. Miller, “*Cage aux folles*: Sensation and Gender in Wilkie Collins’s *The Woman in White*”

Optional:

Rachel Teukolsky, “White Girls: Avant-Gardism and Advertising after 1860”

1/27:

Collins, *The Woman in White* installments 17-28

William Acton on female sexual indifference

Jean-Étienne Esquirol, from *Mental Maladies*

Thomas Laycock, from *Treatise on Nervous Diseases of Women*

Quarterly Review 101 (Apr. 1857) 358-360: on Lunatic Asylums

John Conolly, from *The Treatment of the Insane without Restraints*

Optional:

Jenny Bourne Taylor, *In the Secret Theater of Home*

Nicholas Daly, “*The Woman in White* and the Crowd,” in *Sensation and Modernity in the 1860s*

**Week 4**

2/1:

Collins, *The Woman in White*, installments 28-40

Collins, “Magnetic Evenings at Home”

“The Enigma Novel” *Spectator* 12/28/1861

Henry Mansel, “Sensation Novels,” Quarterly Review 113, April 1863

Margaret Oliphant, “Sensation Novels,” May, 1862

“Novels” Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine, Sept 1867

Optional:

Nicholas Daly “Railway Novels: Sensation Fiction and the Modernization of the Senses”

Deborah Wynne, “Wilkie Collins’s *The Woman in White* in *All the Year Round*,” in *The Sensation Novel and the Victorian Family Magazine*

Nicholas Dames, “The Birth of Amnesia: Collins, Sensation, Forgetting” in *Amnesiac Selves*

2/3:

George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, Book 1

Eliot, “Silly Novels by Lady Novelists”

Herbert Spencer, from *Principles of Psychology*

-Aestho-Physiology

-The Scope of Psychology

-Life and Mind as Correspondence

-The Correspondences in their Totality

Optional:

Athena Vrettoes, “From Neurosis to Narrative: The Private Life of the Nerves in *Villette* and *Daniel Deronda*”

**Week 5**

2/8:

George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, Books 2-3

Herbert Spencer, “The Comparative Psychology of Man,” *Mind* 1876

Spencer, from *Principles of Psychology*

-The Nature of Intelligence

-The Feelings

-Sociality and Sympathy

-Altruistic Sentiments

Optional:

Vanessa Ryan, “Reading the Mind: From George Eliot's Fiction to James Sully's Psychology”

2/10:

George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda* Book 4

T.H. Huxley*,* “On the Hypothesis that Animals are Automata, and its History”

John Tyndall, “Science and Man” (*Fortnightly Review* 22 (1877))

Lewes, from *Problems of Life and Mind: Foundations of a creed; Physical basis of mental life*: i.e., on “bioplasm,” “plasmode” or “psychoplasm” as psychological medium); Definition of physiology in volume 3

Sully, review of *Problems of Life and Mind* in *Mind*

Optional:

Shuttleworth, *George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Science*

-“Science and Social Thought: The Rise of Organic Theory”

-“*Daniel Deronda*: Fragmentation and Organic Union”

Francis Power Cobbe, Dreams as Illustrations as Unconscious Cerebration, Macmillan’s Magazine, 23 1871

T.H. Huxley*,* “Reflex Actions of the Brain,” in *Lessons in Elementary Physiology*

**Week 6**

2/15:

George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda* Books 5-6

Burke, *Enquiry*, “Sympathy, Imitation, and Ambition”

Hume, “Of Tragedy” *Essays, Moral Political and Literary*

Lewes, from *Problems of Life and Mind*

Eliot, “The Natural History of German Life” Westminster Review July 1856

Optional:

“Sympathy in *Mind* (1876-1900)” Susan Lanzoni, *Journal of the History of Ideas* (April 2009)

Suzanne Keen, *Empathy and the Novel*

“George Eliot’s Conception of Sympathy,” Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth, *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (1985)

2/17:

George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, Books 7-8

E.S. Dallas, from *The Gay Science*

James Sully, “George Eliot’s Art” *Mind* 1882

Sully, “Art and Psychology,” *Mind* 1876

Optional:

Jill Matus, “Overwhelming emotion and psychic shock in George Eliot’s

*The Lifted Veil* and *Daniel Deronda*”

Gillian Beer, “Origins and Oblivion in Victorian Literature”

Nicholas Dames*, The Physiology of the Novel*

**\*\*2/19: 6-8 page paper due via email from those not writing a 20-25pp. final paper.\*\***

**Week 7**

2/22:

Robert Louis Stevenson, *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886)

James Ward, “ Psychology” in *Encyclopedia Britannica*

Henry Holland, “The Brain as a Double Organ” in *Chapters on Mental Physiology* (1859)

F.W.H. Myers, “Multiplex Personality”

A.T. Myers, “Psychological Retrospect,” January 1886

Sully, from *Sensation and Intuition*:

-The Relation of the Evolutionist Hypothesis

Optional:

Michael Davis, “Incongruous Compounds: Rereading Jekyll and Hyde and Late-Victorian Psychology” *Journal of Victorian Culture* 2006

Anne Stiles, “Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Jekyll and Hyde* and the Double Brain,” *Studies in English Literature*, 2006

Ed Block, Jr., “James Sully, Evolutionary Psychology, and Late-Victorian Gothic Fiction” *Victorian Studies* 1982

Allen Macduffie, “Irreversible Transformations: Robert Louis Stevenson’s Jekyll and Hyde and Scottish Energy Science” *Representations*,Fall 2006

2/24:

Robert Louis Stevenson, *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

Theodule Ribot, “Heredity and the Law of Evolution”

Henry Maudsley, “Heredity in Health and Disease,” *Fortnightly Review* 45 (1886)

Lankester, from *Degeneration: A Chapter in Darwinism*

Grant Allen on literature, in *Physiological Aesthetics*

**Week 8**

3/1:

Henry James, *What Maisie Knew* (1897)

William James, “On Emotion”

Sully, on Childhood and evolution

Romanes, on The Growth of self-consciousness

Haeckel, on Ontogeny and phylogeny

Optional:

Sally Shuttleworth, “Childhood at the fin-de-siècle,” in *The Mind of the Child*

**\*\*3/1 Final paper abstract due \*\***

3/3:

Henry James, *What Maisie Knew*

Lisa Zunshine, “Tracking Minds,” in *Why We Read Fiction: Theory of Mind and the Novel*

William Flesch, “How Could an Interest in Fiction Have Evolved?” in *Comeuppance: Costly Signaling, Altruistic Punishment, and Other Biological Components of Fiction*.

**Week 9**

3/8:

Henry James, *What Maisie Knew*

Alan Palmer, “The Fictional Mind” in *Fictional Minds*

David Herman, “Storytelling and the Sciences of Mind: Cognitive Narratology, Discursive Psychology, and Narratives in Face-to-Face Interaction” *Narrative* 15

**\*\*3/15: 14-16 or 20-25 pp. paper due via email\*\***