

KÁLAI SÁNDOR:  
CHARACTERIZATION AND DISCOURSE  
(THE PRIEST AND THE DOCTOR AS RETURNING CHARACTERS  
IN ZOLA'S NOVEL SERIES: *LES ROUGON - MACQUART*)

Analysing Zola's first novel series in twenty volumes, the thesis examines the construction of two types of characters: the priest and the doctor. It analyses the problems inherent in these constructions on different levels of the text (story, narration, textualization). Within these questions it pays attention to the two modes of discourse evoked by the two characters: the manifestations of religious and scientific discourse and the intricate relationships between the two.

The thesis is based on an analysis of the twenty novels throughout which certain changes and modulations resulting in the construction of the two characters can be followed all along, as well as the changing relationship between the two discourses on different levels of the text (utterances of the characters and the narrator). On the level of characters the dominance of ecclesiastic characters is evident, as well as the variety of their construction. Among the doctors one character of the family universe is worth mentioning doctor Pascal who shows narrative variations by his repeated returns. In two novels (*Pot-bouille* and *La joie de vivre*) the two types of characters form a functional pair: the relation between them also presents the relationship between the different forms of knowledge of the world. The twenty novels show the variation inherent in the legitimation of the institution of the Roman Catholic Church; of the institutes of medical science we may emphasize the presence of psychiatry that functions as a setting to many of the novels and its representation is the proof of its role getting stronger.

Analysing the level of narration the thesis claims that the narrators of the novels borrow elements from both discourses which become metaphors in literary discourse, as well as fulfilling a textual function. But these two discourses are not present in the same way since scientific discourse can not fill such part in fictionalisation as the religious discourse can. The reason for this is perhaps that the narrative patterns and metaphors inherent in religious discourse became parts of European culture, thus their application contributes to making the text readable, while scientific language according to the tendencies of the age, borrowing elements from the field of medical science does not have such a cultural memory as the other discourse has.

The last novel and the ensuing new cycle entitled *Trois villes* try on the ideological horizon to deploy science as a new religion instead of the institution of religion, which intention makes them resemble a thesis novel. On one hand the obvious presence of the thesis weakens the tension arising out of the conflict between the discourses, on the other hand it cannot erase the presence of religious discourse on various levels of the text but can only display it.