

Novels as a form of art are subjective. Though novels commonly appear with a clear purpose, what the reader will receive from the novel's context will rarely be the message the author had intended to send. Thus a novel's purpose is not predestined, unlike a psychological research. Through the use of characters and various conditions, novels create a situation in which a person can base his thoughts and conclusions on his personal experience. Psychology on the other hand attempts to portray particular sectors of human personality in a very direct and systematic form. There is a constant search for a theoretical proof of human actions and thoughts, thus the use of explicit terms and definitions comes to place; in order to avoid misinterpretation. Today there is an ongoing research regarding the objectiveness of psychological approaches and theories, even so, there are minimal conclusions of them being that way. The common thing that both novels and psychology have is that they both affect human experience. Before psychology had developed novels were the best way for human personality to be explained to any individual. Words unlike any other means can contribute to subjective experience of the mind, as they carry out an individual's personal interpretation regarding tone, images, feelings and understanding. But are novels too abstract?

Perhaps an objective approach will directly answer questions about personality. Developmental psychology for example will examine the personality of an infant or a child. Consider Burrhus F. Skinner who claimed that children cry in order to receive attention (his main argument claimed that when a person finds an action that will benefit his needs he will keep on acting that way); they only do so because they have received this attention in the past from that type of action. The question rising, will it be more exact to approach such case in an objective or subjective way? Is the baby acting in this manner because that is what he knows to do, and the mother has instincts of stopping the cry? Neurological processes might be the key for understanding why a baby's personality is developing in a particular direction. While a neurological exam can explain what makes a man dyslexic, a novel can project the personal struggles of such person to another being. These examples pose limitations for Chomsky's argument; how can we better explain that which is not sourced in actual experience?

Personality of a person could be looked at in terms of the individual's behavior, attitude, personal beliefs and values that he or she might hold. Its presence allows each individual to have a personal interpretation of his environment, thus adjusting his behavior to it.

Researchers debate about what exactly determines the personality of a person. A common interpretation according to David Messer, author of “Mastery Motivation in Early Childhood”, the personality of a being develops to the greatest extent when he is a child, which is where most of his physical, emotional and intellectual growth occurs. So can we assume that he is wrong? It is only at an older age in which we can reach the intellectual level of understanding a psychological interpretation. So if we learn the most when we are young, do we also learn the most through listening to a novel read by our parents?

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In a book published by John Gray called “Men are from mars, Women are from Venus” Gray claimed that “a woman asks rhetorical questions and unknowingly (or knowingly) communicates a message of disapproval”. Psychology will find this argument unprofessional and hasty. A psychologist will demand scientific proof or statistics in order for this argument to be valid. Such generalization (women pose 50% of the world’s population) that attempts to act scientific is of no value, yet the book was sold in millions, and is until today mentioned as one of the greatest books for understanding the opposite sex. So why is it that people prefer Gray’s sheer opinion over actual psychological studies? This lies in the presentation form of both psychology and novels. Scientific psychology uses complex words and experiments in order to examine the final conclusion of the studied object, while a novel would apply more to the reader as it presents various scenarios that the reader might sympathize with. The question arising here is whether we can learn more from a novel rather than a behaviorist research only due to the way it is presented.

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Scientific tests can approve or disapprove of a certain theory through an experiment, but it will only consider a few agreed aspects (e.g. independent and dependent factors). Thus the scientific approach puts the validity of some studies in question and furthermore, it limits its abilities to understand human behavior and personality as it does not look at factors that are not incorporated in the experiment’s pre-made rules. It is evident that scientific psychology is rather narrow, as it follows the system of reductionism. It separates and reduces parts of the whole. Consider structuralism. Wilhelm Wundt the founder of experimental psychology, tried to prove his hypothesis through experimental means. He claimed that the essence of life can be broken into primary elements such as images, sensations and feelings, which then shape a composite mental structure (Hill, G, 2001). This comes in contrast to novels, which appear to work under the system of holism. They introduce the whole, and most of their authors believe that sheer segments cannot satisfy a

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complete understandable interpretation, in this case, of human personality. Throughout the years of its existence scientific psychology and science as a whole found an alternative to the reductionism it practices, which today is referred to as holistic science. Here we once again look upon Gray's title, which practices holism in science through a book, yet this method can be criticized as it does not follow scientific methods. 65

Is it possible that we might learn more about Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet by explaining the hormone reactions caused by the excitement of a forbidden love? And assuming we could, might we learn more in such way rather than comprehending and pondering upon the thoughts and actions of the protagonists? Consider the rather contemporary case of psychology examining homosexuals. An official study of homosexual adult males (E. L. Sevringhaus and J.Chornyak) shows that homosexuality is caused by hormones. Assuming that this is correct, reflect on the following quote from the conclusion of that same research that is proving the above statement: "Studies on urine of 20 overt homosexual males, aged 19 to 31, showed variable levels of 17-ketosteroid (androgen?) and pituitary gonadotrophin". And so regardless of the validity in such research, who can honestly understand the individual personality of homosexual being by reading such conclusion? 70

Furthermore, how can psychology base its findings through exploring a certain number of people, and by that generalize their findings towards the whole human population on the face of the planet? Through exploring novels that describe the feelings and emotions of a gay person such as "The Abomination", a novel by Paul Golding describing the life of a young and troubled homosexual we are likely to learn more about human characteristics and personality. The Superbowl commercials for example; we can see that psychology takes an important role in advertising structure. This may come in the form of an attractive woman or man, to advertise things that are not necessarily related to sex such as cars or beverage. Yet here again, we encounter a hormone reaction which is commonly confused with actual personality of a being. 75

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In July of 1961 Stanley Milgram conducted a social psychology experiment with the purpose of finding out whether people will obey orders and authority figures. This came due to Adolf Eichmann's trial over war crimes during the holocaust, and was intended to answer the thesis claiming that Eichmann and his accomplices were obeying orders rather than willingly executing their actions. During this experiment, a teacher was ordered to electrically shock a student if he answers a question incorrectly, whereas the shock's level 95

increased with each wrong answer. The results of this experiment showed that 65 percent of the participants continued to the highest level of shock (Blass, 2000). Can we now assume that the holocaust was merely caused by people who were simply obeying orders? Personally, I strongly disagree that my child will be taught through such psychological perspectives why six million Jews were murdered; to any extent, the process of ww2 and the holocaust especially can be better described by novels such as Elli Wiesel's "Night" whereas the psychological equation of authority (control = unawareness of actions), is replaced with a well described story of what mass murder means. If scientific psychology gives each Jewish victim an experimental number and novels grant them with emotional, individual characteristics, the personification level is without doubt favorable for novels.

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Psychology cannot be ruled out in determining human personality, it is trying to find key ingredients to the human formula by conducting an analysis of personality that surrounds itself with hormones, human reflexes and cognitive aspects of the persona. In order to understand personality, psychologists tear it down to many pieces; this reduction of actions and thoughts to a clinical perspective disrupts the true understanding of a persona. In contrast to that, books show an elective and whole view of human experience to a much greater extent than psychology. Although books might not be objective and commonly fictional, one must understand that it is not within the book that we find answers; it is merely ourselves who seek out our own personality through the book and thus understanding the individuals around us.

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