Physicians and Their Literary Work

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Romanian Physicians and their Literary Vision

By

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CHAPTER 1

PROLEGOMENA: ON THE BORDER BETWEEN MEDICINE AND LITERATURE

Analyzing the correlation between the work of art and biography, Lucian Raicu distinguishes a more intense interdependence, because the relationship biography-work, man-work "(...) manifests itself, in all its authenticity, at a level on which we could call: of *zest*."[1] Raicu was passionate about the circumstances in which the same person managed to combine the categories of beauty with the theoretical part, happily leading to a "harmonization of the *idea* with the *zest*, of the theoretical man with the practical man, the happy equivalences between thought and action, between 'principles' and the critical judgment intended to authorize them!"[2] By way of deduction, starting from those supported by the theorist, we believe that there were doctor-writers who had a great impact on fiction, having the ability to intertwine the flame of the practical utility of the exact profession with that of conceiving valuable literary works. The same exegete noted that not all authors of literary works are only writers as "most of those of supreme value exceed the limits of literature, represent a 'beyond literature'" Lucian Raicu (1978, 52) because behind each man of letters there is the story of a life that, unintentionally, makes its way into their creation as well. Doctors who managed to create literature fall into the same category. Their works are often crossed by the vein of the profession for which they prepared or practiced: medicine.

The explanation why some representatives of this noble profession were involved in the literature can be found in the fact that, sometimes, the written word pierces the spirit, allowing to see what already existed deeply rooted in their intuitive thinking, because: "writing deciphers inside the one who writes things that are otherwise difficult to discover, things that are

[1] Raicu, 1978, 43
[2] Ibidem

meant to be done and which he forces to emerge, to become actions."[3] A clear separation between the story of the writer and his person cannot be drawn as a human being because the two sides influence each other. There are threads that connect the pragmatic and everyday self with the creative self. This metamorphosis, blending between the professional and personal aspects can be detected in the case of physicians who decided to dedicate their life to literature. The two coexist and mix happily as Florin Mihăilescu noted that humans are not characterized by unity, but they can have different sides and manifest themselves on various levels. These aspects can be in a privileged or subordinate position and, more than other professionals, writers are capable to metamorphose themselves (Florin Mihăilescu 2008, 258).

As such, we can conclude that this study can also be applied to those doctors who practiced literature. The split between what they practiced, on the one hand, and what they felt in the inner forum and put on the written page, on the other hand, cannot be done without mutilating the way we understand the way the mechanisms that have determined to choose the literary field. The "father of medicine" himself, Hippocrates, stated the maxim *Ars longa, vita brevis*, which leads us to the conclusion that the great physician of ancient Greece also noticed the importance of aesthetic values in our lives. In the case of some of the doctors that we are going to analyze in our work, the fusion between the practiced profession and the literary life was less obvious, so that in the case of others this fusion was a deep one, the path of letters having its origin in the formation itself scientific of the analyzed author.

The Latin saying *Artem non odit nisi ignatus*, is quite categorical. The representatives of medicine, not lacking erudition, were, throughout the history of humanity, some of the leading initiators of the understanding of life in its various forms: scientific, artistic, aesthetic, etc. On the other hand, the people of Antiquity were convinced of the existence of the power of reason, of the knowledge acquired instinctively, but above all they deeply believed in the ability of medicine to be a field of interpenetration of several forms of knowledge: *Nulla res tam necessaria est quam medicina*. Disapproving of prejudices, being initiators in several spheres of knowledge, the representatives of medicine can be considered the promoters of a "secular radicalism." (Florin Mihăilescu, 2008, 36). The comparison of medicine and aesthetic values is the result of the harmonized way of the reason of the ancients, because: *Omnium artium medicina nobilissima est*.

[3] Idem, 106

The juxtaposition of the two fields is not a lack of harmony, but, on the contrary, it testifies to their complementary character. The protective god of medicine, Asclepios was initiated into the secrets of healing by the Centaur Chiron. Son of Apollo - the protector of the Arts, lyrics and music and guide of the muses -, Asclepios, later taken over by the Romans under the name of Aesculapus, did not stop only at healing the sick but believed in the possibility of resurrecting the dead, something that attracted the anger of Zeus who struck him down with a lightning bolt.

The human being, examined both physically and spiritually, needs a broad approach that combines several sciences. Such an approach is also medicine which, through communication with the patient, takes science to a higher level: that of dialogue. The human being is the object of study of medicine, being a constitutive component of this science, something that led some representatives of this noble profession to nurture the desire to express their feelings beyond science, sliding towards a written expression of aesthetic values.

The French-born thinker Gaston Bachelard (1884-1964) sought to distinguish the ways in which the exact science of medicine and the art of writing exerted an attraction on each other. Being in opposition, the two fields have philosophy as their common denominator: "The axes of poetry and science are opposite from the very beginning. All that philosophy can hope for is that poetry and science become complementary, to unify them as two well-formed opposites. We must therefore oppose the expansive poetic spirit, the taciturn scientific spirit for which prior antipathy is a holy precaution."[4] In his work, *Applied Rationalism* (1949), Bachelard observed the existence of the so-called Harpagon complex in the case of a scientist. This set of experiences characteristic of "realist spirits" is manifested by taking over reality and processing it subjectively. The operation takes place by perceiving reality through the prism of the scientist in an economical, almost stingy way. Romul Munteanu, as well, brings into discussion the same psychological complex of Harpagon doubled by that of Cassandra.

Romul Munteanu (1994, 224) brings into discussion and joins these terms belonging to psychology when he analyzes Augustin Buzura, doctor-literate, strongly influenced by the Freudian school. Buzura is analyzed in chapter VIII of this work.

The aspiration to identify the ways in which the art of the pen and medicine twin but also repel each other, conditioning each other, aroused our interest in analyzing the means by which the two areas of interest could coexist but could also be productive in the same person.

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[4] Bachelard, 1989, l-2

Going along the path of identifying the explanations that underlie the scaffolding of our analysis, a first clarification is the fact that, basically, both fields are dedicated to the human being, communication being the common denominator of both spheres of activity. A second explanation consists in the fact that, throughout history, doctors have been encyclopedic spirits, having extensive knowledge in several fields but also having a great love for people and aesthetics. In the history of literature, we can identify a large number of literati who first chose the profession of doctor: Chekhov, Cronin, Maugham, etc. The cause of this double choice can be the fact that, in the practice of medicine, the representatives of Aesculap come to have a much more precise and intimate reflection of the inner forum of man. Apparently opposing, the two experiences: the scientific and the aesthetic can coexist in the same consciousness, leading to a full fulfillment of the person in question. Adjacent, interconnected sciences, medicine and the art of writing are part of a much larger ensemble: humanism. Doctors approached not only literature. Their creative spirit found its voice also through visual creation and music.

There is another group of literati, those who were influenced by medicine were writers who approached scientific towers in their literary creations, not being doctors. Examples of such writers were Ibsen, Dostoevsky, Flaubert, etc. I studied pathology from a literary point of view.

Ion Biberi, in his turn a practicing doctor but also a writer, had the ability, perhaps much more meaningful than the other practitioners of medicine, to identify the interconnection between the two areas of interest: the written word and medicine. Trained as a psychiatrist, Ion Biberi devoted numerous pages of essays to the analysis of the triple relationship between medicine-literature-anthropology. Having as a starting point the basic knowledge that has two orientations - the instinctual one (proper to the projection in consciousness) and the analytical one (as a distinctive note of scientific knowledge) - the literate psychologist conceived of medicine as a delimitation area, which makes the connection between the humanistic branch and the realistic one of human knowledge. The reason why medicine, among all fields of scientific knowledge, has the most elements in common with literature is the congruence of the two: man - studied by medicine as a set of psychological and anatomical mechanisms and by literature from the point of view of phenomena deep consciousness. The area of medical knowledge offers the writer the tools to grope knowledge through intuition: “The understanding that a historical era has on man is at the same time intuitive, an expression of internalization, but also of the sympathetic bridges that people establish between themselves, reaching an ethical formula - but also theoretical, the result of an analytical research on

human life, with the help of scientific disciplines." According to Biberi, the most fruitful combination of the art of writing and exact science occurs through medicine because medicine has been, since antiquity, a synthesis of very varied concerns, primarily hygienic and therapeutic, but reaching a theoretical understanding of human nature.

The psychiatrist enhances the inter-relation between literature and medicine by going to the very essence that connects the two: the human being: "Medicine was the first expression of a desire for an anthropological understanding, of totality, of the human being. It was natural that, setting as its goal an analytical understanding of man, medicine should interfere with literary activity. The goal of the two concerns was the same: Man, although the way of thinking of the servants of the two occupations, the doctor and the writer, was different. Medicine offered, however, to the literate, an essential tool of knowledge, which the artist could not overlook."[5]

According to Biberi, the art of healing is the one that, since ancient times, has managed to lead to a deeper perception of man. Even if the human being is approached particularly by the two areas of interest, they converge towards a common objective, managing to influence each other. As we will see in the chapter devoted to Ion Biberi, the psychiatrist was both an active practitioner of medicine and an analyst and theoretician focused on the medicine-literature correlation. Biberi's dual vision is one of the broadest, which is due to the fact that the psychiatrist built an edifice of thought with ramifications in medicine that is also applicable to literature. Biberi comes to the conclusion that the increase in knowledge that medicine brings to literature is for the benefit of both the one who conceives aesthetic values and the one who receives them. The two-literature and medicine-rely on doubt. Uncertainty was a tool in creating prose as it is the starting point of creation. On the other hand, readers themselves use apprehension in order to understand what the writer conveys (Ion Biberi, 1982, 56).

As a result of the infusion of knowledge that medicine has brought with it, not only literature benefits, but also criticism, which is called to the aid of knowledge from various areas of interest, "(...) Freudian, psychiatric or medical methods"[6] to demonstrate his points of view. Medical knowledge, through the revelations of science, guides the steps of the writer eager to explore consciousness. Literature and medicine cross paths in the territory of anthropological knowledge. Ion Biberi brings to the discussion, in support of his statement, a whole plethora of literati who placed their literature under the sign of medicine. Among them, the psychiatrist

[5] Biberi, 1982, 43
[6] Ibidem

mentions Edgar Poe, Dostoevsky, Strinberg, Maupassant, etc. In relation to their literature, Biberi came to the conclusion that the state of permanent psychological ambiguity, inner turmoil and even, in some places, the pathological led them to create an emotional framework, preparing the reader for the literature of future colleagues: James Joyce, Franz Kafka or Faulkner.

In 1964, Prof. Marin Voiculescu and Dr. Mircea Angelescu signed an interesting book entitled *Doctors-writers. Medical writers*. What the authors were looking for was a framing of medical personalities either in the area of literati, or of the practitioners of the medical profession. A first category, according to the authors, seems to be represented by those doctors who found in the written word a means to escape from the daily activity ("doctor-writers" as Prof. Marin Voiculescu and Dr. Mircea Angelescu call them). And a second large category is made up of those who, possessing an obvious talent in the art of the pen, put this aptitude to the service of promoting the medical profession ("doctor-writers" according to the authors).

Along history, doctors have been not only initiators but also practitioners of some of the most diverse spiritual and aesthetic values. From ancient Greece, the art of healing could be practiced by people who had a vast culture, reaching the appearance of a form of "(...) lay medicine, illustrated by philosophical doctors (...)."[7] And this continued throughout the centuries, even in the Middle Ages when healers were recruited, especially, among the clerics who monopolized knowledge so that later, the Renaissance would promote scholars. In the 19th century, Ernest Renan (1823-1892), a philosopher of French origin, would say that a study of the history of medicine is the most novel form of research into the set of ideas of humanity considering that: "(...) true people of progress show great interest in the past. The history of medicine is one of the most interesting and important aspects of the history of the human spirit." (N. Vătămanu, G. Brătescu, 1975, 7).

In the following pages, we will make a concise presentation of some of the most famous personalities of the medical world, belonging to both local and foreign cultures, who were involved in the act of creation, not only literary but also artistic, in general.

One of the first doctors renowned for their broad views is the Greek doctor of Arab origin **Asclepiades from Bithynia** (129-40 B.C.). Even from those times, a full-fledged doctor had to have as wide a culture as possible. Therefore, Asclepiades studied not only medicine but also philosophy in

[7] Vătămanu and Brătescu, 1975, 6

Alexandria, after which he dedicated himself to the practice of medicine in Athens and Rome. A follower of the atomist school, he promoted the mechanistic theory in medicine and biology and divided diseases into two categories: acute and chronic. Supporter of the Epicurean philosophical school, one of the first teachers who taught rhetoric and close to Cicero, Asclepiades implemented some important hygiene norms in Roman life. The first description of the symptoms of malaria and tetanus is linked to his name. Basing his thinking system on scientific and rational concepts, Asclepiades was also a brilliant surgeon, contributing to the development of medical and philosophical culture.

Dante Alighieri (1265–1321), in 1295, became a member of the guild of pharmacists and doctors. At that time, belonging to this profession was not unusual, because pharmacists sold books as well as medicines. Belonging to this guild opened the way to public and political dignities. In the same year, an edict was issued that required nobles willing to occupy political positions to be part of the *Corporazioni delle Arti e dei Mestieri guild*.

Although many practitioners of medicine dedicated their creative energy to writing literature, remaining in the history of literature as valued writers, unfortunately their medical activity, perhaps as valuable as the literary one, was forgotten. **François Rabelais** (1494-1553) was a man of letters, a monk, in order to finally dedicate himself to medical science. We owe him the translation and commentary of some of the most important medical books belonging to Antiquity. Being one of the most important exponents of the Renaissance, Rabelais exposed heresies and bigotry in a critical, frothy but also caustic manner. Between 1534-1539, the writer taught medicine at the Faculty of Montpellier. He surprised his readers with his improper and offending language, often impudent, but he deserves the credit of having advanced the French language with new forms of style, with new metaphors, by applying etymology to the writing of words borrowed from the ancient languages: Greek and Latin. A doctor at heart, Rabelais perceived medicine with the senses of a literati, stating that this profession is a comedy with three characters: the patient, the doctor and the disease.

Gerolamo Cardano (1501-1576), a remarkable figure of the Renaissance, carried out his activity in several areas of interest: natural sciences, mathematics, alchemy, medicine, astronomy, astronomy. Admitted to the University of Pavia in 1520, Cardano began to study medicine. Once he became a practitioner, Cardano imposed himself on the scientific world of the time with one of the most successful medical descriptions of typhoid fever, but also with an unshakable conviction, unusual for the time in which he lived, according to which aphonous people have an intellectual

development similar to that of people without this handicap. Interested in mathematics and mechanics, Cardano invented the combination lock and gimbal suspension that would later materialize in the printing press. In 1570 he was accused of being a heretic because he calculated the horoscope of Jesus. Having gone into exile, Cardano spent the last part of his life in Rome where he wrote his autobiography but also practiced medicine.

Until late, in the 17th century, pharmacists and doctors worked together. A first attempt to dissociate the two professions took place in 1617, when James I of Great Britain tried to separate the two following the advice of **Francis Bacon** (1561-1626). Practitioner of law, politician and philosopher, Francis Bacon also showed interest in medicine. Avid to discover scientific ways of prolonging life, Bacon published a specialized work entitled *History of Life and Death* (1623). Ironically, Bacon died when he was testing freezing as a method of preservation in the case of some foods. We owe Bacon the empirical ways of experimenting with scientific data.

William Harvey (1578-1657) depicted the circular system in the most detail, more precisely the systemic circulation but also the way in which the viscera are irrigated by the blood propelled by the heart. Practitioner of psychiatry, Tudor Vianu considered William Harvey, along with the famous Descartes and Copernicus, to be one of the emblematic values of French classicism in the 17th century. Both professions, medicine and literature, have human beings in common. If the first analyzes the physical structure, the second analyzes the psychological structure, trying to give voice to the ineffable.

Jan Baptista van Helmont (1580-1644) doctor, physiologist and chemist from the Netherlands is the one who connects his name to the word gas. Trained in philosophy, medicine (which he also practiced), theology and chemistry, van Helmont sketched through his tests the existence of enzymes useful in digestion. The Flemish discovered nitric acid and sulfuric acid. His love for science takes on a different meaning for us when we know that he baptized one of his sons with the name of Mercury (chemical element). Years later, his son publishes his medical work under the name *Ortus medicinae* (The Origins of Medicine).

René Descartes (1596-1650), founder of the modern rationalist conception, was an avid connoisseur of several fields: philosophy, logic, morals, mathematics, physics and metaphysics. Cartesius, under his Latin name, believed that all sciences represent the wisdom of the human being: "... all sciences are nothing but human wisdom, which remains one and the same always, no matter how different the things it investigates, and which is not borrowed by more diversity in them than the sunlight borrows from

the things it illuminates."[8] Praising analytical mathematics, Descartes does not overlook medicine, which he crowns as the sovereign of the sciences. If any of the sciences can make the human being wiser or more proficient, medicine is the one. (N. Vătămanu, G. Brătescu, 1975, 327).

Isaac Newton (1642-1727), endowed humanity with the physical and mathematical laws of motion and gravity, but also with important discoveries in optics. The first practical telescope was invented in 1668 by Newton. The phenomena he discovered in the refraction of light and optics ended up, centuries later, helping to create the Hubble telescope. In 1705, for his entire contribution to scientific knowledge, he received the title of Knight from Queen Ana. Having become President of the Royal Society in London, the physicist was also concerned with alchemy and bibliographical chronology. The experiments made in the field of alchemy led to the death of the scientist. Modern research has highlighted the existence of a large amount of mercury in his hair (it is believed that Newton died as a result of hydrargyria). His in-depth research into alchemy led to a corpus of documents testifying to his laboratory experiments. Passionate about iatrochemistry, in other words the use of chemistry discoveries for the benefit of medicine, Isaac Newton is one of the most complex scientific figures because his experiments tried to merge physics with chemistry and medicine. The active orientation towards medicine led Newton to study the writings of Jean-Baptiste van Helmont regarding the origins of medicine *Ortus medicinae* (1667).

Dimitrie Cantemir (1673-1723) is one of the few scholars of his time who dedicated himself to medical science. "Just as in a Leonardo da Vinci, Copernicus, Giordano Bruno, not only the traditions of a culture and the genius of a nation were embodied"[9] Cantemir became a symbol of the scholar with a wide culture, who directs his steps towards new realms of knowledge, carrying out an intense activity of advancing the cultural knowledge of the time. Trying to find his place in the panoply of Romanian culture, Călinescu calls him a Romanian Lorenzo Medic and so that Zoe D. Buşulenga gives him the status of a plurivalent man of letters endowed with a great intellectual determination (Dr. Victor Ţvircun, 2008, 38).

A good connoisseur of the Muslim world, Dimitrie Cantemir learned both modern and oriental languages (Arabic, Persian and Turkish). His knowledge in the fields of logic, natural sciences, medicine, astronomy and music is added to the list. A renowned political scientist and skilled diplomat, Cantemir tried his hand at writings that combined geography,

[8] Descartes, 1957, 7

[9] Pompiliu, 1984, 66

history, poetry with prose, reaching axioms through deductions of past events but also facts of the present. His figure acquires an even greater scope considering that "toward his work, all the lines of force of Romanian spirituality converge as a summation: political and military action, (...), science, as a sign and higher step of the enlightenment of the mind, at the beginning of a century that would cultivate reason above all else; literature (...)."[10]

Anticipating the Enlightenment, Dimitrie Cantemir was one of the preceptors of the Ardelene School because most of his writings were first written in Latin. Author of some basic writings in the field of Moldavian and Ottoman political, geographical and social history, the main virtue of the Romanian ruler was to describe in detail and in a unified manner the geography, underground riches, domestic activities, traditions, population, folklore and customs of Moldova. His descriptions helped create a complex picture of an ancient society with strong historical roots. In his approach, Cantemir used not only personal observations but also resorted to documented sources from both Western and Eastern Europe.

Although in his time few scholars had focused on the study of medicine, Cantemir was one of the first literati to pursue this interest. In 2006, an article entitled *Groin hernia. Anatomical and surgical history* în *Archive of surgery* was published in *Archive of surgery*. The author, McClusky D.A., was referring to Richard H. Meade who, in 1965, published *The history of the abdominal approach to hernia repairs*, marked as the first documentation of the operating method in abdominal hernias by D. Cantemir in *Historia incrementorum atque decrementorum Aulae Othomanicae* (History of the rise and fall of the Ottoman Empire). The American surgeon Henry O. Marcy (1837-1924) is the first to mention the Romanian ruler and his work in his scientific study, *The anatomy and surgical treatment of hernia* (1892). The full name of Dimitrie Cantemir's work was, according to the Latin original, *Incrementorum & Decrementorum Avlae Othoman[n]icae Sive Aliothman[N]icae Historiae a Prima Gentis Origine Ad Nostra Vsqve Tempora Deductae Libris Tres*.

The ruler's brother, Antioh Cantemir, brought the work to England. Nicholas Tindal, a renowned historian and pastor, made the first translation and publication, in 1734, of Cantemir's work. The part dedicated to surgical intervention is called *Avlonia and the explanatory notes* (Annotations) appear from book II, chapter IV, pages 212 - 215 (from the original manuscript). A city on the south-eastern coast of Albania, Avlonia was called Arnaud during the Ottoman occupation. It is believed that the

[10] Rotaru, 1994, 334

Albanians, good sailors and soldiers, knew the surgical technique of treating abdominal prolapse from the Greeks.

Although it seems amazing, the technique applied after the surgical intervention was used in medicine until recently. Surprising is the low mortality rate among patients despite the invasive and relatively unhealthy nature. Only over a hundred years after Cantemir's work, the medical world described this technique: Crampton (1860), Niven (1861), Annondale (1873), Chevasse (1882), Tait (1883). And at the linguistic level, Cantemir showed his interest in the science of medicine by using over seventy medical or anatomical terms in *Hieroglyphic History*.

With a complex scientific background, Cantemir studied not only Latin and Greek, but also medicine, geography and philosophy. At the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries, in 1700, Cantemir, under the influence of what he read in the works of Jan Baptista van Helmont, wrote *Sacrosanctae scientiae indepingibilis imago*, in which he widely used van Helmont's terminology. Cantemir's work is revealing for the entire European system of thought of the time, for the confrontation between scientific and religious values, being, as Ion Rotaru also appreciated, a work published only in Romanian translation under the title of Metaphysics, by Nicodim Locusteanu, with an introduction by Em. C. Grigoraş, Bucharest, 1928.

The monk of Greek origin and Cantemir's teacher, Ieremia Cacavelas, sparked his interest in knowledge. Under his influence, Cantemir's literary style takes shape, a language that surprises with its plasticity and in which "the extraordinary expressiveness of the Romanian language of the period reigns, the words and phrases with strong essences, now increasingly rare (...)."[11]

The medical terminology used by Cantemir is surprising for the period. Many terms are reginalisms that remained in the Romanian language long after their use by the Romanian scholar: beteag=sick; buhăbie=swelling; drob=liver; duhoare=pain, gout; rheumatism ghib=gheb=deformation of the spine; hierbinţeală=fever; hronic = chronic; măruntăi=intestines; obrintitor= obrintit=edema; rândză=stomach; rost=mouth; sin=breast; spată=back; stârv =corpse; trojana=catarrh; ţirulic=surgeon; vintre=abdomen etc.

A scientific spirit by education, Cantemir introduced, through linguistic calculations or borrowings, many terms belonging to various branches of science. In the *Hieroglyphic History*, the author even explains the meaning of some borrowed terms to facilitate their understanding by the reader: agona=The struggle between the body and the soul at the hour of death; anatomy=That which knows the craft of body parts; antidote=Cure

[11] Rotaru, 1994, 360

against the disease hypochondriac=Disease that confuses the fantasy, the weakness around the body, which are around the heart, physics=the science of physical things, larynx=the throat, pharynx, natural sciences=the science of nature, logic=the science of thought, etc.

The Moldavian ruler and scholar had the merit of trying to build a language founded on scientific bases, being the author of some of the first medical works. Even if this medical knowledge is not very specialized, its quality resides in the novelty that it brought to the Romanian lexicon and they endure over time through the desire of their author to have brought the Romanian language to the European level even in this specialized field of medicine.

The Scandinavian **Emanuel Swedenborg** (1688-1772) is another example of a perfect man of culture. His concerns included mathematics, medicine, philosophy, politics and economics. His medical experiments opened up new horizons of understanding on how the brain works. At the age of maturity, dissatisfied with the answers that science offered him, Swedenborg turns to theosophy. His scientific and religious writings influenced Charles Baudelaire, Carl Jung and Balzac, among others. Among his literary works we mention: *Arcana Coelestia* (1747-1756), *Spiritual Experiences* (1747-1763), *Heaven and Hell* (1758), *Divine Providence* (1764), *Christian Religion* (1771), etc.

The vast majority of doctors of the time studied abroad, then returned to the country to practice medicine, driven by the desire to improve the state of the nation. Thus, **Constantin Caracaş** (1773-1828) links his name to the foundation of the Philanthropia hospital and to the first of the hospital operating protocols. His father, Dimitrie Caracaş, after his studies in Austria and Germany, was awarded the title of "archiatros" = "doctor of the police." With a multilateral culture, Dimitrie Caracaş was also interested in the art of writing, working in the literary field under the pseudonym Nicolae Luca, succeeding, years later, to arouse the admiration of the critic Nicolae Iorga who stated: "...sought for his learning and for a special talent in caring for the sick, but, at the same time, a broad spirit in the sense of the 18th century (...)." The documentarian appreciated Dimitrie Caracaş's ability to be both a brilliant doctor and a man of letters: "(...) a home d'esprit, capable of writing verses that he obviously did not give as a means of curation, verses that at the end of his life he collected in a rather elegant volume, which is one of the greatest bibliographic rarities."[12]

Numerous representatives of science have earned a well-deserved place in the history of literature. Practitioners of medicine or pharmacy,

[12] Iorga, 1919, 38

some of them have also brought scientific services to humanity. **Benjamin Franklin** (1706-1790) began his work in his father's workshop. Later, becoming a journalist and renowned politician, Franklin links his name, in science, to the development of the first lightning rod. His scientific experiments are the basis of the theory of electricity. An ardent partisan of individual freedom and a politician with broad views, Franklin opposed slavery. But the beginnings of his scientific activity are related to the activity of a pharmacist that he carried out in his father's shop where he dispensed medicinal plants and medicines to patients. His efforts to spread scientific knowledge also found a voice in the establishment of an association with this purpose: the *American Philosophical Society* and in numerous inventions, such as bifocal glasses. A trailblazer in the true sense of the word, Franklin was also one of the initiators of the U.S. Constitution.

At first attracted by theology, **Julien Offray de La Mettrie** (1709-1751) later devoted himself to the study of natural sciences and, in particular, medicine. Driven by the desire to improve medical knowledge, he practiced surgery. Over the years, the psychology of behaviorism was influenced by its progressive considerations according to which the biological can be influenced by psychic processes. Precursor of Darwinism, author of the work *Natural history of the soul* (1745), La Mattrie saw in the human being an animal on a higher stage of evolution. Follower of the materialist philosophy that explains biological processes by analogy with mechanotechnics, the French doctor described the human organism as a mechanism.

The physiognomist and writer of Swiss origin **Johann Kaspar Lavater** (1741–1801), close to Goethe, is the co-author, along with him, of the work *Physiognomische Fragmente zur Beförderung der Menschenkenntnis und Menschenliebe* (published between 1775-1778). Impressed by the writings of Giambattista Della Porta (*Magiae Naturalis*) and Sir Thomas Browne (*Religio Medici*), Lavater studied how physiognomy can reveal personality. His predecessor, Giambattista Della Porta, considered the following features to be defining for criminal behavior: the deep excavation of small ears, the reduced prominence of the nose, thick lips and bushy eyebrows. Lavater took into account, in addition to these defining features of the criminal character, the pointed chin. All this information is, in fact, the elementary basis of the science of clinical forensics that would be an important concern of the 19th century. Influenced by the writings of Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock, Lavater would try his mastery in the art of writing, becoming the author of two epic poems *Jesus Messias* (1780) and *Joseph von Arimathia* (1794). Lavater, in turn, would influence Balzac and the realism of the 19th century, which tried to establish a correlation

between character traits and physical appearance. In fact, an attempt was made to discover a scientific procedure that would help to paint the literary characters as realistically as possible, a way to picture characters and the environment in an objective style. And medicine seems to have the answer to this dilemma by drawing interconnection between feelings and assertion (Ion Biberi, 1982, 50).

The literary grace of the German **Goethe** (1749-1832) was doubled by his attraction to scientific study. Like his friend Lavater, Goethe believed that biology can offer complex answers. Passionate about the study of anatomy, logic and mereology, Goethe also made scientific contributions in the field of homology that would influence later naturalist and Darwinist doctrine. Together with Lavater, Goethe published a work whose editing took three years, between 1775-1778 *Physiognomic Fragments*, to stimulate the knowledge of man and love for man. Driven by the desire to identify the particularities that distinguish humans from animals, Goethe dedicates himself to the study of the bone system, which he sees as the fundamental element to which the other anatomical structures are attached. To deepen his anatomical study, Goethe goes to the University of Jena where he will study in detail the bone structure of the human body. Impressed by the university's scientific research, the German poet contributes financially to the construction of a chemistry laboratory, the first European laboratory at that time. Goethe comes to the conclusion that man and animals are part of a common anatomical type, having many similarities. What all beings with a bony system have in common is the fact that the vertebrae are the origin of the skull. The passion for the study of bones materializes in the study he publishes in 1795 entitled *Erster Entwurf einer allgemeinen Einleitung in die vergleichende Anatomie, ausgehend von der Osteologie* (The first draft of a general introduction to comparative anatomy, starting from osteology).

The German poet maintained a fruitful correspondence with Merck, Blumenbach and Sömmerring, scientists of the time, and his name is associated to the identification of the ossis intermaxillaris. The moment of scientific revelation is an uplifting one: “I found - neither gold nor silver, but something that gives me indescribable joy, the intermaxillary bone in man!”[13] In 1784, Goethe found particularities of this bone by comparison with animals. His scientific work also extends to the field of botany, being the author of a work entitled *Attempt to explain the metamorphoses of plants* (1790) but also of geology, optics - being the author of the work *About the theory of colors* (1810) and chemistry. His name was also lent to iron oxide, which is also called goethite. Encyclopaedic spirit, Goethe also betrays in

[13] Goethe, 1912, 250

his literary work the passion that anatomical study and medicine, in general, aroused in him:

"I penetrated, alas! Philosophy
And law, medicine, unfortunately
In the interpretation and theology,
Putting hot zeal in everything:
And I sit, poor, mad, as we sit,
And I know as much as I knew."[14]

Half a century after the death of the German poet, the world of science would experience reverberations of his studies. Thus, Nicolae Tesla claimed that *Faust* induced the revelation of the alternating current engine.

In Romanian territory, in Transylvania, the 17th and 17th centuries will bring an opening to European social, cultural and scientific values. One of the first doctors trained abroad and returned to the country to practice medicine is **Ioan Molnar-Piuariu** (1749-1815). In this period of great political and economic changes, also called Iosefina, the Romanian doctor who ends up being both an ophthalmic surgeon and a renowned professor, paves the way for some of the most illustrious doctors. Molnar is, beyond his medical value, also one of the signatories of *Supplex Libellus Valachorum* (1791). The area of his interest is much wider, the doctor also signed a first Romanian-German grammar and also a translation of a *World History*, an encyclopedic work enriched with the scientist's own reflections. This doctor is also responsible for the editing of the first scientific publication *Advice to students in surgery* (1793).

Some practitioners of medicine managed to combine the exercise of the profession with the art of writing. A proof of this is **Friedrich von Schiller** (1759-1805) who, continuing the family tradition, became a military doctor of a regiment in Württemberg. In 1781, he printed his first play that would be staged the same year: *Thieves*. A year later, due to the success of the play, he was awarded the title of honorary citizen of the French Republic. Kindred spirits not only through literary but also scientific concerns, Schiller becomes one of Goethe's closest friends. In 1785, Schiller writes the *Ode to joy* (An die Freude). Beethoven would take over the ode in the 9th Symphony and, years later, it would become the EU anthem. Author of dramas in particular: *Wallenstein, Maria Stuart, The Virgin of Orléans, The Bride of Messina, Wilhelm Tel*, Schiller receives a noble title in 1802.

[14] Goethe, 1957, 21

Xavier Bichat (1771-1802), physiologist and anatomist of French origin, made a great contribution to the development of science through his works dedicated to organic tissues. His name is related to descriptive anatomy, histology and pathological anatomy by identifying more than 21 types of tissues of the human body (*Treatise on membranes*-1799). The modern perspective on pathology is due to him because he demonstrated that diseases do not attack the body as a whole but the tissues of which it is composed. He started his scientific approach from the premise that there are nerve structures called ganglia in the chest. Like all enlightened spirits of the time, Bichat did not limit himself to the study of medicine, he embraced physics and mathematics with equal passion. His works in the medical field *General anatomy applied in physiology and medicine*-1800, *General anatomy*-1801 earned him the reputation of the father of modern physiology. Bichat, through his scientific interest, joined the great gallery of 19th century scholars who would introduce humanity into the new era of enlightenment.

Returning to the native land, we cannot overlook another important figure for the Romanian society in full swing, namely **Vasile Popp** (1789-1842). The Transylvanian doctor obtained his doctorate in medicine, in 1817, with the work *On popular customs of Romanian funerals*, an important study for the geographical, historical and folkloristic descriptions of Romanian customs. In 1819, Popp gets to embrace the didactic activity, teaching philosophy and philology at the Socola Seminary in Iasi. His literary grace is demonstrated in 1813 when he publishes in Latin *Elegia de laudibus Medicinae*, a eulogy to the practiced profession but also a proof of the vast culture that the doctor had. As *physicus cameralis*, Vasile Popp brings significant improvements to a precarious medical system that addressed a population plagued by epidemics of smallpox, endemic goiter and even plague. He was actively involved in the reform of the Transylvanian medical system and in the eradication, through vaccination, of some diseases that had plagued the population of Transylvania for centuries.

A friend of Victor Hugo, **Sainte-Beuve** (1804–1869) initially directed his steps towards medicine, which he gave up after only three years. He dedicated himself, starting from 1824, to literature by publishing some articles in the newspaper *Le Globe*. His studies and articles were collected in the volumes *Port-Royal* (1840-1959) and *Literary Portraits* (1932-1939). He also dedicated himself to teaching, giving Latin lyric courses at the Collège de France. Four years before passing away, he became a senator, a position he used to support the freedom of the press. But to the critic Sainte-Beuve, universal literature owes the initiation of a new way of perceiving a

literary work, from the perspective of the author's life, because from the written page it involuntarily captures the life of its author as well.

In 19th century Moldavia, the struggle for a modern medical system was as current as in Transylvania. One of the most famous Moldavian doctors of the time, **Constantin Vârnav** (1806-1877), went beyond the scope of medicine by publishing a doctoral thesis in 1836, which proved to be a source of knowledge about the economic, social and ethnographic development of Moldova in his time. Moldova. Eager for the prosperity of his native lands, Vârnav also gets involved in politics, being a fervent supporter of the union of the Principalities. The interest in medicine and philosophy is combined in his effort to publish a newspaper, starting with 1844 (*The pioneer of health and economy*) which would become the *Journal of the Society of Physicians and Naturalists of the Principality of Moldavia*, in 1851. The publication proves not only a way of the propagation of medicine among the population, but also a modernization of medical terminology by encouraging, in its pages, the translations from the specialized articles of the time and by the borrowing of words that considerably enriched the Romanian scientific vocabulary.

The beginning of the 19th century proved to be a favorable one for the appearance of some polymath Romanian personalities, eager to bring Romanian medicine to the European level. Among them is **Pavel Vasici-Ungureanu** (1806-1881), a Transylvanian doctor with high cultural aspirations, whose name is associated with the first medical periodical from Transylvania, *Hygiene and school*, which had a double purpose: to spread medical knowledge but also to consolidate Romanian education. The journalistic activity of the doctor is an extensive one, collaborating through his articles in publications such as *Foaie pentru minte, inimă si literatură, Transilvania, Telegraful român, Gazeta de Transilvania,* etc. His orientation towards the philological field is also translated by the activity that the doctor had, starting with 1842 at the Bucharest Literary Society and a member of the Romanian Academy from 1879.

Famous politician and doctor, **Nicolae Kretzulescu** (1812-1900) returned to the country after graduating from the medical courses of the Faculty of Nantes. In 1842 he founded the School of Minor Surgery next to the Coltea Hospital where he taught anatomy and a year later, he published the *Descriptive Anatomy Manual*. Inspired by the desire to promote a modern medical system in Romanian territory, Kretzulescu laid the foundations of the first medical association in Romania under the name of the Scientific Medical Society. The desire to actively change something in Romanian society directed him towards politics and diplomacy. Attracted by the liberal doctrine, he held the seat of prime minister appointed by the

Liberal Party three times. Together with Carol Davila, Kretzulescu founded the National School of Medicine and Pharmacy, the first of its kind in the country. In 1894, he tried his hand by publishing a volume of memoirs entitled *Historical Memories*.

Even if they did not attend medical school courses, many writers were influenced by this noble profession. Thus, **Gustave Flaubert** (1821-1880), son of a renowned surgeon, Achille-Cléophas Flaubert-head of the surgery clinic of a Parisian medical institution, would live closely medical experiences that influenced his literary creation. The gloomy atmosphere in the hospital where the father carried out his activity, the dissections that Flaubert watched secretly, the persecution that his father suffered would influence his literary style, making him become troubled, imbued with sorrow and turmoil, but also pedantic. Or precisely these traits made Flaubert the son to become the most important representative of a literary current imbued with objectivity: literary realism.

Another writer raised in a hospital environment whose prose pages would be influenced by his childhood experiences is **Dostoevsky** (1821-1881). His father had been a military doctor and had practiced medicine in a hospital for the needy, St. Mary's, in the capital of Russia. He initially prepared for a military career at his father's insistence. The beginning of his literary activity takes place in 1846, with the appearance of the short story *Poor people*. Since his childhood, the Russian novelist had come into contact with poverty and the shortcomings of people in need. Involvement in a liberal movement would bring him, in 1849, exile to Siberia where he would also discover the values of Orthodoxy. Starting with 1864, when he published *Notes from the Underground*, he established himself in the literary field. Initiator of a novel literary current - existentialism - Dostoevsky imbues his literary work with psychology promoting split characters, preoccupied with the free will. A possible explanation for the special approach to the inner life of his characters can also be given by his own medical history: Dostoevsky suffered from epilepsy, a fact that determined that one of the characteristics of his literature was precisely the theme of pathological and tense states, of suicide and soul regeneration through pain.

The case of **Henrik Ibsen** (1828-1906) who, when he was not even fifteen years old, was a journeyman in a Grimstadt apothecary, also has a literary beginning in the vicinity of medicine. This is also the moment when the writing inspiration comes to life. Concerned like most representatives of realism with painting reality in an unadorned way, Ibsen wrote the play *Ghosts* in 1881, a morbid case that tried to explain the clouding of judgment through the prism of the pathological - the transmission of venereal diseases to descendants can trigger psychological aberrations.

The doctor **Constantin Esarcu** (1836-1898) acquired a European perspective on culture following his medical and natural science studies in France. Back in the country and animated by cultural ideals, Esarcu appeals to the population to financially support the establishment of the Romanian Athenaeum Society. The building would be completed between 1886–1889. The establishment of the *Romanian Athenaeum* publication (1860) is also due to the doctor. Willing to raise the national consciousness, the man of culture also founded the Society for the Education of the Romanian People, which aimed to propagate through conferences both cultural values and art as well as scientific knowledge. A distinguished doctor and diplomat, Esarcu also embraced the didactic activity, being a professor of natural sciences and psychology. The naturalist would leave his entire fortune to the Romanian Athenaeum in his will.

The American scientist **William James** (1842-1910), physician, philosopher and psychologist, left his mark on the culture of humanity by founding pragmatism and radical empiricism. In addition to the certain value in psychology, James also wrote works with a much broader character, on the border between philosophy, psychology, metaphysics, mysticism and religion: *The Desire to Believe* (1897), *Human Immortality* (1897), *The Variety of Religious Experiences: The Study of Human Nature* (1902), etc.

Nicolae Garoflid (1845-1900) obtained his doctorate both in medicine, specializing in surgery-obstetrics, and in law. A member of several scientific societies, the Romanian Geographical Society and the holder of the Golden Cross of the Order of the Savior of Greece, Garoflid found the energy to spend his artistic growth in writing several scientific works. The measure of his encyclopedic nature is given by his areas of interest which he addressed: law, medicine, geography, tourism but also philosophy that came to life both in the conferences held and in the published works: *Oratory Art. Rhetoric and dialectics or the art of speaking in public and arguing in court* (1881), *The Voyager's Manual* (1885), *Hypnotism from the point of view of science and laws, the dangers of hypnotism* - lecture held in 1887, *Man and his purpose* - lecture held in 1891, *Political parties and the country* (1891).

Physicist, philosopher of science and mathematician **Jules Henri Poincaré** (1854–1912) came from a family dedicated to medicine. His father was a professor of medicine in France. The close connection with the paternal figure determined him to become a paramedic during the Franco-Prussian war (1870). His steps were directed towards science precisely by this experience. The climax of his scientific career was reached in 1906 when he became president of the French Academy of Sciences and, three

years later, became a member of the French Academy. A multidisciplinary personality, Poincaré published not only scientific works - *Science and Hypothesis* (1903) and *The Value of Science* (1905) - but also signed writings in fields such as philosophy, astronomy, quantum physics, geometry and physics.

The polyglot and polymath psychiatrist of Swedish origin **Axel Munthe** (1857-1949) connects scientifically to Pasteur's anti-rabies vaccine. A philanthropist by nature, Munthe fought all her life for the rights of animals, something that materialized in the pages of the novel *An old book about people and animals* (1898). In the practice of psychiatry, he applied to patients' innovative means of treatment through hypnosis and music therapy. When he was not even thirty years old, in 1884, he published his first autobiographical novel (Letters from a city in mourning) which recounts the cholera epidemic in Italy where he settled and to which he contributed as a doctor. The memorial pages from the time spent on the front of the First World War Red Cross, *Iron Cross* (1916) are also related to the experience of the profession of medicine. Four years before he passed away, Munthe published a sentimental autobiographical novel, *The Book of San Michele* (1945).

Another doctor who left his mark on universal literature is **Arthur Conan Doyle** (1859-1930). The creator of the private detective Sherlock Holmes, Doyle attended the Faculty of Medicine in Edinburgh from which he graduated in 1881. A year later he would practice medicine in a practice he opened in Plymouth, and in 1885 his passion for the profession he is translating in defense of his doctorate with the topic of *Tabes dorsalis* - a pathology also called syphilitic myelopathy that leads to the demyelination of cells in the spinal cord following infection with syphilis. Attracted by realistic literature, Doyle makes his literary debut in the periodical Chambers's Edinburgh Journal. The famous detective who attracted the attention of readers is inspired by the professor of surgery during the years spent as a medical doctor. Doyle can be considered the father of modern forensics by initiating innovative techniques for those times: the analysis of fingerprints and traces of blood at the crime scene. The first of the detective writings *A Study in Red* (1887) is a true textbook of modern forensics. Starting with 1891, Doyle practiced ophthalmology. After the Second World War, Doyle begins to be tempted by the practice of spiritualism and, despite the rejection of any pseudo-scientific manifestations, he has a friendly relationship with Harry Houdini whom he believed to be more than just a magician *The frontier of the unknown*. Attracted by mysticism, a year before his death Doyle writes the *History of Spiritism* (1929).

Practitioner of medicine, **Anton Pavlovic Chehov** (1860-1904) is forced for financial reasons to supplement his income by publishing humorous texts in various magazines. If literature gave him financial stability, medicine brought him the fulfillment of having helped his peers in need. In a letter sent on September 11, 1888 to the rich Alexei Suvorin who supported his literary appearances in the publication *New Times* that he owned, Chekhov summarized the relationship he had with both medicine and fiction: "Medicine is my wife and literature is my mistress." A reforming spirit, Chekhov uses his influence to lay the foundations, after the cholera epidemic and the famine of 1892, of schools, a fire station and a clinic. The humble origins - the great-grandfather was a serf peasant - and the experience lived during the cholera were to be found on the page written in the short story *The Peasants*. The desire to help the impoverished population brought him in the middle of a tuberculosis epidemic, a disease from which he would die in 1904.

The American novelist **William Sydney Porter** (1862-1910) printed his short stories under the pseudonym O. Henry. Both his scientific knowledge is linked to the city of Greensboro, in his uncle's pharmacy where, moreover, he got his pharmacy license in 1881. His literary and portrait debut is also linked to that period.

The scholar **Grigore Antipa** (1867-1944), after graduating from the University of Jena, returns to the country where he dedicates himself to saving the Danube Delta and studying this area from an ecological and economic point of view. His passion for study was captured by biology, ichthyology, hydrology and sociology. However, he also has time for historical writings such as *Problems of the Evolution of the Romanian People* (1919).

The son of the specialist in epidemiology and pathology Achille Adrien Proust, **Marcel Proust** (1871-1922) would approach the medical knowledge that influenced his literary theories: Bergsonianism and Freudianism. Aiming to place intuition in the foreground, Proust would criticize Saint-Beuve insisting that "(...) intelligence must be asked to establish its inferiority."[15]

The surgeon and biologist of French origin **Alexis Carrel** (1873-1944), famous in the field of medicine for his experiments on tissues, for the anastomosis of blood vessels and the "three-thread" suture method for which he received the Nobel Prize for Physiology in 1912, but also for his experiments in the domain of the translator. He was also attracted by the art of the pen, ending up publishing *Man, this unknown* (1935) and *Prayer*

[15] Proust, 1976, 18

(1944). This last study, published in Reader's Digest, sheds a special light on the scientist Carrel. Convinced of the therapeutic value of prayer, the scientist wrote "I am neither a theologian nor a philosopher. I express myself in common language and use words in their ordinary sense, and sometimes in their scientific sense." Carrel reveals the source of his conviction: "(...) my experience as a surgeon and physiologist, the laboratory studies to which I dedicated myself for years, allowed me to evaluate and quantify certain healing effects of prayer. I speak only of things that I have verified or that I have learned from people capable of making pertinent and accurate observations." The doctor expresses his regret that medicine did not apply this treatment in the fight against diseases, prayer having a value: "(...) objective of spiritual activities that hygienists, doctors, educators and sociologists almost never thought to deal with. They open a new world for us."[16] The evolution of society leads the human being to the degeneration of the ethical spirit, moving it away from aesthetic creation and turning man into a creature blind spiritually (Alexis Carrel, 1991, p. 10).

The doctor's conclusion is that beyond the physiological layer there is a spiritual universe in continuous formation. The doctor considers medicine an osmosis science, able to guide the steps of humanity, through its accumulations, towards a superior development in all areas of interest, even in the field of artistic creation.

Haralambie G. Lecca (1873-1920) attended the Faculty of Medicine in Paris, but once he returned to the country, he turned to his true passion: writing. Author of lyrics and dramaturgy, Lecca wrote many plays that would come to life on stage: *Casta-Diva, Cancer in the heart, Quinta. Supreme force, Dogs. Septima*. A follower of symbolism, Lecca also writes poetry, signing the volumes *Prima, Secunda, Five poems, Poetry*, etc. He also writes novels, *Branches* (1914), but he also signs translation studies, addressing texts by Shakespeare, Racine, Corneille, Beaumarchais, Lamartine, Maupassant, Sienkiewicz, Balzac, Hugo, Zola, J. Verne, J. Swift Maeterlinck, Boccaccio, Conan-Doyle, etc.

Although the family tradition of **William Somerset Maugham** (1874-1985) meant him to practice law, he decided to direct his steps towards medicine. Possessing a multilateral culture through studies undertaken in Germany, at Heidelberg University, in fields such as literature and philosophy, Maugham does not manage to overcome the handicap of logoneurosis, which prevents him from aspiring to become a lawyer or a spiritual career. While he was studying medicine in London, he published his first novel *Liza of Lambeth* (1897), which reflects his experience in the

[16] Carrel, 1991, 10

field of obstetrics-gynecology during his internship at St. Thomas. The success of his first literary work encouraged him to leave the medical profession and dedicate himself to the pen. However, the acquired medical knowledge would direct him during the First World War towards helping the wounded, working in the Red Cross. In 1916 he was enrolled in the Secret Service (later known as MI6) and acted as a spy in Russia and Switzerland. Having become a well-known playwright, most of his novels or short stories end up being screened: *Moon and two halfpennies, The Painted Veil, The Magician, The Letter*, etc.

Animators of progressive movements, doctors have left their mark, throughout the history of humanity, not only on discoveries in the scientific field but also in much wider areas of interest. **Albert Schweitzer** (1875-1965) graduated from the University of Strasbourg and became a priest. The connections with the literary world, beyond the countless publications he collaborated on, also include family ties: his cousin Anne-Marie Schweitzer Sartre, was Jean Paul Sartre's mother. But his leaning towards philosophy prompts him to write, in 1898, a large-scale work Kant's *Religious Philosophy*.

The theologian is not far from musical concerns either, studying the organ and establishing, in 1905, a choral formation: the Paris Bach Society. In an attempt to substantiate religious sources, Schweitzer writes *History of the Research of the Life of Christ* (1906), *Psychiatric Study of Jesus* (1911), *The Apostle Paul and His Interpreters, The Mysticism of the Apostle Paul* (1930). A complex personality, Schweitzer obtained his doctorate in medicine in 1913. His generosity found a response in his work in Africa where he contributed to improving the health of the indigenous population by establishing a hospital in Gabon. For four years, together with his wife, who was an anesthesiologist, he devotedly cared for the suffering. Exhausted from the hard work, Schweitzer returns to Strasbourg where he dedicates himself to medical and theological work but does not neglect his passion for philosophy, writing the *Philosophy of Civilization*. But his true purpose was volunteering in Africa, so he returns to the Black Continent with medicines such as salvarsan, triparsamide and suramin to help stop and prevent serious diseases. In the 1950s, he received the Nobel Peace Prize and dedicated himself to the fight against atomic weapons, together with Albert Einstein, Otto Hahn and Bertrand Russell.

The Frenchman **Victor Segalen** (1878-1919) became a doctor in the French navy. His travels in Polynesia and China gave birth to works of a memorial and travel but also literary nature: *Gaugain in his last setting* (1904), *Tribute to Gaugain* (1918), *Tibet* (published posthumously), etc. With the most diverse concerns, Segalen embraced ethnography, literature,

lyrics, linguistics and even literary criticism. His first work combines medicine, the practiced profession, and literary study. It is his doctoral thesis *Medical observations on naturalist writers* (1902). Followed by numerous serious literary studies dedicated to symbolism (of Saint-Pol-Roux, Arthur Rimbaud), painting, archeology practiced in China; treatises on the imaginary and the exotic.

Another doctor who, despite his father's insistence to become an engineer, chose the path of psychology, graduating from the Viennese School of Art but also with a deep interest in literature and mythology, is the psychoanalyst **Otto Rank** (1884-1939), a close collaborator of Sigmund Freud, whom he will leave in 1925. In Paris he was the editor of a psychoanalysis magazine. He is the author of numerous works: *The myth of the birth of the hero* (1909), The theme of incest in literature and legend (1912) with which he obtained his doctorate, *The significance of psychoanalysis for the human science*s (1913). After separating from his mentor, he retires to New York where he practices psychiatry. *The myth of the birth of the hero* is a complex work that tries to explain the psychoanalytical development of some of the central figures of mythology and the more or less pathological causes of these characters: Moses, Oedipus, Paris, Gilgamesh, Tristan, Romulus, Hercules, Jesus, etc. *The Trauma of Birth* (1924) is another important work by Rank, located on the border between psychoanalysis, art, philosophy and literature.

Romania can be proud of outstanding personalities of both medicine and culture. Among these, **Vintilă Ciocâlteu** (1890-1947) deserves our attention. A graduate of the Faculty of Medicine, he became the president of the Society of Medical Students (1920). He followed a specialization in Berlin, between 1920-1922, and in 1925 he obtained a Rockefeller scholarship, on which occasion he arrived in Boston and Cambridge. World biochemistry owes to him the result of analyzes in the field of phenic acid, a compound that will be named Folin and Ciocâlteu's Reagent for the dosage of phenols. Coming into contact with Western civilization, Ciocâlteu opens the horizon of his concerns, publishing in 1925 in *Gândirea* magazine two lyrical attempts: *Alone* and *Toast*. Nichifor Crainic, appreciating the literary value of the Romanian doctor's writings, proposes that he be part of the editorial staff of *Gândirea* magazine. But his publishing activity also involves periodicals, such as: *Mişcarea literară, Viaţa românească, Viaţa literară, Flamura*. In parallel, Ciocâlteu carries out a feverish research and teaching activity, becoming in 1932 lecturer of clinical chemistry and nutritional diseases at the Faculty of Medicine. A year later, his volume of poems *Stoned depth* is published. In 1936, he entered the C. Hamangiu Grand Prize of the Romanian Academy and his