



Bildungsroman

Identities - poetry

19th Century - themes

Purpose & Perspective

Shakespeare

Spoken Language



Year 9 Knowledge Organiser: Bildungsroman

Bildungsroman

a genre of novel that shows a young protagonist's journey from childhood to adulthood (or immaturity to maturity), with a focus on the trials and misfortunes that affect the character's growth

•The word *Bildungsroman* is a combination of the German word *bildung* (education) and "roman" (novel) = "a novel of education."

•A Bildungsroman typically begins with a protagonist who feels **alienated and alone**, but ends on a positive note with the character finding a sense of **belonging or self-realisation**

Bildungsroman: 3 part structure

1. The set-up

- ✓ Introduces the protagonist, most often during his or her childhood.
- ✓ Sometimes, this is to a four-part structure, where the set-up is broken into two separate parts – loss and journey.



2. Trials and Tribulations

- ✓ Experiences that shape the protagonist's character
- ✓ Often culminating in some sort of spiritual crisis or loss of faith.



3. Maturity

- ✓ Comes to terms with his or her loss or situation.
- ✓ Usually involves them finding a sense of peace with themselves, or of belonging in the world

Key themes in a Bildungsroman

Growth and Maturity

- ✓ Psychological & spiritual growth
- ✓ Happens at the end of their journey of self discovery



Loss

- ✓ **Emotional loss:** precedes their 'journey', pushing the protagonist to mature
- ✓ **Loss of Innocence:** When the protagonists realize how the world functions, they lose their naiveté.



Conflict: Individual vs. Society

- ✓ The protagonist does not adjust to the values of society, and struggles with this conflict.
- ✓ Through the protagonists' journey that they evolve and finally accept the values they fought against.
- ✓ **Traditional Bildungsroman novels:** the conflict results in the protagonist being accepted back into society.
- ✓ **Modern Bildungsroman novels:** subvert this and end with the society changing; instead of the protagonist having to change, societal values evolve.



Mister Pip, Lloyd Jones, 2006

- Lloyd Jones said that *Great Expectations* was the first 'adult' novel he read and it had a profound influence on his conception of literature.
- Set in Bougainville, in the middle of a Civil War, in the early 1990s.
- Tells the story of Matilda – a girl who is caught in the middle of a Civil War but is also caught between the teachings and expectations of her mother and Mr. Watts her teacher who reads them 'Great Expectations'.
- Matilda's father left for Australia on a mining plane when she was 11
- Some very awful tragic moments that shape Matilda forever
- At the end, she ends up in Australia with her father.



Bougainville

- Largest of the Solomon Islands
- Part of Papua New Guinea
- Primarily forest with a diverse tropical ecosystem
- Copper mining impacted the ecosystem



Great Expectations, Charles Dickens

- Published in book form 1861, serialised 1860-1861
- 1st person narrative
- Tells the story of an orphan nicknamed Pip who encounters a mysterious benefactor and rises in society
- Set in Kent and London in the mid-19th century
- Full of interesting and contrasting characters – caricatures
- Structured in 3 'stages' representing Pip's 'expectations'
- Follows Pip from living with his sister, to his life in London and those he meets and what he learns

Both stories – towards the end- feature the protagonists experiencing a physical journey on a boat. It could be argued this physical journey is symbolic of, and reinforces, the 'spiritual' journey they have made.

Other types of Bildungsroman novels

- ❖ **Entwicklungsroman:** A novel of development; differs from bildungsroman in that it does not necessarily involve the process of growing up.
- ❖ **Erziehungsroman:** A novel of education; emphasis on schooling and knowledge, whether academic or otherwise.
- ❖ **Zeitroman:** A novel that considers the evolution of the protagonist's socio-cultural atmosphere and era along with his own personal development