

Dr. Meltem Gürle
Course Nr.: 15304.0070
Time/Date: Wed. 10:00 - 11:30h
Location: 106 S24
Office Hours: Wed. 14.00 – 15.00 Uhr
Meister-Ekkehart-Str. 11, Raum 1.05
E-Mail: meltemgurle@gmail.com
fguerlem@uni-koeln.de
SoSe 2019

“Smells Like Teen Spirit”: The contemporary Bildungsroman and Its Problems

German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey regards the *Bildungsroman* as the poetic expression of the Enlightenment concept of *Bildung*, and reads the novel of formation as a restricted genre, limited to a certain type of society and a certain period. The *Bildungsroman*, however, proved to be a world genre that has retained its influence to this day. Although it rarely follows the route that the German idealists suggest, that is to say, the one that reconciles the individual with the society, the contemporary *Bildungsroman* is still concerned with the young adult's journey into self-actualization, a process historically in conflict with the existing social and cultural values.

Taking into account the ever-expanding number of coming-of-age stories marked by existential despair and anxiety, this seminar is dedicated to the *Bildungsromane* written in the twenty-first century. It focuses on the narratives (novels, graphic novels, and films) of a new generation of authors that describe the painful transition from adolescence to adulthood at the age of global capitalism, while at the same time offering stories of hope and resistance. The aim of the seminar is not only to problematize the concept of *Bildung* and the idea of maturity in the contemporary European society, but also to uncover in these texts the characteristic themes of the classical *Bildungsroman*, such as provinciality, alienation, ordeal by love, and the search for meaning.

Syllabus

Week 1 Introduction: What is the Bildungsroman?: The classical Bildungsroman and the Enlightenment fantasy of maturity.

Secondary reading: Susan Neiman, *Why Grow Up?: Subversive Thoughts for an Infantile Age*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2014.

Week 2: Modernity and the Bildungsroman: The discovery of youth.

Secondary Reading: Franco Moretti, "Kindergarten" in *Signs Taken for Wonders: Essays in the Sociology of Literary Forms*. Translated by Susan Fischer; David Forgacs; David Miller. London: NLB: Verso Editions. 1983.

Week 3: Modernity and the Poverty of Experience

Secondary Reading: Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller" in *Illuminations* trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books 1969).

Week 4: Late Modernity and the Loss of Experience

Secondary Reading: *excerpt from* Giorgio Agamben, *Infancy and History*, Verso, London, 1993.

Week 5 Back to Childhood: The search for experience

Erlend Loe, *Naïve. Super* (1996) NORWAY

Week 6 The Dystopia: Identity and the Body

Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* (2005) UK
Film: Yorgos Lanthimos, *Dogtooth* (2009) GREECE

Week 7 The eternal child: *Puer aeternus* as the new model of the self in the culture of late capitalism

Paul Murray, *excerpt from Skippy Dies* (2010) IRELAND
Alper Canıgüz, *excerpt from Sons and Suffering Souls* (2004) TURKEY

Optional film: *Disco Pigs* (2001) Film - Director: Kirsten Sheridan, Writers: Enda Walsh (play), Enda Walsh (screenplay) IRELAND

Secondary reading: Karen Coates, "Saving the world before bedtime": The Puer Aeternus as a New Paradigm for Selfhood, in *Stories For Children, Histories of Childhood / Histoires d'enfant, histoires d'enfance*. Tome II. Littérature / Literature. Presses universitaires François-Rabelais, 2017.

Week 8: The Journey

Why we took the car (2010) Wolfgang Herrndorf GERMANY
Optional: *303* (film) (2018) Hans Weingartner AUSTRIA

Week 9 Family and Trauma

Out in the Open (2018) Jesus Carrasco SPAIN

Loveless (2017) Film – Director: Andrei Zvyagintsev RUSSIA

Week 10: Of Mountains and Islands

The Eight Mountains: A Novel (2019) Paolo Cognetti ITALY

Kruso (2014) Lutz Seiler GERMANY

Optional: Kruso (film) (2018) Thomas Stuber GERMANY

Week 11: All About Women

Two Girls (2002) – Perihan Mağden TURKEY

Optional: Abdellatif Kechiche, Blue Is the Warmest Color (2013) Film - La vie d'Adèle (original title) FRANCE

Week 12: The Graphic Novel: Growing up in the Periphery

Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey (2015) Özge Samancı TURKEY

Persepolis (2000-2004) Marjane Satrapi IRAN

Week 13: The Gothic Bildungsroman

Let the Right One In (2004) John Ajvide Lindqvist SWEDEN

Week 14: Conclusion and Review

Selected Bibliography

Theodor W. Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflexionen aus dem beschädigten Leben* (Frankfurt/ M.: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1951).

—, *Minima Moralia: Reflections on a Damaged Life* (London: Verso, 2005).

Giorgio Agamben, *Infancy and History*, Verso, London, 1993.

Louis Althusser, *On Ideology* (London/New York: Verso, 2008).

M. M. Bakhtin, "The Bildungsroman and Its Significance in the History of Realism: Toward a Historical Typology of the Novel," in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* (Austin: University of Austin Press, 1986).

Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968).

——, “Der Erzähler: Betrachtungen zum Werk Nikolai Lesskows,” in *Illuminationen: Ausgewählte Schriften 1* (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 1982).
——, *Selected Writings: 1931–1934*, vol. 2., part 2, ed. by Michael W. Jennings & Howard Eiland (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap, 2004).
——, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by Rolf Tiedemann, vol. 4 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1989).

Tobias Boes. *Formative fictions; nationalism, cosmopolitanism, and the Bildungsroman*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012.

Jonathan Bolton. *Blighted Beginnings: Coming of Age in Independent Ireland*. New Jersey: Bucknell University Press, 2010.

Gregory Castle, *Reading the Modernist Bildungsroman* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2006).

Karen Coates, “Saving the world before bedtime”: The Puer Aeternus as a New Paradigm for Selfhood, in *Stories For Children, Histories of Childhood / Histoires d'enfant, histoires d'enfance*. Tome II. Littérature / Literature. Presses universitaires François-Rabelais, 2017.

Erik H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York, NY: Norton, 1993).
——, *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (New York, NY: Norton, 1994).

Jed Esty, *Unseasonable Youth: Modernism, Colonialism, and the Fiction of Development* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

Martin Jay, *Songs of Experience*. London: University of California Press, 2006.

Walter Jens, “Erwachsene Kinder: Das Bild des Jugendlichen in der modernen Literatur,” in *Statt einer Literaturgeschichte* (Munich: dtv, 1990).

Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980).

Todd Kontje. *The German Bildungsroman: History of a National Genre*. Columbia: Camden House, 1993.^[1]_[SEP]

Georg Lukacs. *The Theory of the Novel: A Historico-Philosophical Essay on the Forms of Great Epic Literature*. Trans. Anna Bostock. London: Merlin, 1971.

Alison Lurie, *Don't Tell the Grown-Ups: The Subversive Power of Children's Literature* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1990).

Franco Moretti, *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture* (London: Verso, 2000).
——, “Kindergarten” in *Signs Taken for Wonders: Essays in the Sociology of Literary Forms*. Translated by Susan Fischer; David Forgacs; David Miller. London: NLB: Verso Editions. 1983.

John Neubauer, *The Fin-de-siècle Culture of Adolescence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

Marc Redfield, *Phantom Formations: Aesthetic Ideology and the Bildungsroman* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996).

Jon Savage, *Teenage: The Creation of Youth Culture* (New York: Viking, 2007).