

THE MODERNIST TRANSFORMATION OF *BILDUNGSROMAN*: BELY'S *KOTIK LETAEV*  
AND JOYCE'S *A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN*

by

DIANA SAPRIKINA

(Under the Direction of Katarzyna Jerzak)

ABSTRACT

*Bildungsroman* as a genre appears in the Enlightenment period and functions in the Modernist period as well. This particular genre narrates the initiation to adult life. The ritual of transformation from childhood to adulthood is the constituent moment of the *Bildung* of the *Bildungsroman* genre. This thesis examines the transformation of the *Bildungsroman* genre in the Modernist period, as presented in Bely's novel *Kotik Letaev* and in Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young man*. I discuss how the protagonists of the Modern *Bildungsroman* undergo a necessary transformation in the context of their society.

INDEX WORDS: *Bildungsroman*, *Bildung*, Bely, Joyce, Goethe, Wilhelm Meister, transformation, formation, artist, Modernism, Bakhtin, chronotope, individual, education, ordeal

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DIANA SAPRIKINA

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DIANA SAPRIKINA

Major Professor:	Katarzyna Jerzak
Committee:	Elena Krasnostchekova Max Roland D Reinhart

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso  
Dean of the Graduate School  
The University of Georgia  
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## DEDICATION

To Irina Ovsianikova, Vladimir Saprikin, and Robert Nasca

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	v
CHAPTER	
1 Introduction.....	1
2 <i>Bildungsroman</i> in the Enlightenment Period: the Formation of the Genre .....	6
3 Transformation of <i>Bildungsroman</i> in Modernism .....	17
4 Bely and Joyce: Modernist <i>Bildungsroman</i> .....	26
5 Conclusion .....	56
REFERENCES .....	59

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The importance of study of the *Bildungsroman* genre is determined by deep changes that took place in the last century in our society. Social and economical reforms brought a radical transformation of the social system as well as an aggravation of social and cultural problems. One of the tough problems is that of the social and cultural crisis of identity of the modern individual. The loss of cultural roots is also relevant to the modern-day society. Culture, in its compressed meaning, is the process and the product of spiritual formation as the system that creates, spreads, and preserves values. When an individual acquires the culture in the process of social interaction with the cultures of the previous and current generations, it forms his or her identity.

*Bildungsroman* is widely considered to be the genre that narrates the initiation to the adult life, and adjustment of an individual to life. The ritual of transition from childhood to youth and adulthood, the experience of the first physiological aspects of growing up, the first spiritual pain, the awareness of death, the perception of the difference between good and evil, the discovery of the world complexity in general—all these are the constituent moments of the *Bildung* or formation of the protagonist of the *Bildungsroman* genre.

The novel of education, which comes into existence in Enlightenment literature and functions in the course of the modern period, becomes the cultural institution. *Bildungsroman* can be perceived as one of the literary genres, while within the time span of three centuries it accomplishes the functions of social regulation. Therefore, the experience of study of the novel of formation needs to be reconsidered. In order to focus on the specific functions of *Bildungsroman*, it is necessary to address the early period of its formation. The philosophical

basis for its study appears to be the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century type of rationality and its problematic character in the 20<sup>th</sup>-century novel of education. Modernity itself includes the period of unlimited belief in mind and reason, and the modernist period of skepticism in relation to classical rationality. The state of unsteadiness and instantaneity, derealization of reality, fragmentation, blurring of values, and the unstable state of the human being are all characteristic features of modernity. In my thesis I show the transformation of *Bildungsroman* from the Enlightenment period to the modern one and the change of the pattern of the novel in the conditions of the shift of cultural paradigm. The formation of the new type of rationality and mentality is conditioned by its two opposite varieties—Enlightenment and Modernism.

The arising of *Bildungsroman* genre in the Enlightenment is influenced by the culture of the period and its institutional formation. In *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (1795-96) by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, we see the cyclical development of the character in the context of that day culture and society. Reflecting the modern society of that period, the novel introduces to the reader the familiar world and the protagonist who can be associated with the reader. One of the main purposes of the particular *Bildungsroman* is to change and reform (in the spirit of Enlightenment hopes) the character of not only the protagonist, but also the reader. *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* is oriented on those examples of the *Bildung* or education of the individual, which are dictated by the time and culture. The novel discovers new prerequisites of thinking relevant to the period. Those prerequisites are the basis for the formation of subjectivity—the idea of the progressive development of society and the improvement of human nature, which brought to the expanding of rationality, the appearance of the notion of human norm. At the same time encouragement of labor also turns out to be fundamental to the formation of social values.

The *Bildungsroman* of the Enlightenment period makes us see that the specifics of the formation of an individual depend on the predetermined result of social interaction and the rationalization of the process of education itself. As a result, there emerge artistic conventions, which allow reconciliation of the author with the artist and ideologist, and to realize this construction not in a didactic or allegorical form, but rather in a realistic one. The actualization of the chronotope elements of the adventurous novel and the novel of ordeal pertain to the realistic form.

However, within the Enlightenment culture there exists the opposition of such strategy—in Fielding’s, Goethe’s, and Sterne’s novels the linearity of the Enlightenment aesthetics is being mocked, and the “starry-eyed” hopes of the ideologists are being questioned. Fielding in his picaresque novel *The History of Tom Jones: A Foundling* shows the limited possibilities of education on the example of opposite result of life experience of two stepbrothers, Tom Jones and Master Blifil. Therefore, we can conclude that the author acknowledges the dominant inborn inclinations to the idea of a *tabula rasa*. The parody of the Enlightenment ideas and tendencies is also evident in Sterne’s novel *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy: Gentleman*, which looks like the novel of education, but in reverse. Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* renounces the idea of creating an outstanding theatrical figure, which, in the spirit of Enlightenment aesthetics had to favor the formation and improvement of imperfect society from the stage. In the end of the novel the protagonist Wilhelm Meister undertakes the journey in the quest of his true vocation.

Mikhail Bakhtin in his work *The Bildungsroman and Its Significance in the History of Realism* formulates the main difference of this novelistic genre from other novels: the category of the developing protagonist. The author’s *Bildung*-oriented position, the realization of the main

character in the course of the specified program, the depiction of the protagonist from childhood to adolescence and adulthood, didactic finale, the “function” of the secondary characters as mentors towards the hero, and also the formation of the protagonist in close connection with the outer environment—all these factors, according to Bakhtin, are constituent and inevitable features of the *Bildungsroman* genre.

The narrative of the novel of education defines the cyclical chronotope, in which the consequence of the events and the actions of the main character are connected with the definite conformity to the stages of the formation of the hero. *Bildung* of the protagonist is shown through the cyclical time periods, which allow the reader to see what experience the hero gained and how this experience influenced one’s ultimate formation. Bakhtin introduces a chronotope in the narrative of *Bildungsroman*—that of space, which is filled with the historical and cultural time with the characteristic features of the behavior of the protagonist within those chronotopes.

The transformation of the novel of education from Enlightenment period to that of Modernism is marked by the acquisition of different qualities and features. The Enlightenment and modern periods are differentiated between each other by the type of rationality, accepted cultural practice, and also the concept of a human being. The Enlightenment proclaimed the ideas of progress, rational organization of social relations and the existence of culture, as well as the freedom of human being. The *Bildungsroman* of the period had an educational purpose rather than an aesthetic one.

Modernism is perceived as a global culture crisis. The specifics of the awareness of the crisis at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century consist in the discovery of “suicidal” tendencies. The former life models, cultural norms are not perceived as exemplary by an individual. Using the modernist novels of education *Kotik Letaev* by Andrei Bely and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* by

James Joyce, I show how the world around the protagonists of both novels loses the accuracy of boundaries and the integrity of its inner structure. Those layers and levels of being (*Dasein*) are revealed in new light these novels of education.

Surges of skepticism, doubts, distrust of the power of rationality and reason are characteristic of the two novels. We witness the birth of new rationality both in *Kotik Letaev* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*: that of myth, religion, art, and philosophy. Both characters experience the longing for integrity. They try to find the understanding of the exterior world, which is completely encompassed by a new myth or new existential condition and which allows deriving spiritual power from new sources. The novels are marked by the critique of modern society, which is based on the idealization of the past and the primordial fullness of human existence. The novels are not devoid of religiously tinged critique, which relates to the parallels between the renunciation of God (and spirituality) and the depersonalization of human being. As the means of spiritual rebirth, Bely and Joyce relate to other religions, cultures, or (as we see in the case of Stephen Dedalus) art. Such technique reveals the depth of the culture and of life values. It also creates a new cultural synthesis and new identity of human being.

## CHAPTER 2

*BILDUNGSROMAN* IN THE ENLIGHTENMENT: THE FORMATION OF THE GENRE

How we understand the meaning of artistic prose depends to a large extent on which genre we ascribe to a given literary work. This is rarely simple, because genre, as well as the essence of an artistic work, never lies on the surface. Traditionally, the following examples of the genre are considered to be the major predecessors of the novel of education: in Antiquity, *Cyropaedia* (4<sup>th</sup> century BCE) by Xenophon; in the Middle Ages, *Parzival* (13<sup>th</sup> century) by Wolfram von Eschenbach; in the Enlightenment, *Gargantua and Pantagruel* (16<sup>th</sup> century) by François Rabelais; in Neo-Classicism, *The Adventures of Telemachus* (1699) by François Fénelon; later examples include, *Emile: or, On Education* (1762, a pedagogical treaty with the elements of novel) by Jean-Jacques Rousseau; *The Story of Agathon* (1766-67) by Christoph Martin Wieland; *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (1795-96) by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe; *Titan* (1801-2) by Jean Paul; *David Copperfield* (1850) by Charles Dickens; *Green Henry* (1855) by Gottfried Keller; *The Magic Mountain* (1924) by Thomas Mann. In Russia, *Bildungsroman* is especially represented by the trilogy *Childhood, Boyhood, Youth* (1852-56) by Leo Tolstoy, as well as by *A Common Story* (1847) by Ivan Goncharov.

The term *Bildungsroman* was popularized in literary criticism by Wilhelm Dilthey in his 1870 essay on Friedrich Schleiermacher, though it was coined by Johann Carl Simon Morgenstern in his 1774 *Essay on the Novel*. Morgenstern recognized the novel of education as a type that portrays the formation of a protagonist from childhood to a certain stage of life fulfillment, and that fosters the education of the reader. Dilthey stresses that it reveals the formation of a personality during different stages of life. He accordingly highlights three kinds of novel of education: the novel that pertains to the “school of Wilhelm Meister;” the romantic

novel; and the novel about the artist. For Dilthey, the stages of the development of the organic world correspond to the stages of the formation or maturation of the main character, thus introducing the parallel between the novel of formation and the theory of evolution. In this process, the role of narrative appears to be dominant. The principal tendencies of *Bildungsroman* were formerly interpreted in the religious Catholic spirit, whereby the hero experienced spiritual transformation. Dilthey points out that this genre embodies a “lost paradise” and the desire to reclaim it.

The genesis of the novel of education and the characteristic of its types are presented in Mikhail Bakhtin’s research «Роман воспитания и его значение в истории реализма» (*The Bildungsroman and Its Significance in the History of Realism*, 1936-38). Unfortunately, this is only a fragment of the original project, in which Bakhtin meticulously examines Goethe’s two *Wilhelm Meister* novels.

The prominent theorist of the novel as a literary genre creates his own classification of the novel. In his monograph «Эстетика словесного творчества» (*Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, 1979) Bakhtin distinguishes the following novelistic subgenres: novel of travel, novel of ordeal, novel of education, and the biographical novel. He also analyzes the influence of historical events on the development of the genre. A peculiar variety of the genre of the novel in Europe appears to be the novel of education, called in German *Bildungsroman* or, less commonly, *Erziehungsroman*. While other European novels of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries were engaged in the depiction of family and everyday life, as well as social and personal well-being, the novel of education focused on the formation of man, which is to say, on the development or transformation of a protagonist’s personality. In Bakhtin’s view of the *Bildungsroman* as a “mastering of historical time,” “[man] emerges *along with the world itself* and he reflects the

historical emergence of the world itself. He is no longer within an epoch, but on the border between two epochs, at the transition point from one to the other” (23).

When analyzing the *Bildungsroman*, the question arises: can we assign all novels that bear educational tendencies and pedagogical aspects to the novel of education? Some researchers, relying purely on compositional principles, especially on the concentration of the whole plot on the educational process of a protagonist, reject this idea. While some of the novels have autobiographical features, others are saturated by the pedagogical ideas of the education of a human being; still others deal with the chronological consequence of the educational process of the main character and have minimal plot.

Mikhail Bakhtin examines the subject matter of the novel of education, juxtaposing it with the novel of ordeal. He mentions that in the novel of ordeal «герой дан всегда как готовый и неизменный. Все качества его даны с самого начала и на протяжении романа лишь проверяются и испытываются» (the hero is always presented as complete and unchanging. All his qualities are given from the very beginning, and during the course of the novel they are only tested and verified), while the novel of education purely deals with the formation of a human being (201). Thus the novel of education is an artistic structure, the principal center of which is *Bildung*, or formation of the protagonist. Bakhtin also emphasizes the instability of the limits that separate the novel of ordeal from the novel of education, since the fundamental ideas of both varieties are closely interwoven.

With respect to the biographical novel, Bakhtin finds that it is devoid of formation and development: «меняется, строится, становится жизнь героя, его судьба, но сам герой остаётся, по существу, неизменным» (the hero's life and fate change, they assume structure and evolve, but the hero himself remains essentially unchanged, 207). Thus the events form not

the human being, but rather one's fate. The novel of education, by contrast, gives the dynamic unity of the image of the protagonist who becomes an "alternating quantity." The transformation of the main character acquires «сюжетное значение» (*plot significance* 212).

It becomes evident that the novel of education involves some synthesis of the novel of travel, the novel of ordeal, and the biographical novel. As a novelistic subgenre, its roots extend back to the chivalrous tales of the Middle Ages and the baroque picaresque novel, before reaching final, complete form in Wieland and Goethe. The German *Bildungsroman* is traditionally considered to be an intellectual philosophical variety without analogs in other European literatures, despite being upheld as the paradigm for the novel of education in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Specifically, the *Bildungsroman* is intimately connected with a tradition of German national culture, that of humanity (*Humanität*), which arose from the uniquely German encounter with Greek and Roman antiquity at a moment of bourgeoisie self-assertion. It is concerned with the particularly German concept of personality (*Persönlichkeit*): elevated individualism, criticism of feudal prejudices, and the problem of the education of the citizen.

Bakhtin connects the birth of *Bildungsroman* in the 18<sup>th</sup> century as a genre with the Enlightenment's «могучего пробуждения чувства времени, прежде всего чувства времени в природе и в человеческой жизни» (great awakening of a *sense of time*, above all a sense of time in nature and human life, 217). Precisely at this historical moment, in Bakhtin's view, what emerges is not the fully developed character, but rather an image of a developing one: «Сам герой, его характер становятся *переменной величиной* в формуле этого романа» (the hero himself, his character, becomes a variable in the formula of this type of novel, 212). The change in the hero himself becomes the focus of attention; in the course of this transformation the whole plot is subject to reconsideration.

The formation of character, according to Bakhtin, can vary. The novel of education can show the transformation of a character from early childhood to adolescence and from youth to maturity revealing all the inward changes and the worldview of the hero, which can only be attained with age. This sort of formation Bakhtin calls “idyllic,” to which the unity of *chronos* and *topos* appears to be characteristic. Bakhtin employs the term *chthonotope* to demonstrate the ability to “see time” and “to read time” in the spatial world and to perceive the space as an “emerging whole,” rather than as something formed and complete. The principle events of this kind of *Bildungsroman* are love, marriage, birth of children, death, and toil, all of which are closely interwoven with the life of nature. This category includes such novels as Keller’s *Green Henry* and Tolstoy’s *Childhood, Boyhood, Youth*.

Another type of the novel of formation deals with the gradual transition of a young man from juvenile idealism and dreaminess to mature practicality. The hero must go through such times in order to obtain the necessary life experience. The reader follows the protagonist as he acquires experience and knowledge. These traits are specifically elaborate in the classical *Bildungsroman* of the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the works of Wieland, Jean Paul, and Goethe.

The third type of *Bildungsroman*, the autobiographical, is devoid of cyclic recurrences. The formation takes place within biographical time and is the aggregate of all changing life events. The fourth type, the didactic, is centered on a pedagogical idea. This is shown in such novels as *The Adventures of Telemachus* and *Emile: or, On Education*. Certain elements of this type of the novel are relevant to both Goethe and Rabelais.

Finally, in the fifth type of *Bildungsroman*—the one Bakhtin considers to be the most essential—the transformation of the hero occurs together with the historical formation. This

formation takes place «в реальном историческом времени с его необходимостью, с его полнотой, с его будущим, с его глубокой хронотопичностью» (in real historical time, with all its necessity, its fullness, its future, and its profoundly chronotopic nature, 213). For example, in such novels as *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, education is not a personal issue. *Bildung* happens along with the formation of the outside world and reflects all the historical changes. Such novels focus primarily on the problems of reality and human possibilities: freedom as well as artistic initiative. Life experience serves not as a means of ordeal of the formed character, but rather as a kind of a schooling environment. Illuminated by the idea of formation, life reveals itself as an experience that forms not only character, but also worldview. The problems of individual perfection, spiritual growth, and education are closely interwoven, as suggested by Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*.

Bakhtin stresses that this specific kind of the novel cannot be understood outside the framework of the other four types of *Bildungsroman*. At the center of the novel, he says, there is a character who meets the following requirements: 1) the protagonist should not be heroic in either an ethical or a tragic sense of the word, but should combine in himself both positive and negative sides; 2) he should be shown not as formed and unchangeable, but rather as emerging and transforming, educated by life.

We may conclude that Bakhtin on a philosophical level shows the insufficiency of the idea of ordeal for perceiving the authenticity of that alive and filled with new life “core” in which the unaccomplished “core” of human being is presented. It becomes obvious that the ordeal by itself does not completely unite this «прорастание» (sprouting), this dynamic character as well as the peculiar space of being of a person. The initial mechanism of such dynamics has not yet become transparent enough, which makes the function of personal being

not a stable characteristic but rather a mutating one. Thus we cannot be limited by only one reference to the phenomenon of ordeal. Bakhtin shows, however, while analyzing the novel of ordeal where the image of the human being is integrated that its unity appears to be static and derivative in a rather simple form. In other words, the ordeal is undergone by a formed, invariable, and persistent subject who is defined in his or her being.

Bakhtin juxtaposes the novel of ordeal and the novel of formation, and concludes that in the novel of ordeal the character does not necessarily possess the substantial type of personal being simply because of having experienced different hardships. Bakhtin once again focuses on two opposite perspectives in the interpretation of a protagonist: in one, the transforming protagonist is viewed as a dynamic unity, as a «переменная величина» (variable) and in another as a static image, as a «постоянная величина» (constant) and stationary firm “point” (211). Here Bakhtin insistently grasps the mystery of the life event—the event of human being, of Heideggarian *Dasein*. The incapacity of the idea of ordeal alone to cast the light on the essence of personal being, that is of “being” a person, on the one hand, and the absolute presence of the phenomenon of ordeal in the development of the main character, on the other, means that the interpretation of the phenomenon of ordeal—*Dasein* as ordeal—should be seen in the context of the formation and the purpose of human existence. Putting oneself to the test, a person experiences the process of ceaseless formation; one becomes a person in the course of self-ordeal as a means of existence. Thus the ordeal acquires a polar existential meaning—it turns out to be the education. The ordeal as the means of existence appears to be an education at the same time.

If we come back to the typology of the *Bildungsroman*, in which the novels of ordeal and formation take a special place, we may conclude that this sort of a hybrid novel can be called the novel of ordeal-formation. The variety of both of these categories does not allow human

existence to come to a stop. Thereby it acquires definiteness, a concrete phenomenal substance of ambivalent organization of personal event, following the basic recognition of the given in the ambivalent structure of the event of the personal existence. Ordeal and formation are the two polarities that cannot be separated; however, they can be distinguished within the structure of the dynamic unity of human existence. Therefore the word polarity appears to be overly metaphorical. To be more precise, this word conceals the character of the relationship between the phenomenon of ordeal and that of education in the context of the dynamics of «пропастания» (sprouting) of the unsubstantial core of a person. There exists a similar relation of inseparability and non-confluence between ordeal and formation. We are talking about an integrated phenomenon of ordeal-education, since ordeal appears to be an education, and vice versa.

For example, in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* and *Wilhelm Meister's Journeyman Years*, the pedagogical message is expressed in the form of the novel of formation. In these two related books, the author logically expounds his ideas on a wide range of philosophical, religious, moral, and aesthetic issues of the period. The cycle is the narrative about the formation of the artistic personality. A man, endowed with intellect and talent, goes through the school of life. He encounters sufferings and joys, earthly blessings and evil in the course of life. Goethe deliberately shows all the sides of human existence because he believes that everything that happens to us has its purpose and leaves its trace, and this favors our spiritual formation.

*Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* specifically deals with the formation of a harmonious person. The character of Wilhelm Meister is presented to the reader as a common person who tries to find his place in the world and answer the crucial questions about the existential issues of

personality. The climax of the novel takes place when Wilhelm is working on the staging of the play *Hamlet*. Having staged and played the main role in the play, Wilhelm Meister does not feel satisfaction. He starts to realize that he is devoid of real talent, and that he is more dilettante than professional, both as a literary person and an actor. Wilhelm starts to understand that his years dedicated to the theater were in fact his years of education. This is the time when his formation is being completed, and he needs to find the real occupation that will allow him to reveal his natural inclinations.

At the beginning of the novel we learn about the adolescent years of the protagonist. Young Wilhelm felt suffocated in his affluent home, since his nature, his personality aspired not for material but rather for spiritual values. His burgher existence prohibited the development of his natural instincts: "I lost myself in deep meditation and after this discovery I was more restful and more restless than before. After I had learnt something, it seemed to me as though I knew nothing, and I was right: for I did not see the connection of things [*Zusammenhang*], and yet everything is a question of that" (*Wilhelm Meister*, qtd. in Moretti, 18).

Having become an actor, Wilhelm Meister hopes to have the opportunity to lead a more elevated life, beyond that of a philistine. Here Goethe makes us reconsider the function of art and places it above the limits of Enlightenment aesthetics: not to improve social morals but rather to give impetus to the formation of personal being. *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* in many ways differs from the previous novels of education. At the end of the novel Wilhelm Meister enters the Masonic Society of the Tower and undertakes a trip with his son Felix in search of his true vocation. It is worth noting that such an uncompleted denouement is uncharacteristic of other novels of the *Bildungsroman* genre. In the traditional novel of education the author's task is to show a gradual formation and deliverance from shortcomings so that the hero inevitably chooses

the mode of behavior that is natural to him. However, Goethe could not have finished his novel with such a predefined finale, given his belief that spiritual formation cannot have an ultimate result. The destiny of humankind is a ceaseless quest of the self and endless self-improvement. The second Wilhelm Meister novel, the *Journeyman Years*, in which Goethe introduces his contemporaries to a strict pedagogical system based on the formation of personality by means of labor, reflects the same ideals and purposes as the *Apprenticeship*. The independent development of human abilities under a beneficial influence should make a person harmonious both with oneself as well as with others. According to Franco Moretti, “To reach the conclusive synthesis of maturity [...] it is not enough to achieve ‘objective’ results, whatever they may be—learning a trade, establishing a family. One must learn first and foremost, like Wilhelm, to direct ‘the plot of [his own] life’ so that each moment strengthens one’s *sense of belonging* to a wider community” (19). Thus Goethe not only believes in the ideals of humanism, deeply rooted in the most secret fundamentals of human nature, but also in the possibility of their attainment. That this idea has been expressed by great thinkers since the time of Renaissance does not diminish its purpose. We can say with confidence that the two Wilhelm Meister novels open a new epoch in the history of the development of *Bildungsroman*. Its themes, first formulated by Goethe, will be repeated and modified in all the novels of education of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Having analyzed the novels of education of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, we may conclude that *Bildungsroman* is concerned with the formation of the world view of a protagonist as a result of the lessons of life and practical experience, a laborious quest for the meaning of existence. The hero of the *Bildungsroman*, as a rule, comes to realize and accept his vocation and becomes thereby beneficial to society. The formation of the *Bildungsroman*’s main character is accomplished in the sphere of labor. Secondary characters serve as particular catalysts in the

protagonist's education. The role of a mentor, who directly accommodates the spiritual formation of a hero, is specifically accentuated.

## CHAPTER 3

### TRANSFORMATION OF *BILDUNGSROMAN* IN MODERNISM

In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the novel of education underwent dramatic transformation and acquired new traits and qualities in comparison to that of the classical representatives of the genre. *Bildungsroman* started to combine several kinds of novelistic narration in it: autobiographical novel, the novel about an artist (extremely popular at that period), family saga novel, and the novel of education in its pure form. Among the most prominent examples that set the scene for the whole century were James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and Marcel Proust's *À la recherche du temps Perdu* (*In Search of Lost Time*; earlier translated as *Remembrance of Things Past*). These novels are specifically significant because they are not just the novels of formation of a person, but of an artist.

Such transformation of the genre of the novel was conditioned by the changes that took place in both social and scientific consciousness. In particular, Darwin's evolutionary theory undermined the concept of stability of the existing order. The literary and historical contexts also contributed mightily at the turn of the century, as literature sought new means to feel, express, and communicate life. The novel of education acquired a specific energy of negation, directed at the search of new values. The traditional understanding of education was reconsidered, and the role of environment in the spiritual and intellectual development of the main character was diminished. This was particularly true of the English tradition of the genre, in which "social responsibility tended to triumph over personal *Bildung*, thus creating an ambivalent, at times contradictory, relationship between socialization and individualism, between social mobility and self-sufficiency, between personal desire and social demand" (Castle 30). For example, Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* deals with the dynamic issues of modernity influenced

by the Catholic Church, which had a tremendous effect on social life. In his book *Reading the Modernist Bildungsroman*, Gregory Castle claims that Joyce more critically interprets the values of *Bildung* by critiquing the processes of socialization.

The self-knowledge of the hero is moved to the forefront, as a result of which his moral growth takes place. The whole action of the modern novel of education gets communicated through the protagonist's consciousness and affects the rest of the characters of the novel similarly. The hero of such a novel is the center of the universe, and the surrounding world is a kind of a raw material of his perception, recollections, and reflections. Proust's multivolume saga exemplifies this well. Marcel, a young writer, is shown from the earliest years of his childhood as he grows up as a rather sensitive child. Memory and re-creating "the times past" are seminal, allowing the author to re-enter the world of childhood while maintaining simultaneously the perspective of the child and the adult artist who writes about it. Though we see the omniscient narrator here, just as in a traditional *Bildungsroman*, there are differences. As Gerard Genette points out, "here the *Recherche* parts company with the *Bildungsroman* tradition and approaches certain forms of religious literature, like Saint Augustine's *Confessions*: the narrator does not simply know *more*, empirically, than the hero; he *knows* in the absolute sense, he understands the Truth—" (253). This omniscient narrator does not serve the narrative purpose of creating a definite fixed ending; Proust concentrates on the quest, not so much the result of the formation of his hero: "The interval between the end of the story and the moment of the narrating is therefore the time it takes the hero to write his book, which is and is not the book the narrator, in his turn, reveals to us in a moment brief as a flash of lightening" (227).

One of the characteristic features of the modern *Bildungsroman* appears to be a deep psychological insight into the consciousness of the main character, combined with the

introduction of the main traits of modernist aesthetics in the framework of narration. In the novels of education of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the principal attention is focused not on the adventure and the consequence of event, but rather on a specific stage of the development of the protagonist, who at every step is sensitive and susceptible to external influence. Its structure is not complicated, since the plot consists not of a variety of actions, but rather of a unity of sensations and feelings. Such modernist novels as *Kotik Letaev* by Bely and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* by Joyce focus on the internal world of their protagonists. Their *Bildung* is shown not through the interaction with other people, but through self-cultivation. Everything is centered on the personal experience of the main characters, Kotik Letaev and Stephen Dedalus. All the events and other characters find their way through their consciousness, which dwells apart from and captivates the human being mentally. According to Caste, the modern novel of education “depends on the techniques and technologies of ‘depersonalization’ (63).

The most important thing for the genre of the novel of education in the modern period appears to be the depiction of how the protagonist comes to terms with his identity—in other words, a peculiar form of mediation between the model of the world and the model of the self. In the 20<sup>th</sup>-century novel both the model of the world and the model of the self undergo change. The actions and events that happen to the hero of such a transformed novel of education are now in harmony with the educational stages through which the hero passes. It is easy to trace what kind of experience the protagonist has acquired in this or that period of life and how, as a result, this life experience can influence the education.

In order for the novel of education to accomplish the function of socialization for the contemporary reader, the presence of Bakhtin’s chronotopes, the space that is filled with historical and cultural time, is necessary. There are five such chronotopes: native home,

provincial city, metropolis, island, and the road. In the course of the whole narrative, semantic and hierarchical transformation occurs in these chronotopes. The native home is connected both with the first steps literally made by the protagonist as well as with the first steps of his transformation. The space of the native home consists of separate images, which are marked by the stages of the acquisition of life experience of the hero. The space of the provincial city designates the place where events rarely take place to a full extent, the space in which cyclical time occurs. The provincial city in *Bildungsroman* appears to be the borderline that the protagonist has to cross in the process of transformation.

If these two chronotopes are relevant to the novel of education of the Enlightenment and the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the chronotope of metropolis acquires crucial meaning. Needless to say, the metropolis of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is the epicenter of changes introduced and imposed by modernity. The city as a place can be characterized by its punctuality, accuracy, and peculiar alertness, which forces the person to be part of the immense social mechanism.

The main features of the island chronotope are its reticence and secularization, and its divorce from the outer world. The finiteness of the time spent on the island makes it an ideal place for the various experiments within the limits of the *Bildungsroman* genre. However, the education of the character begins in the chronotope of the road, which is the connecting link with other spaces. The hero's transformation and, of course, all the narrative come to an end when the movement within the spaces ceases and return is made to the native home.

The modern *Bildungsroman* is characterized by ceaseless dissension and suffering, which accompany the process of perception of the transformed world. The period from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century is perceived not only by modernist artists, but also by all social classes as a global cultural crisis, which causes new world views. In the modernist novel

of education, the enlightenment of socialization is replaced by the endeavor of individual self-comprehension, the acquisition of lost values, and the test of the durability of traditional values.

This transformation is expressed as followings: the typical hero of the Enlightenment novel is replaced by the exceptional character, an artist and a creator for whom the main purpose is to find the way out of crisis, cultural crisis in particular. The focus shifts: instead of concentrating on coping with the environment and the external circumstances, the character is engaged in inner struggles. The spiritual life of the character becomes the focal point of the story; the inner state of the hero appears to be only the background for the perception of circumstances.

The weakening of the author's perception of educational position is also relevant to the modern representative of the genre. The character-narrator recounts life's hardships, experienced in the process of evolution. The finale of the novel loses its didactic function. The role of the secondary characters, the protagonist's mentors, is weakened or simply absent. The people who surround the protagonist can be perceived as the archetypes of collective unconsciousness. Finally, the formation of the hero represents not a single-phase act of initiation, but rather the process of individualization that occurs in the course of the whole life of the person. However, the 20<sup>th</sup>-century *Bildungsroman* preserves such characteristic peculiarities as a realization of the protagonist in the process of formation of the given purpose. The depiction of the process of education of the hero from childhood through maturity, conditionality of the ultimate results of the formation of the person in the course of the whole life, and also the demonstration of personal transformation in intimate connection with the environment are inevitably relevant to the modern *Bildungsroman*. Modernism preserves certain characteristic features of the classical

novel of education, such as the depiction of life as an ordeal, as a school of life, which the human being has to experience.

In Bakhtinian terms the *Bildungsroman* at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century can be summarized as follows:

1. The main character goes through specific stages of transformation—the years of education, the years of traveling, and the years of wisdom.
2. The inner world of the protagonist is revealed to the reader, though the motives of the behavior remain concealed.
3. The novel is now monocentric, in other words, the epic tendency is replaced by the lyrical narrative.
4. The spiritual growth is given against the background of the other characters, who are represented through the hero's reflections and through stages of transformation. The ordeals and temptations take place through encounters and their ideological conflicts.
5. The novel of education has a step-by-step structure, which demonstrates the spiritual growth of the hero.

The definite changes in the genre of the novel are conditioned by the specifics and peculiarity of the new literary period, which brought forward its aesthetic claims. The novel of education is the Enlightenment genre, motivated by the belief that human kindness is natural and can be rationally cultivated; that the natural power of the hero is sufficient to oppose whatever irrationality surrounds the protagonist. This kind of plot arrangement is reconsidered in the 20<sup>th</sup> century novel of education.

The European *fin de siècle* mentality could be characterized by its vulnerable state and morbid individualism; in a word, “the European culture of the *fin de siècle* period was neurotic.

This neurosis became almost a demand, a necessary part of modernity” (Pavlychko 238). The French scholar E. Weber claims that neurosis occupies a central place in European culture of the time, and he traces the beginnings of this state of mind to Charles Baudelaire (12). Another relevant topic is madness, understood not as a misfortune or a reason for marginalization, but as a promise of personal enlightenment, a way to see the truth about life. Foucault states that madness is but a way to interpret the world, and that the world itself is responsible for causing madness in the first place (288).

The modern *Bildungsroman* focuses not so much on the world as on the individual’s internal world. The structure of the traditional novel of education undergoes significant changes: overcoming of life difficulties in the course of engagement in the useful work or activity often looks like a conscious quest and invention of these difficulties. It is significant that the figure of the mentor, who assists the spiritual growth of the protagonist, disappears in the modernist novel of formation.

In modernity, cultural crisis gives birth to new strategies of world comprehension and new scenarios of socialization within existing institutions. The modernist novel of education claims to remythologize, thereby revealing deep origins of culture in order to discover real values and to create new cultural synthesis as well as new personal values by means of returning to the origins of the world, in the process of plunging into chaos. The condition of unsteadiness, change, instantaneity, and derealization of reality all constitute elements of the modern novel. Trying to perceive the hopelessly changed world, the miserable consciousness of modern man experiences dissension and existential sufferings.

As noted above, the modern *Bildungsroman* is not devoid of various scenarios of remythologization. One of the most common is the return to childhood, or to the story of birth;

another is application of foreign or exotic culture: medieval, Oriental, primeval. Medieval culture is attractive because of its static nature, symbolism, lucidity, and quiescence, all of which create the illusion of suspension of social dynamics and seem to promise eternal peace to the restless “Faustian” soul of the modern person. Representative of such remythologization are *The Glass Bead Game* (1943) and *Siddhartha* (1922) by Hermann Hesse and *The Magic Mountain* (1924) by Thomas Mann. The motifs of the pristine culture attract by its promise of discovery of the fullness and integrity of spiritual strength and acquisition of the new body, as well as the emancipation of sensuality.

Noteworthy is the author’s position. In the modernist novel of education the author pursues the hermeneutical strategy of not only self-interpretation, but also of presenting vital cultural problems through the prism of the main character. Thus we gather that the reader is also trying to find answers to personal questions caused by the cultural crisis of the period. Consequently, the novel fulfils a compensatory and harmonizing function for the individual.

Examples of transformational *Bildungsroman* are Bely’s *Kotik Letaev* and Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. What unites these two authors is the aspiration to reveal the truth of human mind through the stream of consciousness. Stream of consciousness is an illogical inner monologue that reproduces the chaotic thoughts and feelings, and minute vibrations of consciousness. It can be called a free initiative stream of thoughts the way they occur and interrupt each other and cluster together. Consciousness is a river, since the true essence of human being can be found not in the outer life of actions, but rather in the inner emotional life, which does not obey logical laws. *Kotik Letaev* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* are among the first traditional modern novels of education to introduce the

associative processes of subconsciousness and a ceaseless play with the language of the text. It is important to note that both authors were deeply interested in Ibsen, Wagner, and Nietzsche.

Both novels are devoid of plot as such. The spiritual development of their main characters, Kotik Letaev and Stephen Dedalus, and their sophisticated inner worlds are shown distinctly, if figuratively. At the same time, it is rather the form that is emphasized, and not the plot. Both novels are autobiographical. Bely is often referred to as the forerunner of Joyce. The artistic expression of both authors is unique and defies standard analysis. Both authors were able to elaborate on something personal, independent from any other theoretical framework, in which they expressed the attitude toward humanity and the epoch in which they lived.

In this period, the novel of the genre evolves into a form capable of expressing only the solitude and despair of an individual, thrown into the chaos of reality. If the classical novel of education aspires to create a complete illusion of reality, the contemporary *Bildungsroman* gives only the feeling of fiction. The removal of an image, a tragic grotesque, and the union of the myth with reality are not only connected with the quest of forms of realization of new reality, but also with the loss of the ability to reflect life objectively.

## CHAPTER 4

BELY AND JOYCE: THE MODERNIST *BILDUNGSROMAN*

When talking about Modernism, it is necessary not to confuse it with decadence, which is characterized by self-reticence, by an escape from reality into illusions and fantasies. Modernism (in which we include the artistic worlds of such writers as James Joyce, Andrei Bely, Virginia Woolf, Vladimir Nabokov, T. S. Eliot, Marcel Proust, and Franz Kafka) is formed as a negative reaction to the mysticism of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which suggested that feelings and instincts have priority over reasoning and rationality. The new trend starts its quest for the dialogic relationships in the new environment of city life. The dialog, in the polyphonic modern novel, is one of the new levels of artistic associations. Dialogic interaction is based on synthetic processes, and the synthesis in its turn implies an ultimate result, an absolutely new semantic formation that preserves the characteristics of the synthesized phenomena. One dialogic result is the symbol, though not in the simplified meaning of emblem or allegory. According to Bely, the "living word"

is the expression of the innermost essence of my nature, and, to the degree that my nature is the same thing as nature in general, the word is the expression of the innermost secrets of nature [...]. If words did not exist, then neither would the world itself. My ego, once detached from its surroundings, ceases to exist. By the same token, the world, if detached from me, also ceases to exist. "I" and the "world" arise only in the process of their union in sound. Supra-individual consciousness and supra-individual nature first meet and become joined in the process of naming. Thus consciousness, nature, and the world emerge for the recognizing subject only when he is able to create a designation. Outside of speech there is neither nature, world, nor recognizing subject. In the word is given the

original act of creation. The word connects the speechless, invisible world swarming in the subconscious depths of my individual consciousness with the speechless, senseless world swarming outside my individual ego. The word creates a new, third world: a world of sound symbols by means of which both the secrets of a world located outside me and those imprisoned in a world inside me come to light [...]. In the word and only in the word do I recreate for myself what surrounds me from within and from without, for I *am* the word and only the word (Bely 429-30, 493-94).

Bely presents the very system of symbols as a worldview pyramid, the constituents of which appear to be science, religion, poetry, and philosophy. In order to accomplish such a pyramid of symbols, it is necessary to attain an integrated architectonic principle, according to which the constituent parts of the pyramid can coexist in one context. Such a principle for modern literature is synchronism, which is a parallel depiction of simultaneously occurring events.

One of the key symbols in the creative work of Bely is «самораспятие» (self-crucifixion). The author believes that every human being, while acquiring knowledge of the world and self, goes through the Passion of Christ and is reborn. In fact, this formula in its complex shape consists of the stages of the predestined way of a man: the body must die in order to be resurrected in the new capacity, to be filled with new meaning. In the same «посвятельном» (sacrificial) meaning one should understand the process of the birth of consciousness.

The creative works of Bely are unique and defy conventional interpretation. An ardent follower of the theory and the practice of symbolism, Bely created his own conception of individual, independent of any other theory. Many things combined in his life before he became

«ПЛАНЕТОЙ СО СВОИМ МИРОМ» (a planet with his own world, Ходасевич). His real name was Boris Bugaev, and the pseudonym “Andrei Bely” was not his own invention. In interpreting his pseudonym, researchers traditionally have taken “Andrei” as the name of the saint apostle claimed to be the first disciple of Christ (Andrei Pervozvanny); this significance is what attracted Bely in the first place. “Bely” (the word for the color white in Russian) is the symbol of light, chastity, purity, freedom, and the catharsis of the world on the Day of Judgment. White also results from the mixture of colors of the spectrum, the symbol of the synthetic world view, its harmonious combination.

It is interesting to note that Marina Tsvetaeva had her own interpretation. In her essays «Пленный дух» (*A Captive Spirit*), dedicated to Bely, she remarks that every literary pseudonym is, in the first place, a rejection of patronymic, since it excludes a father. Depicting the tragic image of the writer, Tsvetaeva interprets the pseudonym as a subconscious renunciation of the duty of filial succession. This is not only the renunciation of a father, but also everything sacred, the renunciation of all the roots—both church and kin. A family drama lies behind all of this, and is of fundamental importance in the autobiographical novel *Kotik Letaev*. Bely used to recollect that his childhood was spent in constant endeavors to resist the world of the elders, an example that was both alluring and frightening.

*Kotik Letaev* is a novel of education about the first phase of the formation of the soul and consciousness of a child. The author recounts the creation and birth of a mystical self. The story, in fact, is presented as a biography of a human self, which is revealed not only in the process of spiritual formation, but also in the course of observing the meticulous changes in the outer world. The beginning of the story is the awakening of consciousness of the born child, and the end—comprehension of the faith in God.

The being of the main character Kotik Letaev begins not in the moment of birth, but rather much earlier: « - я жил до рождения! «...» - и в мимическом жесте (не в слове, не в образе) встаёт *память о памяти*, пересекая орнаменты мне в собственный жест мой в стране жизни ритмов: там был до рождения я» (—I lived before birth! [...] – and in the mimic gesture (not in the word, not in the image) arises *memory of memory*, slicing through the ornaments for me into my gesture in the realm of the life of rhythms: there before birth was I, 521-22). The child who is entering and discovering the world is able to feel the light and warmth, his body and the space that lies beyond it: «...ОН входит... ОН стоит между светлого рёва лучей, между чистыми ганями стен; всё – бело и алмазно; и – смотрит... Тот самый...» (...*He is entering... He stands amid the radiant roar of the rays, amid the clean facets of the walls; all is white and diamond; and—he looks... That Very One...*, 441). Since childhood a man is thrown into the darkness of his mind: « - вы – маленький-маленький-маленький, беззащитно низвергнутый в нуллионны эонов—преодолевать их, осиливать—схвачены чёрным светом пустот...» (—you are tiny-tiny-tiny, you are defenselessly precipitated into nillions of aeons—to overcome them, to conquer—gripped by the black whistles of void..., 441). The novel about childhood appears to be some sort of specific, mystical revelation of consciousness of the child, connected with «дотелесной жизнью» (pre-bodily life) in the cosmos and Christ.

The main character of the novel, a mature, thirty-five year old man, returns to his childhood: «Мне – тридцать пять лет: самосознание разорвало мне мозг и кинуло в детство; я с разорванным мозгом смотрю, как дымятся мне клубы событий; как бегут они вспять...» (I am—thirty-five: self-consciousness has burst open my brain and hurtled into childhood; with burst-open brain I watch how clouds of events puff up at me; how they run back

again..., 428). For Bely, the return to a remote childhood, a time before conscious existence and before birth itself, is not at all an anti-*Bildung* or degradation: quite to the contrary, it is rather a grasping of truth. He calls it «полноумие» (living with a full mind), an entering into the space of powerful potential for development, an understanding of self and growth. One cannot grow until one knows one's roots, one's sources, one's beginning: this is what Bely is implying. The "emergence of the infant life" means, for him, the opening of «...Солнце, Око, и меня отторгнувши, из меня излетело, оставив связь блесков, между собой и мною: мои комнаты Космоса! «...» Я прошёл состояние тепловое: внутри вспыхнуло Солнце «...» Знаю я, - будет время: «...» - это будет не здесь: не теперь. «...» Самосознание моё будет мужем тогда, самосознание моё, как младенец ещё: буду я вторично рождаться...» (—the Sun flashed, the Eye, and having torn me away, it flew out of me, leaving a bond of sparkles between it and me: my rooms of the Cosmos! [...] I passed through the thermal condition: inside it the Sun flashed [...] I know, - there will be a time! —this will not be here: not now. My self-consciousness will be husbanded then, my self-consciousness as a little child still: I will be born a second time..., 578).

The writer shows us a child's psyche during the first moments of consciousness, in that transition from the world of unstable, dreamlike memories about oneself and one's existence to the "hard" world that can wound and hurt. This is the world of catastrophe, the world of absurdity. Bely captures the fluidity of the child's world, and juxtaposes it with the "harshness" and "rigidity" of the world the child has to enter when he finally develops consciousness. Bely depicts the life of the young Kotik most genuinely. We see a quiet boy «обвисший кудрями; в пупсовеньком платьице; капризничал он очень мало, а разговаривать не умел» (draped with curls: in a vermillion frock; I was naughty very rarely; but I didn't know how to converse,

472). The reader witnesses how the mother of the boy dresses him in girl's clothes and calls him diminutively «Котенька», «Котик», «Котёнок» (Kotenka, Kotik, and Kotenok).

The reader sees two markers of gender transgression: female clothing and long hair. In her groundbreaking work *Female Masculinity*, Judith Halberstam differentiates between “male” and “female” *Bildungsroman* (6). If for a boy, growing up means going out in the world, opening up to it, and having it open up to him, for a girl, getting older means restrictions, spaces closing up (for example, staying in her room and embroidering instead of climbing trees). If a boy learns and experiences the world as expanding, a girl experiences it as restrictive. Boys enter the public sphere, whereas girls remain within the private sphere. In a way, we see this paradigm redefined in Kotik Letaev. The novel's protagonist is not biologically a girl, but he wishes to stay in the sphere of the private. When he is dressed in a sailor's suit, he feels uncomfortable: «Штанишки не в пору: теснят они, жмут меня; хожу я матросом - с огромным и розовым якорем, но... без слов; и, отвечая на ласки, я трусь головою о плечи; из-под бледно-каштановых локонов дозирую я мир: о, как странно! Нет, не нравится мир: в нем все - трудно и сложно» (It's not time for pants yet: they are tight, they squeeze me; I go around as a sailor—with a massive, rose-colored anchor, but... without words; and, responding to caresses, I rub my head on my shoulders; from under pale-chestnut locks I discern the world: oh, how frightening! No, I don't like the world: in it all is—difficult and complicated, 571). For him, it is threatening to be dressed as a boy.

This modernist *Bildungsroman* calls attention to the problems of gender. Gender, a social role that does not equal biological sex, is not taken for granted. Kotik, “a man,” experiences a desire to return to his origins, to enter the very essence of what was considered feminine: birth. However, this does not mean that he is somehow “abnormal”—this only shows us that the

conventions of proper education and proper *Bildung* have changed. Just as feminists during the *fin de siècle* could enter social life and act “like men,” boys and men could likewise participate in the spheres of life traditionally considered feminine. The discourse of neuroticism can be understood as an entrance point into the questions of gender, femininity and masculinity. These issues were not talked about so openly in the earlier *Bildungsroman*. Modernism’s ideology of neuroticism, which is in itself a state of change, transformation, and instability, offered a safe space for dealing with gender identification. It is no wonder that Bely refers to the fluidity of consciousness and the absence of rigidity in the infant’s world—the rigidity that will solidify as a number of binary oppositions, gender included, in the mind of an adult person infused by inhibitions and demands of society.

The gender issue takes us back to the choice of Bely’s pseudonym: Tsvetaeva rightly points out that the pseudonyms lack patronymics. Persons who take on a pen name have no father; they belong to no kinship structure. Kotik Letaev is, no doubt, a projection of the author himself, one of his “voices,” in a broadly taken Bakhtinian sense. Kotik does not want to “belong” to any of the realms of the kinship structure: he has no desire to be like his father, to be a “man”—instead, he defies the gender role that awaits him. He cannot quite belong to the world of his mother, to the feminine, because he is not a girl. He is more of an outcast, a transvestite, a crossdresser in the domain of his family, which is a representation of the bigger picture: kinship structure in general, a rigid system of roles and obligations already in place. He says that he is neither Mom’s nor Dad’s: he sins against both of them by rejecting them and accepting them at the same time: «Грешник я: грешу с мамочкой против папочки; грешу с папочкой против мамочки. Как мне быть: не грешить? Одному мне зажить: я – не папин, не мамин; а жить – одиноко...» (I am a sinner: with Mama I sin against Papa; with Papa against Mama. How can I

exist and: not sin? I must begin to live alone: I am not Papa's, not Mama's; but to live—is lonely..., 532-33). Bely shows the whole spectrum of the child's psychological anxieties against the background of the family drama. A feeling of solitude torments Kotik. The boy experiences the same feelings in anticipation of the unknown: «И оно надвигается; восстаёт: окружает меня лабиринтом комнат; среди этого лабиринта – я; более – ничего» (And *it* is approaching; it is rising up: and surrounding me with labyrinths of rooms; in the middle of this labyrinth am I; beyond me—nothing, 449). The result of this terrible isolation is a split personality: « - Почему это так: вот я – я; и вот – Котик Летаев... Кто же я? Котик Летаев?.. А – я? Как же так? И почему это так, что –  
- я – я?..» (—Why is it like this: here I am I; and here is Kotik Letaev... Who then am I? Kotik Letaev?.. But what about—I? How is it so? And why is it that—  
—I am—I?.. 472-73).

The novel has a certain performative quality: Kotik Letaev is not “thinking,” as in stream of consciousness, but reacting with his whole self. The sentences, as in the quote above, are often incomplete; the thoughts—if they can even be called thoughts in the strict sense of the word – are fragmentary. This fragmentation is one of the chief devices through which Bely performatively shows the reader the inside of the mind of the small child. Children do not “think” the way adults do; they experience emotional states, catching glimpses of reality around them. This is exactly what happens to Kotik, and we witness these processes. The text does not merely “say” things, it “performs” them: «...и вот – Котик Летаев... Кто же я? Котик Летаев? А – я? Как же так?» (...and here is Kotik Letaev... Who then am I? Kotik Letaev?.. But what about—I? How is it so? 472-73). The phrases imitate the feelings of anxiety and loss: short, undeveloped, incoherent.

In order to recreate a child's vision of the world, Bely implements «взрослые» (adult) categories, viewing the environment through the perception of not only objects, but also noises, colors, and smells. This also underscores the fragmented, “incoherent” (in adult understanding) way of thinking of a small child. Smells, noises, and colors are “flashes” of reality, not necessarily “connected” with each other, but constituting a matrix of things and events that unfolds before Kotik. He is not yet “making sense” of everything—he is at the developmental stage where he can only absorb and learn. However, in his novel Bely experiments on multiple levels. His child character exists not only for the reader to see how the mind of a toddler works, but also to be the vehicle of another message, a religious one. In any ordinary event or phenomenon Kotik Letaev sees omen of outer sphere, and on the basis of every image there exists «вечный» (an eternal) prototype. It is as if this child has retained the memory of other worlds, the ones he came from, and can be a messenger, a medium between them.

His antennae, still clean and unburdened by adult, conscious life and responsibilities, are receptive to many other signals. He is a link between the earthly world and the world beyond—in religious terms; we can also say, psychologically, that he is the link between the conscious and the unconscious. His mind reacts to the things he encounters by producing images. For example, he associates his father with a volcano, which fills the rooms with kerosene fumes; and at the same time, he is a forefather of the world, the origin of ideas and everything new.

Bely depicts the state of the hero as a specific unity of the singular and the universal («Грядущее»). Self-consciousness of the infant stage is defined as something peculiar to the whole circle of people, who belong to different historical conditions. In the prologue the author symbolically shows the development of human history which begins at childhood. The human perception of “self” comes later, and the author himself becomes its prophet:

Самосознание, как младенец во мне, широко открыло глаза и сломало всё – до первой вспышки сознания; сломан лёд: слов, понятий и смыслов; многообразие рассудочных истин проросло и охвачено ритмами; архитектура ритмов осмыслилась и отряхнула былые мне смыслы, как мёртвые листья; смысл есть жизнь: *моя жизнь*; она - в ритме годин: в жестикуляции, в мимике мимо летящих событий; слово – мимика, танец, улыбка (Self-consciousness, as the little child in me, opened its eyes wide, and smashed everything—preceding that first flash of consciousness; smashed is the ice: of words, concepts, meanings; a variety of rational truths sprouted and were seized by rhythms; the architectonics of the rhythms was interpreted and shook up former meanings like dead leaves; meaning is life: *my life*; it's in the rhythm of the years: in gesticulation, in mimicry of events flying by; the word is—mimicry, a dance, a smile, 430).

Eventually, this history develops further, aligned with the development of the child: when the child grows to the point of consciousness, he is mature enough to embrace the idea of Christianity. The author identifies himself with Christ, sees in the people surrounding him the crowd at the crucifix, and perceives the facts of daily life as the reflection of the great history. Kotik Letaev understands the latter as an eternal stream of time, which flows through the space that is creative individuality. The author understands history in the novel as a constant returning to what has already been, and fills the narrative with reminiscences from ancient Greek myths and the Bible. Applying historical categories to the study of the human being, he depicts the maturation of the child as the steady entrance into different epochs of time. The surrounding conditions are analogical to either the state of heathen chaos, or to the ordered culture of ancient Egypt and Greece. Kotik, in his consciousness, goes through all the early stages of human

philosophy: pre-Greek, Ancient Greek, sun worship, and Christianity. It is interesting to note that the knowledge about Christ, according to Bely, is initially imprinted in human consciousness, but is forgotten in the course of everyday life. Hence, the life of the main character is depicted as a path through an array of rooms (everyday life) to the church:

—Переходы, комнаты, коридоры напоминают нам наше тело, преобразуют нам наше тело; показывают нам наше тело; это – органы тела... вселенной, который труп – нами видимый мир; мы с себя его сбросили: и вне нас он застыл; это – кости прежних форм жизни, по которым мы ходим; нами видимый мир – труп далёкого прошлого; мы к нему опускаемся из нашего настоящего бытия – перерабатывать его формы; так входим в ворота рождения; переходы, комнаты, коридоры напоминают нам наше прошлое; «...» ...в первых мигах сознания, переселяют меня в древнейшую эру жизни: в пещерный период; «...» переживаю жизнь катакомб; переживаю... подпирамидный Египет: мы живём в теле Сфинкса...» (—Passages. Rooms, corridors remind us of our body, prototypify our body to us; they show us our body; they are the organs of the body... of the universe, the corpse of which is the world visible to us; we have cast it off ourselves: and outside us it has congealed; they are the bones of earlier forms of life after which we come; the world visible to us is—the corpse of the distant past; we sink toward it out of our present existence—to rework its forms; thus we enter the gateway of birth; passages, rooms, corridors remind us of our past; [...] ...in the first moments of consciousness, transfer me into the most ancient era of life: into the cave period; [...] I experience the life of the catacombs; I experience... Egypt beneath the pyramids: we live in the body of the Sphinx..., 440).

The biblical symbolism is transformed into the reality of the surrounding world. The professors who come to see Kotik Letaev's father are perceived as the Magi, and the parents turn into the embodiment of figurative notions. Bely understands East and West as cosmic categories, which are reflected in the subconsciousness of the formative human being. Therefore, Kotik's family represents the clash of paganism and Christianity, personified in the images of father and mother. The empirical life, which flows within spaces, has several interpenetrating layers. One is the space of the father's office—a special mathematically built world, in which even Christ is not the God. Another spatial layer includes the rest of the apartment and is the mother's domain, bathed in the elements of colors and music. Time is not perceptible in these spaces, everything takes place over months and years there, whereas the space of the real city—Moscow—is marked by the signs of daily life: winter is replaced by spring, every house and street has its name. Such a contrasting juxtaposition of the inner and outer worlds allows the author not only to show the conflict of the parents, but also its futility. All these suggest that the protagonist recognizes in the parents' conflict the phenomenon, typical of the specific historical period of time that represents the two kinds of mentalities. The only way out of it Kotik Letaev sees through the teaching of Christ.

Logically, then, the third line comes out of the two: the child's sin of learning and knowledge of life leads to conflict with the parents. The motif of Christianity as the saving escape is introduced by Bely as the means both to understand the meaning of the occurring phenomena and at the same time to admit Kotik's inability to resist them. It is significant that the last chapter is dedicated to the theme of the crucifixion and resurrection of God. Such a synthetic world view comprehends the eternity of knowledge, whereby the past penetrates into one's present and becomes an inseparable part of the future. All the fears that Kotik Letaev faces in the

course of the novel meet at the same instant in his life: «— когда косматая стая старцев, шепчась и одевая печально шершавые шубы, уйдёт от меня, то —

- то придвинется стая женщин с крестом: положит на стол; и на сиоле, пригвоздит ко кресту» (—when the maned flock of old men, whispering and putting on their mournfully shaggy fur coats, leaves me then—

—then a flock of women will come in with a cross: they will place it on the table; and on the table they will nail me to the cross, 576). Everything in Kotik's life comes to the universal, all-encompassing anticipation of «во Хресте умереть, чтоб в Духе воскреснуть» (In Christ we die in order to rise in the Spirit, 578). Christianity to Bely is the highest point of the formation of man: the formation of the human spirit and personality, and also the ultimate development of all humanity. The novel *Kotik Letaev* is consonant with one of the favorite statements of Bely, that the meaning and purpose of art can only be religious.

The traditions of the *Bildungsroman* in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were continued and developed in the novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* by James Joyce. The title of the novel already signifies the innovative approach to the genre. Joyce makes the reader, not the listener of the developing story, but rather the observer of some sort of a picture. We not only read the history of the life of the protagonist Stephen Dedalus, but also see the portrait of the artist. A “portrait” represents a new stage in the development of the novel of education in the modernism period. The protagonist's spiritual growth and emancipation from the yoke of the clerical Jesuit environment; his attempt to find his self in art is shown against the background of the breach in the family relationship as well as in the conflict with the self.

There are no trivial descriptions in the novel; everything is subordinated to the laws of consciousness. Joyce reveals the inner mechanism of the main character's consciousness, revealing the surrounding world from inside Stephen Dedalus' mind. The author deviates from the traditional depiction of life, concentrating on the inner world of the character. It is also remarkable that the spiritual development of Stephen Dedalus is displayed not in a consistent manner, but rather in halted glimpses. The outer world is shown through the protagonist's eyes, which remotely and patiently marks everything he sees around him. By referring to the social, psychological, moral *Bildung* of the main character, Joyce continues the tradition of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century novel of education. However, he introduces a new trend in the *Bildungsroman* by penetrating into the innermost realm of a human being, and presenting a new picture of the relationship of a man with the outer world.

*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is a semi-autobiographical novel. The plot of the book reflects the brightest and the most-remembered periods in life of the protagonist, a young poet, Stephen Dedalus. The name of the protagonist, rather unusual for an Irishman, requires special attention, because it is composed of a number of mythological and literary symbols. The first name comes from the first Christian martyr, Saint Stephen (the name stands for "wreath" or "crown" in Greek), killed by pagans, and symbolizes the fame of an artist. Dedalus refers to the mythological creator of the Cretan labyrinth, whom Stephen Dedalus regards as his forefather and spiritual mentor. However, Stephen is a poet rather than an artificer—his labyrinth is inside of him, in his soul.

The satirical picture of surrounding reality serves as a backdrop on which the inner world of the artist—lonely and betrayed by everybody—is created. Stephen Dedalus' aspiration to find

and express his poetical vision of the world collides with all the ecclesiastical and social structures of contemporary Irish culture. The events seem strange and are incomprehensible to Stephen as a child, and wound his susceptible young soul. Although they darken his ideas about people and the world, in general, he is able to resist the blows of life and to develop as a personality. This success owes to his strong belief in himself.

Joyce skillfully penetrates the psychology of the child, and later the young man, who has an intense inner life. In an effort to protect himself from the uncaring atmosphere at home and from the unpleasant college environment, where he is suppressed by austere discipline and the rudeness of the peers, Stephen creates his own world. His imagination is filled with images that are both poetical and disturbing, and that contribute to his singularly acute perception of the sounds, smells, and colors of nature. He feels happy only when he is alone, or with his imaginary friends. Stephen is the only main character of the novel, and the whole action is filtered through the prism of his consciousness. The other characters find themselves in the novel by occupying his mind. Stephen Dedalus himself is the center of the universe. This is not just a biography of a maturing young man; it is rather the depiction of his inner life, the formation of his character, the origin of civil sense of a young patriot. His whole internal experience is filled with indelible childish impressions.

*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is a novel of self-examination and self-knowledge. The young protagonist delves deeply into ordinary themes from his school books: “He opened the geography to study the lesson; but he could not learn the names of places in America. Still they were all different places that had different names” (13). His thinking gradually acquires a distinctly philosophical tendency: “They were all in different countries and the countries were in continents and the continents were in the world and the world was in the

universe” (13). While the subject itself may bore him, it nonetheless helps him to discover other realms—extending even to universal ones—for meditation. He also is so much the universe that he feels no need to study about the universe outside him. It seems redundant.

Stephen often recollects the verses from his Spelling Book: “Wolsey died in Leicester Abbey / Where the abbots buried him. /Canker is a disease of plants, / Cancer one of animals” (8). He once meditated on these unsophisticated lines, which, however, made him realize that “by thinking about things you could understand them” (37). Joyce often employs, with calculated effect, the verb “to think.” “But, O, the road there between the trees was dark! You would be lost in the dark. It made him afraid to think of how it was. He heard the voice of the prefect of the chapel saying the last prayer. He prayed it too against the dark outside under the trees” (15). Joyce scrutinizes the inner world of little Stephen with sensitive caution, as if afraid to disturb his soul. Stephen Dedalus tries to perceive the surrounding world himself, without asking anyone any questions. The boy ponders: “What was after the universe? Nothing. But was there anything round the universe to show where it stopped before the nothing place began?” (13). That is to say, the problem of the universe troubles the mind of a child!

Stephen already realizes that everybody, at home, at college, speaks of God (Stephen even imagines Him). The boy, however, cannot grasp how God understands all the people praying in different languages. The child comes to a conclusion: “But though there were different names for God in all the different languages in the world and God understood what all the people who prayed said in their languages still God remained always the same God and God’s real name was God” (13-14). “It made him very tired to

think that way.[...] It pained him that he did not know well what politics meant and that he did not know where the universe ended” (14).

It is possible that not every child is like Stephen, attempting to solve the questions beyond the capacity of some philosophers. In such episodes Joyce presents himself as an astounding and shrewd observer of the formation of soul and mind of a young man. It was something new for the literature of that period. The narration is rendered as if through recollections, and recollections sometimes arise spontaneously, sometimes successively, and everything seems to be natural. It is like a dream, where even in the most contradictory moments one may not see any strangeness. The boy finds salvation from his “fundamental” meditation in a prayer: “God bless my father and my mother and spare them to me!/God bless my little brothers and sisters and spare them to me!/God bless Dante and uncle Charles and spare them to me!” (16).

Feeling his solitude among school friends, Stephen instinctively finds consolation in the reminiscence of his now distant careless childhood. When he is hurt by somebody, the boy used to imagine how he would die and everybody would pity him. He even hears the death-bell and the song of childhood sounds in his soul: “Dingdong! The castle bell! / Farewell, my mother!/ Bury me in the old churchyard / Beside my eldest brother. / My coffin shall be black, / Six angels at my back, / Two to sing and two to pray / And two to carry my soul away” (20).

During his illness in college Stephen has some visions, and he hears the name—Parnell: “-He is dead. We saw him lying upon the catafalque. / A wail of sorrow went up from the people. / -Parnell! Parnell! He is dead! / They fell upon their knees, moaning in sorrow” (23).

Later, Stephen witnesses the scene, which predetermines his future political and social views. The setting is his home at Christmas. All of the family members are gathered by the fireplace. During the dinner elders start a conversation, in which they mention God, and the name of Parnell can again be heard in the room. The father speaks in support of this name and others blame the father for something. Stephen loves his father and believes him and, having felt that his father defends Parnell, Stephen is filled with respect and reverence for this mysterious hero. The face of the father was engraved in Stephen's memory, Simon's eyes "were full of tears," the face of a man who is sincerely worried about the fate of his motherland—Ireland. Who knows, perhaps, this very scene gives the boy strength and makes him think about his future, about the future of Ireland. In my opinion, this very episode paves the way for the future sprouts of national consciousness, a peculiar love for his nation, entangled in the religious faction between the fighters for independence and the followers of the church, who used to call their nation and their flock for obedience and total mercifulness.

The words of prayer are engraved in Stephen's remote childish consciousness: "O Lord open our lips / And our mouths shall announce Thy praise. / Incline unto our aid, O God! / O Lord make haste to help us!" (15).

Little Dedalus remembers the smell of church for the rest of his life—a "holy smell." His recollection smoothly floats in his consciousness, fusing with reality. His life is filled with some peculiar meaning. It seems that Stephen knows that his destination is marked with a sign of fate.

Young Stephen asks himself many questions and solves them himself, fearlessly and fondly. He once asks himself what might happen "if he would die. You could die just the same on a sunny day" (20). That is to say, the sun, "sunny day" are the markers of

happiness and joy, therefore there is no place for grief and sorrow at such divine moments, and every living creature wants to think this way. However, a young soul of the future artist seeks its answers and solutions. Stephen says to himself that everything is in God's power, and everything will be the way He pleases. Stephen believes that God does nothing in vain—if God needs his soul, then it is inevitable.

Stephen's childhood recollections are spontaneous, and they arouse ambiguous feelings, which are still unclear. For example, he is struck by the image of a protestant girl Eileen who has "long and white and thin and cold and soft" hands—like ivory, and her hair, streaming out behind her— "tower of ivory" indeed. Years will pass and the image of shining ivory which resembles the shine of the word will start to agitate the mind of Stephen Dedalus. Young Stephen is not merely a poet. His meditations are deep; his inner life makes him self-sufficient in order to attain the perfection the real poet should be endowed with. In order to reveal the process of inner formation of the poet, Joyce takes advantage of a particular style: reminiscence, impressions, reflection of events. This technique gives the novel some unusual charm and makes it especially poignant.

The reader feels sympathy for Stephen in the episode with the broken glasses, when the prefect of studies punishes him: "His whole body was shaking with fright, his arm was shaking and his crumpled burning livid hand shook like a loose leaf in the air. A cry sprang to his lips, a prayer to be let off. But though the tears scalded his eyes and his limbs quivered with pain and fright he held back the hot tears and the cry that scalded his throat" (44). It is hard to read these lines without indignation, one may even feel desire to give advice—he should protect himself! The prefect does not believe that the reason why Stephen was not writing is the broken glasses, and "the doctor had told him not to read

without glasses” (45). The prefect calls him “lazy idle little loafer,” which is humiliating and unfair—Stephen has always been one of the best students in the class. The boy reflects: “Then to be called a schemer before the class and to be pandied when he always got the card for first or second and was the leader of the Yorkists! How could the prefect of studies know that it was a trick?” (45). “The prefect of studies was a priest but that was cruel and unfair” (45). The boy seeks protection and justice from the rector. Stephen makes the first steps to resistance in his life, “his heart was beating fast on account of the solemn place he was in and the silence of the room...” (49). He is eager to obtain justice, and it happens; the rector, convinced of Stephen’s innocence, tries to console him: “...it is a mistake and I shall speak to Father Dolan myself” (50). Stephen feels happy, for he was justified, and he managed to protect himself. He generously decides “not be anyway proud with Father Dolan. He would be very quiet and obedient: and he wished that he could do something kind for him to show him that he was not proud” (51). Stephen comes to understand that he can and must stand up for himself. If he is able to do it, everybody will be happy, and, in the first place, Stephen himself. At this early age, the boy is quite subtle spiritually, which is well seen in his attitude towards Uncle Charles, when in the chapel “Stephen knelt at his side respecting, though he did not share, his piety” (53). During the walks with his uncle the future artist listens to his talks with the acquaintances and memorizes unfamiliar words: “Words which he did not understand he said over and over to himself till he had learnt them by heart: and through them he had glimpses of the real world about them” (54).

After the bankruptcy of Father Simon Dedalus, Stephen feels inexplicably wretched and poor, however, he cannot understand why, and it deeply frustrates him. He cannot perceive and forgive elders for such a state of things, but he is unable to be of any help as

well. All this irritates Stephen, but he tries to conceal his discontent from extraneous looks. Stephen does not think about such notion as material well-being, however, he feels different: “I was someone else then” (212). He now has a different world view, he is a socially different man for “the life of his body, ill clad, ill fed, louse-eaten, made him close his eyelids in a sudden spasm of despair...” (296).

Stephen Dedalus is intellectually more mature than his school mates. At times he even treats them with indulgence, taking no offence at their caustic remarks and silly jokes: “He scarcely resented what had seemed to him a silly indelicateness for he knew that the adventure in his mind stood in no danger from these words: and his face mirrored his rival’s false smile” (68).

Having studied in college, Stephen dedicates all his leisure to reading “subversive writers whose jibes and violence of speech set up a ferment in his brain before they passed out of it into his crude writings” (69). Stephen considers essay writing to be one of the most important tasks: he is the best essay writer in his class and can calmly defend his point of view in his essays. Reading and writing, especially the poetry of Lord Byron, have great significance for him. He is ready to make sacrifices for poetry (at one point he tries to write it). Writing poetry differentiates him from others. This fact can be interpreted as the author’s attempt to emphasize Stephen’s sensitivity and neuroticism. He is not a “sturdy” boy who is growing up as a very thoughtful individual. Stephen is not a typical man—this is one of the main messages of the novel, and it is a modernist message. Modernist *Bildungsroman* is aimed at depicting a non-typical, exceptional individual. Poetry is to be understood in this context as a marker of this exclusiveness and exceptionality.

Stephen's soul absorbs everything his mind considers to be necessary to remember. He becomes mature, grows to be a man: "His mind seemed older than theirs: it shone coldly on their strifes and happiness and regrets like a moon upon a younger earth. No life or youth stirred in him as it had stirred in them" (83-84). Gradually Stephen's body matures as well, carnal thoughts start to haunt him, disturbing and frightening him: "He wanted to sin with another of his kind, to force another being to sin with him and to exult with her in sin. He felt some dark presence moving irresistibly upon him from the darkness, a presence subtle and murmurous as a flood filling him wholly with itself" (87).

Childhood ends, adolescence begins and grows into youth, and Stephen starts to perceive his "viciousness" more keenly, he feels shame which he cannot escape. He wants to expiate his corporeal sin, he is determined to confess. He wanders about the streets, finds a distant church, where he prays assiduously and confesses: "The old and weary voice fell like sweet rain upon his quaking parching heart" (126). The voice admonishes him, and the feeling of conciliation and purification rises in Stephen's soul. The young man vows to God never to sin again and leaves the church "conscious of an invisible grace pervading and making light his limbs" (127). Grown-up Stephen enters a new stage of life, when he is able to decide what sin is and confess. Will he acquire peace of body and soul? The words of Father Arnall are engraved in Stephen's memory: "Remember only thy last things and thou shalt not sin for ever— words taken [...] from the book of Ecclesiastes" (95). Dedalus' restless soul is covered by a blanket, woven of fine details of the big confession: "Stephen's heart had withered up like a flower of the desert..." (95).

Stephen Dedalus listens to the words of the rector and absorbs admonitions from catechism about four fundamental things: death, judgment, hell, and heaven. One should meditate on these notions in order to attain eternal blessing for the souls of humans—the

preacher says, and these words deeply agitate the mind of the maturing man: "...a thick fog seemed to compass his mind. He waited in stupor of mind till it should lift and reveal what it had hidden" (97). Stephen, still a young man, who has not yet seen life in all its fullness and diversity, listens to the sermon and imagines dreadful scenes, where he pictures himself as an acting character. He sees himself in hell and experiences all the tortures of Hades, when "the blood seethes and boils in the veins, the brains are boiling in the skull, the heart in the breast glowing and bursting, the bowels a red-hot mass of burning pulp, the tender eyes flaming like molten balls" (106). One should have a certain inner strength in order to even mentally experience the depicted torments. This characterizes him as a man, who possesses personal courage. This experience, albeit imaginative, is very important, because it is also a part of his *Bildung*; he goes through trials in his mind, and not in what is normally referred to as "real life," but for him these mental images and phenomena are more real than anything else—and terrifying, too. They are the difficulties he faces, and he meets the challenge with dignity and strength.

Stephen Dedalus is astounded by the depth of the sermon. When he leaves the chapel, "his legs shaking and the scalp of his head trembling as though it had been touched by ghostly fingers. And at every step he feared that he had already died, that his soul had been wrenched forth of the sheath of his body, that he was plunging headlong through space" (109). Perhaps, his attitude towards the sermon could not be different, taking into account his susceptibility and keen intellect. He thinks that every word of the preacher is addressed to him what brings him to despair. Meanwhile, Stephen ponders that God is almighty, and He can help lost souls even if it is very hard to do. Youth, lack of experience and ignorance are the shortcomings that pass with age. Stephen's aesthetics is aimed

against the dullness of life; however, he is still in want of steadfastness and maturity to prove his rightfulness. He doubts the truth and wants to perceive the fullness of life through his personal experience. It is hard, at times impossible and painful: “I tried to love God. [...] It is very difficult. I tried to unite my will with the will of God instant by instant. In that I did not always fail. I could perhaps do that still—” (212).

Stephen confesses to his friend Cranly that he is not afraid to stay alone, he is not afraid to make mistakes: “Even a great mistake, a lifelong mistake, and perhaps as long as eternity too” (218). Dedalus decides to leave the country, to leave his family and find a refuge on this beautiful and sinful earth. He hears a call in his soul: “Away! Away!” (223).

The climax of Stephen Dedalus’ *Bildung* occurs when he takes for granted his inner conflict between his old religious self and the rigidity of religion, and his new self which is still in the making. He does not want to conform to social norms. His *Bildung* consists in diving into religious experience and thoughts about becoming a priest (he feels that he can be useful to people and experiences guilt in not following these ideals) and shedding his old identity. The idea that the doors of religious sacrament, unknown to those who are not ordained, will open to him, seems alluring to him. However, Stephen soon realizes that he is unable to subordinate the pride of his free spirit to the strict Jesuit discipline. He realizes that in the Jesuit order a dark regular life awaits him, and his destiny is to avoid any kind of social and religious bonds.

He understands that his lot is to perceive his own wisdom apart from anybody else, by himself. Spiritual solitude is the characteristic of the protagonist in the course of all his formation, from childhood, through boyhood, to adolescence. In the last chapter of the novel the development of the main theme takes place. The problems, which used to ripen in

the course of the whole narrative—family, religion, politics, art—are being dissipated in the mind of Stephen Dedalus. He finally realizes his true attitude towards these issues and decides to leave the country. He wants to express himself in this or that form of life and art as fully and openly, as he finds protection in the “armor” of solitude, silence, and exile. Religion becomes a major threshold for him. The internal thing appears to be not a *Bildung* that involves physical travelling, but internal travelling. The conflict of Stephen Dedalus with religion can be interpreted as a metaphor of travelling trials. Real travelling takes place only after he knows where he can go. Exploration of internal space takes place before he can explore “real” spaces. Joyce focuses attention on the inner trials of the main character—the changes that take place not on the surface, but rather in the deep “crevices” of subconsciousness. The author represents the ceaseless, changing consciousness of a contemporary man. The novel from the beginning to the end is an inner monolog, exploration of the intensive internal life of the man, absorbed in constant self-observation.

Modernist *Bildungsroman* focuses on atypical experiences. In the case of Kotik, we see an experience of a small child (not addressed before in such a manner in literature). In the case of Joyce—experience of an artist, an exceptional man. In *Kotik Letaev*—the history of a child’s development is shown as the history of mankind and Christ. In the background of the novel there lies “mythological thinking.” It is evident that Bely designs the narrative on the basis of the archaic myth about the death and resurrection of Christ. A number of motifs indicate Kotik’s direct identification with Christ. In order to delve deeply into the structural and semantic peculiarity of the novel, one should be aware of the fact that the protagonist appears to be a suffering individual. The indicating factor of this turns

out to be Kotik's experience of the phases of death, expressed in the motifs of the all-absorbing fire, fear, and crucifixion.

Despite the exterior storyline of the novel, which begins as a novel of education, with the most logical plot—the childhood of the main character, and the consequent recounting events of his development, the pattern of the text only conditionally is connected with the birth of Kotik as a motivation of the narrative. The events happen seemingly without any connection with each other and are complicated and varied according to the extent of their repetition; some kind a resolution always seems to be expected, but in reality it does not arrive. Kotik Letaev finds himself under the influence of the vortex of the recurring events that cause a destructive effect on his life and his world. He is thrown into the «мрак черепа» (darkness of the cranium) from the very first days of his life. The main purpose of the protagonist's *Bildung* is to escape this defenselessness and overcome the “darkness.” Kotik's first glimpses of conscious memory resemble delirious visions, which he perceives as the true reality. Here ensue the feelings of instability, insecurity of the universe, nonsense, and confusion. The real world is intimidating to the child, and he feels isolated in it. Kotik lives in ruins, in the power of an endless terror, and antediluvian myths, which appear to be the true reality. The reality of the contemporary man is nothing but something fortuitous, subjective, transient, and unstable.

The threshold of human consciousness is rather unsteady, and can easily be ruined by circumstances: then the unconscious realm of myths and delirium capture the mind. Progress and culture impose new habits, instincts, and feelings. Kotik Letaev is always under threat to lose touch with reality, which can be devoured by the “world” of delirium. The world, as it is, is catastrophic. It is revealed in *Kotik Letaev* in vortical elements,

turmoil, and confusion. The escape from it lies in human rationality and reasoning. The mind of Kotik Letaev interprets the confusion of the surrounding milieu and builds an empirical world of causality; it is the only stronghold against the “cosmic storms:” «Ныне древние мифы морями упали под ноги; и океанами бредов бушуют и лижут нам тверди: земель и сознаний; видимость возникла в них; возникло «Я» и «Не - Я»; возникли отдельности... Но моря выступали: роковое наследие, космос, врывается в действительность; тщётно прятались в её клочья; в беспокровности таяло всё: всё-всё ширилось; пропадали земли в морях; изрывалось сознание в мифах ужасной праматери; и потопа кипели» (Now the ancient myths have fallen away beneath my feet as seas; and as oceans of deliria they rage and lick out solid masses: of lands and consciousness; visibility appeared in them; “I” and “Not-I” appeared; separateness appeared. But the seas advanced: a fateful legacy, the cosmos burst into actuality; in vain they hid in actuality’s shreds; everything melted in coverlessness: everything expanded; the lands were lost in the seas; consciousness burst out in myths of the horrible progenitress; and floods seethed, 433).

The self and mind control and subdue the elements. The mind appears finally to acquire stability; however, the author is not fascinated by the “continents” of reality, formed by the self. Our mind and consciousness remain cold and mechanical, devoid of flesh, life, and true artistic origin. In *Kotik Letaev*, Bely shows that the protagonist possesses uncoordinated knowledge of the world, and thus is unable to give answers to questions on the value cosmos, earth, people, and our individual lives. Bely shows the crisis of culture and life with peculiar distinctness. Solitude, individualism, the feeling of catastrophe, and disappointment in human rationality are distinctly reflected in Kotik

Letaev's mindset. The novel ends with the words: «Во Христе умираем, чтоб в Духе воскреснуть» (In Christ we die in order to rise again in the Spirit, 578). Crucifixion is the only principle of the knowledge of the world and the way of inner self. Thus the symbol of “self-crucifixion” acquires an additional meaning: a man has to go through the Passions of Christ and resurrect in the knowledge of the world. The body has to perish in order to acquire a new meaning.

In comparison to *Kotik Letaev*, where the main character finds purpose in religion, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* shows how a man grows up and relinquishes religion in order to attain personal freedom, which is the only goal of the artist's *Bildung*. In Joyce we are dealing with the *Bildung* of the artist. The protagonist develops not only as a man, but as a poet-philosopher. The aesthetics of Stephen Dedalus, aimed at the ignorance of the everyday life, is a revolt—a revolt which is, however, egocentric and immature. The young poet is charmed by the beauty of the “word,” he feels like a pagan or even a rebellious angel. He has not yet experienced the fullness of life, and has not yet come to know that spiritual truth, goodness, and beauty, if not being the same things, are inseparably connected with each other. The rebellion against the platitude is transformed at times into misanthropy and aestheticism. The enthusiastic impulses of youth can easily be wasted. Without realization of the necessity of being in constant search of good, the person who rebels against the dullness of life risks becoming the captive of this dullness.

The *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is the kind of *Bildungsroman* subgenre, which is entirely connected with the man in the humanistic sense, and is directed to the man by both its content and purpose. The artistic and aesthetic problems—the problems of a personality—are interwoven in this kind of novel. It does not necessarily depict a specific

person, but is generally connected with the mysteries of human nature. What does it mean to portray a person as an artistic “object?” This is the novel that focuses on the artist, an exceptional man, as welcome by the tradition of Modernism. This is the kind of a narrative technique, just like in Proust or Bely. He lives through the educational experiences and observes himself at the same time, being able to articulate them in a way that goes beyond even the novelistic technique of the omniscient narrator. One of the main experiences he faces is religion—in Bely just as much as in Joyce. But if Bely presents a series of revelations and discoveries heavily loaded with symbolism and mysticism, Joyce concentrates on the motifs of rebellion and liberation.

We witness the spiritual crisis of the protagonist of Stephen Dedalus. The spiritual catastrophe, or *catharsis*, appears to be a unique twist as a result of which Stephen, once an ardent Catholic, becomes an equally ardent artist. The individual twist is hidden in the spiritual crisis—transformation, implying the transformation of the religious “substratum” personality into the aesthetic one. The individualistic rhythm in this particular case is the rhythm of transformation from religious element into artistic one. The artist himself explicitly demonstrates that the religious world can be transferred into the aesthetic almost without any loss. The dogmatic points of Christianity become the origins and fundamentals of aesthetics.

When comparing *Kotik Letaev* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, it is important to note that both authors, step by step, form a new view of consciousness. They find new meanings not only to old words, but also the new language. The “word” for them ceases to be the only medium of linguistic connotations. The text itself becomes one big “word,” in which separate words are mere elements, interacting in the integrated semantic

unity of the text. Both novels the authors feel every single word and nuance of the rhythm in order to give an exceptional depth of meaning. Among the conceptual works of literature of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, those are the most sophisticated ones, in which philosophy, mysticism, mythology, and science are integrated in the plot.

Both protagonists, Kotik Letaev and Stephen Dedalus, model a new world view pyramid. Their concepts express alienation from reality. The rejection of the real world appears to be their aesthetic response to crudeness, which reigns in all spheres of life, art, human relationships, and feelings. The divorce from the surrounding environment provokes in the protagonists the aspiration to create their own world, free from pressures of the real one. By expressing it, Bely and Joyce present their society and their time. The main purpose of *Bildungsroman* is to communicate cultural values, the norms of social behavior, and the integration of the reader into society. However, in the modernist novels of education the social and cultural values are false, and the *Bildung* of the protagonist proposes an agonizing quest for the sense of the world, and an existential creation of true cultural values. The main feature of the transformation of *Bildungsroman* in Modernism is the protagonist's search for the way out of not only personal crisis, but also of cultural crisis. In this respect, the modernist novel of education acquires a peculiar compensating function as that of social institution.

## CHAPTER 5

## CONCLUSION

Using the two modernist novels of education, *Kotik Letaev* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, I showed how the traditional Enlightenment *Bildungsroman* was transformed in the modernist novel and how it was reconsidered. In the course of the analysis of these two novels of education of the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, I examined the change of the narrative, which is directly connected with the transformations of traditional social and individual values. The protagonists of the discussed novels experience existential suffering and are unable to perceive the changed world. They have to develop new strategies in order to understand and find new means of socialization within the existing institutions, be it school, home, or the outer world. In the modernist *Bildungsroman*, the predetermined socialization that was much favored in the discourse of Enlightenment is replaced by the endeavor of individual self-comprehension. Instead of a philistine hero of the classical novels of education, in the modernist novel we see an artist, whose vocation is to overcome not only the crisis of one's individual being, but also of the culture in general. The plot of the modernist novel shifts from the outer world to the inner world of the main character. The processes of spiritual life of the protagonist become materialized. The secondary characters turn into the archetypes of the collective subconsciousness of the protagonist. The formation of the main character represents not the single-phase act of initiation, but rather the process of individualization which encompasses the whole life.

Various scenarios of mythologization appear to be relevant for modernist *Bildungsroman*. One of the most common themes is the return to the origins of culture or personal experience of the protagonist: to childhood or the history of previous generations (*Kotik Letaev's* childhood is also present in Joyce's novel as well). By implementing this technique, a vulnerable

consciousness of a modernist individual tries to re-acquire the lost integrity of the surrounding world.

The author's position in the narrative also changes. In the modernist novels of education the author engages in a hermeneutical strategy of self-interpretation and focuses on the vital cultural problems through the hero-narrator. Thus the reader is able to find the answers to personal questions, caused by the cultural crisis. The narrative structure and the style of the modernist novel mirror these processes performatively by offering us a "neurotic" consciousness written with the help of modernist techniques: stream of consciousness, fragmentation, ellipses/flashbacks, and interest in the unconscious processes. Therefore, we can conclude that *Bildungsroman* fulfils a harmonizing function: it acts as mediator between the society and the person, to provide the knowledge and skills necessary for individual survival in the new, often absurd and incomprehensible age, with no "rules" of rationalism and reason à la Enlightenment in place. It is no wonder that the modernist novel of education focuses on the experiences that were not described before: that of a small child (*Kotik Letaev*) and that of an artist (*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*), a "unique," atypical person. A child and an artist both are logical choices because they are in touch with the world of the unconscious more than a "normal" person favored by such novels before. Consequently, the modernist novel of education has the function of an institution—mediation of subjectivity and the formation of social and cultural identity; the novel therefore accomplished the same social functions.

In the Enlightenment *Bildungsroman*, the formation of an individual occurs in terms of the ideal of personality of the period, a rational mode of upbringing. The protagonist at the end of the classical novel of education enters society as a transformed personality. In the modernist culture, in the situation of crisis of previous forms of rationality and life strategies, the

*Bildungsroman* undergoes radical changes. The education within such a novel does not bear the regulatory or exemplary function. The socialization strategy is replaced by individualization—self-understanding of the main character—and thereby the reader also begins to comprehend the personal course of life, individual, and social identity.

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