

DOI <https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2026-2-59>

MEMORY, UNRELIABLE NARRATION, AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE BILDUNGSROMAN IN JULIAN BARNES'S "THE SENSE OF AN ENDING"

Gila Huseynli,

*Ph.D. in Philology, Associate Professor, Azerbaijan University of Languages
(Baku, Azerbaijan)*

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-1754-865X

gila.huseynli@adu.edu.az

Abstract. The postmodern bildungsroman challenges the traditional understanding of growing up as a linear and objective process. This article examines the characteristics of the postmodern bildungsroman in Julian Barnes's novel "The Sense of an Ending". The study explores the transformation of the classic novel about identity formation within a postmodern narrative structure. Using genre analysis, narratological interpretation, and close reading, the study examines the novel's non-chronological temporality, unreliable narration, and the relativity of memory and truth.

In contrast to the traditional depiction of the protagonist's life as a strictly chronological sequence, the narrative unfolds retrospectively and fragmentarily through the memories of the protagonist, Tony Webster. The analysis reveals that growing up in the novel is neither progressive nor harmonious, but retrospective, morally unsettling, and incomplete. Tony's rethinking of his past reveals the instability of personal history and calls into question the possibility of a coherent self-formation.

The findings suggest that Barnes reimagines the bildungsroman as a narrative of epistemological uncertainty rather than achieved integration, thus demonstrating the genre's postmodern transformation.

Key words: bildungsroman, postmodernism, identity formation, memory, unreliable narration, retrospective memory.

Introduction. Julian Barnes's literary works are distinguished by their rich use of postmodern elements. His novel, "The Sense of an Ending", is considered one of the most significant works of 21st-century British literature and won the Man Booker Prize in 2011. The narrative centers on Tony Webster, a retired historian whose flashbacks form the core of the novel. Divided into two parts, the novel begins with the protagonist's school memories, gradually moving to deeper reflections on his past and personal responsibility.

Problem statement. Despite numerous studies of Julian Barnes's work, the genre status of "The Sense of an Ending" as a postmodern transformation of the bildungsroman remains under-systematized. While the novel is often analyzed from the perspectives of memory studies, unreliable narration, and historiographic metafiction, few studies explicitly consider how Barnes rethinks the structural and epistemological principles of the classic bildungsroman (Childs, 2011; Moseley, 2015). In particular, a systematic analysis of the interplay between retrospective narration, ethical ambiguity, and the temporality of identity is lacking, leaving the postmodern aspects of the bildungsroman under-explored. Unlike the classic bildungsroman, postmodern narratives emphasize epistemological uncertainty, ethical ambiguity, and retrospective self-reflection, making a comparative framework necessary for understanding the novel's contribution to the genre.

This study focuses on the epistemological and temporal aspects of the genre, exploring how Barnes transforms the traditional bildungsroman through narrative unreliability, retrospective temporality, and ethical ambiguity.

The traditional bildungsroman presents coming-of-age as a sequential and progressive development of the individual within society (Buckley, 1974). However, in postmodern literature, this linear model is fragmented and destabilized (Hutcheon, 1988; Lyotard, 1984). In Barnes's novel, com-

ing-of-age is presented as retrospective, uncertain, and incomplete, raising the question of whether authentic formation is achievable in a postmodern context. Here, the bildungsroman is viewed not only as a narrative of personal growth but also as a historically conditioned literary system whose structural logic can be reshaped.

Research questions. This study aims to answer the following questions:

1. How does “The Sense of an Ending” rethink the structural model of the classic bildungsroman, particularly its teleological and temporal logic?
2. How do memory, unreliable narration, and fragmented temporality alter the process of coming of age in the novel?
3. Does Tony Webster ultimately achieve self-realization, or does the narrative problematize the very possibility of closure, illustrating a postmodern restructuring of the bildungsroman?

Relevance of the study. The relevance of this study lies in the growing scholarly interest in the transformation of traditional genres in postmodern contexts. As contemporary fiction increasingly questions stable identities, historical objectivity, and narrative authority, rethinking the bildungsroman within a postmodern framework acquires theoretical significance (Golban, 2018; Waugh, 1984). Moreover, Barnes’s novel convincingly demonstrates how personal memory intersects with genre conventions (Ricoeur, 2004), demonstrating that the bildungsroman in a postmodern context embraces both epistemological uncertainty and ethical self-reflection.

Aim and objectives. The purpose of this article is to explore the key characteristics of the postmodern bildungsroman in Julian Barnes’s novel “The Sense of an Ending”, focusing on its structural, epistemological, and temporal transformations.

To achieve this goal, the following objectives are set:

- to outline the theoretical foundations of the classical and postmodern bildungsroman;
- to analyze the novel’s narrative structure, focusing on temporality, retrospection, and ethical issues;
- to examine the role of memory and unreliable narration in shaping the protagonist’s development;
- to determine whether the process of coming of age in the novel is complete or fundamentally fragmented, and how this reflects postmodern transformations of the genre.

Methodology. The study utilizes genre analysis, narratological interpretation, and elements of comparative literary studies. The theoretical framework draws on classical theories of the bildungsroman (Buckley, 1974; Dilthey, 1985) and contemporary approaches to postmodern narrative, particularly concepts related to fragmented identity, unreliable narration, and the relativity of historical truth (Hutcheon, 1988; Lyotard, 1984; Ricoeur, 2004). This approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the novel as a work of fiction and as a systematic restructuring of the principles of literary genre.

Novelty of the research. The novelty of this study lies in its comprehensive approach to the novel as a postmodern bildungsroman. Rather than viewing memory and narrative as isolated themes, the article demonstrates how these elements structurally function, transforming the genre itself (Golban, 2018). It highlights the epistemological and ethical dimensions of the bildungsroman, situating Barnes’s work within the broader context of postmodern narrative theory.

Structure of the article. This article is structured as follows: first, it outlines the theoretical evolution of the bildungsroman from its classical form to its postmodern reinterpretation; second, it analyzes the key narrative and thematic elements of “The Sense of an Ending”, focusing on retrospective narration, epistemological instability, and ethical self-reflection; and finally, it assesses the extent to which the novel conforms to or violates genre conventions, demonstrating the transformation of the traditional bildungsroman into a postmodern form.

Materials and methods. The study is based on qualitative literary analysis and utilizes an interdisciplinary methodological framework combining genre theory, narratology, and postmodern literary criticism (Hutcheon, 1988; Waugh, 1984).

The primary method employed in this study is genre analysis, which identifies the structural and thematic characteristics of the classic bildungsroman and compares them with their transformation in the postmodern context (Buckley, 1974; Dilthey, 1985). This approach allows us to examine how traditional formative elements such as linear development, social integration, and harmonious self-realization, are modified in Julian Barnes's short story "The Sense of an Ending".

Furthermore, the article utilizes narratological analysis, particularly with an emphasis on temporality, retrospective narration, and unreliable narration (Hutcheon, 1988; Ricoeur, 2004). Particular attention is paid to the fragmented structure of memory and the instability of narrative perspective, which play a central role in shaping the protagonist's maturation.

The study also utilizes close reading and analysis of key passages in the novel to demonstrate the interplay of memory, self-perception, and historical awareness within the narrative. Selected quotes from the novel serve as textual evidence supporting the study's theoretical arguments.

From a theoretical perspective, the study draws on classical theories of the bildungsroman (Buckley, 1974; Dilthey, 1985), as well as contemporary interpretations of the postmodern formative novel (Golban, 2018; Hutcheon, 1988; Lyotard, 1984). Concepts such as fragmented identity, the relativity of truth, and the crisis of historical objectivity form the conceptual framework of the analysis.

Study is qualitative in nature and does not rely on quantitative data. His findings are based on an interpretive analysis of the narrative structure, thematic development, and character formation in the novel (Barnes, 2011; Ricoeur, 2004).

Literature review. The bildungsroman, which has taken various forms in accordance with historical processes, has undergone significant transformations in different literary periods.

The term "bildungsroman" was first systematically theorized by Wilhelm Dilthey, who defined it as a narrative of individual development shaped by experience and social interaction (Dilthey, 1985). Later, Jerome Hamilton Buckley described the genre as a story of adolescence, conflict, self-discovery, and subsequent integration into society (Buckley, 1974). These foundational definitions emphasize linear development, the integrity of identity, and reconciliation between the individual and the social order. These classical conceptualizations presuppose both epistemological stability and chronological clarity as necessary conditions for the bildungsroman.

From Dilthey's early works, "Poetry and Experience", to Buckley's "Season of Youth" the bildungsroman was initially viewed as a genre that flourished in 19th-century European literature. However, 20th-century literary trends significantly transformed the genre. Modernist and postmodern aesthetics disrupted the linear teleology that traditionally defined the structure of the developmental novel. As Boes (2006) argues, the 20th-century bildungsroman has increasingly shifted toward narratives of crisis, fragmentation, and instability, particularly in postcolonial and minority literatures. Rather than harmonious integration, modern and postmodern versions often highlight alienation and incompleteness. While Boes (2006) and Golban (2018) provide valuable overviews of the evolution of the bildungsroman, this study emphasizes Barnes's specific narrative strategies, aligning the analysis closely with "The Sense of an Ending" rather than with generalizations about the genre.

The bildungsroman, deeply influenced by the twentieth century, gradually shifted its focus from class struggle and social mobility to issues of self-identity and psychological formation. This shift highlights the epistemological dimension of postmodern formation: identity becomes temporary, memory unreliable, and maturation nonlinear.

In postmodern contexts, identity itself becomes unstable. Linda Hutcheon (1988) notes that postmodern fiction questions grand narratives and stable truths, thereby destabilizing traditional models of development. Similarly, Jean-François Lyotard (1984) emphasizes the decline of metanarratives, which directly impacts the teleological structure of the classic bildungsroman. While maturation once implied coherence and unity, postmodernism redefines it as fragmented, temporal, and ethically ambiguous. This transformation indicates that the bildungsroman is no longer purely developmental

but also epistemological: the process of formation involves uncertainty, interpretive plurality, and constant ethical reflection.

This transformation also impacts narrative technique. Unreliable narration, temporal disruptions, and the fragmentation of memory become central means of representing subjectivity. According to Ricoeur (2004), memory is not a stable archive, but a reconstructive process shaped by ongoing consciousness. This understanding of memory undermines the objective retelling of the past and introduces epistemological uncertainty into the narrative of development. In this sense, the postmodern bildungsroman utilizes narrative instability as a structural tool for rethinking both self-knowledge and moral understanding.

For this reason, in the postmodern bildungsroman, the period of perfection is often expressed through psychological and introspective processes rather than through external achievements. Golban (2018) argues that the bildungsroman should be understood not as a fixed genre, but as a dynamic literary system that develops historically. This perspective allows us to view contemporary novels as transformations, not simply deviations from the classical model. Barnes's novel, in particular, illustrates how the epistemological instability of memory and the ethical uncertainty of retrospective judgment can constitute the very mechanism through which bildungsroman is realized in postmodern literature.

In this theoretical context, Julian Barnes's novel "The Sense of an Ending" occupies a special place. Although the novel has often been examined within the context of memory, historiography, and unreliable narrative (Childs, 2011; Moseley, 2015), far fewer studies explicitly situate it within the framework of the postmodern bildungsroman. The novel's retrospective structure, its fragmented temporality, and the protagonist's late-life reappraisal of past events suggest a rethinking of the traditional narrative of identity formation. In other words, Barnes demonstrates that coming of age in a postmodern context is not a teleological achievement, but an ongoing epistemological and ethical process.

Unlike the classic bildungsroman, where development culminates in social harmony, Barnes presents coming of age as a belated, painful, and morally ambiguous phenomenon. The protagonist's development occurs not through gradual social integration, but through the destabilization of memory and self-perception. Thus, existing research provides valuable insights into memory and narrative in Barnes's works, yet systematic genre analysis remains limited. This study contributes to addressing this gap by examining how Barnes uses narrative structure and memory to transform the conventions of the bildungsroman into a postmodern model of identity formation.

Analysis and discussion. Julian Barnes's novel "The Sense of an Ending" contains many of the aforementioned characteristics of the postmodern bildungsroman. However, its distinctive feature lies not only in its thematic similarities but also in its structural transformation. Barnes doesn't simply reproduce the formative model; he restructures it, destabilizing its epistemological and teleological foundations through retrospective narration and narrative unreliability.

Before considering the novel's genre transformation, it's necessary to outline the structural principles of the classic bildungsroman. Traditionally associated with a developmental model exemplified by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, the genre is based on teleological progress. The protagonist's life unfolds along a linear timeline, in which youthful experiences gradually lead to maturity, reconciliation, and social integration. Development is cumulative and progressive; each stage of life contributes to the strengthening of identity.

Within this paradigm, formation presupposes epistemological stability. Experience generates knowledge, knowledge generates self-awareness, and self-awareness ensures harmonious inclusion in society. Narratives typically conclude with a denouement, where internal conflict is resolved and the individual achieves equilibrium with the external world. Thus, teleology, linear temporality, social adaptation, and a coherent identity constitute the structural coordinates of the classical model.

Barnes's novel systematically destabilizes each of these coordinates. Instead of advancing toward integration, the narrative moves backward through memory; instead of strengthening identity,

it exposes its fragility; instead of closure, it culminates in anxiety. Therefore, the transformation of the bildungsroman in “The Sense of an Ending” can be understood as a structural reorganization of its founding principles.

Having outlined the structural premises of the classic bildungsroman, Barnes now turns to an analysis of how he reconfigures these foundations within the novel’s narrative architecture: “We sat in the classroom, listening to the teacher, while Adrian whispered jokes behind our backs and Veronica rolled her eyes at him” (Barnes, 2011, p. 12). This scene illustrates the early stage of social formation typical of the classic bildungsroman. Tony’s interactions with Adrian and Veronica reflect his evolving understanding of himself and others. In traditional models, such experiences gradually foster mature self-knowledge and social integration. Barnes, however, presents them retrospectively, emphasizing that Tony’s memories are selective and sometimes distorted. Thus, formation becomes unstable, retrospective, and epistemologically problematic. This underscores the postmodern restructuring of the bildungsroman: development ceases to be teleological, and self-realization occurs belatedly, intertwined with ethical and moral ambiguity.

The transformation occurs not only at the level of superficial motifs; rather, it unfolds through a systematic disruption of teleology, temporality, and epistemological stability. The subsequent analysis examines how retrospective narration becomes the primary mechanism through which this structural shift is accomplished.

The key feature that distinguishes the classic bildungsroman from other genres is the protagonist’s spiritual development and maturation. As Buckley (1974) argues, classic coming-of-age implies progressive development culminating in social integration. In traditional models, such as those associated with Johann Wolfgang von Goethe –development follows a linear trajectory, in which experience gradually leads to self-knowledge and harmony between the individual and society. However, in Barnes’s novel, this teleological sequence is disrupted. The protagonist’s development does not unfold chronologically, but is reconstructed retrospectively through memory, which proves unreliable and selective.

Tony’s reflections on history provide a clear example of this epistemological instability: “History is that certainty produced at the point where the imperfections of memory meet the inadequacies of documentation” (Barnes, 2011, p. 17). This assertion demonstrates that memory and documentation are inherently unreliable, challenging the classic bildungsroman assumption that experience gradually leads to stable self-knowledge. Here, Barnes reimagines formation as a process arising from the awareness of distortions, rather than from cumulative clarity.

Tony’s memories are often incomplete or distorted. This unreliability becomes apparent when missing letters and forgotten details fundamentally alter the reader’s understanding of earlier events: “I blamed Veronica for everything, and Adrian, well, he just amused himself at my expense” (Barnes, 2011, p. 28). This passage illustrates Tony’s early moral and emotional development, a key feature of the bildungsroman. His perception of Adrian and Veronica demonstrates a subjective and partial understanding, shaping his retrospective narrative. In a classic bildungsroman, such relational conflicts would gradually lead to self-knowledge and ethical growth. However, in Barnes’s postmodern version, the narrative emphasizes Tony’s selective memory and misinterpretation, demonstrating that identity formation is incomplete and ethically ambiguous. The scene emphasizes that maturation occurs through memory and reflection, not through direct social integration.

Initially, Tony presents himself as a passive victim, particularly in relation to Veronica and Adrian. However, the subsequent revelation of his cruel and vindictive letter destabilizes this self-image (Barnes, 2011). Thus, the narrative dramatizes the instability of self-perception. In a classic bildungsroman, self-knowledge gradually improves; here, this is belatedly corrected.

However, this belated correction does not lead to reconciliation. Tony’s admission of his moral error creates discomfort rather than harmony. Reflecting on this, he says “You are allowed a long

moment of pause, time enough to ask the question: what else have I done wrong?” (Barnes, 2011, p. 149). The rhetorical question resists closure. Instead of confirming achieved maturity, it opens a continuous process of ethical analysis. Here, the transformation of the genre becomes evident: maturity is reimagined as persistent self-doubt rather than stable self-integration.

Veronica’s repeated remark – “You just don’t get it, do you?” (Barnes, 2011, p. 73) – further reinforces this anti-teleological structure. In classic models, the protagonist ultimately “gets it”: understanding signals closure. In Barnes’s novel, even reflection in adulthood fails to produce full understanding. Age does not guarantee wisdom, experience does not guarantee insight. This constant interpretive failure reconfigures the endpoint of development. The narrative misses that final moment of clarity that traditionally concludes the *bildungsroman*.

This persistent inability to understand extends beyond interpersonal misunderstandings and reaches the level of self-perception within narrative. If the protagonist repeatedly “doesn’t understand”, the question arises whether the limitation lies not only in interpreting others but also in constructing one’s own identity. Thus, the instability of understanding points to a deeper ontological instability inherent in the act of narration itself.

The genre’s transformation occurs not only at the level of temporality but also at the level of narrative ontology. The novel’s first-person retrospective structure foregrounds the act of self-construction. Tony doesn’t simply remember events, he narrativizes them. His identity emerges as a product of narrative, shaped and reshaped through selective recollection.

Memory in the novel functions as a creative, rather than reproductive, force. Each act of recollection reorganizes the past, creating alternative versions of the self. Consequently, identity loses its ontological coherence. The self is not a stable entity discovered through experience, but a temporary construct sustained by narrative coherence. When omitted details emerge, coherence collapses, revealing the fragility of personal identity.

In the classic *bildungsroman*, self-knowledge presupposes the existence of a coherent self awaiting realization. However, in “The Sense of an Ending”, the self is constituted through narrative mediation and therefore remains inherently unstable. Identity formation culminates not in ontological certainty, but in a heightened awareness of narrative insufficiency. The protagonist’s maturity lies not in self-mastery, but in the recognition that the self he created was incomplete.

Another key feature of the classic genre is the tension between the individual and society, typically resolved through adaptation. In contrast, Tony’s central conflict arises not from social opposition, but from the discrepancy between memory and factual truth. His professional identity as a historian reinforces this irony. Having once defined history as a “version of events”, he is forced to confront the instability of his own narrative (Barnes, 2011).

The conflict is internal and epistemological, not social. Thus, the axis of formation shifts from external integration to internal reassessment. Recalling his past, Tony begins to perceive memory as a collection of disparate impressions. This perspective is consistent with the idea that memories are reconstructive rather than reproductive. The novel dramatizes this through gradual uncovering and narrative gaps. Each return to the past generates a reinterpretation rather than a confirmation. If retrospection replaces linear development, then the very temporal logic of formation requires rethinking. The novel’s narrative structure suggests that development is not synchronized with life experience, but is delayed, fragmented, and reinterpreted over time. This shift forces a reconsideration of when and how the *bildungsroman* can occur within a postmodern framework. Consequently, development occurs retrospectively. The protagonist is shaped not by experience at the moment of its occurrence, but by its subsequent reinterpretation. This retrospective structure fundamentally alters the temporal logic of the *bildungsroman*.

One of the most significant departures from the classical paradigm is the shift in the process of formation from adolescence to late adulthood. In the traditional *bildungsroman*, maturation occurs during

the formative years; growth is synchronized with chronological development. However, in Barnes's novel, understanding emerges not at the moment of lived experience, but decades later, through retrospective reconstruction. Adolescence does not produce insight, it produces misinterpretation.

Tony's ethical awakening is belated. His awareness of responsibility occurs only after the destabilization of his self-narrative. Thus, the novel's temporal structure inverts the classical model: development is no longer developmental, but corrective. Instead of moving toward clarity, the protagonist returns to the past to revise it. Formation becomes an act of rereading, not living.

This temporal shift redefines the very meaning of *bildungsroman*. If classical formation implies continuity between experience and maturity, Barnes introduces a discontinuity. Time does not guarantee wisdom; aging does not guarantee understanding. Maturity is not a natural result of chronological progress, but a painful consequence of an epistemological rupture. The protagonist is "formed" not through harmonious growth, but through a belated confrontation with his own distortions.

In the postmodern transformation of the genre, maturity becomes psychological rather than social. Tony's late realization does not lead to reintegration or external transformation. Instead, it generates ethical anxiety. The final lines of the novel highlight this shift: "Accumulation. Responsibility. And beyond these, there is unrest. There is great unrest" (Barnes, 2011, p. 149). The repetition of "uneasiness" replaces the classical harmony of finality with moral shock. Formation continues, but its outcome is no longer equilibrium; it is a heightened awareness of responsibility.

Thus, "The Sense of an Ending" does not abandon the tradition of the *bildungsroman*. Development still occurs, and self-knowledge remains central. However, Barnes transforms the structural logic of the genre. Linear teleology is replaced by retrospective reconstruction; social integration gives way to ethical ambiguity; certainty gives way to epistemological instability. Thus, the novel illustrates not the disintegration of the *bildungsroman*, but its postmodern transformation.

Taken together, these structural shifts as temporal, epistemological, and ontological demonstrate that Barnes is not simply adapting the *bildungsroman* to contemporary conditions. He is reconsidering its fundamental logic. The theme of formation remains, but its development no longer culminates in reconciliation, but leads to ethical contradictions and narrative uncertainty. The genre survives, but only through transformation.

Conclusion. In conclusion, Julian Barnes's novel "The Sense of an Ending" can be assessed not only as a postmodern narrative but also as a deliberate transformation of the *bildungsroman* tradition. This study demonstrates the usefulness of integrating narratological, ethical, and genre analysis to understand the postmodern transformations of the *bildungsroman*. The novel demonstrates how genre can be reimagined through retrospective narration, epistemological uncertainty, and ethical ambiguity, demonstrating that the *bildungsroman* remains a dynamic literary system rather than a fixed form.

The analysis reveals that the novel not only depicts a life story but also questions the very principles of formation. Rather than presenting adulthood as a harmonious integration into society, Barnes portrays it as a delayed, morally troubling, and psychologically fragmented process. This underscores the shift from classical teleological progression to a postmodern understanding of *bildungsroman*, in which self-formation is contingent, tentative, and mediated by interpretation. The narrative contains traces of the postmodern *bildungsroman* during the periods of childhood, travel, and late adulthood. However, these structural phases are no longer linear stages leading to social harmony; instead, they function as narrative experiments in temporality, memory, and ethical self-reflection. The stages of adolescence, experience, and maturity are reimagined as fragmented, retrospective moments whose meaning emerges only through selective memory and ongoing narrative reconstruction.

The key characteristics of the postmodern *bildungsroman* – non-chronological temporality, the relativity of memory and truth, unreliable narration, and the protagonist's inability to fully understand themselves – are manifested not only thematically but also structurally, illustrating the epistemological and ontological aspects of modern self-formation. In Barnes's novel, identity formation is not an

achieved state, but a process of continuous self-analysis and ethical struggle. Identity is temporary, knowledge is mediated, and moral insight is belated, which connects the narrative to contemporary theories of postmodern subjectivity and the instability of lived experience.

Ultimately, “The Sense of an Ending” demonstrates that the bildungsroman is not outdated, but adaptable. Development remains a thematic concern, but it no longer culminates in resolution or social integration. Instead, the genre survives through transformation, embracing ethical ambiguity, narrative uncertainty, and the temporality of identity as defining features. Thus, the postmodern bildungsroman, as demonstrated here, is a narrative of ongoing self-reflection, in which the process of bildungsroman itself becomes as significant as its hypothetical end result.

Future research could explore comparative approaches to other contemporary novels that similarly destabilize classical formation, examining how postmodern literary strategies – retrospective narration, ethical ambiguity, and epistemological uncertainty – redefine the trajectory of personal and social development.

References:

1. Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays* (M. Holquist, Ed.; C. Emerson & M. Holquist, Trans.). University of Texas Press.
2. Barnes, J. (2011). *The Sense of an Ending*. Jonathan Cape.
3. Boes, T. (2006). Modernist studies and the bildungsroman: A historical survey of critical trends. *Literature Compass*, 3(2), 230–243. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-4113.2006.00317.x>
4. Buckley, J. H. (1974). *Season of youth: The bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding*. Harvard University Press.
5. Childs, P. (2011). *Julian Barnes*. Manchester University Press.
6. Dilthey, W. (1985). *Poetry and experience* (R. Makkreel & F. Rodi, Trans.). Princeton University Press. (Original work published 1870s)
7. Golban, P. (2018). *Bildungsroman: From ancient beginnings to romanticism*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing. URL: <https://www.cambridgescholars.com/resources/pdfs/978-1-5275-0395-3-sample.pdf>
8. Hall, S. (1996). Introduction: Who needs identity? In S. Hall & P. du Gay (Eds.), *Questions of cultural identity* (pp. 1–17). Sage.
9. Hutcheon, L. (1988). *A poetics of postmodernism: History, theory, fiction*. Routledge.
10. Lyotard, J.F. (1984). *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge* (G. Bennington & B. Massumi, Trans.). University of Minnesota Press.
11. Moretti, F. (2000). *The way of the world: The Bildungsroman in European culture*. Verso.
12. Moseley, M. (2015). *Understanding Julian Barnes*. University of South Carolina Press.
13. Ricoeur, P. (2004). *Memory, history, forgetting*. University of Chicago Press.
14. Waugh, P. (1984). *Metafiction: The theory and practice of self-conscious fiction*. Methuen.