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ESCOLA DE HUMANIDADES
PROGRAMA DE PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO EM LETRAS
MESTRADO EM TEORIA DA LITERATURA

LUIZA PITREZ GRESSLER

“IT’S TIME YOU STARTED BEIN’ A GIRL”: *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD*, A FEMALE
BILDUNGSROMAN

Porto Alegre
2019

PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO - STRICTO SENSU



Pontifícia Universidade Católica
do Rio Grande do Sul

PONTIFÍCIA UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA DO RIO GRANDE DO SUL

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Dissertação de mestrado apresentada como requisito parcial para a obtenção do título de Mestre em Teoria da Literatura pelo Programa de Pós-Graduação em Letras da Escola de Humanidades da Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul.

Orientador: Prof. Dr. Pedro Theobald

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Aprovada em _____ de _____ de _____.

BANCA EXAMINADORA:

Prof. Dr. Pedro Theobald – PUCRS

Prof. Dr. Norman Roland Madarasz – PUCRS

Profa. Dra. Maria Rita Drumond Viana – UFSC

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In memory of Ita, Meiza and Polly.

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*The soul has moments of escape —
When bursting all the doors —
She dances like a Bomb, abroad,
And swings upon the Hours.
Emily Dickinson*

ABSTRACT

This master's thesis presents an analysis of North-American author Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960) in the light of the female *Bildungsroman*. We aim to focus on the theoretical definitions of the novel's subgenre and how they feature in Lee's novel and possibly propose new definitions. The question that aims to be answered with this work is: What essentially causes *To Kill a Mockingbird* to be categorized as a female *Bildungsroman*? Scout, the protagonist/narrator in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, reports a period of her life which was marked by decisive events to the girl's personal development. Through her journey, Scout relies on the support of her intimate relations, such as her father Atticus, her brother Jem, and Calpurnia, the family cook, as primary references for the development of her identity. Scout must also go through the conflicting moment in her life when social expectations which dictate what it means to be a woman or, in her case, what it means to be a girl, are suddenly imposed to her. At the same time, the girl observes how the trial of a black man accused of rape by a white woman unfolds within a deeply racist community and the combination of all these factors cause her to gradually lose her innocence. The fundamental authors for this thesis are Morgenstern (2009), Dilthey (1997), Lukács (1998), Mann (apud BRUFORD 2009) and Bakhtin (1986), regarding the traditional concept of *Bildungsroman*. For the approach to the female literary tradition and the female *Bildungsroman*, Gilbert and Gubar (2000), and Abel, Hirsch, and Langland (1983) are the main authors who complemented the theoretical background for this research. This thesis has evidenced that the characteristics of *To Kill a Mockingbird*'s narrative correspond to the definitions of the concept of female *Bildungsroman* and that it might propose new definitions for the narrative subgenre; for instance, a revision of the narrative of apprentice structure, and how a protagonist initially raised mostly unfamiliar to the pressures of gender roles develops a more autonomous personality than other female *Bildungsroman* protagonists who are raised within the limitations of such social expectations.

Key-words: Female Bildungsroman. Harper Lee. To Kill a Mockingbird. Female Authorship.

RESUMO

Esta dissertação apresenta uma análise do romance *O sol é para todos* (1960), da escritora norte-americana Harper Lee, à luz do romance de formação (*Bildungsroman*) feminino. Propõe-se enfatizar como as definições do subgênero do romance se configuram na obra em questão e possivelmente apresentar novas definições. A pergunta que se objetiva responder com o trabalho é: o que essencialmente faz com que *O sol é para todos* seja categorizado como romance de formação feminino? Em *O sol é para todos*, a protagonista/narradora Scout relata um período de sua vida marcado por acontecimentos decisivos para sua formação pessoal. Ao longo de sua trajetória, Scout conta com a ajuda de suas relações mais próximas, como o pai Atticus, o irmão Jem e a cozinheira Calpúrnia, referências essenciais para a formação de sua identidade. Scout também precisa passar pelo conflitante momento em que expectativas sociais que ditam o que é ser mulher, ou menina, como no caso da narradora, passam a lhe ser impostas. Ao mesmo tempo, ela observa os desdobramentos do julgamento de um homem negro acusado de estuprar uma mulher branca dentro de uma comunidade extremamente racista. A combinação desses elementos leva a menina a gradualmente perder sua inocência. Os principais autores que fundamentam este trabalho são Morgenstern (2009), Dilthey (1997), Lukács (1998), Mann (apud BRUFORD 2009) e Bakhtin (1986), acerca do *Bildungsroman* tradicional. Dentro do romance de formação feminino, as principais autoras que complementam a fundamentação do trabalho são Gilbert e Gubar (2000) e Abel, Hirsch, e Langland (1983). Esta dissertação evidencia que as características que compõem a narrativa em *O sol é para todos* encontram correspondência com as definições do conceito de romance de formação feminino e que este romance pode propor novas definições para o subgênero; como por exemplo, uma revisão da estrutura da narrativa de aprendizado, e como uma protagonista inicialmente criada praticamente sem a pressão imposta por papéis de gênero desenvolve uma personalidade mais autônoma em comparação a outras protagonistas de romances de formação femininos, criadas dentro das limitações de tais expectativas sociais.

Palavras-chave: Romance de formação feminino. Harper Lee. O sol é para todos. Autoria feminina.

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INTRODUCTION

Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960) is a modern classic of North-American literature that narrates a period within the childhood of Scout during the 1930s in Alabama. The novel also narrates the trial of a black man accused of raping a white woman. As it represents a transitive period of its protagonist's life, the novel is commonly categorized as a twentieth-century female *Bildungsroman*. The narrative, of course, approaches more than one theme and is not focused exclusively on the plot of Scout's development: it tackles polemic topics such as class, gender, and, specially, racism, which have caused the book to be constantly banned from North-American schools even up to date for its use of racist terms¹.

Even though *To Kill a Mockingbird* is almost sixty years old and a most relevant novel in its place of origin, regarded as a modern classic, this literary work has not been frequently studied in Brazilian academic research on literary theory². In Brazil, *To Kill a Mockingbird* was edited and translated as *O sol é para todos*. Its first Brazilian translation dates back to the 1960s, but in 2015, with the world publication of the novel's original manuscript *Go Set a Watchman*, a new translation of the classic novel has been published in the same year. This reedition of Lee's work in a new translation to Portuguese by Beatriz Horta might renew the interest of Brazilian readership on *To Kill a Mockingbird* and promote new academic research on it and, now, *Go Set a Watchman* as well.

Because *To Kill a Mockingbird* discusses different themes that make Lee's novel such a rich one, analyses of this work commonly approach the themes it tackles, mostly concentrating on the debate on racial prejudice. Ware (2010) and Seidel (2010) analyse the influences on Scout's childhood and identity and state that the novel is fundamentally a female *Bildungsroman*. These analyses, however, do not approach the novel as a female *Bildungsroman* in a theoretical light.

Thus, in order not to simply attain to stating that the novel is a female *Bildungsroman*, it became necessary to analyse *To Kill a Mockingbird* in an attempt to promote new investigations on the work and, most importantly, to relate it to the tradition of the female *Bildungsroman* by examining how its categories may apply to the narrative. To develop this work, we start from the question, *what essentially causes To Kill a Mockingbird to be*

¹ Available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/education/wp/2018/02/07/a-school-district-drops-to-kill-a-mockingbird-and-huckleberry-finn-over-use-of-the-n-word/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.52a000a330f5> (access November 27, 2018).

² A research on database such as Capes and Scielo found no works that approach Lee's novel in Brazil. A research on Google Scholar, on the other hand, found articles that approach the novel, but these articles were in the area of Law.

categorized as a female Bildungsroman? To investigate the aspects that fundamentally make the novel an exemplar of the sub-genre, specifically within the female literary tradition, we had to start with a research that presented the studies on the *Bildungsroman*.

The concept of *Bildungsroman* is originally related to the eighteenth-century literary production of German culture. The central idea of these novels is to depict a male protagonist's formative years, specifically, how he develops internally before assuming his role in society. Moreover, narratives of personal development commonly present autobiographical elements from the author's life. The term was coined by Karl Morgenstern (2009) in 1819 and since then, the model for the sub-genre has been Johann Wolfgang Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (1795-1796). Goethe's novel narrates the personal development of a young man who goes on a journey which promotes his interaction with the world outside his original circumstances, a necessary process to learn about himself and society in order to make the transition to adulthood. Studies on the *Bildungsroman* that have developed since the nineteenth century by renowned authors such as Dilthey (1997), Lukács (1998) and Bakhtin (1986), relates the *Bildungsroman* to the male gender. Bakhtin's (1986) definition exemplifies that the genre is essentially a narrative that covers the process of becoming a man.

However, there had been many other novels which portray the development of female protagonists as early as the nineteenth century, as the example of Charlotte Brontë's classic *Jane Eyre* (1847) attests, but they had not been approached nor even mentioned by any of those male authors who discussed the traditional *Bildungsroman*. This disregard for novels of female development clearly related to the secondary role that women have played in the history of literary tradition. This historical undermining is inextricably associated to the practiced patriarchal culture in Western societies, which delegated roles of passivity to the woman and subjugated those who attempted to change this established convention.

Yet, those women writers responsible for transcribing the female experience into literature found a way to communicate them to one another and establish a literary tradition, as Gilbert and Gubar's (2000) study demonstrates. The authors' study began with the 1970s movement of feminist literary theory which aimed to revise the history of literature in order to bring the works of women writers to light. Additionally, these authors meant to evidence a female literary tradition that has existed concomitantly to the masculine literary tradition, even though submersed, as early as the nineteenth century.

Abel, Hirsch, and Langland's (1983) *The Voyage In: Narratives of Female Development* was a necessary study which brought attention to the fact that the definitions of the traditional

Bildungsroman could not simply be transferred to female novels, given that men and women's developments represent completely oppositional experiences. This way, the authors and the contributors to this work aimed to revise the traditional concept of the novel sub-genre in order to account for the female experience. As the authors attest, gender is a determinant for narratives of development, as it modifies their structure, their psychological aspects and, mostly, the social expectations placed upon the protagonist. Up to date, this remains as a fundamental source for studies on the female *Bildungsroman*, which demonstrates the need for further research on this sub-genre of the novel.

This master's thesis is divided in three chapters. The first chapter presents an approach to the development of studies on the *Bildungsroman*, from Morgenstern's (2009) coinage of the term to the contributions of Dilthey (1997), Lukács's (1998), Mann's (apud BRUFORD 2009), and Bakhtin's (1986). We also present a discussion on the association between narratives of personal development and the autobiography. Three examples of *Bildungsroman* from the twentieth century are briefly presented and commented: James Joyce's (2001) *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, J. D. Salinger's (2014) *The Catcher in the Rye* and Stephen Chbosky's (2009) *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*.

In the second chapter, we move closer to the fundamental studies for the development of the present work. We begin with a brief study on the woman writer and discuss her social condition and the obstacles she has been given through time. Then, we move on to present the discussion on the female *Bildungsroman*, based on Abel, Hirsch, and Langland's (1983) study. We briefly present three examples of female *Bildungsroman* and observe how they also feature autobiographical elements and relate to the concept of female *Bildungsroman*: Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* and Sylvia Plath's (2013) *The Bell Jar*.

Finally, the third and last chapter presents a brief outline of Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, contextualizing the novel and identifying it as a female *Bildungsroman*. Then, at last, we present the analysis which aims to evidence how the concepts and characteristics of the female *Bildungsroman* are featured in Lee's novel and how this dissertation might promote new definitions for the subgenre.

1 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE *BILDUNGSROMAN*

The *Bildungsroman* modeled after Johann Wolfgang Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* has its origins in eighteenth century Germany. This original model is characterized for depicting the development of a man as his inner self confronts the external world, this being a necessary confrontation in order to reach maturity. The sub-genre has been studied since its emergence by authors from Germany and outside of it. There are oppositional views on the sub-genre, which mostly isolate the eighteenth century German *Bildungsroman* from the other novels characterized as *Bildungsroman* either produced in different periods of time or coming from different cultures. Yet it is a fact that a variety of works that apply to the category had been produced even before the model of Goethe's novel was established. From the nineteenth century on, the *Bildungsroman* has suffered modifications in its characteristics, especially during the twentieth century, which witnessed the increase of the autobiographical element in the narrative composition of the novel of formation.

1.1 On the origin of the term

Bildungsroman, frequently translated to the English language as "formation novel", is a German term closely related to *Erziehungsroman* ("education novel") (CUDDON, 1998). It is used in literary studies in reference to novels that narrate the transitional period from adolescence to adulthood, commonly of a male character's, depicting his process of reaching maturity through life experiences (CUDDON, 1998). This is a summarized definition of the term, concerning the thematic aspects that categorize worldly novels of development from different times in history. As Flavio Quintale Neto (2005) observes, before delineating a concept for *Bildungsroman*, it is necessary to understand the complexity of meaning involving the German word *Bildung*.

Even though *Bildung* is conventionally translated as "formation" or "development", Rolf Selbmann³ believes it is impossible to translate the word into another word, as it best translates into a concept (QUINTALE NETO, 2005). Yet the concept of *Bildung* cannot be simplified either, on account of its multiple sides and uses. With its dual roots in Hellenistic tradition of *cultura animi* ("spiritual cultivation"), which was later on applied to 1700s pietistic education, and the Christian doctrine of men as God's image, the concept of *Bildung*

³ As mentioned by Tobias Boes (2009), Rolf Selbmann is a German academic and the author of a relevant work on the German *Bildungsroman*, titled *Zur Geschichte des Deutschen Bildungsromans* (1988).

is strictly tied to the idea of education as identified in Kant's views on pedagogy (SILJANDER & SUTINEN, 2012). The common ground to all these facets seems to be the sense of development.

Among these distinct origins of the word, according to Quintale Neto (2005), the one most relatable to the concept of *Bildungsroman* — considering Goethe's model, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (1795-1796) — is the medieval concept of *Imago Dei*, the Christian belief that men were created as a resemblance of the image of God. Having lost this image in the original sin, men could only find reconciliation with divinity in the process of becoming themselves, meaning, the recovery of the lost image (QUINTALE NETO, 2005). The linguistic root of *Bildung* reinforces this relationship: *Bild* means “image”, and its derivative *bilden* means “to form”, “to create” (SILJANDER & SUTINEN, 2012).

In literary criticism, contrasts can also be found in the views on the *Bildungsroman*, and such opposing ideas can amount to two extremities: there are critics who defend that the *Bildungsroman* is exclusively a novel of the German nation, whose main concern was to promote German thought, while others perceive it as a universal modern literary reaction to the need of fulfilling one's destiny outside of pre-established traditions (BOES, 2012). Even so, these disparate currents of criticism seem to agree that the emergence of the *Bildungsroman* in the second half of the eighteenth century associates to the rise of German idealism (BOES, 2012).

To apprehend these nuances and how they have unfolded throughout the centuries, it is essential to become acquainted with the origin of the term *Bildungsroman*. In the history of *Bildungsroman*, Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) is the one responsible for making the term known in literary criticism with his 1906 work *Poetry and Experience*, even though the German philosopher was not the person who named this sub-genre of the novel (BOES, 2009).

Dating back to the early nineteenth century, the term *Bildungsroman* was actually coined by Karl Morgenstern (1770-1852), a German philologist who exposed his conception of what he perceived as “the most noble category of the novel” (MORGENSTERN, 2009, p. 654) in a lecture from 1819 titled *On the Nature of the Bildungsroman (Über das Wesen des Bildungsromans)*⁴. This was a celebratory speech on the occasion of the seventeenth

⁴ Boes (2009), an academic researcher on the *Bildungsroman* and the translator of Morgenstern's lecture to English, observes that the philologist had already used the term *Bildungsroman* in a previous lecture from 1809 titled *Über den Geist und Zusammenhang einer Reihe philosophischer Romane* (“On the Spirit and Cohesion of a Number of Philosophical Novels”), self-published in 1817. However, the 1819 lecture presents a more consistent definition of the *Bildungsroman*.

anniversary of the University of Dorpat (present-day Tartu, Estonia) where Morgenstern was at the time employed as a professor of rhetoric (BOES, 2012).

Morgenstern's coinage of the term, a discovery only made in the early 1960s by Fritz Martini⁵ (BOES, 2009), brings his name to be often mentioned in studies on the subject. This lecture is of relevance not only for his coinage and the settling of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* as the model of *Bildungsroman*, but also for his more universal perspective on this division of the novel, which according to Tobias Boes (2009), is surprisingly opposed to Dilthey's nationalistic view.

In his introduction to the lecture, Morgenstern claims that the name *Bildungsroman* “[had] to [his] knowledge never been used before” (2009, p. 650), yet he mentions that some might have previously used a different term, *Familienroman* (“family novel”), to allude to novels of the kind about which he wished to speak, this being in his view a label that fell short of defining such works. The German philologist then broadly speaks of the novel: how theorists approximated it to the heroic epic, despite being written in prose, and how it was regarded as epic literature since it is, after all, a fictional work that narrates a story (MORGENSTERN, 2009).

The necessity of a brand-new adequate work of theory for the genre, “written in a philosophical spirit and with critical erudition” (MORGENSTERN, 2009, p. 650) was a concern to the philologist, considering that in those times there were no meticulous studies on the novel in his judgement, although he does mention Blanckenburg's *Essay on the Novel* (1774), which he considered insufficient forty-five years following its publication. What Morgenstern (2009) requested then was a clearer examination on the divergences between the novel and the dramatic and epic genres, both properly theorized before.

Mostly, the lecture demonstrates how these differences operate, particularly between the novel and the epic. Nevertheless, Boes (2009) notices that Morgenstern still carried an old-fashioned perspective with this method of comparing the novel to drama and the epic, since it is quite similar to the way Blanckenburg structured his ideas in the previously mentioned work which Morgenstern criticized for its insufficiency, *Essay on the Novel*. As in other eighteenth century studies, Blanckenburg's work was grounded on a “rhetorical approach” which “...tried to give a technical account of how the new genre worked, how it differed from established literary forms such as the epic or the drama [...]” (BOES, 2012, p. 14).

⁵ Boes (2009) also mentions Fritz Martini's article on the discovery of Morgenstern's coinage, which is printed in Rolf Selbmann's *Zur Geschichte des Deutschen Bildungsromans*.

Morgenstern's brief observations concerning the differences between novel and drama derive from a selected passage of the literary work the philologist praised the most: Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*. The essence of the argument taken from Goethe's words is that novel and drama converge in presenting human nature and action, whereas they diverge in terms of pace: "the novel needs to progress slowly, drama, by contrast, in a hurry" (MORGENSTERN, 2009, p. 651). This, Morgenstern (2009) also notices, relates to the fact that in drama the characters are presented as entirely developed beings, while in the novel their development is expected to occur moderately throughout the narrative.

Still, a great part of his commentaries presents the contrasts between the novel and the epic, which are summarized in three topics. The most relevant difference between the two genres according to Morgenstern (2009) is the third and last one: in the epic, the hero's actions have an impact and alter the world around him, while in the novel, the world around the hero and those who surround him influence the progress of his interior development. This remark finally reveals the *Bildungsroman*, the category that in the speaker's opinion represents the essence of the novel genre, especially in comparison to the epic. In the author's words,

We may call a novel a *Bildungsroman* first and foremost on account of its content, because it represents the development of the hero in its beginning and progress to a certain stage of completion, but also, second, because this depiction promotes the development of the reader to a greater extent than any other kind of novel (MORGENSTERN, 2009, p. 654-655).

In this ancient thematic definition, the basic premise for the general *Bildungsroman* can already be found, for it is known that in literary studies the novels of the kind are essentially labeled as such for depicting the process of development of its main character (CUDDON, 1998). Nonetheless, Morgenstern also specified a concern with the reader's development in the *Bildungsroman*, a pedagogical view which indicates another reminiscence of an eighteenth century frame of mind (BOES, 2009). This can relate to Morgenstern's predilection for Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, for as Quintale Neto (2005) observes, Goethe believed in the idea of humanistic education through the novel and in *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship's* case the development of the young man in the principles of Humanism transcends the narrative and aims directly at its readership.

First published in Germany between the years 1795 and 1796, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* narrates the formative years of its eponymous character who must face the world outside his circumstances while "mastering" his inner self in order to make the

transition from young man to adult. The book had a sequel, *Wilhelm Meister's Journeyman Years* (1821), written in the 1790s and published only years later.

In *Apprenticeship*, Wilhelm's initial driving force in life is his love for theater, an affection he has nurtured since childhood. His parents, however, consider this a frivolous enthusiasm, and expect him to take a serious interest in the family's business. When his father asks him to travel for commercial affairs, Wilhelm sees this as an opportunity to fulfill his dream of a life on stage. However, his lived experiences, especially of becoming actively involved with theater, could only demonstrate his romantic ideals — his inner dispositions — to be disparate from concrete social reality, a rough yet fundamental understanding for his development: "From youth, I have been accustomed to direct the eyes of my spirit inwards rather than outwards; and hence it is very natural that to a certain extent I should be acquainted with man, while of men I have not the smallest knowledge" (GOETHE, 2000, p. 150).

This process of meeting with the unfamiliar exterior reality is related to the humanistic idea that "man is ever the most interesting object to man" (GOETHE, 2000, p. 64), which reflects the previously mentioned personal belief of Goethe and is key to the narrative of Wilhelm's development. Wilhelm's efforts, above all things, are directed toward his self-development, to the improvement of his personality so he can grow as a human being. In the narrative, the portrayal of human nature in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* fascinates and takes Wilhelm to meditate upon the subject. Yet he must trespass the bounds of contemplation in order to complete his process of apprenticeship, and this can only be achieved once he leaves the dramatic texts behind in order to actively take part in the world: "I am abandoning the stage: I mean to join myself with men whose intercourse, in every sense, must lead me to a sure and suitable activity" (GOETHE, 2000, p. 274).

After all, Wilhelm thought his life had always been guided by destiny only to realize that his development so far had been guarded (and consequently guided) by other men, the members of a secret society which envisioned the education of young men in the principles of Humanism. The completion of his development comes symbolically in the form of a text, which decrees that he has finally become the man he had always been determined to be: "Hail to thee, young man! Thy Apprenticeship is done; Nature has pronounced thee free" (GOETHE, 2000, p. 277). As Dilthey (1997) observes, Wilhelm's narrative comes to an end when he meets a sense of completion for his apprenticeship and is prepared to assume his identity, his role in society.

This way, Morgenstern (2009) found the most suitable representative for his definition of *Bildungsroman* in Goethe's narrative of becoming oneself, regarding it a favorite among other *Bildungsromane*. Even though, Morgenstern (2009) does not fail to acknowledge Wieland's *Agathon* (1766), a prior example of German *Bildungsroman* which, however, emphatically narrates the aesthetic development of the hero, instead of his educational or religious development (FRIEDERICH, 1951). In the philologist's opinion, no other novel had so successfully portrayed human development before *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (MORGENSTERN, 2009). Authors after Morgenstern have traditionally kept Goethe's novel as the model of *Bildungsroman*, the most relevant works among them being Dilthey (1906) and Lukács's (1920) studies. Thoman Mann (1923) and Bakhtin (1979)⁶ have also praised the novel in their works.

Morgenstern observes how *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* "presents to us German life, German thought and the morals of [his] time through its hero, its scenery and environment" (2009, p. 655) and believes the modern "German environment" to be the "...most suitable for the purpose of representing a general formation" (2009, p. 656). Boes (2012) argues that Morgenstern's sense of "German times" is aspirational and as far from the reality of his times as the times of Goethe's novel, especially because a unified Germany was inexistent then. Still, Boes (2012) also recognizes in the philologist's lecture a transparent romantic nationalism, common to the times of Morgenstern's lecture, after the Napoleonic Wars.

Another relevant remark from Morgenstern's thoughts is that the philologist had distinguished in *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, decades before Thomas Mann had, the connection between the narrative of personal development and the narrative of social criticism — *Bildungsroman* and *Zeitroman*⁷ (BOES, 2009). Morgenstern (2009, p. 656) perceives how it "[depicts] a human being who develops toward his true nature by means of a collaboration of his inner dispositions with outer circumstances".

Despite the brevity of Morgenstern's criticism and the fact that at first it only circulated in an obscure academic environment⁸, acknowledging his thoughts and definitions is necessary for a modern panorama of the *Bildungsroman*. Besides Morgenstern's establishing the term

⁶ Bakhtin's considerations on the *Bildungsroman* were first published in Moscow in 1979; however, the material for this study was produced between the years 1936 and 1938, as Michael Holquist (1986) reports.

⁷ According to the *Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms*, "in German the term denotes a novel which is mainly concerned with an author's critical analysis of the age in which he or she lives" (CUDDON, 1998, p. 991).

⁸ As Boes (2009) observes, Morgenstern's lecture was not so diffused specially for geographical reasons, since he taught at a "provincial university" and the text was published in the following year in an equally "provincial journal".

and indissolubly associating it with Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, the philologist's also contributes with other possibilities of approach for the *Bildungsroman*:

To the contemporary critic, Morgenstern's essay, despite all its archaisms, thus offers an approach that would connect the classical *Bildungsroman* to many of the broader intellectual currents of its time: the move toward social realism in literature and the arts, the yearning for the shared experiences of a national community and not least the search for an adequate way to represent the dynamic forces of history (BOES, 2009, p. 649).

Knowing now the history and specially the content of Morgenstern's lecture, which has not circulated in academia as much as the works of those who succeeded him, it is essential to present the perspectives of those most acclaimed authors from the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries: Wilhelm Dilthey, Georg Lukács (1885-1971), Thomas Mann (1875-1955) and Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975), who have investigated and perpetuated the *Bildungsroman* in literary criticism inside and out of its original German context.

1.2 From different perspectives

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, literary criticism on the *Bildungsroman* began to develop not only in Germany but also outside of the novel subgenre's place of origin. What these authors all seem to agree is on the developmental principle of the novel of formation. However, these authors present their thoughts from different perspectives: the national perspective, as it is the case of Dilthey (1997) and Mann (1923, apud BRUFORD, 2009), the aesthetic and historico-philosophical perspective, as in Lukács (1988) and the cultural historical perspective, as in Bakhtin (1986).

It is known that the diffusion of the concept of *Bildungsroman* in literary criticism is attributed to Dilthey's *Poetry and Experience*, published in 1906, even though the German philosopher had briefly mentioned the term in a previous work from 1870 titled *Life of Schleiermacher* (BOES, 2009). In *Poetry and Experience*, Dilthey (1997) discusses the *Bildungsroman* from a national standpoint, that is, in the sense of German *Bildungsroman* from the late eighteenth century.

The philosopher believes self-cultivation to be a relevant characteristic of the German *Bildungsroman*, for the novels of the kind "gave expression to the individualism of a culture whose sphere of interest was limited to private life" (DILTHEY, 1997, p. 335). The novels most prized by the author, such as *Hyperion* and *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, mirror

the impact that Rousseau's *Emile* (1762) had in Germany, as it aroused a national "interest in inner culture" (DILTHEY, 1997, p. 335). In addition, Dilthey (1997, p. 236) discerns in Goethe's work traits of the German Enlightenment in his preference for inner matters rather than external ones: "Goethe adopted as his own the most characteristic tendency of this German Enlightenment — which was determined by [Germans'] entire history — that of man's immersion in himself and in the ideal of his universal nature".

In his approach to Goethe and the relevance of his contribution to German literature, Dilthey (1997, p. 269) observes how the poet's own development took place "at a time when economic life, the legal safeguards of bourgeois affairs and religious freedom were steadily expanding in Germany", a favorable context for his innovative poetics to flourish. This freer environment for the expansion of one's nature, since the decadence of Protestant values of family and social structures found assistance in the works of literary authors from France and England (DILTHEY, 1997).

Dilthey (1997, p. 336) also recognizes as a characteristic of the German *Bildungsroman* its relationship with the ideals of Humanism, in the sense of "[...] 'personality', as a unified and permanent form of human existence". In this way, he praises the achievements of Goethe, as well as the poet's contemporary authors, for promoting said humanistic ideals in their novels, since "this optimism of personal development [...] has never been expressed more joyously and confidently than in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*: an immortal radiance of enjoyment of life shines through this novel and those of the Romantics" (DILTHEY, 1997, p. 336).

Dilthey (1997, p. 335) exposes his definition of the German *Bildungsroman*:

Beginning with *Wilhelm Meister* and *Hesperus*⁹, they all portray a young man of their time: how he enters life in a happy state of naiveté seeking kindred souls, finds friendship and love, how he comes into conflict with the hard realities of the world, how he grows to maturity through diverse life experiences, finds himself, and attains certainty about his purpose in the world.

Moreover, the author comments on *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* and how, on the one hand, with this novel "Goethe's goal was the story of a person preparing himself for an active life" (DILTHEY, 1997, p. 335) and how, on the other, the narrative, as many *Bildungsromane* from the same period, "...took its protagonist just to the point where he is about to act decisively in the world" (DILTHEY, 1997, p. 343).

⁹ Jean Paul's *Hesperus* (1795).

Dilthey (1997) also argues that novels of biographical structure have been published before, as the example of Fielding's *Tom Jones*. In his opinion, however, "the *Bildungsroman* is distinguished from all previous biographical compositions in that it intentionally and artistically depicts that which is universally human in such a life-course" (DILTHEY, 1997, p. 335), again emphasizing a broader humanistic concern within the sub-genre of the novel.

Regarding the status of Dilthey in the history of *Bildungsroman* criticism, Boes (2009, p. 648) argues that his "approach spawned a long tradition emphasizing the genre's concern with 'inwardness' and 'personality' at the expense of social concerns and interpersonal relations", which as previously mentioned is opposed to Morgenstern's perception of the sub-genre.

In *Theory of the Novel*, Lukács (1988) presents an essay on *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* and with this work the author demonstrates his views on what he calls the novel of education form from a philosophical perspective. In a later preface from 1962, Lukács (1988) mentions Dilthey's *Poetry and Experience*¹⁰ as a groundbreaking work for intellectual pursuits. In this same preface, the philosopher advises of his state of mind while producing the text, since his motivation to write the treatise came from the outbreak of the First World War, his position being of absolute aversion to the war and those who endorsed it: "Thus it was written in a mood of permanent despair over the state of the world" (LUKÁCS, 1988, p. 12).

Lukács (1988) defines *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship's* theme, "aesthetically and historico-philosophically", as based on the individual's interactions with society. It is "the reconciliation of the problematic individual, guided by his lived experience of the ideal, with concrete social reality" (LUKÁCS, 1988, p. 132), considering that the main character's individuality — as well as the form — finds itself in-between what the author defines as "abstract idealism" (concerning objectivity) and "Romanticism of disillusionment" (concerning subjectivity).

In this type of novel, this resolution between individual and social, despite the hardships of life, "is ultimately possible to achieve" (LUKÁCS, 1988, p. 132). The abstract ideal, guiding the character's actions, aims to uncover "[...] responses to the innermost demands of his soul in the structures of society" (LUKÁCS, 1988, p. 133). In other words, the conflicts of the inner self, as the individual acts out in external reality, are necessary struggles in order to reach maturity (LUKÁCS, 1988).

¹⁰ In the consulted edition of *Theory of the Novel*, the original title, "*Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung*", was translated as "Lived Experience and Literary Creation".

Concerning the hero, Lukács (1988, p. 134) argues that the character's centrality in this kind of narrative is simply a matter of chance, since it relies on the articulation between "ideal" and "soul": "the hero is picked out of an unlimited number of men who share his aspirations, and is placed at the centre of the narrative only because his seeking and finding reveal the world's totality most clearly".

The philosopher discerns a perceptible humanistic sense of harmony between abstract idealism and Romanticism in Goethe's novel, seeing that the development of the hero is supposed to present not only action but also contemplation in the form he denominates "novel of education", a synonym for *Bildungsroman*:

This is why Goethe in *Wilhelm Meister* steers a middle course between abstract idealism, which concentrates on pure action, and Romanticism, which interiorises action and reduces it to contemplation. Humanism, the fundamental attitude of this type of work, demands a balance between activity and contemplation, between wanting to mould the world and being purely receptive towards it. This form has been called the 'novel of education' – rightly, because its action has to be a conscious, controlled process aimed at a certain goal: the development of qualities in men which would never blossom without the active intervention of other men and circumstances; whilst the goal thus attained is in itself formative and encouraging to others – is itself a means of education (LUKÁCS, 1988, p. 135).

Moreover, the author observes the existence of novels of education which tend to portray a non-symbolic subjectivity. These novels focus on memorialist aspects rather than more universal developmental ones, a "dangerous" approach in the philosopher's opinion: "The hero and his destiny then have no more than personal interest and the work becomes a private memoir of how a certain person succeeded in coming to terms with his world", to which he complements by stating that this is the case of the "overwhelming majority of modern 'novels of education'" (LUKÁCS, 1988, p. 137).

Lukács (1988, p. 138) believes that "the completion of the process of education must inevitably idealise and romanticise certain parts of reality and abandon others to prose", the latter in cases where their significance is void. However, the world that the hero achieves in the novel must be in complete accord to reality, and here a secondary "danger" to the novel of education is detected, one that, as Lukács (1988, p. 139) observes, only Goethe was able to avoid, even though partially: "romanticising reality to a point where it becomes a sphere totally beyond reality or, still more dangerously from the point of view of artistic form-giving, a sphere completely free from problems [...]".

At last, in *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, considering all the formative aspects of the novel of education, Goethe “[posits] a purely individual experience which may, postulatively, have universal validity, as the existent and constitutive meaning of reality”, although “[...] no artist’s skill is great and masterly enough to bridge the abyss” (LUKÁCS, 1988, p. 143) between artistic configuration and reality.

It is noteworthy how Lukács (1988) uses the term “reconciliation” of the individual with the social and places it at the center of the novel of education, as a balance “between wanting to mould the world and being purely receptive towards it” (LUKÁCS, 1988, p. 135), while Morgenstern (2009) mentions the “collaboration” between the inner self and the external world in the *Bildungsroman*, in spite of emphasizing the influence that the world and others exercise in the progress of the individual’s development, since in his perception this is what mostly differentiates the novel from the epic genre.

Thomas Mann, himself a *Bildungsroman* author¹¹, dedicated the later years of his life not only to the production of literary works but also to lecturing about German culture and its politics, despite initially abstaining himself from critical-thinking on politics, which was a common attitude to writers who had experienced the turbulence of war times (BRUFORD, 2009). It is a fact that the cultural and the political have always been by some means related to the *Bildungsroman*, and similarities between what Mann argued in his speeches and Dilthey’s (1997) thoughts on the literary sub-genre can be perceived, especially considering that both start from a German point of view. Moreover, Walter Horace Bruford (2009) attests Mann’s relevance as one of the leading spokespeople of German thought from the interwar period.

It must be emphasized that Mann had, in the course of his life, an unstable relationship with politics, eventually coming to criticize those who felt indifferent to the subject (BRUFORD, 2009). Having lived through the First and the Second World Wars and all the political events of before and after, Mann experienced a process of “conversion”, as Bruford (2009, p. ix) defends, starting from “a position of Romantic disdain for politics to a public-spirited concern for the enlightenment of the German people about politics, as an essential part of a humane life”. In his process of becoming politicized, he often relied on literature for the support of his arguments and the shaping of his thoughts, especially for his belief in humanitarian values (BRUFORD, 2009). As Bruford (2009, p. 226) mentions,

¹¹ Despite having more than one novel themed on “development” of some kind, among Thomas Mann’s works, the one that most clearly inserts itself in the category of *Bildungsroman* is *The Magic Mountain* (1924), as supported by Bruford (2009).

It is well known that Mann's political views underwent what looks like a complete reversal, though he often disputed this interpretation, seeing his whole life's effort as directed towards a fuller humane life for all. His example may at least show how it was possible for a patriotic German conservative to grow into a supporter of the Weimar Republic, an impassioned opponent of Hitler and, in his last years, a convinced democrat who, as an American citizen, deliberately lived in Switzerland and declared himself to belong to no party but that of 'humanity'.

In 1923, during one of his several speeches on politics¹², Mann stated his belief that the reason for German people to be so indifferent to the topic — particularly in those days and specially in the middle-class — had its roots in the cultural “inwardness” of the nation and the belief that “this devotion to culture is good because it tends to make [them] humane” (BRUFORD, 2009, p. 228). Understanding that the German people could only benefit from the combination of culture and politics, the inward with the outward, Mann admits that he himself had only been enlightened by this ideal in recent years then, believing that the German culture of self-cultivation would remain “incomplete” if it persisted on excluding the political element from it (BRUFORD, 2009).

In order to support his argument that Germans are excessively concerned with inner matters, with the subjective rather than the objective, Mann turns to literature in allusion to the *Bildungsroman*, as it is to him a consequent product of this national trait, and for this reason, the sub-genre of the novel could only have emerged in such context:

The finest characteristic of the typical German, the best-known and also the most flattering to his self-esteem, is his inwardness. It is no accident that it was the Germans who gave to the world the intellectually stimulating and very humane literary form which we call the novel of personal cultivation and development. Western Europe has its novel of social criticism, to which the Germans regard this other type as their own special counterpart; it is at the same time an autobiography, a confession. The inwardness, the culture ['Bildung'] of a German implies introspectiveness; an individualistic cultural conscience, consideration for the careful tending, the shaping, deepening and perfecting of one's own personality or, in religious terms, for the salvation and justification of one's own life; subjectivism in the things of the mind, therefore, a type of culture that might be called pietistic, given to autobiographical confession and deeply personal, one in which the world of the *objective*, the political world, is felt to be profane and is thrust aside with indifference, 'because', as Luther says, 'this external order is of no consequence' (MANN, 1923 apud BRUFORD, 2009, p. vii).

¹² Bruford (2009) traces Thomas Mann's journey of political awakening in an essay titled *The Conversion of an Unpolitical Man*. This specific lecture, titled “*Geist und Wesen der deutschen Republik*” (“Spirit and Essence of the German Republic”), was given to republican students in Munich, in June 1923, on a tribute meeting to Walther Rathenau, and Mann's brief speech approaching German inwardness and the way it impacts the people's lack of interest in politics was a pertinent opening to discuss the Weimar Republic, the new governmental form then, which found little support from Germans in that first moment.

Mann complements by stating that to the German people the idea of including the external matters of politics in this inner culture, “to what the peoples of Europe call *freedom*, would seem to [them] to amount to a demand that [they] should do violence to [their] own nature, and in fact give up [their] sense of national identity” (MANN, 1923 apud BRUFORD, 2009, p. vii).

In this speech, Mann also perpetuates the tradition of electing Goethe’s work as the exemplar *Bildungsroman*. He focuses his analysis, however, on *Wilhelm Meister’s Journeyman Years*, the sequel to *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship*, relying once again on the works of German literature as a means to sustain his arguments (BRUFORD, 2009). In this novel, after going through his formative years, Wilhelm is now concerned with the rearing of his son and thus has awakened to external matters, the objective world (BRUFORD, 2009). This focus on the social aspect in Wilhelm’s journey through education is what best supports Mann’s idea of uniting culture to politics, seeing that the poetic work is

A wonderful anticipation of German progress from inwardness to the objective and the political, to republicanism. It is a work that is far more complete in its humanity than the German ‘Bürger’ thinks if he understands it merely as a monument of personal culture and pietistic autobiography. [...] It teaches us to see the element of education as the organic transition from the world of inwardness to that of the objective; it shows how the one grows humanly and naturally out of the other (MANN, 1923 apud BRUFORD, 2009, p. 88).

Summarizing Mann’s views, Bruford (2009, p. 253) states that the author believed that “to be truly humane, Germans needed to develop the political interests and capacities which they had hitherto neglected, in their exclusive pursuit of *Kultur*” and that in his 1923 speech, Mann “often comes back to this idea as his central new insight, that the political is not opposed to humane culture, but a part of it”.

Mann’s humane attitude toward politics not only concerned his life as a spokesperson but it also reflected on his literary works. The author’s approach to German culture and politics directly relates to the *Bildungsroman*, since it is known that inwardness and Humanism have always been constituent parts of the sub-genre, as Dilthey (1997), for instance, earlier affirmed. This, however, is not the only visible feature in Mann’s impressions that is relatable to the previous discussions about the *Bildungsroman*.

Dilthey (1997) had already observed that writers since the eighteenth century were considered alienated from political circumstances for their preferred dedication to matters of the inner self, and Mann, in 1923, believed this traditional “individualistic” culture, mainly focused in the improvement of “personality”, continued then to move the German people

away from social subjects, “the political world”, a problem that could only be solved when these two aspects were merged into a unity (BRUFORD, 2009).

Proceeding from a farther geographical location and speaking from a less distant time than his predecessors, Bakhtin (1986) presents in *The Bildungsroman and Its Significance in the History of Realism*, originally written in the 1930s, a more varied perspective on the sub-genre, not exclusively centered on the German production of *Bildungsromane*. Before undertaking Bakhtin’s (1986, p. 21) thoughts on “the novel of human emergence”, to use his expression, it is essential to consider that a great part of the Soviet theorist’s works is unfinished and this study on the subcategories of the novel represents only the initial fragment of one of his lost books, which would have had the same title as the study¹³ (HOLQUIST, 1986).

Admittedly influenced by theorists who prioritize the cultural-historical aspect in literary analysis, such as Tynyanov (HOLQUIST, 1986), Bakhtin (1986, p. 10) presents his division of the novel genre based on “an attempt at a historical classification of these subcategories”: the travel novel, the novel of ordeal, the biographical (autobiographical) novel and the *Bildungsroman*. As a criterion for classification, he centers on the construction of the hero’s image and how varying principles prevail throughout this process, namely the plot, the conception of the world, the composition and, chiefly, the degree of integration of “real historical time” and “historical man” into the novel (BAKHTIN, 1986).

In his specific approach to the *Bildungsroman*, Bakhtin’s (1986, p. 19) theme is mainly “time-space and the image of man in the novel”, more specifically, “the image of *man in the process of becoming* in the novel”. A chronological list of *Bildungsromane* from different times in history and places other than Germany is initially presented, starting from Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia* (circa 370 B.C.) until Thomas Mann’s *Buddenbrooks* (1901) and *The Magic Mountain* (1924), not leaving aside Russian authors Tolstoy’s *Childhood* (1852), *Adolescence* (1854), and *Youth* (1857) and Goncharov’s *An Ordinary Story* (1847) and *Oblomov* (1859) and, evidently, Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister*, both the *Apprenticeship* and the *Journeyman Years* (BAKHTIN, 1986).

Bakhtin (1986) acknowledges the breadth of literary examples that assign to the subcategory and how different perspectives on what the *Bildungsroman* is could make his list

¹³ As Holquist (1986) reports, the loss of Bakhtin’s book, which he worked on from 1936 to 1938, as well as the incompleteness of this remaining fragment are both related to the Second World War: in the first case, because the publishing house that held the manuscripts of the book was blown up during the German invasion, and in the second, because during the shortage days of the war, Bakhtin used the conclusive parts of the preparatory material, still in his possession, to wrap his cigarettes. The published fragment covers only the first part of what the book would have been.

either shorter or longer, depending on the choice of view, which can be compositional, developmental, biographical, pedagogical or chronological, and that would demand a different division not only of the list, but of the concept of *Bildungsroman*:

Some scholars, guided by purely compositional principles (the concentration of the whole plot on the process of the hero's education) significantly limit this list [...] Others, conversely, requiring only the presence of the hero's development and emergence in the novel, considerably expanding this list [...] It is clear even at first glance that this list contains phenomena that are too diverse, from the theoretical and even from the biographical standpoint. Some of the novels are essentially biographical or autobiographical, while others are not; in some of them the organizing basis is the purely pedagogical notion of man's education, while this is not even mentioned in others; some of them are constructed on the strictly chronological plane of the main hero's educational development and have almost no plot at all, while others, conversely, have complex adventurous plots. Even more significant are the differences in the relationship of these novels to realism, and particularly to real historical time (BAKHTIN, 1986, p. 20).

To present this division, the theorist primarily isolates “the aspect of man's essential *becoming*”, characteristically a trait of the *Bildungsroman*, from “the vast majority of novels” (BAKHTIN, 1986, p. 20) and its corresponding subcategories. In these most common novels, the hero is a solid figure of “static nature”, the plot, composition and internal structure of this kind of novel determine this invariability of the hero, who Bakhtin (1986) defines as the “constant” in the novel. The “variables”, he proceeds, concern the events of the hero's life and his fate, while he presents no changes and these, consequently, prevent him from emerging: “the hero is that immobile and fixed point around which all movement in the novel takes place” (BAKHTIN, 1986, p. 21).

This definition of the majority of novels is a means to introduce, by contrast, Bakhtin's (1986) definition of the *Bildungsroman*, a distinct type of novel that is characterized for depicting “the process of becoming” a man, therefore, a “dynamic” hero:

Along with this predominant, mass type, there is another incomparably rarer type of novel that provides an image of man in the process of becoming. As opposed to a static unity, here one finds a dynamic unity in the hero's image. The hero himself, his character, becomes a variable in the formula of this type of novel. Changes in the hero himself acquire *plot* significance, and thus the entire plot of the novel is reinterpreted and reconstructed. Time is introduced into man, enters into his very image, changing in a fundamental way the significance of all aspects of his destiny and life. This type of novel can be designated in the most general sense as the novel of human *emergence* (BAKHTIN, 1986, p. 21).

However, since this emergence is not standardized and its variations are postulated by the way “real historical time” is integrated into the novel, Bakhtin (1986) proposes to divide

the novel of emergence into five types: cyclical, idyllic, biographical (autobiographical), didactic-pedagogical and realistic-historical.

In cyclical and idyllic time, the emergence of man is possible, as they depict the process of growing old, the passage through life's stages of maturation and this process is cyclical for its essential repetition in the life of each person (BAKHTIN, 1986). A variation of this cyclical emergence, also age-related and exemplified in Wieland's classical novel of education, *Agathon*, represents the development from the fanciful idealisms of youth to sober and skeptical maturity, where life experiences are taken for lessons, and this complex process leads to a common conclusion: "one becomes more sober, experiencing some degree of resignation" (BAKHTIN, 1986, p. 22).

Bakhtin's (1986) comments on the third and fourth types are brief. In the biographical (autobiographical) type, the emergence occurs in biographical time "through unrepeatable, individual stages" (BAKHTIN, 1986, p. 22). This process derives from the events, actions and circumstances of life, "the emergence of man's life-destiny fuses with the emergence of man himself" (BAKHTIN, 1986, p. 22). Examples of this type, according to Bakhtin (1986), are Fielding's *Tom Jones* (1749) and Dickens's *David Copperfield* (1850). The didactic-pedagogical type represents a pedagogical development of the hero and is centered on a particular ideal of pedagogy, as Rousseau's *Emile*. However, some aspects from the didactic-pedagogical type also reflect in different subcategories of the novel of emergence and can be found in the works of Goethe and Rabelais (BAKHTIN, 1986).

The fifth type, the realistic-historical type, is the most relevant to Bakhtin (1986, p. 23) since the development occurs in "real historical time" and "in it man's individual emergence is inseparably linked to historical emergence". The previously mentioned types depicted a static world, with changes of little impact, which served as mere scenery for the hero's emergence and the most recurrent lesson learned from it was that one needed to adapt and consent to such disappointing pre-established world (BAKHTIN, 1986). In addition, Bakhtin (1986, p. 23) observes that in these other types of novel, "man's emergence was his private affair, as it were, and the results of this emergence were also private and biographical in nature".

In the realistic-historical type, of which Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* is an example, the emergence of man is not a "private affair" as it is in the others, but simultaneous to the world's emergence, the hero "is no longer within an epoch, but on the border between two epochs, at the transition point from one to the other", resulting on "a new, unprecedented type

of human being” (BAKHTIN, 1986, p. 23) which becomes a part of an equally new historical time.

Bakhtin (1986) closes his ideas by establishing connections between this most important type and the others, tracing back from the origins in the classical German *Bildungsroman*. The author references Wieland’s novel of education *Agathon* and demonstrates that this example of cyclical time made it possible for Goethe to develop his realistic-historical type of works. The second type of novel, as Wieland’s example, “is a most typical phenomenon of the German Enlightenment” (BAKHTIN, 1986, p. 24). The theorist also mentions how even this earlier example of Wieland’s is admittedly related to the biographical novel of emergence, that is, Fielding’s *Tom Jones*, as Wieland himself reports in the foreword of his *Agathon* (BAKHTIN, 1986).

Bakhtin (1986, p. 24) emphasizes that to grasp man’s emergence in realistic-historical novels such as Goethe’s, “it is immensely important to consider the idea of education as it took shape during the Enlightenment, and particularly that specific subcategory that we find on German soil as the idea of the ‘education of the human race’ in Lessing and Herder”, corroborating with the relationship between *Bildungsroman* and Humanism as established by his antecessors.

Parallel to Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister*, Bakhtin (1986) also considers Rabelais’s novel *Gargantua and Pantagruel* (1532) a great example of the realistic-historical novel of emergence. According to Michael Holquist (1986), Bakhtin considered the eighteenth century Germany with its most relevant thinkers — Goethe and Kant — to be a most successful period for the production of intellectual content, and this admiration is reflected on his thoughts.

Bakhtin’s (1986) study attests how wide the subgenre of the novel has always been and how it has expanded since the emergence of the German model in the eighteenth century. A relationship can be established between what Bakhtin (1986) detects as a characteristic “private and biographical nature” in the first four types of novel of emergence and what Lukács (1988) criticizes in the vast majority of modern novels for the display of a non-symbolical subjectivity in its tendency to portray “a private memoir”.

The chronological and geographical variety of literary examples and subcategories presented in Bakhtin’s (1986) fragmental study proves not only that the *Bildungsroman* has come a long way since Morgenstern’s (2009, p. 654) first impressions of this “most noble category of the novel”, which found its best representative in Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship*, and Dilthey’s (1997) inclusion of the term in the canon of literary criticism,

but also that complexity of meaning does not concern only the original word *Bildung*. Bakhtin's (1986) work presents a partial view of how the *Bildungsroman* has developed outside of its German boundaries.

1.3 Outside of German boundaries

The list of *Bildungsromane* exposed in Bakhtin's (1986) study includes the most miscellaneous works that may adjust to the category, examples that not only vary in territorial origins but also in chronological distance. Thus, the list testifies that novels classified as *Bildungsroman* have been produced in different parts of the world as early as 370 B.C., as the example of Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*. In addition, it is known that Wieland admitted the relationship between his *Agathon* (1766), which is considered one of the earliest examples of German *Bildungsroman*, and Fielding's *Tom Jones*, an English novel from 1749 (BAKHTIN, 1986). Moreover, Dilthey (1997) observed the impact that Rousseau's *Emile* (1762) had on German culture and, consequently, on its literary production.

Nevertheless, it is also known that theorists who have studied and defined the *Bildungsroman* considered the eighteenth century German example of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* as the most relevant source to elaborate their definitions. Considering that, this section will approach *Bildungsromane* that have been produced post-Goethe's novel in countries that are foreign to Germany, as well as briefly present commentaries on three novels of the kind that were written in the English language.

The *Bildungsroman* from the eighteenth century Germany in the molds of *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* would only trespass the limits of its motherland in the early nineteenth century, and the one considered responsible for introducing the sub-genre, at least to the English readership, is Scottish author Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), who translated Goethe's most acclaimed novel of formation in 1824 (CUDDON, 1998).

Bruford (2009) reports that not only German literature but also its philosophy and scholarship began to successively expand through European and American countries by the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries, when the Napoleonic Wars came to an end, having a deep intellectual impact in a considerable part of these countries. Victorian English authors readily assimilated and promoted the "good" conception of the Germany from the times of Goethe (BRUFORD, 2009) as they found in German culture a suitable response to the problem of materialism which followed the industrial revolution:

The Victorian ‘sages’, Carlyle, Coleridge, J. S. Mill and Matthew Arnold, for example, were greatly attracted by German ideas about culture and used them as a counterblast to the materialism which had become rampant in this country from the 1820s, owing to the remarkable results of the industrial revolution (BRUFORD, 2009, p. viii).

However, once exceeding its national limits, starting from this first moment, according to Cíntia Schwantes (2007), the *Bildungsroman* as it had been known from the original German mold had its traditional features expanded, considering that it gradually began to be assimilated by the most diverse cultures with equally diverse processes of personal development, which consequently reflected on the structure of these novels, thus altering the characteristics of the sub-genre in this assimilation.

At the same time, for historical reasons, in the transition from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century, the *Bildungsroman* has also suffered a drastic change in its narrative: in the first moment, the novel portrayed the development of the hero as culminating in an optimistic result, rooted in the humanistic ideals of knowledge and self-cultivation from the Enlightenment; in contrast, the following century proved these ideals to be nothing but promising, leading the hero to disappointment and resignation, this way changing the narrative tone to a pessimistic one (SCHWANTES, 2007). In the twentieth century, the *Bildungsromane* are characterized for the representation of a wider variety of gender, ethnicities and class identities through their main characters (SCHWANTES, 2007).

Succeeding Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship*, some examples of novels from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries categorized as *Bildungsroman* for narrating the personal development of a man are: Stendhal’s *The Red and the Black* (1830); Gustave Flaubert’s *Sentimental Education* (1869); Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884); James Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916); Herman Hesse’s *Demian* (1919); J. D. Salinger’s *The Catcher in the Rye* (1945-1946)¹⁴; and Stephen Chbosky’s *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (1999).

A common trait of the *Bildungsroman* that has become more evident in these nineteenth and twentieth centuries narratives is the use of autobiographical elements in its composition. Both sub-genres have long been related: as Mann (1923 apud BRUFORD, 2009, p. vii) noticed, the *Bildungsroman* “is at the same time an autobiography, a confession”.

Dilthey (1997, p. 335) distances the earlier biographical model from the *Bildungsroman*, since its artistic intention is to describe that which can be seen as “universally

¹⁴ *The Catcher in the Rye* was initially published in serial format between the years 1945 and 1946, and afterward published in the form of a novel in 1951.

human”. Lukács (1988, p. 137) detected the autobiographical element as recurrent in the “overwhelming majority of modern ‘novels of education’”¹⁵ which, he alerted, constituted a “danger” to the *Bildungsroman*, since in his opinion those novels tended to become a narrative of “no more than personal interest” when they could have depicted a more general exemplar process of development. Bakhtin (1986) had also identified and briefly commented the biographical (autobiographical) type of *Bildungsroman* in his study, which is characterized by the fusion of the character’s fate and his own emergence. Bruford (2009, p. 30) corroborates with the evidence of an autobiographical trait in the *Bildungsroman* and complements that “there is often a large autobiographical element in such novels, so the favourite hero is a writer or artist, not a man of action”.

On the one hand, the *Bildungsroman* is essentially a narrative of one’s transition from adolescence to adulthood (CUDDON, 1998). More specifically, this transition consists of a struggling process of one against the world and eventually results in “the reconciliation of the problematic individual [...] with concrete social reality” (LUKÁCS, 1998, p. 132) or as Bakhtin (1986, p. 19) defines, it represents “the image of *man in the process of becoming*”, up to a certain point, commonly when maturity is supposedly reached (DILTNEY, 1997). On the other hand, the autobiography presents, in Philippe Lejeune’s (1996, p. 14, our translation) words, “a retrospective narrative in prose that a real person makes of his or her own existence, while focusing on the individual, particularly on the story of one’s personality”¹⁶, and it can start from a primary childhood memory (or even before that, with the recapitulation of the story of one’s ancestors) and extend as far as old age.

Considering these definitions, it is clear that the *Bildungsroman* and the autobiography are relatable since both focus on telling the story of an individual. The latter is, however, limited to exclusive use of first verbal person as the narrator (a real person) reports facts, lived experiences from a vaster period of his or her life. In contrast, the *Bildungsroman* may use either first or third verbal person and focuses on a specific stage of transition in its protagonist’s life and is, essentially, a fictional narrative. John Anthony Cuddon (1998, p. 65) observes that “during the 18th century we find there is some connection between autobiography and the then relatively new form of the novel” and novels of the kind could be

¹⁵ More precisely, Lukács (1988) uses the term “private memoir”, however, it is known that the autobiographical is an elementary part of the memoir, according to the *Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms* (CUDDON, 1998). What Lukács (1988) criticized was the problem with lack of symbolism, in the exemplar sense, in novels that tend to emphasize the memorialist aspect.

¹⁶ Récit rétrospectif en prose qu’une personne réelle fait de sa propre existence, lorsqu’elle met l’accent sur sa vie individuelle, en particulier sur l’histoire de sa personnalité.

described as “autobiographical fiction” or “fictionalized autobiography”, definitions that relate to the *Bildungsroman*.

Despite becoming more evident from the nineteenth century on, it is known that the autobiographical element had already been present in the late eighteenth century German *Bildungsroman*. According to Bruford (2009), Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship* itself is partially composed of real events from Goethe’s life, among them, his involvement with amateur theater during the novel’s years of production:

When Goethe wrote his novel of the theatre, between 1777 and 1785, he was busy, amongst many other things, with the amateur theatre at the court of Weimar, doubling the role of *maître des plaisirs* of the Duke with that of minister and member of the small governing council of state. Like Wilhelm, he traced his interest in the theatre back to his grandmother’s gift of a puppet-theatre when he was a small boy, and he had been writing plays and reading and seeing French classical drama since boyhood (BRUFORD, 2009, p. 31).

A remarkable *Bildungsroman* from the early twentieth century outside the German circle, usually categorized as a *Künstlerroman* (“artist novel”)¹⁷ is an example of novel of education that admits autobiographical elements in its composition: Irish author James Joyce’s (1882-1941) first novel, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Facts of Joyce’s life, such as his Catholic background, the years spent in a Jesuit school and his family life in Ireland have all helped Joyce compose the character of Stephen Dedalus (BELANGER, 2001).

Applying innovative writing techniques to the novel, Joyce (2001) narrates the intellectual and spiritual maturation of Stephen Dedalus — the last name a symbolic reference to Daedalus, the mythological creator of the Cretan Labyrinth — not only through the author’s characteristic narrative style of stream of consciousness, but also through a discernible linguistic progress. Language is central in Stephen’s relationship with the world and for the development of his art: his linguistic articulation develops as he himself develops (BELANGER, 2001). In the most noteworthy first lines of the book, it is perceptible how Joyce (2001) writes on a typical language used by adults when talking to children, using the classic opening line of fairy tales as an indirect reference to the stage of life the character is in:

¹⁷ According to the *Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms*, “A novel which has an artist (in any creative art) as the central character and which shows the development of the artist from childhood to maturity and later” (CUDDON, 1998, p. 446).

Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road and this moocow that was coming down along the road met a nice little boy named baby tuckoo...

His father told him that story: his father looked at him through a glass: he had a hairy face.

He was baby tuckoo. The moocow came down the road where Betty Byrne lived: she sold lemon platt (JOYCE, 2001, p. 3).

As Stephen gradually relates to the world around him, he begins questioning the conventions of society and the doctrines of Catholic religion as they had been presented to him. The interaction between the inner self and external reality is invariably conflictual, still the “balance between activity and contemplation, between wanting to mould the world and being purely receptive towards it” (LUKÁCS, 1988, p.135) is arduous but necessary to every person’s development, and so it is to Stephen:

He went once or twice with his mother to visit their relatives: and though they passed a jovial array of shops lit up and adorned for Christmas his mood of embittered silence did not leave him. The causes of his embitterment were many, remote and near. He was angry with himself for being young and the prey of restless foolish impulses, angry also with the change of fortune which was reshaping the world about him into a vision of squalor and insincerity. Yet his anger lent nothing to the vision. He chronicled with patience what he saw, detaching himself from it and tasting its mortifying flavour in secret (JOYCE, 2001, p. 50).

Religion plays a most significant role in Stephen’s process of maturation, for even though he is transitioning from a young boy who is a follower of the Christian doctrines he was raised in into a young adult mainly concerned with poetical, philosophical and political matters, his God fearing and the constant guilt of sin, especially regarding the discovery of sexual pleasures, initially torment and restrain him from entering this new side to the world that he is getting to know:

When the fit had spent itself he walked weakly to the window and, lifting the sash, sat in a corner of the embrasure and leaned his elbow upon the sill. The rain had drawn off; and amid the moving vapours from point to point of light the city was spinning about herself a soft cocoon of yellowish haze. Heaven was still and faintly luminous and the air sweet to breathe, as in a thicket drenched with showers; and amid peace and shimmering lights and quiet fragrance he made a covenant with his heart.

He prayed: [...]

His eyes were dimmed with tears and, looking humbly up to heaven, he wept for the innocence he had lost (JOYCE, 2001, p. 106).

From the early debates with his schoolmates on the works of Byron to the profounder discussions on Aristotle at university, Stephen comes to terms with the fact that he would never be able to achieve his artistic ambitions as a writer for as long as he remained in Ireland,

deciding to leave the country for the benefit of his art. The narrative comes to an end when Stephen is taken “just to the point where he is about to act decisively in the world” (DILTHEY, 1997, p. 343). This way, the development of Stephen culminates in his departure, although he continues to search for accomplishment through experience, as the reader learns from the pages of his diary:

APRIL 26. Mother is putting my new secondhand clothes in order. She prays now, she says, that I may learn in my own life and away from home and friends what the heart is and what it feels. Amen. So be it. Welcome, O life! I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race.
 APRIL 27. Old father, old artificer, stand me now and ever in good stead (JOYCE, 2001, p. 196).

Moving forward in time, *The Catcher in the Rye* by North-American author J. D. Salinger (1919-2010) is a relevant exemplar of *Bildungsroman* from the mid-twentieth century, more commonly referred to as a coming-of-age novel¹⁸, another term that refers to the novel of formation. Narrated in retrospect, the story is straightforwardly told by Holden Caulfield, who unusually concentrates it on a short period of time of his life instead of approaching a longer developmental period, as most *Bildungsromane* do. More specifically, he focuses on the events from the previous Christmas, which begin with him being expelled from boarding school after failing classes, as he is determined not “to tell [us] [his] whole goddam autobiography or anything” (SALINGER, 2014, p. 3).

This late 1940s work narrated in first person introduces a shift of narrative tone if compared to the previous example of *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, not only for its directness of speech but also because its main character, who “was sixteen then, and [is] seventeen now, and sometimes [acts] like [he is] about thirteen” (SALINGER, 2014, p. 11), is not necessarily like the recurrent hero of the *Bildungsroman*. Joyce’s (2001) character applied himself to the studies of poetry and philosophy in order to master his art. Salinger’s (2014) Holden Caulfield, on the other hand, narrates his story from a pessimistic perspective about his education or the world around him, although he does benefit from education and admires people who are educated as well.

His seemingly tone of carelessness becomes evident in the first lines from the book, when the character, who is staying at an unspecified institution as a result from the

¹⁸ According to the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* (HORNBY, 2000, p. 237), “**to come of/from something** to be the result of something”.

occurrences of the narrative about to begin, presents a mockery of the traditional narrative style and structure of the *Bildungsroman*:

If you really want to hear about it, the first thing you'll probably want to know is where I was born, and what my lousy childhood was like, and how my parents were occupied and all before they had me, and all that David Copperfield kind of crap, but I don't feel like going into it, if you want to know the truth. In the first place, that stuff bores me, and in the second place, my parents would have about two hemorrhages apiece if I told anything personal about them. They're quite touchy about anything like that, specially my father. [...] I'll just tell you about this madman stuff that happened to me around last Christmas just before I got pretty run-down and had to come out here and take it easy (SALINGER, 2014, p. 3).

It is known that the narrative told by Holden is reduced to a short period of the character's life, no more than weeks, yet it is possible to grasp the most essential element for the novel of formation in this cut-out of his coming “into conflict with the hard realities of the world” (DILTNEY, 1997, p. 335), the contemplative moment of encounter between the inward and the outward as the individual begins to understand the principles of social conventions. Holden's perception of external reality is based on his own thesis that people, especially adults, are insincere in their interpersonal relations, and this is a recurrent conflict in the narrative — the character's frustration with people's “phoniness”:

One of the biggest reasons I left Elkton Hills was because I was surrounded by phonies. That's all. They were coming in the goddam window. For instance, they had this headmaster, Mr. Haas, that was the phoniest bastard I ever met in my life. Ten times worse than old Thurmer. On Sundays, for instance, old Haas went around shaking hands with everybody's parents when they drove up to school. He'd be charming as hell and all. Except if some boy had little old funny-looking parents. You should've seen the way he did with my roommate's parents. I mean if a boy's mother was sort of fat or corny-looking or something, and if somebody's father was one of those guys that wear those suits with very big shoulders and corny black-and-white shoes, then old Haas would just shake hands with them and give them a phony smile and then he'd go talk, for maybe a half an *hour*, with somebody else's parents. I can't stand that stuff. It drives me crazy. It makes me so depressed I go crazy. I hated that goddam Elkton Hills (SALINGER, 2014, p. 17).

As Holden struggles to come to terms with his process of maturation, it becomes clear that one of the character's greatest concerns is innocence and its inevitable loss. Thus, one of the few people that Holden feels comfortable to talk with is his younger sister Phoebe, who in spite of being a child seems to have more clarity of mind about social reality than her older brother does, as she observes that Holden never “[likes] *anything* that's happening” (SALINGER, 2014, p. 187). Phoebe is the one person to whom Holden confesses his

symbolic fantasy of preventing children from falling off a cliff, to be the “catcher in the rye”, as in his interpretation of the misheard lyrics from Robert Burns’ poem *Comin’ Thro the Rye*, clearly a metaphor for his own unacceptance of the transition from childhood to young adult life, namely his loss of innocence:

“You know what I’d like to be? I mean if I had my goddam choice?”

“What? Stop *swearing*.”

“You know that song ‘If a body catch a body comin’ through the rye’? I’d like —”

“It’s ‘If a body *meet* a body coming through the rye!’” old Phoebe said. “It’s a poem. By Robert *Burns*.”

“I know it’s a poem by Robert Burns.”

She was right, though. It *is* “If a body meet a body coming through the rye.” I didn’t know it then, though.

“I thought it was ‘If a body catch a body,’” I said.

“Anyway, I keep picturing all these little kids playing some game in this big field of rye and all. Thousands of little kids, and nobody’s around — nobody big, I mean — except me. And I’m standing on the edge of some crazy cliff. What I have to do, I have to catch everybody if they start to go over the cliff — I mean if they’re running and they don’t look where they’re going I have to come out from somewhere and *catch* them. That’s all I’d do all day. I’d just be the catcher in the rye and all. I know it’s crazy, but that’s the only thing I’d really like to be. I know it’s crazy” (SALINGER, 2014, p. 191).

When reaching the end of his narrative, Holden’s opinion of the ones he considered “phony” has apparently been altered as a result from the hindsight of exposing his personal experience, since he states that he misses those people. This retrospective of events becomes a reflection upon his own turbulent development, as the narrative “provides an image of man in the process of becoming” (BAKHTIN, 1986, p. 21). Holden continues an alien to reality. This process, however, has modified by some means his understanding of social life:

A lot of people, especially this one psychoanalyst guy they have here, keeps asking me if I’m going to apply myself when I go back to school next September. It’s such a stupid question, in my opinion. I mean how do you know what you’re going to do till you *do* it? The answer is, you don’t. I think I am, but how do I know? I swear it’s a stupid question.

[...] D.B. asked me what I thought about all this stuff I just finished telling you about. I didn’t know what the hell to say. If you want to know the truth, I don’t *know* what I think about it. I’m sorry I told so many people about it. About all I know is, I sort of *miss* everybody I told about. Even old Stradlater and Ackley, for instance. I think I even miss that goddam Maurice, It’s funny. Don’t ever tell anybody anything. If you do, you start missing everybody (SALINGER, 2014, p. 234).

More responsive to contemporary times, Stephen Chbosky’s (1970-) first novel *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* is another example of *Bildungsroman*, also commonly referred to as a coming-of-age novel. Through a series of letters anonymously sent to an unidentified

receiver, simply referred to as “friend”, Charlie, an introvert fifteen year-old, narrates the events that have affected the process of his development. The most impacting occurrences of his life relate to two personal losses — the death of his aunt Helen and, most recently, the suicide of Michael, the only friend he seemed to have:

August 25, 1991

Dear friend,

I am writing to you because she said you listen and understand and didn't try to sleep with that person at that party even though you could have. Please don't try to figure out who she is because then you might figure out who I am, and I really don't want you to do that. I will call people by different names or generic names because I don't want you to find me. I didn't enclose a return address for the same reason. I mean nothing bad by this. Honest.

I just need to know that someone out there listens and understands and doesn't try to sleep with people even if they could have. I need to know that these people exist.

I think you of all people would understand that because I think you of all people are alive and appreciate what that means. At least I hope you do because other people look to you for strength and friendship and it's that simple. At least that's what I've heard.

So, this is my life. And I want you to know that I am both happy and sad and I'm still trying to figure out how that could be (CHBOSKY, 2009, p. 3).

Charlie develops a friendly relationship with his English teacher, Bill, who notices his interest in reading and writing and assigns him not only the papers on the literary books for his classes, but also extracurricular essays on other books, most of them *Bildungsromane* from English and North-American literature. The teacher's choice of novels seems to be intentional, as Charlie realizes the thematic pattern in these books and how they are all relatable to the moment in life he is going through. This relationship associates with Morngenster's (2009) early observation that a secondary concern with the reader's development is implied in the *Bildungsroman*, the humanistic idea, then, of education through literature (QUINTALE NETO, 2005):

Dear friend,

I have finished *To Kill a Mockingbird*. It is now my favorite book of all time, but then again, I always think that until I read another book. My advanced english teacher asked me to call him "Bill" when we're not in class, and he gave me another book to read. He says that I have a great skill at reading and understanding language, and he wanted me to write an essay about *To Kill a Mockingbird* (CHBOSKY, 2009, p. 11).

Bill gave me one book to read over the break. It's *The Catcher in the Rye*. It was Bill's favorite book when he was my age. He said it was the kind of book you made your own.

I read the first twenty pages. I don't know how I feel about it just yet, but it does seem appropriate to this time (CHBOSKY, 2009, p. 79).

Incapable of establishing a close relationship with his father, which comes from both sides, Charlie finds a mentor figure in his teacher Bill. The teacher not only encourages Charlie to develop his writing skills and helps him decide to effectively become a writer, but also reassures him to “participate” in social life, in order not to remain a “wallflower”:

I look at people holding hands in the hallways, and I try to think about how it all works. At the school dances, I sit in the background, and I tap my toe, and I wonder how many couples will dance to "their song." In the hallways, I see the girls wearing the guys' jackets, and I think about the idea of property. And I wonder if anyone is really happy. I hope they are. I really hope they are.

Bill looked at me looking at people, and after class, he asked me what I was thinking about, and I told him. He listened, and he nodded and made "affirmation" sounds. When I had finished, his face changed into a "serious talk" face.

"Do you always think this much, Charlie?"

"Is that bad?" I just wanted someone to tell me the truth.

"Not necessarily. It's just that sometimes people use thought to not participate in life."

"Is that bad?"

"Yes."

[...] And I told him about the boy who makes mix tapes hitting my sister because my sister only told me not to tell mom or dad about it, so I figured I could tell Bill. He got this very serious look on his face after I told him, and he said something to me I don't think I will forget this semester or ever.

"Charlie, we accept the love we think we deserve." (CHBOSKY. 2009, p. 26-27).

By some means, this is relatable to Lukács's (1988, p. 135) perception of the balance between activity and contemplation in the formative process depicted in the *Bildungsroman*: “the development of qualities in men which would never blossom without the active intervention of other men and circumstances; whilst the goal thus attained is in itself formative and encouraging to others”.

Similarly to the main character in Salinger's (2014) novel, Charlie also reflects upon innocence and the impact of its loss, this seemingly a recurrent thought in the mind of the *Bildungsroman* hero. In a passage that resembles Holden Caulfield's imagery of becoming the “catcher in the rye”, Charlie observes from a distance and meditates on the process of development and the inevitable loss of innocence it implies:

I walked over to the hill where we used to go and sled. There were a lot of little kids there. I watched them flying. Doing jumps and having races. And I thought that all those little kids are going to grow up someday. And all of those little kids are going to do the things that we do. And they will all kiss someone someday. But for now, sledding is enough. I think it would be great if sledding were always enough, but it isn't (CHBOSKY, 2009, p. 78).

In the end, we learn that Charlie had been both physically and emotionally hurt during his childhood, namely having been sexually abused by his deceased aunt Helen, a fact he had repressed from his memory although it had influenced his approach to the world. Having suffered a nervous collapse after recollecting the occurrence, he stays at a mental hospital to be treated and seems to have matured by accepting that a person is not able to change his or her traumatic past, “but even if we don’t have the power to choose where we come from, we can still choose where we go from there” (CHBOSKY, 2009, p. 228). Thus, *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* is a narrative of personal development since it depicts a young man who “grows to maturity through diverse life experiences, finds himself, and attains certainty about his purpose in the world” (DILTHEY, 1997, p. 335).

The development of the *Bildungsroman*, from *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship* to the most recent example of *The Perks of Being a Wallflower*, demonstrates that in the course of the centuries, the sub-genre of the novel has changed, despite maintaining its essence. The concept of *Bildungsroman* is proven applicable beyond its place of origin, to different cultures and consequently different character types, even though the fundamental narrative of the conflictual process of development significantly remains: it essentially narrates the story of an individual who first meets with external reality. The novels and the studies discussed so far, however, have been approached from an exclusive masculine perspective. Thus, it becomes essential to present the concept of female *Bildungsroman* and some of its literary examples.

2 THE FEMALE *BILDUNGSROMAN*

The female *Bildungsroman* is a tradition that revises the definitions of the male correspondent, mostly because the social roles historically delegated to men and women are opposed to one another. The woman writer, particularly from the nineteenth century in England, had many social obstacles to overcome in order to publish her works and establish a literary female tradition. The female *Bildungsroman* is an essential part of this tradition, and once again, because of the different lives that men and women lead, its characteristics do not correspond to an absolute transfer from the male characteristics of the sub-genre. Examples of nineteenth and twentieth century novels that describe female development attest that these characteristics needed to be evidenced, despite the similarities that both male and female *Bildungsroman* might share.

2.1 To be a woman, a woman writer

The *Bildungsroman* is, fundamentally, a “novel of formation” or personal development (CUDDON, 1998), originally conceptualized after the eighteenth-century German model of Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship* (MORGENSTERN, 2009). It is a narrative of the experience of transitioning to adulthood, more often of a person of the male sex (CUDDON, 1988). It portrays “the image of *man in the process of becoming*” (BAKHTIN, 1986, p. 19), a process in which the inner-self must face “concrete social reality” (LUKÁCS, 1998, p. 132), a conflictual but necessary part for this transition to be fulfilled, with the narrative commonly coming to an end when the protagonist “is about to act decisively in the world” (DILTHEY, 1997, p. 343). In addition, even though the *Bildungsroman* is essentially fictional, the autobiographical element is commonly incorporated to novels of the kind (BRUFORD, 2009) — as we have seen in the examples of *Bildungsroman* previously commented —, and despite their basic differences, one genre associates to the other.

Furthermore, from the nineteenth century on, once it was assimilated by different cultures, the *Bildungsroman* began to describe even more diverse processes of personal development, from multiple ethnicities, class identities and, notably, not only from the male perspective (SCHWANTES, 2007). As we have seen, the *Bildungsroman* is a narrative of the human experience of development; however, from its first manifestations and in its great

majority, it is a narrative of the *male* experience of development. Being so, what would the narrative of the female experience of development consist of? What would distinguish it from its male correspondent?

Before approaching a more direct discussion on the female *Bildungsroman* and presenting its characteristics and literary examples, we may begin by initially considering that the female experience has historically been opposed to the male experience because of social, cultural and economic conditions which have been imposed to women. Moreover, the majority of male narratives in literary tradition presents the image of women from the male perspective, which has effectively impacted the woman writer's definition of herself as well as her confidence to write, and these factors seem to be directly associated with the lesser number of female authors in literary history. At last, this specifies the need for a revision of literary tradition in order to approach the alternatives the woman writer found to overcome these obstacles and write herself into fiction.

Considering that the female *Bildungsroman* is, fundamentally, a narrative of the female experience of development committed to realism and often partially autobiographical, all these factors are consequently an essential part of such narratives. Thus, it becomes necessary to begin with a discussion on how the foundations of patriarchal society¹⁹ have affected the female experience through time, more specifically, the life and work of the woman writer and, on the whole, the history of literary tradition.

As Ronald Carter and John McRae (2001, p. 398) notice, “most histories of literature talk about women's writing as if it were somehow different from men's writing; yet male writers are hardly ever discussed in terms of their gender”, and its reason, the authors go on, is solely because, historically, women were a minority among a majority of poets — and literary critics — who happened to be men. What the authors' observation suggests is that gender should not be a sort of literary classification, since the male production is not customarily approached separately in literary studies, under such rubrics as “men's writing”, while the female production often is.

The reason for such division, however, evidently originates from the position occupied by women in society, for equally evident patriarchal cultural implications have long segregated men and women and placed the man in the most advantageous position, which seems to directly relate to the lesser manifestations of female authors in literary history. As

¹⁹ For this study, we will consider the observations on England's society and literature, and how its impositions have affected both English and North-American women writers.

Clara Reeve²⁰ in the late eighteenth century attested, in terms of artistic creation, “For what in man is most respected, / In woman’s form shall be rejected” (apud CARTER & MCRAE, 2001, p. 226).

Virginia Woolf (2012) correlates this historical undermining of the work of the woman writer with the social, cultural and economic circumstances imposed to women. An observation of the late-1920s woman’s condition brought the author to reflect on the restrictions that women faced. By investigating the historical position of the woman in England’s society, the author found that such restrictions were deeply rooted in its foundations, as history proved that the life of women from the 1400s to the 1600s involved domestic violence and the denial of autonomy, education and, on the whole, the basic right to speak their minds (WOOLF, 2012).

To demonstrate the depth of these constraints and how they affect female artists, Woolf (2012) conceives the character of Judith Shakespeare, a middle-class girl who could have been Shakespeare’s sister. Through this imagery built on facts about the Elizabethan woman, the author argues that women born with the same artistic disposition as the English dramatist’s would not have been able to equally develop their artistry and become renowned authors, not because they possessed less ability to create, but because society imposed them the aforementioned limitations (WOOLF, 2012).

While Shakespeare supposedly had all the education and opportunities necessary to freely practice his art and become ‘Shakespeare’, these basic means for perfecting one’s craft were not at the disposal of his female contemporary, so like her, the imaginary sister who possessed a natural talent for writing would have remained uneducated, economically dependent and household bound (WOOLF, 2012). This illustrates not only what women experienced, but also Woolf’s (2012) argument that creative genius is determined, to a greater extent than gift, by favorable economic and sociocultural circumstances, which have historically been granted almost exclusively to men:

Shakespeare himself went, very probably (his mother was an heiress), to the grammar school, where he may have learnt Latin — Ovid, Virgil and Horace — and the elements of grammar and logic. [...] Meanwhile, his extraordinarily gifted sister, let us suppose, remained at home. She was as adventurous, as imaginative, as agog to see the world as he was. But she was not sent to school. She had no chance of learning grammar and logic, let alone of reading Horace and Virgil. She picked up a book now and then, one of her brother’s perhaps, and read a few pages. But then her parents came in

²⁰ Clara Reeve (1729-1807) was an English author whose best known work is the Gothic novel *The Old English Baron* (1777) (CARTER & MCRAE, 2001). The quoted lines are taken from the author’s *An Argument in Favour of the Natural Equality of Both the Sexes*, published in 1776 (CARTER & MCRAE, 2001).

and told her to mend the stockings or mind the stew and not moon about with books and papers (WOOLF, 2012, p. 61).

Despite all adversities, the woman writer still managed to somehow overcome them and find means to produce and publish her works. As Carter and McRae (2001, p. 26) expose, women in England have written literary works as early as the twelfth century, and such cases as Margery Kempe's (1373-1438), a female author who "could neither read nor write" and yet managed to publish her book²¹ by dictating it to two literate men once again prove that women have constantly struggled so their voices could be heard.

The achievements of Aphra Behn²² (1640?-1689) must also be considered. The female author was an exception to the practiced patriarchal rule of her time, for she was not only an important figure for the development of the novel genre in her country (CARTER & MCRAE, 2001), but also a well-known writer who was able to financially support herself with her art (GREENBLATT, 2006). Woolf (2012, p. 74) exalts her by stating that "all women together ought to let flowers fall upon the tomb of Aphra Behn" for having paved the way for female authors to come with her accomplishments.

The period covering the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century in England witnessed both a considerable growth of female readership for the novel genre and a moment of great fertility among women writers of the same, as the appraised literature of Jane Austen (1775-1817), the Brontë sisters (Emily, 1818-1849; Charlotte, 1819-1855; Anne, 1820-1849), Elizabeth Gaskell (1810-1865) and George Eliot (1819-1880) attests (CARTER & MCRAE, 2001). Despite this vigorous development resulting from such creative works produced by female minds, the woman determined to write still had to face the ever-present hard realities of patriarchy in order to publish. As Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar (2000, p. 64) observe,

[...] the literary woman has always faced equally degrading options when she had to define her public presence in the world. If she did not suppress her work entirely or publish it pseudonymously or anonymously, she could modestly confess her female "limitations" and concentrate on the "lesser" subjects reserved for ladies as becoming to their inferior powers.

Therefore, the nineteenth-century woman writer still experienced subjugation: although she was now, in a way, a more expressive part of the male-dominant literary scene

²¹ *The Book of Margery Kempe* (date undetermined), an autobiographical piece.

²² Behn was the author of diverse fictional genres, but mostly theater and prose. She is said to have had a wider life experience than most of the women of her times and openly approached the most varied and polemic topics in her writing, such as female sexuality. Her best known work is the novel *Oroonoko* (1688), whose hero is a "royal slave" (GREENBLATT, 2006).

than she ever was, still she was placed at the disadvantageous position and could not enjoy creative freedom the same way that male authors always did. Moreover, Woolf (2012, p. 66) observes that “there was an enormous body of masculine opinion to the effect that nothing could be expected of women intellectually” and “[...] even in the nineteenth century a woman was not encouraged to be an artist”.

Carter and McRae (2001, p. 267) comment on this most socially acceptable option for the woman writer, meaning, to attain her work to unimportant topics by concentrating on “the sub-genres of romance, fantasy and sensation”, which were financially successful although disregarded by literary criticism, as they avoided dealing with the more serious social matters frequently tackled in the literature of men. George Eliot (2006) defined the works of these women novelists as “silly novels”²³ for their lack of commitment to a more intellectual approach.

Another strategy adopted by nineteenth-century women writers, which Eliot herself practiced, was to dress themselves up in the “cloak of maleness” (GILBERT & GUBAR, 2000, p. 65) of an ambiguous or actual masculine pseudonym. Gilbert and Gubar (2000) expropriate Woolf’s argument to comment that this was the option for the writer who wanted to avoid “admitting she was ‘only a woman’ or protesting that she was ‘as good as men’” (WOOLF, 2012, p. 80), in order not to remain excluded from literary criticism appreciation.

Remarkable nineteenth-century women writers who have used pseudonyms in order to omit their female identities are the Brontë sisters, who hid behind the ambiguous names of the Bell brothers Acton (Anne), Currer (Charlotte) and Ellis (Emily) and, of course, George Eliot, born Mary Ann Evans, who seemed deeply concerned with getting her novels to reach more serious audiences (CARTER & MCRAE, 2001). Knowing the heavy burden of the female mark, had it been attached to her work, Evans adopted not only a masculine name, but an attempted masculine persona²⁴ for her writing in order to escape the ‘lady novelist’ label (GILBERT & GUBAR, 2000).

It becomes clearer that these patriarchal determinations of society have imposed great obstacles for women writers and seem inextricably related to the secondary role that they have played in the history of literature. The majority of male authors in literary tradition is itself

²³ In her anonymously published essay *Silly Novels by Lady Novelists* (1856), Eliot (2006) criticized these much unrealistic literary sub-genres adopted by a considerable number of women writers. What Eliot (2006) argued was that these works contributed to the prejudice against women writers and negatively affected the woman who, as herself, produced more laborious, socially-aware literary works.

²⁴ This, however, did not prevent a most careful reader, deeply familiar with the composition of fiction such as Charles Dickens was, from observing that the style of the author from *Scenes of Clerical Life* carried “womanly touches”, as he wrote on a letter to Eliot in 1858 guaranteeing to be sure that despite the author’s male name, its author could only be a woman (DICKENS, 2016, p. 35-36).

another determinant for this historical minority of women writers because, as a result, female authors "...had no tradition behind them, or one so short and partial that it was of little help" (WOOLF, 2012, p. 82). As Woolf (2012, p. 74) also observed, "[...] masterpieces are not single and solitary births", and so "[...] the effect of tradition and of the lack of tradition upon the mind of a writer" (WOOLF, 2012, p. 44) is vital for the case of the woman writer.

Acknowledging this fact, Gilbert and Gubar (2000, p. xxi) revise traditional literary history in order to establish a "newly defined context of a female literary tradition", stating that there has been an almost imperceptible tradition for women writers which the authors proposed to evidence, observing that women have long been communicating the female experience in literature by their own means. As Carter and McRae (2001), they also verify the male predominance in the adopted model of literary periodization and that, in this model, women writers are commonly placed as exceptions to the literature produced in their times, resulting in the separate approach that their works are given, which isolated female authors from one another and, on the whole, from literary tradition itself (GILBERT & GUBAR, 2000).

Because of the male author's authority proved by literary history, the image of women crystalized in traditional literary texts almost singularly projected the male perception of the female sex: "From Eve, Minerva, Sophia and Galatea onward, after all, patriarchal mythology defines women as created by, from, and for men, the children of male brains, ribs, and ingenuity" (GILBERT & GUBAR, 2000, p. 12). This way, Gilbert and Gubar (2000) observe that the woman as written by men has been given a great deal of different "masks", but she was mostly confined to the "angel²⁵ or monster" or "angel/monster" images: if the woman was not a docile and silent (silenced) creature, she was instantly perceived as a monstrous, rebellious "madwoman²⁶", although the latter could eventually be hiding under an angelic surface. These images reflected patriarchal expectations of women and have strongly influenced the woman writer's image of herself, causing her to doubt her own creative dispositions, "[f]or it is as much from literature as from 'life' that literate women learn they are 'to be dull/ Expected and designed²⁷'" (GILBERT & GUBAR, 2000, p. 11).

²⁵ The "angel" image in Gilbert and Gubar's (2000) study is based on the one found in Coventry Patmore's poem *The Angel in the House* (1854). The imagery of female perfection described in the poem, based on the poet's wife, represents the male ideals for the Victorian woman.

²⁶ The madwoman or monster image in the study and its title relates to the character of Bertha Mason Rochester, the "madwoman in the attic" in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, who Gilbert and Gubar (2000) define as the contrasting double of the eponymous protagonist and Brontë herself.

²⁷ Throughout their study, Gilbert and Gubar (2000) use excerpts of female poetry in order to support their arguments. The lines "to be dull/Expected and designed" are taken from the poem *Introduction*, by Anne Finch, Countess of Winchelsea (1661-1720).

The authors use the example of Makarie, a character from Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Journeyman Years*, described as an angel-woman whose life was merely contemplative, therefore, a life of no stories, especially in contrast to male characters' active lives, those commonly portrayed as great explorers of the world who did have stories to tell (GILBERT & GUBAR, 2000). This way, a woman whose life diverged from what was socially expected of her — the submissiveness of the “angel” extremity — and engaged in activities associated to the male sex, such as writing, was immediately considered an anomaly, which pushed her to the “monster” extremity: “[...] all characteristics of a male life of ‘significant action’ — are ‘monstrous’ in women precisely because ‘unfeminine’ and therefore unsuited to a gentle life of ‘contemplative purity’” (GILBERT & GUBAR, 2000, p. 28). To overcome these forced patriarchal expectations and obstacles to reach literary autonomy, the authors believe that female writers had to “examine, assimilate and transcend the extreme images of ‘angel’ and ‘monster’ which male authors [had] generated for [them]” (GILBERT & GUBAR, 2000, p. 17).

In their revisionary process for women writers, Gilbert and Gubar (2000) use Harold Bloom's (1997) theory of the “anxiety of influence”²⁸ to support their arguments, a concept which describes a male author's “fear that he is not his own creator and that the works of his predecessors, existing before and beyond him, assume essential priority over his own writing” (GILBERT & GUBAR, 2000, p. 46). As the authors observe, Bloom's theory cannot be simply transferred to the woman writer because as they importantly attest and elaborate, the female author would not equally experience this anxiety of influence, for the simple fact that the majority of those influential writers were those same males who mostly recorded their own definitions of women in literature, in a way that does not correspond to the reality of female experience (GILBERT & GUBAR, 2000). Instead, the woman writer would suffer from a different type of anxiety — an “anxiety of authorship”:

On the one hand, therefore, the woman writer's male precursors symbolize authority; on the other hand, despite their authority, they fail to define the ways in which she experiences her own identity as a writer. More, the masculine authority with which they construct their literary personae, as well as the fierce power struggles in which they engage in their efforts of self-

²⁸ Bloom (1997) proposes a theory to define how relationships of influence work among poets. The author states that no work of poetry is essentially new, as they actually represent equivocal interpretations of the works of earlier poets. The anxiety of influence implies that a poet does not benefit from influence; instead, it generates a feeling that the poet can only achieve innovation and become a “strong” poet once he annuls the influential poet, in a battle between father and son, as the myth of Oedipus and Laius. This process of anxiety develops in six phases that would culminate in a complete “distortion” of the earlier poet's work, and if in the end, the poet was able to create something that could be defined as new, he would become a “strong” poet, but if the essence of his poet/father was still perceptible in his work, then the poet would be considered “weak”.

creation, seem to the woman writer directly to contradict the terms of her own gender definition. Thus the “anxiety of influence” that a male poet experiences is felt by a female poet as an even more primary “anxiety of authorship” — a radical fear that she cannot create, that because she can never become a “precursor” the act of writing will isolate or destroy her (GILBERT & GUBAR, 2000, p. 48-49).

This way, Gilbert and Gubar (2000) praise the great efforts of English and North-American nineteenth-century literary women, as the alternative they found to overcome this anxiety of authorship was itself an intense process of revision. These women simultaneously consented and rebelled against the patriarchal definitions of the literary tradition they had to work and struggle with, “in isolation that felt like illness, alienation that felt like madness, obscurity that felt like paralysis” (GILBERT & GUBAR, 2000, p. 51), for they did have a story of their own to tell, even though literary tradition and society implied there was none.

A considerable number of nineteenth-century women worked with clearly limited conditions so they could write — as aforementioned, either attain their work to ‘silly’ topics or adopt male pseudonyms —, while others developed a literary artifice of writing stories which carried deeper, not easily accessed meanings (GILBERT & GUBAR, 2000). Under the surface of the seemingly ordinary female plots in their writings, they gave their own account on themselves and secretly communicated the reality of female experience and, by doing so, they subversively refused patriarchal definitions of women while simultaneously taking part of the literary context dominated by male authors:

From Austen to Dickinson, these female artists all dealt with central female experiences from a specifically female perspective. But this distinctively feminine aspect of their art has been generally ignored by critics because the most successful women writers often seem to have channelled their female concerns into secret or at least obscure corners. In effect, such women have created submerged meanings, meanings hidden within or beyond the more accessible, “public” content of their works, so that their literature could be read and appreciated even when its vital concern with female dispossession and disease was ignored (GILBERT & GUBAR, 2000, p. 72).

The discovery of these “submerged meanings” within women’s texts, their own female stories, reinforced Gilbert and Gubar’s (2000) theory that considers them in the light of a unitary female tradition, instead of the common separate approach these writers had been historically given. The plot which lies beneath these “palimpsestic” writings commonly present an imagery of silence, disease and confinement, which corresponded both to the literal and figurative female experience, and it is, in the authors’ words, “[...] a story of the woman writer’s quest for her own story; [...] of the woman’s quest for self-definition” (GILBERT & GUBAR, 2000, p. 76), their way to escape the restrictive definitions of “angel/monster”

which literary men had imposed to them. This move toward female literary authorship, despite its hardships, is itself a “revolutionary act” and an “extraordinary accomplishment”, as the authors define (GILBERT & GUBAR, 2000).

After struggling with the degrading limitations of patriarchal society, women writers finally achieved a sense of literary autonomy, with their own restless efforts, and this was a necessary struggle so that women writers to come could grasp such a reinforced tradition of female authors (GILBERT & GUBAR, 2000). This nineteenth-century women’s strategy of subliminally communicating their own life experiences was of extreme relevance, because women could not have remained restricted to the unrealistic literary image men had made of them. As Hélène Cixous (1976, p. 875) strongly argues,

Woman must write her self: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies — for the same reasons, by the same law, with the same fatal goal. Woman must put herself into the text — as into the world and into history — by her own movement.

As we can see, the life of a woman and the social constraints that have been imposed to her are absolutely opposed to the life of a man and the liberty he has historically possessed, and these implications are an important part of the fiction produced by women writers. This relates to a primary difference between the traditionally masculine *Bildungsroman* and the female counterpart, as the female *Bildungsroman* is, fundamentally, a narrative of the female experience. This way, it becomes necessary to verify the female *Bildungsroman*’s own definitions and characteristics, as it is evident that it must not be simply approached as an inversion of the traditional male counterpart.

2.2 To become a woman in fiction

The above mentioned historical distinctions between the social lives of men and women represent the first essential aspect to consider for the approach to fictions of female experience, more specifically, the female *Bildungsroman*. As Gilbert and Gubar (2000, p. 43) complement, these distinctions are signalled in the first stages of childhood and determine different developmental courses for boys and girls, as “the male child’s progress toward adulthood is a growth toward both self-assertion and self-articulation, [...] a development of the *powers* of speech. But the girl child must learn the arts of silence [...]”.

As distinguished social roles played by — but mostly imposed to — men and women circumscribe personal development, we understand that the female *Bildungsroman* possesses its own diverging characteristics from the traditional definitions of the sub-genre with its foundations on the development of a male character. Again, the developmental aspirations and course of the male *Bildungsroman* protagonist generally do not correspond to the female counterpart's aspirations and course; therefore, they are not simply transferred to female characters, because as Elizabeth Abel, Marianne Hirsch, and Elizabeth Langland (1983, p. 5) observe, “[...] the sex of the protagonist modifies every aspect of a particular *Bildungsroman*: its narrative structure, its implied psychology, its representation of social pressures”. Considering that the individual's relation to society is a central articulation to fictions of personal development, the authors acknowledge the need for a revision of the traditional definitions of *Bildungsroman* in order to elucidate the female experience (ABEL; HIRSCH; LANGLAND, 1983).

Abel, Hirsch and Langland's (1983, p. 5) *The Voyage in: Fictions of Female Development* presents an “alternative generic model” of similarities and disparities for the female *Bildungsroman*, thus standing as one of the most expansive revisionary studies on the subject. For this reason, this section will mostly concentrate on the essays that compose the book, as they approach varied possibilities²⁹ for the novel of female development. On the whole, female literary tradition has proven to be a necessary process of constant revision, reexamining, and expanding, as Gilbert and Gubar's (2000) study also demonstrated; this being, as previously approached, intrinsically related to traditional male dominance in literature³⁰.

Abel, Hirsch, and Langland (1983, p.7) notice that “[...] when a critic identifies the ‘principal characteristics’ of a ‘typical *Bildungsroman* plot’, he inevitably describes ‘human’ development in exclusively male terms”. As is known, the *Bildungsroman* protagonist must essentially interact with the social sphere in order to reach a certain stage in his development when he uncovers “responses to the innermost demands of his soul in the structures of society” (LUKÁCS, 1998, p. 133), thus entering adulthood, but “for a woman, social options

²⁹ We observe that, even though the majority of essays in *The Voyage in: Fictions of Female Development* focus on the female literary production in English, they also approach female narratives of other nationalities, such as the work of Clarice Lispector in Marta Peixoto's text, and female German authors, as in Sandra Frieden's.

³⁰ Moreover, differently from the male classic, the female *Bildungsroman* does not consist of a two hundred year-old theoretical tradition. Indeed, theories of female *Bildungsroman* are historically recent, having developed mostly from the crescent 1970s feminist literary criticism, precisely, from feminist critics' discoveries of women writers and their works (GILBERT & GUBAR, 2000), as is the case of Gilbert and Gubar's (2000), and Abel, Hirsch, and Langland's (1983) vital investigations.

are often so narrow that they preclude explorations of her milieu” (ABEL; HIRSCH; LANGLAND, 1983, p. 7).

For Marianne Hirsch (1983, p. 23), the development of the woman in a number of nineteenth-century *Bildungsromane* is actually an “antithesis of *Bildung*” in the Goethean sense of gradual development, based on the prototype of *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship*. The author observes that due to the life of passivity conditioned to women, the only possible growth for the protagonist in these narratives would correspond to contemplative growth, or an inward “spiritual development” (HIRSCH, 1983). Hirsch (1983) also observes that, when a female character effectively becomes an adult to society, symbolized by marital union and subsequent motherhood, she is taken by a conflicting feeling because her personal growth is abruptly stopped. The nineteenth-century woman’s entrance to adulthood simply implied the exchange of one household for another, not allowing her to freely affirm her identity by acting out her own ambitions (HIRSCH, 1983). This way,

The plot of inner development traces a discontinuous, circular path which, rather than moving forward, culminates in a return to origins, thereby distinguishing itself from the traditional plot outlines of the *Bildungsroman*. With this circularity, structures of repetition rather than structures of progression come to dominate the plot (HIRSCH, 1983, p. 26).

According to Bakhtin (1986, p. 21), the male *Bildungsroman* protagonist is a “dynamic hero” whose progressive changes “acquire *plot* significance”; here, the female *Bildungsroman* protagonist would possibly be described as a “static” heroine, as she is not able to actively participate and have an impact on the social structures that could allow those changes to happen to her and, consequently, to the plot.

The protagonist finds herself in a paradox between “psychological needs and social imperatives” (HIRSCH, 1983, p. 27), which makes female development for this character circular instead of linear. She believes the return to retreat to be the only alternative for her to resist social conventions after realizing she would never be allowed to fully develop in exteriority as the male counterpart does. Yet social structures remain unaltered, her retreat only has a negative impact on herself. This, according to Hirsch (1983), leads the protagonist to a destructive path.

The only possible narrative solution for these female *Bildungsromane*, as the author observes, would be the inevitable death of the protagonist, whether a figurative death of seclusion or a literal death, commonly culminating in the protagonist’s suicide (HIRSCH, 1983). For these female characters, however, literal death is often “...described in

unequivocally positive terms as a stillness, a feeling of liberation, peace” (HIRSCH, 1983, p. 41), contrary to early critical reviews that perceived these characters’ fate as a result of neuroses, the inability to face the complexities of adult life. As Hirsch (1983, p. 28) comments, “to adopt this view is to ignore the limited possibilities offered by their societies”.

In a way, the structure of this circular plot on female *Bildungsromane* partially resembles the male *Künstlerroman* (HIRSCH, 1983), like the earlier example of Joyce’s (2001) *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Hirsch (1983) comments that both narratives prioritize inward development at the expense of outward experience. They differ, however, in the sense that, on the one hand, the excessive inwardness of the male artist is compensated with the mastering of his artistry, which allows him to create something from this contemplative state that will eventually be shared with the outer world; on the other hand, for the female protagonist, “subjectivity is not an assertion of individual identity and imaginative power, but a dissolution, an extinction” (HIRSCH, 1983, p. 47).

Moreover, Abel, Hirsch, and Langland (1983) identify two distinctive structures in narratives of female development³¹, one that shares similarities to the male *Bildungsroman* plot, and another that reformulates the traditional definitions of the sub-genre’s structure. The narrative of apprenticeship, of less occurrence among narratives of female development, assimilates the male *Bildungsroman*’s characteristic course of progression, attaining to chronological facts of the protagonist’s life from the earlier stages of life into adulthood; the difference from the male counterpart lies, however, in the fact that the solutions offered for the female protagonist’s development are commonly “imperfect”, as the authors define (ABEL; HIRSCH; LANGLAND, 1983).

An exemplar female narrative of apprenticeship is Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*, and even though Brontë’s heroine is given adequate formal education which would allow her to fully develop the same way as a male hero would, when Jane reaches maturity, she takes the path of other nineteenth-century female protagonists who “[...] learn instead to consolidate their female nurturing roles rather than to take a more active part in the shaping of society” (ABEL; HIRSCH; LANGLAND, 1983, p. 7). Abel, Hirsch, and Langland (1983) also observe, however, that the gradual course of female narratives of apprenticeship in some cases might shift and lead the protagonist to the above mentioned destructive path as defined by Hirsch (1983).

³¹ Pinto (1990) observes that Abel, Hirsch and Langland (1983) opt for the broader term “development” to approach these two narrative structures, instead of “*Bildungsroman*”, as the term is also suitable for the awakening narrative, in which the character’s development is not an exact correspondent to the sense of “*Bildung*”.

The other structure identified by the authors is particular and most common to female narratives: it reformulates the definitions of *Bildungsroman* and, consequently, contributes to make the sub-genre broader (ABEL; HIRSCH; LANGLAND, 1983). According to Abel, Hirsch, and Langland (1983, p. 11), the narrative of awakening describes a different kind of development for its protagonist, one that does not follow a progressive course from childhood onward as the female narrative of apprenticeship does, but in this case, the “development is delayed by inadequate education until adulthood, when it blossoms momentarily, then dissolves”.

In these novels, the protagonists are educated within romantic expectations, but are taken by an internal revolution when meeting with concrete reality (ABEL; HIRSCH, LANGLAND, 1983). After the emblems for female maturity of marriage and maternity (HIRSCH, 1983) result in frustration instead of the personal realization these women expected to achieve, their awakening is commonly presented through sparse moments of revelation or recollection of memories, which implies a fragmental, not linear narrative (ABEL; HIRSCH; LANGLAND, 1983). This way, the “spiritual development” that Hirsch (1983) detected in female *Bildungsromane* may occur in both the apprenticeship and the awakening narratives.

Abel, Hirsch, and Langland’s (1983) observations circumscribe the distinctive narrative structures of apprenticeship and awakening among novels of female development. However, Susan J. Rosowski (1983) applies these terminologies to explicit a difference of another kind. For the author, the novel of apprenticeship is a synonym for novels of male development, and the novel of awakening, in contrast, would account for an exclusively female sub-genre for novels of development:

The novel of awakening is similar to the apprenticeship novel in some ways: it also recounts the attempts of a sensitive protagonist to learn the nature of the world, discover its meaning and pattern, and acquire a philosophy of life, but she must learn these lessons as a woman (ROSOWSKI, 1983, p. 49).

Electing Gustave Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary* (1856) as an exemplar novel of awakening³², Rosowski (1983) corroborates with Abel, Hirsch, and Langland (1983) and identifies these protagonists as constrained women who feel reality to be nothing but sheer disillusionment. The same way as Hirsch (1983), the author perceives the circularity of these

³² Rosowski (1983) bases her arguments and definitions for the novel of awakening in literary works from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Moreover, even though the author claims *Madame Bovary* to be a model for such novels, she comments that the male narrator’s implied voice in Flaubert’s work narrates the development of the protagonist from an observer’s standpoint. Differently, Kate Chopin’s equally omniscient narrator in *The Awakening* (1899) would stand closer to the protagonist’s experience. Chopin’s novel resembles *Madame Bovary*’s plot, however, being narrated through a female voice, it would correspond to a “high degree of narrative sympathy” and a “distilled example” of novel of awakening (ROSOWSKI, 1983, p. 52).

heroines' development (ROSOWSKI, 1983). Complementary, Rosowski (1983) explains that when female characters attempt to unify their expectations with the status quo, their private selves with their socially-expected selves, commonly through the resolution of matrimony, they realize that such union is unattainable, thus they experience an "awakening to limitations" (1983, p. 49), represented as an interior battle of private self against public self:

Conflict is largely internal, between two selves: an inner, imaginative self of private value is at odds with an outer, conventional self of social value. Movement is from an initial childhood separation between the two selves to an illusion of synthesis in marriage, followed by an awakening to the impossibility of such a union and a return to separation (ROSOWSKI, 1983, p. 49-50).

Furthermore, the author identifies that the awakening of the protagonist may occur toward opposite directions: in late nineteenth-century novels it is common that the female character awakens to turn to her inner self, retreating as a way to avoid dealing with social life, moving from the clash with reality to the escapism of dreams and fancy; while in early twentieth-century narratives female characters tend to awaken and move to external matters, thus the conflict with reality for these characters causes them to abandon dreams and fancies to often accept and commit to social roles (ROSOWSKI, 1983). Either way, the female protagonist in the novel of awakening must, on the whole, deal with constant opposition as she faces, in Rosowski's (1983, p. 68) words, "[...] the dilemma of the individual who attempts to find value in a society that relegates to her only roles and values of the woman, ignoring her needs as a human being".

Abel, Hirsch, and Langland (1983) also observe that male and female *Bildungsroman* protagonists carry different objectives along with their developments, as a possible result from the ways their gender identities are defined. According to the authors, traditional *Bildungsroman* fundamentally "assumes the possibility of individual achievement and social integration" (ABEL; HIRSCH; LANGLAND, 1983, p. 5) for the male character. Dilthey (1997), Lukács (1997), and Mann (1923 apud BRUFORD, 2009) also observe that the original goals for these heroes involved self-cultivation, the development of personality, sometimes at the expense of interrelations, in order to achieve maturity and then actively participate in social life. This is evident in the prototype of Goethe's (2000) *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, in which the protagonist's efforts are almost exclusively directed toward the improvement of his personality so he can grow and evolve as a human being.

Revisionary feminist theories of psychoanalysis³³ suggested that “the dynamics of the mother-infant bond” (ABEL; HIRSCH; LANGLAND, 1983, p. 9) are essential to define male and female identities, and as the mother shares a closer connection with the female child, the male child identifies himself as a contrast to the mother, thus developing apart from her, and consequently, in a more autonomous way than the female child. For the girl, these theories suggested that she identifies herself as relating to the maternal figure, who is considered a constituent part of the girl’s identity, as she believes to be an extension of her mother (ABEL; HIRSCH; LANGLAND, 1983).

This way, Abel, Hirsch, and Langland (1983, p. 10) revise the meanings and course of the protagonist’s development, especially in nineteenth-century female narratives, and observe that they are, opposed to male narratives, “[...] defined in terms of community and empathy rather than achievement and autonomy”. Since girls develop their sense of self in relation to another from the first stages of life, in these narratives, “[...] the heroine encounters the conviction that identity resides in intimate relationships, especially those of early childhood” (ABEL; HIRSCH; LANGLAND, 1983, p. 11).

Gender identity might also relate to the fact that the male *Bildungsroman* hero easily separates from his family to go on a journey by himself in the outer world, like Wilhelm Meister does (GOETHE, 2000), while the female heroine tends to remain closer to her relatives and intimate friends (ABEL; HIRSCH; LANGLAND, 1983). Mary Anne Ferguson (1983, p. 228) evidences that these identity traits determine the narrative pattern in male and female *Bildungsromane*, additionally corroborating with Hirsch’s (1983) comment on the circularity of narratives of female development:

The pattern for the female novel of development has been largely circular, rather than spiral: women in fiction remain at home. Instead of testing their self-image through adventures in the outside world, they are initiated at home through learning the rituals of human relationships, so that they may replicate the lives of their mothers.

Because interpersonal relationships are deeply rooted in women’s identities, the female *Bildungsroman* may also narrate the parallel development of one of the heroine’s relations, thus expanding traditional definitions of protagonist (ABEL; HIRSCH; LANGLAND, 1983). A representative of such characteristic would be Louisa May Alcott’s (1832-1888) *Little Women* (1868-9), in which the protagonist’s development is accompanied

³³ These studies developed between the 1970s and 1980s present alternative theories for the understanding of female identity and its development, diverging from traditional Freudian anatomy-based definitions of gender and sexuality, which described women in terms of inferiority to men (ABEL; HIRSCH; LANGLAND, 1983).

by her sisters': "Women characters, more psychologically embedded in relationships, sometimes share the formative voyage with friends, sisters, or mothers, who assume equal status as protagonists" (ABEL; HIRSCH; LANGLAND, 1983, p. 12).

Moreover, Gelfant (1983) evidences novels of development in which the leading role is shared between a brother and a sister, as the case of Holden Caulfield and Phoebe, in Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*. The author observes that in novels of shared development between siblings, as they grow together, gender expectations will eventually separate them, since they must assume their identities of man and woman; yet this is often a traumatic experience, as "[...] it destroys them because they have been too integrally a part of each other, [...] to be separated by the unequivocal sex roles society prescribes" (GELFANT, 1983, p. 154).

Gilbert and Gubar's (2000) theory of the submerged plots that convey the true life experiences of women, also traditional to nineteenth-century novels, is evidenced in female *Bildungsromane*. Abel, Hirsch, and Langland (1983) observe that the subversive combination of a primary plot that prescribed social expectations of women and a concealed account of the real female experience is responsible for building narrative tensions in a number of novels of development. This is the case of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), in which the protagonist's development is revealed to the reader through her recollection of past memories, as Abel (1983) detects, or for Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* (LANGLAND, 1983).

According to Langland (1983, p. 112), under the superficial reading of a conventional female narrative where personal achievement means becoming a wife, Alcott's classic subliminally argues that the actual goal of a woman's development is to find "female fulfilment in a community of women". Langland (1983, p. 125) observes, however, that this possible tension built between the two plots is contradictory, as Jo, the protagonist, "undergoes the development of an autonomous person within a female community, and then she must leave that community and the identity she developed there to marry". Thus, even though *Little Women* prescribes the conventions of a romantic plot, the encoded message in its secondary plot proves that the development of women's identities strongly benefits from interpersonal relationships: "Female growth, as Alcott sees it, takes place through integration rather than separation" (LANGLAND, 1983, p. 127).

Finally, Abel, Hirsch, and Langland (1983) acknowledge that the female *Bildungsroman* is, as female literary tradition on the whole, subject to constant revisions, reformulations, and expansions, as much as its male counterpart, for it is also a parallel representation of the ever-changing course of history and social norms. Complementary, as

Simone de Beauvoir (2011) observes³⁴, on twentieth-century women's move toward independence, their gaining the right to vote and the rising of women workers, must be acknowledged, as it diminished the social differences between sexes, thus altering social norms to a certain extent. However, despite these achievements, women continued to experience subjugation of some kind:

[...] these civic liberties remain abstract if there is no corresponding economic autonomy; the kept woman — wife or mistress — is not freed from the male just because she has a ballot paper in her hand; while today's customs impose fewer constraints on her than in the past, such negative licences have not fundamentally changed her situation; she remains a vassal, imprisoned in her condition. [...] Moreover, social structures have not been deeply modified by the changes in women's condition. This world has always belonged to men and still retains the form they have imprinted on it (BEAUVOIR, 2011, p. 813).

Still, Western societies' advances with the opening of some doors to the woman promote new meanings and narrative structures for fictions of female development, which may additionally describe even more similar characteristics to the traditional male model, as the twentieth century witnessed the transition of women — and chiefly, women writers — from a world of limitations to a world of considerable broader possibilities, in which they can participate more effectively: “[...] we see, in fictions of female development, a movement from the world within to the world without, from introspection to activity” (ABEL; HIRSCH; LANGLAND, p. 13). Moreover, as Cristina Ferreira Pinto (1990, p. 32, our version) states, “in our times, the ‘*Bildungsroman*’ contributes to the validation of female individuality and to the fulfilment of woman's aspirations, as well as to the shaping of a society in which such realization is attainable”³⁵.

The female *Bildungsroman* is a variation of a traditionally masculine sub-genre of the novel, and despite presenting similarities, it promotes an expansion of its model of origin, as the narratives of women demand a revision of structures, plots, themes, and gender identities to account for the multiplicity of the female experience. To become a woman in fiction is a development on its own terms: a circular, inward movement, a conflict with social limitations, a turn into seclusion and constant compromising, but mostly, restless subverting. Essentially, women in fiction and in real life often understand their identities through relationships: that is the foundational principle for women's personal development in fiction and for the literary female tradition nineteenth-century women writers envisioned and concomitantly established.

³⁴ Here, the author speaks of the French woman.

³⁵ O ‘*Bildungsroman*’ contribui hoje para a afirmação da individualidade da mulher e para a realização dos seus anseios, assim como para a formação de uma sociedade onde isso possa concretizar-se.

This way, we must observe these generic characteristics of women's development and how they are featured in the female literary tradition of the *Bildungsroman*.

2.3 To behold a womanly tradition

The studies on the female *Bildungsroman* have proven that within the sub-genre, male and female narratives present significant distinctions that needed to be evidenced. Despite the basic premise of the protagonist's personal development of some kind as constituent of both male and female *Bildungsromane*, the social factor, also common to both, implies different experiences for men and women, which also determines different aspirations and resolutions for characters of each gender. Thus, the outline for the "alternative generic model" which Abel, Hirsch, and Langland (1983, p. 5) have gathered attests the existence of a female tradition of own definitions and characteristics within the *Bildungsroman* sub-genre.

The period covering the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in England, as aforementioned, is historically remarkable for female literary tradition, as many relevant works by women writers were produced during that time (CARTER & MCRAE, 2001). Gilbert and Gubar (2000, p. xxviii) focused their theory on nineteenth-century English and North-American women novelists and poets for finding their works "[...] powerful in a richly significant female literary tradition", and Abel, Hirsch, and Langland (1983) believe that along with the novel genre, these same women writers have concomitantly revised the sub-genre of the *Bildungsroman*. Thus, for this section we will consider the female tradition of the *Bildungsroman* starting from the nineteenth-century English and North-American contexts in order to present and comment how most of the definitions and characteristics of women's development are featured in exemplars of female *Bildungsroman*.

Furthermore, the three selected examples of female *Bildungsroman* to be discussed — one English novel from the nineteenth century and two North-American novels, one from the nineteenth and the other from the twentieth century — demonstrate that the autobiographical element which Dilthey (1997), Lukács (1998), Mann (1923 apud BRUFORD, 2009), and Bakhtin (1986) had detected in the traditionally masculine *Bildungsroman* is also a characteristic of the female tradition. Bruford's (2009, p. 30) statement that "there is often a large autobiographical element in such novels [...]" refers to the male *Bildungsroman*, but it may also apply to the female counterpart. This way, the autobiographical element might be considered another similarity shared by both male and female traditions.

In female literary tradition, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* is one of the earliest examples of partially autobiographical female *Bildungsromane*. Brontë, as we have seen, was one of those women writers who covered her female identity with a "cloak of maleness" (GILBERT & GUBAR, 2000, p. 65), publishing her work in 1847 under the name of Currer Bell. Narrated in first person, the novel stands as a definitive literary classic and one of the prime references among female *Bildungsromane*, the same way Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* represents a prototype for the traditional male correspondents.

From misfortune to fortune, Jane Eyre's development traces the same linear path as the traditional male *Bildungsroman*, portraying the protagonist's course from childhood onward, thus fitting the less recurrent structure of female narratives of apprenticeship, as defined by Abel, Hirsch, and Langland (1983). This progression, however, occurs within limited options, specifically, within the confining options that were destined to the middle-class woman in the Victorian Age, with the protagonist growing up to eventually assume the "female nurturing [role]" (ABEL; HIRSCH; LANGLAND, 1983, p. 7) of governess.

Yet, as an orphan, Jane's development involves struggling to find her place in the world while developing her inner self, and this difficult course is what causes her to mature her emotional and psychological sides, an aspect which again relates to traditional definitions of *Bildungsroman*, as in Lukács's (1998) observation of the hero's development as a conflictual but necessary process for personal growth: "I could not answer the ceaseless inward question — *why* I thus suffered; at the distance of — I will not say how many years, I see it clearly" (BRONTË, 2003, p. 11).

Jane Eyre might describe a paradoxical narrative tension of the kind detected by Abel, Hirsch, and Langland (1983) based on Gilbert and Gubar's (2000) theory of the submerged plot in nineteenth-century women's novels. Despite the seemingly conventional course of life that Jane traces, from one household to the other (HIRSCH, 1983) — from Gateshead to Lowood to Thornfield Hall; then from Thornfield to Moor House until she finally settles for a socially expected life of marriage to Rochester and subsequent motherhood in the secluded Ferndean (BRONTË, 2003) —, the protagonist is unusually autonomous for the conventional Victorian "angel" (GILBERT & GUBAR, 2000). Therefore, Jane Eyre would possibly represent a Victorian "monster", an ultimate rebel in Gilbert and Gubar's (2000) sense: "I am no bird; and no net ensnares me; I am a free human being, with an independent will" (BRONTË, 2003, p. 294).

Moreover, in a most referenced passage from the novel, the protagonist takes a criticizing tone and questions social conventions and the contrasting lives imposed to men and women, thus conveying truth about the feminine experience as Gilbert and Gubar (2000) argue:

It is vain to say human beings ought to be satisfied with tranquillity; they must have action; and they will make it if they cannot find it. Millions are condemned to a stiller doom than mine, and millions are in silent revolt against their lot. Nobody knows how many rebellions, besides political rebellions, ferment in the masses of life which people earth. Women are supposed to be very calm generally; but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties, and a field for their efforts, as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. It is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them; if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex (BRONTË, 2003, p. 123).

For Jane Eyre, strength to grow and to develop (and to discover) her own identity is based on the personal relationships built throughout her journey: her friendship with Helen at Lowood, the re-establishing of her heritage by discovering her cousins in Moor House, the sense of family she finds in Rochester in Ferndean (BRONTË, 2003). In the end, despite the subversive ideals implied in the novel, the protagonist's goal in this classic female *Bildungsroman* resides in "community and empathy rather than achievement and autonomy", as Abel, Hirsch, and Langland (1983, p. 10) determine as a distinguishing characteristic of narratives of female development.

Moving forward in the nineteenth century and into the North-American literary context, another example of female *Bildungsroman* also partially based on events from the author's life³⁶ is Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women*. Similar to *Jane Eyre*, the novel follows the less recurrent path of progression in female narratives noted by Abel, Hirsch, and Langland (1983); it covers, however, not the characters' development starting from childhood, but from the moment in life they are on the verge of no longer being girls, even though they have not fully developed into women yet, hence the title (LANGLAND, 1983). The novel is a third-person narrative that tells the story of the March sisters Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy, growing up as they learn from moral lessons and Christian values (ALCOTT, 2008). As previously mentioned, Alcott's novel represents an example for a characteristic of female novels of development, since it describes a shared development (ABEL; HIRSCH;

³⁶ Langland (1983) comments that the events presented in *Little Women* are partially inspired in Alcott's personal experiences; her family life, however, was not as happy as the March's, since the author had to care for her relatives "financially and emotionally" for the most part of her adult life.

LANGLAND, 1983) among the four protagonists, despite the leading role clearly falling on the character of Jo.

Of all the March sisters, Jo is the most aware of the functioning of gender roles and the one to whom the social conventions of being a woman — again, Gilbert and Gubar's (2000) “angel” image — weigh heavier. Not only the character objects gender distinctions in a similar way as Jane Eyre does (BRONTË, 2003), but mostly refuses to act the way she is expected to, as she is often described as “boyish”, a girl with an attitude, a non-conformist (ALCOTT, 2008).

In the opening scene from the novel, the girls are expressing their dissatisfaction about their works and chores, as well as the fact that they have little money to buy Christmas presents for each other that year because their father is away, serving in the Civil War (ALCOTT, 2008). Jo's sisters go on to judge her masculine manners, which seem to be extending throughout her womanhood, to which she firmly replies, in a defiant tone, echoing that of Jane Eyre (BRONTË, 2003) in her social critique,

“I hate to think I've got to grow up and be Miss March, and wear long gowns, and look as prim as a China-aster. It's bad enough to be a girl, any way, when I like boys' games, and work, and manners. I can't get over my disappointment in not being a boy, and it's worse than even now, for I'm dying to go and fight with papa, and I can only stay at home and knit like a poky old woman” (ALCOTT, 2008, p. 13).

Throughout their development, the March sisters take interests in different artistic areas: Amy draws pictures, Beth plays the piano, Jo writes stories (ALCOTT, 2008). Yet, Jo puts a special effort to develop her artistic gift and attempts to earn money from it, initially hoping to become a successful writer, although writing becomes, throughout the years, a secondary activity in her life, as she grows older and takes the job of governess when moving to New York (ALCOTT, 2008). However, the narrative structure of *Little Women* and the course of Jo's development as a writer is rather different from the hero in Joyce's (2001) aforementioned example of *Künstlerroman, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

The male artist intensely focuses on inner development for the benefit of his artistic production, as Hirsch (1983) observed; therefore, his goals tend to become more individualistic, aiming at personal achievement. On the other hand, Jo's ambitions regarding her gift are essentially more selfless than the male artist's, for she sees her writing as a means to financially support not only herself, but mostly her family and, possibly, others (ALCOTT, 2008). Jo also demonstrates her selflessness when she decides to sell her hair in order to finance her mother's trip to visit their sick father during the war (ALCOTT, 2008). Once

again, women's development is evidently directed toward that sense of "community and empathy rather than achievement and autonomy" which Abel, Hirsch, and Langland (1983, p. 10) observe as a recurrent characteristic in female *Bildungsromane*:

The dream of filling home with comforts, giving Beth everything she wanted, from strawberries in winter to an organ in her bedroom; going abroad herself, and always having *more* than enough, so that she might indulge in the luxury of charity, had been for years Jo's castle in the air (ALCOTT, 2008, p. 374).

The aforementioned social conventions which have long constrained women writers may represent another factor for Jo's development as an artist becoming secondary in *Little Women*. The journey that Alcott's heroine takes somehow illustrates the real-life situation of the nineteenth-century woman writer, who often met extremely "degrading options" (GILBERT AND GUBAR, 2000, p. 64) when it came to the conditions imposed to get her works published. After enjoying little financial success with the publication of some of her stories, Jo sees the opportunity at hand of earning more money by abandoning her artistic ideals of writing 'tales with a moral' and working from within the sensationalist sub-genre (ALCOTT, 2008). This used to be a historically lucrative option, as Carter and McRae (2001) observed, even though not considered serious literature, which fell into the "silly novel" label established by Eliot (2006): "She took to writing sensation stories — for in those dark ages, even all-perfect America read rubbish" (ALCOTT, 2008, p. 374).

As time goes by, Jo's writing ambitions are left aside, and according to Langland's (1983) aforementioned observation, her following the social prescriptions of marriage and motherhood idealized for women, the same way her sisters do, implies a contradictory turn, as Jo's development through the most part of the narrative would probably lead her to a less conventional ending. Jo's "castle in the air" (ALCOTT, 2008, p. 374) is an absolute opposite to what she had pictured in her early womanhood, as Jo does not become a successful writer — although the possibility of resuming her writing one day is not discarded — and abandons her boyish ways, growing up to wear "her gown pinned up" (ALCOTT, 2008, p. 523).

In the end, the *Bildungsroman* heroine remains more concerned with others than with herself, attesting Langland's (1983, p. 127) observation that the development of Alcott's *Little Women* is aimed at "integration rather than separation", as Jo finds self-realization in community, by opening a school for boys in the place she inherits from her Aunt March, having her family constantly near her. Moreover, according to Langland's (1983) other previous observation, Alcott's novel may reveal a double-plotted text in the sense of Gilbert

and Gubar's (2000) theory, which reads romantic ideals but implies a deeper sense of self-realization in women's communal life:

Yes, Jo was a very happy woman there, in spite of hard work, much anxiety, and a perpetual racket. She enjoyed it heartily, and found the applause of her boys more satisfying than any praise of the world, — for now she told no stories except to her flock of enthusiastic believers and admirers. As the years went on, two little lads of her own came to increase her happiness. Rob, named for grandpa, and Teddy, — a happy-go-lucky baby, who seemed to have inherited his papa's sunshiny temper as well as his mother's lively spirit. How they ever grew up alive in that whirlpool of boys, was a mystery to their grandma and aunts; but they flourished like dandelions in spring, and their rough nurses loved and served them well (ALCOTT, 2008, p. 522).

The last example to be discussed moves further in time and stands as a renowned representative of the twentieth-century female *Bildungsroman*: Sylvia Plath's (1932-1963) *The Bell Jar* (1963). Plath's work is, in its essence, a narrative of awakening in the conception of Abel, Hirsch, and Langland (1983), since the events reported in this first-person novel start from the protagonist's young womanhood and are presented in a fragmental structure, with recurrent recollections of past moments. In addition, these events are known to be related to the author's personal experiences³⁷; once again evidencing that autobiography may also associate with the female *Bildungsroman*.

The development of Plath's (2013) protagonist, Esther Greenwood, a girl whose ambition to become a writer is abruptly interrupted by the evolution of a mental disorder, relates to the 1950s and the accompanying changes of North-American society and the way they reflect on the female *Bildungsroman*. Thus, women's experience of these changes as they consequently affect their lives (BEAUVOIR, 2011) causes the characteristics and definitions of novels of female development to be altered, as Abel, Hirsch, and Langland (1983) previously observed. *The Bell Jar* mostly portrays a shift in the female *Bildungsroman* protagonist's goals and course in comparison to those of nineteenth-century protagonists, like the ones in *Jane Eyre* and *Little Women*. Despite these changes, the woman in the twentieth century still experienced the burden of social conventions and subjugation (BEAUVOIR, 2011), as we have seen.

As she faces the responsibilities of adult life, Esther feels lost within the pressures of the persistent expectations of marriage and motherhood imposed to the 1950s North-

³⁷ Lois Ames (2013) comments that Plath relied on autobiographical elements to compose *The Bell Jar* and used the pseudonym Victoria Lucas to first publish her book in 1963 for two reasons: first, because she worried that the book would not be read as "serious" work; and second, because she made little changes in the literary versions of her personal friends and family, mostly changing their names, so she did not want them to feel hurt or exposed by the way she portrayed them.

American woman (PLATH, 2013). Moreover, the protagonist often describes the oppression she feels in the way female sexual freedom was judged by society: “I couldn’t stand the idea of a woman having to have a single pure life and a man being able to have a double life, one pure and one not” (PLATH, 2013, p. 90). In what Hirsch (1983, p. 27) describes as a moment of awakening for female protagonists, Esther experiences the clash between “psychological needs and social imperatives”, but mostly, in her case, personal desires in contrast to those behavioural expectations placed upon women.

Esther finds herself in the dilemma which Rosowski (1983, p. 68) observes in novels of awakening, as the protagonist “[...]attempts to find value in a society that relegates to her only roles and values of the woman, ignoring her needs as a human being”. When reminding of an article about women and chastity her mother sent her in college, the protagonist observes that the recommendations within the text neglected the woman’s personal values, only attaining to the values of society imposed to her:

It gave all the reasons a girl shouldn’t sleep with anybody but her husband and then only after they were married.
The main point of the article was that a man’s world is different from a woman’s world and a man’s emotions are different from a woman’s emotions and only marriage can bring the two worlds and the two different sets of emotions together properly. My mother said this was something a girl didn’t know about till it was too late, so she had to take the advice of people who were already experts, like a married woman. [...] Now the one thing this article didn’t seem to me to consider was how a girl felt (PLATH, 2013, p. 90).

Although constantly criticizing and objecting these expectations during the early stages of her adult life, the oppositional gender roles and how they still delegated freedom to the man and limitations to the woman affect Esther personally and become a larger internal conflict in the process of the protagonist’s development (PLATH, 2013). Like Jane Eyre (BRONTË, 2003) and Jo March (ALCOTT, 2008), Esther feels the burden of being a woman and opposes to the idea of assuming the inferior position that society prescribed her: “The trouble was, I hated the idea of serving men in any way. I wanted to dictate my own thrilling letters” (PLATH, 2013, p. 84).

Essentially, *The Bell Jar* fits into the narrative of awakening structure in Abel, Hirsch, and Langland’s (1983) sense. Esther, however, differs from the majority of female protagonists in novels of awakening as defined by Rosowski (1983), since she develops what might be described as a ‘premature’ awakening, occurring before marriage and motherhood take place. Throughout her development, Esther promises herself and her long-term date Buddy Willard that she would never follow social conventions of marrying and having

children, as this would mean the end of the career as a writer she longs to build, even though the narrative implies that later in life Esther breaks her promise and does become a mother (PLATH, 2013).

The identity Esther attempts to develop in her early adulthood might describe an inversion of nineteenth-century female protagonists' goals, as her ambitions aim at "achievement and autonomy" rather than "community and empathy" (ABEL; HIRSCH; LANGLAND, 1983), thus incorporating male *Bildungsroman* goals into a female protagonist, evidencing how social changes are featured on the female *Bildungsroman* and Abel, Hirsch, and Langland's (1983) recommendation for a constant revising of its definitions:

These seemed a dreary and wasted life for a girl with fifteen years of straight A's, but I knew that's what marriage was like, because cook and clean and wash was just what Buddy Willard's mother did from morning till night, and she was the wife of a university professor and had been a private school teacher herself (PLATH, 2013, p. 94).

However, it is known that mental illness, also a relevant subject in Plath's (2013) narrative, interrupts Esther's ambitions of becoming a writer. After a long successful academic career, Esther Greenwood begins to decrease into madness when she receives a rejection letter for a summer writing class in college, thus losing the sense of identity she had built for herself (PLATH, 2013). The course that the protagonist's life takes — shock therapy, suicide attempts, retreat into an asylum — leads her to the enclosure of a metaphorical bell jar, which describes an equally destructive path as Hirsch (1983) identified in nineteenth-century female narratives of development.

In the end, Esther seems to recover her mental stability, although she wonders whether "someday — at college, in Europe, somewhere, anywhere — the bell jar, with its stifling distortions, wouldn't descend again" (PLATH, 2013, p. 269). The continuing pressures of social conventions to women and the ways in which they affect them (and their mental health) must not be overlooked, as Hirsch's (1983) commentary on nineteenth-century narratives of awakening would apply to Plath's novel.

Finally, these examples of female *Bildungsroman* represent the multiple possibilities for the womanly tradition of narratives of development and how they might relate, the same way as the traditional male sub-genre, to the author's personal experiences, adding the autobiographical element as an extended characteristic for the female counterpart. Moreover, these examples attest that the female *Bildungsroman* not only shares similarities with the male tradition but mostly possesses its own characteristics, which are constantly following the

changes of history through time. What these three protagonists from different contexts in time and space share is the constant need for narratives of female development to question the oppression of the roles determined to men and women by society.

The history of women and, particularly, of the woman writer, evidences that there have long been female stories that needed to be told. These stories of subversion and revision give form to a relatively young but consistent female literary tradition, of which the female *Bildungsroman* is a fundamental part. Female and male developments in life are essentially different as a result of the roles that are socially determined to each sex, which causes the literary form that narrates these processes to be equally differentiated, as the presented examples of female *Bildungsroman* attest. Considering these facts and the constant need for revision of the sub-genre's characteristics and definitions, we propose to further present Harper Lee's North-American literary classic, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, through an analysis of the novel in the light of the female *Bildungsroman* tradition, aiming to investigate how the novel takes part of this tradition while attempting to contribute with new possibilities for the concept of female *Bildungsroman*, which is constantly subject to changes.

3 *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD, A FEMALE BILDUNGSROMAN*

Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a 1960 first-person narrative that describes a period from the childhood of Scout, during the 1930s in a fictitious small town in Alabama. The novel tackles such themes as race, class, gender, and loss of innocence. The narrative is partially based on historical facts. The time Lee produced the novel must be considered to understand the debate on racial prejudice this literary work presents, since the 1950s rise of the civil rights movement in the United States was clearly an influence for the author. The novel's original manuscript was published in 2015, and it revealed the unusual process that *To Kill a Mockingbird* went through. For narrating a transitive period within the protagonist's childhood, the novel is categorized as a female *Bildungsroman*. Thus, an analysis that approaches Lee's novel in the light of female *Bildungsroman* is presented, in order to evidence how the characteristics of the subgenre are featured in the text while attempting to contribute with new possibilities for female novels of development.

3.1 An outline for *To Kill a Mockingbird*

To Kill a Mockingbird is a novel by North-American author Harper Lee, published in 1960. The first-person narrative is set during the early 1930s in Maycomb County, a fictitious small town located in the state of Alabama. Lee's narrator, Scout, whose actual name is Jean Louise Finch, tells the story of a series of crucial events that marked her childhood, covering a period of three years' time, from the girl's nearly six to almost nine years of age. Scout's observation that "enough years" had passed since those occurrences took place indicates that the narrative facts are told in retrospect, although the time or place where the narrator is speaking from is not specified, as Bloom (2010) observes.

Scout initially reminisces the time when her older brother Jem broke his elbow and how it was essentially a consequence of those past events the protagonist is about to narrate. The narrative that follows portrays the childhood adventures that Scout shares with her brother and their friend Dill, which initially involve trying to make the town's legendary reclusive, Boo Radley, leave his home, while the children simultaneously uncover the hard realities of the adult world:

When enough years had gone by to enable us to look back on them, we sometimes discussed the events leading to his accident. I maintain that the Ewells started it all, but Jem, who was four years my senior, said it started long before that. He said it began the summer Dill came to us, when Dill first gave us the idea of making Boo Radley come out (LEE, 2010, p. 3).

Those crucial events that occur as Scout grows up represent the parallel plot of the novel, in which the children's father, the lawyer Atticus Finch, is charged with the defense of Tom Robinson, a black man accused of rape by Mayella Ewell, a poor white woman. Atticus, who is presented as an honorable man of principles, must face the struggling situation that comes to affect his personal life, as well as his children's, for defending a black person within a deeply racist community:

"Do all lawyers defend n-Negroes, Atticus?"

"Of course they do, Scout."

"Then why did Cecil say you defended niggers? He made it sound like you were runnin' a still."

Atticus sighed. "I'm simply defending a Negro—his name's Tom Robinson. He lives in that settlement beyond the town dump. [...] Scout, you aren't old enough to understand some things yet, but there's been some high talk around town to the effect that I shouldn't do much about defending this man. It's a peculiar case [...]."

"If you shouldn't be defendin' him, then why are you doin' it?"

"For a number of reasons," said Atticus. "The main one is, if I didn't I couldn't hold up my head in town, I couldn't represent this county in the legislature, I couldn't even tell you or Jem not to do something again." [...] (LEE, 2010, p. 100).

The novel's title is taken from the following passage, when Scout is speaking to their neighbor and friend, Miss Maudie Atkinson, and wonders why her father told her brother it would be a "sin" to shoot a mockingbird with their rifles:

"Your father is right," she said. Mockingbirds don't do one thing but make music for us to enjoy. They don't eat up people's gardens, don't nest in corncribs, they don't do one thing but sing their hearts for us. That's why it's a sin to kill a mockingbird" (LEE, 2010, p. 119).

This metaphor has been largely interpreted as a reference to the characters of Tom Robinson or Boo Radley, therefore symbolizing innocence, while others believe it to be a reference to tolerance, as the message in the book conveys, Jacqueline Tavernier-Courbin (2010) informs³⁸. It may also be interpreted as a metaphor for not only Robinson's character, but for North-American black people in general, as Isaac Saney (2010) complements.

³⁸ Tavernier-Courbin (2010) believes there is another meaning for this metaphor, as mockingbirds are in reality aggressive creatures, so the novel title would possibly refer to the hypocrisy of the people in Maycomb, as mockingbirds are not exactly the innocent creatures they seem to be.

For these reasons, *To Kill a Mockingbird* is often approached for the themes it tackles, namely, racism, class, gender, and, in its core, the move toward the loss of innocence as one grows up (WARE, 2010). These rather controversial topics relate to the history of human kind, and in particular, to the development of North-American society's identity, which might explain the novel's contradictory history of both acclaim and backlash. Even though the novel conveys a message of conscious-awareness on racism, still it starts from a white, female-Southern perspective, which must be considered when approaching the presentation of this theme in the novel, as Saney (2010) observes. Despite *To Kill a Mockingbird*'s popularity, the use of racist terms and the representation of black people in the novel have been contested and considered offensive, causing it to be constantly banned from North-American schools' curriculums³⁹.

Despite being set in a fictitious Southern town, the background for Lee's narrative is mostly based on facts of North-American history. The narrative action in *To Kill a Mockingbird* takes place during the first half of the 1930s in a fictitious North-American Southern town. Therefore, it represents the years of racial segregation, which is mostly portrayed in the process of Tom Robinson's trial and how townfolks reacted to it. The novel also depicts the early stages of The Great Depression. The slow-paced small town in its decaying condition mirrors the impact of this historical moment, especially on poorer families as the Cunninghams:

There was no hurry, for there was nowhere to go, nothing to buy and no money to buy it with, nothing to see outside the boundaries of Maycomb County. But it was a time of vague optimism for some of the people: Maycomb County had recently been told that it had nothing to fear but fear itself (LEE, 2010, p. 6).

Patrick Chura (2010) observes, however, that even though the novel relates to the Great Depression era, much of the approach to racial and social issues in the way they are regarded by Maycomb's more consciously aware inhabitants, such as Scout's father, would actually translate much of the ideologies from the novel's time of production. Lee wrote her novel during the 1950s, a period historically marked by the rise of the Civil Rights movement in the United States of America.

³⁹ Up to date, the reading of the book in North-American schools remains a controversy. As in February 2018, *To Kill a Mockingbird* was banned from a school in Minnesota because the school board feared students would be offended by the frequent use of racist language in the book. Available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/education/wp/2018/02/07/a-school-district-drops-to-kill-a-mockingbird-and-huckleberry-finn-over-use-of-the-n-word/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.52a000a330f5> (accessed September 15, 2018).

Chura (2010) also comments that Lee's discussion about racism in the novel has possibly been influenced by two controversial trials involving racial prejudice that began in the first half of the 1950s: the *Brown vs. Board of Education*⁴⁰ trial, in 1954, and Emmett Till's trial, in the following year. The latter might have been a strong reference for Tom Robinson's story in the novel, as Till, a 14 year-old black boy then, was murdered by two white men for having supposedly whistled at a white woman in Mississippi (CHURA, 2010). Moreover, the *Scottsboro Trials*⁴¹, which happened in the 1930s, are the most probable influence for Lee's novel (BLOOM, 2010), since *To Kill a Mockingbird*'s narrative is set in this period, although Lee was only five years old when the trials occurred and might not have been influenced by them, as Chura (2010) contests.

Harper Lee was born on April 28, 1926, in Monroeville, Alabama. As Lee's unauthorized biographer Charles J. Shields (2006) informs, the author was an extremely reserved person, who made few public statements, so little is known about her personal life⁴². Daughter of a lawyer, Lee herself studied in the University of Alabama's Law School, a course she eventually abandoned to dedicate to writing (SHIELDS, 2006). For the most part of Lee's life, *To Kill a Mockingbird* was the author's only book, although she published a number of essays and magazine articles, as Bloom (2010) complements about the author's production. The fact that Lee has given little information about herself or her work throughout her life has led readers and critics to wonder what the actual sources for her single masterpiece were (BLOOM, 2010).

While the author defended that the novel was essentially fictional, Bloom (2010) comments that because Lee never revealed whether *To Kill a Mockingbird* was inspired in autobiographical elements or not, many have speculated its possible connections with the author's personal experiences. The literary critic observes that aspects from the author's life find correspondence in the narrative (BLOOM, 2010). For instance, says Bloom (2010), the portrayed space and characters are similar to those of Lee's hometown; the same way as

⁴⁰ The *Brown vs. Board of Education* trial, as Chura (2010) reports, was a relevant decision for the North-American Supreme Court, as it made racial segregation between black and white students in the country's public schools unconstitutional.

⁴¹ Bloom (2010) informs that the *Scottsboro Trials* refer to the case of nine black men who were accused of raping two white women on a train in Alabama, rape being a capital crime in the state. The men were convicted, although there lacked evidences. Because one of the women involved dropped her charges, the accusations became suspicious. The trials lasted until the early 1970s until one of the defendants was pardoned.

⁴² Shields (2006) wrote a book on Harper Lee's life, which he defines as an "unusual" biographical piece. The author states that because of Lee's characteristic reserve, it was a difficult task to come up with the work on the writer's life. Having written the book before Lee's death, Shields (2006) comments that the author of *To Kill a Mockingbird* refused to provide information about herself to help him write her biography, and also encouraged her family, personal friends and acquaintances not to give information about her private life to him.

Atticus, Lee's father was a lawyer; and Scout's friend, Dill, described as a child of excessive imagination which borders a compulsion for lying, is said to be a precise description of the author's best friend in childhood, the renowned author Truman Capote:

Dill was a curiosity. He wore blue linen shorts that buttoned to his shirt, his hair was snow white and stuck to his head like duckfluff; he was a year my senior but I towered over him. As he told us the old tale his blue eyes would lighten and darken; his laugh was sudden and happy; he habitually pulled at a cowlick in the center of his forehead (LEE, 2010, p. 10).

The history behind *To Kill a Mockingbird's* publication and the way it has unfolded as years have passed describes an unusual case⁴³ in literary history criticism. In the late 1950s, the manuscript of the novel, originally titled *Go Set a Watchman*, was purchased by the J.B. Lippincott Company⁴⁴. The narrative in this embryonic text is set twenty years ahead of the time presented in *To Kill a Mockingbird* and depicts most of the characters from Maycomb County and Scout as a grown-up woman (LEE, 2015), as it was later revealed.

It is known that after reading this primary version, Tay Hohoff, the editor responsible for Harper Lee's publication, suggested that the first-time writer should rewrite the story in a memorialist structure to account for Scout's childhood (SHIELDS, 2006), instead of focusing on her young womanhood as it was originally intended. To the surprise of many readers, in 2011 was announced the rediscovery of *To Kill a Mockingbird's* manuscript, which had been considered lost for over fifty years⁴⁵. *Go Set a Watchman* was published in July 2015, less than a year before Harper Lee's death, and was first announced as a sequel to the acclaimed novel, despite actually being its first manuscript⁴⁶.

However, Lee's possible intentions with her original narrative describe a pessimistic tone in comparison to *To Kill a Mockingbird's*. In *Go Set a Watchman*, Scout's admiration for Atticus dissolves once she finds out that her father and her boyfriend, Hank, are active members of Maycomb County Citizens' Council, composed of men who were in favor of white supremacist ideals (LEE, 2015). The protagonist's grown-up version experiences the disappointments of adult life, through the demystification of the immaculate paternal image she carried:

The one human being she had ever fully and wholeheartedly trusted had failed her; the only man she had ever known to whom she could point and

⁴³ Available at: < <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/13/books/the-invisible-hand-behind-harper-lees-to-kill-a-mockingbird.html>> (accessed September 10, 2018).

⁴⁴ *Idem ibidem*.

⁴⁵ *Idem ibidem*.

⁴⁶ *Idem ibidem*.

say with expert knowledge, “He is a gentleman, in his heart he is a gentleman,” had betrayed her publicly, grossly, and shamelessly (LEE, 2015, p. 113).

The primary plot in *To Kill a Mockingbird* surrounding Tom Robinson’s trial and the events that anticipate and follow it mostly addresses racial and social matters. However, as we have seen, the narrative’s themes are plural, not restricted to this major storyline, the same way its categorization is not limited to the social novel sub-genre. *To Kill a Mockingbird* is, in its essence, a narrative of its protagonist’s personal development, therefore, a female *Bildungsroman*.

The reader may often attain to this most polemic discussion that the novel presents on the damages of racism to society, but as literary critics and scholars have observed, Scout’s role in the narrative is not merely to report her childhood observations of the complexities in the adult world, as her younger version is also an important agent in most of those stories. This way, the reader simultaneously accompanies the protagonist’s gradual development toward the final stages of her childhood as the memorialist narrative itself develops, and her consequent internal changes resulting from those definitive years she reports characterize the novel as a female *Bildungsroman*.

Kathryn Lee Seidel (2010) states that Scout’s speech implies that the protagonist may have grown up to be neither the lady that Southern conventions preached nor an antithesis of it, but mostly a reasonable, consciously-aware person, much due to the role that her father Atticus plays in her personal development as a child, for his main concern is that his children do not grow up to become intolerant adults like the people of Maycomb. For this reason, Seidel (2010, unpagged) affirms that *To Kill a Mockingbird* is “indeed a bildungsroman”, and that the movement within Scout’s development, from obscurity to enlightenment on the problems of society, is the ideal Harper Lee conveys with her narrative: “It is Scout who makes the journey that Lee is espousing, a journey from prejudice to tolerance, from ignorance to wisdom, from violence to self-control, from bigotry to empathy; from a code of honor to a code of law”.

Michele S. Ware (2010) observes that not only Atticus helps shape Scout’s identity, but also the family cook, Calpurnia, who serves as a female role model for the motherless child, besides being the one responsible for introducing Scout to the reality of Maycomb’s black citizens. Moreover, Ware (2010) corroborates with Seidel (2010) and evidences that the novel is a female *Bildungsroman*, specifically, a feminist narrative within the sub-genre:

To Kill a Mockingbird can be read as a feminist *bildungsroman*, for Scout emerges from her childhood experiences with a clear sense of her place in her community and an awareness of her potential power as the woman she will one day be. Admittedly, her power is limited and her authority is circumscribed by the historical/cultural context of the novel; Lee's portrayal of Scout ends not in defeat but in a triumphant expansion of her knowledge, understanding, and sympathy (WARE, 2010, unpagged).

Furthermore, Bloom's (2010) observations that Harper Lee possibly found inspiration in facts of her life to write *To Kill a Mockingbird* demonstrates that Scout's representation is possibly connected to the author's image. Thus, the novel might represent another example of the frequent association between the female *Bildungsroman* and the autobiography, which had already been observed in the previously commented examples of *Jane Eyre*, *Little Women* and *The Bell Jar*.

These statements and observations testify that *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a representative of the twentieth century female *Bildungsroman*. Yet, here we must not simply attain to these statements, but deeply examine what fundamentally makes the novel an exemplar of the female literary tradition of the sub-genre. In order to do so, we propose to develop an analysis of Harper Lee's novel in the light of the female *Bildungsroman* studies presented so far. Thus, we aim to uncover how the previously presented characteristics of novels of female development may be featured in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, while attempting to contribute with new possibilities for the ever-changing concept of female *Bildungsroman*.

3.2 Scout's personal development: Analysing *To Kill a Mockingbird* in the light of the female *Bildungsroman*

First and foremost, *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a first-person narrative of childhood memories. The past events covering Scout's adventures in company of her brother Jem and their friend Dill, however, are presented in a chronological course of progression. The narrative action, as the protagonist anticipates, begins on "[...] the summer Dill came to [them], when Dill first gave [them] the idea of making Boo Radley come out" (LEE, 2010, p. 3). For this reason, the novel's structure may formally associate with the female narrative of apprenticeship that Abel, Hirsch, and Langland (1983) identified within the female *Bildungsroman* sub-genre.

Yet, Scout's memories do not represent the usual apprenticeship structure, beginning in childhood and culminating in the protagonist's transition to the adult world, but a cut-out

version of this pattern. We assume that the narrator is a fully-grown woman with a better understanding of her past, since “enough years had gone by” (LEE, 2010, p. 3). But she does not tell how she became a woman, as Bloom (2010) observes: the memorialist storyline takes the protagonist only up to a later stage of her childhood, when she is around nine years old. Still, there is an apprenticeship within that short period of time, a transition that happens through a gradual process of loss of innocence which was crucial for the adult woman that Scout became. Thus, we must observe the elements that compose Scout’s life and specify how those decisive moments in the narrative translate into the protagonist’s personal development, her female *Bildungsroman*.

We may begin with the approach to Scout’s close relationships, since the ones established in early childhood are definitive for the development of a female *Bildungsroman* protagonist’s identity, as Abel, Hirsch, and Langland (1983) attest. These characters not only help shape the protagonist’s identity, but also guide her through experiences that are fundamental for her development. In the first part of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, which mainly concerns the world of children, we are not only introduced to the narrative universe, but most importantly, to Scout’s family. In Maycomb, the Finches are a traditionally respected family that would belong to the town’s middle/upper class, despite having been relatively impacted by the economic problems resulting from the Great Depression.

Scout introduces the members of her household: “We lived on the main residential street in town — Atticus, Jem and I, plus Calpurnia our cook. Jem and I found our father satisfactory: he played with us, read to us, and treated us with courteous detachment” (LEE, 2010, p. 6). Specifically, Scout’s family circle is composed of three members: the father Atticus, the older brother Jem, and the woman who is possibly the closest to a mother figure in the protagonist’s life, Calpurnia.

Scout’s mother is a faceless, almost imperceptible character: being a motherless child since she was only two years old, she has no vivid memories of her mother to share⁴⁷. The name of Scout and Jem’s mother is not even mentioned throughout the narrative, neither does their father ever speak of his deceased wife. Based on the little information that is given about this character, we learn from Mrs. Dubose, an actual grumpy old neighbor in town, that “a lovelier lady than [their] mother never lived” (LEE, 2010, p. 133), and that differently from Scout, her older brother eventually remembers this traumatizing loss:

⁴⁷ This idea is found and discussed in Ware’s (2010) analysis.

Our mother died when I was two, so I never felt her absence. [...] Jem was the product of their first year of marriage; four years later I was born, and two years later our mother died from a sudden heart attack. They said it ran in her family. I did not miss her, but I think Jem did. He remembered her clearly, and sometimes in the middle of a game he would sigh at length, then go off and play by himself, behind the car-house. When he was like that, I knew better than to bother him (LEE, 2010, p. 7).

Since Scout has not been able to develop anything closer to a relationship with her mother, the girl does not experience the “mother-infant bond”, considered a determinant for the female child growth (ABEL, HIRSCH, LANGLAND, 1983). Thus, the girl establishes this dynamic relation with the immediate masculine figures of her life; namely, her father and brother, who help shape her identity and autonomy⁴⁸. Yet, the protagonist is not completely absent from a closer female role model in her life: as Ware (2010) and Seidel (2010) evidenced, Calpurnia is a strong, constant presence in Scout’s development. In many aspects, Calpurnia might compensate for the gap left by the death of Scout and Jem’s mother.

Atticus acknowledges he “...couldn’t have got along without [Calpurnia] all these years”, and the cook is regarded as “...a faithful member of [that] family [...]” (LEE, 2010, p. 182) for having cooperated with the rearing of his children: “She tried to bring them up according to her lights, and Cal’s lights are pretty good — and another thing, the children love her” (LEE, 2010, p. 183). Calpurnia’s position in the Finch household is not merely of an employee; she cares for Scout and Jem’s welfare in an ambiguously harsh and loving way, as a mother would. The cook is not only responsible for feeding them, or inspecting their personal hygiene, but also for advising and educating the children, especially on how to treat others with dignity.

On one of the first episodes in the narrative, Scout brings attention to her poor classmate Walter Cunningham’s lack of table manners when Jem invites him over for lunch. It is Calpurnia who calls attention to the girl’s rude behavior. The cook attempts to elucidate Scout that above any etiquette rule, she must first comprehend and respect the reality of people from different classes and their habits, an important lesson for her understanding of Maycomb’s society:

“There’s some folks who don’t eat like us,” she whispered fiercely, “but you ain’t called on to contradict ‘em at the table when they don’t. That boy’s yo’ comp’ny and if he wants to eat up the table cloth you let him, you hear?”
 “He ain’t company, Cal, he’s just a Cunningham —”
 “Hush your mouth! Don’t matter who they are, anybody sets foot in this house’s yo’ comp’ny, and don’t you let me catch you remarkin’ on their

⁴⁸ *Idem ibidem.*

ways like you was so high and mighty! Yo' folks might be better'n the Cunninghams but it don't count for nothin' the way you're disgracin' 'em — if you can't act fit to eat at the table you can just set here and eat in the kitchen!" (LEE, 2010, p. 32-33).

Calpurnia plays an important role in Scout's education. The protagonist reminisces that reading was an ability which she naturally developed, not having been directly taught: "[...] reading was something that just came to me, as learning to fasten the seat of my union suit without looking around, or achieving two bows from a snarl of shoelaces" (LEE, 2010, p. 23). Writing, however, is something that the girl has learned from Calpurnia, who had no formal education but was taught by one of her past employers through the same method she applies to Scout:

It kept me from driving her crazy on rainy days, I guess. She would set me a writing task by scrawling the alphabet firmly across the top of a tablet, then copying out a chapter of the Bible beneath. [...] In Calpurnia's teaching, there was no sentimentality: I seldom pleased her and she seldom rewarded me (LEE, 2010, p. 24).

Despite initially describing Calpurnia as a "tyrannical presence as long as [she] could remember" (LEE, 2010, p. 7), Scout realizes that little-by-little, as she grows older, the dynamics of their relationship takes a shifting turn: "For some reason, my first year of school had wrought a great change in our relationship: Calpurnia's tyranny, unfairness, and meddling in my business had faded to gentle grumblings of general disapproval" (LEE, 2010, p. 45). At some point in the protagonist's development, this change becomes more evident, and her judgement on Calpurnia positively evolves: from a defiant and strict tyrant, the cook becomes a friendly and admirable woman to Scout's eyes.

When Calpurnia takes Jem and Scout to Maycomb's black community church, she reveals a part of her personal life that was unknown to the children, while simultaneously exposing them to the other side of Tom Robinson's trial repercussion⁴⁹. This way, the cook is expanding Jem and Scout's worldviews and, mainly, the children's views on their own community⁵⁰. In this episode, brother and sister question Calpurnia's "double life", which refers to her contrasting language use among black people and in the Finch household, where she talks in a more grammatically-correct register. In her response, Calpurnia indirectly exposes to the children the hypocrisy in which the social relations in Maycomb are founded:

"Well, in the first place I'm black—"

⁴⁹ *Idem ibidem.*

⁵⁰ *Idem ibidem.*

[...] “Suppose you and Scout talked colored-folks’ talk at home it’d be out of place, wouldn’t it? Now what if I talked white-folks’ talk at church, and with my neighbors? They’d think I was puttin’ on airs to beat Moses.” [...] “It’s not necessary to tell all you know. It’s not lady-like — in the second place, folks don’t like to have somebody around knowin’ more than they do. It aggravates ’em. You’re not gonna change any of them by talkin’ right, they’ve got to want to learn themselves, and when they don’t want to learn there’s nothing you can do but keep your mouth shut or talk their language” (LEE, 2010, p. 167).

However, the evolution of Scout and Calpurnia’s relationship is paced-down by the arrival of the children’s aunt, Alexandra, to the Finch household. A typical southern lady, Alexandra Finch is an elitist, mostly concerned with appearances and “Old Family” values, which she attempts to transmit to Jem and Scout. Based on her personal belief that there are limits for the interaction with the lower classes, the aunt abruptly imposes her ruling and disapproves the children’s proximity to the black cook. She even forbids Scout from visiting Calpurnia’s house: “You may *not*.” (LEE, 2010, p. 181).

Initially a cold and distant relative who lives on the family’s land (Finch’s Landing), Alexandra becomes a closer familial relationship of Scout when she comes to live with Atticus and the children. After a turbulent Christmas in the Landing, when Scout physically assaulted her cousin and Alexandra’s grandson, Francis, for calling her father a “nigger-lover” (LEE, 2010, p. 112), Atticus’s sister convinces her brother that it is time for the rebellious child to have a female role model in the house — meaning, a female model in her own terms, as she clearly invalidates Calpurnia as such. Atticus consents to this intervention, mainly because he feels guilty for his future absence at home due to his involvement with Tom Robinson’s trial.

Alexandra’s goal with this move is an attempt to fill the maternal void in the children’s life, especially for considering Scout’s boyish behavior erratic. Thus, the aunt establishes an imposed “mother-infant bond” which is superficial. This bond she envisions merely signifies perpetuating her personal definitions of femininity, as she restlessly tries to make a little lady out of Scout: “We decided that it would be best for you to have some feminine influence. It won’t be many years, Jean Louise, before you become interested in clothes and boys [...]” (LEE, 2010, p. 170).

Alexandra soon adapts to Maycomb and becomes an active member of that society, as well as a friendly and kind neighbor to the community’s eyes. Scout describes her father’s sister as one of the last specimens of classical Southern femininity, the embodiment of social conventions for the traditional Alabama lady:

She had river-boat, boarding-school manners; let any moral come along and she would uphold it; she was born in the objective case; she was an incurable gossip. When Aunt Alexandra went to school, self-doubt could not be found in any textbook, so she knew not its meaning. She was never bored, and given the slightest chance she would exercise her royal prerogative: she would arrange, advise, caution, and warn (LEE, 2010, p. 172).

In spite of Alexandra's fierce authority, Scout initially loathes her aunt's presence and does not conform to the rules she tries to impose: "Aunt Alexandra fitted into the world of Maycomb like a hand into a glove, but not into the world of Jem and me" (LEE, 2010, p.175). Although the aunt forces an ideal of femininity that Scout despises, in a short period of time the girl gives in to Alexandra's pressures concerning her clothing and manners; despite not necessarily becoming the lady her aunt expected her to become. In the end, the blood relative represents an actual "tyrannical presence" in Scout's personal growth rather than Calpurnia, as the cook develops a relationship of love and caring with Jem and her.

Despite their influence and necessity on Scout's life, those female characters are not the primary role models that help shape Scout's identity throughout her personal development. Fundamentally, Scout's references fall upon her father Atticus and her brother Jem. Scout presents her child version as an ultimate tomboy, who has neither girl friends nor the desire to participate in a typical world of femininity. On the contrary, the girl prefers the company of boys, namely, her brother and their friend Dill.

From the initial narrative focus on their childhood adventures, it becomes perceptible that the development of Scout in *To Kill a Mockingbird* is not a journey that the protagonist takes by herself, but one that is mostly shared with her brother Jem. This associates *To Kill a Mockingbird* with another recurrent characteristic of the female *Bildungsroman*: a shared development between siblings, identified by Gelfant (1983), for we can follow Jem's development parallel to Scout's. The development of the boy character is more clearly described, as Scout reports her childhood memories of her brother growing up as one who observes.

Beginning on the summer Dill came to join them, when Scout was "almost six and Jem was nearly ten" (LEE, 2010, p. 7), brother and sister spent their days in constant company of one another. In those innocent days, their activities revolved around playing outside, and their worries were restricted to deciding which book they would represent next:

Thereafter the summer passed in routine contentment. Routine contentment was: improving our treehouse that rested between giant twin chinaberry trees in the back yard, fussing, running through our list of dramas based on the

works of Oliver Optic, Victor Appleton, and Edgar Rice Burroughs⁵¹(LEE, 2010, p. 9).

Scout observes that Jem and she were practically the only children in a neighborhood of old people, so they could only rely on each other to play with. The admiration for her older brother, despite their typical brother-and-sister fights, might have influenced the protagonist's boyish ways. Scout, however, not only admires her brother, but wants to be his equal. For instance, later on that same year, Scout's choice for a Christmas present is the same as her brother's: a rifle to shoot birds, not a usual object of desire for six year-old girls in Maycomb's context.

As Jem and Scout grow up, however, their childhood brother-and-sister bond gradually loses strength. Scout's first day of school symbolizes the beginning of the siblings' separation. They had, up to that point, shared equal interests, in spite of their four-year age gap. Jem warns her that from that day on, their lives were supposed to be divided in two: the private and the public. This way, he teaches Scout one of her first lessons about the rules of the grown-up children world, as she is not allowed to expose their playing hours at home to their schoolmates:

[...] Jem was careful to explain that during school hours I was not to bother him, I was not to approach him with requests to enact a chapter of *Tarzan and the Ant Men*, to embarrass him with references to his private life, or tag along behind him at recess and noon. I was to stick with the first grade and he would stick with the fifth. In short, I was to leave him alone (LEE, 2010, p. 20-21).

Still, Jem does not fail to care for Scout. Being the older brother, he takes the responsibility of protecting and guiding his little sister. Scout's short-temper is the absolute opposite of Jem's reason, as Calpurnia remarks. The protagonist observes: "She was always [...] asking me why I couldn't behave as well as Jem when she knew he was older..." (LEE, 2010, p. 7). Because of Scout's violent, impulsive behavior at home, which she extends to her school environment, Jem assumes a rational posture, an "older but wiser" air that reads superiority, especially outside of their household boundaries. In an episode from Scout's first day of school, when the girl physically assaults and blames Walter Cunningham for the supposed embarrassment he caused her, the older brother intervenes:

[...] Jem came by and told me to stop.
"You're bigger'n he is," he said.

⁵¹ These three authors, who used pseudonyms, wrote books directed to a young boys' readership.

“He’s as old as you, nearly,” I said. “He made me start off on the wrong foot.” [...]

I stomped at him to chase him away, but Jem put out his hand and stopped me. [...]

Jem suddenly grinned at him. “Come on home to dinner with us, Walter,” he said. “We’d be glad to have you.”

Walter’s face brightened, then darkened.

Jem said, “Our daddy’ a friend of your daddy’s. Scout here, she’s crazy — she won’t fight you anymore.” (LEE, 2010, p. 30-31).

At a certain stage in Jem’s development, his father-son bond with Atticus seems to gradually replace the bond he shared with Scout. The boy demonstrates a concern with becoming a gentleman like his father. He begins to admire Atticus’s professional history and consequently assimilates and mimics the lawyer’s moral conduct and values. Besides, Atticus also asks him and Scout not to respond to the verbal insults they might hear in school and in the streets of Maycomb because he is in charge of Tom Robinson’s defence. Atticus observes that Jem’s conduct in this situation might represent a role model for Scout, who looks up for her brother as well: “Scout’s got to learn to keep her head and learn soon, with what’s in store for her these next few months. She’s coming along, though. Jem’s getting older and she follows his example a good bit now” (LEE, 2010, p. 116).

Mrs. Dubose is a neighbor who bullies the children every time they pass by her house, which deeply bothers Jem. But his father reminds him: “‘Easy does it, son,’ [...] ‘She’s an old lady and she’s ill. You just hold your head high and be a gentleman. Whatever she says to you, it’s your job not to let her make you mad’” (LEE, 2010, p. 133). However, after the elderly’s constant provocations, when she says “Your father’s no better than the niggers and trash he works for!” (LEE, 2010, p. 135), she gets on Jem’s last nerve and the boy loses his mind, thrashing Mrs. Dubose’s garden and her precious camellias.

The offense directed toward his father is the one that finally hits him. This was mostly expected to come from short-tempered Scout, not from calm little gentleman Jem. The boy is clearly trying to find balance in his transition from childhood to adolescence, as he must learn to control his emotions if he wants to become a “gentleman”. As a grown-up, Scout comments this past episode:

In later years, I sometimes wondered exactly what made Jem do it, what made him break the bonds of “You just be a gentleman, son,” and the phase of self-conscious rectitude he had recently entered. Jem had probably stood as much guff about Atticus lawing for niggers as had I, and I took it for granted that he kept his temper — he had a naturally tranquil disposition and a slow fuse. At the time, however, I thought the only explanation for what he did was that for a few minutes he simply went mad (LEE, 2010, p. 136).

It becomes clear that Jem follows, although secondarily, the progressive path of a classic *Bildungsroman* hero. Although the actual borders of manhood are relatively far ahead of him, all these episodes from his development are presented as signs that Scout's brother is moving closer toward the adult world and leaving the younger sister behind. As aforementioned, since Scout's first day of school, the siblings had ceased to grow together and started to gradually grow apart.

This traumatic separation mainly generated by gender roles expectations is inevitable in female *Bildungsromane* that present the shared development between brother and sister (GELFANT, 1983). In *To Kill a Mockingbird's* case, this parting is mostly felt by the narrator, who admits her feelings while acknowledging the brother's importance in her young life: "Of course Jem antagonized me sometimes until I could kill him, but when it came down to it, he was all I had" (LEE, 2010, p. 138-139).

Their separation aggravates when Jem reaches puberty. Scout, as an observer, describes in details the perceptible changes in her older brother's physique and personality when he turns twelve. On the other hand, the description of Scout's physical development is not as detailed as the observations on her brother's changes. Few remarks that evidence the protagonist's physical growth are presented through Atticus's comments: "You're mighty big to be rocked" (LEE, 2010, p.139). To the younger sister's eyes, her brother's transition occurred "in a matter of weeks":

Jem was twelve. He was difficult to live with, inconsistent, moody. His appetite was appalling, and he told me so many times to stop pestering him I consulted Atticus: "Reckon he's got a tapeworm?" Atticus said no, Jem was growing. I must be patient with him and disturb him as little as possible. (LEE, 2010, p. 153).

Although Jem constantly reminds his tomboy sister of her female condition in the course of their development, once he reaches a certain stage of maturity, he begins to emulate and impose social conventions of gender to Scout. Jem becomes unrecognizable to his sister when he starts to firmly request that she assumes her role as a girl. This moment also marks Scout's gradual assimilation of women's conventions, as her feeling of abandonment by her brother causes her to turn to Calpurnia and concentrate on a stereotypical female environment: the kitchen.

The words uttered by Jem symbolize not only the traumatic experience of parting between brother and sister, when they must inevitably assume their roles of man and woman

(GELFANT, 1983), but also the greater conflict that marks the female process of development, the demand to assume social conventions for being a woman:

Overnight, it seemed, Jem had acquired an alien set of values and was trying to impose them on me: several times he went as far as to tell me what to do. After one altercation when Jem hollered, "It's time you started bein' a girl and acting right!" I burst into tears and fled to Calpurnia. (LEE, 2010, p. 153).

From that moment on, Calpurnia starts to refer to the brother as "Mister Jem", while reminding Scout of another of her roles: the family's "baby". These linguistic marks deeply bother the protagonist as a child, for they evidence how their age gap eventually caught up with them and how gender distinctions started to weigh upon their relationship. Scout no longer feels she is an equal to Jem, because she is younger and because she is a girl:

"Baby," said Calpurnia, "I just can't help it if Mister Jem's growin' up. He's gonna want to be off to himself a lot now, doin' whatever boys do, so you just come right on in the kitchen when you feel lonesome. We'll find lots of things to do here" (LEE, 2010, p. 153-154).

Jem's gradual familiarization with the world of adults and its functioning inevitably bring him to reflect on and question the realities of social segregation which he has only begun to experience. Contemplation is a necessary stage for the balance of a *Bildungsroman* hero's development, as Lukács (1998) defines. When Jem shares his thoughts on how he perceives the structures of society with Scout, the once sensitive boy assumes a sensible posture that contrasts his little sister's still sensitive views⁵². He implies that Scout continues to possess something he is gradually losing: his innocence. Yet, his worldviews show that he remains a naïve boy, who clearly speaks from a limited standpoint (as well as slightly elitist), as his younger but sharp-witted sister points out:

"[...] There's four kinds of folks in the world. There's the ordinary kind like us and the neighbors, there's the kind like the Cunninghams out in the woods, the kind like the Ewells down at the dump, and the Negroes."
 "What about the Chinese, and the Cajuns down yonder in Baldwin County?"
 "I mean in Maycomb County. [...]"
 "[...] Naw, Jem, I think there's just one kind of folks. Folks."
 [...]
 "That's what I thought, too," he said at last, "when I was your age. If there's just one kind of folks, why can't they get along with each other? If they're all alike, why do they go out of their way to despise each other? [...]" (LEE, 2010, p. 302-303-304).

⁵² This idea is also found and briefly approached in Bloom's (2010) analysis.

By the final stages of Scout's and Jem's personal growths, they barely spend time in company of one another: they have different routines in school, and Jem, who is close to thirteen, prefers the company of boys his age. Their back and front yard plays from that summer they met Dill have already crystalized into those memories which Scout as a grown woman reminisces with affection. But the siblings still had a crucial experience to share, their "[...] longest journey together" (LEE, 2010, p. 240).

On a Halloween night which turned into a most horrifying event, Jem assumes the responsibility of taking his little sister to school for a pageant. The protagonist acknowledges her brother's carrying and gentleman-like attitude: "Jem was carrying my ham costume, rather awkwardly, as it was too hard to hold. I thought it gallant of him to do so" (LEE, 2010, p. 341). After missing her entrance at the pageant, Jem also comforts Scout: "Jem was becoming almost as good as Atticus at making you feel right when things went wrong" (LEE, 2010, p. 347).

When returning home alone in the dark, the children are attacked by evil Bob Ewell, the father of Mayella, who wanted revenge after Atticus exposed him during Tom Robinson's trial. Brother and sister are once again reunited to share a near-death experience: Jem saves Scout, and Boo Radley saves both their lives. It is then revealed that the narrative driving force — the story of how Jem broke his elbow — evokes a traumatic yet honorable moment when Jem put his life at risk to protect his younger sister.

In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Jem's and Scout's developments are symbiotic. Scout monitors her personal growth by watching her older brother's growth. As he grows older and understands the world around him, Jem helps Scout to understand it as well. This potential masculine figure represents a gender reference that is initially assimilated and reflected on Scout's tomboyish identity. Later on, however, as their bond loosens, this reference goes on to demonstrate how social expectations of gender distinguish them. Finally, despite their distance, Jem proves that the bond between Scout and him may have weakened but has not been completely untied: from beginning to end, Jem is always there for his younger sister.

Yet, we must not forget the relevance of the paternal figure in Scout's development. The "mother-infant bond" that the girl lacks is not only sufficed with the presence of Calpurnia, but specially balanced with the "father-infant bond" she shares with Atticus⁵³. Even though Jem is a fundamental reference for Scout's development and is, in many aspects, a secondary *Bildungsroman* hero, Atticus is an equally important model and the closest to a

⁵³ This idea is found and discussed in Seidel's (2010) analysis.

heroic figure in the narrator's eyes: the father is the protagonist in Scout's tale. As we have seen, because intimate relations are influential in the development of the female *Bildungsroman* protagonist, the lead may be directed to these characters closer to her in the course of the narrative, again according to Abel, Hirsch, and Langland (1983).

In *To Kill a Mockingbird*'s case, it is Atticus Finch who also plays a leading role. Although the novel is formally divided in two parts, the two plots that compose the narrative — one concerning the world of children and another concerning the world of adults — are not separated, but at some point, they are crossed and juxtaposed. When the storyline in the adult world becomes more evident, by the end of part one, the narrative focus is moderately directed to the lawyer and the process of Tom Robinson's trial.

Atticus Finch is a gentleman beyond his son's perception: he is a humanist, and therefore, respects people's individualities; he is empathic to each person's life story. The father seeks to transmit these personal values to his children and to maintain himself as a role model of such. As he teaches Scout after the first anthropological experience of her development — the first day of school —, she should try and understand why people act the way they act; in other words, she must learn to respect each person's individuality, as well as their timing:

[...] "If you can learn a simple trick, Scout, you'll get along a lot better with all kinds of folks. You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view—"

[...]

"Until you climb into his skin and walk around in it."

Atticus said I had learned many things today, and Miss Caroline had learned several things herself. [...] We could not expect her to learn all Maycomb's ways in one day, and we could not hold her responsible when she knew no better (LEE, 2010, p. 39).

The values Atticus constantly aims to transmit to Scout are an essential part for her personal growth. On that same day, he teaches Scout another lesson which will be later on relevant for her (and his) understanding of Boo Radley's situation regarding Bob Ewell's death. Even though Atticus is considered Maycomb's reference of a law-abiding citizen and tries to live up to this title, he explains to his daughter that eventually, for greater goods, rules might be reconsidered. When Scout's teacher tells her not to read anymore because it went against the educational system the school was trying to apply, she feels frustrated and asks her father not to attend school anymore. Atticus proposes an agreement to her:

[...] "Do you know what a compromise is?" he asked.
"Bending the law?"

“No, an agreement reached by mutual concessions. It works this way,” he said. “If you’ll concede the necessity of going to school, we’ll go on reading every night just as we always have. Is it a bargain?”

“Yes sir!”

[...]

“By the way, Scout, You’d better not say anything at school about our agreement.”

“Why not?”

“I’m afraid our activities would be received with considerable disapprobation by the more learned authorities” (LEE, 2010, p. 41-42).

Atticus believes he “... can’t live one way in town and another way in [his] home” (LEE, 2010, p. 367), a quality which Miss Maudie observes that most people in Maycomb do not possess, but recognizes in Scout’s father: “Atticus Finch is the same man in his house as he is on the public streets” (LEE, 2010, p. 61). While the lawyer is clearly concerned with the transparency of his conduct to his children and neighbors, he is at the same time reserved about himself personally, especially with Jem and Scout.

Initially, Scout describes their father as neither excellent nor terrible, but “satisfactory”; he is a present father who participates in their lives by playing with them and reading to them. However, as she also attests, he “... treated [them] with courteous detachment” (LEE, 2010, p. 6), and this is a most suitable definition for Atticus’s relationship with his daughter and son.

When Scout sees her father taking off his coat in the middle of Tom Robinson’s trial, she reports that it was the equivalent of seeing her father naked. This implies that Atticus was never out of his work suit, both figuratively and literally, because he is the same person, the righteous lawyer, at home and in the streets. This illustrates what Scout means by “detachment” when describing their relationship: she does not know any other side to her father’s personality or the story of his life.

The children do know Atticus, the lawyer and father well, but they know very little about Atticus, the man, or how he became the man he is. The episode of Tim Johnson, the mad rabid dog, evidences this fact, as it sheds a light on a fact about the father that was unknown to Jem and Scout until then. Atticus is neither a typical father nor a typical man, so the children at first hold little admiration for their elderly, almost inert paternal figure in Scout’s conception⁵⁴. Because their father is not a laborer or keen to activities common to other men in town, therefore, he is not manly in the girl’s eyes. Moreover, we observe that Scout’s remark is essentially based, even if unconsciously, on a distinction of class and on stereotyped ideals of masculinity:

⁵⁴ *Idem ibidem.*

Atticus was feeble: he was nearly fifty. When Jem and I asked him why he was so old, he said he got started late, which we felt reflected upon his abilities and manliness. He was much older than the parents of our school contemporaries, [...]

Atticus did not drive a dump-truck for the county, he was not the sheriff, he did not farm, work in a garage, or do anything that could possibly arouse the admiration of anyone.

[...]

He did not do the things our schoolmates' fathers did: he never went hunting, he did not play poker or fish or drink or smoke. He sat in the livingroom and read (LEE, 2010, p. 118).

In the mad dog event, however, Atticus reveals that he is actually a great shooter, killing the menacing creature with only one shot. Scout learns that her father is not as “feeble” as she thought he was. Miss Maudie, being a friend of Atticus since youth and knowing about this ability, tries to prove Scout that her father has many qualities. She questions the girl: “‘Well now, Miss Jean Louise,’ she said, ‘still think your father can’t do anything? Still ashamed of him?’ ‘Nome,’ I said meekly” (LEE, 2010, p. 129).

Jem and Scout see a side of Atticus that represents something that “could possibly arouse the admiration of anyone” (LEE, 2010, p. 118) to their typified, childish perceptions, but which their father chose to suppress, omitting this part of his history from them. He does not want them to know about what he considers a personal flaw in his record: his “One-Shot Finch” (LEE, 2010, p.128) past identity.

In his attempt to reach moral perfection, Atticus ended up developing a somehow limited relationship with Scout and Jem — he conceals what he considers a flaw of character; he creates a distance by selecting the information about himself he is willing to give to Jem and Scout. But there is a deeper meaning to his keeping this fact of his life from the children. He does so not because he is ashamed of possessing or thinks less of such typically male attribute, but because he wants his children to learn that bravery goes beyond any sort of virile prowess.

First, when referring to his defending Tom Robinson, and then, to Mrs. Dubose’s struggle with a morphine addiction, the definition of courage Atticus wants to pass on to his children is that it means to face adversities despite knowing the odds are not necessarily in one’s favor. He wanted his children “‘...to see what real courage is, instead of getting the idea that courage is a man with a gun in his hand. It’s when you know you’re licked before you begin but you begin anyway and you see it through no matter what [...]’” (LEE, 2010, p. 149).

This episode and its unfolding reflect on important aspects of Scout's development. Using his own example, her father indirectly deconstructs, with the help of Miss Maudie, Scout's initial definitions of manliness based on stereotypes of masculinity. Moreover, when telling Scout and Jem about Mrs. Dubose's journey, he demonstrates that courage is not only found in men, but mostly attributed to the female sex. For her courageous attitude, Atticus perceives Dubose as a "great lady": "She was the bravest person I ever knew" (LEE, 2010, p. 149).

It becomes clear that Atticus is just as relevant and definitive as Jem for Scout to develop her identity and, mostly, her autonomy: the girl looks up to her father as much as to her older brother. But while Jem directly intervenes and demands certain behaviors from his little sister, Atticus's methods for guiding his younger daughter as she grows up involve 'demonstrating' rather than 'telling' her what to do.

As previously mentioned, Atticus Finch is not a typical father, because the way he raises Jem and Scout is slightly different from the conventions for child rearing⁵⁵. In situations where most grown-ups would simply rely on vague answers or ignore the child's doubts, Atticus tells things the way they are: he never infantilizes his explanations, even when Scout and Jem do not have a full understanding of some concepts. Moreover, he does not believe in physical punishment, at least not coming from him, and searches to be fair with both his daughter and son: "[...] When Jem an' I fuss Atticus doesn't ever just listen to Jem's side of it, he hears mine too [...]" (LEE, 2010, p. 113).

The children seem to acknowledge their father's effort and prove that they learn from him. But Atticus admits his single-parenting is not flawless: "[...] 'Sometimes I think I'm a total failure as a parent, but I'm all they've got'" (LEE, 2010, p. 366). His recognition of his faults is very important for the narrative's closure, because we learn that despite all his efforts, Atticus is not as perfect as he wished he were: he is human, and therefore, subject to fail.

Yet, a fundamental contribution to the development of Scout's identity and autonomy is Atticus's detachment from gender roles. For the most part, the father does not differentiate the treatment he gives his son from the one he gives his daughter⁵⁶. To Maycomb's most conservative citizens like Mrs. Dubose, "[...] it was heartbreaking the way Atticus Finch let [his wife's] children run wild" (LEE, 2010, p. 133). It seemed inevitable that Scout turned out to be a tomboy, at least during the earlier stages of her life. To begin with, she never got to

⁵⁵ *Idem ibidem.*

⁵⁶ Although he does lend his father's pocket watch to Jem once a week, which clearly represents a patriarchal tradition.

experience a relationship with every child's primary female reference: the mother. For this reason, she grew up in an essentially masculine environment centered on two primary male references and, as a consequence, she mirrored their masculine manners and tastes while growing up. Calpurnia, despite representing the strongest female reference of Scout's childhood, comes as a secondary influence in comparison to the girl's immediate familial relations.

As we have seen, Jem's development is essential for Scout's development and a determinant for her tomboyish behavior, because Scout initially assimilates the masculine interests and ways of her older brother. But Scout would not have been allowed to act in a way that is socially expected from boys if her father had not given her complete freedom to behave as such. He does not place gender norms on Scout: she gets the same rifle as Jem's for Christmas. In addition, he never forces her to wear dresses, nor demands that she starts "bein' a girl" (LEE, 2010, p. 153) as her brother does. Despite Atticus's "detachment", he is careful enough to understand and respect his daughter's individuality. If Jem later on becomes a reference to Scout for the pre-established differences between boy and girl; her father, throughout her early childhood, promotes another reference which mainly deconstructs these conventions.

Personally, Atticus does not seem to follow gender expectations by the book. For instance, Atticus was the first male to break a generational custom that required all men born into the family to reside in Finch's Landing. By breaking this tradition, Atticus also breaks a patrilineal cycle, as the Landing goes on to be managed by a woman, his sister Alexandra, for the first time in the Finches history:

[...] yet, the tradition of living on the land remained unbroken until well into the twentieth century, when my father, Atticus Finch, went to Montgomery to read law. [...] Their sister Alexandra was the Finch who remained at the Landing: she married a taciturn man who spent most of his time lying in a hammock by the river wondering if his trot-lines were full (LEE, 2010, p. 4-5).

Scout's relatives, like her Aunt Alexandra, her Uncle Jack and even Jem, constantly remind her of her female condition and demand that she acts according to what society expects from a girl. Whether his daughter will grow up to become a lady is not a preoccupation to Atticus: "[...] But the only time I ever heard Atticus speak sharply to anyone was when I once heard him say, 'Sister, I do the best I can with them!' It had something to do with my going around in overalls" (LEE, 2010, p. 108).

More than anything, Atticus wants Jem and Scout to follow his set of principles, mainly because he fears they might become intolerant adults like some of their neighbors. After the turbulent experience of Tom Robinson's trial, the father's main concern is that "... when [Scout] and Jem are grown, maybe [they'll] look back on this with some compassion and some feeling that [he] didn't let [them] down" (LEE, 2010, p. 139); and Scout does, as her narrative proves. This way, Atticus's lack of concern with pre-established ideas of masculinity and femininity reflects on the development of Scout's autonomy. Because of her background, in a first moment, Scout feels free to speak her mind and does not accept the roles of passivity commonly destined to the female sex.

Thus, *To Kill a Mockingbird* promotes a new dynamic for the primary relationships in a *Bildungsroman* protagonist's development. It is common to *Bildungsroman* heroines to be raised within the social expectations for women, as in the examples of narratives of awakening (ABEL, HIRSCH, LANGLAND, 1983). But in Scout's apprenticeship, she is raised by a father who does not impose these expectations to his daughter. This way, Scout seems to develop an unusually autonomous identity for female *Bildungsroman* protagonists in such an earlier stage of life. When the time comes and people start to demand she acts according to those conventions, she initially refuses to accept the limitations that are generally imposed to girls from birth. In other words, she was raised the same way as a boy is raised, so until the eighth year of her life, she was unfamiliar to "the arts of silence", and developed in the direction of "self-assertion and self-articulation", inverting Gilbert and Gubar's (2000) observation on the distinction of boy's and girl's developments.

Social expectations, one of the most relevant aspects which differs male from female *Bildungsroman* according to Abel, Hirsch, and Langland (1983), might represent the greatest conflict in the development of a female *Bildungsroman* heroine. The same way, the experience of this conflict is a determinant for Scout's personal growth. The protagonist was mostly spared from the limitations that come with feminine values for the first years of her life. However, the protagonist gradually experiences these pressures that become more evident when her brother reaches puberty. Besides Atticus, one of the few people perceived as a positive influence on Scout is Calpurnia, because she does not demand a typical feminine behavior of her. But even though the cook does not impose these values to Scout, she is aware of them and eventually reproduces the expectations they imply, for instance, when she says that excessive demonstrations of knowledge are "... not lady-like" (LEE, 2010, p. 167) or when she goes on to refer to Jem as "Mister". However, Scout's other relations pressure her to start being a girl.

Scout, as her nickname suggests, belongs to a society of boys. The tomboy's childhood friends are exclusively Jem and Dill, and the pressures of gender on Scout are first experienced in her relationship with these two proto-men. In the narrative, besides Jem's move toward adolescence, which has already been demonstrated to be a gender reference for Scout's development, the arrival of Dill is also a determinant for this gradual demand of femininity. For Scout, the primary charges of a typical female behavior comes from the world of children which she inhabits.

On the following summer Scout and Jem spend with Dill, their friendship is already affirmed. Dill becomes an important person in Scout's life: they become sweethearts. However, as gender roles become more evident in the children's development, the boy ends up moving closer to Jem. Up until then, the three had been inseparable during their plays, which mostly revolved around their curiosity about Boo Radley.

From that moment on, Jem constantly proves his courage by trying to interact with Boo. Scout menaces to break her older brother's character because she notices that he is actually scared. As a response, Jem tries to hurt his little sister by reminding her of her female condition: "I swear, Scout, sometimes you act so much like a girl it's mortifyin'" (LEE, 2010, p. 50). This exemplifies how, to their childish perceptions, courage is initially an attribute related to masculinity, an idea which their father, as we have seen, later on deconstructs.

This summer marks the beginning of Scout's recognition of herself as female, and it is her brother who starts this process, finding a necessary supporter on his male friend Dill. This segregation based on gender, evidencing Scout as a girl in contrast to the brotherhood of boys that Jem and Dill establish, excludes the protagonist from the unity the three children used to share. The girl finds comfort in the company of their neighbor, Miss Maudie, a potential positive female role model for Scout, although secondarily:

They spent days together in the treehouse plotting and planning, calling me only when they needed a third party.
But I kept aloof from their more foolhardy schemes for a while, and on pain of being called a girl, I spent most of the remaining twilights that summer sitting with Miss Maudie Atkinson on her front porch (LEE, 2010, p. 55).

"[...] You're the best lady I know" (LEE, 2010, p. 59).

The fascination for their mysterious neighbor Boo extends through that summer, so they decide to enact a drama based on the Radley family. The previous plays the children performed were mostly based on adventure books that revolved around a world of boys. In the

past, Scout happily played male characters, but from that day on, Jem starts to impose female roles to Scout during their plays, starting with the character of Mrs. Radley. Fundamentally, he delegates her female stereotypes of passivity. Scout initially refuses to accept this forced request, because in her eyes, the conventions that surround femininity represent an enormous disappointment: they are the opposite of activity, they limit her. Although initially fighting back, she ends up compromising:

Jem said, "Scout, you can be Mrs. Radley—"
 "I declare if I will. I don't think—"
 [...]
 Jem parcelled out our roles: I was Mrs. Radley, and all I had to do was come out and sweep the porch. [...]
 As the summer progressed, so did our game. [...]
 I reluctantly played assorted ladies who entered the script. I never thought it was as much fun as Tarzan [...] (LEE, 2010, p. 51-52).

This exclusion moves from their fictional universe to their concrete reality. Jem and Dill continually unite their potential masculine powers to delegate Scout passive roles. Jem, who is older, tells his sister and Dill, who is also his junior, to watch for him while he takes action and trespasses the Radley Place boundaries. The objective is to hand in a note to Boo—once again Jem is trying to prove his virile courage. He takes advantage of his being the oldest and not only charges Scout with unimportant tasks, but Dill as well. However, the boys' brotherly forces are united to convince Scout to assume the less amusing task of all. The girl continues to refute this segregation while struggling with Jem and Dill's impositions and her desire to be around them:

Next morning when I awakened I found Jem and Dill in the back yard deep in conversation. When I joined them, as usual they said go away.
 "Will not. This yard's as much mine as it is yours, Jem Finch. I got just as much right to play in it as you have."
 [...]
 "If you stay you've got to do what we tell you," Dill warned.
 [...]
 Jem said placidly, "We are going to give a note to Boo Radley."
 [...]
 "Now you're in it and you can't get out of it, you'll just stay in, Miss Priss!"
 "Okay, okay, but I don't wanta watch. [...]"
 "Yes, you will, you'll watch the back end of the lot and Dill's gonna watch the front of the house an' up the street, an' if anybody comes he'll ring the bell. That clear?"
 "All right then [...]" (LEE, 2010, p. 61-62).

This growing separation eventually comes down to evidence their anatomical differences, on the day they accidentally catch one of their neighbors urinating out in the open.

This might translate as a moment when Scout becomes aware that there are physical distinctions between her and her companions which she can never compensate for, and this impossibility seems to frustrate her:

At first we saw nothing but a kudzu-covered front porch, but a closer inspection revealed an arc of water descending from the leaves and splashing in the yellow circle of the street light, some ten feet from source to earth, it seemed to us. Jem said Mr. Avery misfigured, Dill said he must drink a gallon a day, and the ensuing contest to determine relative distances in respective prowess only made me feel left out again, as I was untalented in this area (LEE, 2010, p. 68).

Within the limits of their childish imaginations, Dill mimics the future expectations of marriage and maternity with Scout. First he promises to marry her, but that is left aside and replaced by his growing male bond with Jem. Later on, he decides that Scout and he should literally ‘get’ a baby, and this comes as a response to his feelings of abandon by his mother and stepfather. The boy and the girl assimilate and reproduce adult expectations. In Scout’s childhood, these fantasies anticipate the most common conventions that are imposed to and expected from women, another characteristic pressure in the course of a *Bildungsroman* heroine’s development:

He had asked me earlier in the summer to marry him, then he promptly forgot about it. He staked me out, marked as his property, said I was the only girl he would ever love, then he neglected me. I beat him up twice but it did no good, he only grew closer to Jem (LEE, 2010, p. 55).

“ [...] Scout, let’s get us a baby.”
“Where?”

There was a man Dill had heard of who had a boat that he rowed across to a foggy island where all these babies were; you could order one— [...] (LEE, 2010, p. 191).

At a certain point, gender expectations start being demanded from Scout’s adult references. Her father, as we have seen, does not ask his daughter to change the way she is, but the girl’s other relatives do. In Maycomb, “Ladies bathed before noon, after their three-o’clock naps, and by nightfall were like soft teacakes with frosting of sweat and sweet talcum” (LEE, 2010, p. 6). Scout is socially expected to live up to this definition of routine, which by that point in her life represents the absolute negative of hers, since her daily plays involve activities such as rolling inside tires, playing in the mud, and being in constant company of boys.

The pressure to assume a posture of femininity according to Southern values becomes more evident and constant after the Christmas episode in Finch’s Landing. First, Jem and Dill

exclude Scout from most of their plays, and then Aunt Alexandra and Uncle Jack try to silence Scout's tomboyish personality. As time goes by, Scout feels "...the starched walls of a pink cotton penitentiary closing in on [her]" (LEE, 2010, p. 182). Scout seems to progressively move from a world of autonomy, of "self-assertion" and "self-articulation", to a world of passivity, of "silence", again in reference to Gilbert and Gubar (2000).

Uncle Jack disapproves Scout's use of language at the table. At one point, she asks him "[...] to pass the damn ham, please" (LEE, 2010, p. 105). The uncle frowns-upon this behavior of Scout, as he believes these are not appropriate words for a little girl if she wants to become a lady one day, to which she responds that this is not an aspiration of hers:

"You like words like damn and hell now, don't you?"

I said I reckon so.

[...]

"Scout, you'll get in trouble if you go around saying things like that. You want to grow up to be a lady, don't you?"

I said not particularly.

"Of course you do. [...]" (LEE, 2010, p. 105).

After Scout punches her cousin, Uncle Jack reprehends and punishes her, but not without making a remark that implies another social pressure of women: an ideal of beauty perfection. He also reminds Scout of the expectation that she marries one day with this observation: "'There now,' he said. 'You'll have a very unlady like scar on your wedding-ring finger'" (LEE, 2010, p. 115).

But the one person in the course of Scout's development who simply cannot accept her tomboyish manners is Aunt Alexandra. As we have seen, she eventually becomes a female reference in Scout's life and obsessively tries to make her abandon her unfeminine behavior. The girl describes the charges that her aunt placed upon her. Alexandra's demands imply typical definitions of femininity related to passivity, which do not correspond to Scout's personality. The narrator adds that her father was completely careless about his sister's complaints:

Aunt Alexandra was fanatical on the subject of my attire. I could not possibly hope to be a lady if I wore breeches; when I said I could do nothing in a dress, she said I wasn't supposed to be doing things that required pants. Aunt Alexandra's vision of my deportment involved playing with small stoves, tea sets, and wearing the Add-A-Pearl necklace she gave me when I was born; furthermore, I should be a ray of sunshine in my father's lonely life. I suggested that one could be a ray of sunshine in pants just as well, but Auntie said that one had to behave like a sunbeam, that I was born good but had grown progressively worse every year. She hurt my feelings and set my teeth permanently on edge, but when I asked Atticus about it, he said there

were already enough sunbeams in the family and to go on about my business, he didn't mind me much as I was (LEE, 2010, p. 108).

Alexandra's efforts to turn Scout into a lady are rooted in a deeper concern with maintaining the tradition of the Finches as a respectable family from the County. She also pressures her brother to demand adequate behaviors from both his children because she believes their family holds a certain upper status in Maycomb's society, something he is not comfortable with doing as it goes against his personal values. Jem and Scout later on demonstrate his aunt that their family is not as perfect as the picture Alexandra has painted for herself. Yet Atticus tries to explain his sister's values to Jem and Scout:

“[...] I don't exactly know how to say this”

[...]

“Your aunt has asked me to try and impress upon you and Jean Louise that you are not from run-off-the-mill people, that you are the product of several generations' gentle breeding—” [...]

“She wants me to tell you you must try to behave like the little lady and the gentleman that you are. She wants to talk to you about the family and what it's meant to Maycomb County through the years, so you'll have some idea of who you are, so you might be moved to behave accordingly” (LEE, 2010, p. 177-178).

In another of her attempts to educate Scout on her ideals of femininity, Alexandra hosts a tea party to Maycomb's missionary circle of ladies and asks her niece to participate in the event. This party takes place after Tom Robinson's defeat in court, but these upper class women seem to overlook the topic and rather concentrate on discussing the issues of distant lands. Alexandra's ambition with this move is to promote a feminine environment for her tomboy niece to interact with and somehow try to initiate her in that routine of Maycomb's ladies which Scout previously describes.

Even though Scout is absolutely averse to the company of women, at this point, after all the demands that she started being a girl, she has come to accept the idea of partially assimilating the values of femininity in Maycomb's terms. This event represents a milestone in Scout's gradual process of compromising to social expectations for girls, which had started when Jem began his transition to adolescence and Scout relied in the adults Calpurnia and Miss Maudie for company. With her attitude of accepting her aunt's invitation, Scout is demonstrating that she has learned from her father's advice: she is trying to climb into Alexandra's skin and walk around in it so she can understand her point of view, why she gives such an importance to these ideals of femininity.

Although Scout starts to accept the fact that she will probably have to be around female company more often than she desires and emulate their behavior at social events, she

cannot identify with this reality. She is empathic to her aunt's conduct and beliefs, she may compromise and wear a dress, but she does not see herself as a part of that reality. What mostly bothers Scout is that the world of femininity seems superficial to her eyes, as Maycomb's ladies do not say what they mean, which she could only define as hypocrisy. Different from these women in Scout's perception, her father always told her the straight story:

There was no doubt about it, I must soon enter this world, where on its surface fragrant ladies rocked slowly, fanned gently, and drank cool water. But I was more at home in my father's world. People like Mr. Heck Tate did not trap you with innocent questions to make fun of you; even Jem was not highly critical unless you said something stupid. Ladies seemed to live in faint horror of men, seemed unwilling to approve wholeheartedly of them. But I liked them. There was something about them, no matter how much they cussed and drank and gambled and chewed; no matter how undelectable they were, there was something about them that I instinctively liked. . . they weren't—
 “Hypocrites, Mrs. Perkins, born hypocrites,” Mrs. Merriweather was saying [...] (LEE, 2010, p. 313).

It is on that same day that they receive the news that Tom Robinson was shot to death when he tried to escape from prison. At that moment, Scout observes how her adult references — her father, Calpurnia, her aunt, Miss Maudie — handle such a delicate situation. Alexandra lets off her guard and demonstrates her care for Atticus while also acknowledging the hypocrisy of Maycomb's citizens. In the end, Scout seems to acknowledge that in spite of her authoritarian posture, her aunt was more than a tyrant, she was also a woman of strength: “After all, if Aunty could be a lady at a time like this, so could I” (LEE, 2010, p. 318).

Scout's understanding of herself as a girl, from loathing to acceptance, is an important transition that she must experience for her development in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. It is a conflicting struggle, as it usually is for the female *Bildungsroman* protagonist, to meet with what society dictates for the female sex while carrying a set of personal values that do not correspond to those expectations. Even though her primary identification is with the world of men, throughout her process of development, Scout demystifies her ideas of what it means to be a woman. Scout gradually accepts social expectations for being a girl, but, in the end, she mostly presents a critique to the behavior that society expects from women. An important lesson that Scout learns about being a woman comes first from her father, and then is proven by the women around her, as Calpurnia, Miss Maudie, and even Alexandra. To be a woman involves more than dressing up in pastel prints and consenting to roles of passivity: it is fundamentally an act of courage. In the end, Scout acknowledges that she has grown and

turned out to be a brave girl: “‘Atticus, I wasn’t scared’ [...] ‘Besides, nothin’s real scary except in books” (LEE, 2010, p. 375).

The movement that Scout makes between her sixth and ninth year is similar to the movement that both the *Bildungsroman* hero and heroine make in narratives of apprenticeship when they reach maturity. As Seidel (2010) observes, Scout is taken on a journey from the ignorance of prejudice to the enlightenment on tolerance, regarding the problems of class and race which contaminated the society of Maycomb— the sense of conscious-awareness Lee aims to transmit with her novel. Even though the protagonist never crosses the borders of childhood in the diegetic universe, there is an apprenticeship with the gradual process of loss of her innocence that occurs within those three years, even if part of those turbulent situations might have taken many years for her to assimilate. Jem says Scout is too young to understand the events from Tom Robinson’s trial, but Scout seems to have carried all that weight inside for the years that follow: “So many things had happened so fast I felt it would take years to sort them out [...]” (LEE, 2010, p. 277-278).

Scout experiences at a premature stage in her life her first conflict with reality, the basic premise for both male and female *Bildungsroman*. In her apprenticeship, she learns with those closest to her that the world is bigger than her front yard, and this world can be cruel: the majority of her neighbors are intolerant, elitist, and racist; the only lesson they seem to have learned is how to be hypocritical. Society sorts and labels people by class, race, and gender, and the process to assimilate that involves Scout’s gradual loss of her childish innocence. But Scout’s lesson is not a bitter one.

In the end, although Scout’s personal development is deeply marked by these conflicts with the conventions of society, it actually proves it was an experience of positive outcomes. The narrator demonstrates through the recollection of her memories that she understood the problems within the society she was raised in. Atticus’s straightforwardness, although questionable to the conservative citizens of Maycomb, have proven to be effective: “‘this is their home [...] we’ve made it this way for them, they might as well learn to cope with it” (LEE, 2010, p. 285).

We do not know how Scout became the woman who tells the story, but her remarks demonstrate that those events covered a period of crucial learnings that clung to her. Scout apprehends the lessons she learns from person in her life, especially from her father. Despite the process of assimilating all those events, her understanding of Tom Robinson’s inevitable death, given Maycomb’s racist context, proves that Scout had already awakened to what was happening on around her: “[...] Atticus had used every tool available to free men to save Tom

Robinson, but in the secret courts of men's hearts Atticus had no case. Tom was a dead man the minute Mayella Ewell opened her mouth and screamed" (LEE, 2010, p. 323). At almost nine, Scout has already apprehended much of the complex relations of the world, that people are unjust to people who do not deserve it because they do not want to climb into one another's skins and walk in around them. She understands, finally, why it is a sin to kill a mockingbird.

CONCLUSION

This work aimed to investigate how the characteristics that constitute the concept of female *Bildungsroman* are featured in Harper Lee's literary classic *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The fundamental question that served as a guide to this research is, *what essentially causes To Kill a Mockingbird to be categorized as a female Bildungsroman?*

In order to do so, we initially had to present a research on the *Bildungsroman* and its origins, which mostly concentrates on novels of personal development that present male protagonists. Bearing in mind the socio-historical distinctions between the male and the female sexes, the approach to the female *Bildungsroman* was a necessary study for this work. The studies on the female counterpart of the sub-genre evidence the need for a revision of the traditional concept of *Bildungsroman*, for the simple fact that even though there may be similarities between male and female narratives, the female experience of personal development, given the aforementioned social distinctions, does not correspond to the male experience.

Having reached the final part of this work, we may conclude that many of the characteristics that form the concept of female *Bildungsroman* are featured in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. First, we observe that Harper Lee's novel and its supposed correspondence to the author's life reinforce the strong relation between the *Bildungsroman* and the autobiography genre. As we have seen with previous examples, this is a characteristic of both male and female novels of personal development.

The novel assimilates the narrative of apprenticeship structure to describe a shorter period of the protagonist's life, as it does not cover the usual transition from childhood to adulthood that characterizes this pattern. Yet, there is an apprenticeship within that short period of Scout's childhood, as she moves toward enlightenment on the functioning of society. Therefore, *To Kill a Mockingbird* presents a variation for the narrative of apprenticeship pattern within the female *Bildungsroman*.

Scout's identity and autonomy are deeply formed by the influence of those around her. Among these people, the two most influential are her brother Jem and her father Atticus. Scout's shared development with her brother Jem evidence another recurrent characteristic of the female *Bildungsroman*. The brother is a reference of gender distinctions for her growth and necessary in Scout's development as he helps her understand their society.

To Kill a Mockingbird promotes a new dynamic for the primary relationships in a *Bildungsroman* protagonist's development, as Scout is raised by a father who does not impose

gender expectations to his daughter. A girl initially raised without social expectations develops an unusual sense of autonomy for female *Bildungsroman* protagonists who are raised within the boundaries of social expectations.

Yet, a socially expected behavior is eventually imposed to her. The conflict that Scout goes through involves the understanding of gender segregation and the roles of passivity that are imposed to women while she has previously formed an autonomous personality which does not correspond to society's expectations of girls. The demand to assume social conventions for being a woman is possibly the greatest conflict that marks the process of development in female *Bildungsromane*.

We may add that the conflict that Scout experiences with her tomboy personality and the social demand for her to be a girl relates to the character of Jo March in *Little Women*. This approximates a modern female character to another female classic character in North-American literature and demonstrates that even though the novels are almost a hundred years apart, there has not been a drastic change in the expectations that society places on women.

We acknowledge that this study has focused on Scout's personal relationships the most, leaving other characters that also contribute for her development aside. For further research on *To Kill a Mockingbird* as a female *Bildungsroman*, we suggest an investigation, for instance, on how the figure of Boo Radley, a relevant character in the narrative, might represent a monitor of Scout's development, from the children's initial fantasy about their unknown neighbour until the final moment she comes face to face with him.

Additionally, this work aimed to contribute to the study of the female *Bildungsroman*, yet we acknowledge the need for an expanded approach to the ever-changing definitions of the sub-genre. Most of the discussions in Abel, Hirsch, and Langland's (1983) vital work are based on nineteenth-century productions, thus we suggest that future researches investigate other twentieth and twenty-first century exemplars of female *Bildungsroman* in order to observe how the process of becoming a woman has developed throughout the years.

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