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*Anne of Green Gables* by L.M. Montgomery and F. Scott

Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* as Bildungsroman

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### Abstract

This analysis explores how *Anne of Green Gables* by L.M. Montgomery and F. Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* fit the Bildungsroman genre, focusing on the protagonists' journeys from youth to maturity. The objectives include examining the themes of personal growth, identity formation, societal expectations and the development of leadership qualities in both novels. The key research question is: How do Anne and Amory's experiences reflect the conventions of the Bildungsroman, particularly in their development of leadership characteristics, and how do their paths differ based on their environments and challenges? the analysis examines how both characters navigate self-discovery, leadership growth, and the pressures of adulthood by using literary theory on the Bildungsroman. The study concludes that while both protagonists mature and develop leadership traits, their growth is shaped by contrasting cultural and personal factors. It shows the versatility of the genre and the role of leadership development according to Bildungsroman theory.

**Keywords:** Bildungsroman, *Anne of Green Gables*, L.M. Montgomery, *This Side of Paradise*, F. Scott Fitzgerald, personal growth, leadership development, identity formation.

### Introduction

This journey isn't just about physical movement, but also about psychological and emotional development. The protagonist typically embarks on a personal journey marked by a key life transition, such as leaving home, moving to a new environment, or facing a significant emotional or social challenge. The protagonist faces challenges that force them to question their beliefs, desires, and identity, often leading to moments of deep introspection (Gottfried, 1976)

One critical point Gottfried emphasizes is that the Bildungsroman reflects the conflict between individual autonomy and societal expectations. The protagonist's struggle is not only internally shaped by their desires and ambitions—but also external, as they contend with the rules, norms, and pressures imposed by family, community, or social institutions. This tension often drives the narrative forward, as the character tries to assert their individuality while navigating societal demands. For instance, they may be torn between personal passions, such as art or love, and more conventional paths, like career or family expectations (1976).

Gottfried (1976) also explains that the Bildungsroman often involves encounters with key figures, such as mentors, friends, or love interests, who play significant roles

in shaping the protagonist's growth. These relationships are essential in helping the character understand the complexities of life, including love, work, morality, and social responsibility. Sometimes these figures offer guidance, while other times they represent obstacles the protagonist must overcome.

Gottfried suggests that while the Bildungsroman usually ends with a form of resolution, the outcome isn't always optimistic or straightforward. In some cases, the protagonist achieves a sense of maturity and reconciliation with the world, finding a balance between their desires and the demands of society. In others, the journey may end in disillusionment or compromise, highlighting the challenges of truly achieving self-fulfillment. This complexity allows the genre to explore a wide range of human experiences, from idealism to cynicism, from triumph to tragedy(976).

Moreover, Gottfried points out that the Bildungsroman is adaptable to different cultural and historical contexts. Whether set in 18th-century Europe or modern-day America, the genre continues to resonate because it addresses fundamental questions of identity, purpose, and belonging. He highlights that the genre's ability to explore individual growth within varying societal frameworks is one reason for its enduring popularity. Gottfried's analysis shows that the Bildungsroman is not just a story of growing up but a profound exploration of the tension between personal development and social integration. The protagonist's journey symbolizes the universal human experience of striving to define oneself in a world full of expectations, conflicts, and challenges(1976).

A Bildungsroman is made up of two German words: "Bildung," which means "education," and "Roman," which means "novel." (In German, nouns are always capitalized.) A Bildungsroman is a story about the main character's formative years, focusing on their psychological growth and moral learning. These stories usually end on a positive note, where the character has learned from their mistakes and is ready for a productive future. Although the term mainly applies to novels, people now sometimes use it for films about a young character's journey to adulthood(Merriam-Webster 2024).

The Bildungsroman genre was first recognized by this title in the early 1800s by a German scholar who considered it a common representation in many popular novels. This pattern started with Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's 1796 novel Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship, which tells the story of Wilhelm Meister as he grows into adulthood. Wilhelm is passionate about the theater, but his parents and society push him toward being a businessman. As Wilhelm goes through life, he makes friends and enemies, experiences love, and learns important lessons about happiness, suffering, love, family responsibilities, community, and how to handle both everyday challenges and more dramatic struggles that come with being young (Merriam-Webster 2024).

Though the Bildungsroman is sometimes called by other names, like "the novel of education" or "coming-of-age novel," its core is about the main character shaping their own identity, despite being influenced by larger, external forces. It is easy to see why the Bildungsroman is such a common genre. If the key element is a young character going through the challenges of youth, growing into maturity, or facing hard truths,

then many well-known books fit this description: *Huckleberry Finn*, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, *Invisible Man*, *The Catcher in the Rye*, *Jude the Obscure*, *Jane Eyre*, *Great Expectations*, and more modern works like *Harry Potter*, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, and *The House on Mango Street*. All of these are forms of Bildungsroman (Schwartz, 2024).

Lucy Maud Montgomery was orphaned at a young age, finding comfort in her imagination and the natural beauty of Island. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* (1908) has elements of autobiography, as it seems to draw from the author's own childhood experiences. Growing up in a home with two older caretakers and being surrounded by nature may be reflected in the story of Anne Shirley. She was eleven-year-old orphan who moves to Prince Edward Island to live with two older guardians on a farm near nature (Benasir, 2023).

The novel follows Anne's journey from adolescence into adulthood, inviting readers to experience the world through her eyes. What makes the story so compelling is Montgomery's beautiful writing and Anne's character who is portrayed as lively, innocent, and full of joy. This study examines *Anne of Green Gables* as a Bildungsroman, demonstrating how children's literature can have a lasting impact on readers by addressing key genre themes, such as culture, identity, true friends, love, personal growth, optimism, and imagination.

*This Side of Paradise* is a mostly autobiographical novel about love and greed. It follows Amory Blaine, an ambitious young man from the Midwest who falls in love with two wealthy girls but ends up being rejected by both. When the novel was published in 1920, it received great reviews and quickly made Fitzgerald, who was just 24, one of the most promising young writers in the country. He embraced his newfound fame and began living a lavish lifestyle, which gave him a reputation as a playboy and hurt his image as a serious writer. This study based on the Bildungsroman genre and applies it to Fitzgerald's novel, comparing it with other works in the genre. This new interpretation clarifies the structure of *This Side of Paradise* and offers fresh insights into the formal aspects of the Bildungsroman.

## 2.1 Navigating the Journey: Understanding Bildungsroman

Bildungsroman refers to a specific genre of literature focused on the personal growth and development of the main character. The term comes from German literature, with Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* as a key example. The protagonist in a Bildungsroman usually starts as a young person, and the story follows their journey through various life experiences as they learn and mature.

The Bildungsroman became especially popular in Victorian literature. During this time, the genre mirrored the values of society, particularly the focus on self-development, morality, and fitting into social norms. Victorian authors used this genre to explore how people, especially young men and women, found their place in a world full of challenges and expectations. The typical themes in a Bildungsroman include education, identity, and personal growth. The protagonist often faces struggles or obstacles that shape who they become. The novel usually shows how the character balances their personal desires with what society expects from them. Maynard explains

that the story often begins with the protagonist leaving home, encountering difficulties, and finally reaching maturity, either accepting their place in society or rejecting it (Maynard, 2002).

Gender and class also play important roles in Bildungsroman novels. For male characters, the story often involves professional ambitions and intellectual growth. In contrast, women's Bildungsroman tend to focus on emotional growth and domestic life. Maynard discusses how the genre explores these different experiences based on the protagonist's social position. Maynard emphasizes the lasting influence of the Bildungsroman on modern literature. The genre has continued to evolve over time and is still relevant in contemporary fiction. Its focus on personal growth and overcoming challenges makes it adaptable to different times and cultures (Maynard, 2002).

This special issue examines the evolving concept of the Bildungsroman, exploring how it has expanded beyond traditional novels to include memoirs, films, and long-form television. It brings together experts from various fields to analyze this narrative form, spanning from the 18th to the 21st centuries. Traditionally, the Bildungsroman follows a young protagonist's journey of growth, learning, and social integration, but new interpretations have emerged that challenge this model, offering alternative or "counter" Bildungsroman (Frow, et al., 2020).

Some argue that since the late 18th century, the Bildungsroman has been a fundamental structure for the European novel, with Wilhelm Dilthey identifying Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* as a key example. However, it wasn't until Susanne Howe's 1930 work *Wilhelm Meister and his English Kinsmen* that this German concept was connected to English literature. Fifty years later, Franco Moretti continued the debate over the applicability of this European model to English novels. The conventional Bildungsroman features a young man from the provinces who seeks fortune in the city and undergoes a transformative process, eventually reconciling with society. Variations include young women who experience personal or sentimental growth, often culminating in marriage, or protagonists who become writers or artists. The colonial context also plays a larger role, often serving as a critique rather than just a means of material advancement. Additionally, some versions of the Bildungsroman end tragically, with failure or death instead of success (Frow, et al., 2020).

These variations reflect the genre's flexibility and its ability to challenge traditional norms. For example, Mikhail Bakhtin emphasized how the Bildungsroman imagines individual development alongside historical change. However, his framework excluded more global or exotic influences. Scholar Jed Esty later highlighted how the Bildungsroman has been revised to accommodate globalized and uncertain social contexts. Although the Bildungsroman originally centered on European, male, and privileged experiences, it now serves as a framework to examine the lives of individuals who are marginalized or excluded from these forms of privilege. Post-colonial and post-settler perspectives, in particular, have led to historical revisions and formal experimentation, reshaping the Bildungsroman to reflect diverse and often alienated experiences.



Bakhtin, like Lukács and Moretti, examined how the novel mirrors its era, particularly in the Bildungsroman. Moretti argued that this genre reflects early capitalism's tensions and believed its lifespan was short, lasting only from Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre to Daniel Deronda. He claimed that after this period, the genre's premise that a young person's biography could meaningfully represent history became untenable. However, this narrow view has been challenged. Susan Fraiman critiqued the overemphasis on Wilhelm Meister as the defining Bildungsroman, noting that it reinforces male-centered, middle-class narratives. Carolyn Steedman shifted focus to Goethe's character Mignon, exploring themes of childhood, poverty, and performance. Similarly, Stephanie Insley Hershinow expanded the genre's timeline and focus, analyzing female-centered texts like Richardson's Pamela and works by Radcliffe and Burney. Hershinow argued that these novels focus on inexperience rather than development, and that social limitations can convey profound aesthetic and ethical ideas. She extended this analysis to contemporary fiction and media, like The Hunger Games and Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt, emphasizing the continuity of the Bildungsroman over time.

Nancy Armstrong (2020) argues that the traditional coming-of-age novel, or Bildungsroman, is no longer effective in portraying personal growth in modern literature. The social structures which once supported the classic Bildungsroman, where characters could find their place in a stable society, have changed. Today's society is much more fragmented, and personal identities are not as fixed as they once were. As a result, the straightforward journey of personal development seen in traditional coming-of-age stories doesn't reflect modern realities.

Modern characters often face fragmented identities. Instead of following a clear, linear path to maturity, contemporary protagonists go through disjointed and unclear phases of life. This challenge the idea of steady, predictable growth that is common in traditional Bildungsroman novels. Modern stories often have uncertain or open-ended conclusions, unlike the classic Bildungsroman where the character reaches a clear point of self-realization or maturity. These unresolved endings mirror the complexities and uncertainties of real life, where clear resolutions aren't always possible (Armstrong, 2020).

Globalization and the rise of diverse voices in literature challenge the Eurocentric focus of the traditional Bildungsroman. Stories from different cultural backgrounds often emphasize collective experiences and community rather than focusing solely on individual growth. New literary forms are emerging to better capture modern experiences. Fragmented storytelling, mixing genres, and postmodern narratives offer alternative ways to explore personal development in a world that no longer follows the predictable patterns of the classic Bildungsroman (Armstrong, 2020)

The Bildungsroman, traditionally focused on personal growth and social integration, has evolved over time. While it once followed a clear, linear path of development, modern literature challenges this structure, reflecting fragmented identities and shifting societal expectations. Despite these changes, the core elements of personal growth, self-discovery, and the tension between individual desires and

social norms remain central to the genre, making it adaptable to contemporary storytelling across diverse cultural contexts.

### 3.1.1 The Imagination of Lucy Maud Montgomery

Lucy Maud Montgomery, born in 1874. Montgomery found friendship in her imagination, nature, books, and writing. Montgomery never aimed for the level of fame she achieved, but she always wanted to see her writing published. The fame that came with her novels felt uncomfortable for her, like a garment that did not fit right. Her passion for storytelling, both fictional and drawn from her life, was much stronger than any discomfort she felt from public attention. Writing was essential for Montgomery.

Growing up in a strict Puritan environment and continuing to live in that world after marriage, she often felt stifled and silenced by societal expectations for women. Following the Victorian ideals of female behavior, she had to maintain a calm exterior while inside she was passionate and observant, carefully studying human nature. She expressed her feelings of disillusionment and the realities of life in her journals while pouring her deeper emotions of hope, pain, and innocence into her novels (McIntosh, & Devereux, 2013).

Her island home inspired many of her stories. It is often said that good writers should write about what they know, blending imagination with reality. Montgomery believed in this idea, as each of her novels reflects a part of her life, capturing her thoughts and emotions in a lasting way through her writing. Her journal entries serve as a release for her feelings and a glimpse into her inner self. During her time in Prince Albert, she had her first poem, *On Cape LeForce*, published in a local newspaper, *The Patriot*. The *Anne of Green Gables* series is a beloved coming-of-age story known for its charm, humor, and lasting appeal.

### 3.1.2 *Anne of Green Gables*: A Tale of Growth and Self-Discovery

*Anne of Green Gables* is a beloved Canadian children's book that was published in 1908. The story follows an eleven-year-old orphan named Anne Shirley, lively, clever, imaginative, and has a bright view of life. This story of personal growth begins when Anne arrives at Green Gables, a home on Prince Edward Island, Canada, where she's meant to aid the elderly siblings, Marilla and Matthew Cuthbert, with their farm tasks. Initially, the Cuthberts were let down to discover that they'd mistakenly brought home a girl instead of the boy they intended to help with the heavy farm labor. Despite this unexpected turn, Anne quickly captivated them with her lively spirit and natural charm. In literature, children's stories are often undervalued, as childhood is commonly viewed as a phase we simply move beyond.

This novel can be seen as semi-autobiographical because it reflects the author's own childhood experiences. Montgomery's mother passed away from tuberculosis during her early years, and her father placed her with her grandparents on Prince Edward Island. She grew up under the care of two elderly relatives, near open fields and immersed in natural surroundings. This background is mirrored in *Anne of Green Gables*, where the eleven-year-old main character, Anne Shirley, is an orphan who moves to Prince Edward Island and is raised by two older guardians in a similar rural

setting. The story follows Anne as she grows from a child into an adult, allowing readers to experience the world through her eyes. Montgomery's novel is unified by her enchanting prose and the character of Anne, who is sincere, unpretentious, and brimming with happiness (Benasir, 2023). She was brought up by elderly caretakers close to open fields and amidst natural beauty. Instructor Ann Casano states that:

A coming-of-age story, also called a Bildungsroman, is all about the protagonist's journey from being a child to being an adult. It is a journey that takes a young person from naïve to wise, from idealist to realist, and from immature to mature. The path of the protagonist, or main character, can vary from story to story. Perhaps he had to go to war, or lost his mother, or experienced extreme injustice, or went on some great worldwide adventure. There will usually be pain and suffering along the way – growing up is not easy. However, no matter the narrative direction, the result that the hero grows from his experiences and in some way loses the childhood innocence that help steer him towards adulthood (Casano, 2021, p.).

A coming-of-age story features a main character who is growing socially and emotionally, learning more about themselves and the world around them. When Anne Shirley arrives at Green Gables, she brings her imagination, positivity, and hope. Anne explores Green Gables with her cheerful outlook, asking questions about everything in her new life, like why the road is so red and why the Cuthbert siblings never married, among many other curious thoughts.

How you going to find out about things if you don't ask questions?... isn't it splendid to think of all the things there are to find out about? It just makes me feel glad to be alive—it's such an interesting world. It wouldn't be half so interesting if we know all about everything, would it? There'd be no scope for imagination then, would there? (Montgomery, 1908, p 23)

It is important because it allows readers to connect with the characters and their experiences. It offers hope and shows readers that they are not alone in their struggles. By seeing how the characters grow and overcome challenges, readers can feel reassured that things can get better in their own lives too.

As the main character in a coming-of-age story, Anne embarks on a journey of discovery, asking questions about her experiences. In a bildungsroman, there is a change from being immature to becoming mature, and from being naïve to wise. In a 2014 talk by children's author Daniel McInerney titled "Children's Literature and the Golden World," he explains how children's literature captures imagination and innocence. He refers to the "golden world" as a place of pure and innocent childhood, where children are protected in their innocent state of mind. While society often tries to keep children safe and confined, McInerney believes that true innocence comes from



exploring the world, understanding both good and bad, and still choosing to remain innocent at heart. The coming-of-age novel helps the main character transition from childhood to adulthood, while children's literature ensures that this change is from childishness to respect (Benasir, 2023).

The journey involves experiencing both good and bad, guided by her experience. For instance, she sees a cherry tree at the railway station and describes it as a "beautiful bride" with its slim white branches. She calls the avenue road the "White Way of Delight" and the Berry Pond the "Lake of Shining Water." Anne also says, "When I don't like the name of a place or a person, I always imagine a new one and think of them that way. There was a girl at the asylum named Hepzibah Jenkins, but I always imagined her as Rosalia DeVere" (Montgomery, 1908, p. 26).

Oh, it seems so wonderful that I'm going to live with you and belong to you. I've never belonged to anybody--not really. But the asylum was the worst. I've only been in it four months, but that was enough. I do not suppose you ever were an orphan in an asylum, so you cannot possibly understand what it is like. It's worse than anything you could imagine. Mrs. Spencer said it was wicked of me to talk like that, but I did not mean to be wicked. It's so easy to be wicked without knowing it, isn't it? (Montgomery, 1908, p. 40).

Skillfully, Anne's innocence and imagination are drawn by Montgomery in her writing. In adult literature, imagination often isn't valued as it lacks concrete evidence, making it hard to critique without drifting away from reality. However, McInerney argues that children's literature, like Montgomery's, captures imagination and innocence in a way that brings readers closer to reality. Anne's discussions about her experiences are part of her real life, and her imaginative thoughts reflect her innocence in dealing with the world around her. Rather than distancing readers from reality, her imagination reveals her truth and helps her grow throughout the novel (Benasir, 2023).

Anne was crushed upon discovering that the Cuthberts had actually wanted a boy. Though initially dismayed, she tried to make the best of the situation when they inquired about her name, playfully suggesting they call her Cordelia. To Anne, it seemed unimportant if they used a different name, as Cordelia sounded far lovelier than plain Anne. When Marilla Cuthbert declined to use this new name, Anne firmly requested they at least spell her name with an "e," believing that "Anne" with an "e" had a nicer ring than just "Ann." This moment highlights Anne's optimistic and delightful nature, revealing her hope that others will see her as someone special.

Despite being reprimanded by her teacher, Anne is more upset about the teacher misspelling her name than about the punishment itself. She values her vivid imagination and feels secure in her identity. She even boldly declares that she'd rather feel fanciful in puffed sleeves than ordinary in plain clothes. However, this doesn't mean Anne is demanding or ungrateful. As an eleven-year-old orphan, her world is limited, and joyful experiences are scarce. She holds dear anything that brings her a sense of individuality

and happiness, from her name to her dream of wearing puffed sleeves. Anne also deeply cares for those in her life. When she befriends Diana, her first true friend, she expresses immense happiness.

A bosom friend an intimate friend, you know a really kindred spirit to whom I can confide in my inmost soul. I've dreamed of meeting her all my life. I never really supposed I would, but so many of my loveliest dreams have come true all at once that perhaps this one will, too! (Montgomery, 1908, p.77).

This highlights how important friendship is to Anne. Having a strong and opinionated main character is essential, but not every opinion of an eleven-year-old can be considered wise. Anne expresses that she'd rather be pretty and not very smart than be smart and ugly. She dislikes her red hair, and believes no one will love her. Anne is stubborn and can lose her temper easily. She uses long words. Throughout her time at Green Gables, Anne learns to overcome her negative traits(Devereux,2020).

In a coming-of-age story, character growth often begins with a conflict between the protagonist and society, sometimes leading to a sudden realization about themselves or the world. Anne faces two types of battles: one with the outside world and another within herself, as she struggles with self-acceptance. Anne does not value her own academic abilities until the Cuthbert's express their pride in her hard work, saying they would choose her over a hundred orphan boys. The Cuthbert's show Anne unconditional love, treating her as their own. The love in the story is familial rather than romantic, and it has a deep and positive impact on readers.

Anne's realization comes after the death of Matthew Cuthbert. She struggles to fully express her feelings about his passing and ironically laughs at the times she used long words. She also decides to forgive her classmate Gilbert, understanding that holding onto anger isn't healthy, especially when she's facing such a significant loss. Anne says that:

We have not been we've been good enemies. But we decided that it would be much more sensible to be good friends in the future. Were we really there half an hour? It seemed like just a few minutes. But you see, we have five years'lost conversations to catch up with Marilla(Montgomery, 1908, p. 258).

Anne opts against attending a university; instead, she decides to remain on Prince Edward Island, become a teacher, and care for Marilla Cuthbert. This decision is entirely her own, reflecting what she genuinely wants rather than fulfilling anyone else's expectations. By now, Anne has developed into a self-assured woman who no longer seeks validation from others; she prioritizes her family. Mathias notes that in many coming-of-age stories, the protagonist's journey often brings them a sense of contentment, belonging, or self-discovery as they shift from youth to adulthood. Anne's

growth is evident when she concludes with, “God’s in His heaven, all’s right with the world” (Montgomery, 1908).

#### 4.1 F. Scott Fitzgerald: A Journey Through the Roaring Twenties

F. Scott Fitzgerald was born in 1896, in St. Paul, Minnesota. His family background was a mix of Southern tradition and Irish immigrant success. After struggling in business, his father’s failure forced the family to rely on his mother’s inheritance. Fitzgerald began writing early, eventually attending a Catholic prep school, and joined the army during World War I. After falling in love with Zelda Sayre, he rewrote the novel *This Side of Paradise*, published in 1920, which made him famous (Prigozy, 2002).

Fitzgerald struggled with his reputation as a drinker, overshadowing his literary achievements. His writing often explored themes of aspiration and loss, reflecting the spirit of the Jazz Age. In 1924, seeking peace for his writing, the Fitzgeralds moved to France, where he wrote *The Great Gatsby*. In Paris, he befriended Ernest Hemingway, but after returning to America, he struggled to write and briefly tried screenwriting in Hollywood. Feeling like a failure Scott Fitzgerald died, and his obituaries were patronizing, suggesting he would fade into literary obscurity. Fitzgerald had secured his status as one of America’s lasting writers.

F. Scott Fitzgerald’s writing style is characterized by a deep exploration of character, particularly in how they reflect his personal vision of the world. Through his five novels and numerous stories, he created a diverse array of characters, most notably debutantes, ambitious young men, and college students seeking fulfillment through wealth, social status, and love. Many of his characters share recognizable traits influenced by Fitzgerald’s own experiences, often blending ambition with a yearning for romantic ideals, yet frequently lacking the resilience to achieve their dreams (Prigozy, 2002).

Fitzgerald’s male characters often face failure not due to their weaknesses but because the ideals they pursue do not match reality. Their quests, set against the backdrop of a changing world, illustrate how beauty’s gradual loss, innocence turns to a general distrust of others, and aspirations diminish when confronted with harsh truths. An example of this is Gatsby’s conviction that he can reclaim the past, reflecting his poignant yet misguided hope (Keshmiri & Mahdikhani, 2015).

His female characters, emerging in a time when such representations were rare, are depicted as brave, intelligent, and aware of the importance of their marital choices. While Fitzgerald admires these independent women, he also critiques them, revealing a complexity in their inability to share the dreams of their male counterparts. Fitzgerald’s work is imbued with a main valuable perspective, as his characters undergo self-assessment or are evaluated by others against ideals of honor and responsibility (Keshmiri, & Mahdikhani, 2015).

#### 4.1.2 *This Side of Paradise* tale of Youth, Ambition, and Maturity

With his novel Fitzgerald became known as a bold writer mainly because of his subject matter and themes, not because of new writing techniques. His young male and female characters, who pushed against traditional standards, represented the new 1920s and attracted younger readers while unsettling many older ones. However, he was not really a modernist or an experimental writer like some of his time.

*This Side of Paradise* is considered one of the first American examples of the European Bildungsroman genre. However, many critics find its structure problematic because it has not been fully recognized as fitting into this genre. This analysis creates a theory for understanding the Bildungsroman form and applies it to Fitzgerald's novel by comparing it with other works in the genre. This fresh interpretation of *This Side of Paradise* clarifies its structure and offers new insights into the form of the Bildungsroman.

The story of Amory Blaine in *This Side of Paradise* follows a traditional structure, divided into two books with an interlude. There is an introduction, a main body, and a conclusion, all arranged in a balanced way. The introduction, which is about 33 pages long, provides Amory's background his family, childhood influences, and early experiences leading up to college. It smoothly transitions into the main body, where Fitzgerald focuses on two key sets of Amory's desires and goals at Princeton (Burhans, 1969).

In the first part of the main body, Amory is driven by a desire for popularity and success, similar to his ambitions at St. Regis. He wants to be admired and be part of the elite social circles, whether through athletics, extracurricular activities, or campus leadership. However, his lack of focus on academics causes him to lose eligibility for these activities. Surprisingly, he isn't too upset by this, as his imagination and intellect are not satisfied with his achievements. As Amory moves away from seeking popularity, he starts focusing on developing his intellectual and spiritual potential. This new goal becomes his main focus during the last two years at Princeton, and the latter part of Book One revolves around this evolution (Burhans, 1969).

Fitzgerald highlights this shift in Amory's character through three main ways: by showing Amory's thoughts, actions, and conversations; by introducing role models who represent his different aspirations; and through life-changing events. One key model for Amory's early ambitions is Dick Humbird, a seemingly perfect aristocrat admired by everyone. However, Humbird's tragic death in a car accident marks a turning point for Amory, making him realize that his goals of popularity and success are shallow and cannot protect him from life's harsh realities. As Amory changes, new role models embody his evolving desires (Burhans, 1969).

In *This Side of Paradise*, F. Scott Fitzgerald highlights Amory Blaine's emotional and intellectual development by juxtaposing his relationships with two important figures, Dick Humbird and Burne Holiday, and comparing them to two key women in his life, Isabelle Borge and Clara Page. These characters mark significant stages in Amory's growth, a central feature of the Bildungsroman genre.

Amory's relationship with Isabelle Borge reflects his early drive for popularity and social dominance, much like his admiration for Dick Humbird, who symbolizes the ideal of campus success and social leadership. For Amory, Isabelle is not a romantic partner but an adversary in a game of ego and supremacy. As Isabelle sizes him up, "she felt as if a good speech had been taken from the star and given to a minor character. . . . She mustn't lose the leadership" (Fitzgerald, 1948, p. 64). Similarly, Amory's pursuit of Isabelle is not driven by affection but by a desire to maintain his image: "if he didn't kiss her, it would . . . interfere vaguely with his idea of himself as a conqueror" (Fitzgerald, 1948, p. 92). Their relationship mirrors Amory's early, shallow ambitions for success, where his goals are more about appearances and ego than substance.

As Amory matures, Burne Holiday becomes a new role model, replacing Humbird, and Clara Page represents the idealistic and spiritual counterpart to Isabelle. Clara is described as "the first fine woman he ever knew and one of the few good people who ever interested him" (Fitzgerald, 1948, p. 141). Unlike his relationship with Isabelle, Amory's feelings for Clara are genuine and idealized. He admires her virtue and devotion so much that he declares, "I think . . . that if I lost faith in you, I'd lose faith in God" (Fitzgerald, 1948, p. 144). This shift from ego-driven affection to idealistic love reflects the transformation typical of the Bildungsroman, where the protagonist moves from superficial desires to more meaningful, self-aware aspirations.

### Conclusion

Both *Anne of Green Gables* and *This Side of Paradise* exemplify the enduring appeal of the Bildungsroman genre by portraying the protagonists' journeys of self-discovery and growth amid the complexities of societal expectations and personal aspirations. Lucy Maud Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* emphasizes themes of identity, friendship, and the power of imagination, illustrating how Anne's formative experiences shape her character and worldview. Similarly, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* explores the emotional and intellectual development of Amory Blaine, as he navigates love, ambition, and societal pressures, ultimately reflecting the struggle between individual desires and external constraints.

These novels challenge the notion of a straightforward path to maturity, demonstrating that personal growth is often fraught with obstacles, disillusionment, and the need for reconciliation with oneself and society. These narratives not only resonate with readers due to their universal themes but also reflect the particular cultural and historical contexts in which they were written, showcasing the genre's adaptability and relevance across generations. Ultimately, the Bildungsroman serves as a profound exploration of the human experience, emphasizing the complexity of identity formation amid the myriad challenges of life.

In *Anne of Green Gables*, Lucy Maud Montgomery masterfully portrays Anne Shirley's journey of growth and self-discovery, blending her imaginative nature with the realities of life. The novel is not only a charming coming-of-age story but also a reflection of Montgomery's own life experiences and emotions. Through Anne's curiosity, positivity, and resilience, the reader witnesses the transition from childhood innocence to mature self-awareness. As Anne navigates her way through challenges,



both internal and external, she learns valuable lessons about identity, love, and acceptance. Montgomery's depiction of Anne's emotional depth, imaginative world, and search for belonging highlights the power of resilience and optimism in the face of adversity

In *This Side of Paradise*, F. Scott Fitzgerald explores the emotional and intellectual development of Amory Blaine, tracing his journey from a superficial, popularity-seeking youth to a more introspective and spiritually aware individual. By juxtaposing Amory's relationships with key figures such as Dick Humbird, Burne Holiday, Isabelle Borge, and Clara Page, Fitzgerald illustrates Amory's internal transformation—one that mirrors the Bildungsroman tradition. As Amory matures, his evolving ambitions and romantic relationships reflect his growing understanding of life's deeper meanings, culminating in a shift from ego-driven pursuits to a search for genuine self-knowledge and fulfillment. Ultimately, Fitzgerald's novel portrays a nuanced coming-of-age story, offering insights into the complexities of youth, identity, and personal growth.

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