

TOPICS in Film & Literature:

Modern & Postmodern Representations of Tribulated and Tortured Youth:
Sparagmos of the Bildungsroman!

Summer 2006

Session 2

Comparative Literature v29.0300

English (Dramatic Literature) v30.0306

Tue-Wed-Thu 9:15 - 11:25 AM, 4pts

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The novels of the genre known as *Bildungsroman* narrate the moral and psychological growth, upbringing or development of a youthful protagonist. These works describe the vicissitudes of a formative journey that is *ideally* teleological: It drives toward future solid maturity. This constitutes the bildungsroman dilemma: very rarely a strong bildungsroman fulfills its ideal premise. Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (*The Sorrows of Young Werther*) provides a good example of this quandary.

Sparagmos, "tearing asunder," is the Greek word for the mythical or ritual dismemberment of a, usually, young male sacrificial victim. This class' postulation is that the 20th century's chronic socioeconomic, political, cultural, and armed violence led to the metaphorical *sparagmos* of the bildungsroman and of its central character (oftentimes, to the latter's literal death).

By means of a wide-sweeping survey, we will work towards the identification and analysis of the narrative, linguistic and structural modifications of the genre throughout the last-century. To take advantage of the opportunities afforded by comparative reading and thinking, the films and texts will be approached through questions that interrogate them not only from literary and cultural analysis, but also from ethics and politics. The selected cinematographic and literary representations constitute a good exhibit of the modern-and-postmodern youth's voyage, through alienation from, disenchantment with, and forthright erosion or annihilation of the existential experience.

Sparagmos of the Bildungsroman will comprise films from Ireland, France, United Kingdom, Sweden, Spain, USA, Colombia, Brazil, and Argentina, and novels by James Joyce, Gunter Grass, Roddy Doyle, Anthony Burgess, Cormac McCarthy, Bret Easton Ellis, Don DeLillo, Manuel Puig, and Fernando Vallejo.



Goya