



Bernhard
Schlink
Der Vorleser

Roman • Diogenes

The Reader

Translated by Carol Brown Janeway



Bernhard Schlink
Author of Flights of Love

'For generations to come, people will be
reading and marvelling over Bernhard Schlink's *The Reader*'
Evening Standard

Tripartite Structure

- Part I: 1958
 - Michael Berg is 15
 - Auschwitz liberated 1.27.45
- Part II: Six Years Later
- Part III: Eighteen Years Later

Genres

Vergangenheitsbewältigung
the struggle to come to
terms with the past

Bildungsroman

- Bildung = education
- Roman = novel
- Bildungsroman = coming of age novel, literally “novel of education”

A **parable** is a didactic story in prose or verse.

- A parable is different from a fable because it uses human characters rather than animals.

Historical Context--Acronyms

- West Germany
 - **GDR**: German Democratic Republic
 - **DDR**: Deutsche Demokratische Republik
- **NAZI** = abbreviation for “Nationalsozialismus”
 - German for “National Socialism”

- Do you have any questions about the history or the historical context of this novel?

Point of View: Compare and Contrast

- Part I: 1958

- Michael Berg is 15

- Part II: 1965

- Michael Berg is 21

- To what extent does Schlink give us a reliable or unreliable narrator in Part I and Part II?

Holocaust

- Noun

- 1: a sacrifice consumed by fire
- 2: a thorough destruction involving extensive loss of life especially through fire <a nuclear *holocaust*>
- 3a *often capitalized* : the mass slaughter of European civilians and especially Jews by the Nazis during World War II —usually used with *the*
- b : a mass slaughter of people; *especially* : genocide

Kennzeichen für Schutzhäftlinge in den Konz. Lagern

EXHIBIT "N"

Form und Farbe der Kennzeichen

	Politisch	Berufs- Verbrecher	Emigrant	Bibel- forscher	Homo- sexuell	Asozial
Grund- farben						
Abzeichen für Rückfällige						
Häftlinge der Straf- kompanie						
Abzeichen für Juden						
Besondere Abzeichen					Beispiel <small>RECEIVED Date: 5-2-54 File No.: 2307 How No.: J. J. 1.</small>	
	Jüd. Rasse- schänder	Rasse- schänderin	Flucht- verdächtig	Häftlings- nummer		
	Pole	Tscheche	ehemaliger Wehrmacht angehöriger	Häftling Ia		

Part I Analysis Discussion Use quotations to support your ideas.

1. To what extent does Michael understand or misunderstand his relationship with Hannah in Part I?
 - A. What is accurate or inaccurate about his point of view?
 - B. What is the effect of the authorial choice to provide this limited perspective?
 - C. How does Michael's bildungsroman develop by the end of Part I—how does Schlink end the affair? Effect?
2. Speculate: How does your group think Hanna views this relationship **and** what is accurate or inaccurate about their views? How would she have written part I?
3. Blame Game: Who failed to protect a teenage Michael from predatory sexual abuse? Assign blame to a variety of factors based on quoted evidence.
4. How does Schlink develop the following themes/motifs in Part I?
 - A. Openness (also nakedness) and Secrecy
 - B. Intimacy and Abuse
 - C. Disease
 - D. Morality and Law and Guilt Individual Consciences

Today's Primary Source Optional Context Read:

Discuss the point of view, rhetorical devices used, and evaluate this primary source from The Atlantic in 1956

Essential Question Do “superior orders” equate with innocence?

Nuremberg: A Fair Trial? A Dangerous Precedent

"If in the end there is a generally accepted view that Nuremberg was an example of high politics masquerading as law, then the trial instead of promoting may retard the coming of the day of world law."

CHARLES E. WYZANSKI APRIL 1946 ISSUE

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1946/04/nuremberg-a-fair-trial-a-dangerous-precedent/306492/>

Part 2, Chs. 1-5 Analysis Questions

- **Begin by listing what Schlink shifts between Part I and Part II (six years later).**
1. What horrible thing did the female guards do to merit this trial? How does this affect your opinion of Hannah?
 2. How do the callousness/numbness that Michael begins to adopt in his post-Hanna days relate to the numbness he notices in the courtroom?
 3. "What should our second generation have done, what should it do with the knowledge of the horrors of the extermination of the Jews" (104). What do you think is the author's opinion regarding this question?
 4. What do you think Hanna's lack of emotion during her trial can show about camp guards? About her?
 5. What do the law students show that the younger generation feels they need to do about their parents and the Nazi legacy?

Compare and contrast Part I and Part II:

- Select one of the following themes....
 - Openness (also nakedness) and Secrecy
 - Intimacy and Abuse
 - Moral law/conscience
- Consider the metaphors Schlink uses to represent the allegorical relationship themes in both parts of the novel.
- Write a comparative thesis-driven paragraph that discusses why he uses these particular metaphors and what they represent.