



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

Identity Write

1. Connecting Woolf & Schlink: To what extent do you honestly speak the content of your mind as you move through your day/life?
2. What can be gained or lost as a novel—or other artistic work—is translated?
 - Across time periods?
 - Across languages?
 - Across cultures?
 - What other divides have implications that should be explored as a translated text is created?

The Reader—Der Vorleser

Publication & Translation

Review:

- What can be gained or lost as a novel— or other artistic work—is translated?
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 - Across cultures?
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With Translated Texts, Consider...

- How important but difficult is it to translate word and sentence choices with all their associations, implications, and connotations into a different language.
- What aspects of meaning can be lost?
- What is supposed to be funny in the text? Is it funny to all readers?
- Audit how your cultural lenses might impede your understanding of the text.
- What are the implications of translating stylistic features such as imagery, rhythm, sound, or figurative expression?
- How important is the fact that texts create meaning within a social or cultural context? Does understanding of a cultural, as well as a linguistic, frame of reference affect the way a work is read and how easy is this to translate?
- **In which ways does the author of the original text remain the author of the translated work? Does the *translator* become the *author* through the linguistic choices they make?**

Some Words Defy Translation. Angela Merkel Showed Why.



German Chancellor Angela Merkel deployed a word English speakers might use to describe chaos or outrage during a speech at a technology conference.

Timm Schamberger/EPA, via Shutterstock

By **Melissa Eddy**

Dec. 5, 2018



BERLIN — Some words can't be translated easily. But they can

Der Vorleser (1995) *The Reader* (1997)

A novel by German law professor and judge Bernhard Schlink, published in Germany in 1995 and in the United States in 1997



The Reader—Der Vorleser

Publication & Translation

- *The Reader* sold 500,000 copies quickly in Germany.
- Ranks 14th in a list of the 100 favorite books of German readers, the second-highest ranking for any contemporary German novel on the list
- Translated into over 25 languages
- *The New York Times*, Richard Bernstein called it “arresting, philosophically elegant, (and) morally complex.”

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.

“Rhabarberbarbara” video

- **German is known for its extra-long compound words.**
- When Mark Twain complained that some German words were "so long they have a perspective," he was thinking of words like *Freundschaftsbezeugungen* (demonstrations of friendship) and *Generalstaatsverordnetenversammlungen* (general states representatives meetings).
- Long German words were in the news in 2013 when many sources reported that Germany had "lost its longest word" because the European Union removed a law from its books called (*ahem*): *Rindfleischetikettierungsüberwachungsaufgabenübertragungsgesetz* (the law for the delegation of monitoring beef labeling).
- But Germany had not in fact lost its longest word, because the process for forming these words is an active, productive part of the language, and the potential exists for creating words even longer, if so needed, in the moment.
- Here's an example of how that process works...

Rhabarberbarbarabarbarbaren



that they
were soon
referred to
as the
"Rhubarb
Barbara Bar
Barbarians"

Rhabarberbarbara

Eszett



- The letter β (also known as sharp S, **German**: eszett or scharfes S) is a letter in the **German** alphabet.
- It is the only **German** letter that is not part of the basic Latin alphabet.
- The letter is pronounced [s] (like the "s" in "see").
- The β character is not used in any other languages.

