TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

My Masters set out to explore – and make sense of – my experiences after arriving here in New Zealand. Using my impressions from this time as a guideline, I intend to look more deeply into the anxieties, pleasures, unstableness and the expanded consciousness one could experience when being exposed to an unfamiliar cultural and social environment. As the various experiences bring about completely differing moods, the illustrative means should vary as well. Therefore, I would like to make a mixed media film, illustrating my experiences.

2. BACKGROUND

In 2003, I hitchhiked through New Zealand with my best friend who I have known since kindergarten. During this experience I fell in love with the country, its wonderful landscape and its open-minded people with their easy-going hospitality.

Now that I have moved to New Zealand, I am exposed to unfamiliar situations, each of which I absorb with more amazement than ever before. Most of them are eventful, exciting and beautiful but there are some which are exhausting and difficult as well. I interact with people who speak a different language and have customs, values and attitudes that are unlike my own. After having felt confused in the beginning, I have started to adjust to this culture. Now I find myself adapting and feel more and more comfortable within it.

3. RESEARCH AIMS

As one's own feelings are most inspiring, I would like to tell a story provoked by my personal experiences. I would like to make a mixed media film depicting my two different alter egos. The first alter ego is going to be inspired by myself as an illustrator, designer and puppeteer who has to find the best means to express his thoughts. Within the course of his story he creates and develops the second alter ego who will be inspired by my private life. Representing me in New Zealand, this second protagonist has to deal with the new world around him. In conflict with the environment, which is set on the illustrator's desk, he meets different characters that are formed out of every day objects. During the course of the story, this alter ego becomes more and more three-dimensional and detailed. He gradually transforms into a part of his new world.
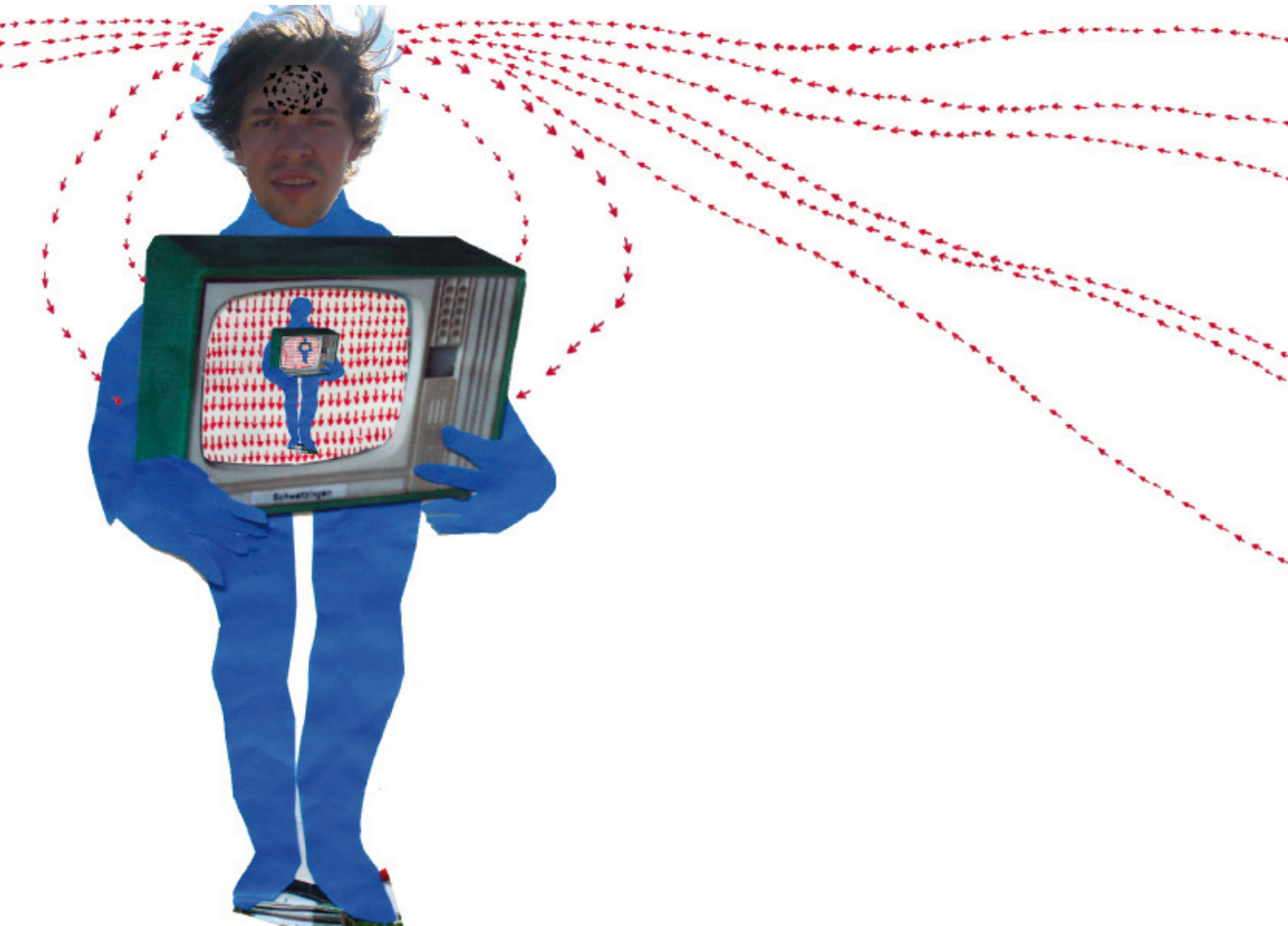
My *Research through Design* is going to explore the genre of surrealistic film. I am going to analyse cinematic techniques, combining real-life footage, animation and puppetry. I will attempt to find expressive means to illustrate experiences one can have when confronted with an unfamiliar environment. My main research aim is finding a narrative structure for this broad story, which will allow me to connect the different single sequences. I wish to find appropriate transitions between the different stages.
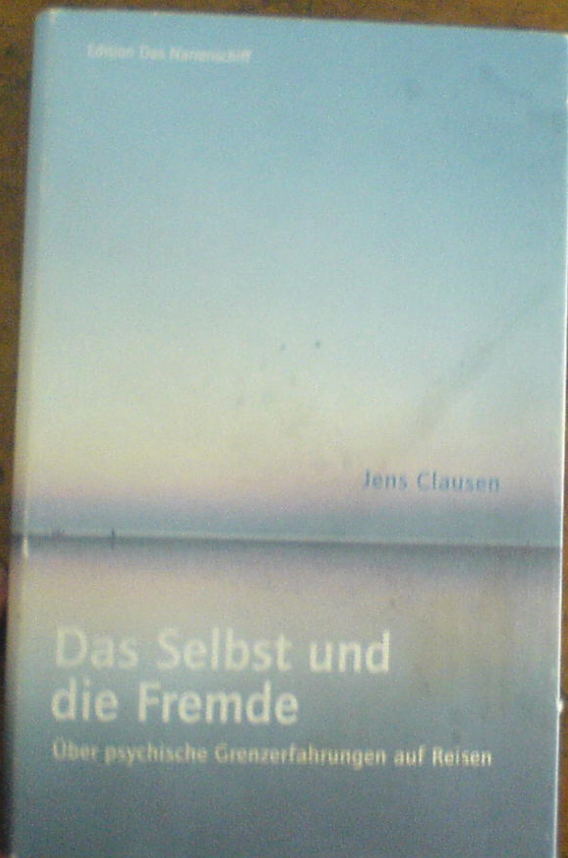
4. METHODOLOGY

My Masters thesis set out to illustrate a case of personal development through the experience of travelling. This began with me examining in detail what happened when I left my familiar surroundings and set off on an adventure into another culture. Firstly, I observed the change in my feelings that came about through confusion, amazement and the sense of being overwhelmed, and then I began to research literature that had already been written about experiences.

I have had a close look at the term *journey* as a metaphor for personal development and the formation of identity. My film *Lepidoptera* looks to allegorize how egression out of one's comfort zone and open-mindedness towards experiences to which one is unaccustomed broadens one's horizon. It also explores how interpretation of different attitudes and ways of thinking leads to contemplation of one's own and therefore gives an insight into one's self.

In order to gain an overview about this subject area I have investigated the literary genre of the *Bildungsroman*. This specific German type of novel mostly tells the story of a young protagonist who goes on a journey. In an unfamiliar world he has experiences that turn his exterior journey into an interior journey – his personal development. I have had a closer look at the structure of the *Bildungsroman*, which inspired the narrative structure of my film.

Apart from fictional literature, I have investigated psychological texts that deal with the change of identity when travelling. For this, I have involved the research of Jens Clausen, which he writes about in his book *Das Selbst und die Fremde (The Self and the Unfamiliar)*. He connects literature of travel experiences with the psychological aspects of journeys and looks into how people lose – and eventually regain – their sense of self when they travel to a new society (Clausen, 2007).

The analysis of the relationship between an individual and society has led me to André Gide. In his autobiographical book *Si le grain ne meurt* (*If It Die*) he describes the purpose of life as the liberation from societal pressures and the finding of one's self. Gide establishes the realization of his homosexuality and the resulting break away from his puritanical parents as an essential starting-point for self-discovery (Gide, 1947).

In my film, the main character's personal development is also initiated by his first homosexual encounter and the resulting clash with society.

Experiencing unfamiliar situations within journeys leads to befuddlement and instability. The senses do not really seem to work and everything seems unreal. I have come across expressions of this kind of distorted perception in the Bildungsroman, Jens Clausen's research and in my own personal experience of starting a life in New Zealand. Not long into my search for suitable expressive means, I settled for animation - more specifically for surrealistic mixed-media film. Owing to the fact that the characters and their movements are so obviously distorted, the viewer is able to utterly accept, and not to question, their reality. This allows the film-maker to allegorically depict personal experiences and situations without this coming across as absurd or silly. Amongst other things, I have had a look at the mysterious and sometimes macabre mixed-media films by the Czech animator Jan Svankmajer, and tried to detect the means that he uses to distort the qualities of objects and rooms.
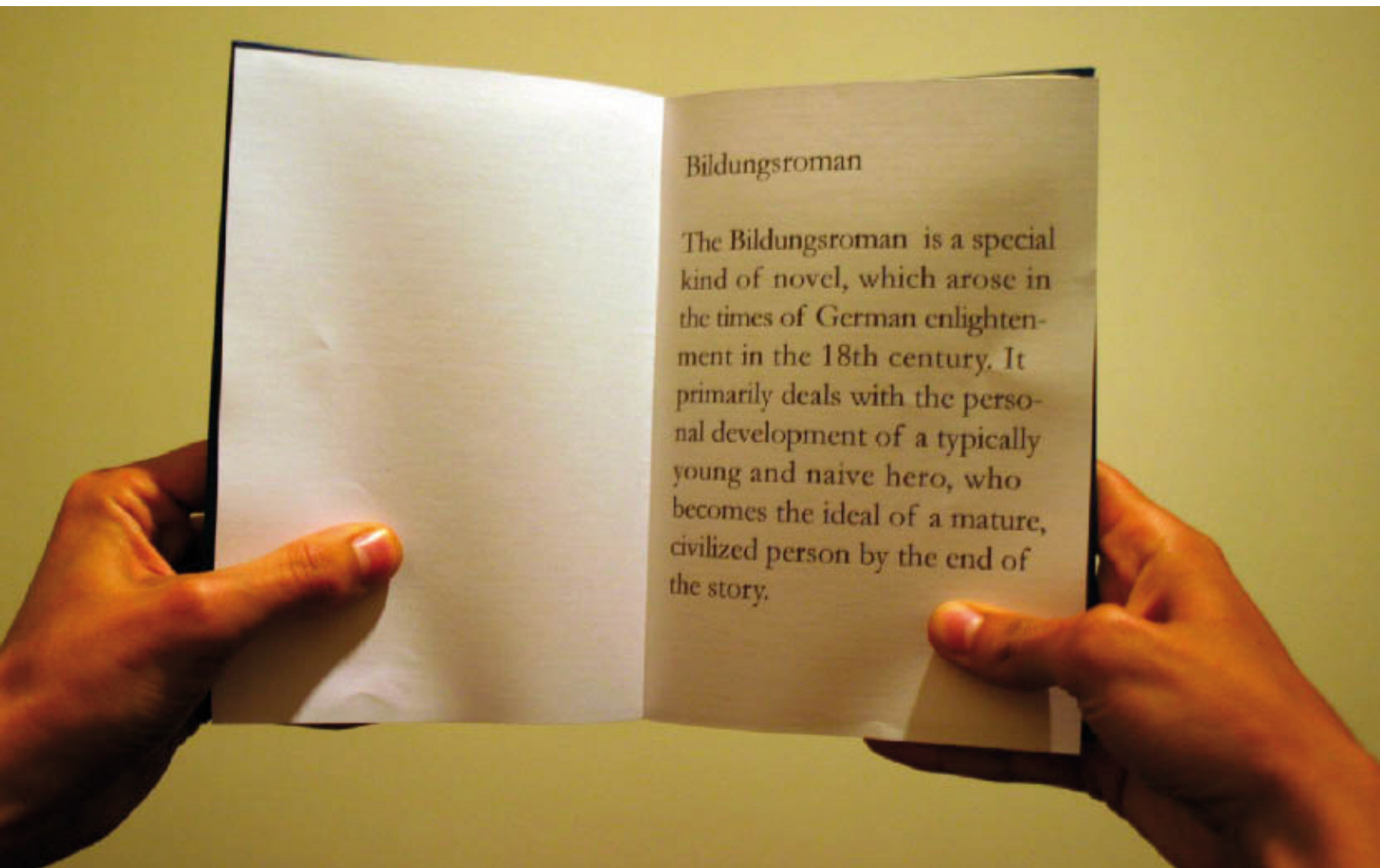
Inspired by Svankmajer's interaction of live action, animation and the world of puppetry, I have researched literature dealing with the history of puppetry. Through developing different kinds of characters and puppets and designing miniature sets, I have explored the world of puppets and marionettes and looked for the best means to illustrate my experiences.

In my *Bildungsfilm*, a real life illustrator, who is searching for his own identity sends a drawn figure on a journey in place of himself. As an autobiographical author of his own *Bildungsroman* he illustrates the psychological aspects of breaking away from society. Different kinds of animation visually represent the various stages of personal development from discontentment to freedom, while different animation techniques will show the transition between them.

5. LITERATURE REVIEW.

5.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE Bildungsroman....

Bildungsroman

The Bildungsroman is a special kind of novel, which arose in the times of German enlightenment in the 18th century. It primarily deals with the personal development of a typically young and naive hero, who becomes the ideal of a mature, civilized person by the end of the story.

Bildungsroman is one of the German words that has been adopted into the English language without being translated such as *Kindergarten* or *Zeitgeist*. There is no direct translation, but in literature the term "novel of personal development" is used very often. *Roman* is the German word for *novel* but *Bildung* can be translated depending on the context. The German word *Bildung* (old high German: bildunga, middle high German: bildunge) originally had the meaning *picture*, *image* (lat.: imago) and *imitation* (imitatio) as well as *form* (forma) and *design* (formatio). Prior to the 18th century, the word was mainly used in a religious or theological context. It referred to the formation of an image of God in a person's mind (Constantin, 1944; Lichtenstein, 1971; Rauhut & Schaarschmidt, 1944).

Over the course of the German Enlightenment, the word became secularized. *Bildung* came to be understood as the accumulation of spiritual, intellectual and personal skills of a person. Subsequently, it was seen as a moral and pedagogical idea that was more or less synonymous with *education*, *upbringing* and *development*. The enlightened idea of *Bildung* means the education of the rational skills of a human being (Sulzer, 1745).

The German philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder detached the meaning of the word *Bildung* from its religious origins. For him *Bildung* is no longer only upbringing and apprenticeship but also refers to the well-balanced development of an individual as the result of both personal and social influences (Vierhaus, 1972).

The climax of the debate about *Bildung* in Germany was reached in 1851 when Wilhelm von Humboldt reformed the definition by declaring that the imitation of classical antiquity was its essential feature. He regarded individual development as being of higher importance than civic duties. Since the 18th century, *Bildung* has defined an ethical notion whereby an exciting balance can be found between the individual's needs and the norm-based expectations of society.

For the German professor of literary studies, Rolf Selbmann, the historical definition of *Bildung* which is responsible for the term *Bildungsroman* in the times of German Enlightenment traces its origins back to the classical antique as well. It stands for the individual development of every single person who aspires to a higher and positive goal, independent from national and social standards. He also mentions that the term includes the building of an intellect as well as the forming of a national consciousness. A further characteristic of the historical term is the inclusion of positive external influences on the development of a person's existing capacities (Selbmann, 1984).

The hero of a Bildungsroman starts off by being in conflict with his environment. While he is still young, naïve and full of ideals, he finds the world holds him back with its disapproval. At the beginning, nothing seems to turn out as he would expect or want. The novel explores the mutual misunderstanding and condemnation that exists between the protagonist and his society. This relationship between the hero and his environment initiates his development – his "Bildung". The hero encounters situations that allow him to grow and mature as a person. This process of development concludes when the hero is reconciled to his world (Jacobs, 1972). The hero attains a state of self-knowledge, which invests his life with meaning. He is able to accept – and become a part of – the world that he once despised.
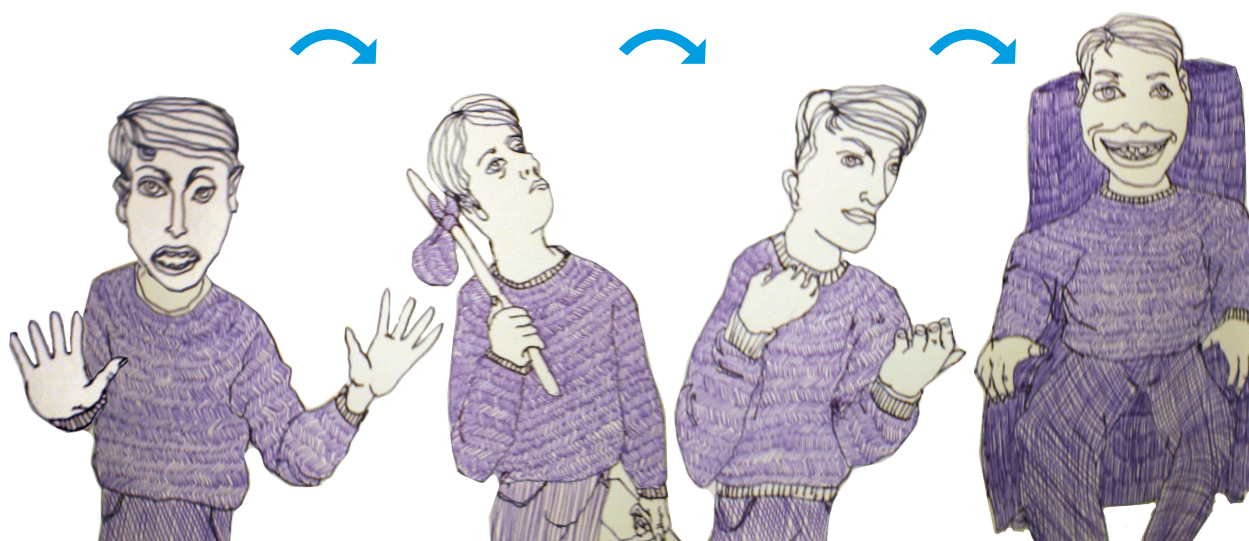
In his book *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung*, Wilhelm Dilthey wrote: 'Beginning with Wilhelm Meister and Hesperus, they all depict the youth of that time, how he enters life in a blissful daze, searches for kindred souls, encounters friendship and love, but then how he comes into conflict with the hard realities of the world and thus matures in the course of manifold life-experiences, finds himself, and becomes certain of his task in the world (Dilthey, 1906).'

Although the term *Bildungsroman* had not been created, Christian Friedrich von Blanckenburg wrote in his *Versuch über den Roman* (*essay about the novel*) that the hero's inner story and not the external sequences of events was the most important characteristic of a novel. The fixed aim of a novel was to form the hero's character (Blanckenburg, 1774). In 1823, Karl Morgenstern coined the word *Bildungsroman* and defined it as the noblest kind of novel. He was well on the way to a classification of the term when saying 'We said that we may call it a Bildungsroman, first and primarily, on account of its content, because it represents the *Bildung* of the hero to a certain stage of completion; but also secondly, because it is this very depiction that promotes the *Bildung* of the reader more than any other kind of novel' (Morgenstern, 1823).

A Bildungsroman both describes *Bildung* and aims to bring about a similar development in the reader's own understanding. The genre often employs an omniscient narrator, one who has already made the journey faced by the hero.

The Bildungsroman is frequently divided into three parts, schematically "years of youth – years of travel – years of mastership".

I look upon my whole Masters as a Bildungsroman in which I, as the protagonist, set out on a journey into the unknown. Through my research in New Zealand, I have gathered social, academic, personal and cultural experiences, and have grown in many respects as a result.

This written component, which you are reading at the moment, the documentary film and the design product, the movie itself, represent, within my thesis, the three constituent parts: years of youth, years of travel and years of mastership.

In his youthful years, the protagonist of the Bildungsroman can normally be found in the comfort of his parents' home. He emulates the behaviours, habits and opinions of his experienced elders, and does not take much initiative himself. In this way, he can be seen to be collecting useful information. This phase is represented in my thesis by the literature review. Here, I mainly focussed on absorbing literature and films that had been created by other artists or authors. I wrote about topics and themes that had previously been explored by creative and insightful people. In the Bildungsroman, the parents usually pass on knowledge to their child in order to prepare it for life. Similarly, in my own case, I have made use of the expertise and ideas made available by more knowledgeable individuals to prepare me for the next step of my personal Bildungsroman.

During the second phase, the years of travel, the protagonist of the Bildungsroman is travelling away from his home. He gathers new impressions, is influenced by new perspectives and critically compares these with the experiences of his youth. In processing these new life-experiences, he learns more about himself and develops as a person.
In the same way, the documentary, which you are watching right now, deals with the personal experiences I have gathered, and links these with my findings from the literature review, the adolescent phase, so to speak, of my thesis. I will present my design process, which, just like the travel phase in the Bildungsroman, contains difficulties, surprises and lessons to be learnt.

In the mastership phase of the Bildungsroman the personal development of the protagonist comes to fruition. Our hero is now mature and has found his place in society. Through the adolescent stage of my thesis (my written component) and my travel phase (the documentary), I have established my point of view, formed my creative vision, and my final short film can be considered as representative of the third – or mastery – phase.

The butterfly, which becomes the leitmotif in my film, was the inspiration for the naming of the three phases.

The development of a butterfly can also be seen in terms of three distinct stages.

The insect spends its years of youth, so to speak, as a caterpillar, merely feeding. It gathers sustenance which is important for the next phase of development, just as I have done in my literature review.

The initial metamorphosis sees the caterpillar turn itself into a chrysalis. In its cocoon, the caterpillar is able to digest and process everything it has consumed and undergoes a personal development which progresses towards a final stage.

The butterfly represents the phase of mastery, where the insect has reached the culmination of its development; it is vibrantly colourful, and can even fly.

The titles for the three sections of my Masters thesis are derived from these three phases of what could be referred to as the 'Bildungsroman of the butterfly'. Larva, pupa and Lepidoptera are the scientific terms, respectively, for caterpillar, chrysalis and butterfly.

5.2 GOETHE'S *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* AS AN EXAMPLE FOR THE *Bildungsroman*

Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* is often described as the standardizing prototype of the generic term *Bildungsroman*. This novel defined the standards and rules of a Bildungsroman, which have seemingly never been fulfilled by any other Bildungsroman (Selbmann, 1984). Therefore I would like to enter the plot, going down in the specific characteristics in the following:

Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship is divided into eight books that describe the personal development of Wilhelm Meister who is a son of a businessman.

When he was a child, Wilhelm was enchanted and inspired by puppetry and now that he meets the actress Marian, he naively dreams of creating a national theatre. When the relationship with Marian fails, Wilhelm goes through a crisis. He feels misunderstood by the world and is in conflict with his father, who thinks that visiting the theatre is just a waste of time.

As a result of this breakdown, Wilhelm's father sends him on a business trip and he seizes this opportunity to evade his close relationship to his parents. He steps out of his prosperous home and his familiar surroundings and meets a group of theatre people, who help him explore a state of personal freedom and self-development. In their company, Wilhelm feels understood again. Every member of this group has his or her own purpose in life and therefore represents an individual character trait. Wilhelm spends time with every single one of these people, considering each different way of thinking with sensitivity and empathy.

The community elects Wilhelm as their leader and he meets influential people. It seems that their project becomes more and more successful, but on their journey to the popular theatre director Serlo, highwaymen rob Wilhelm. A surgeon and a "beautiful Amazon" rescue Wilhelm and later on he tries to find her in vain.

When business trips his father sends him on become very urgent he doubts his own purpose in life and sees himself standing at a crossroad. Upon hearing of his father's death he feels independent again and writes a letter to his brother-in-law saying that it has always been his aim to shape himself according to his own nature:
'...the cultivation of my individual self, here as I am, has from my youth upwards been constantly though dimly my wish and my purpose.' (Goethe, 1796). In this, he recognises not only his own purpose, but also defines the most important characteristic of a Bildungsroman.

At the climax of his career, Wilhelm stages *Hamlet* and plays the main part, which obviously represents himself. This becomes a turning point in his life when the theatre catches fire, leading to the disbanding of the community.

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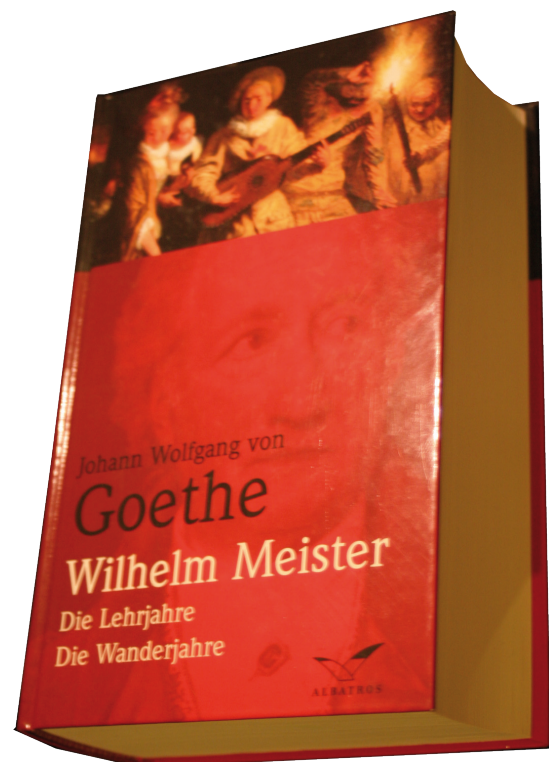
In the 6th book, Goethe inserts a story of the personal development of an aristocrat, which is read by Wilhelm. These "confessions of a beautiful soul" lead to the second part of Wilhelm's years of apprenticeship. Here, he is persuaded to abandon the theatre and work for a community of enlightened people, loosely modelled on the Freemasons. The so-called *Tower Society* is an undercover group who have obviously observed Wilhelm before.

Indentures confirm that his years of apprenticeship are over and he finally finds his missing Amazon. He also finds out that he has fathered a son to his former lover Marian. Wilhelm accepts him, realizing that the boy is just beginning his own process of personal development.

The inscrutable interventions of the *Tower Society* confuse Wilhelm and drive him to despair. He plans his departure but the society promises him Natalie, the beautiful Amazon. Mignol and the harpist Austin, two members of the former theatre community who represent naivety and original art cannot live in a world of enlightened rationalism and lose their lives. At the end of the story, Wilhelm and Natalie get married.

The Bildungsroman *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* shows different perspectives of the conflicts and themes it contains. The protagonist goes through these stations of examination of the outside world. The novel elaborates on the themes of Enlightenment, the relationship between nobility and bourgeoisie, the role of art, enlightenment, freemasonry and pietism. In this prototype of the Bildungsroman one can easily track the protagonist's personal development. In his process of disillusionment, the ideal of a universal harmonic development through art collapses and the hero only finds his personality and purpose in life when he finds his place in a community, namely in the *Tower Society*.

5.3 COMPARISON OF Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship AND Lepidoptera

Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship is commonly seen as a three part work, consisting of the phases mentioned above: years of youth, years of travel and years of mastership. This breakdown has helped me structure *Metamorphosis*, however it was not detailed enough to inform the narrative structure of the film *Lepidoptera*, so I looked for a more specific sub-categorisation within the three broad stages of the Bildungsroman. Through my research into the Bildungsroman, I discovered that, in most of the novels, the protagonists are confronted with similar challenges. These situations could be divided into eight categories: Identity Crisis, Discontentment, Love, Clash with Society, Friendship, Being Overwhelmed, Communication Breakdown and Freedom. The following is a brief explanation of the eight phases I came up with as they occur in Wilhelm Meister.

Identity Crisis: Wilhelm feels at home in the theatre – in a world where one can slip in and out of various roles. He is not yet at all sure who he is exactly, however, as an actor, he can take on a diverse range of characters and test which one suits him the best.

Discontentment: Wilhelm's father wants him to leave the theatre and take up a traditional profession. Wilhelm is very unhappy about this and wishes to escape from his father's house.

Love: Wilhelm enjoys his first love affair with Mariane, who is engaged to Norbert, a business man. It is clear to Wilhelm that he and Mariane belong together.

Communication Breakdown: Unfortunately the language of love does not work for Mariane and Wilhelm and a great misunderstanding arises between them. Wilhelm believes that Mariane has betrayed him and leaves her. This misfortune casts him into a terrible crisis of body and soul.

Clash with Society: Wilhelm often gets into difficult conversations with people who advise him to give up his acting career and attempt a more rational line of work. For example, in the third book, his friend Jarno urges him to 'take up a regular profession'.

Friendship: After Wilhelm leaves his home to get his foot in the door at a theatre, he gets to know lots of free spirited people who think like he does. Together, they establish a theatre community and for the first time Wilhelm feels like he is among like-minded souls.

Being Overwhelmed: The staging of 'Hamlet' is a high-point for the theatre group and a turning point for Wilhelm. After a successful performance there is a fire in the theatre. Wilhelm loses everything and the group disbands. Wilhelm is at a loss for what to do.

Freedom: Wilhelm marries Natalie, who once saved his life, and who he has been searching for ever since. He also finds his son who was born by him to the now deceased Mariane. At the end of the book, Wilhelm finds his place in the *Tower Society*, a contemporary group of the Freemason Movement.

I used the same categories as a narrative guide for my film *Lepidoptera* which I would like to summarize in the following.

Identity Crisis: At the beginning, the illustrator tries to craft himself but fails.

Discontentment: The outline figure is imprisoned in the piece of paper. He wants to leave his familiar surroundings and go on a journey.

Love: The shadow puppet feels love for the first time when he meets his lover behind the lamp

Clash With Society: The affectionate couple clashes with society, represented by the sun, which condemns their homosexuality.

Friendship: After losing his lover, the friendship with the knitting doll and the pin cushion make the paper character feel comfortable again in his new world.

Being Overwhelmed: When the Russian dolls demand sexual favours, the fabric character is overwhelmed.

Communication Breakdown: The marionette tries to call the butterfly but fails because he hasn't discovered language yet.

Freedom: Once he learns how to speak he can finally communicate with his self – which is represented by the butterfly – and reaches it in the freedom of nature.

At the beginning of *Lepidoptera*, an illustrator sees his reflection in a mirror at his desk. He is urged by his reflected self to create an alter ego. The illustrator can be seen as my Bildungsroman's protagonist, while the reflection takes on the role of the narrator in that he knowingly lures the alter ego into new surroundings.

At pivotal points during my story my character reviews his past experiences. These reflections are an important feature of the Bildungsroman. They both provide the narrative with a formal structure and clarify the protagonist's development. These moments of reflection also define and conclude the individual stages of development within the hero's journey. Every acquaintance changes the protagonist. In my film, this can be seen visually as the character changes his physical form. A symbolic object from each successive setting plays a part in this bodily transformation. By accepting and making use of his new body part, the character is able to interpret what he learned in his previous state.

6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Please note:

The visual research as well as my personal design development is described in the following documentary film which is part of my Masters thesis. Please see the enclosed DVD *Pupa*.