

Summary

Alex, one of the main voices in the novel *Everything is Illuminated* (2002) by Jonathan Safran Foer, is a typical example of a *Bildungsroman*-character who develops from a want-to-be teenager into a fully grown adult in his outlook as well as in his writing. This development of Alex's personality and style is greatly influenced by family members and friends, but most of all by his own realisation that life is about taking advantage of your circumstances instead of running away from problems. At the end of the novel he buries his dream of a perfect life in America for securing his family's survival and happiness instead. His final decision makes Alex take responsibility for more than his own well-being. This responsibility is based on his notion to always tell the truth. His life becomes dedicated to honesty. Jonathan's story helps him to see how necessary it is in life to be faithful towards oneself to be able to be true to the people you love. On the one hand the truth costs him his desire of running away and it costs him his father, but on the other hand Alex is finally able to find out what it means to love and to be loved.

Alex is able to find his innermost self in the process of writing down his own life-story for Jonathan. It functions as a kind of a personal diary because in his texts he realises that he has been running away from the truth and even from himself. The mistakes he makes in grammar and language at the beginning of the novel become his very individual style towards the final chapters and he manages to use them for expressing exactly what he intends to say. He is able to take advantage of his own weaknesses and to transform them into a strong and personal part of his life.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1: The Change of Alex’s World-Perception.....	6
Chapter 2: Finding the Self Through Others.....	16
Chapter 3: Language Creates a Character- a Character Creates Language.....	23
Conclusion	32
Works Cited	36