

## FEMALE BILDUNGSROMAN IN THE WORKS OF HARLEM WRITERS

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**Received: 12 Mar 2024**

**Accepted: 21 Mar 2024**

**Published: 31 Mar 2024**

### ABSTRACT

*Reconstruction African Americans, it was a tremendous accomplishment to learn and get to know how to read and write. More than just an artistic accomplishment, it was a massive political movement to make the writers write and stir diatribes to create an uproar against slavery, which must be powerful enough to shake the consciousness of a nation. Their verse somewhat seemed stilted, and they prosaically wrote about the evils of slavery and racism, which were the most predominant catastrophes in their life. Thoughts, ideas, emotions, suppression, and struggle for existence could not be a vehicle that could roll forward and blow trumpets about their race to the big world outside. As they dismounted to be heard by the world outside, the tragedy was that the range of their work was minimal, and their revolutionary thoughts did not gain the anticipated momentum. As the concepts viewed into a specific theme, the writers have only been able to write about plantations and lament and cry about slavery, trying their best to gain some solace or the fact, at least some sense of satisfaction that they, too, could cry out their anguish and pathetic state of life.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Reconstruction African Americans, Female Bildungsroman*

### INTRODUCTION

Black authors and artists developed distinct aesthetic tendencies inspired by African American folk sources and African traditions. The fiction of the Harlem Renaissance is notable for its cultural instability, in other words, for its modernity. The novelist of the great Renaissance explored the Black experience across the boundaries in varied aspects like class, color, and gender while implicitly protesting anti-Black racism. The transformation of mainstream culture was affected by the new Black middle class and by the Black creative arts using the conventions of the novel of manners, advanced themes that included racial upliftment, a strong sense of patriotism and optimism for the future, and also for Black solidarity. They focused on the career and the various atrocities like the lynching of Blacks, protesting against racial oppression, and exposing. Whether the new writing styles and literary forms were necessary to convey the sensibilities and Black experiences in fiction more effectively arises.

On the other hand, elements of the Black experience were considered the continuing power. The concept of damaging white stereotypes would be better left untouched. Writers like Du Bois were worried that white editors and readers would draw Black authors into an empty aestheticism or salacious modes of primitivism. The immense sales of the book written in Van Vechten's *Nigger Heaven* seemed to be strongly confirming his fears, especially after some younger Black authors came to the novel's defense. At about the same time, Harlem became a popular nightlife destination for whites. Interracial parties hosted by Blacks as well as whites also developed supportive networks, and patronage led to the

movement. However, such patronage, Jon the movement, led it astray and ultimately destroyed it.

Issues of racial psychology, class, and sexuality in the modern city were Nella Larsen and Rudolph Fisher thoroughly explored their ideology. Larsen explored the psychology of urban sophisticates and the psychological intricacies of race and class. Larsen knew the price ultimately, color line culture exacted on those who transgressed its most fundamental rules, and her fiction remains unequalled for the originality and incisiveness with which it exposes the contradictions of identities founded on the assertion of the absolute difference between "Black and white." Hers was a unique achievement when de facto and de jure segregation became even more entrenched in American society.

Gaining a stature as a writer was an oddity and, indeed, a unique profession. Apart from Fredrick Douglass, who had cleaved a path for himself, writers like Phillis Wheatley, Paul Laurence Dunbar, and Charles W. Chestnut have become appreciated writers. However, unfortunately, the literature of the Blacks, which had the privilege to be published, was tailor-made according to the whims and fancies of the white publishers. However, people and acclaimed writers like Chestnut and Dunbar tried to break open the chains imposed upon them and present them to the big world outside their reality. The writers of this period did their best to stay visible to the outside world through their publications. They were remarkable with it but did not help the African American tradition flourish. The hard toil did not go in vain; it only paved the way for the rise of the Harlem Renaissance, provoking and thereby developing an authentic African American culture.

The Renaissance began around the World War I period and extended into the 1930's. It started mainly as a movement by the African American artists and writers who had contributed from every state in the country. As a gateway for African American writers, journals like "Crisis" and "Opportunity" allowed them to publish in a unique style that catered to their taste and, at the same time, found white patrons. Being labeled as the "New Negroes" these Renaissance artists chiseled out a unique African American culture with a mission to improve race relations at the same time maintaining their distinct cultural identity.

Writers like Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, Countee Cullen, Nell Larsen, and Zora Neale Hurston made an indelible mark as hardcore exceptional writers of the Renaissance period. However, the young writers were abundantly showered with wondrous encouragement by the older established writers like W.E.B. Du Bois, editor of the journal "Crisis" and "Charles S Johnson" editor of the journal "Opportunity." It was only because of the nurturing of these writers that Harlem came into existence, sustained, and even thrived, given the state of affairs. The characteristics of the much talked about Post Renaissance writing had often decried racism; the Harlem Renaissance had emerged as a shift from the moralizing work. Though the excellently written and eloquently executed literature, it did little to change the country's consciousness. It was to create an uproar and stir the emotions of the outside world. They also encouraged the writers to communicate the ills of the racist world and display exemplary works of art. The advantageous dressings enveloped in this capsule are for the readers who experienced what was delivered in verse and through the characters' lives, whereby the message is delivered subtly and efficiently.

As destiny would have it, the economic depression, which deepened the Renaissance, had to fade away slowly. Only the works of writers like Richard Wright marked a new era in the history of African American literature. With the works of Richard Wright, literature saw a transition period for Black writers as they bridged the wildly creative period of the Renaissance with that of more political activity and intense creativity to mark the specialty of Renaissance literature. During this time, the writers came up with the concept and went against the motto "art for artist's sake," which they

believed should die, and they wanted to reiterate the point that literature must be directly intended to end racism. It was a period where they were desperate to reaffirm that Blacks were an essential part of American society, a belief that was one of the foundations for the ideology of the civil rights movement. Various other concepts, like realistic African-American issues and extreme eclecticism, were blended by poets trying to take multiple other roads to be heard. The most vital part was that they were rewarded and accepted in the community beyond. As they gained acceptance, some established poets were Gwendolyn Brooks, Robert Hayden, and Melvin B Tolson.

During this time, the release of *Tell It on the Mountains* by James Baldwin and *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison brought serious African American issues to mainstream culture. They gained worldwide acceptance and taught in classes around the country. Long after the Harlem Renaissance died, it was patronized by the whites, unlike the Black Aesthetic movement, also known as the Black Arts Movement, which blossomed. Phrases like "Black is Beautiful" were popularized, and the civil rights marches closely paralleled the artistic movement; it was a loud and clear call for independence experienced in the African American community.

In the process, they were stumbling upon their own identity within the Aesthetic movement. They wrote not only to be heard amongst the world outside but to produce works of art that would be meaningful to the Black masses. Though the language was shocking, there was still a conscious attempt to show Black activists' power and vitality. More than Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X was more of an idol as the writers, rather than diplomats, opted to be more revolutionaries. They believed that artists also had to be decisive in political activities to achieve nationalist goals. They powerfully drove home that the artists had more responsibilities than just coming down or putting art on paper.

One of the leading voices of the movement was Sonia San Chez. He was one of the most prominent writers who combined feminism with her commitment to furthering the younger generation and the men of her race to fight for Black Nationalism. Many women also wrote about double marginalization and how they were forced to play a role in the male-oriented Black nationalistic movement.

Women writers supported by the women's liberation movement were women more comprehensively. The works of writers like Zora Neale Hurston served as an inspiration and impetus for their work. Their unique voice, which reverberated across the world, had gained its appreciation and was able to distinguish the female voice and the pain along with the uniqueness of it. The eclectic band of women writers who made them cry loud enough to be heard by the outside world were Gayle Jones, Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, Gloria Naylor, and Terry Mcmillan. More than the male authors, the female authors produced more quality and quantity in the publishing world and created a jitter in the country. They were all the more rewarded and finally saw the light at the end of the tunnel when Toni Morrison was bestowed the Nobel Prize for literature. It was during the Black Aesthetic movement that the writings of African Americans became more legitimized in America. Universities around the country started full-fledged departments on Black American studies. The barriers in presenting various genres were the victim utterly broken down, and variety became the keyword in their writings during the 1950s. They even go on to the extent of denouncing them and blissfully sabotaging their career, leaving the victim shattered. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *Great Expectations*, *Catcher in the Rye*, and *Invisible Man* are books well-known to the vast majority. They all can be named "Bildungsroman" books and offer a crucial perspective: they revolve around young men getting to be men. So, where are the stories about young ladies getting to be ladies?

The female *Bildungsroman* sort - infrequently called the *frauenroman* - has been discussed among researchers and women's activists alike with an obscured determinate women class stray from the examples of the male "Bildungsroman"? What are its complete attributes? Are t' "re enough wor" expounded on females, by females, to make a sub-classification in the *Bildungsroman* kind? These inquiries emerge because outcomes are restricted when examining the "female *Bildungsroman*."

Numerous examinations concerning "the female *Bildungsroman*" "go up against a women's activist evaluation. In the 1970s, women pundits utilized the expression "women women" to portray stories about growing, "highlighting female" heroes. These women's activist pundits broke down nineteenth and women's century authors' depictions of young women authors' *Bildungsroman* of these circumstances portrayed the "concealment and annihilation of female independence, imagination, and development by patriarchal sexual orientation standards" (Lazzaro-Weis 17). This depiction was fitting for the Victorian lady, who battled with the desire for social achievements and wifehood, which characterized her whole existence. Female improvement was a subject in writing that was particularly hard to portray in light of the social tightening influences of the time. Composing the improvement of a female hero as parallel to a male lead character in this day and age would have implied depicting a young lady experiencing self-improvement through instruction, development, and citizenry. Even though this approach was radical, it was not nonexistent; it is typified in Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*.

In Bronte's work the principal Bronte's male *Bildungsroman*, the female hero encounters self-improvement past that of social and monetary status. Bronte's Bronte's novel was dubious at the time it was due to the obscure personality of the architect (Bronte distributed it under the pen name "Ringer"), but additionally, because it delineates str "dedyo" "g lady getting an education, along these lines shattering the severe class limits of the time (Watkins). It likewise relates to a Victorian lady's inward improvement and development procedure. In any case, Jane's Jane's way in the novel varies from that of other Jane's romans of the time, which some women's activist faultfinders say delineates women as down as opposed to growing up." Women journalists' s of the *Bildungsroman* kind tend to portray the female experience as managing more with sentimentality, misfortune, home and group, and the era hole amongst moms and their girls (Lazzaro-Weis 21).

Despite stark contrasts in the advancement of men and ladies, the two sexual orientations of the *Bildungsroman* have clear similitudes. Among these likenesses are the hero's inclusion in advancement, self-reflection, co-hero's hero, and reintegration into society (Maier 318-319). Instead of being the inverse of *Bildungsroman* books with male heroes, the female *Bildungsroman* is viewed as an "augmentation" of the conventional transitioning kind (Maier 320). Even though male heroes are more typical in the *Bildungsroman* classification, works, for example, Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* and Charlotte Bronte's Plath'sve been generally perceived Bronte'sks despite the utilization of female principal characters. It is a direct result of these works that female essayists and the improvement of female heroes in the *Bildungsroman* sort have proceeded through hundreds of years. Early works by female creators in the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth hundreds of years made ready for female heroes to play a crucial part in today's way of life. Contemporary works that could today's *Bildungsroman* could incorporate *Twilight* by Stephenie Meyer; "Are You There God? It is Me", Margaret by Judy Blume; "The Hunger Games" by Suzanne Collins; and *Speak* by Laurie R. King.

While the adjustment in the sexual orientation of the hero in the *Bildungsroman* changed the standard of the class, the move of standards in the public eye modified the subjects secured by female journalists. Female *Bildungsroman* in

contemporary writing and film can investigate issues that those of the past could not say. Sexuality, advanced education, and different parts of society that were once forbidden to female scholars (especially when expounding on ladies) are currently portrayed and investigated broadly due to the move in social standards. For instance, in "Are You Their God? It is Me", Margaret delineates you" "lady experiencing adolescence" "e and incorporates her considerations on substantial changes. Additionally, *Anderson's Anderson's Speak* investigates life in the second Anderson's Anderson and focuses on the topic of assault. These points are open in the public eye for dialog, permitting the female Bildungsroman sort to develop and create. Be that as it may, critical segments of the stories of transitioning have persevered. The most prevalent one is considering a romantic tale as a feature of a young lady's growing up. While works of earlier hundreds olady's on marriage as the conclusion, numerous contemporary works still join sentimental connections as a vital part of the hero's advancement—contemporary female *Bildungsromahero's hero'ss* to be finished when just concentrating on self-acknowledgment and investigation of oneself. An association, especially a sentimental one, with someone else is quite often included.

Though the presence of female *Bildungsroman* works, contrasts in the advancement of men and ladies have been investigated. In any case, the likenesses in the development of characters in both customary and female *Bildungsroman* demonstrate that the last is essentially an augmentation of the class instead of a direct opposite. The two sexual orientations may not be indistinguishable in their comings of age, yet the feelings and lessons learned by them are fundamentally the same. The way that female authors are presently given more range in their topic enables these similitudes to be additionally distinguished and examined. Hence, the thesis discusses two women authors and their *Bildungsroman* characters in different lights and perspectives. They are at absolutely diagonal corners and are fighting battles in their style. One might seem endowed, but still, the struggle continues.

*Bildungsroman* was later adapted by post-modernist, socialist, and black feminists, and a novel genre named female Bildungsroman emerged. In the modern world, it has helped address the problematic nature of the newly emerging notion of youth. It has become a symbolic representation of modernity. When talking about modernity, the essence of it was to envision the world that seeks its denotation in the future. The expansion of the perspective of the present-day youth, as it fits nicely into the structure of the Bildungsroman, is very well accommodated by the new quintessence of postmodernity. It emerges as an alternative and a response to the young adults in the novel of the post-modernist era. It is bestowed with the developmental arch and the advanced cyberpunk roots. The Bildungsroman of Modernity exposes the adverse effects of mature capitalism. At the same time, it offered a hope of narrative and capitalism.

Women belonging to the developing world experienced the inheritance of socio-cultural oppression, along with the political issues that were entangled with the decolonization procedure. This factor further complicates the skirmish of these womenfolk in terms of rebellious patriarchy, in comparison with feminists all over the Western world who did not need to fight colonial structures. The difference between the feminists of the West and the rest of their counterparts contrasted to an outsized extent; it was boundaries apart. This aspect was not accepted in the Western world as it differed in race and religion. Western feminists and feminists outside of the West also often differ in terms of race and religion, which is not acknowledged in Western feminism and can cause other differences. Postcolonial feminists disagree that women are a universal Group. Black women writers in the postcolonial period have been omitted from the critical theory.

Meanwhile, in the 1960s, the concentration on black culture grew manneredly in American literary criticism. The very term Black Feminist is thought-provoking. Alice Walker disagrees with the term feminist as applied to black women; she writes that she traded Feminist with womanist, pronouncing that a womanist does not turn her back upon the men of her community.

## CONCLUSION

Zora Neale Hurston, a prominent Harlem Renaissance representative and folklorist, insisted upon using dialect and folklore in her folktale book *Mules and Men*. Black feminists have often turned to the slave narrative in their autobiographies. Thus, Black women writers have articulated their anger, jealousy, rage, and disappointment through books, articles, and anthologies. The collective leitmotifs in their works concern the character's attempt to define a meaningful character's and adventurous expectations and prejudices, to sustain one's self-dignity in a world of growing alienation, one's and moral decay and promote individual self-esteem in an intimidating social climate. Looking for liberation from the mannish governance is one of the vital issues of feminist writing. An unconscious common bond exists between women writers of the world- white, black, or colored. One can come across the life force in the fictional works of Black Women Writers of America.

Moreover, the women writers equipped to express such consciousness are labeled Black Feminist Writers. However, they are not through breed feminists like the rest of the world. In dismantling phallogentric configurations of power and etching feminine development patterns in their male characters, Zora Neale Hurston has provided agendas for a revelation of communal change that depends upon a preventive perspective and a privilege of co-feeling.

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