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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled ‘Soul and Harmony: Bildungsroman in the Select Novels of Zora Neale Hurston and Maya Angelou’, submitted by me for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is the record of work originally carried out by me from September 2014 to September 2017 under the guidance and the supervision of Dr. T.V.S. Padmaja, Principal & Head, Valliammal College for Women, and that the thesis has not been submitted either wholly or in parts for the award of any previous degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or any other similar title in this or any other university or similar institution of higher learning.

Chennai- 600102

Signature of the Candidate

Date:

(Uma Rajmohan / J. Uma Maheswari)
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Uma Rajmohan

Alias

J. Uma Maheswari.
Abstract

*Bildungsroman* is a German theory but it has been adopted worldwide to express the Apprenticeship or Coming of Age novel. This has more relevance in terms with Black American concepts. It is the search of identity that forms the core of the *Bildungsroman*. The Harlem Renaissance acted as a channel for the Black Writers, but ended when prosperity ended with the stock market crash of 1929. The publishing industry went into decline, the patrons went bankrupt, and the audience no longer had disposable income. Nonetheless the works produced during those dozen years generated a new cultural climate for African American creativity, and fostered the work of artists such as Zora Neale Hurston and Langston Hughes and so on, who went on to write the literary masterpieces, Hurston’s footsteps were followed and Maya Angelou wrote many of her appreciable works of which her female *Bildungsroman* was one. A genre which both the authors’ chosen have done palpable justice and the works still stand as laudable examples of the genre. Two works of African American women’s literature are Zora Neale Hurston’s *Their Eyes Were Watching God* and, Maya Angelou’s, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. Both stories give example to an oppressed character and the difficulties of their lives. Through description of character, language and their surroundings they tell their adventure. These two novels connections include the story and poem similarity. Authors input, and how the speech ties all these points put together into the single topic of racism. In *Their Eyes were Watching God*, Hurston uses the life and trials of Janie, to display the pliancy and ability of African American women to transform much
of what others use to oppress and destroy them, such as race, gender, education, and poverty, into a source of strength and self-dependence. A female \textit{Bildungsroman} novel of education, initiated in the unsatisfactory social goals envisioned by the older generation (“mother”) for the younger (“daughter”) is generically the kind of novel called a \textit{Bildungsroman} a German term that means “novel of education,” which describes the formation of the main character’s mind and character from youth into maturity.

This thesis thematises the journeys of the protagonists and their purpose to enrich academics with a deeper understanding of the significance of the self in formulating a distinctly African American stable self-concept by researching the aspects of these elements as related to the Black female identity evidenced in the development of appearance in relation to female in both the novels reveals meaningful insight into the struggles and finally the potential triumphs of African American women’s image. As a proper understanding of a woman protagonist of a \textit{Bildungsroman} novel this thesis provides a the basis for comprehending the African American female’s relation to herself and the whole world around her, a working definition and description of the term and its general significance to African American critical theory is provided.

The introductory chapter talks about what is a \textit{Bildungsroman} and how it originated and gathered momentum through the course of time. It then goes on to talk about how Harlem literature fits exactly into the mold of the Apprenticeship novel. The two authors who are to be argued are introduced here and other examples of \textit{Bildungsroman} are also explained explicitly.
The second chapter deals with the journey of discovery that Janie undertakes begins at the gatepost of her grandmother’s house, and ends in the bedroom of the house she has inherited from a twenty year marriage. Each of the major plot developments occurs as a departure from a house. Each man she takes up with enriches her knowledge of the world, so at the end of the novel, Janie returns to her former home, knowing “Ah done been to de horizon and back and now Ah kin sit in mah house and live by comparisons.”[191].

The third chapter deals with Maturation or realization of the self as the foremost theme of *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. It not only aims and focusses only on the development of Marguerite alone but also to a certain extent the growth and development of Bailey. It is simultaneously both these characters who under the care and stable guidance of their grandmother, who is a static character is growing and changing into a dynamic character. Like most of the life histories of African American men or women the grandmother, here plays a pivotal role.

Throughout the novel she describes the personal, cultural, social and the historical influences which were the basic elements which shaped her and helped her to find her identity and develop the confident personality. She goes on to explore her individual identity at the same time succoring her relationship with the family, the community at large and finally an understanding with the world. Although the divergent experience that she has been confronting in her life also represents the stages of her self-awareness and spiritual growth. In reality her works only echoes her owns conception as a unique human being along with all
the survival strategies available to a struggling Black American to sustain in America.

Searching for the Self and trying to make a mark in society is the aspiration of each and every individual in life. And in the formative stage just as being an apprentice and learning the gradations of life. Hence I choose the Bildungsroman as my subject of study and dealt with one of the novel of Zora Neale Hurston and Maya Angelou’s contribution to the genre of Bildungsroman. But the subject of dealing with the formative ages of an individual will aptly fit for any third world countries or any region that has a blossoming of suppressed classes. Hence the Black American authors and the likes are more potential for these kind of study.

I had restricted my study of the Novel of Evolution to the works of only two authors and mapped out the growth of the young adolescent in search of the self and the success path to empowerment or just survival. Any suppressed class could use this genre to further evaluate author’s varied approaches on how they trace the growth path of the protagonist. It could cater to the literature of the underprovided of any part of the world and how their upbringing plays the role of distorting their peaceful way of living.
Note on Documentation

The Researcher has followed the method of documentation prescribed by the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (Seventh Edition)*.
## ABBREVIATIONS USED

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<td>DEdD</td>
<td><em>Das Erlebnis and die Dictung</em></td>
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<td>FBIVF</td>
<td><em>Female “Bildungsroman” in Victorian Fiction.</em></td>
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<td>EOTN</td>
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<td>TEWWG</td>
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