Chapter – 1

Introduction - The Expedition in Search of Soul and Harmony in Zora Neale Hurston and Maya Angelou

*Bildungsroman* a novelistic genre that arose during the German Enlightenment interprets a central character progressing and presenting psychological, moral and the social shaping of a personality, where the protagonist is customarily young more so, entering his adolescence. The term was coined by Johann Carl Morgenstern of Germany. The novel concerns itself with the development of a youthful protagonist as he or she matures. It is analogous in many ways to the “Educational novel” or the “Apprenticeship novel” which actually young adults and youth of a sensitive protagonist, who rummage in search of the denotation of life and in a larger sagacity tries to comprehend the nature of the world.

The very term *Bildungsroman* symbolizes a novel of an all-round self-development as it habitually encompasses a few such related genres. For example the *Entwicklungsroman* which is customarily about the story of broad-spectrum growth rather than those mannerisms of self-culture, another genre to the *Enziehungsroman*, which focuses only on formal education and training alone. There is yet another additional genre called the *konstierroman* which talks about the advancement of an artist, even though some of the classic specimens of these genres like Charles Dickens’s *Great Expectations*, Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s *Aurora height* and Graham Swift *Water Land* fits
more aptly into these classifications. They are all trundled into a single genre the *Bildungsroman* which aptly relates to all three. According to the Marianne Hirsch, the *Bildungsroman* is a purified version of the “The Novel of Formation as Genre”. More generally quoted it is the story of a single individual’s progression and development within the limitations of a defined social order.

The progression method as such is at its roots a quest story, which was often designated as “an apprenticeship to life” and also as a “search for meaningful reality within society”. To trigger off the progression of development the hero or the heroine on their expedition, most often they suffer from a personal irretrievable loss or dissatisfaction which will distance them at a very early stage away from home on household setting or from secured background. For this young protagonists the process of maturity is long, arduous and measured, though, but it consists of repeated clashes between the protagonist, needs and the longings of an adolescent. To add value to, the views and the unfair most often unfair verdict enforced by an unbending social order is the unfortunate issue. But in the long run the spirit and the values of the social order becomes demonstrated in the protagonist who is then accommodated into society and gains a worthy status, a well-earned one.

The novel usually ends with a valuation that the protagonist makes of himself and his new place in society. The best example of this genre and the direct descendant of Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister* is *Great Expectations* which is a prototypical *Bildungsroman*. Though *Aurora Leigh* falls well into the
characteristic sorts of the genre, it slightly complicates as it involves the glitches of gender in the Victorian society. But Water Land as such reconsiders individual growth more so, in a postmodern perspective, wherein narrative is used not for description, but as a means of transportation for maturation.

Within a wide-ranging genre, an entwicklungsroman is a story of general growth and many other genres, separately from the Bildungsroman can include elements of the Bildungsroman as a protuberant part of their story line which does not fit into the criteria. A military story will show how a raw recruit on receiving a baptism of fire becomes a battle hardened soldier, while a high fantasy quest may show a conversion from an adolescent protagonist into an adult aware of his power or lineage. But neither of these categories or stories, resemble to the Bildungsroman.

The Bildungsroman originated in the latter part of the 18th century in Germany and subsequently then it has become one of the major narrative genres in European as well as the Anglo American literature. It in point of fact charts the journey of the protagonist's metaphysical path from youth to maturity. In the commencement the aim of his or her journey is a reconciliation between the individuals’ desire for self-fulfillment and the surviving up with the demands of socialization. The genre deals with the partisanship and the relationship between one’s self and of society. Many novels that were concerned with psychological characterization and the interrogations of identity, use the elements of the Bildungsroman.
The nineteenth century as a period of class conflict, educational reforms and social change all through Britain and Europe, which transforms and challenge the relationship between the protagonist and the society. The genre undertakes many revisions, crises and modifications throughout the twentieth century. The term in Webster’s College Dictionary defines it as “a novel dealing with the tutoring and development of the protagonist”. Having been devised in Germany, Jerome Buckley notes that the word itself is German, with Bildung having a variety of connotations of “picture”, “portrait”, “shaping” and “formation” all of which gives sagacity of development of creation that the development of a child can also be seen as the conception of Man. The second part Roman simply means “Novel”. The term Bildungsroman materialized as a description of Goethe’s novel Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre. It was during 1794 to 1796 that the Bildungsroman were put in book form.

The expression lehrjahre can be translated as an “apprenticeship” which has many connotations, most of which often deal with education and drudgery. A trainee goes to work, he not only earns his source of revenue, but gains hands on experience and additional learns to develop his trade in the process he goes on to treasure trove out his identity and his locus stands in society. Similarly, Bildungsroman is characterized by aspects like growth, education and development of an individual and modelling of the character both in the big world outside and to explore at the end of the day within himself.
The noun *Bildung* refers to a number of significances and connotations, which is why the term *Bildungsroman* is often left untranslated. Throughout the Middle Ages and the initial modern period, *Bildung* was a primarily theological term used to pronounce the relationship between man and God in the composite sense of imago *dei*. But by the mid-eighteenth century *Bildungs* has blended in the humanist philosophical ideas of the Age of Enlightenment and thereby it became a profane term. However, the concrete denotation and the manifestations were debated by major German writers and philosophers. According to Winckelmann, it involved the humanist classical knowledge of antiquity. According to Schiller, in the year 1795 counter-revolutionary treatise *Uber die asthetische Erziehung des Menschen* that is the story of the Aesthetic Education of man, specifically includes a dogmatic agenda in that of education and improvement.

But Wilhelm Von Humboldt was prejudiced by a morphological and botanical form; the natural sciences which kind of achieved the most refined and the most comprehensive definition of *Bildung* both as a combination of *Anbildung* that is acquired of what it takes for acquiring knowledge, *Ausbildung* which is a advancement of already existing potentials, *Entjalting* which is creative broadening of acquired skills or qualities without external restriction and finally acclimatization. Goethe defines his idea of the *Bildung* with the help of his own perceptions of metamorphosis and morphology as a natural and organic progression of maturation as well as a pedagogic principle leading to that of an overall wellness.
**Kunstleroman** is a kind of subset to that of the **Bildungsroman**. It is the story of an artist from his childhood to prime of life. Joyce’s **Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man** is a very celebrated example. It is easy to find look alike that directly do not exactly fit the mildew, but it still involves the elements of the **Bildungsroman**. About one third of **Jane Eyre** for example, is concerned with her childhood, which again bears the traces of Bildungsroman an English **Bildungsroman**. It is not the development of the main character, but a precise characteristic of that character’s life.

This genre has a strong tradition in English literature. It can trace its heritages back to Daniel Defoe’s **Robinson Crusoe** in Great Britain in 1719 and from that point the British **Bildungsroman** has grown in popularity. It was especially popular in Victorian England, the novel of the adolescence. More and more authors at that time in full swing it started producing works based on the passage from childhood to adulthood. George Eliot wrote **The Mill on the Floss**, Charlotte Bronte penned **Jane Eyre** and Charles Dickens wrote **David Copperfield** and **Great Expectations**. All these novels trace the growth of a child. In this aspect some of the most popular narratives of the nineteenth century were well thought-out part of the genre called **Bildungsroman**.

The **Bildungsroman** is subcategorized into certain very unambiguous types of genres, most often or basically German, but in English literature, it is closer and does not fall into specific spheres and it is a more inclusive term. According Buckley’s book “seasons of youth” the **Bildungsroman**, of English Literature is well thought-out “in the broadest sense… a convenient synonym
for the novel of youth of apprenticeship”. (TPG 89) Nevertheless, the definition of the *Bildungsroman* specifically the English *Bildungsroman* is more involved than just a simple etymological inspection of the roots of the word or a simple historical reference to that of Goethe. It varies from novel to novel, but they have many aspects in collective all of which concentrate mainly on the development of the protagonist.

*Bildungsroman* is a genre of novel that shows a young protagonist's expedition from childhood to adulthood tracing the growth from or immaturity to prime of life, with a single-mindedness on the prosecutions and adversities that affect the character's growth. A *Bildungsroman* stereotypically galvanizes with a protagonist who feels estranged and unaccompanied, but ends on an assenting note with the personality discovering a sense of appropriateness or self-realization, however many authors have played with this prescription. The term "coming-of-age novel" is every now and then used interchangeably with *Bildungsroman*. This is not inescapably unbecoming in most circumstances the terms can be used interchangeably but *Bildungsroman* passes on the implication of an unambiguous and distinct literary convention, whereas "coming-of-age novel" is superfluous of a catch-all word.

The first and principal aspect of a *Bildungsroman* is that it is an autobiographical practice, but that does not imply that they are autobiographies in the verbatim sense. Somerset Maugham on speaking about his novel *Human Bondage* which is well-thought-out to be a *Bildungsroman* nominates his views as “It is not an autobiography, but an autobiographical novel, fact and fiction
are inextricably mingled”. (HB 2). Unsurprisingly, an author does bring something of his own life into that of his works, in particular that of his childhood reminiscences a form that is very important for the development of the protagonist and aids in the flow of the novel itself. However, as Maugham said, “fact mingles with fiction”, an author may always incorporate autobiographical elements, allocating with the determinative years as because it is easier to write about what one already knows. One of the few concession is Charles Dickens *Great Expectations* for it is not the story of Dickens but that of Pip’s. The foremost character in the novel *A Portrait of the Artist as the young man* is not the author James Joyce but Stephen Dedalus. Charlotte Bronte wrote the novel *Jane Eyre* which is subtitled “An Autobiography” but it is clearly the story of *Jane Eyre* but not Charlotte Bronte. In genuineness the autobiographical elements do contribute to a sense of reality within that of *Bildungsroman*.

The archetypal Bildungsroman forms a three-part construction:

1. **The set-up**, which familiarizes the leading title role, most often during his or her childhood.

2. **Experiences that shape the protagonist's character**, often terminating in more or less some sort of mystical predicament or forfeiture of assurance.

3. **The protagonist reaches maturity**, which customarily involves them finding a wisdom of harmony with themselves, or of fitting in the world.
Nonetheless this structure is not always used by writers of *Bildungsromans* precisely as pronounced here, it is extraordinarily common for *Bildungsromans*.

Autobiography is one major aspect of the *Bildungsroman*. The second and the most protuberant characteristic of the Bildungsroman is the ancestry of the main character. Most of the English *Bildungsroman* has a protagonist who is often an urchin or a child who has writhed the loss of a father. This turns out to be the best setting of a scene for a problematic development, marked by a deep longing in the protagonist to go in search of his or her identity. As there is no commencement point or link to start off in the case of an orphan, no familial identity as the protagonist is a fatherless child. Therefore the time-consuming and arduous process of seeking to gain an identity of one’s own and development from thence begins.

The third most significant factor of the English *Bildungsroman* is the education of the protagonist. It so transpires that the education is crucial and becomes a part of the child’s maturation and preparation for impending adolescence to adulthood. Most often this education is a sticking socket in the child’s experiences at home. He or she usually hails from a small provincial town and most repeatedly the education does expand the child’s mind and its frustration is articulated in as many words as it may recommend options that are not available to him or her in one’s present setting. There are the possibilities that are not accessible, to him or her in the present setting. These are the most imperative factors in the shaping and improvement of a
protagonist. The major part of the development of a child is the desire, as declared earlier is to leave home and become his own “self-made man”.

Both the search for identity and the repression of the small town in which he or she is carried up acts as a motivation for the protagonist to do just that, and most often his dream journey's end had been London. Invariably, he travels to London in search of a trade and occupation. For a Bildungsroman this is most predicted and more appropriate as London is the largest city in England and therefore presents numerous occasions for the new adolescent visitor child to continue his development, education and ultimately to find his niche within society through that of his chosen livelihood. His journey is usually very important as his undeviating experience of urban life, for he strongly believes that suffering is only back home and that it would be heaven once he reaches his destination safely. Whatever it is the so called urban know-how is not always a pleasant one and never turns out to be sweet memories of childhood which is the birthright of every child.

On the other hand, the child may have been in his provincial town, the dream destination is not all that utopia as there is urban squalor and abject poverty prevalent in London, which is a rather harsh reality for the aspiring young child, who walked in anticipating to enter paradise. London! Although seems and reverberates like some perfect destination overflowing with opportunities is the source of disenchantment which turns out to be more alarming and decisive than any dissatisfaction with the narrowness of the provincial life. Therefore, all the same the hero also dreams of London as a
admirable city full of hopes and aspirations, is bursting and turns out to be a
great disillusionment and the tragedy in the life is not much different from that
of the life he was leading back to home.

A trait of the new life, that he is at the commencement and the lustrous
period in the city is the period when he falls in and it is usually his very first
experience. These novels encompass at least two love relationships on sexual
encounters, one debasing one exalting. As a silver lining in every dark cloud, it
is usually between the debasements of the first love affair. The disillusionment
in the disillusionment with the city, boldly it is at this point of time the young
man takes the final step in his development. It is after so much of excruciating
soul searching that he reconsider reconciles to the sort of accommodation to
that of the modern world he honestly tries to make. In other words, the inner
development and the mellowness of the protagonist takes place only after his
education in the city. It is only in this newfound self-knowledge that signals the
ultimate maturity of the leading role. It is with that maturity, there comes
attainment and often the protagonist marries, which is a kind of recognition of
reception and maturity, now that he knows himself he can share his life which
was otherwise devoid of any individual bliss can now be pooled with someone
else. But even if the protagonist does not opt to get married, he finally returns
home to share his accomplishments with the family and the fellow
townspeople. It is a unblemished and crisp display of pride in his
accomplishments, and more importantly a pursuit for external validation,
however ironic it may turn out to be, he must return home to his roots. This is
where the reader is prompted of who the protagonist is and where he had come from, and thence his development can be delineated. Although he has come full circle, the commemorations of the boy that are perfectly suited to emphasize the man that he has become.

Perceptibly this is the basic characterization of the English *Bildungsroman*. There are variations within the genre where one or more rudiments may be left out of a particular novel. But however the basic principles of education and development and the journey from childhood to that of adulthood, and those from small to large are present within every *Bildungsroman*. It is these metamorphoses which make each novel an exclusive story on its own. Whatever said and done even though every person’s story is different, they all have to go over and done with various stages of development in order to reach one’s maturity and in the process find their personal reach within the big bad world that has been belittling them. The rudimentary prescription of the *Bildungsroman* is universal and specially very appropriate to the growing world of the Victorian age, where the kind of opportunities accessible to the central character of the *Bildungsroman* echoed aloud the actual experiences of these growing up in that era.

To go into the depth and getting to dichotomize and try to analyze the *Bildungsroman* one can get to know that it is divided into five main points where the knowledge of *Bildung* or formation, cultivation, education, shaping of a single main character, usually of a young man and the second aspect is distinctiveness, especially the emphasis on the uniqueness of the protagonist
and the primacy of his private life and contemplations, although these are at the same time representatives of a particular age and culture. The third aspect of the *Bildungsroman* is the most prominent biographical element, usually supplied from the author’s own life in what the Dithery calls or portrays as “conscious and artistic presentation of a particular individual life”. (WDDL 135).

The fourth aspect is the connection with that of the psychological perspective, in particular the then first-hand psychology of development. It was very much prevalent and finally culminates into the final aspect of the ideal of humanity. To the ridge of its full realization of all the human potential one possess as the goals of life. As Wilhelm puts it

“The *Bildungsroman* examines a regular course of development in the individual each of its stages has its own value and each is at the same time the basis of a higher stage. The dissonances and conflicts of life appear as the necessary transit points of the individual on his way to maturity and harmony. And the highest happiness of humankind is the development of the person as the unifying, substantial form of human existence.” (DEdD 248)

Thus he pictoriously describes *Bildungsroman*. Having seen the German and English perspectives of the *Bildungsroman* one can make out on how the
eyes of a young protagonist are opened to the realities, the coming of age novel
their unique protagonist to put away the Black and white view of a child and
get acclimatized to the shades of gray as every individual is forced to live as
one survives in the great big world as adults. In fact, most of the literature
which is assigned in the syllabus does qualify as a Bildungsroman. A lot of
literature which are discussed here, dives fully deep well into the qualities of
the Bildungsroman.

The instance given most frequently is Johann Goethe's Wilhelm
Meister's Apprenticeship, in which the foremost personality who is Wilhelm
tries to find to escape on or after the averageness of his middle-class
background and lead the life of an artist as a replacement for. The book
comprises many of the stratagem fundamentals that later became trademarks of
the genre. He undergoes anguish, has his imaginative ambitions rumpled, gets
sent away from household by his parents to acquire a mechanism or two,
lavishes his affluence imprudently, and faces monetary devastation.

At the end of the novel, conversely, Wilhelm shows signs of ensuring
seasoned as a consequence of his understandings. Not only has he initiated to
find some accomplishment for himself as a performer, but the book culminated
with him taking a durable ethical deportment, he sets off on an expedition to
find and admonishes another personality, whose self-interested comportment
had disastrous magnitudes for one of the protagonist’s friends. This emphasis
on subjective growth and self-realization predominantly over and done with
making and learning from his mistakes residues the key features of the
Bildungsroman. The genre propagated in acceptance melodramatically throughout the 20th century and extended to different cultures round the domain.

Harper Lee’s To Kill a Mockingbird is a classic example, as it diligently traces Scots’ awakening to the realities of racism and the fact that just not served to the readers. Just as Huckleberry Finn is another example which presents the story in an absolutely different way. The ascent on steady though slow growth of the young adult literature in spite of the fact that the crossover adult appeal is very much rooted to the Bildungsroman. The up the order and hype that was created by J.K. Rowling’s Harry Potter and sent the younger generation spinning to the tunes and kindled all the youngsters. One book which incorporated the habit to read and explore that world fits very appropriately and fits like a bone and joint into the norms of a Bildungsroman. It is one of the books where the various aspects of the Bildungsroman is aptly satiated. Having understood what the Bildungsroman thoroughly means and having gained hands on knowledge of what it really means and denote one will get an understanding of what is Black American literature and how every protagonist will fit conveniently into all these molds as they are the lot who talk about the suppression and the hassle of growing up in a non-compatible environment and when it is usually the story of childhood to adulthood, tracing the growth with trials and tribulations.
There is no distinct recognized characteristics, it is in fact defined only through the discriminations of the reader who recognizes the transformation of the protagonist from that of an inchoate identity to that of a fixed mature one. It does not follow a theory or logic, but all the theory is disciplined through the eyes of the readers. That acknowledgement also depends on how the development of the protagonist conforms to that of a model of maturation which is imitative from Enlightenment ideals of the individual as autonomous and also rational. As a response to the contested nature of the identity of American culture the reinforcement as that of the Enlightenment paradigm which acts as a natural countenance of the individual or self which eventually is the foundation for Bildungsroman’s reputation.

The Bildungsroman itself came of age in the nineteenth century as a Western genre well-matched to the “civilizing” expansions of its time. Since the “development” and “maturation” of central character inferred the up-and-coming social amalgamation, the genre came to be supplementary with progressions of acculturation, acclimatization and toeing the line. But during the course of the twentieth century the so-called “novel of education” was throw down the gauntlet on all fronts. Critics debated the genre’s empirical value, its theoretical restrictions, its political purpose, and its faithfulness to hegemonic dispositions. Denigrated or promotional at once for its conceptual closure and its incongruity, the Bildungsroman also inspired rehabilitated interest.
Contemporary detractors set it in conversation with other literary prototypes and braved its traditional thematic and ceremonial conventions. Postcolonial, feminist and immigrant literatures counterfeit new connections to the genre, acclimatizing it to suit sundry contexts and philosophies and “unsettling” a genre that had long bewildered critics. It is with an eye on this ever-changing landscape that Stella Bolaki’s *Unsettling the Bildungsroman: Reading Contemporary Ethnic American Women’s Fiction* argues for the “novel of formation” as a potentially oppositional and even subversive form. Acknowledging competing proclamations about the Genre’s that are notoriously slippery along with conceptual borders as well as its results in unreasonable closure, She put up with an methodology that sees all genres “as constructions whose literary and social functions change depending on who defines them and when” (Unsettling10).

There are some older samples of Bildungsroman, such as the *Telemachy* from Homer’s *Odyssey*, the story of Telemachus printed in the 8th century BC. However, the category didn’t become widespread until about the 18th century. There are numerous well-known models of bildungsroman novels from the 18th century to the contemporary day, including Voltaire’s *Candide*, *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë, *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, by James Joyce *Gone with the Wind* by Margaret Mitchell, and *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee.
While voluminous novels that meet the requirements as bildungsroman examples are imparted to young adults in school, such as *To Kill a Mockingbird*, bildungsroman books are not at all the same as the genre of fledgling adult literature. *Bildungsroman* novels are generally told about the bygone of a personality in a way that recommends a grownup standpoint that has established over time. Bildungsroman novels are popular because adult readers can identify the determinative familiarities that happened to a certain extent in their own lives which facilitated them develop psychosomatically. In the novel of Charlotte Bronte, the eponymous personality Jane Eyre starts off as an urchin upraised by her forbidding aunt. She pronounces the outpouring excerpted above right before her aunt sends her away to a boarding school. Jane was always a self-determining individual, but this outpouring helps strengthen her pathway and cut any concluding ties to her blood associations. Though she is still a teen-ager at that period of time, Jane moves en route for her fortune and autonomy by way of proclaiming herself. All the way through the rest of the novel, Jane endures on her path toward maturity and moral and emotional education.

*To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee is a famous example of bildungsroman. The attractiveness of Scout re-counts the novel, but at a sequential distance. She is an older lady looking back at the happenings which led to her loss of blamelessness and expedition toward middle age. The prompt for this expansion is a legal instance her father took on and
unjustly lost. In this quote from the novel, Scout recognizes that the somber chronicles of the novel require her and her brother to act more like adults and less like the offspring they still are. They comprehend they have to start to settle their disagreements in a more mature way.

Lois Lowry’s *Number the Stars* is an innovative attempt about the Holocaust and one girl’s endeavor to help save her Jewish friend and friend’s family. In this appraisal, the character Annemarie understands not only that her mother is mendacious but why it’s so important that she’s lying. Annemarie loses some of her guiltlessness here and becomes fleetingly equal to her mother in adult sympathetic.

Paul Murray’s fashionable novel *Skippy Dies* is set in an Irish boarding school and demonstrates the expansion of numerous characters as they embark to really learn about life. This is more contemporary bildungsroman example and, in the passage above, the raconteur designates the key epiphany that turns offspring into grown-ups: the impending does not hold interminable phenomenon, but as an alternative comparatively uninteresting life. Though it is a disheartening epiphany, the teen-agers initiate to temper their own prospects payable to it.

The German philologist Johann Karl Simon Morgenstern fashioned the definition of bildungsroman in the initial period of the 1800s, and it was later popularized in the early 1900s. The coming-of-age chronicle, basically
put, it follows the growth of a child or juvenile into adulthood. The pedigrees of this narrative theme can be outlined back to the bildungsroman, or “formation novel.” Late 18th century German novels, such as Johann Goethe’s Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship, time-honored and a narrative pattern which was followed by quite a few other authors in the imminent centuries. This arrangement typically features a young protagonist either male or female who endures a troubled exploration for an adult identity by progression of trials, revelations and experiences. This refrain is prominent in several distinguished European and American novels of the 19th and early 20th centuries, such as David Copperfield (1849–50) and Great Expectations (1860–61) by Charles Dickens, Street Life in New York with the Bootblacks by (1868), Louisa May Alcott’s Little Women (1869), Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain (1884), A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man by James Joyce (1916), and The Catcher in the Rye by J. D. Salinger (1951). The popularity of this narrative has continued into the late 20th and early 21st centuries, as shown in critically acclaimed books such as Dorothy Allison’s Bastard out of Carolina (1993) and Jon Krakauer’s 1996 account of the life and bereavement of Chris McCandless in Into the Wild, and through prevalent culture texts, such as J. K. Rowling’s Harry Potter series.

The common themes of the Bildungsroman are Class struggle, God and the Sublime, Sexual Frustration, and the Supernatural Element. The common supporting characters of a Bildungsroman The Enchanting same sex friend, The wicked Authoritative figure, The Unrequited Love and the Kindly Teacher,
And the common plot devices that forms a *Bildungsroman* are Alienation from one’s immediate family, Financial crises and the rise from rags to riches. Before all these the pain of being “sent off” to a boarding school, hard labor, jail, or a distant relative’s house, Physical punishment and about the harsh living conditions. And how they flee, running away, and travel to an exotic land in search of the ecclesiastic, and Spiritual crises and encounters. Usually the protagonists that forms a part of a *Bildungsroman* usually the misfit, the orphan, the runaway and most often an artist who is talented.

During the course of the 20th century, contrariwise, the range in years for a coming-of-age chronicle widened from this age group to include central characters in their early to mid-twenties. It is for this purpose that the genre studies researcher Barbara White limits the definition of a coming-of-age narrative to focus on protagonists between the ages of ten and nineteen. Moreover, in the latter part of the 20th century, the works of anthropologists, have always been supplementary to the deliberation over the elements of a coming-of-age narrative. From side to side of their research in rites of passage and social advancement and configuration, the works of anthropologists such as Van Gennup and Mead sanction researchers to advertise over the sociocultural interpretations of these descriptions. It is the sociocultural allegations that was the cause of argument among researchers. Unquestionably, coming-of-age narrative is reliant on a pursuit for an adult identity, this narrative is meticulously interconnected to other areas of distinctive
development, such as gender, race, social class, and to a large extent national identity also.

By the way in which a repetitive constituent of the coming-of-age narrative is the way in which a protagonist’s grownup identity is bordered by chronological events and points of origin and habituated by social expectations and obligations. Mark Twain’s *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* serves as a specimen of this theory. In the novel, an undeveloped Huck accompanies Jim, a fugitive slave, on a trip down the Mississippi River to reach the free North. The novel’s climax occurs when Jim is caught by slave catchers, and Huck must make a decision between informing Miss Watson, Jim’s landlord, about Jim’s whereabouts and attempting to free Jim from his bondage. In his decision, Huck had to balance the social obligation of returning “property” to its equitable owner and his own principles. During his trip, Huck has come to see Jim not as a percentage of property but as a human. Inharmoniously, Huck makes the resolution to “go to hell” by following his morality, making every effort to free from Jim and his captivity.

The novel of Mark Twain, was published after the institution of slavery was put an end to, but it functions as a historical point of orientation, as Finn would have grown up in pre-Civil War America. Huck Finn’s adult identity is surrounded within these racist restraints; although African Americans were free, they still were considered as mediocre when compared to whites. Thus, the socially acceptable and expected thing for Huck to do would be to turn Jim in to Miss Watson, and it is the deviance from this probability that Huck accept as
true that it will condemn his soul. The Huck Finn example also serves as a way to highlight three additional features of the coming-of-age narrative. One of these features is the loss of childhood incorruptibility and virtuousness. In his novel, even though Huck idealistically misapprehends the consequences of his resolution, his naïveté speaks volumes to readers.

The magnitude of his decision marks his alteration from childhood to adulthood. Aforementioned to the novel’s climax, Huck has been witness to the darker side of the adult world from his father’s racist diatribe about the voting rights of recently freed slaves to a stretched and bloody family vendetta to the con artistry of the Duke and Dauphin. Unbeknownst to Huck, but plentifully clear to the novel’s readers is the encouragement that these events have on his decision to attempt to free Jim the first adult decision of his life. Because of his understandings and this decision, Huck becomes conscious that he may be outcast from his society, as he has deviated from its expected adult norms, and he will no longer be able to go back to live his previous lifestyle of barefooted, pipe smoking truancy.

This unconventionality from expected norms highlights yet another feature of the coming-of-age narrative: the realization of social expectations and norms. To once again use the central character fully realizes the implications of his pronouncement. He considers himself damned and acknowledges that he will be unable to fully participate in the adult world because of this desecration. As such, he is able to be familiar with the social, adult world now arranged out before him. While this comprehension further
distances the protagonist from their childhood innocence, it also presents them with a choice. Either to accept this adult world and conform to its norms and principles or decide on self-exile. They of course, cherry-picks the latter, as they decide to light out for the territories of the American West rather than conform to the rigid social obligations demanded by War. The choice to light out for the territories highlights a third feature of the coming-of-age narrative. This decision to leave is rooted in another choice, to accept a socially constructed identity, or to construct a subjective sense of identity for oneself. While this idea is one of the primogenital and most mutual themes of literature, when examined from side to side though the lens of a coming-of-age narrative, it takes on additional heaviness. Not all coming-of-age protagonists are as fortunate, though.

In some cases, their gender, race, and class serve as inhibitions to a sense of freedom. As the feminist scholar Rachel Blau Du Plessis observes, that most of the 19th century female protagonists have two options presented before them when coming of age: matrimonial obligation, the socially conventional option for young women; or death, the end result for those young women who diverge from socially predictable norms. Undeniably, restraining one’s distinctiveness to social norms and prospects is the choice for one of 19th century America’s most well-known female central character, Jo March. In Alcott’s Little Women, the creative and headstrong Jo winds up wedded by the novel’s end. Race and class also function as a special factors in these narratives. The unnamed narrator of Ralph Ellison’s Invisible Man (1952)
comes to realize his state of affairs very early on in the novel. After the narrator, an encouraging young African-American student, chooses to show a white benefactor the poor living circumstances of sharecroppers living around the chronicler’s college, he is exorcized from school and is forced to choose between accepting society’s roles for an African-American man and developing his own identity. Jon Krakauer’s *Into the Wild* features the real-life story of Chris McCandless, a college graduate from a prosperous East Coast family.

When the central character realizes the limitations of the options set before him he unrelenting studies, tries to earn a position in a well-paying job in the business world tries his best he renounces his previous materialistic life and sets off on the roads of America in an attempt to discover who he truly is. Countrywide character is also an imperative factor in coming-of-age narratives. Some preeminent American literature scholars, such as Leslie Fiedler, R.W.B Lewis, and Ihab Hassan have argued that the coming-of-age narrative is one of the most dominant narratives in American literature. For the researchers, a sense of history, or lack of something vital is the key to their view of the importance of the coming-of-age narrative in American literature. At the heart of this disputation is the squabble that the American national identity recompenses several key individualities with the coming-of-age narrative. The whole episode is a kind of renewal of innocence when it comes to the national character.
The first of these characteristics is that the American national character is primarily based on renewal and innocence. His philosophy of the American Adam states that American culture is repetitively going back to beginnings and new starts, an attempt to revert to a lost childhood or return to a forgotten Eden. This is the at the epicenter of most American literature a constant return to youth, with an emphasis on the revelations and experiences, and trials characteristic in a coming-of-age narrative.

Thus, in a sense, the single-mindedness on coming of age in American literature and in the national character can be argued as an unwillingness to acknowledge history. All events are subject to change and to reinterpretation, a kind of automatic “redo” where each peer group must begin its task of the coming of age process. The idea of innocence as a conscious denial of American history, but one goes on to contend that the denial is also firmly rooted in political ideology. The focus on a wide-eyed, unexperienced virtuousness of each age group defining itself is not just a literary trope, rather, it is deeply embroiled in an ideology that does not offer any roots, nor genealogies, and finally culminating in a state of no sense of a permanent and static identity. As per scholars, this single-mindedness on coming of age chronicles underscores the obsession with youth found in American culture. They argue that this desire to return to a childlike, and state that this is predicated on the idea that the American national character is persistently fluid and dynamic, youthful and energetic. To allow the national character to mature
static and enduring would force American culture to grow old, and conceivably to grow up.

The coming of age narrative is moderately simple to define; however, the implications of that characterization are numerous and wide-ranging. What originated as a way to fictionalize how a child became an adult became convoluted throughout the centuries by other issues. Race, gender and class all play a pivotal role in how a youth is predictable to grow into an adult in various societies. Additionally, the acceptance or elimination of social obligations and duties is another factor in how teens grow into adults. All of these factors multiply a relatively benign textbook characterization into a wide-ranging, thoroughly complex theme.

All through history, the highly challenged concepts of race and gender have adversely molded the lives of oodles of people. In the United States it is most notably African Americans who have been victimized on the grounds of their skin color. Women of African parentage have suffered a double jeopardy due to the intersection of race and gender. For an inordinate many of African Americans, men and women alike, literature has become an “important vehicle to represent the social context, to expose inequality, racism and social injustice.” (Williams 147). The female Bildungsroman scrutinizes the problem of growing up black and female in a civilization which associates beauty with beautiful eyes and whiteness., The media, consumer goods, adult endorsement and a dismissive attitude towards the woman mislead the protagonist to internalize white beauty standards. With the story of Black Americans, Authors
points out how the internalization leads to racial self-loathing and ultimately to self-destruction. Nonetheless, the undesirable tone of the black *Bildungsroman* is in part counteracted through Claudia MacTeer, whose narrative is juxtaposed to anti- *Bildung* and thus turns certain novels into a double *Bildungsroman* with one girl “growing up” and the other one “growing down.” The novel of Toni Morrison’s will fits very aptly into this genre of *Double Bildungsroman* and surfaces as a classic example.

Most of Race and gender is the major issues of the Black American novels. The topic can be considered of particular relevance as it addresses a theme which continued unexamined until the 1970s, a leitmotif which many have not wanted to know about and which others have been in abjuration with always. They, though, face the truth about the intersection of race and gender by exploring it in their novel how racism and sexism purpose, as well as the disheartening drawbacks that can transpire. The unveiling further accentuates that the search for culprits is complicated scenarios since the wrongdoers in the crimes against the central characters are often victims themselves.

As a circumstantial atmosphere for discussion, the considerations often will first look at the concepts of race and gender in reference to African American literature and then briefly expand on perspective of these issues. The subsequent section will sketch the socio-historical context of the novel’s setting, the time of writing as well as prospective encouragements in writing the novels. Consequently, the novel’s aesthetic form will come under scrutiny.

Like numerous ethnic sectional women writers, our writers seems to subvert
the traditional white standards in view of structure. The groundbreaking nature is, for instance, mirrored in the juxtaposition of Bildung and stream-of-consciousness and various multiple perspectives, and deliberate fragmentation. With this background established, the writers will proceed to examine racism in its sheer complexity. The anti-black racism will briefly outline the racist actions with the dominant culture practices in the period.

Then it goes on to address the internalized form of racism and how this form manifests itself differently more in African American men than in women. To provide an understanding for this difference some information on society’s beauty standard will herald the analysis of black girlhood and womanhood. The analysis of black adolescence will scrutinize into the fundamental differences, differences which decide on emotional survival or demise in their cruel host society. The segment on black womanhood will concentrate on the mother-child relationship of African American women in general. Black masculinity is also examined in terms of internalized racism, with the central character at the center of attention. Finally racism is explored through the tragic outcome of the central character’s life. Summing up on the most important aspects, with a touch upon the contemporary identity formation of African Americans. The socially constructed concepts of race and gender in reference to African American literature, and will then proceed to the black women writer’s perspective on these issues.
“Race”, a term which commenced in the 17th century, can be apportioned manifold undertones, dithering, for example, from linguistic and religious to ethnic groups. Hence, it is more useful to define the aspect of race most relevant to this analysis, which understands race as a traditional title categorizing a group based chiefly upon its mutual noticeable features. In other words, this particular aspect of race has formed racial classifications based on biological metamorphoses that mask the authenticity of race as a social edifice. The racial philosophy of the United States accredited an inferior societal position to African Americans. This “myth of black inferiority,” which white people cultivated and made customary, stemmed in racial segregation, oppression and discrimination in all domains of everyday life, including literature.

Initial African American writers felt that whites had misrepresented their instance too often and had shown the race in too negative a light. Afterwards, African American literature began to progress into a liberating tool qualifying to tackle the racialized worldview. Nevertheless, the first African American transcripts, the so-called slave narratives (1830-1861), had to be accredited by the dominant culture, which also set the criterions for their writings. Henceforth, these literatures did not honestly represent a dependable black voice. This transformed as time passed. Innumerable ethnic and dogmatic expansions, such as the Civil Rights Movement, made African American writers feel less restraint, they progressed for shaping their own standards, such as the practice of black dialect, and even determined a nationwide sermon on
race. Additionally, African American women writers became accepted and time-honored. These women had originally been encountered with a “double” disrespect in virtue of the non-natural barriers of not only their race, but also their gender.

Gender can be observed as a communally fabricated measurement of being male or female; men and women were supplementary with distinctively different roles, demonstrations, values and beliefs. The Oxford Companion to African American Literature opinions out the enormousness of gender at this time and states that “… assumed the inveterate inferiority of women in general.” Henceforward, the black woman, lumbering a double jeopardy, was positioned at the very nethermost position of the chain of being. From the motivation to counter factual, literary, but global undesirable categorizes of African American women, the black feminist literature emerged. The mechanism predominantly explores the intersection of race and gender by accentuating its unfavorable impact on the black women’s persistent efforts to gain recognition and respect in society.

Zora Neale Hurston’s *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, is renowned as one of the most significant authors in African American women’s literature. She has been welcomed as “literary foremother” amongst African American women writers. She was one of the incalculable Black women authors whose work was unremittingly intimidated by the mainstream culture. Barefaced racism combined with sexism made her effort more dependent on the munificence of publishers phase after phase. Nonetheless, she remained faithful
to her black lineage and kept celebrating African American ethos in all her writings. In the 1970s and ‘80s when African American women writers had as a final point “freed themselves of a particular ideological and literary repression,” modern-day writers such as Toni Morrison nurtured a resurgence of the African American literary landscape.

Black American Women writers, had established themselves in the legendary canon through their multi-faceted work as a lecturer, editor, novelist, and essayist. However, feeling initially inhibited to enter a racist and male subjugated literary world, writers kept reviewing their work novel over and over again. Their literary debut scrutinized the issue of African American female identity, a leitmotif that was heretofore unexamined. In wide-ranging objective of speaking, they uses their art to call responsiveness to the chronological and enduring quandary of African Americans, and dissects concepts such as community, uniqueness, and moral responsibility. Fascinatingly, writer’s parents and their defiance towards the racialized world are said to have been of crucial importance for their daughters writings.

In looking at their family backgrounds, their fathers hostility towards white people coupled with her mothers sanguine attitude, sounds stereotyped, but that is the reality. Their novels reflect both the pessimism that racism yielded and the buoyancy that has empowered African American people to be able to survive and thrive in spite of racism. In light of the forfeiture of some black traditions such as black fiction, storytelling, increased in importance for the women writers more so. They were not only a writers, but also contributors
in every form with heart and soul. In the latter roles the women writers had paved the way for a good many other African American and feminist writers by promoting them. Conversely, the writers had not always been accumulated with commendation. Based on misapprehensions of their novels, critics reproached them of confirming, rather than challenging, stereotypes about African American people.

What made America idiosyncratically American was the real or invented Africanism, which functioned as the vehicle by which the American self knows itself as not enslaved, but free, not repulsive, but appropriate, not helpless, but licensed and powerful; not history-less but historical; not damned, but innocent; not blind accident of evolution, but a progressive fulfillment of destiny.

They intensely disagrees with the unanimity among literary scholars who claim that “race” was not meaningful to the construction of American identity. The writers clearly states that the concept of the blacks’ inferiority not only adversely affected black people, but also reciprocally pretentious white people and the way they made-believe their roles in society. Additionally, they implicated American literature in disregarding and misapprehending African American female characters.

The African Americans’ expedition to true impartiality and respect dragged on for several decades. The consequences proved that discrimination to be psychologically detrimental, which were found to evoke approaches of
legitimate social subsidiarity and to cause a distorted self-image which stimulated internalized racism. The notion of beauty in American society was to a certain degree revolutionized in the 1960s. “Black is Beautiful” became one of the catchphrases for the Black Power movement, which was propagated during this time. In contrast to many other African Americans,

Although African Americans in the United States tolerated endless and indescribable suffering, most of them fervently hoped that race relations would improve over time. Fortunately, they proved right. The culmination of the American Civil War in 1865 heralded the eradication of slavery. Within a span of the next five years, African Americans were granted full and equal citizenship and black males were given the right to vote. Yet, percipience on the grounds of race did not come to an end. Underneath the “separate but equal” dogma, the 1896 Plessy V. Ferguson case advocates the constitutionality of racial segregation laws, which sheltered many public facilities, such as restaurants, restrooms and public schools

According to Peach, the black juvenile had up till then been, if at all, “peripheral” and “doubly marginalized” in literature. The novels, however, centers on young African American as how something as grotesque as the demonization of a whole race could take derivation inside the most tantalizing member of society, that to a child; the most susceptible member being a female happening to be the apt prey. Writer’s impetus for writing her first novel, was to hinder that a tragic story like that of these unfortunate children who are the
central characters was being failed to recall in the enunciation of the new-found political cognizance of that epoch.

It is by and large accepted that form and gratified in a novel are equally important. In The novels have aptly coordinated form and content in a way that conveys and reinforces their message. Stream-of-consciousness, numerous standpoints, overall fragmentation, to label but a few, are literary means she has skillfully used to achieve underlying messages of her novel.

Toni Morrison one of the most prominent exponents of Black American writers contributed in abundance to race, gender, intersectionality and Bildungsroman. Of the nine novels, of these Beloved a classic Bildungsroman is often considered to be her masterpiece, Morrison had published various other forms of literary work, among them were the literary criticisms. Works like that as “Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American Presence in American Literature,” an address delivered at the University of Michigan in 1988, and Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination (1992). Her first book of literary criticism, was of significant implication since they revealed Morrison’s perspective on race. She disputes that “race” (which she herself often puts in quotation marks) has continuously had been an integral part of American philosophy and literature, or as she phrases it, “where both the black and white American writers, in a wholly racialized society, there is no escape from racially inflected language.”(Beloved 22). They proves that the black woman stood even further outside the margin of the marginal groups and is presented as “the furthest thing from human, so far away as to be not even
mammal but fish.” *(Beloved 29).* The plight of non-white Americans continues; they label as “declarations that racism is irrelevant, over or confined to the past” as “premature fantasies.” While “race” generally remains “a virtually unspeakable thing” *(Beloved 31)*, they go on to venture into speaking the unspeakable in their works.

The Great Depression then put all the Americans to a challenging test. However, racial minorities such as African Americans were hit hardest. Unemployment among African American males averaged sixty-six percent for most of the depression. Black men furthermore had a hard time finding a job since white immigrants flooded the low-level jobs. In divergence, black women were given the chance of working as nannies, caretakers and cooks, consequently, the males had to make way for their women to become the primary breadwinners. White dolls and doll-like icons like were recurring motif in *The Bluest Eye*, in which quite similar to the Clark studies, “all the world had agreed that a blue-eyed, yellow-haired, pink-skinned doll was what every girl treasured”. *(Beloved 20).*

Here both Twain’s and Morrison’s character have been draws to show the lineage why in the very first aspect *Bildungsroman* had been following the same line of conduct though it had been shipped from continent to continent and language to language, the individuality stays the same. There are small digression, with social *bildungsroman* and Female *Bildungsroman* and Coming of age also trying to stand apart from the rest. But *Bildungsroman* is a complete version of all these put together. This thesis is again going to deal with the
Bildungsroman of two more Woman characters where the child and the woman plays a hunt in the maze of the bizarre society that they are thrown into at the tender stage where they have to be tended and taken care of and nurtured they are made to swim against the currents and survive in spite of strong under currents and faltering weathers.

The state of Angelou’s character too follows the same line like that of Toni Morrison and sees dawn at the end of the tunnel. A tunnel which is not accepted for a toddler at the formative stage of their life. That is why two similar novels was not chosen for the study. The protagonist of the Hurston is so much more different as she was shielded and protected by her grandmother. She was a slave and lost her daughter to the atrocities of the world went all out to protect her granddaughter and see to it she lands up in the safe hands of her benefactor. But again it is a cruel world for any child in the Black American scenario be it against the whites or against their own men. All said and done the cant be categorized under feminism as the woman does not want to falter and prove the man of her own race as wrong, though it might be the case. She does not want to lose one their most vital fighters against racism. Whatever said and done the protagonist’s mature identity is bordered by the chronological events and points of origin and habituated by social expectations and obligations.