

Afro-American narratives – Analysis of the Afro-American narratives with the post-colonial perspective

Jayasree K

PhD Research Scholar,
PG & Research Department of English,
Vellalar College For Women, Thindal, Erode, TamilNadu.

Abstract:

This paper means to give an overview on the ascent of Afro-American literatures. The American slavery depended on race and just the people of African plume were enslaved. So the institution was immensely significant in setting the course of American race relations. To get America or American culture when all is said in done and the African American culture specifically, it is important to see how slavery impacted the American life before 1865. In this way, the slave narratives delivered in the nineteenth century by previous American and British slaves, which had a critical impression in literature and historical curricula in American universities today vouch for the intensity of these texts. This paper explains the impression of social status of Africans in American condition.

IndexTerms - Afro-American literature, Literature, Slave narratives, African writers, Black writers.

I. INTRODUCTION

African American literature has turned into an unavoidable piece of American literature and culture. The solid nearness of African American literature has made ready for the emergence of Native American, Asian American, and Chicano American streams of literature. It is just with a critical representation of African American literature. American society stands to be cleansed from the problem of racial discrimination. African American literature has inspected the issue of racial discrimination in the entirety of its philosophical, existential and epistemological angles. It has gone from the mid-eighteenth century with slave narratives to the present occasions with all its socio literary richness starting a literary and cultural change in the fabric of American society.

It was distinctly during the mid-twentieth century after the momentous influential socio-political writings Washington's *Up from Slavery* (1901) and Du Bois' *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) and Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, and James Baldwin formulated a brand of African American Modernism. Wright's *Native Son* (1940), Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952) and Baldwin articulate volume of essays *The Fire Next Time* contended for social and cultural emancipation of African Americans. Cutting over the influence of the Civil Rights Movement that was occurring at the same time, it is just James Baldwin who tended to the issues of Black masculinity, sexuality and the gay rights of African Americans.

Exploring the psychosexual problems, Baldwin has dismantled the sexual myths that legitimized the discrimination and filled in as a projection of instability and dread of white individuals. He has rejected Black Nationalism and redirected the attention of the society towards dissolving the logical inconsistencies that tormented African American society. This point of view has made ready for an increasingly analytical and critical elucidation of African American society in the late twentieth century.

The emergence of African American Women writings got the twofold risk of racism in Black Women's movement. Gloria Hull analyzed the issue of Black women in *All the Men are Black*. Every one of the Women in White, *But Some of Us are Brave*. This has made many black women move in the direction of one another for a superior contemplative and analytical comprehension of Black Women's problems. Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1970) and Tony Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970) tended to the subject of how self-identity and regard are accomplished by a black young lady in a society, which barely values her reality. Tony Morrison extended her thematic range from female identity to Black individuals relationship with African American past in her works *Song of Solomon* (1977), *Beloved* (1987) and *Jazz* (1991). These books have explored folk heritage, slavery, and motherhood. This is trailed by Alice Walker's *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* that talked about the issues of poverty and family violence. She uncovered the logical inconsistencies inside the Black movement portraying the issue of domestic violence, father-daughter rape and female genital mutilation in *The Color Purple* (1982) and *Possessing the Secret of Joy* (1982).

Regardless of the negative representation of Black men, Alice Walker's works have started the renaissance of African Women's writings. This has made ready for the emergence of a literature of spots, communities, and neighborhoods and home. Many imaginative journalists who are veterans of black movements and black woman's rights helped by activist position gave keen literary and political essays. Gloria Naylor's *The Women of Brewster Place* (1982), Audre Lorde's *Zami* (1982), Paul Marshall's *Praise Song of the Widow* (1983) and Gayle Jones *Corregidora* (1975) have redrawn the guide of African American literary canon. The more youthful journalists like Sherley Ann Williams with a touchy depiction of African Women's life in *Dessa Rose* (1986), Terry McMillan with *Waiting to Exhale* (1992) broke the new ground in the class of fiction for Black women. In the midst of the extraordinary abundance of Black women's imaginative generation, African American Men's composing has been accepting less attention. The autobiographical resonances and the sharing of the topics keep on holding the centrality and significance of African American Men's writings. John Edgar Wideman's *The Homewood Trilogy*, *Philadelphia Fire* (1990), *Brothers and Keepers* (1984), Charles Johnson's *The Middle Passage* (1990), *The Oxherding Tale* (1974) have outlined African American counter-history. Every one of these works has demonstrated that African American literature has released another imaginative talent keeping pace with other noteworthy streams of Post-Colonial and Post Modern literature.

Literature as a mode of expression and correspondence endeavors at speaking to and exploring the manner by which individuals or a social group view and experience the world. Literature explores the unpredictability of human involvement in a convincing manner; it is a mission to explore, discover and present human ideas and feelings. It is the association with ideas of permanent and all-inclusive intrigue. It likewise speaks to a language or individuals: culture and tradition with which the author presents and presented with the new universe of encounters. It prompts express human conditions, for example, the delight of love, sorrow of death, agony of obligation, loathsomeness of war, acknowledgment of self and soul and his association with society and its reaction to him. African-American creator Angela Y. Davis characterizes literature as:

It helps individuals to learn not just about the target powers at work in the society in which they live, yet additionally about the force social character of their inside lives. At last, it can drive individuals toward social emancipation. (Davis, 7)

Literature has introduced a path for Africans in America to demonstrate their humanity and show a limit with respect to aesthetic creation and imaginative musings. Afterward, literature was a method for African-Americans to resist slavery and institutional racism. They likewise battled to pick up freedom and acknowledgment as full natives of the United States. African-Americans utilized literature as a vehicle for social analysis and head-to-head encounter with discriminations and racial traditions. Agreeing on GaneAJarrette, African-American Literature has fused structures, for example, speaker, the composed word, song, move and film and so forth to show its flexibility as a vehicle of African-American cultural expression. Jarrette composes:

The literature has continually recorded the battles of African-Americans with race and (hostile to black) racism, African heritage and Euro-American influence, slavery and freedom, constitutional enfranchisement and instructive advancement, political agency, and social assimilation, just as the phantoms of history and modernity. (Jarrette, 1)

African-American literature endeavors to find and break down the commitment of the Black authors to it and explores the role of African-Americans inside the bigger American society. It features the topics, for example, African-American culture, racism, slavery, and equality. African-American literature is the formation of differing universes, culturally diverse customs and blended creeds. It depicts personal encounters and the history of African-American culture. It presents encounters and memories of Black individuals and the ruthless treatment of the white community against them. It is depicted as a documentation of the multi-faceted nature of persecution in the multi-racial community. The state of African-Americans battling for freedom and equality is the principal worry of African-American creators. Accordingly, they share the encounters of Black women in a bigot and sexist community.

African-American literature has contributed more than the aggregate of its response to oppression. African-American literature was a post-emancipation happening that picked up its consistency as an endeavor in the social world. It endeavors to show the Black journalists' response to social and political conditions through fiction. The examination work investigations chose fictional works of Alice Walker on the topic of anger, anguish and identity cognizance of the African-Americans. It came to fruition in the situation of the test to the implementation and avocation of racial subjection and activity. The Black scholars are denied from delineating their aesthetic inventiveness that eventually prompts deny their reality in literature.

James Weldon Johnson in his introduction to *The Collected Poems of Sterling A. Dark* colored communicates that the negligible existence of literary writings does not really show the existence of literature. In such manner Johnson writes:

The record of the Negro's efforts in literature returns far, covering a period of over a century and a half, however it is just inside the previous ten years that America all in all has been made deliberately aware of the Negro as a literary artist. It is just inside that short time that Negro writers have stopped to be viewed as segregated instances of exceptional, maybe inadvertent ability, and have picked up group recognition. It is just inside these couple of years that the mediators of American letters have started to test crafted by these writers by the general literary standards accord it such examination as it may justify. (Johnson, xiii)

Johnson's observation recognizes the existence of writers and the recognition of works as literature. Alice Walker's novels, short stories, poems, and essays are proof to her firm faith in the African-American people. The center of her composing was the Black women, their battle for existence, attainment of power and human rights. African-American literature is literature framed in the United States by writers of African plunge that present racial and sexual clashes. It starts with the works generally eighteenth-century writers Phillis Wheatley, Jupiter Hammon, and others and imprints its climax with world-realized writers like James Baldwin, Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, Tony Morrison, Alice Walker, and others. Alice Walker as the Black essayist is applauded for her canny and riveting representations of Black life where she uncovered the battle of the Black people; especially her emphasis is on the encounters of Black women in a supremacist and sexist society. It is seen that the repetitive subject all through Walker's works is the conservation of the Black culture. Walker's female characters interface personal relationships with communities as they show potency, patience, and cleverness in facing and conquering oppression in their lives. Alice Malsenior Walker began her life journey on February 9, 1944, in Eatonton, Georgia, United States. She is an African-American creator and feminist who was awarded the lofty Pulitzer Prize in 1983. Walker as an African American accomplished decent image in the liberal political community for her support of vanguard and disliked perspectives. Walker as a creator, feminist and humanist is thoughtful of people everything being equal, ethnicities and races. She worked in the U.S. Civil Rights Movement and continued her composition career when she joined *Ms. Magazine*.

Alice Walker and other Black writers have shown their womanist soul all through their works. The novels of Alice Walker unequivocally express a feeling of anger and anguish; in addition, she communicates her response against the rape, incest and social partiality rehearsed in the society. She endeavors to portray African-Americans' push to escape from partiality and poverty and a sundering from every one of that has supported and characterized them. The works incorporate African-American history of violence from slavery to the comprehensive internal city violence, which reaches out to the feeling of otherness and the image of a woman that has been a point of obliviousness. Walker has utilized female genres, for example, epistolary structure, journal writing, and knitting to underscore issues identified with culture and history.

In this paper, we talk about the Afro American literature through slave narratives which goes back to the eighteenth century as Travelers notes and later in the twentieth century as slave narratives.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Prior to understanding the origin of African American literature, it is critical to know the primary issues of that period. The issue of race and tensions of color pushed African Americans to utilize writing to establish a spot for themselves in that community. The English added to the issue of segregation. They had developed the thoughts of inferiority and distinction through illustration on biases established in images of blackness and physical contrasts between the two peoples (Bruce 02). Those negative images were made by English adventurers and dealers who visited the African Continent. The literature read around then in England offered a negative portrayal of Africans and their lifestyles. The Africans were depicted as brutal and ugly people (01).

From the get-go in the eighteenth century, laws rejected the testimony of the black in court particularly in the South. In several colonies, the free black paid reformatory taxation and was precluded from owning property. In Virginia, a few blacks lost the privilege to vote. They were brought without wanting to and numerous wives were isolated from their husbands and were given to other people (64).

African Americans were given various names like 'Colored' 'Negros' 'Black' and 'African American'. Actually, African American literature exemplifies novels, ballads and plays demonstrating the status of the race all in all. The writers' works mirror their identities (Warren 05). African American literature displays a wide scope of writings from the colonial period to the present. It is identified with various literary periods: The colonial period (1746-1800), antebellum period (1800-1865), the reconstruction period (1865-1900), the protest movement (1960-1969) and the contemporary period (1970-present).

During the colonial period, African-American literature speaks to the separated self of Africans who were compelled to go to colonial America. They were lost between their country and their new personality. Some of them endure and the others kicked the bucket as a result of affliction and suicide. In 1700, Sewall proclaims that "It is in like manner most lamentable to think, how in removing Negros from Africa, and setting them here, that which God has consolidated men do strongly sever in half; Men from their nation, husbands from their wives, parents from children" (Bruce 17).

One of the captured slaves who were transported to colonial America was Wheatley. In her writings, she centers around the complexity of slavery and freedom (Jarrett 22). During the colonial period, African-American slaves were precluded from adopting a few abilities, for example, reading and writing. Accordingly, they utilized their creative capacities, for example, tunes, folk tale and oral narrating to discuss slavery. These works fuse the vernacular of early black Americans (Smith & Jones 07).

During the American revolutionary war (1775-1781), the two Americans and Black soldiers took an interest together to battle the British. They needed self-rule, equality, and freedom. African-American writers of the period, for example, Wheatley Lucy Terry Prince, George Moses Horton handled the status of African Americans and requested freedom from the British oppression (07). They talked about white Americans 'self and not slavery. The issue of slavery and the revolutionary war prompted the development of African American writings. Their lyrics and letters mirror the African Americans' torment.

In spite of the cancelation of slavery, the United States was not ready to understand the blacks' fantasy to be equivalent. Therefore, African American writers proceeded with the exchange of the theme of slavery.

In the Reconstruction era, there was an extraordinary accentuation on education and literacy to acquire freedom either socially, economically or politically. Black slaves were illiterate. Thus, numerous schools were established to show the writing and reading aptitudes (Worth 05).

African American writers utilized their pen to safeguard blacks' political freedom. Additionally, African Americans kept underlining on numerous issues of the period, for example, equivalent rights for Americans under Pan Africanism. As per Smith and Jones, "Pan Africanism in the Reconstruction period gave African Americans a feeling of pride in black history and culture and gave a foundation to the accentuation on racial personality in the literature of the Harlem Renaissance"(115).

African American literature of the period incorporates the oral traditions, for example, lessons, discourses, spirituals and stories whose capacities were to advance equality.

For instance, one can refer to Henry Mc Neal Turner's lesson "How Long? To what extent? O Heaven?"(155). This lesson speaks to a significant part of the oral tradition in African American literature. It tends to racial violence in Southern states (Smith and Jones 115).

Indeed, during the reconstruction period, numerous writers endeavored to coordinate the oral and composed traditions by fusing black tongues in their literature. They utilized vernacular articulations in their attempts to catch the voices of the group of spectators. For example, Paul Laurence Dunbar is an artist who composed *Sympathy* (1899) which spotlights on the African American battle for respect and equality. In *Sympathy*, Dunbar says:

I know what the caged bird feels, Alas!
 When the sun is bright on the upland slopes
 When the wind stirs flows like a stream of glass
 And the river flows like a stream of glass
 When the first bird sings and the first but steals
 I know what the caged bird feels! (Quoted in Smith & Jones 155)

Thus, the caged bird represents the African American artists who attempt to use art as a means of achieving freedom. Some social factors such as the abolition of slavery, the gaining of suffrage rights for black men and the feminist movement led African American women to be a vital part of American work after the civil war. They asked for equality in their public and private lives. Due to the institution of slavery, women had to work alongside men. Black female writers such as Anna Julia Cooper, Pauline Hopkins, and B. Wells-Barnet tackled the role of women in American society (116).

During reconstruction, African American slaves got freedom. As a result, they could receive education and owned land. However, by the end of the 19th century, the reconstruction ended. Thus, the whites violated these civil rights. The Jim Crow system revealed racial segregation. It entailed the disenfranchisement of African Americans. Its function was to maintain white supremacy over the African Americans (Haggard xvii). The whites employed violence to maintain dominance over African Americans.

The end of the Great Depression and the beginning of the Second World War represent the period of political protest for black Americans. The main purpose of the protest period is to eliminate racism. The era of protest was either overt or covert. These protests were for the sake of gaining freedom from slavery (Smith & Jones 468).

During this period, there was a great emphasis on economic problems. Because of the depression, African Americans experienced a worse economic situation. African American writers had difficulties in obtaining funds to develop their writing career. According to Smith and Jones:

Literature that had protested as a purpose was especially distasteful to white readers who were not ready to face the realities of racism. The issue of racism continued to the Second World War due to the segregation between black and white soldiers (469).

Also, they claim that:

The protests of this period were nonviolent. Most of them were organized by the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). Other protests were made by African American publication such as *The Atlantic*, *Daily World*, *The Norfolk Journal Guide* and *The Chicago Defender* (469).

In addition, many articles in the African American press helped to end racial discrimination in the armed forces (469). Black authors of the period were concerned with how to live with whites rather than going to Africa to escape from racism. As an example, Margaret Walter 's poem, *For my People*, expresses pride in African American culture and revealed realities of racial oppression. This poem marks the new era for black women poets who had not published poetry since 1918 (470).

The period lasting from 1960 to 1969 is referred to as the black aesthetics movement. This period was marked by the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Nationalist Movement, and the Women's Movement. It was known as "Black Power Movement". During this period, black artists used multiple genres to make a change in society. For instance, Martin Luther King and Carmichael led hundreds of demonstrations through the Mississippi to explain the relationship between blacks and American society. Politics and writing were inseparable. Activists focused on community control of schools, welfare rights, jobs and justice for the poor (Smith & Jones 659).

During the aesthetic movement, Amiri Baraka (Le Roi Jones) and the Congress of African People (CAP) settled international dimensions of the black freedom struggle of the 1960s (Joseph 56). Amiri Baraka helped to establish black aesthetics; most of his writings were against imperialism and colonialism (658). During the 1960s, black students asked for education relevant to their history of racial oppression. The proponents of the Black Studies Movement of the 1960s and 1970s claimed that the American educational institution had to be transformed (659).

A group of organizations was led by women such as the National Association of Colored Women (NACW). This organization was controlled by Jennie L.Mouton who claims that "for 43 years the organization that grew out of this call has been working for the uplift of the race generally and for the advancement of race in particular"; she adds that:

Although there had been conflicting among African American women at the political level over the strategies of resistance, black women's organizations carried out. It contains solidarity on a wide range of issues across class, color, poor and working class. American women joined white American women for the sake of ending discrimination (Collier & Franklin 23).

Between 1954 and 1965, the Civil Rights Movement started to be accepted. This period involved protests, marches, beating, and boycotts. These years were the starting point of black voting rights. They represent the heroic period of the Civil Rights movement (Joseph 03). This movement helped African Americans to overcome racism.

From 1970 till the present, American society changed. The protest aspect of American literature has remained. In this period, black literature became an important part of the university curriculum (743). In addition, African American women's voices began to be heard as a result of the women's movement and the Civil Right Movement. Music was another means for African Americans to express themselves. The most famous one was Rap music. It focused on realities such as drug abuse, violence, and teenage (744). At the beginning of 1980, the most prominent writers were: Du Bois, Charles Chesnutt, Pauline Hopkins, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Sutton Griggs and James Weldon Johnson (745).

Objective

In this paper, we analyze the evolution of African literature in American land as Afro American literature and its evolution against white supremacy with reference to some selected authors.

III. AFRICAN LITERATURE

Origin of African Literature

Said's ideas about the complexity of the relationship among past and present are especially suggestive in the discussion of post-colonial Third World literature, a zone of study so full of a wide range of questions, doubts, polemics, and ideological premises as almost to resist use out and out. Multiple quarters of the people living in the world today have had their lives molded by the experience of colonialism.' Though its general influence on the perceptual framework of contemporary people isn't effectively characterized, literature offers a standout amongst the most significant manners by which these new recognitions are exposed and recorded. They display an unavoidable worry with myths of identity and authenticity as a component basic to all post-colonial literature in English, which could be summed up as "the alienation of vision and the emergence of self - picture as experienced by post-colonial societies. In this manner when marginality turned into a remarkable wellspring of creative vitality, there developed the idea of a 'post-colonial literary theory' resulting to the failure of European theory to manage the complexities and shifted cultural issues of post-colonial writing. It needs to operate in a cultural framework which, while not denying hereditary affiliations, sees the individual or national destiny as unpreventably enmeshed in contemporary, multi-cultural reality. Also, consequently it has started to manage the issues of transmuting time into space, with the present battling out of the past, and, similar to much late post-colonial literature, it endeavors to develop a future, which could be seen as offering an exit from the historical and philosophical impasse.

In this manner, while we pass on in a language that isn't our very own the spirit that is our own, we find numerous thematic parallels over the distinctive Third World literature in English, repetitive basic examples which disentangle the presence of shared concerns. In African nations and in India, generally in post-colonial nations where suitable alternatives to English keep on existing, an intrigue for arrival to writing solely, or for the most part in the regional dialects has been a repetitive component of calls for decolonization. (Decolonization isn't to be mistaken for the reconstitution of pre-colonial reality.)

'Colonialism' or 'colonial consciousness' is in itself a term which should be analyzed. Edward Said in his commended book, *orientalism* has focused on the confinements which colonial consciousness forces on a country. Here a social circumstance is made where one is constrained to take a gander at oneself through the eyes of the colonial experts and to pass judgment on oneself by all accounts by estimating oneself against their measuring sticks. There is a longing to receive what is passed out, an enthusiasm to

identify with them, imitate with extraordinary cleverness. Despite the fact that not by any means not the same as Fanon's analysis, Said involves the development of colonial consciousness into two stages- - one of acknowledgment of the imperial model and the other a getting some distance from it. Both are needy and imbalanced relationships, and they, in the end, lead to the last phase of moving far from these optional positions to a place of critical identification of one's own way of life, of being in a situation to filter and to reprimand, a position which is set apart by a grown-up development.

This might be said to progress to the genuine postcolonial awareness which is described by a capacity to venture outside the offered and to dismiss shortsighted divisions of the 'great' and 'terrible' and to fashion an independent identity.

The term African Literature generally alludes to an exhaustive, mind-boggling and creative literature of and from Africa. In any case, various faultfinders having a place with various ways of thinking have given changing translations about African literature. Chinua Achebe doesn't "see African literature as one unit yet as a gathering of related units, in reality, the entirety of all national and ethnic literature of Africa." (Gill,9) Nobel laureate Nadine Gordimer trusts that "African writing is done in any language by Africans themselves and by others of whatever skin color ... who offer the African experience and who have Africa focused consciousness" (Gill,9)

African literature might be grouped into three particularly and broadly acknowledged classes traditional oral literature of Africa, literature written in indigenous African dialects and literature written in European dialects. Africa in pre-colonial occasions was separated into different ethnic gatherings. During that period various networks developed particular oral literature of their own. Traditional oral literature of Africa might be as exposition, refrain or maxim. It is generally portrayed as a speaker. Speaker prospered in Africa fundamentally without across the board literacy and was passed on the generations through remembrance and recitation. The substance may contrast long extending from single sentence plan, for example, adages to stories which must be performed over some undefined time frame. This verbal craftsmanship had a utilitarian reason for giving entertainment just as guidance. They filled in as the medium to clarify the production of the universe, the substance of the exercises of God and animals and their intro and entomb relationships. Oral folklore was utilized to reestablish confidence in gathering esteems and demoralize against social inclinations.

Origin of Afro American literature

African literature might be grouped into three particularly and broadly acknowledged classes traditional oral literature of Africa, literature written in indigenous African dialects and literature written in European dialects. Africa in pre-colonial occasions was separated into different ethnic gatherings. During that period various networks developed particular oral literature of their own. Traditional oral literature of Africa might be as exposition, refrain or maxim. It is generally portrayed as a speaker. Speaker prospered in Africa

African American literature has turned into an inevitable piece of American literature and culture. The solid nearness of African American literature has prepared for the development of Native American, Asian American, and Chicano American streams of literature. It is just with the huge representation of African American literature American society stands to be washed down from the issue of racial discrimination. African American literature has analyzed the issue of racial discrimination in the entirety of its philosophical, existential and epistemological perspectives. It has gone from the mid-eighteenth century with slave narratives to the present occasions with all its socio literary abundance starting a literary and social change in the texture of American society. It was distinctly during the mid-twentieth century after the historic powerful socio-political writings Washington's *Up From Slavery* (1901) and Du Bois' *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) and Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, and James Baldwin contrived a brand of African American Modernism. Right's *Native Son* (1940), Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952) and Baldwin articulate volume of essays *The Fire Next Time* contended for the social and social emancipation of African Americans. Cutting over the impact of the Civil Rights Movement that was occurring simultaneously, It is just James Baldwin who tended to the issues of Black masculinity, sexuality and the gay rights of African Americans. Investigating the psychosexual issues, Baldwin has dismantled the sexual myths that legitimized the discrimination and filled in as a projection of insecurity and dread of white individuals. He has rejected Black Nationalism and redirected the consideration of the society towards dissolving the logical inconsistencies that tormented African American society. This point of view has prepared for an increasingly analytical and critical explanation of African American society in the late twentieth century. The rise of African American Women compositions got the twofold danger of bigotry in Black Women's movement. Gloria Hull inspected the predicament of Black women in *All the Men are Black*. Every one of the *Women in White, But Some of Us are Brave*. This has made many black women move in the direction of one another for a superior reflective and analytical comprehension of Black Women's issues.

Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1970) and Tony Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970) tended to the subject of how self-identity and regard are accomplished by a black young lady in a society, which scarcely values her existence. Tony Morrison extended her topical range from female identity to Black individuals relationship with African American past in her works *Song of Solomon* (1977), *Beloved* (1987) and *Jazz* (1991). These books have investigated folk heritage, slavery, and motherhood. This is trailed by Alice Walker's *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* that talked about the issues of poverty and family violence. She uncovered the logical inconsistencies inside the Black movement portraying the issue of domestic violence, father girl rape and female genital mutilation in *The Color Purple* (1982) and *Possessing the Secret of Joy* (1982). In spite of the negative representation of Black men, Alice Walker's works have started the renaissance of African Women's compositions. This has made ready for the rise of the literature of sports, communities, and neighborhoods and of home. Many creative scholars who are veterans of black movements and black woman's rights helped by lobbyist position gave shrewd literary and political essays. Gloria Naylor's *The Women of Brewster Place* (1982), Audre Lorde's *Zami* (1982), Paul Marshall's *Praise Song of the Widow* (1983) and Gayle Jones *Corregidora* (1975) have redrawn the guide of African American literary canon. The more youthful essayists like Sherley Ann Williams with a touchy depiction of African Women's life in *Dessa Rose* (1986), Terry McMillan with *Waiting to Exhale* (1992) broke the new ground in the class of fiction for Black women. In the midst of the incredible abundance of Black women's creative generation, African American Men's composing has been accepting less consideration. However, the autobiographical resonances and the sharing of the themes keep on holding the noteworthiness and importance of African American Men's works. John Edgar Wideman's *The Homewood Trilogy*, *Philadelphia fire* (1990), *Brothers and Keepers* (1984), Charles Johnson's *The Middle Passage* (1990), *The Oxherding Tale* (1974) have diagrammed African American counter-history. Every one of these works has demonstrated that African American literature has released another creative ability keeping pace with other huge streams of Post-Colonial and Post Modern literature.

Clarifying African American literature has turned into a challenging task to each critic and academician. There is a decent arrangement of African American literary theory even before the appearance of Post-Colonial, Post Modern streams of literary criticism. The typical criticism leveled against African American literary criticism is that it will, in general, be automatic and prescriptive. All the huge African American authors utilized a proper method of representation to propel the reason for African American creative articulation. Du Bois, Alain Locke, Richard Wright endeavored to propose a theory of perusing as opposed to a specific organization of criticism. This point of view has experienced a quick change, with the appearance of European ways of thinking in the American Academy. Deborah E. McDowell in the exposition 'The Changing same' portrays the landing of the theory as a changing change in perspective in African American literary investigation (Black Women's Literature, Criticism and Theory 1995. xixii). Many of the African American critics have communicated their dismay at the excellent basic of modern theory, for example, semiotics, structuralism, post-structuralism, psychoanalysis. Slithering underneath the rubble of critical theory, African American critics have set to reconstruct the organization of creative articulation. Communicating a blend of hostility and enthusiasm a portion of the Black researchers have managed to build up surprising comprehension of new theory, which drove for radical change. Rather than thinking about theory as a risk to their activism, they saw it as a potential for social change and an incredible philosophical foundation. This point of view was invited by a totally different age of African American students, who graduated from esteemed white colleges with a calculated lucidity on modern literary theory. The new type of scholastic critics experiencing troublesome conditions attempted to recoup the wrecked past by illustration sources from Marxism, Feminism, Post Structuralism and Psychoanalysis. Inevitably African American literary criticism has turned into a talk to be figured with.

The main hypothetical article in African American literary examination is Barbara Smith's 'Toward a Black Feminist Criticism'. It has opened another line of reasoning on Feminism and Black Feminism. Smith has postulated the entwining of gender, class and racial legislative issues fundamental for Black Feminist point of view. She contended that Black Feminist critics ought to have a decent learning of the recognizable custom of Black Women's composition. She ought to have a decent eye and ear for Black Women's language and she should think and work out of her own identity. Black Women critic should unite the thoughts or approach of the white literary canon. Smith has shown these standards because of counter the homophobia in literary representation.

Without a doubt, the black American is the only American who had made to depend so exclusively on the American environment in order to recreate his identity. The Americanness of the black is reflected in his literature. White Americans have in any event had their European institutions, values, and traditions to cling to, or modify or rebel against. The Negro could only model his culture after the white master's civilization that surrounded him. He couldn't venture again into time or history to seek his roots. These blacks and their descendants have been suffering centuries of humiliation and abuse and denial of their civil rights by terror and evasion. They have been the victims of color prejudice and social deprivation.

They continue to fight against rocklike intransigence and sophisticated manipulation of the whites by various methods and their literature forms one of the powerful weapons in their crusade and protest against social ills. The approach a bigger world of social degradation, suffering, poverty, and hopelessness. Their private heck, by its extremely racial nature, raises bigger issues of human rights and social responsibilities. When they document their very own predicaments and the persecution of their community, their writings mirror their social and social context. They like other writers attempt to step out into the university by first going through the thin door of the particular.

Their folklore reveals a lot about the manner in which they viewed themselves and others, about the ways that they have amused themselves and sustained themselves in an often-hostile culture, and about the ways that they have disguised their genuine feelings and opinions from white society. The misrepresented tales of humor, legends of famous folk heroes, slave stories, animal tales, blues, spirituals and work songs created as a result of the oral tradition. The oral tradition bit by bit offered a path to the written tradition in the history of American slavery. A relatively privileged class of "house niggers" created. This class often represented by the racially mixed relatives of the old master, soon constituted a small, elite caste within slavery, whose opportunities for literacy far outstripped those of "field niggers". These "house niggers" began producing written literature, which was a momentous achievement in itself.

The black writers of the eighteenth century, most of whom were living in New England, where they did not experience the miseries of southern plantation and so on composed relatively little on the subject of race and virtually nothing, which corresponded in subject or intensity to the black protest writing of the nineteenth century. They were committed to religious themes, neglected the obvious evils of enforced human servitude, and viewed the peculiar institution as the glorious means by which the otherwise heathen Africans were brought into the Christian overlay.

Phillis Wheatley (1754 – 1784), The African-born servant of John Wheatley, was given educational opportunities because of her obvious intelligence and thereby turned out to be knowledgeable in the Bible and in the English classics. Her Poems on various subjects, Religious and Moral, was published in London in 1773.

Slave memoirs were the dominant literary form published by black American during the nineteenth century prior to the civil war. They are extensions of the folk-story tradition in that they uncover and rehash common social experiences relate similar tales of the horrors of slavery, pitiless overseers, separation of black families, and sexual abuse stacked upon black women by their white masters.

Frederick Douglass (1817-1895) and William Wells Brown (1810-1873), among others, developed as effective spokesmen for their cause. Douglass' autobiography was originally published as a slave Narrative of the life of Frederick Douglass (1845) was republished as My Bondage and My Freedom in 1855, with certain further details. It was further expanded as Life and Times of Frederick Douglass in 1891 and was elaborated one last time in 1892, under the same title. Through his writings, he championed emancipation, battled disenfranchisement, worked for equality in education and employment and endorsed not too bad treatment of the working class by and large:

"I assert then that poverty, ignorance, and degradation are the combined evils, or in other words, these constitute the social disease of the free colored people of the United States. To deliver them from this triple malady is to improve and elevate them, by which I mean, simply to put them on an equal footing with their white fellow countrymen in the sacred right to 'Life, Liberty and the pursuit of happiness'"(A letter to Mrs. Stowe", from Black American Literature Essays ed. David Turner(Columbus, Ohio:Charles E. Merrill Publications Co., 1969,p.18).

He upheld the use of direct political action as the most effective means of overthrowing slavery. William Wells Brown (1816-1884) was America's first black novelist and he was single-minded in his commitment to abolish slavery. His *My Three Years in Europe*, (1852) was the first travel book by a black American. In 1858, he composed *The Escape or a Leap for Freedom*, which was the first play by a black American. He was also the first major black American to exploit the tragic mulatto theme. His autobiography, the narrative of William Wells Brown (1847) describes his successful escape from his white master in 1834, and his subsequent development as an orator, novelist, and playwright. *Clotel or The President's Daughter* (1852) recounts the story of the two mulatto girls Clotel and Althesa, the daughters of Thomas Jefferson, the writer of the Declaration of American Independence, and one of the presidents of the incredible republic. *Darker* was a man committed to the ideal of social justice and his purpose was to shake into wakefulness the American conscience to the evils of slavery.

IN 1863, Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, by the last decade of the nineteenth century, the social and literary climate for black Americans in the north had changed slowly, and enough education and stability included become inside the middle class to stimulate literary expression. This period was the first to deliver writers who, in spite of persisting oppressive racial conditions, had the option to maintain in their writing significant artistic detachment from those conditions. Race relations, especially in the south, were at an unsurpassed low. During Reconstruction, the southern white reaction against blacks who were asserting their new rights began. The Ku Klux Klan began to flourish with its customary night-riding sprees of terror, mutilation and arson. In addition, the Ku Klux Klan and other racial organizations expanded their activities as a supplement to the "Jim Crow" laws, which still denied blacks the right to cast a ballot and the right to receive better than average education. In 1883, the U.S. Supreme Court decided that the Civil Rights Act of 1875 was unconstitutional and in 1896, the same court declared that "separate however equal" public accommodations were "reasonable" provisions for blacks.

In spite of these dismal and disastrous social conditions, various writers, committed to the perfection of literary artistic expressions, developed during this period. Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906) was a gifted artist whose blackness forced him into the production of verse in dialect and it was his dialect verse, which made him the best-known black artist since Phillis Wheatley. It is, of course, significant that three out of his four novels are not about blacks by any stretch of the imagination, and he depicted himself as a white youth in his autobiography, *The Uncalled* (1898). He seldom managed themes of protest and he rarely mentioned racial injustice. His novel *The Sport of the Gods* (1902) and his short story, "The Lynching of Jube Benson" are exceptions. He unwittingly reinforced the notion of many whites that social and economic opportunities were available to all who were industrious and cheap and "wait", thus indirectly supporting the "accommodations" policy of Booker T. Washington (1858-1915), who was a pragmatic and conservative pioneer. He was the organizer of the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama.

He preached a message of compromise, of humility, and patience. His works supported the stereotype of the need as a satisfied peasant, docile servitor; a creature had a spot, knew it and would maintain it in control to lead a decent life. He contended that it was vain for the blacks to endeavor to take the leap to equality on the double; advocated the gospels of hard work, self-help, and thrift. The blacks must substantiate themselves, must show tangibly that they deserved the blessing of Emancipation. His accommodations policy suited the then predominant conditions and prejudices. The foundations of race advancement must be economic, not political and moral not confrontational. His emphasis on the practical and possible made the blacks meek not militant, industrious not indolent, conforming not complaining. In short, he wanted the black American to live himself by his own bootstrap. His advice did not consider the way that the need was barefoot. His policies were interpreted as self-perpetuating and as permanent acceptance of servility and subsequently, he was known as a tyrant and traitor to the cause of black dignity.

James Weldon Johnson (1871-1938) presents the protagonist of his novel *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* (1912) as a man who finds himself torn between his commitment to the black race and his desire for success for himself and for his family. It also deals straightforwardly with the round of "passing" practiced by Chesnut. The protagonist appears white because of his New England upbringing and despite the fact that he has hopes of a brilliant future in music as a "white", he is nonetheless committed to living "black"; however after much psychological torture "passes" permanently into white society marries a white, and becomes a successful businessman yet at a considerable moral cost. Johnson composed "Lift Every Voice and Sing" which had the endorsement of Booker T. Washington and turned into the "Negro National Anthem." He published three volumes of verse and a phenomenal study of black culture in New York, *Black Manhattan* (1930) as well as his autobiography, *Along This Way*, (1933) written to a great extent to demonstrate that the novel was not, truth be told, his autobiography.

The "New Negro" was only apparently phoenix-like, rejuvenating from the ashes of his own degradation. In the 1920's the blacks broken through the prejudices. The Garvey Movement, fast getting outside the allowed boundaries, swept the country like a wildfire. J.W. Johnson published an anthology of black verse. Carter Woodson and various books dealing with black life began the monumental historical studies of the blacks and aspirations had been published, read, discussed, praised or damned by 1920. Unfortunately, a great part of the literature of this period was second-rate stuff satisfying the merriment-seeking Jazz Age readers who desired to taste vicariously a life as different from their own as they could find. With the onslaught of the Depression, the vogue of the black died almost as swiftly as it had developed.

In rebelling against the social and cultural restraints of their predecessors, the Renaissance writers took an opposite direction that created an equivalent distortion. Taking their literary cues from the preoccupations of the Jazz age, they emphasized the black's showmanship, his songs, his dances, and his social pleasures, to the exclusion of other salient ingredients of his life. Be that as it may, they were committed to strengthening each other by genuine or symbolic acts. They endeavored to redefine their past by discovering a more glorious history as it was fancied to have been in Africa.

The 'Edenic nostalgia' of the black American literature is the black's response to Africa. The image of Africa more than once appeared in black verse. Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association, originally established in Jamaica in 1914, spread in America in the mid-1920s and was in some respects the political embodiment of the black American's concern with Africa as image and truth. Garvey advocated a back-to Africa policy, which assumed that Africa was the spiritual, if not real, home of the blacks. It was the first dynamically organized mass movement, which resulted in the blossoming of Black Nationalism. Despite its unexpected end – Garvey's projects misfired one after the other and he himself was arrested for extortion and banished its significance was considerable. For the first time, there was pride and fulfillment in the minds of the black masses who had previously been ashamed of their color.

The nationalist aspects of the Renaissance literature of the twenties – the fierce race pride, the constant sense of ethnic identity, and the bait of Africa remained a strong factor in the writings of later black authors. They were committed to the Nationalist tradition and 'proletarian literature' school. Among the writers of the 1930s and 1940s, some were influenced by existentialism and the French African literary tradition. They were enthusiastic about the concepts of 'Black Power' and 'Black is Beautiful' and shattered the stereotype of a black character as one grinning, passive and happily acquiescent to his exploitation.

It was in the verse of James Weldon Johnson, Claude McKay, Langston Hughes, and Countee Cullen that black Americans first experienced an enormous expression in the lyric form of their ancestral memories and of their irrefutably destined involvement in the American Dream. The fictional works of George S. Schuyler *Black No More* (1931), Nella Larson *Quicksand* (1928) and Zora Neale Hurston *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) mirrored the multifaceted mirror of their existence and their very own literature developed.

This period was the first to deliver writers who, in spite of oppressive racial conditions, committed themselves to maintain in their writing significant artistic detachment from those conditions. Harlem turned into the capital of black American cultural life during this period and served as the training ground for most of the major writers who began their career during the twenties. Various white writers also treated black themes and contributed to the new interest in black lifestyles and culture; the show of Eugene O'Neill *Emperor Jones*, (1920) and *All God's Chillum Got Wings*, (1923) as well as the fiction of Sherwood Anderson *Dark Laughter*, (1925), Dubose Heyward *Mamba's Daughters*, (1929) and Carl Van Vechten's *Nigger Heaven* (1926). The *Confessions of Nat Turner* by William Styron is also an endeavor, after Mrs. Stowe, by a white author to document the psychological rationale of an incident in the history of blacks through the eyes of the black protagonist.

The first important writer of the Renaissance was Claude McKay (1889-1948), who was born in Jamaica. He went to the U.S.A in 1912 to study agriculture at the Tuskegee Institute. *Home to Harlem*, *Banjo* and *Banana Bottom* (1933) were the three novels and *Gingertown* is a book of short stories written by McKay. In any case, it is in his verse that he will be longest recollected. In his verse, he expressed the black's determination to ensure his human dignity, his cultural worth, and his right to a decent life.

Braithwaite recognized Claude McKay as the first voice in the Harlem Renaissance. His sonnet "If We Must Die" stirred the blood everything being equal:- If we must die, let us not be like hogs Hunted and written in an inglorious spot, while round us bark the distraught and hungry dogs, making they're false at our accursed parcel. If we must die, gracious, let us honorably die. So that our precious blood may not be shed in vain; then even monsters we resist shall be constrained to honor us however dead; Oh! Kinsmen! We must meet the common enemy! Through far dwarfed, let us show us bold, and for their thousand blows bargain one final knockout! What however before we lie the open grave? Like men we'll confront the murderous, cowardly pack, pressed to the divider, dying, however fighting back (Quoted in Herbert Hill, op.cit. 13).

Sir Winston Churchill quoted these lines as climax and conclusion of his oration before the joint-houses of the American Congress when he was seeking to draw America into the common effort in World War II. McKay had written it as a different answer to lynching and mob violence in the southern states. Churchill made it the voice of the embattled allies as he read aloud "If We Must Die".

The second important writer of the Renaissance, Jean Toomer (1894-1967) published his *Cane* in 1923. With an artist's passion and sympathy for life, he wrote about the black without the surrender or compromise of the artist's vision. So the objective was it that we feel that it is a mere accident that birth or association has thrown him into contact with the life he has written about. He would write just as well, about the others, had experience brought him in touch with their existence. *Cane* is a highly successful collection of prose sketches and poems strung together thematically into contrasting pictures of southern peasant life and northern black urban life. It is also about the search for roots and about the penalties suffer by being uprooted. *Roots* (1976), the generational opus was written by Alex Haley, are his family's origins from Africa through slavery and into the present century. Haley traces his roots and lineage in order to repossess his own history and reveals how the blacks prize their ancestral memories and find themselves as an inseparable component of the American culture.

Undoubtedly, the most popular writer to emerge from the Renaissance was the poet Langston Hughes (1902-1967), who was born in Missouri. His article, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain" which was widely acclaimed as the literary manifesto of the "New Negro", urged the black artist to make full use of the colorful, distinctive material at his disposal and to interpret the beauty of his people. He proclaimed: We younger Negro artists who create now intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame. If white people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, it doesn't matter....if colored people are pleased, we are glad. If they are not their displeasure doesn't matter either. We build our temples for tomorrow, strong as we know how, and we stand on top of the mountain free within ourselves (*The Nation*, Vol.122.No.3181:1926, .640). Hughes popularized an imaginary character Jesse B. Simple, the black Everyman. Simple's conversation with his friend Boyd served as a springboard for Hughes's opinions and flights of imagination. Simple, an anti-authoritarian optimist pokes fun at his own foibles and mocks at the hypocrisy and the shams of his compatriots both black and white and makes his readers feel angry and abashed simultaneously. He is sane and resilient. He is the embodiment of the black's desire to survive and prevail in the face of insuperable odds.

IV. CONCLUSION

African-American literature is very old, vast and varied as that of African literature, or Dalit literature in India. America, as a youthful nation started its reality during the 1620s. The white pilgrims established their colony first in Jamestown and afterward in Virginia, and after that in the remainder of the vast mainland nation. England bit by bit grabbed hold of America as a New World. America, as a colony developed, and it utilized labor force in its plantation agriculture.

African American literature has been old, vast and varied. The whites, especially the Quakers started to demonstrate this. Samuel Sewall was the first to compose an anti-slavery leaflet. John Woolman's *Some Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes* (1754) is noteworthy. Olaudah Equiano and Jupiter Hammon are additionally the early writers. Phillis Wheatley is said to be the principal African American author of significance in American.

The Romantic Movement from 1820 to 1860 was significant for the dark writers, as it underlined the spirit of democracy. This age likewise created the principal golden age in American literature. Incredible writers - Poe, Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, Dickinson, Hawthorne, Melville, Stowe, Mark Twain, and the Boston Brahmins created an exceptional assortment of literature. Abolitionists like Whittier, Lydia Child, the Grimke Sisters, Sojourner Truth, Stowe, Harriet Jacobs, Harriet Wilson, William Garrison, Richard Douglass, and women's activists escalated the following Civil War (1860-1865) itself, which gave an exercise to the world. A considerable lot of these dark writers like Douglass created slave narratives, which applied an incredible impact on American literature.

The literary accomplishment of African Americans was a standout amongst the most striking literary developments of the post-Civil War era. In the works of Booker T. Washington, W.E.B Du Bois, James Weldon Johnson, Charles Waddell Chesnutt, Paul Laurence Dunbar, and others, the underlying foundations of dark American composing grabbed hold strikingly in the types of life account, challenge literature, messages, verse, and melody. Numerous antiquarians have described the period between the two world wars as the United States traumatic 'coming of age'.

This is the means by which African American slave narratives are the most dominant works of authentic life and reflections. In this line, anybody can acknowledge Dunbar, Wright, and Hurston, yet numerous others when them.

REFERENCES

- [1] Washington, B.T., 2013. *Up from slavery*. Simon and Schuster.
- [2] Du Bois, W.E.B. and Marable, M., 2015. *Souls of black folk*. Routledge.
- [3] Wright, R., 2016. *Native son*. Random House.
- [4] Ellison, R., 2016. *Invisible man*. Penguin UK.
- [5] Angelou, M., 1997. *I know why the caged bird sings*. Bantam.
- [6] Morrison, T., 1994. *The Bluest Eye*. 1970. New York, pp.751-59.
- [7] Morrison, T., 2004. *Song of solomon*. Vintage.
- [8] Morrison, T., 1988. *Beloved*. 1987. New York: Plume, 252.
- [9] Morrison, T., 1993. *Jazz*. 1992. London: Picador.
- [10] Walker, A., 2011. *The color purple* (Vol. 1). Open Road Media.
- [11] Walker, A., 2011. *Possessing the secret of joy* (Vol. 3). Open Road Media.
- [12] Naylor, G., 2005. *The women of Brewster place*. Penguin.
- [13] Lorde, A., 2018. *Zami: A New Spelling of my Name*. Penguin UK.
- [14] Marshall, P. and Shay, M., 1983. *Praisesong for the Widow* (p. 137). London: Virago.
- [15] Jones, G., 2019. *Corregidora*. Hachette UK.
- [16] Williams, S.A., 1987. *Dessa Rose: A Novel*. Phoenix Books, Incorporated.
- [17] McMillan, T., 2006. *Waiting to exhale*. Penguin.
- [18] Davis, A.Y., 1998. *The Angela Y. Davis Reader*. John Wiley & Sons.