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The Grammar of the Mid-Century Diasporic Afro-Entwicklungsroman: Context, Purpose and Form of Discourse

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Dr. Babacar Dieng

Université Gaston Berger de Saint-Louis
UFR Lettres et Sciences Humaines
Route de Ngallèle, Saint-Louis
Senegal

ABSTRACT

This article is a study of the characteristic traits of what we term the mid-century diasporic Afro-Entwicklungsroman, a new version of bildungsroman developed in the African Diaspora in the mid-twentieth century. It results from the realization of the differences in terms of form between the traditional European Bildungsroman's model and the version popularized by writers of the African diaspora from the middle to the end of the twentieth century. It mainly argues that these differences stem from the context and the function of the discourses disseminated in them. It demonstrates that although both the European and diasporic versions are pedagogical in impulse, they bear different forms because the Afro-Entwicklungsroman, unlike the European bildungsroman which depicts more stages and celebrates the protagonist's entrance into the world as a mature being, focuses exclusively on the challenges faced during the protagonist's stage of growth as a means of awakening, sensitizing, and educating the colonized subjects. In other words, this article demonstrates that the grammar of the novel of development is determined by the context and the function of the discourse.

Keywords: *Bildungsroman, Entwicklungsroman, Novel Of Development, Postcolonialism, African Diaspora*

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1. Introduction

Twentieth-century Afro-Diasporic literature abounds with novels of development or bildungsromane. As a matter of fact, the genre witnessed an unprecedented popularity in the period going from the 1950s to the end of the century in Africa, America, as well as in the Caribbean: a growing number of creative writers in the African diaspora adopted the coming of age novel as a privileged mode of representation of issues of growth, personal development, identity, alienation, nation building and independence in a context of vibrant nationalism. In the Caribbean, several writers made use of this ubiquitous genre to write quasi-autobiographic stories conveying key pedagogies derived from their experiences in the colonial and postcolonial period. Among others, we can list Samuel Selvon in *A Brighter Sun* (1952), George Lamming in *In the Castle of My Skin* (1953), Jean Rhys in *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), Merle Hodge in *Crick Crack, Monkey* (1970), Michel Cliff in *Abeng* (1984), Jamaica Kincaid in *Annie John* (1985), Zee

Edgell in *Beka Lamb* (1986) and Merle Collins in *Angel* (1987), Jamaica Kincaid in *Lucy* (1990) and Edwidge Danticat in *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994).

In African-American as well, one can record the publication of a considerable number of novels of development: Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952), Gwendolyn Brooks' *Maud Martha* (1953), Paule Marshall's *Brown girl, Brownstones* (1959), Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969), Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970), Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982), Sapphire's *Push* (1996), Ntozake Shange in *Liliane: Resurrection of the Daughter* (1994), Thulani Davis in *1959: A Novel* (2001), and Jacqueline Woodson in *Another Brooklyn* (2016). In all these novels, American realities and concerns are painted through the eyes of children and the mature consciousness of the adults looking back to the past.

In francophone as well as anglophone Africa, the coming of age novels enjoyed a similar popularity as of the mid-

century. In West Africa, Camara Laye wrote *The Dark Child* (1954), and some years later in 1966, Flora Nwapa's *Efuru* came out. Chinua Achebe published Okonkwo's story, *Things Fall Apart* in 1958. Buchi Emecheta's *The Bride Price* was published in 1975 and Ben Okri's *Flowers and Shadows* followed in 1980. Ghanaian Ama Ata Aidoo's *Our Sister Killjoy*, the story of Sissie's growth abroad, started being sold in 1977. In East Africa, Ngugi Wa Thiongo published *Weep Not Child*, the story of Njoroge in 1964. In South Africa, Tsitsi Dangaremba's *Nervous Conditions* (1988) is illustrative of the coming of age's fame. As for Ferdinand Oyono's *Une vie de boy*, a classic anticolonialist coming of age of an African boy, it came out in 1956 in Central Africa.

These novels of development produced by creative writers of the African diaspora strikingly diverge from the grammar of the conventional European bildungsroman. Indeed, we witness the birth of a new form of bildungsroman which often ends at the main protagonist's stage of growth and which does not therefore depict the stage of maturity. Only very few novels of development of the African diaspora such as *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* or *Our Sister Killjoy* portray the protagonist's maturity stage. What explains this difference in grammar and form? Why isn't the stage of maturity depicted in these novels? These are some questions our analysis will address.

In our view, this change in form mainly results from the context and the discourses disseminated in these novels. Whereas the link between context and text has been thoroughly illustrated in literature, the one between context and form is usually insufficiently scrutinized, especially in reference to the bildungsroman. Many recent works focus on the European bildungsroman's version¹ even if there have been some theses on the Caribbean and African American ones. In their analyses, bildungsromane critics have discussed the definition of the term and how feminist and minorities have reshaped the genre by arguing that feminist and minority studies have given a new bend to the bildungsroman.² Other scholars have tried to classify the various versions of the genre. Thus, different names such as the "novels of

development," or "novels of awakening," postcolonial bildungsroman, Entwicklungsroman have been coined.

This article treads new ground as it adopts a rather comparative and formalist approach and studies the link between context, purpose of discourse and form of the bildungsroman based on the specificities of some Afro-Entwicklungsroman or "novels of mere growth" produced in the twentieth-century African Diaspora. It argues that the mutation of the bildungsroman into Entwicklungsroman in the African Diaspora obeys the exigencies of the context and the functions of the ideological discourses circulating in that period. In other words, the grammar—form and number of stages—of the novel development is determined by the context and the purpose of the discourse. To make this point, it reminds the function and main traits of the traditional bildungsroman before comparing and contrasting its features with the ones of the Afro-Entwicklungsroman in Africa, America and the Caribbean. To show the link between narrative form and grammar of narrative discourse, it uses the narrative discourses of representative African-American and Caribbean Entwicklungsromane, grounding analysis on linguistic and literary theories.

2. The European Bildungsroman: Function, Evolution and Characteristic Traits

It is necessary to remind the origins, conventions and evolution of the traditional bildungsroman to better explain the changes of the genre's grammar. Pedagogical in its impulse and aiming at showing how talents could be cultivated to liberate the mind and achieve success, the European novel of development was born in Germany in the eighteenth century during the period of the Enlightenment. In literary studies, German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey was the first scholar who brought up the term bildungsroman in 1870. Bildungsroman derives from the German "bildung" which means education, and "roman" or a novel. The term *Bildung* originates from the 16th century Pietistic theology, which stipulated that the devout Christian should strive to cultivate (*Bildung*) his talents and dispositions according to the image of God, which was innate in his soul. Beside this religious usage, some philosophers used the word during the period of the Enlightenment to refer to "the development or unfolding of certain potentialities within an organism." Gradually, *Bildung* became associated with

¹ Sawles, Martin. (2015) *The German Bildungsroman from Wieland to Hesse*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

² For further information see Lima, 1993, p 3.



liberation of the mind from tradition and superstition, but also liberation of the German from old feudal political system controlled by Holy Roman Empire. Mikhail Bakhtin (1986), in “The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism,” explains that the bildungsroman presents to the reader “the image of man in the process of becoming” (19).

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship* published in 1795 is considered as the first of the genre even though novels fitting the definition of the Bildungsroman surfaced as early as the last half of the eighteenth century (Li, 2011, p IX). Even if it quickly lost its popularity in the German tradition in the nineteenth century, the bildungsroman was adopted in the French and English contexts in the nineteenth century. For instance, writers such as James Joyce, Honore de Balzac, Gustave Flaubert, Charles Dickens, Charlotte and Emily Bronte, George Elliot and George Meredith and a handful of other authors have utilized the genre. Franco Moretti in his ground-breaking study of the genre, *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture* (1987) explains that the bildungsroman was adopted and transformed by European writers mostly to negotiate complex issues related to identity, nationality, education, the role of the artist, and social as well as personal relationships” (Castle, 2003, p. 670).

Specialist scholar J. H Buckley’s 1974 book-length study, *Season of Youth: The Bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding*, offers no doubt one of the best overviews of the bildungsroman tradition and its characteristics. He identifies the following specific stages in the hero’s journey from youth to adulthood: 1) the depiction of a sensitive child growing up in a happy and protected atmosphere; 2) the disruption of the protagonist’s comfortable world as a result of a conflict with the father and departure from home; 3) the hero’s preparation for a career; 4) and, after many trials and encounters, his entrance into the world as a mature individual who asserts his values. For Buckley (1974), a bildungsroman is a novel of formation that portrays all but two or three of a set list of characters among them « childhood, the conflict of generations, provinciality, the larger society, self-education, alienation, ordeal by love, the search for a vocation and a working philosophy » (18).

Thus, in the traditional bildungsroman, the main protagonists resolve the conflicts they are facing and eventually achieve successful transition into maturity; not only are they depicted in the process of becoming but also during the stage of maturity. The stage of maturity marked by the protagonists’ acquisition of a working philosophy through the cultivation of talents or skills was the reason of being of the German and European novel of development insofar it offered the protagonist’s success as a lesson to the reader. In Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship*, the main protagonist successfully negotiates the hurdles in his life and lives a happy life surrounded by his offspring.

As noted above in the introduction, this western literary genre born in Germany has been much utilized as a vehicle of postcolonial discourses in the African diaspora from the 1950s onward. Tobias Boes (2006) notes with great relevance that there was literally “an explosion of bildungsroman writing in postcolonial and minority literatures of the late twentieth century” (240) and Maria Helena Lima (1993) reinforces Boes’ view when she points out that the bildungsroman “has, ironically, been ‘chosen’ in numerous countries undergoing decolonization because it is a form of discourse that constitutes identity in terms of a relation to origin” (16). However, one does not need to be an expert to notice that this diasporic version of the bildungsroman is strikingly different in terms of form; it is closer to a type called the Entwicklungsroman or “novel of mere growth,” a category Pratt invented in reference to *Los Rios Profundos*.

[3. The Grammar of the Afro-Entwicklungsroman: Features and Divergences from the German Template](#)

In an Entwicklungsroman or novel of “mere growth,” the plot ends “before the protagonist reaches adulthood,” and it rarely “depict(s) their protagonists as fully enfranchised within their culture” (Trites, 2000, p. 19). Mariane Hirsch (1983) further explains that unlike the traditional *Bildungsroman* which valorizes “progress, heterosexuality, social involvement, healthy disillusionment, ‘normality,’ adulthood,” these stories focus on the tensions between spaces and how characters deal with the uncomfortable situation of being part of “normality” and yet existing outside of it (27). The Entwicklungsroman thus restricts

representation to the depiction of the sensitive child, the disruption of the protagonist's comfortable world and, in most cases, it closes with the departure from home. Unlike the traditional bildungsroman which legitimizes the dominant sociopolitical structures, the mid-century diasporic novel of development contested sociopolitical practices and patterns of oppression and illustrated how the latter negatively impacted on the growth of youth.

George Lamming's *In the Castle of My Skin*, Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, Michelle Cliff's *Abeng*, Merle Hodge's *Crick Crack, Monkey*, and several other novels written in the African Diaspora from the middle to the end of the twentieth century conform to the conventions of Entwicklungsroman. Published in 1953, Barbadian George Lamming's autobiographical novel deals with issues of identity, nation-building and development. It denounces through G's development, the psychological devastations engendered by colonialism on the Barbadian subjects: alienation, loss of history and neocolonialism. It illustrates how the colonizer's culture is pitted against the native's one through subtle use of ISAS such as school, religion and family. In a context when the colonizer has left, but the effects of colonialism are still potent in Barbadian society: schools still valorize the British cultural capital and the social hierarchy venerating the western to the detriment of the native still persists. Mr Slime, the former schoolteacher, takes the place of Mr Creighton, the former plantation owner. The story of G's development only encompasses nine years of experience in Barbados; the narrative ends with G's departure from the small island locked in the past to the metropolis. Lamming neither depicts G's experience in Great Britain nor his return in Barbados.

The Bluest Eye also conforms to the features of this type of novel of development. Like *In the Castle of My Skin*, Morrison's 1970 novel is quasi-autobiographical, for it represents issues that Morrison had had to deal with growing up as a young girl in Lorrain Ohio during the 1930s: racism, self-esteem, identity, the role of the family. The plight of Pecola parallels in several respects the challenges the author faced growing in a context of racism doubled with economic depression. Pecola's desire for blue eyes is a metaphor illustrating the black people's loss of pride in their heritage resulting from the appropriation and

internalization of a racist ideology and cultural capital. The destructive effects of the loss of identity and consequences of racism are painted in the background of Pecola's development through the characterization of her family, ironically called the Breedloves. The father, Cholly is an alcoholic, psychologically instable and insecure man who drifts in society without any focus or direction. The mother, Polly is a frustrated maid who is more preoccupied with the white family she works for than caring for her own family. Cholly and Pauline are unable to nurture their daughter like the Mc Teers, and she believes that if she has blue eyes like Sherley Temple, she will have a good life. The life of Pecola, who is barely eleven years old at the onset of the novel ends in tragedy: she is raped by her drunk father, the baby dies still born and she sinks into madness. Through this tragic ending, Morrison makes a powerful call: she sensitizes the audience on the evils of internalizing the western ideological discourses. Like her Barbadian counterpart, Morrison does not stage the maturity stage, departure and triumphal return of the main protagonist; her novel is an Entwicklungsroman depicting the growth of Pecola in Lorrain.

Morrison's novel of mere growth shares formal features with the contemporary Caribbean ones. For instance, *Crick Crack, Monkey* (1970) by social activist Merle Hodge is also a quasi-autobiographical novel chronicling the life of a Trinidadian girl, Cynthia also called Tee, from early childhood to adolescence. Through the experience of Tee in school, church, society, Hodge paints the destructive effects of the colonial system, effects which still persist in Trinidad even though the country has gained autonomy. In *Crick Crack, Monkey*, Merle Hodge illustrates the subtle ways through which the British colonial machine, symbolized by school, socialization and religion, erodes the Trinidadian culture and operates on young girls. The novel does not represent Tee's stages of maturity in England and her triumphal return to Trinidad with a working philosophy. At the end of the novel, Tee is about to leave Trinidad under the jealous eyes of her cousins to go to Great Britain to pursue her studies. The reader imagines she will gain maturity in the metropolis and eventually return home, like Hodge, to serve her country, but the narrative never reveals these stages.



Another Caribbean novel of development which illustrates our argument is Michelle Cliff's *Abeng* (1983), an autobiographical novel of development retracing the life of a young Jamaican girl growing up in a society fragmented by race classification, colonial-minded attitudes and stereotypes. Through the life of Clare Savage, who is like Michelle Cliff a mulatta growing up in a postcolonial Jamaican society, the text depicts the various obstacles she had to deal with in Jamaican postcolonial society. Clare has a mixed heritage: she is a descendant of a family of former slave owners and a family of former slaves. Clare's father belongs to a formerly very powerful family of slave owners: the Savage. Clare discovers that her father's culture is celebrated to the detriment of her mother's one, considered as low. Very close to her mother, Clare gains at an early age a critical consciousness of the social hierarchy resulting from slavery and colonialism. Her story is a call on the part of Jamaicans to decolonize their minds. It reveals the destructive effects of school and other ISAs on the colonial subjects. Like the previously mentioned texts, *Abeng* is Entwicklungsroman ending with Clare sent away to live with Mrs Winifred Stevens as a punishment. The narrative does not paint Clare's stage of maturity and triumphal return to her community.

Jamaica Kincaid's *Annie John* constitutes another novel of mere growth which can be used as a case in point. Like *The Bluest Eye*, *Abeng* and *Crick Crack, Monkey*, representation of the development of Annie is limited to the three initial stages: the depiction of a sensitive child growing up, the disruption of the girl's comfortable life, the conflict with the mother and the departure from home. In filigree of the portrait of the young girl reaching puberty, Kincaid paints the destructive effects of colonial education, the erasure of the Trinidadian culture under colonialism, and the relationship between the metropolis and its colonies. Like *In the Castle of My Skin*, *Crick Crack*, *Monkey* and *Abeng*, the novel closes on the main protagonist's departure for the metropolis. In the closing chapter, Annie is about to leave Antigua for England via Barbados.

Thus, one notices that these Afro-Entwicklungsromane of the mid-century have a different grammar. Not only do they include fewer stages, but also the focus is rather put on the ordeals of the main

protagonist. The main protagonist's life is offered as an eye-opening experience sensitizing their audience about the workings and consequences of colonization and other forms of domination or exclusion. They help the reader transition from colonialism to post-colonialism and are often vehicles of a post-orientalist discourses aiming at deconstructing the effects of colonialism and domination.

Unlike the conventional novel of development which stages the point when the protagonist reaches wholeness, the diasporic Entwicklungsroman rather emphasizes the stage of fragmentation because its objective is preventive and purely didactic; it is not so much about the celebration of wholeness but rather an attempt to make the reader learn from the protagonist's experience and misfortunes in spaces where forms of domination and exclusion prevail. On the one hand, in the diasporic Entwicklungsroman, especially the Caribbean one, the "pursuit of education and wisdom in the traditional bildungsroman is replaced by "scenes of instruction and ideological interpellation, in which the subject resists a social system that seeks to produce individuals capable of serving the needs of ISAS" (Castle, 2003, p 674). On the other one, Claudine Raynaud (2004) points out, in African-American novels of development, the discovery of racism is the major event in the protagonist's development and in his "education" (106).

Some scholars read these differences in form as a subversion of the genre by feminists. For instance, Heather Emily Rellihan (2005) attributes the modification of the bildungsroman to the fact that it is impossible for female characters to have access to "self-development in the same way that male characters" (4). We rather consider that the form of the genre is in a large measure determined by the context and the purposes of the discourses disseminated.

4. Context and Purpose as Factors Determining the Grammar of the Novel of Development

In this section, the context of production of the European bildungsroman will be compared to the one of the Afro-Entwicklungsroman to illustrate that the changes in the template of the novel of development results from the context and the purpose of discourse production.

It is however important to present beforehand the underlying assumptions of

our analysis to clarify the link between contexts and grammars of the novels of development.

Literary works are narrative discourses and regardless of type, the form of the discourse is determined by three key elements: the type, the context and the purpose. Context, in most scholars' view not only determines the discourse and influences the speaker's choice of grammatical form, information structures and organizational pattern.³ Besides, scholars have already demonstrated the tight link between context and text. Developments in linguistics and discourse analysis, have classified novels among narrative discourses determined by the contexts of their productions. Marxist theorists and historicists have indeed argued that authors are products of their times, and one can only understand the meaning of their texts through a study of the discourses circulating in the periods when they were produced. Macherey (1978), for instance, thinks that literary texts can only be understood in the context of their utterances, for they are produced under determinate conditions, and the time and place where they are written, the languages in which they are inscribed, the traditions and debates within which they intervene all come together to create a textual fabric (78).

Context should be taken in a literary sense: it refers to all the "co-texts" or all aspects of the circumstances of actual production of a creative work relevant to understanding meaning.⁴ In literature, situation and cultural contexts are particularly important in understanding a literary work. Situational context refers to the environment, time and space in which the discourse happens and the relationship between the participants. As for cultural context, it refers to the culture, customs and background of the period in which the speakers participate. It is also understood that language is a social phenomenon closely tied up with the social structure and value system of society, and it is influenced by a variety of factors such as social role,

social status, sex and age, etc.

A scrutiny of the *bildungsroman* shows a link between context, function of discourse and grammar. As a matter of fact, the novel of development developed in the 16th century, during the period of Enlightenment when emphasis was put on cultivation (*Bildung*) of talents to liberate the mind from tradition or superstition and find one's way in the world. In such circumstances, it is of paramount importance to represent in these novels of development the resolution of the conflicts: the diegesis represented not only the conflicts young protagonists encountered but also, and more importantly, the resolution of the latter. In these traditional stories, the representation included more stages: the growth of the child in a happy and protected environment, the disruption of the main participant's comfortable world resulting from a conflict with the father, the departure from home, the hero's preparation for a career characterized by many trials and difficulties, and his entrance into the world as a mature individual who asserts his values. As a result of the didacticism of the narrative discourse which offers the hero's journey as a model to the audience, the last stage constitutes the most significant component and essence of the message conveyed by the German and European *bildungsromane* because it celebrates a successful *bildung*.

On the contrary, in the mid-century Afro-Entwicklungsroman's, the representation of the main protagonist's stage of maturity and return to the community is not of paramount importance in the discourse's pedagogy. The majority of these Afro-Entwicklungsromane are written in a context of struggle to liberate Africans in the diaspora and a tremendous rise of nationalism among the African-American, the Caribbean and African communities. Indeed, as of the 1920s, we witness a growth of an authentic liberated African point of view writing back to Eurocentric representations in the African diaspora. In the US, the Harlem Renaissance, the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Power and Black Arts movement mark the outburst of the nationalistic movement giving voice to the formerly excluded enslaved and disfranchised black consciousness. This nationalism spread its tentacles to Africa and the Caribbean via Paris where African-American cultural producers met African intellectuals. The Caribbean countries were also flooded by the growing ideological positioning. Shortly thereafter, these African

³ For more details see Cho, 1984, p. 453; Longacre, 1983, p. 10.

⁴ Our definition of context also owes much to linguists H. G. Widdowson and Guy Cook. The former considers context as "those aspects of the circumstance of actual language use which are taken as relevant to meaning" (H.G. Widdowson, 2000, p.126). The latter who studied the link between discourse and literature defines context as knowledge other parts of the text under consideration, sometimes referred to as, co-text" (Guy Cook, 1999, p. 24).



in the diaspora reclaimed their freedom and autonomy. African and Caribbean countries were freed from the hegemony of the British and French and the elite took over the reins of power. In America, African-Americans were progressively integrating mainstream American society. All around the African diaspora, movements denouncing domination, alienation and exploitation of the people of African descent developed. Most of the *Entwicklungsromane* are written by the elite who wanted to save the youth from the pangs of the illnesses they had experienced as colonized subjects. The novels of development fulfilled the writer's need to "reassess one's childhood from the vantage point of maturity" and "wish to establish an authentic basis of experience: to repossess or reinterpret a past that seems broken and fragmentary to the adult" (Leseur, 1986, pp. 26-27). For the African-Americans, racism was a major concern and for the Caribbean and Africans colonialism ranked among the most potent challenges.

The twentieth century cultural producers in the diaspora used the tale of their own experiences as a lesson of awareness and sensitization for the youth. These narratives are not celebratory in their impulse but rather revolutionary. In these texts, the narrative discourses mainly aimed at exhibiting the causes and effects of conflicts such as colonialism and other forms of oppression on the dominated. They were often vehicles through which participants who have experienced "colonial" impositions and its workings, write stories as a means of mass sensitization and awareness raising for younger generations. In other words, the experience of the main protagonist parallels their lived experience. In these types of novels of development denouncing impositions and their consequences, the resolution of the conflict is secondary: the purpose of such discourses was rather to sensitize the younger generation as a preventive measure against the pernicious effects of colonialism and racism.

These novels of development can be considered as novels of ordeals or predicaments, for they usually focus on the first three initial stages of the protagonist's; that is, the depiction of a sensitive child growing up in a happy and protected atmosphere, the disruption of the child's comfortable world and/or the conflict with the father and departure from home. They are more interested in the tedious journey

towards self-cultivation rather than the process of development and the celebration of self-cultivation. These preoccupations reflect in the form of the novel of development: whereas the European one included numerous stages going from the painful growth to the protagonist's triumphal return to the community, the afro-*Entwicklungsroman* focused more on the stage of growth and closes with the departure of the protagonist from the community.

5. Conclusion

Some critics have read the change of the *bildungsroman*'s form as a subversion of the western one, and we agree to some extent because writers of the African diaspora have appropriated the coming of age story and conferred it a revolutionary function. The initial function of the traditional *bildungsroman* was to support existing power relations. Indeed, the traditional *Bildungsroman*'s function used to be to legitimize "authority by normalizing the dominant sociopolitical practices and patterns of the nation-statist modernity and by affirming the capacity of those systems to distinguish good citizens from bad subjects" (Slaughter, 2007, p. 124). The twentieth-century Afro-*Entwicklungsroman*, on the contrary, serves deconstructive and postcolonial purposes.

However, we are more inclined to believe that the modification of the novel of development's form rather derives from the contexts and the purposes of the discourses disseminated in the literary genre. In other words, the grammar or form of the novel of development is determined by the situational and cultural contexts and the function of the narrative discourse. Due to its extreme preoccupation with self-cultivation, the early version of the European *bildungsroman* includes more stages because it shows the protagonist's stage of maturity and triumphal return to the community. Originally, as Buckley (1974) and Moretti (1987) illustrate it, the *bildungsroman* included several stages ranging from childhood, the conflict with the father, the departure from home, experience in the larger society, self-education, and the triumphal return home with a vocation and a working philosophy. The last stages of the European form celebrated self-cultivation and its virtues.

On the contrary, the Afro-*Entwicklungsroman* includes fewer stages. These novels, with the exception of very

few, do not include all the stages of the traditional bildungsroman; they are Entwicklungsromane describing the main protagonist's growth and do not depict the stages of maturity and successful insertion into the community after a journey. Most are semi-autofictions or autobiographies recounting the experience of a young boy or girl as a form of education of the audience. In this type of novel of development, the author focuses more on the obstacles dispersed along the young woman's development than the development itself because the main purpose is to sensitize the audience about the challenges to be faced rather than exhibit the successful transition of the protagonist. The experience of the protagonist is offered as a conscious-raising lesson. In the Afro-entwicklungsroman, the objective is to expose the mechanisms through which authority perpetuate its domination and consequently liberate the mind of the oppressed and sensitize them on the insidious work of ISAs. The Afro-Entwicklungsroman developed in a nationalistic and political context when writers of the African diaspora were concerned with decolonizing the minds of the newly freed colonial subjects and drawing them out of alienation and/or sensitizing them on the loss of their identity and other forms of alienation resulting from the adoption of the dominant culture's capital.

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